



# world revolution

## Neither Israel nor Palestine! Workers have no fatherland!

Since Saturday 7 October, a deluge of fire and steel has been raining down on the people living in Israel and Gaza. On one side, Hamas. On the other, the Israeli army. In the middle, civilians being bombed, shot, executed and taken hostage. Thousands have already died.

All over the world, the bourgeoisie is calling on us to choose sides. For the Palestinian resistance to Israeli oppression. Or for the Israeli response to Palestinian terrorism. Each denounces the barbarity of the other to justify war. The Israeli state has been oppressing the Palestinian people for decades, with blockades, harassment, checkpoints and humiliation, so revenge would be legitimate. Palestinian organisations have been killing innocent people with knife attacks and bombings. Each side calls for the blood of the other to be spilled.

This deadly logic is the logic of imperialist war! It is our exploiters and their states who are always waging a merciless war in defence of their own interests. And it is we, the working class, the exploited, who always pay the price, with our lives.

**For us, proletarians, there is no side to choose, we have no homeland, no nation to defend! On either side of the border, we are class brothers and sisters! Neither Israel, nor Palestine!**

### There is no end to war in the Middle East

The twentieth century was a century of wars, the most atrocious wars in human history, and none of them served the interests of the workers. The latter were always called upon to go and be killed in their millions for the interests of their exploiters, in the name of the defence of “the fatherland”, “civilisation”, “democracy”, even “the socialist fatherland” (as some presented the USSR of Stalin and the gulag).

Today, there is a new war in the Middle East. On both sides, the ruling cliques are calling on the exploited to “defend the homeland”, whether Jewish or Palestinian. The Jewish workers who in Israel are exploited by Jewish capitalists, the Palestinian workers who are exploited by Jewish capitalists or by Arab capitalists (and often much more ferociously than by Jewish capitalists since, in Palestinian companies, labour law is still that of the former Ottoman Empire).

Jewish workers have already paid a heavy price for the war madness of the bourgeoisie in the five wars they have suffered since 1948. As soon as they emerged from the concentration camps and ghettos of a Europe ravaged by world war, the grandparents of those who today wear the uniform of the Tsahal were drawn into the war between Israel and the Arab countries. Then their parents paid the price in blood in the wars of ‘67, ‘73 and



Imperialist war causes death and destruction in Gaza and Israel

‘82. These soldiers are not hideous brutes whose only thought is to kill Palestinian children. They are young conscripts, mostly workers, dying in fear and disgust, who are forced to act as police and whose heads are filled with propaganda about the “barbarity” of the Arabs.

Palestinian workers, too, have already paid a terrible price in blood. Driven from their homes in 1948 by the war waged by their leaders, they have spent most of their lives in concentration camps, conscripted as teenagers into Fatah, the PFLP or Hamas militias.

The biggest massacres of Palestinians were not carried out by the armies of Israel, but by those of the countries where they were parked, such as Jordan and Lebanon: in September 1970 (“Black September”) “Little King” Hussein exterminated them en masse, to the point where some of them took refuge in Israel to escape death. In September 1982, Arab militias (admittedly Christian and allied to Israel) massacred them in the Sabra and Shatila camps in Beirut.

### Nationalism and religion, poisons for the exploited

Today, in the name of the “Palestinian homeland”, Arab workers are once again being mobilised against the Israelis, the majority of whom are Israeli workers, just as the latter are being asked to be killed in defence of the “promised land”.

Nationalist propaganda flows disgustingly from both sides, mind-numbing propaganda designed to turn human beings into ferocious beasts. The Israeli and Arab bourgeoisies have been stirring it up for more than half a century. Israeli and Arab workers have constantly been told that they must defend the land of their ancestors. For the former, the systematic militarisation of society has devel-

oped a psychosis of encirclement in order to turn them into “good soldiers”. For the latter, the desire was ingrained to do battle with Israel in order to find a home. And to do this, the leaders of the Arab countries in which they were refugees kept them for decades in concentration camps, in unbearable living conditions.

Nationalism is one of the worst ideologies invented by the bourgeoisie. It is the ideology that allows it to mask the antagonism between exploiters and exploited, to unite them all behind the same flag, for which the exploited will be killed in the service of the exploiters, in the defence of the interests and privileges of the ruling class.

To crown it all, to this war is added the poison of religious propaganda, the kind that creates the most demented fanaticism. Jews are called upon to defend the Wailing Wall of Solomon’s Temple with their blood. Muslims must give their lives for the Mosque of Omar and the holy places of Islam. What is happening today in Israel and Palestine clearly confirms that religion is “the opium of the people”, as the revolutionaries of the 19th century put it. The purpose of religion is to console the exploited and oppressed. Those for whom life on earth is hell are told that they will be happy after their death provided they know how to earn their salvation. And this salvation is exchanged for sacrifice, submission, even giving up their lives in the service of “holy war”.

The fact that, at the beginning of the 21st century, ideologies and superstitions dating back to antiquity or the Middle Ages are still widely used to lead human beings to sacrifice their lives speaks volumes about the state of barbarism into which the Middle East, along with many other parts of the world, is sinking.

### The great powers are responsible for the war

It is the leaders of the great powers who have created the hellish situation in which the exploited people of this region are dying in their thousands today. It was the European bourgeoisie, and particularly the British bourgeoisie with its “Balfour Declaration” of 1917, which, in order to divide and conquer, allowed the creation of a “Jewish home” in Palestine, thus promoting the chauvinist utopias of Zionism. It was these same bourgeoisies who, in the aftermath of the Second World War, which they had just won, arranged for hundreds of thousands of Central European Jews to be transported to Palestine after leaving the camps or wandering far from their region of origin. This meant that they did not have to take them in at home.

It was these same bourgeoisies, first the British and French, then the American bourgeoisie, who

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# The bourgeoisie is unable to stem the tide of climate change

**This article was written before the terrible events in Derna, Libya, after floods stirred up by Storm Daniel swept through ill-maintained dams on the Wadi Derna and caused unimaginable levels of destruction. Over 11,000 are known to have died, thousands more are missing and those left in the ruins face starvation and disease. Nothing could more clearly illustrate the growing impact of climate change and capitalism's total inability to build a "dam" against it, as the article below clearly shows.**

The year 2023 is demonstrating once again the scale of the environmental disaster into which the bourgeoisie is dragging all of humanity. The devastating forest fires in Canada and Hawaii, the floods in Asia, the shortages of drinking water in Uruguay and Africa, the devastating storms in the United States, the irretrievable melting of the glaciers... all these "natural disasters" are directly linked to global warming.

## A disaster on a global scale

Not only is global warming real, it is accelerating at a dizzying and catastrophic rate. July 2023 was the hottest month on record for the planet. The month of August has seen the hottest day on record ever for this period. Forecasters are predicting that 2024 could well exceed these woeful records. The collapse of the system of ocean currents like the Gulf Stream, an essential regulator of the planet's climate, could, if confirmed, drastically alter the Earth's climate and considerably weaken the human species in the space of a few decades; it's a new threat yet to be confirmed, but one that could be added to all those already hanging over humanity!

The bourgeoisie can no longer deny this reality, even though it has deliberately sought to reduce or even conceal the risks for many years in order to protect its profits!<sup>1</sup> But the acceleration and accentuation of the consequences of climate change means they can no longer hide the truth: the global climate is heading for a catastrophic situation that will make more and more areas of the planet uninhabitable. Apart from totally irrational "climate sceptics" like Trump and the European far right, the most "responsible" heads of state are all promising, hand on heart, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to develop a more environmentally-friendly economy. Of

<sup>1</sup> The bourgeoisie was fully aware of global warming by the 1970s. In 1972, the "Report of the Club of Rome" warned of the seriousness of the situation. For decades, the bourgeoisie generally sought to conceal this reality or to drown it under a torrent of ideological mystifications, of which the report itself, advocating "limited growth" (perfectly contrary to the reality of the capitalist economy) is a clear illustration.

course, these commitments are never met, or fall far short of what's at stake, or are utterly laughable (banning plastic straws, sales receipts, etc.). Consequently, the bourgeoisie is having to change its tune and to start preparing us all to face the unthinkable by introducing measures of "adaptation". The latest comments, but certainly not the last, are from France's new health minister, Aurélien Rousseaux, who, faced with a new heatwave that hit half the country in August, had nothing better to say than: "We have to get used to living with these extremely high temperatures". Needless to say, as with the case of the past and future pandemics, the bourgeoisie is showing unspeakable incompetence and is not seriously preparing for the catastrophe. Behind these so-called "adaptations", the ruling class is above all preparing people for austerity and shortages of supplies in the name of adjusting to "environmental requirements".

## The bourgeoisie has no solution to the environmental crisis

Under the pretext of "adapting" to increasingly unsustainable climatic conditions, the bourgeoisie is starting to reshape its economy... but certainly not to preserve the planet! Several countries are planning to reactivate coal-fired power stations or (like France) are unscrupulously tampering with quotas to avoid shutting them down! The French government is very close to authorising new oil drilling in the Gironde, symbolically located at the place where the forests were ravaged last year! States are fighting to avoid putting excessive constraints on their economies, and are using the environment as an imperialist weapon to vilify each other's inaction, to protect their own markets and try to weaken their competitors with, for example, high-profile lawsuits against competing car manufacturers for infringing environmental rules... As a result, the European law on the protection of nature, adopted on 12 July, contains a provision introducing an economic safeguard clause: if the economy suffers as a result of misconceived measures set out in the law, these should be cancelled! For capital, there should be no constraints on the expansion and intensification of its economy. Environmental destruction has to take second place.

At the same time, preventive measures are not being taken, with the obvious risk of accelerating the scale of disasters. The fires in Hawaii, for example, were uncontrollable because the electric power lines were still not buried underground and the risk of overhead lines spreading the fires led the authorities to cut off the electricity, which immediately disconnected the pumps supplying the firefighters' hoses with water. In Asia, the lack

of medicines to combat malaria and dysentery played a large part in worsening the human toll of the floods. In Uruguay, with a drop in the capacity to supply enough drinking water to people's taps, it was replaced with salt water! In Mayotte, a French overseas territory, no provision was made to deal with a drought depriving the population of drinking water.

## Protecting the environment is not profitable...

This is not a matter of "choice" or "lack of political will", but the very logic of capitalist accumulation, which forbids any questioning of the ultra-polluting dynamics of bourgeois society. For it is capitalism that is responsible for these problems; it is capitalism that forces every capitalist to produce more and more, and at lower cost, even if this production leads to more pollution and health hazards. Capitalism needs to sell. And that's all there is to it! An anarchic and short-term approach. In fact, it's suicidal. Selling is not about satisfying human needs, it's about profiting from market demands.

