

# افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد  
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم  
بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد  
از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

By Kavita Krishnan  
15.04.2023

## "Multipolarity", the mantra of authoritarianism



**Sources:** The India Forum

*The defense of multipolarity, without added democratic values, becomes an alibi for various despotic regimes in different parts of the world. Russian President Vladimir Putin has also used this figure while undertaking the invasion of Ukraine, which part of the left hesitates to condemn clearly.*

Multipolarity is Today the compass that guides the left's vision of relations International. All currents of the left, in India and Everyone has long advocated a multipolar world, in place of the unipolar dominated by US imperialism. At the same time Over time, multipolarity has become a cornerstone of the shared language of fascisms and global

authoritarianisms. It's a War cry of the despots, which serves to disguise war against imperialism its offensive against democracy.

The masking and legitimization of despotism through multipolarity are reinforced by the resounding support that the Global Left lends to it, celebrating it as a democratization anti-imperialist of international relations. By framing the political confrontations within, or between, nation-states in a zero-sum game between supporting multipolarity or unipolarity, The left perpetuates a fiction that even at its time less Ignoble was misleading and inaccurate. It is now manifestly dangerous, and It serves only as a narrative and dramatic instrument in favor of the prestige of authoritarians and fascists.

The unfortunate consequences of the left's commitment to A multipolarity stripped of values are very crudely illustrated. in its response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The Global Left and the India has legitimized and amplified discourse to varying degrees Russian fascist, protecting the invasion as a multipolar challenge to unipolar imperialism led by the United States.

### **The Freedom to Be a Fascist**

On September 30, 2022, while announcing the illegal annexation of four Ukrainian territories, Russian President Vladimir Putin explained what multipolarity and democracy meant in their ideological framework (1). Putin defined multipolarity as liberation from the pretension of Western elites to establish as universal their own "degenerate" values of democracy and human rights; values "alien" to the vast majority of people in the West and elsewhere. His rhetorical ploy was to assert that the notion of an order based on rules, democracy and justice is nothing more than an ideological and imperialist imposition of the West, which finds in it a pretext to violate the sovereignty of other nations.

Watching Putin play on legitimate outrage over the long list of crimes of Western countries (colonialism, imperialism, invasions, occupations, genocides, coups d'état), it was easy to forget that his was not a speech that demanded justice, reparations or an end to such crimes. In fact, his Affirmation of the obvious fact that Western governments do not They had "no moral right to an opinion, even to utter a word." on democracy" skillfully removed people from the equation. The people of the colonized nations have fought, and continue to fight, for freedom. The peoples of the imperialist nations go out to the streets to demand democracy and justice and combat racism, the Wars, invasions, occupations committed by their own Governments. But Putin did not show his support for these people. Rather, encouraged "like-minded" forces around the world (movements). far-right politicians, white supremacists, racists, anti-feminists, homophobes, transphobes) to

support the invasion as part of a project advantageous to them: to overthrow the "unipolar hegemony" of the universal values of democracy and human rights, and "Obtaining True Freedom: A Historical Perspective."

Putin uses a "historical perspective" of his own election to support a supremacist version of a Russian "civilization-country" in which Laws dehumanize LGBT+ people and where references to historical events are criminalized in the name of the "strengthening of [Russia's] sovereignty". Proclaims the Russia's freedom to deny and oppose democratic norms and International laws defined "universally" by institutions such as the United Nations (UN). The project of "Eurasian integration" that Putin handles as a multipolar challenge to the "imperialist" European Union and unipolarity Western can only be properly understood as part of a plan Explicitly anti-democratic ideological and political. (Another thing is that the appearance of the competition between the US and Russia as great powers is complicated here by the shared political project represented by Donald Trump in the first country and Putin in the second).

