

## Internationalism

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In an era of global crises and conflicts, such as those linked to climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic or the war in Ukraine, governments and politicians regardless of their political orientation tend to appeal to *international solidarity*. Often, this means little more than calling on other actors to align themselves with one's own political position across borders. We will devote only passing attention to this understanding of international solidarity in this thematic issue.

In contrast to this discourse, many people and social movements see international solidarity as a way to address social grievances through transnational forms of cooperation. At the core of both theoretical reflections and practice is the search for non-nationalist alternatives to social inequality. Ideas and practices of international solidarity are, on the one hand, shaped by changing global and local structures of rule (such as the capitalist world system, colonialism or gender relations). On the other hand, they refer to an intellectual tradition of theorising and analysing these frameworks with the objective of furthering social justice (for example, in Marxist and feminist debates). In addition, there is the assumption or expectation of a convergence of struggles in different regions (e.g. in the context of liberation movements). In historical comparison, the theoretical and practical points of departure for thinking and exercising international solidarity have differed and are highly heterogeneous, i.e. vis-à-vis the role of the state. Accordingly, international solidarity has many faces, not only in terms of daily interactions and practices, but also scope and scale of institutionalisation. And, not least, international solidarity has resulted in small and large successes, but also failures, which are part and parcel of critical reflections for social movements today.

Analytically, at least two basic assumptions for transnational solidarity can be distinguished:

- (1) Specific groups have the same starting point and interests. This classically refers to the proletariat, which is exploited and at the same time striving for socialist transformation.
- (2) A situation is unjust but different for the actors involved in the context of an unequal world order, for example in relation to the consequences of colonial plundering or asymmetrical gender relations. Solidarity is the means to achieve various forms of equality and justice for all people.

The different ideas and practices of the various past internationalist movements, such as the proletarian internationalism of the Socialist and Communist internationals, the International

Brigades in the Spanish Civil War, Tricont's support of national liberation movements in the Global North, civil society tribunals and the anti/alter-globalisation movement still serve as references or role models of international solidarity, albeit to varying degrees. Well-known examples are the internationalist movements and groups that express solidarity with the uprisings and alternative social projects in Chiapas and Rojava. However, past experience of international solidarity can also feed problematic projections and disappointed hopes, institutional attrition and solidarity becoming paternalistic or authoritarian.

More recently, practices of global solidarity and cooperation increasingly appeared, at least at first glance, to function outside of the national framework that is inherent in the word "international". Examples include the Fridays for Future or #MeToo mobilisations. Likewise, forms of protest such as gathering in public places have spread from Tahrir Square to Puerta del Sol and Wall Street. The performance "un violador en tu camino" ("a rapist on your way") by the Chilean group las tesis has been taken up by feminist groups worldwide. Against the backdrop of digital communication and globally interlinked social media, practices of cross-border networking and the "wandering" of forms of protest across continents seem to have taken on new references to and meanings of solidarity. Nevertheless, it could be said that they face broader problems at least in one respect: the mediation of common or similar interests and concerted agency between regionally different contexts in light of global power relations.

This proposed thematic issue seeks to contribute to the debate on the history and practice of international solidarity and internationalism and their value for today's movements with respect to global challenges and social struggles. We welcome contributions that deal with the following questions:

- Which roles do worldviews and analyses underlying international solidarity play in its elaboration and success? How, for example, do universalism and notions of developmental stages inherent in modernisation theory on the one hand and postcolonial theory of the recognition of difference on the other impact notions and practices of international solidarity?
- Is international solidarity still an up-to-date concept at all? Have other forms of global and transnational solidarity emerged in recent years? How have notions of internationalism, revolution and liberation changed historically? How would an internationalism in the 21st century look? Which alternatives can be identified in the context of the manifold forms of global solidarity in recent years?
- What are the implications of global media being in the hands of a few internet corporations located in the capitalist centre for international solidarity? Which is the role of the "digital divide" in this context?
- How did international solidarity respond to the neoliberal globalisation of international production and value chains? How should it respond to the current tendencies towards renationalisation under the wake of COVID-19, renewed awareness of war and the rise of China as a global counterpart to the USA?
- Which role does the EU play?

- Are Chiapas and Rojava projections of the internationalist left, or are they projects and role models of lived solidarity – or both?
- What relationship exists between internationalist visions of transnational solidarity and practices on the one hand and the day-to-day challenges of exercising international solidarity in a world with borders on the other? How relevant is such a distinction?
- Which kind of relationship exists between the struggles over repressive border regimes and international solidarity?
- Which historical experiences of international solidarity are still relevant today? Do they feature in current debates, and how? Among such traditions, which have (rightly) been lost? What kind of structures is needed for international solidarity to be effective and permanent?
- Does it make sense to distinguish between “South-South” solidarity and “North-South” solidarity? Is an anti-Western internationalism emerging?

*Please submit manuscripts by*  
28 August 2023.

For further questions on planned contributions, editorial policy and the publication process please contact [info@zeitschrift-peripherie.de](mailto:info@zeitschrift-peripherie.de), or visit our website at <https://www.zeitschrift-peripherie.de/>.