It is therefore pointless and self-deceiving to imagine that this system is capable of suddenly inventing a long-term vision and a reasoned organisation; it is not capable of this and never will be. The fierce competition that distinguishes it may have been a powerful engine of progress for the productive forces from its inception, but when it reached the limits of solvent demand, in other words of the markets, this fierce competition transformed itself into a machine of war: economic war, military war, for world domination at any cost, including the very cost of destroying the environment.

Today, the research and development of the productive apparatus are much more about servicing the military sector than protecting the environment and meeting human needs. Global military spending now exceeds 2,000 billion dollars and has never been so high since the end of the Cold War. This spending is a complete waste, its sole aim that of destroying and killing or, at best, leaves machinery rusting away in some hangar. They deploy thousands of brains in order to destroy and spread chaos and death. The acceleration of imperialist tensions since the end of the Cold War shows very clearly that this trend is still far from having reached its peak.

## Only communism can offer humanity a future

Saving the planet will not be achieved through "frugality" or "degrowth", which amounts to nothing more than an admission of impotence, or even

a fantasy of a return to a pre-capitalist society. No, saving the planet will require the conscious abolition of the capitalist economy and its now obsolete relations of production, and the construction of a society capable of producing for human needs in a way that is both rational and respectful of the whole environment. Only the proletariat can bring an end to capitalism, because it is the only social force with the bulk of the world's production apparatus in its hands; a force that, at the same time, suffers from the impact of the crisis and exploitation and therefore has no interest in the perpetuation of this system.

Time is clearly no longer on our side and capitalism could, in due course, considerably threaten the existence of civilisation, if not humanity as a whole. But human and material resources do exist to reorganise production on a global scale in a way that respects the environment and human life and this while the untapped possibilities of science and technology are still immense.

Only the proletariat, once it has seized power on a world scale, will be able to free the productive forces from the capitalist constraints that shackle them. Only the proletariat is capable of conceiving, deciding and implementing, on an international scale, a policy that will free this world from the laws of profit and rebuild a society on the ruins that capitalism is bequeathing to humanity. By putting an end to the capitalist competition that contaminates the world, it will free the productive forces from the domination of the military sphere, which is directing all human ingenuity towards the work of destruction. It would also free them from the permanent waste of capitalist production: useless and polluting overproduction, programmed obsolescence, unproductive expenditure linked to mass unemployment, industrial espionage, etc. Finally, it will be able to raise human consciousness and the human spirit by developing an education that is no longer geared towards immediate profit, but towards human emancipation and a harmonious relationship with nature. As Engels wrote in "The Role of Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man": We "by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside nature – but that we, with flesh, blood and brain, belong to nature, and exist in its midst, and that all our mastery of it consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other creatures of being able to learn its laws and apply them correctly". **Guy, 28 August 2023**

## Internationalist positions against the war

Tensions are reaching boiling point everywhere because of the horribly violent clashes between the Hamas regime in Gaza and the state of Israel. An atmosphere of hysteria is being stirred up in both camps. As revenge for the terror attack by Hamas, on one level, armed Jewish settlers on the West Bank have already killed five Palestinians in this first week of the war, while the Israeli military masses to obliterate Gaza. In such an oppressive atmosphere it is very difficult to follow the internationalist path that refuses to choose one or the other side. It requires courage to publicly defend a consistent proletarian perspective.

But fortunately there are some internationalist voices making themselves heard. Even if we do not share all the positions developed in their articles, they are a light in the darkness of the present barbarism unleashed by the international bourgeoisie.

Among these voices there are two other organisations of the communist left. The first one is the Internationalist Communist Tendency with the statement "The Latest Butchery in the Middle East is Part of the March to Generalised War".

The second one is *Il Partito Comunista* with the article "War in Gaza, Against the imperialist warfare, for the revolutionary class warfare".

But there are also at least two anarchist groups that have published an internationalist position against the atrocities committed by capitalism in the Middle East. The first one is the Anarchist Communist Group that has published the article "Neither Israel nor Hamas!" The other article is by the Anarcom Network called "Neither one State nor two States! No 'State' will end the slaughter of our Class!"

So, despite the deafening campaign by the governments of the USA, the UK and others in support of Israel, and of the bourgeois left to support the "Palestinian cause", several organisations in Europe and North America have remained loyal to the internationalist principles of the world proletariat.

We will come back to some of the positions adopted by the different groups in due course. 14.10.23

To find the articles in question, put the titles into a search engine.

## Tribute to our comrade Antonio

Our comrade Antonio left us this spring, on the eve of the 25th International Congress of the ICC. We have a tribute to him on our website, which we encourage our readers to read.

He was one of the old militant founders of Révolution Internationale (RI - section in France of the ICC) still present in the organisation. In paying tribute to him for the first time, our Congress highlighted "his courage and modesty", both in his personal and militant life. The stimulating political atmosphere in France in 1968 encouraged his political thinking, which took on a truly internationalist perspective. He came close to the positions of Révolution Internationale, of which he became a member. He remained an active militant of the ICC until the end of his life.

In the most varied circumstances of the political struggle, the comrade always showed great honesty and unfailing loyalty to the organisation and the cause. Beyond that, the comrades who fought alongside him were able to appreciate his great sympathy, his vast encyclopaedic knowledge but also and above all his humour, never caustic but often teasing, subtle and friendly towards his comrades but also... towards himself and his own weaknesses.

Antonio was also a loving father and companion,

committed in the face of adversity, notably through his devotion to ensuring that his second child, who has suffered from a severe physical and intellectual handicap since birth, was not isolated from everything and everyone. To this end, he learnt sign language and taught it to his son, for whom it has proved to be a real means of communication. Our comrade's commitment to his family was even greater when his partner became seriously ill. For years, they fought side by side against a cancer which she finally succumbed to, exhausted by the battle.

The tension between Antonio's personal and militant responsibilities was stretched to the limit on many occasions. As he said himself, he was several times on the point of abandoning the political struggle but, in the end, he kept his loyalty to himself, his family and the organisation, directing his life and the care of his family on the basis of what was his passion and conviction: communist militancy.

The life of this comrade, who managed to maintain his militancy for more than half a century (from 1968 to 2023) against all kinds of pressures, is an example of what we must pass on to the new generation of militants. **ICC**

# Coups d'état in the Sahel: a further step in the destabilisation of the region

Since 2020, there has been one coup d'état after another in West and Central Africa, from Guinea to Gabon, via Mali, Burkina-Faso and Niger. Not to mention the "constitutional coups" that have also taken place in the Ivory Coast and Chad.

## An increasingly unstable region

In Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, the corrupt and bloodthirsty regimes supported by France have been overthrown by (equally corrupt and bloodthirsty) military factions, to the cheers of crowds fed up with being starved to death by unscrupulous predators and their Western accomplices. But the demonstrators are deluding themselves: neither the coup plotters nor the candidates lining up to replace France in its traditional zone of influence (the Wagner group, China, etc.) are concerned about the fate of the population. On the contrary, these putsches are the expression of an accelerated destabilisation of the region and promise only ever greater misery.

The Sahel region, in which Niger occupies a central place, is characterised by growing instability, caused in particular by the acute economic distress of the populations, the deterioration of the security situation, the rapid increase in the population, the massive displacement of migrants (4.1 million displaced persons in 2022 alone) and the terrible degradation of the environment.

The Sahel region as a whole is experiencing a devastating upsurge in attacks by Islamic armed groups, which take advantage of porous and extensive borders. Over the last five years, in the central Sahel, the number of security incidents has increased sixfold and the number of deaths by almost eightfold. These terrorist groups regularly attack state institutions, target communities and block urban centres by cutting off roads and supply lines. Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger are among the ten countries most affected by terrorism.

According to the State Fragility Index, the Sahel countries are among the 25 most fragile states in the world. Most of these governments are unable to control their territory. In Burkina Faso, for example, armed Islamist groups control up to 40% of the territory. Despite the Wagner group's "support" for the Malian government, Islamic State (IS) has doubled its territory in that country in the space of a year.

## An expression of growing chaos

After Mali and Burkina Faso, French imperialism was forced to evacuate Niger with arms and baggage, to the booing of demonstrators. Niger was considered a "safe country", relied on by various imperialist powers, in particular France and the United States, to protect their interests: "Niger, which neighbours Libya, has since become an important geopolitical location for its mineral wealth, including uranium and oil, and for the passage of migrants to Europe [...]. The Niger army seemed to be more attractive and more combative to the Americans, who installed two drone air bases in Niamey and Agadez, which has provided information to forces acting under 'Operation Barkhane' (a French-led anti-insurgency operation), but not to the Sahelian states themselves".

But, contrary to what the bourgeois press may claim, this coup d'état (like those which recently preceded it in Mali and Burkina Faso) is not a simple reversal of alliances such as we saw during the Cold War, with the coup plotters now preferring to deal with Russia or China rather than Western countries. In reality, it is the expression of a sharp acceleration in the decomposition of bourgeois society, which is tending to sweep the weakest links in capitalism into absolute chaos.

Far from an imperialist reorientation in favour of a new "partner", we are instead seeing totally irresponsible bourgeois factions taking advantage of the destabilisation of governments and the fragility of states to "try their luck". They adopt any rhetoric that will enable them to gain power and

are ready to ally themselves with whoever is in a position to support them at the time. In Niger, the putsch was carried out openly against the former colonial power, with the support of Mali, Burkina-Faso and the relative support of the Wagner group, Russia's weapon for stirring up chaos. But no one can rule out the possibility that the junta in power will back down and end up negotiating with France.

## Every man for himself increases the chaos

Today, the major imperialist powers are concerned not with the fate of the people or the maintenance of "democratically elected" governments (what a huge joke!) but with the consequences of coups d'état for the defence of their own sordid interests. In Gabon, for example, the coup plotters pushed Ali Bongo, a great defender of French interests, out of office, without calling into question the enormous French influence in the country. This coup was therefore described by the Western press as an "adjustment" and did not arouse any "strong emotion" from the Quai d'Orsay (the French foreign affairs ministry). In Niger, on the other hand, the coup plotters were threatened with economic sanctions and military intervention.