### **A common language**

The language of multipolarity and anti-imperialism also finds resonance in China's hyper-nationalist totalitarianism. A joint statement by Putin and Xi Jinping in February 2022, shortly before Russia invaded Ukraine, expressed their shared rejection of universally accepted standards of democracy and human rights, in favor of definitions of these terms embraced by cultural relativism: "A nation can choose the forms and methods of implementing democracy that best suit its (...) Unique traditions and cultural characteristics (...). It is only up to the people of the country to decide whether their state should be democratic." On the basis of this idea, "the efforts made by the Russian side to establish a fair multipolar system of international relations" were praised(2).

For Xi, the "universal values of freedom, democracy and human rights" were fulcrums of "the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the drastic changes in Eastern Europe, the color revolutions (3) and the Arab Spring, all caused by the intervention of the US and the West"(4). Any popular movement demanding human rights and democracy is treated as an imperialist color revolution, inherently illegitimate.

The demand for a democracy embraced by the movement against repression in the name of zero covid that developed throughout China stands out in light of the cultural relativism promoted by the government of that country. A 2021 *White Paper* on "China's conception of democracy, freedom and human rights" defined human rights as "happiness" resulting from well-being and profits, not as protection against unbridled government power (5). It

blatantly omits the right to question the government, dissent or organize freely. Defining "democracy with Chinese characteristics" as "good governance" and human rights as "happiness" allows Xi to justify the repression of the Muslim minority of the Uighurs (6). He argues that concentration camps to "re-educate" these populations and reshape their practice of Islam to make it "Chinese-oriented" have provided "good governance" and greater "happiness"(7).

Even among the leaders of Hindu supremacism in India there are powerful reverberations of the fascist and authoritarian discourse of a "multipolar world", in which the civilizing powers will rise again to reassert their former imperialist glory and the hegemony of liberal democracy will give way to right-wing nationalism. Mohan Bhagwat, head of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh – a National Association of Volunteers, an Indian far-right paramilitary organization – says with admiration that "in a multipolar world" that challenges the US, "China has risen up. He doesn't care what the world thinks about it. It pursues its objective (...) [recovering] the expansionism of its former emperors"(8). Similarly, "in the multipolar world, Russia also plays its game and tries to progress by repressing the West." Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi also repeatedly attacks human rights defenders as anti-Indian, even as he declares that India is "the mother of democracy"(9). This becomes possible if Indian democracy is seen, not through a *Western* prism, but as part of its "civilizational *ethos*"(10). A note distributed by the government links India's democracy to "Hindu culture and civilization," "Hindu political theory," the "Hindu state," and the (often reactionary) traditional caste councils, which impose caste and gender hierarchies (11). Such ideas also reflect attempts to incorporate Hindu supremacists into a global network of authoritarian and far-right forces (12). Russian fascist ideologue Aleksandr Dugin – like Putin – proclaims that "multipolarity (...) It advocates a return to the civilizational foundations of every non-Western civilization [and the rejection of] liberal democracy and human rights ideology"(13).

The influence is bidirectional. Dugin approves of caste hierarchy as a social model (14). Directly incorporating the Brahmanical values of the Manu Laws (15) into international fascism, he sees the "current order of things", represented by "human rights, anti-hierarchy and political correctness", as "*Kaliyuga*": a calamity that brings with it the mixture of castes – miscegenation caused in turn by the freedom of women, also a calamitous aspect of *Kaliyuga*, the "age of quarrel and hypocrisy" that appears in the Hindu scriptures – and the dismantling of the hierarchy. The Russian intellectual has described Modi's electoral success as a victory of "multipolarity", happy proclamation of "Indian values" and defeat

of the hegemony of the "ideology of liberal democracy and human rights". However, the left continues to use "multipolarity" without revealing the slightest awareness of how fascists and authoritarians express their own goals in the same language.

### **When the left meets the right**

Putin's discourse on "multipolarity" is designed to Resonate with the global left. His comforting familiarity seems prevent the left, which has always done an excellent job exposing the lies that underpinned the claims of "save democracy" from the US imperialist warmongers, apply the same critical lens to anti-colonial rhetoric and Putin's anti-imperialist.