But the reactions of the big imperialist sharks also took place in a context where every man for himself reigns. Paris immediately tried to organise a military intervention, but once again demonstrated its powerlessness. Macron tried to flex his muscles by claiming to be "intractable" and "inflexible" on the "return to legality", even though everything indicates that he does not have the means to enforce his claims: "France is pushing ECOWAS to intervene, along with its ally in this affair, Nigeria. But it is also trying to get its European partners on board. The problem is that the Germans are not convinced of the benefits of intervention, and neither are the Italians, who have not forgotten France's tragic mistakes in Libya. As for the United States, it wants to hold on to its positions in Niger".<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, "French diplomats and military officers bitterly point to the 'murky game in Niger' being played by Washington, which did not even use the term 'coup d'état' [...] an American general replied: 'From Niger we are fighting against the influence and pressure of Russia, via Wagner, and China. And against international terrorism in the Sahel'".<sup>3</sup>

The chaos in Niger is so extreme, and the inability of the West to act in concert so glaring, that it is forcing even the imperialist powers to review their positions on the ground so as not to lose too many feathers. This is true of Washington, which sees Niger as a central pawn in its fight against the influence of China and Russia in the region, but is not sure it can count on the putschists.

To put it plainly: "In Niger, the West is not in a position to support an invasion, even one led by regional states that are themselves in need of domestic legitimacy. These states would in any case be seen to be acting under the leadership of the West".<sup>4</sup> Above all, "the West" no doubt remembers its disastrous military intervention in Libya in 2011, one of the consequences of which was the spread of "jihadist terrorism" throughout the Sahel and the collapse of a state in a situation that is still inextricable.

All the imperialists present in the Sahel are therefore repositioning themselves to better defend their interests, even if it means accelerating chaos and accentuating imperialist turbulence.

**Amina, 25 September 2023**

<sup>2</sup> *Le Canard enchaîné* (16 August 2023).

<sup>3</sup> *Le Canard enchaîné* (23 August 2023).

<sup>4</sup> "Niger: 'Il est temps de rompre avec la pratique du paternalisme envers les Africains...' », *Le Monde* (20 August 2023).

## War in the Middle East

# The SWP justifies Hamas slaughter

Faced with the horrors of imperialist war, a genuine "socialist" and "workers'" organisation has one duty: to denounce both camps in every conflict, to stand with the exploited class against their exploiters and recruiting sergeants. The "Socialist Workers Party" in the UK has denounced the bloody assault on Gaza by Israel, but let's look at their position on the murderous rampage of Hamas in the south of Israel:

"Palestinians have struck a huge blow against Israeli settler colonialism.

*In the face of escalating violence from the Israeli state, Palestinian fighters launched an unprecedented attack from the Gaza Strip on Saturday 7 October.*

*Read about why the Palestinian people have every right to respond in any way they choose to the violence that the Israeli state metes out to them every day!*<sup>1</sup>

"To respond in any way they choose"? In other words, the SWP supports the cold-blooded murder of hundreds of unarmed Israeli men, women and children, the seizure of civilian hostages to be used as human shields or bargaining chips, all backed up by indiscriminate rocket fire at residential centres in Israel. In a whole series of articles that openly celebrate the Hamas incursion, there is no mention in the SWP press about these crimes.

In other words, the SWP shares the logic of imperialist war, which justifies the branding of whole populations as enemies. Israel's retaliatory assault on Gaza, despite claims by its politicians and generals that they are going after Hamas and not civilians, is already indistinguishable from the Russian bombardment of cities in Ukraine, with whole residential areas being reduced to rubble, backed up by a total siege which is cutting off supplies of food, water, electricity and medicines to a population which had already suffered years of blockade. The impending ground invasion by Israeli forces will greatly increase the death toll. The inevitable consequence of all this is the piling up of civilian corpses in their thousands. This is collective punishment of an entire population. But the merciless, indiscriminate slaughter of Israeli Jews (and a number of Muslims and Christians) by Hamas obeys precisely the same sinister logic, even if the methods of killing differ.

## SWP support for imperialism: a long history

This is not the first time the SWP has voiced its support for one camp against the other in the imperialist wars in the Middle East. In the "Yom Kippur War" of 1973, *Socialist Worker* (October 12 1973) wrote that "The Arab states have every right to resume the war against Israel". Their *International Socialism* journal number 63 claimed that "the fight of the Arab armies is a fight against imperialism".

For the anarchists who held a meeting at the recent anarchist bookfair in London under the heading "Fighting Russian imperialism in Ukraine" and urged participants to help send military and other equipment to the Ukrainian army (via its anarchist fighting units...), there is only one imperialist side in Ukraine. Ukraine's pivotal role in the decades-long offensive of US imperialism against its Russia rival counted for nothing - and internationalists at the meeting, both left communist and anarchist, who denounced both imperialisms were shouted down for "Westplaining" and "speechifying".

For the SWP, countries like Egypt, Syria, Iran or Iraq (which they supported in 1991 and 2003 against the US) are or can be "anti-imperialist" when they oppose US imperialism's aims. But like all other lesser powers, these states have their own imperialist needs and interests, which they invariably pursue by obtaining the backing of other, more powerful imperialisms. In 1973, Egypt was backed by Russian imperialism, just as Syria is today. The SWP's support for Egypt in 1973 aligned them with the imperialist interests of the USSR, as did their backing for North Vietnam and the NLF in the Vietnam war<sup>2</sup>. These policies

<sup>1</sup> <https://socialistworker.co.uk/news/arm-yourself-with-the-arguments-about-why-it-s-right-to-oppose-israel/>

<sup>2</sup> In an article, "Rejoice as Palestinian resistance humiliates racist Israel" (*Socialist Worker* 2876,

expose the emptiness of the "Neither Moscow nor Washington" slogan of the SWP's predecessors, the International Socialism group. Despite "discovering" that the Stalinist USSR was state capitalist rather than a "degenerated workers' state", as other Trotskyists argued, this never prevented IS and later the SWP from supporting Russian imperialism against the imperialism of the USA.

In 1915, Rosa Luxemburg wrote in *The Junius Pamphlet* that "in the contemporary imperialist milieu there can be no wars of national defence". This applies just as much to so-called "national liberation" or "resistance" movements as to fully formed states. Just as Zionism could only establish and maintain a state in Palestine through the backing of US and other imperialist powers, Palestinian nationalism, whether posing as "marxist", "secular" or "Islamist", has also placed itself at the service of contending imperialist forces: Germany and Italy in the 1930s, the USSR, China, Saudi Arabia, or Iraq in the post-war period. Today Hamas and Hezbollah are mainly agents of Iranian imperialism: one of the aims of the Hamas attack was no doubt to disrupt the impending alliance between Israel and Saudi against their common enemy Iran<sup>3</sup>.

And we should not forget that Hamas is already a state formation - a faction of the Palestinian bourgeoisie - which exploits and oppresses the masses of the population in Gaza. They deal with "their" workers just like any other capitalist regime. In 2006 teachers in Gaza and the West Bank came out on strike in protest against unpaid wages and were met by threats and repression by the Hamas regime (and they have been out again in the West Bank in February/March 2023). And one of the greatest ironies in this whole nightmare is that Hamas to a large extent owes its existence to Israel, who initially encouraged its development as a counter-weight to the PLO<sup>4</sup>.

The SWP's portrayal of Hamas as identical to the "Palestinian people" once again puts them on the side of a faction of the bourgeoisie against the working class. And "rejoicing" at the Hamas murders hides the fact that they have wilfully exposed the entire Palestinian population to a gigantic military reaction by Israel which has already claimed hundreds of lives. We can even say that they have benefited the Netanyahu regime, which was tottering in the face of major divisions in Israeli society but can now present itself as the core of a new "national unity" government.

In 1973, we wrote in the first edition of *World Revolution*, in an article headed "The Arab-Israeli war and the social-barbarians of the 'left'": "It is quite clear that for all the rhetoric of the 'Palestinian people's war', the Palestinian national movement could only 'liberate Palestine' by tail-ending the state armies of Egypt, Syria, Iraq and others, no doubt heavily backed up by Russian imperialism. Any regime set up by these forces would be a ghastly caricature of 'liberation'. Of necessity it would be a puppet state of different, anti-Western imperialisms, exerting a ruthless dictatorship over the defeated Israeli population and exploiting the labour of both Jewish and Palestinian workers". The Hamas attack shows that the "victory to the resistance" that the SWP and sundry other leftists shout about would, in the increasingly irrational wars of capitalism's decomposition, most likely bring mass extermination and a further dive into chaos.

There is no solution to the endless bloodbaths in the Middle East and across the globe outside of the international class struggle and the world wide proletarian revolution. All forms of nationalism, and their "socialist worker" apologists, are deadly enemies of the working class and its revolutionary future. **Amos, 12.10.23**

October 9) the SWP says of the Hamas incursion: "Like the Tet Offensive in Vietnam in 1968, the Palestinians' surprise attack has humbled imperialism".

<sup>3</sup> And thus the SWP, which claims to support workers and oppressed women in their resistance against the regime of the Mullahs in Tehran, are entirely happy supporting the imperialist foreign policy of the Iranian state.

<sup>4</sup> See for example this article by the Anarchist Communist Group, who have taken an internationalist position against the current war. <https://www.anarchistcommunism.org/2023/10/11/neither-israel-nor-hamas/>

<sup>1</sup> "Niger: toute la région plonge dans le chaos", *Courrier International* n° 1710 (10 August 2023).

# After a year of workers' struggles across the world The struggle is ahead of us!

Over the past year, major workers' struggles have erupted in the core countries of global capitalism and around the world. This series of strikes began in the UK in the summer of 2022, and workers in many other countries have since taken up the struggle: France, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, the United States, Korea... Everywhere, the working class is raising its head in the face of the considerable deterioration in living and working conditions, the dizzying rise in prices, systematic insecurity and mass unemployment, caused by the accentuation of economic destabilisation, ecological constraints and the intensification of militarism linked to the barbaric war in Ukraine.

## A wave of struggle unprecedented for three decades

For three decades, the world has not seen such a wave of simultaneous struggle in so many countries, or over such a long period. The collapse of the Eastern bloc in 1989 and the campaigns about the supposed "death of communism" had provoked a deep ebb in the class struggle at the world level. This major event, the implosion of the Stalinist imperialist bloc and of one of the world's two greatest powers, the USSR, was the most spectacular expression of capitalism's entry into a new and even more destructive phase of its decadence, that of its decomposition<sup>1</sup>. The rotting of society on its feet, with its growing violence and chaos at all levels, the nihilistic and desperate atmosphere, the tendency towards social atomisation ... all this in turn had a very negative impact on the class struggle. We have thus witnessed a considerable weakening of combativeness compared to the previous period, beginning in 1968. The resignation that hit the working class in Britain for more than three decades, a proletariat with a long experience of struggle, illustrates the reality of this retreat. Faced with attacks from the bourgeoisie, extremely brutal "reforms", massive de-industrialisation and a considerable fall in living standards, the country's workers have not seen any significant mobilisation since the stinging defeat inflicted on the miners by Thatcher in 1985.

While the working class has occasionally shown signs of combativeness and tried to reappropriate its weapons of struggle (the fight against the Contrat de Premier Emploi (CPE) in France in 2006, the Indignados movement in Spain in 2011, the first mobilisation against pension reform in France in 2019), proving that it had by no means been taken off the stage of history, its mobilisations have largely remained without a follow up, incapable of re-launching a more global movement. Why was this? Because not only did the workers lose their fighting spirit over the years, they also suffered a profound decline in class consciousness in their ranks, which they had fought so hard to acquire in the 1970s and 1980s. Workers had largely forgotten the lessons of their struggles, their confrontations with the unions, the traps set by the "democratic" state, losing their self-confidence, their ability to unite, to fight en masse... They had even largely forgotten their identity as a class antagonistic to the bourgeoisie and carrying its own revolutionary perspective. In this logic, communism seemed well and truly dead with the horrors of Stalinism, and the working class seemed to no longer exist.

## A break in the dynamic of class struggle

And yet, faced with the considerable acceleration of the process of decomposition<sup>2</sup> since the global pandemic of Covid-19, and even more so with the massacres of the war in Ukraine and the chain reactions that this has provoked on the economic, ecological, social and political levels, the working class is raising its head everywhere, taking up the fight and refusing to accept sacrifices in the name of the so-called "common good". Is this a coincidence? A one-off epidermal reaction to the attacks of the bourgeoisie? No! the slogan "Enough is enough!" in this context of widespread destabilisation of the capitalist system clearly illustrates that a real change of mindset is taking place within

the class. All these expressions of combativeness are part of a new situation that is opening up for the class struggle, a new phase that breaks with the passivity, disorientation and despair of the last three decades.

The simultaneous eruption of struggles over the past year did not come out of nowhere. They are the product of a whole process of reflection in the class through a series of previous trial-and-error attempts. Already, during the first mobilisation in France against pension "reform" at the end of 2019, the ICC had identified the expression of a strong need for solidarity between generations and different sectors. This movement had also been accompanied by other workers' struggles around the world, in the United States as well as in Finland, but had died out in the face of the explosion of the Covid pandemic in March 2020. Similarly, in October 2021, strikes broke out in the United States in various sectors, but the momentum of the struggle was interrupted, this time by the outbreak of war in Ukraine, which initially paralysed workers, particularly in Europe.

This long process of trial and error and maturation led from the summer of 2022 onwards to a determined reaction by workers on their own class terrain in the face of the attacks arising from the destabilisation of capitalism. The British workers have opened a new period in the international workers' struggle, in what has been called the "summer of anger". The slogan "enough is enough" was elevated to the symbol of the entire proletarian struggle in the United Kingdom. This slogan did not express specific demands to be met, but a profound revolt against the conditions of exploitation. It showed that the workers were no longer prepared to swallow pathetic compromises, but were ready to continue the struggle with determination. The British workers' movement is particularly symbolic in that it is the first time since 1985 that this sector of the working class has taken centre stage. And as inflation and crisis intensified around the world, greatly exacerbated by the Ukrainian conflict and the intensification of the war economy, health workers in Spain and the United States also went on the offensive, followed by a wave of strikes in the Netherlands, a "megastreik" of transport workers in Germany, more than 100 strikes against wage arrears and redundancies in China, a strike and demonstrations after a terrible train crash in Greece, teachers demanding higher wages and better working conditions in Portugal, 100,000 civil servants demanding higher wages in Canada, and above all, a massive movement of the proletariat in France against pension reform.

The highly significant nature of these mobilisations against capitalist austerity also lies in the fact that, in the long term, they also include opposition to war. Indeed, if the direct mobilisation of workers against the war was illusory, the ICC had already pointed out in February 2022 that the workers' reaction would manifest itself in resistance to attacks on their purchasing power, which would result from the intensification and interconnection of crises and disasters, and that it would also run counter to campaigns calling for the acceptance of sacrifices to support the "heroic resistance of the Ukrainian people". This is also what the struggles of the past year bear the seeds of, even if workers are not yet fully aware of it: the refusal to sacrifice more and more for the interests of the ruling class, the refusal to make sacrifices for the national economy and for the war effort, the refusal to accept the logic of this system which is leading humanity towards an increasingly catastrophic situation.

## We need to fight united and in solidarity!

In these struggles, the idea that "we're all in the same boat" began to emerge in the minds of workers. On the picket lines in the UK, strikers told us that they felt they were fighting for something bigger than the corporatist demands of the unions. The banner "For all of us" under which the strike took place in Germany on 27 March is particularly significant of the general feeling developing in the class: "we are all fighting for each other". But it was in France that the need to fight as one was most clearly expressed. The unions did try to divide and rot the movement in the trap of

the "strike by proxy" behind supposedly "strategic" sectors (like energy or rubbish collection) to "bring France to a standstill". But the workers did not fall into the trap en masse, and remained determined to fight together.

During the thirteen days of mobilisation in France, the ICC distributed over 150,000 leaflets: interest in what was happening in the UK and elsewhere never waned. For some demonstrators, the link with the situation in the UK seemed obvious: "it's the same everywhere, in every country". It was no coincidence that the unions at the "Mobilier national" had to take charge of strike action during the (cancelled) visit of Charles III to Paris in the name of "solidarity with British workers". In spite of the inflexibility of the government in France, in spite of the failures to make the bourgeoisie back down or to really obtain better wages in Great Britain or elsewhere, the greatest victory of the workers is the struggle itself and the awareness, undoubtedly still in its infancy and very confused, that we form a single force, that we are all exploited people who, atomised, each in their own corner, can do nothing against capital but who, united in the struggle, can become the greatest social force in history.

Admittedly, workers have still not regained confidence in their own strength, in their ability to take the struggle into their own hands. The unions everywhere kept control of the movements, speaking a more combative language to better sterilise the need for unity, while maintaining a rigid separation between the different sectors. In Great Britain, workers remained isolated behind the picket lines of their companies, although the unions were forced to organise a few parodies of supposedly "unitary" demonstrations. Similarly, in France, when workers came together in gigantic demonstrations, it was always under the absolute control of the unions, who kept workers huddled behind the banners of their companies and sectors. Overall, corporatist confinement remained a constant in most struggles.

During the strikes, the bourgeoisie, particularly its left-wing factions, continued to pour out their ideological campaigns around ecology, anti-racism, the defence of democracy and so on, designed to keep anger and indignation on the illusory terrain of bourgeois "rights" and to divide the exploited between white people and people of colour, men and women, young and old... In France, in the midst of the movement against pension reform, we saw the development of both environmentalist campaigns around the development of "megapools" and democratic campaigns against police repression. Although the majority of workers' struggles have remained on a class terrain, i.e. the defence of workers' material conditions in the face of inflation, redundancies, government austerity measures, etc., the danger posed by these ideologies to the working class remains considerable.

## ICC online recent additions

\* Confrontation between USA and China  
**The dynamic of decaying capitalism leads to more and more wars**

\* Refugees  
**Europe outsources its dirty work to Frontex and 'third party' countries**

\* Polemic  
**Riots in France: "Le Prolétaire" has not understood what class struggle is all about**

\* Why does the ICC defend the validity of the concept of decomposition of capitalism?

\* Defence of the communist left  
**A "conference of left communism" in Brussels? A decoy for those who want to take part in the revolutionary struggle!**

\* ICC/ICT correspondence on Gaizka  
**Gaizka: should an adventurer be publicly exposed?**

\* Discussion Bulletin no.2 of groups of the communist left

## Preparing for tomorrow's struggles

Struggles have diminished in several countries at the moment, but this does not mean that workers are discouraged or defeated. The wave of strikes in the UK continued for a whole year, while the demonstrations in France lasted for five months, despite the fact that the vast majority of workers were aware from the start that the bourgeoisie would not give in to their demands immediately. Week after week in the Netherlands, month after month in France and for a whole year in the UK, workers refused to throw in the towel. These workers' mobilisations have clearly shown that workers are determined not to accept any further deterioration in their living conditions. Despite all the lies of the ruling class, the crisis is not going to stop: the cost of housing, heating and food is not going to stop rising, redundancies and insecure contracts are going to continue to abound, governments will continue their attacks...

Unquestionably, this new dynamic of struggle is only at its very beginning and, for the working class, "All its historical difficulties persist, its capacity to organise its own struggles and even more so to become aware of its revolutionary project are still very far away, but the growing combativity in the face of the brutal blows dealt by the bourgeoisie to living and working conditions is the fertile ground on which the proletariat can rediscover its class identity, become aware again of what it is, of its strength when it struggles, when it shows solidarity and develops its unity. It's a process, a struggle that is resuming after years of passivity, a potential that the current strikes suggest."<sup>3</sup> No one knows where or when significant new struggles will arise. But it is certain that the working class will have to continue to fight everywhere!

Millions of us fighting, feeling the collective strength of our class as we stand shoulder to shoulder in the streets - that's essential, but it's by no means enough. The French government backed down in 2006, during the struggle against the CPE, not because there were more students and young people on precarious contracts in the streets, but because they had taken control of the movement from the unions, through sovereign, massive general assemblies, open to all. These assemblies were not places where workers were confined to their own sector or company, but places from which massive delegations set off for the nearest companies in order to actively seek solidarity. Today, the inability of the working class to take the struggle actively in hand by seeking to extend it to all sectors is the reason why the bourgeoisie has not retreated. However, reclaiming its identity has enabled the working class to begin to reclaim its past. In the marches in France, references to May '68 and to the 2006 struggle against the CPE have multiplied. What happened in '68? How did we get the government to back down in 2006? In a minority of the class, a process of reflection is underway, which is an essential means of learning the lessons of the past year's movements and preparing for future struggles that will have to go even further than those of 1968 in France or those of 1980 in Poland.

Just as the recent struggles are the product of a process of the subterranean maturation that has been developing for some time, so the efforts of a minority to learn the lessons of the recent struggles will bear fruit in the wider struggles that lie ahead. Workers will recognise that the separation of struggles imposed by the unions can only be overcome if they rediscover autonomous forms of organisation such as general assemblies and elected strike committees, and if they take the initiative to extend the struggle beyond all corporatist divisions. **A & D, 13 August 2023**

<sup>1</sup> "Theses on decomposition"; (May 1990)", *International Review* n°107 (2001).

<sup>2</sup> See "Update of the Theses on Decomposition (2023)", *International Review* n°170 (2023).

<sup>3</sup> Report on class struggle for the 25th ICC congress, *International Review* n°170 (2023)

# Strikes and demonstrations in the United States, Spain, Greece, France... How can we develop and unite our struggles?

*“We have to say that enough is enough! Not just us, but the entire working class of this country has to say, at some point, that enough is enough”* (Littlejohn, maintenance supervisor in the skilled trades at Ford’s Buffalo stamping plant in the United States).