It is indeed strange that the left has embraced the language of polarity, a discourse that belongs to the realist school in international relations. Political realism sees the global order in terms of competition between foreign policy objectives – which are supposed to reflect objective "national interests" – of a handful of poles. And it is fundamentally incompatible with the Marxist vision, which is based on understanding that the "national interest", far from being an objective and neutral fact in terms of values, is subjectively defined by the "political (and therefore moral) character of the leadership strata that shape and take foreign policy decisions"(16). Thus, for example, Vijay Prashad, one of the most prominent enthusiasts and advocates of multipolarity on the global left, observes approvingly that "Russia and China seek sovereignty, not global power." Prashad fails to mention how these powers interpret sovereignty as disregarding accountability to universal standards of democracy, human rights, and equality (17).

A recent essay by the general secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), Dipankar Bhattacharya, presents similar problems: he explains the party's decision to balance solidarity with Ukraine through its preference for multipolarity and its national priority of resisting fascism in India (18). (*Disclosure*: I have been an activist of the Communist Party of India [Marxist-Leninist] for three decades and a member of its politburo, but I left the party early last year, due to differences, which reached a critical point, concerning the party's lukewarm solidarity with Ukraine.) Bhattacharya's formulation is that, "regardless of the internal configuration of competing global powers, a multipolar world is certainly more advantageous for progressive forces and movements around the world in their quest to reverse neoliberal policies, social transformation, and political advancement." In other words, the PCI (m-l) welcomes the rise of non-Western great powers even if they are internally fascist or authoritarian, because it believes they will offer a multipolar challenge to American unipolarity. Such a formulation offers no

resistance to authoritarian projects that describe themselves as champions of imperialist *multipolarity*. In fact, it cloaks them in a layer of legitimacy.

Bhattacharya perceives unconditional support for resistance Ukrainian as difficult to reconcile with the "national priority" of "fight fascism in India". The idea that the duties of International solidarity of the left must be postponed in favour of What is perceived as a national *priority* is a case of internationalist Marxism clouded by the "realistic" concept of national interest, applied this time not only to nation-states, but also to their own National Left Parties. But how can the unconditional solidarity with Ukraine against a fascist invasion with the fight against fascism in India?

Bhattacharya's reasoning is forced, biased and twisted. It takes a puzzling detour toward the need for communist movements to beware of the danger of "prioritizing the international at the expense of the national situation." Bhattacharya incorrectly attributes the Communist Party of India's mistake in 1942 of staying out of the Quit India movement (19) to prioritizing its international commitment to the defeat of fascism in World War II over the domestic one of overthrowing British colonialism, then an ally in the war against the Axis (20). The only plausible purpose of this diversion seems to be to draw an analogy with the current situation of the Indian left vis-à-vis the invasion of Ukraine. Given that the Modi regime's main foreign alliance is with the US-led West, it is suggested that the fight against Modi's fascism would be weakened if Russia, a *multipolar* rival of the US, were defeated by the Ukrainian resistance. This twisted calculation obscures the simple fact that a defeat of Putin's fascist invasion of Ukraine would embolden those fighting for the defeat of Modi's fascism in India. Similarly, a victory for people resisting Xi's majoritarian tyranny would inspire those resisting Modi's majoritarian tyranny in India.

In the words of Martin Luther King, "injustice everywhere It's a threat to justice everywhere." We weaken our own democratic struggles when we choose to see the struggles of others through a distorting camper lens. Ours is not a Zero-sum choice between unipolarity and multipolarity. In each In the situation, our choices are clear: we can support resistance and survival of the oppressed or worrying about survival of the oppressor. When the left assumes the *duty* to support the survival of *multipolar regimes* (Russia, China and, for a certain left, even Iran), fails in its real duty. to support those struggling to survive the dimension genocidal of these regimes. Any benefits the U.S. can draw from their material or military support such struggles is less important that the benefit of people's survival in such conditions. We would do well to remember that

material and military support The American to the USSR in World War II contributed to the defeat of Nazi Germany.

Tyrannical regimes interpret support for those who resist them as foreign or imperialist "interference" in their "sovereignty." If we on the left do the same, we will serve as facilitators and apologists for such tyrannies. Those who are engaged in life-and-death combats need us to respect their autonomy and sovereignty to decide what kind of moral, material, military support they demand, accept or reject. The moral compass of the global and Indian left needs an urgent reset to correct the catastrophic course that has made it speak the same language as tyrants.

**Notes:**

1. Guillaume Lancereau: "Putin's World War" at *The Grand Continent*, 1/10/2022.
2. "Joint Statement of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on the International Relations Entering a New Era and the Global Sustainable Development", 4/2/2022, available at [en.kremlin.ru/supplement/5770](https://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/5770)
3. Large mobilizations and insurrections against authoritarian regimes, especially in former Soviet republics, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, considered by some as the product of imperialist conspiracies.
4. "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era", 29/10/2018, available in [www.china.org.cn/english/china\\_key\\_words/2018-10/29/content\\_68857761.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/english/china_key_words/2018-10/29/content_68857761.htm).
5. "Full Text: Pursuing Common Values of Humanity – China's Approach to Democracy, Freedom and Human Rights", 7/12/2021, available at [english.www.gov.cn/archive/whi...](http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whi...)
6. "Chinese President Xi Jinping Defends Xinjiang Detention Network, Claiming 'Happiness' is on the Rise" on *ABC News*, 27/6/2020.
7. "Islam in China Must be Chinese in Orientation: President Xi Jinping" in *The Indian Express*, 17/7/2022.
8. Deeptiman Tiwary: "China Has Now Risen, Doesn't Care What World Thinks of It: RSS Chief" in *The Indian Express*, 3/12/2020.
9. "India Must Save itself from 'Foreign Destructive Ideology': PM Modi in Rajya Sabha" in *The Indian Express*, 8/2/2021.
10. "Narendra Modi Slams 'Selective' Reading of Rights Issues" in *The Hindu*, 12/10/2021.
11. K. Krishnan: "On Constitution Day, the Modi Government Is Exacting the rss's Revenge on Ambedkar" in *The Wire*, 26/11/2022.

12. A. Dugin: "Fascism—Borderless and Red," 1997, available in [www.stephenhicks.org/wp-content...](http://www.stephenhicks.org/wp-content...)
13. A. Dugin: "The Indian Moment of Multipolarity" in *Seminar* No 728, 4/2020, available in [www.india-seminar.com/2020/728...](http://www.india-seminar.com/2020/728...)
14. A. Dugin: *The fourth political theory*, Fides, Tarragona, 2013.
15. Sanskrit text of ancient Indian society [N. E.].
16. Achin Vanaik: "National Interest: A Flawed Notion" in *Economic and Political Weekly* vol. 41 No 49, 9/12/2006.
17. "Full Text of Putin's Speech at Annexation Ceremony", 1/12/2022, available at [www.miragenews.com/full-text-o...](http://www.miragenews.com/full-text-o...)
18. D. Bhattacharya: "On the Current Juncture in India and the International Context" in *Liberation*, 27/9/2022.
19. Independence movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi [N. of E.].
20. The position of the PCI of treating the first two years of World War II as a war between imperialists was in line with the Comintern directive of the time: when the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed between the USSR and Nazi Germany in 1939, the Comintern abruptly changed its 1935 directive urging communists to form broad anti-fascist popular fronts and characterized the war that Germany initiated as a mere war between rival imperialist powers. The change in the position of the PCI coincided with the change in the position of the Comintern: the war was characterized as a "people's war against fascism" only when Nazi Germany broke the pact and invaded the USSR. The problem with the ICP was not the difficulty of combining internationalism with its national priorities. Rather, it was the result of allowing himself to be guided not by consistent resistance to fascism and imperialism, but by Stalin's unprincipled and opportunistic approach to Nazi Germany and the war.

*Note: The original version of this article was published in The India Forum, 20/12/2022, and reproduced in Spanish in El Cuaderno, 2/2023. Translation: Pablo Batalla Cueto.*

Source: <https://nuso.org/articulo/304-multipolaridad-mantra-autoritarismo/>

Rebellion 14.04.2023