This American worker sums up in one sentence what is ripening in the consciousness of the entire working class, in every country. A year ago, the “Summer of Rage” broke out in the United Kingdom. By chanting “Enough is enough”, British workers sounded the call to take up the fight again after more than thirty years of stagnation and resignation.

This call was heard beyond borders. From Greece to Mexico, strikes and demonstrations against the same intolerable deterioration in our living and working conditions continued throughout the end of 2022 and the beginning of 2023.

In mid-winter in France, a further step was taken: proletarians took up the idea that “enough is enough”. But instead of multiplying local and corporatist struggles, isolated from each other, they were able to gather in their millions in the streets. To the necessary fighting spirit they added the force of massive numbers. And now it is in the United States that workers are trying to carry the torch of struggle a little further.

## In the United States, a new step forward for class struggle

A veritable media blackout surrounds the social movement that is currently setting the world’s leading economic power ablaze. And with good reason: in a country ravaged for decades by poverty, violence, drugs, racism, fear and individualism, these struggles show that a completely different path is possible.

At the heart of all these strikes shines a genuine surge of workers’ solidarity: *“We’ve all had enough: the temps have had enough, long-serving employees like me have had enough... because these temps are our children, our neighbours, our friends”* (the same New York employee). This is how the workers stick together, between generations: the “old” are not on strike just for themselves, but above all for the “young” who are suffering even worse working conditions and even lower wages.

A sense of solidarity is gradually growing in the working class as we realise that we are *“all in this together”*: *“All these groups are not just separate movements, but a collective rallying cry: we are a city of workers - blue-collar and white-collar, union and non-union, immigrant and native-born”* (Los Angeles Times).

The current strikes in the United States are bringing together far more than just the sectors involved. *“The Stellantis complex in Toledo, Ohio, was abuzz with cheers and horns at the start of the strike”* (The Wall Street Journal). *“Horns support strikers outside the carmaker’s plant in Wayne, Michigan”* (The Guardian).

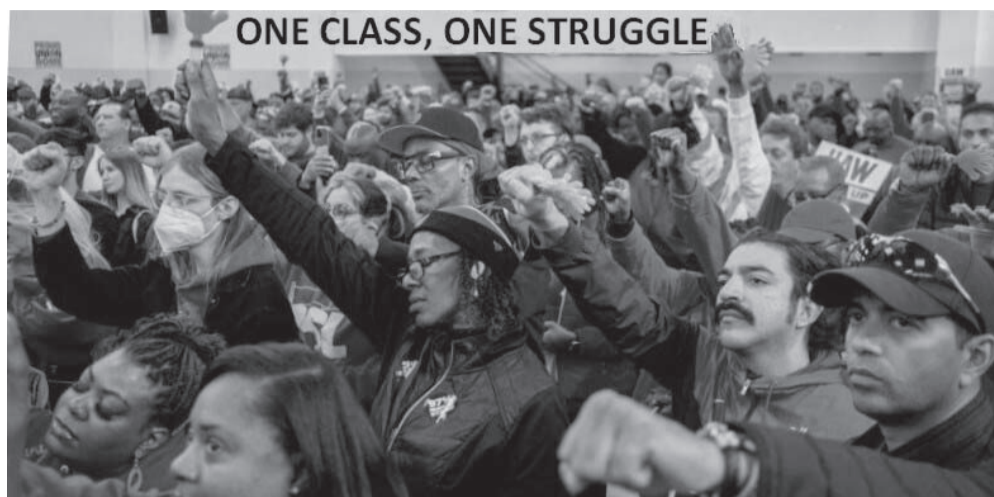
The current wave of strikes is of historic importance:

- scriptwriters and actors in Hollywood fought together for the first time in 63 years;
- private nurses in Minnesota and Wisconsin have staged the biggest strike in their history;
- Los Angeles municipal workers went on strike for the first time in 40 years;
- workers from the “Big Three” (General Motors, Ford, Chrysler) led an unprecedented joint struggle;
- Kaiser Permanente workers, on strike in several states, led the largest demonstration ever organised in the health sector.

We could also add the many strikes in recent weeks at Starbucks, Amazon and McDonald’s, in aviation and railway factories, or the one that has gradually spread to all hotels in California... all of these workers are fighting for a decent wage in the face of galloping inflation that is reducing them to poverty.

With all these strikes, the American proletariat is showing that it is also possible for workers in the private sector to fight. In Europe, until now, it has been mainly public sector workers who have mobilised, the fear of losing their jobs being a de-

cisive brake for employees in private companies. But faced with increasingly unbearable conditions of exploitation, we are all going to be forced to fight. **The future belongs to the class struggle in all sectors, together and united!**



## Faced with division, let’s unite our struggles!

Anger is rising again in Europe, Asia and Oceania. China, Korea and Australia have also been experiencing a succession of strikes since the summer. In Greece, at the end of September, a social movement brought together the transport, education and health sectors to protest against a proposed labour reform designed to make employment more flexible. October 13 marks the return of demonstrations in France, on the issue of wages. In Spain too, a wind of anger is beginning to blow: on 17 and 19 October, strikes in the private education sector; on 24 October, a strike in the public education sector; on 25 October, a strike by the entire Basque public sector; on 28 October, a demonstration by pensioners, etc. Faced with these forecasts of struggles, the Spanish press is beginning to anticipate “another hot autumn”.

This list not only indicates the growing level of discontent and combativeness of our class. It also reveals our movement’s greatest current weakness: despite growing solidarity, our struggles remain separate from each other. Our strikes may take place at the same time, we may even be side by side, sometimes on the streets, but we are not really fighting together. We are not united, we are not organised as a single social force, in a single struggle.

The current wave of strikes in the United States is another flagrant demonstration of this. When the movement was launched in the “Big Three” auto plants, the strike was limited to three “designated” plants: Wentzville (Missouri) for GM, Toledo (Ohio) for Chrysler, and Wayne (Michigan) for Ford. These three plants are separated by thousands of miles, making it impossible for the workers to get together and fight as one.

Why were they so scattered? Who organised this fragmentation? Who officially supervises these workers? Who organises the social movements? Who are the “specialists in struggle”, the legal representatives of the workers? The trade unions! All over the world, they are scattering the workers’ response.

It was the UAW, one of the main unions in the United States, that “designated” these three factories! It is the UAW which, while falsely calling the movement “strong, united and massive”, is deliberately limiting the strike to only 10% of the unionised workforce, while all the workers are loudly proclaiming their desire to go on strike. When the Mack Truck (Volvo trucks) workers tried to join the “Big Three” in their struggle, what did the unions do? They rushed to sign an agreement to end the strike! In Hollywood, when the actors’ and scriptwriters’ strike had been going on for months, a management/union agreement was signed at the same time as the car workers joined the strike.

Even in France, during demonstrations which bring millions of people together in the streets, the unions divide up the processions by having “their” union members march grouped by corporation, not together but one behind the other, preventing any gathering or discussion.

In the United States, in the United Kingdom, in France, in Spain, in Greece, in Australia and in every other country, if we are to stop this organised division, if we are to be truly united, if we are to be able to reach out to each other, to pull each

everything they can to limit workers’ demands to the strict framework of capitalism, by emphasising the need for a better distribution of wealth between employers and employees. *“Now that industry is recovering, [workers] should share in the profits”* even Biden declared, the first American President to have found himself on a picket line.

But by fighting against the effects of the economic crisis, against the attacks orchestrated by the States, against the sacrifices imposed by the development of the war economy, the proletariat is rising up, not as citizens demanding “rights” and “justice”, but as the exploited against their exploiters and, ultimately, as a class against the system itself. This is why the international dynamic of the working class struggle carries within it the seeds of a fundamental challenge to the whole of capitalism.

In Greece, during the day of action on 21 September against labour reform, demonstrators made the link between this attack and the “natural” disasters which ravaged the country this summer. On the one hand, capitalism is destroying the planet, polluting, exacerbating global warming, deforesting, concreting, drying out the land and causing floods and fires. On the other, it is doing away with the jobs that used to look after nature and protect people, and prefers to build warplanes rather than Canadairs, i.e. firefighting planes.

As well as fighting against the deterioration in its living and working conditions, the working class is engaged in a much broader reflection on this system and its future. A few months ago, in demonstrations in France, we began to see signs rejecting the war in Ukraine, refusing to tighten our belts in the name of this war economy: *“No money for war, no money for weapons, money for wages, money for pensions”*.

The economic crisis, the ecological crisis and the barbarity of war are all symptoms of the deadly dynamic of global capitalism. The deluge of bombs and bullets raining down on the people of Israel and Gaza as we write these lines, while the massacres in Ukraine continue, is yet another illustration of the downward spiral into which capitalism is driving society, threatening the lives of all humanity!

The growing number of strikes shows that two worlds are clashing: the bourgeois world of competition and barbarity, and the working class world of solidarity and hope. This is the profound meaning of our current and future struggles: the promise of another future, without exploitation or social classes, without war or borders, without destruction of the planet or the quest for profit.

**International Communist Current, 8 October 2023**

other along, to extend our movement, we must wrest control of the struggles from the hands of the unions. These are our struggles, the struggles of the whole working class!

**Wherever we can, we must come together in open, massive, autonomous general assemblies, which really decide how the movement is run. General assemblies in which we discuss as broadly as possible the general needs of the struggle and the most unifying demands. General assemblies from which we can set off in mass delegations to meet our class brothers and sisters, the workers in the nearest factory, hospital, school or administration.**

## Behind every strike looms the hydra of revolution

In the face of impoverishment, in the face of global warming, in the face of police violence, in the face of racism, in the face of violence against women... in recent years there have been other types of reaction: the “Yellow vests” demonstrations in France, ecological rallies like “Youth for Climate”, protests for equality like “Black Lives Matter” or “MeToo”, or cries of rage like during the riots in the United States, France or the United Kingdom.

But all these actions are aimed at imposing a fairer, more equitable, more humane and greener form of capitalism. That’s why all these reactions are so easy for governments and the bourgeoisie to exploit, and they have no hesitation in supporting all these “citizens’ movements”. What’s more, the unions and all the politicians are doing

Continued from page 8

## ICC intervention in workers’ struggles

more deadly and destructive spiral of capitalist society, defends tooth and nail that the future of humanity is in the hands of the working class. We believe that it is the responsibility of revolutionary organisations to explain to the working class, as clearly as possible, the historical conditions in which its struggle is taking place and what is at stake.

With the same approach, the ICC also organised two series of public meetings on the international class struggle in a number of countries. The first was on the theme: **“We are not alone in mobilising... There are workers’ struggles in many countries!”** The second: **“Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Mexico, China”... We need to go further than 1968!”**<sup>2</sup>.

These meetings were driven by a clear desire for clarification through a confrontation of the different positions involved. They were real proletarian debates where support, nuances, doubts and questioning, and even disagreements with the ICC’s positions were expressed. This active participation in the debates is an illustration of the slow matu-

<sup>2</sup> Presentation to the public meetings held in a number of countries on 13 May 2023. For a more developed assessment of these public meetings, see: Why does the ICC talk about a “rupture” in the class struggle? World Revolution 397

ration of consciousness which is taking place in depth within the world working class, and which is particularly evident among small minorities, often belonging to a new generation who are gradually renewing their links with the experience of the workers’ movement and the Communist Left.

By intervening actively in the demonstrations, as well as in our web and paper press, the ICC has fully fulfilled its political responsibilities within the working class. The fruits of this intervention have been seen in the fact that new elements seeking class positions have made contact with the ICC and some have even come to take part in our public meetings.

While since last June, the momentum that began in the summer of 2022 in the United Kingdom seems to have reached a kind of “pause”, the outbreak of strikes in the automobile sector in the United States clearly shows that the dynamic of struggle is continuing. For the ICC, these economic struggles are the privileged terrain for the class to develop its reflection and consciousness. It is the responsibility of revolutionary organisations to participate fully in these struggles in order to bring to maturity this vital effort for the development of the revolutionary struggle. **Vincent, 1 October 2023.**

# The ICT and the No War But the Class War initiative: an opportunist bluff which weakens the Communist Left

The Internationalist Communist Tendency have recently published a statement on their experience with the No War But the Class War committees (NWBCW) which they launched at the beginning of the war in Ukraine<sup>1</sup>. As they say, “*There is nothing like an imperialist war for revealing the real class basis of a political framework, and the invasion of Ukraine has certainly done that*”, explaining that the Stalinists, Trotskyists have once again shown that they belong to the camp of capital – whether by supporting the independence of Ukraine, or rallying to Russian propaganda about the ‘de-Nazification’ of Ukraine, the leftists are openly calling on the working class to support one side or the other in a capitalist war which expresses the deepening rivalries between the biggest imperialist sharks on the planet and thus threatens catastrophic consequences of the whole of humanity. The ICT also notes that the anarchist movement has been profoundly divided between those who call for the defence of Ukraine and those who have maintained an internationalist position of rejecting both camps. In contrast to this, the ICT say that “*the Communist Left across the world has remained solidly behind the international interests of the working class and denounced this war for what it is*”.

So far so good. But we differ profoundly when they then argue that “*For our part, the ICT has taken the internationalist position a stage further by trying to work with other internationalists who can see the dangers for the world working class if it does not get organised. This is why we have joined in with the initiative to develop committees at a local level across the world to organise a response to what capitalism is preparing for workers everywhere*”

## The necessity for polemics

In our view, the ICT’s call for the formation of the No War But the Class War committees is anything but a “stage further” in internationalism or a step towards a solid regroupment of internationalist communist forces. We have already written a number of articles explaining our point of view on this, but the ICT has responded to none of them, an attitude justified in the ICT statement which insists that they don’t want to engage in “*the same old polemics*” with those who they think have misunderstood their positions. But the tradition of the communist left, inherited from Marx and Lenin and carried on in the pages of *Bilan*, is the recognition that polemic between proletarian elements is indispensable to any process of political clarification. And in fact, the ICT statement is really a hidden polemic, mainly with the ICC – But by their very nature such hidden polemics, which evade referring to specific organisations and their written statements, can never lead to a real and honest confrontation of positions.

In their statement on NWBCW, the ICT claims that its initiative is in continuity with the approach of the left-wing current in the process initiated by the Zimmerwald conference of 1915, having already made a similar claim in the article “NWBCW and the ‘Real International Bureau’ of 1915: “*we believe that the NWBCW initiative conforms to the principles of the Zimmerwald Left*”<sup>2</sup>.

But the activities of the Zimmerwald Left, and above all of Lenin, was characterised by a relentless polemic aimed at a decantation of revolutionary forces. Zimmerwald brought together different tendencies in the workers’ movement in opposition to the war, and there were considerable divergences on a number of questions; the Left was fully aware that a common position against the war, as expressed in the Zimmerwald Manifesto, was not enough. For this reason, the Zimmerwald Left did not hide its divergences with the other currents at the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences, but openly criticised these currents for not being consistent in their fight against the imperialist war. In and through this debate Lenin and those around him forged a nucleus that would become the embryo of the Communist International.

## Our previous criticisms of the NWBCW initiative

As readers can see from the publication of our correspondence with the ICT regarding the ICC’s call for a joint declaration of the communist left in response to the war in Ukraine, the ICT’s refusal to sign and their promotion of NWBCW as a kind of “rival” project severely weakened the capacity of the communist left to act together at this crucial moment. It scuppered the possibility of a coming together of its forces for the first time since the break-up of the international conferences of the communist left at the beginning of the 1980s. The ICT chose to discontinue this correspondence<sup>3</sup>.

We have also published an article tracing the actual history of NWBCW in the anarchist milieu in the 1990s<sup>4</sup>. This meant that these groups contained all kinds of confusions, but in our view they did express something real – the response of a small minority critical of the massive mobilisations against the wars in the Middle East and the Balkans, mobilisations that were on a clearly leftist and pacifist terrain. For this reason, we felt it was important for the communist left to intervene towards these formations in order to defend clear internationalist positions within them. By contrast, there are very few such pacifist mobilisations in response to the Ukraine war and the anarchist milieu, as we have already noted, is profoundly divided on the question. Thus we see very little in the various NWBCW groups that has made us question our conclusion to the article: “*The impression we get from the groups which we know something about is that they are mainly ‘duplicates’ of the ICT or its affiliates*”. In our opinion, this duplication reveals some serious disagreements about both the function and mode of operation of the revolutionary political organisation and its relationship with minorities who situate themselves on a proletarian terrain, and indeed with the class as whole. This disagreement goes back to the whole debate about factory groups and struggle groups, but we don’t intend to develop it in this article<sup>5</sup>.

More important – but also connected to the question of the difference between a product of the real movement and the artificial inventions of political minorities – is our article’s insistence that the NWBCW initiative is based on a wrong assessment of the dynamics of the class struggle today. In present conditions, we cannot expect the class movement to develop directly against war but against the impact of the economic crisis – an analysis which we think has been amply verified by the international revival of struggles which was sparked off by the strike movement in Britain in the summer of 2022 and which, with inevitable ups and downs, has still not exhausted itself. This movement has been a direct response to the “cost of living crisis” and while it contains the seeds of a deeper and more widespread questioning of the impasse of the system and its drive towards war, we are still a long way from that point. The idea that the NWBCW committees could in some sense be the starting point for a direct class response to the war can only lead to a misreading of the dynamics of the present struggles. It opens the door to an activist policy which, in turn, will not be able to distinguish itself from the “do something now” positions of the left of capital. The ICT statement insists that its initiative is above all political and that it is opposed to activism and immediatism, and they claim that the openly activist direction taken by the NWBCW groups in Portland and Rome is based on a misunderstanding of the real nature of the initiative. According to the statement, “*those who signed up to NWBCW without understanding what it really was about, or rather, who saw it as the exten-*

3 Correspondence on the Joint Statement of groups of the Communist Left on the war in Ukraine (ICC Online)

4 “On the history of the No War but the Class War groups”, *World Revolution* 393

5 See for example “Reply to the Internationalist Communist Party (*Battaglia Comunista*) in *International Review* 21; “The organisation of the proletariat outside periods of open struggle (workers’ groups, nuclei, circles, committees)” in *International Review* 21; also *World Revolution* 26, “Factory Groups and ICC intervention

*sion of their previous radical reformist activity. This happened in both Portland and Rome where certain elements saw NWBCW as something to immediately mobilise a class which was still recovering from four decades of retreat, and which was only just beginning to find its feet in the fight against inflation. Their immediatist and ultra-activist perspective only led to the demise of those committees*”. For us, on the contrary, these local groups grasped better than the ICT that an initiative which has been launched in the absence of any real movement against the war – even among small minorities – can only fall into attempts to create a movement out of nothing.

## A new “United Front”?

We have mentioned that the Italian Fraction of the Communist Left, which published *Bilan*, insisted on the need for rigorous public debate between proletarian political organisations. This was a central aspect of their principled approach towards regroupment, opposing in particular the opportunist efforts of the Trotskyists and ex-Trotskyists of the day to resort to fusions and regroupments which were not based on a serious debate around fundamental principles. In our view, the NWBCW initiative is based on a kind of “frontist” logic which can only lead to unprincipled and even destructive alliances.

The statement admits that some openly leftist groups have hijacked the “No War But the Class War” slogan to hide their essential support for one side or the other in the conflict. The ICT insist that they can’t prevent such “false flag” operations. But if you read our article on the opening meeting of the Paris NWBCW committee<sup>6</sup>, you will find not only that a considerable part of the participants were advocating openly leftist “actions” under the NWBCW banner, but also that a Trotskyist group which defends the right of Ukraine to self-determination, *Matière et Révolution*, had actually been invited to the meeting. Similarly, the Rome NWBCW group seems to have been based on an alliance between the ICT’s affiliate in Italy (which publishes *Battaglia Comunista*) and a purely leftist group<sup>7</sup>.

We should add that the presidium of the Paris meeting was made up of two elements who were expelled from the ICC in the early 2000s for publishing material which exposes our comrades to state repression – an activity we have denounced as snitching. One of these elements is a member of the International Group of the Communist Left, a group which is not only a typical expression of political parasitism, but which was founded on the basis of this police-like behaviour and thus should have no place within the internationalist communist camp. The other element is now actually the representative of the ICT in France. When the ICT declined to sign the joint declaration, they argued that its definition of the communist left was too narrow, mainly because it excluded groups defined by the ICC as parasitic. In fact, it has been shown very clearly that the ICT would prefer to be publicly associated with parasitic groups like the IGCL than with the ICC, and its current policy, via the NWBCW committees, can have no other result than to give such groups a certificate of respectability and to strengthen their long-standing effort to make the ICC a pariah – precisely because of its defence of the clear principles of behaviour which they have repeatedly breached.

In some cases, such as in Glasgow, the NWBCW groups seem to have been based on tem-

6 “A committee that leads its participants into a dead end”, *World Revolution* 395

7 The statement contains a link to an article in *Battaglia Comunista* on the fate of the Rome committee, Sul Comitato di Roma NWBCW: un’intervista. It describes the negative outcome of an alliance with a group called Società Incivile (“Uncivil Society”). It is written in such an obscure way that it is very difficult to draw very much from it. but if you look at the website of this group, they seem to be out-and-out leftists, singing the praises of the anti-fascist partisans and to the Stalinist Communist Party of Italy. See for example <https://www.sitocomunista.it/canti/cantidilotta.html>; <https://www.sitocomunista.it/resistenza/resistenzaindex.html>; <https://www.sitocomunista.it/pci/pci.html> <https://www.sitocomunista.it/resistenza/resistenzaindex.html> <https://www.sitocomunista.it/pci/pci.html>

porary alliances with anarchist groups like the Anarchist Communist Group who have taken up internationalist positions on the Ukraine war but who are linked to groups who are on a bourgeois terrain (eg Plan C in the UK). And recently the ACG has shown that it would rather associate with such leftists than discuss with an internationalist organisation like the ICC, which it excluded from a recent meeting in London without eliciting any protest from the CWO<sup>8</sup>. This does not mean we don’t aim to discuss with genuinely internationalist anarchists, and in the case of KRAS in Russia, who have a proven record of opposing imperialist wars, we asked them to support the joint declaration in whatever way they could. But the ACG affair is yet another example of how the NWBCW initiative recalls the opportunist policy of the United Front, in which the Communist International expressed its willingness to work with the traitors of social democracy. This was a tactic to strengthen communist influence in the working class but its real result was to accelerate the degeneration of the CI and its parties.

The Italian Communist Left was, in the early 20s, a harsh critic of this opportunist policy of the CI. It continued to adhere to the original position of the CI, which was that the social democratic parties, through supporting the imperialist war and actively opposing the proletarian revolution, had become parties of capital. It’s true that their critique of the United Front tactic retained an ambiguity – the idea of the “United Front from Below”, based on the assumption that the trade unions were still proletarian organisations and that it was at this level that Communist and social democratic workers could struggle together.

In their conclusion to the NWBCW statement, the ICT makes the claim that there is a historical precedent for the NWBCW committees in the revolutionary movement: the appeal for a United Proletarian Front launched by the Internationalist Communist Party (PCInt) in Italy 1944. This appeal is fundamentally internationalist in content, but why does it talk about a “United Proletarian Front”? And what is meant by the following demand: “*The present time calls for the formation of a united proletarian front, i.e., the unity of all those who are against war, whether fascist or democratic.*

*Workers of all proletarian political formations and without party! Join our workers, discuss class problems in the light of the events of the war and form together in every factory, in every centre, committees of the united front capable of bringing the struggle of the proletariat back to its true class terrain*”.

Who were these “proletarian political formations”? Was this in fact an appeal to the rank and file of the former workers’ parties to engage in joint political activity with the militants of the PCInt?

This was not a mere inaccuracy in the 1944 appeal, as demonstrated only a year later when the PCInt’s Agitation Committee’s published a new ‘Appeal’, explicitly addressed to the Agitation Committees of the Italian Socialist Party, the Stalinist Communist Party and other organisations of the bourgeois left, calling for their joint action in the factories. We published an account of this in *International Review* 32. In *International Review* 34 we published a letter from the PCInt responding to our criticisms of the Appeal. In this letter they wrote:

“*was it in fact an error? Yes, it was; we admit it. It was the last attempt of the Italian Left to apply the tactic of the ‘united front at the base’ defended by the CP of Italy in 1921-23 against the Third International. As such, we categorize this as a ‘venial sin’ because our comrades later eliminated it both politically and theoretically with such clarity that today we are well armed against anyone on this point*”.

To which we replied:

“*If a proposal for a united front with the Stalinist and social democratic butchers is just a ‘minor’ sin what else could the PC Int have done in 1945*

8 “ACG bans the ICC from its public meetings, CWO betrays solidarity between revolutionary organisations”, *World Revolution* 397

Continued on page 7

1 “The No War but the Class War

Initiative”, *Revolutionary Perspectives* 22

2 <https://www.leftcom.org/en/articles/2022-07-22/nwbcw-and-the-real-international-bureau-of-1915>

Continued from page 1

## Neither Israel nor Palestine! Workers have no fatherland!

armed the State of Israel to the teeth in order to give it the role of spearhead of the Western bloc in this region during the Cold War, while the USSR, for its part, armed its Arab allies as much as possible. Without these great "sponsors", the wars of 1956, 67, 73 and 82 could not have taken place.

Today, the bourgeoisies of Lebanon, Iran and probably Russia are arming and pushing Hamas. The United States has just sent its largest aircraft carrier to the Mediterranean and has announced new arms deliveries to Israel. In fact, all the major powers are participating more or less directly in this war and these massacres!

This new war threatens to hurl the entire Middle East into chaos! This is not the umpteenth bloody confrontation to plunge this corner of the world into mourning. The sheer scale of the killings indicates that the barbarity has reached a new level: young people dancing at a festival mowed down with machine guns, women and children executed in the street at point-blank range, with no other objective than to satisfy a desire for blind revenge, a carpet of bombs to annihilate an entire population, two million people in Gaza deprived of everything, water, electricity, gas, food... There is no military logic to all these atrocities, to all these crimes! Both sides are wallowing in the most appalling and irrational murderous fury!

But there is something even more serious: this Pandora's box will never close again. As with Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Libya, there will be no turning back, no "return to peace". Capitalism is dragging ever larger sections of humanity into war, death and the decomposition of society. The war in Ukraine has already been going on for almost two years and is bogged down in endless carnage. Massacres are also underway in Nagorno-Karabakh. And there is already a threat of a new war between the nations of the former Yugoslavia. Capitalism is war!

### To put an end to war, capitalism must be overthrown.

The workers of all countries must refuse to take sides with one bourgeois camp or another. In particular, they must refuse to be fooled by the rhetoric of the parties which claim to be working class, the parties of the left and extreme left, which ask them to show "solidarity with the Palestinian masses" in their quest for their right to a "homeland". The Palestinian homeland will never be anything but a bourgeois state at the service of the exploiting class and oppressing these same masses, with cops and prisons. The solidarity of the workers of the most advanced capitalist countries does not go to the "Palestinians" just as it does not go to the "Israelis", among whom there are exploiters and exploited. It goes to the workers and unemployed of Israel and Palestine (who, moreover, have already led struggles against their exploiters despite all the brainwashing they have been subjected to), just as it goes to the workers of all the other countries of the world. The best solidarity they can offer is certainly not to encourage their nationalist illusions.

This solidarity means above all developing their fight against the capitalist system responsible for all the wars, a fight against their own bourgeoisie.

The working class will have to win peace by overthrowing capitalism on a global scale, and today this means developing its struggles on a class terrain, against the increasingly harsh economic attacks levelled at it by a system in insurmountable crisis.

Against nationalism, against the wars your exploiters want to drag you into:

**Workers of all countries, unite!**  
ICC, 9 October 2023

ICC public meeting

## Faced with the whirlwind of capitalist decomposition, only the class struggle offers a way out

With the new outbreak of barbarism in Israel/Palestine, we are obliged to change the focus of this public meeting, which had intended to concentrate on the ecological crisis. Coming in the wake of the war in Ukraine, this new conflict confirms once again that war plays a central role in what we have called the "whirlwind effect" – the accelerating interaction of all the different expressions of capitalist decomposition, posing a growing threat to the very survival of humanity. It is vital for revolutionaries to put forward a clear internationalist position against all the imperialist confrontations spreading across the globe.

This does not imply any underestimation of the fact that the capitalist destruction of nature is an integral part of this threat. Indeed, the intensification of war and militarism can only worsen the ecological crisis, just as the deepening of the latter can only fuel the increasingly chaotic military rivalries.

Neither does it mean that all hope for the future is lost. The return of the class struggle that began in Britain over a year ago, and which is now making its mark in the USA, shows that the working class is not defeated and that its resistance against exploitation contains the seeds of the revolutionary overthrow of the present world order.

All these questions are up for discussion at the forthcoming meeting.

DATE: Saturday 21st October, 2pm to 5pm UK time

VENUE: The Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1X 8JR

It will also be possible to participate in this meeting online. Please write to [uk@internationalism.org](mailto:uk@internationalism.org) for details

See ICC website for future public meetings.



Continued from page 6

for it to fall into a really serious mistake... join the government? But *Battaglia Comunista* reassures us: it has corrected these errors quite a while ago without waiting for the ICC and it has never tried to hide them. Possibly, but in 1977 when we just brought up the errors of the PC Int in the war period in our press, *Battaglia* answered with an indignant letter admitting that there had been mistakes but claiming that they were the fault of comrades who left in 1952 to found *Programma Comunista*".

The ICT's continuing defence of the 1944 call for a United Proletarian Front shows that this profound error has not been "eliminated both politically and theoretically". And the 'United Front from Below' tactic from 1921-23 is still the inspiration for the ICT's opportunist No War but the Class War 'movement'.

The ICT is therefore right on one point about No War But the Class War: it is in continuity with the opportunist call for a 'United Proletarian Front' by the PCInt in 1944. But it is not a continuity to be proud of since this tactic actively obscures the class line that exists between the internationalism of the Communist Left and the pretend internationalism of leftism, parasitism and the anarchist swamp. Moreover the NWBCW was intended to be an exclusive alternative to the intransigent internationalism of the Common Statement of the Communist Left, thus weakening revolutionary forces not only by opportunism toward leftism etc, but also by sectarianism toward other authentic groups of the Communist Left.

Amos

We have made some minor changes from the original version first submitted on 11 September in English. The appeal for a "Proletarian United Front", republished recently by the ICT, was in fact issued in 1944, not 1945 as initially stated. The Appeal to the Agitation Committees of the Socialist and Communist parties was issued in 1945 - which actually shows a further downward step into opportunism on the part of the PCInt. 30.9.23

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Recent donations include:

B. £100  
While selling outside ABF £2  
J. 50p

## International Review 170

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**The crucial responsibility of revolutionary organisations**

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## Contact the ICC

**Write to the following addresses without mentioning the name:**  
**WORLD REVOLUTION** BM Box 869, London WC1N 3XX, GREAT BRITAIN

**Write by e-mail to the following addresses:**

From Great Britain use [uk@internationalism.org](mailto:uk@internationalism.org)

From India use [India@internationalism.org](mailto:India@internationalism.org)

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# Balance sheet of the ICC's intervention in the struggles of workers around the world

As the most advanced part of the working class, revolutionaries have a responsibility to intervene in struggles. But unlike the leftists and the excitable elements of the petty-bourgeoisie who see the spectre of social revolution behind "everything that moves", revolutionaries, in order to carry out a coherent intervention, must have a compass, a method learnt from marxism, based on the experiences of the history of the workers' movement over nearly two centuries. It is precisely this method which alone enables them to understand and intervene in the struggles of the working class with a historical and long-term vision, so as not to fall into the trap of impatience, of waiting for immediate results and finding themselves trailing in the wake of the organisations of the extreme left of capital or of rank and file unionism.

So, in the summer of 2022, the ICC analysed the outbreak of struggles in Britain not as a simple local event but as a phenomenon of international and historical significance. The resumption of workers' struggles, on a scale not seen in the UK since the 1980s, marked a real break in the dynamic of class struggle. Faced with such an event, the ICC decided to produce an international leaflet in which we affirmed that the massive strikes in the UK were "a call to struggle for proletarians everywhere".

This was fully confirmed in the months that followed, when, as well as continuing struggles in many sectors in the UK, strikes and demonstrations broke out in several European countries and on other continents. For the most part, these too were on a scale not seen since the late 1980s, confirming a real return of workers' fighting spirit after several decades of stagnation on a global scale.

During the autumn of 2022, the ICC took part in demonstrations and picket lines. The section of the ICC in Britain took part in 8 picket lines, mainly in London and Exeter, distributing several hundred leaflets. It also took part in the London Anarchist Book Fair. The ICC was also present at the cross-industry day of action in France on 29 September 2022.

During the discussions on demonstrations and at the picket lines, we defended the international dimension of the attacks and therefore the need for everyone to fight together, acting in a unified way and avoiding getting bogged down in local struggles, within one's own company or sector.

At the same time, the ICC regularly published

articles in its press (website, papers, *International Review*) highlighting the openly proletarian terrain of these various struggles, but above all their historical significance, by emphasising that they formed a real springboard for reclaiming class identity.

The outbreak of the struggle against pensions reform in France in January gave new impetus to this dynamic of international struggles. Almost every week for nearly 6 months, millions of workers took to the streets to oppose a vile attack by the bourgeois state. During the 13 days of demonstrations, both in Paris and in the provinces, the ICC mobilised all its forces, rallying its supporters around it, to disseminate its press as widely as possible, distributing nearly 130,000 leaflets and dozens of newspapers.

The quality of the intervention depended on the ability of the ICC to adapt to the evolution of the class's response on an international level, but also to the more specific evolution of the struggle in France. This is why the ICC has produced both leaflets with an international scope and more "territorial" leaflets when necessary. This was done in order to respond as effectively as possible to the needs of the movement, not only in France, but above all on an international level, since struggles broke out during the same period in many countries, and in which the ICC was also able to intervene. To varying degrees, this was the case in Belgium, Spain, the Netherlands, Germany, the UK and Mexico.

What, then, were the main themes defended in the demonstrations, both through leaflets and territorial papers and during discussions?

- In January 2023, a new international leaflet entitled "How can we fight together in a massive united movement?" highlighted the need to counter the work of division undertaken by the unions by developing solidarity beyond one's corporation, company, sector, town, region or country.

- Subsequently, while continuing to defend the same necessity, the ICC placed at the heart of its intervention the defence of self-organisation and methods of struggle that would create a balance of forces with the bourgeois state. The leaflet of 2 February "It's not enough to come out in large numbers, we have to take control of our struggles!" and the third international leaflet "Everywhere the same question: How to develop the struggle? How to make governments

back down?", was a response to this concern, which was being expressed more and more over the weeks, particularly in the discussions we had in demonstrations. In particular, we defended the need to create forums for discussion such as sovereign mass meetings open to all.



- Despite their many weaknesses, all these struggles did indeed express an attempt to create a collective force, united in solidarity, not as isolated individuals but as an exploited class confronting its exploiter.

The echoes of the struggle in France among British and German workers fully illustrated this.

So, one of the responsibilities of revolutionaries is precisely to contribute to the development of this effort to recover class identity. That's why we've always stressed the need to reappropriate the experience and history of the working class. Especially since this concern was spontaneously expressed in the struggle in France through the slogan "You give us 64, we'll give you May 68" brandished in every march from the beginning to the end of the movement. Or in the resurgence of the memory of the struggle against the CPE in 2006.

The leaflet "How did we win in 2006?" defended the experience of sovereign general assemblies, which had contributed to the movement's expansion and ultimately led to the government's retreat. A few weeks later, the fourth international leaflet, "Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Mexico,

China.... We have to go further than in 1968!", extended this effort, but above all made it possible to defend more explicitly the historic challenge of the resumption of workers' struggles and the challenge it posed: the overthrow of capitalism and the victory of the proletarian revolution for the survival of humanity.

Overall, our various leaflets were always well received, the headlines often hitting the mark, and provoking reactions from demonstrators: "Yes, we're all in the same boat!", "Yes, we must all fight together!", "I've come from Germany and there are struggles there too!", "We're from Italy, and we've come to demonstrate with the French workers", "I was there in May '68, we must do the same thing again!", "Oh yes, we must indeed make the revolution!" These were the most significant reactions to the many discussions we were able to have. Of course, they remain a minority, and sometimes confused, but they express the effort of reflection that is taking place in the depths of the working class to recognise itself as a class, to take the struggle into its own hands and to develop the struggle that will enable the working class to take the road to revolution.

It was this historic dynamic at work that we highlighted in the leaflet taking stock of the struggle against pension reform on the last day of demonstrations on 6 June, when the desire to fight and struggle continued unabated. On several occasions, demonstrators agreed with the title of the leaflet, even telling us "We've lost a battle, but we haven't lost the war". So yes, "the fight is well and truly ahead of us!"

Our intervention was also accompanied by the distribution of hundreds of copies of the Third Manifesto of the ICC<sup>1</sup> which, faced with the ever

<sup>1</sup> Capitalism leads to the destruction of humanity... Only the world revolution of the proletariat can put an end to it, *International Review* 169, Winter 2023

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## Political positions of the ICC

**World Revolution** is the section in Britain of the **International Communist Current** which defends the following political positions:

\* Since the first world war, capitalism has been a decadent social system. It has twice plunged humanity into a barbaric cycle of crisis, world war, reconstruction and new crisis. In the 1980s, it entered into the final phase of this decadence, the phase of decomposition. There is only one alternative offered by this irreversible historical decline: socialism or barbarism, world communist revolution or the destruction of humanity.

\* The Paris Commune of 1871 was the first attempt by the proletariat to carry out this revolution, in a period when the conditions for it were not yet ripe. Once these conditions had been provided by the onset of capitalist decadence, the October revolution of 1917 in Russia was the first step towards an authentic world communist revolution in an international revolutionary wave which put an end to the imperialist war and went on for several years after that. The failure of this revolutionary wave, particularly in Germany in 1919-23, condemned the revolution in Russia to isolation and to a rapid degeneration. Stalinism was not the product of the Russian revolution, but its gravedigger.

\* The stultified regimes which arose in the USSR, eastern Europe, China, Cuba etc and were called 'socialist' or 'communist' were just a particularly brutal form of the universal tendency towards state capitalism, itself a major characteristic of the period of decadence.

\* Since the beginning of the 20th century, all wars are imperialist wars, part of the deadly struggle between states large and small to conquer or retain a place in

the international arena. These wars bring nothing to humanity but death and destruction on an ever-increasing scale. The working class can only respond to them through its international solidarity and by struggling against the bourgeoisie in all countries.

\* All the nationalist ideologies - 'national independence', 'the right of nations to self-determination' etc - whatever their pretext, ethnic, historical or religious, are a real poison for the workers. By calling on them to take the side of one or another faction of the bourgeoisie, they divide workers and lead them to massacre each other in the interests and wars of their exploiters.

\* In decadent capitalism, parliament and elections are nothing but a masquerade. Any call to participate in the parliamentary circus can only reinforce the lie that presents these elections as a real choice for the exploited. 'Democracy', a particularly hypocritical form of the domination of the bourgeoisie, does not differ at root from other forms of capitalist dictatorship, such as Stalinism and fascism.

\* All factions of the bourgeoisie are equally reactionary. All the so-called 'workers', 'Socialist' and 'Communist' parties (now ex-'Communists'), the leftist organisations (Trotskyists, Maoists and ex-Maoists, official anarchists) constitute the left of capitalism's political apparatus. All the tactics of 'popular fronts', 'anti-fascist fronts' and 'united fronts', which mix up the interests of the proletariat with those of a faction of the bourgeoisie, serve only to smother and derail the struggle of the proletariat.

\* With the decadence of capitalism, the unions everywhere have been transformed into organs of capitalist order within the proletariat. The various forms of union

organisation, whether 'official' or 'rank and file', serve only to discipline the working class and sabotage its struggles.

\* In order to advance its combat, the working class has to unify its struggles, taking charge of their extension and organisation through sovereign general assemblies and committees of delegates elected and revocable at any time by these assemblies.

\* Terrorism is in no way a method of struggle for the working class. The expression of social strata with no historic future and of the decomposition of the petty bourgeoisie, when it's not the direct expression of the permanent war between capitalist states, terrorism has always been a fertile soil for manipulation by the bourgeoisie. Advocating secret action by small minorities, it is in complete opposition to class violence, which derives from conscious and organised mass action by the proletariat.

\* The working class is the only class which can carry out the communist revolution. Its revolutionary struggle will inevitably lead the working class towards a confrontation with the capitalist state. In order to destroy capitalism, the working class will have to overthrow all existing states and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale: the international power of the workers' councils, regrouping the entire proletariat.

\* The communist transformation of society by the workers' councils does not mean 'self-management' or the nationalisation of the economy. Communism requires the conscious abolition by the working class of capitalist social relations: wage labour, commodity production, national frontiers. It means the creation of a world community in which all activity is oriented towards the full satisfaction of human needs.

\* The revolutionary political organisation constitutes the vanguard of the working class and is an active

factor in the generalisation of class consciousness within the proletariat. Its role is neither to 'organise the working class' nor to 'take power' in its name, but to participate actively in the movement towards the unification of struggles, towards workers taking control of them for themselves, and at the same time to draw out the revolutionary political goals of the proletariat's combat.

### OUR ACTIVITY

Political and theoretical clarification of the goals and methods of the proletarian struggle, of its historic and its immediate conditions.

Organised intervention, united and centralised on an international scale, in order to contribute to the process which leads to the revolutionary action of the proletariat.

The regroupment of revolutionaries with the aim of constituting a real world communist party, which is indispensable to the working class for the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a communist society.

### OUR ORIGINS

The positions and activity of revolutionary organisations are the product of the past experiences of the working class and of the lessons that its political organisations have drawn throughout its history. The ICC thus traces its origins to the successive contributions of the *Communist League* of Marx and Engels (1847-52), the three Internationals (the *International Workingmen's Association*, 1864-72, the *Socialist International*, 1884-1914, the *Communist International*, 1919-28), the left fractions which detached themselves from the degenerating Third International in the years 1920-30, in particular the *German, Dutch and Italian Lefts*.