



world revolution

After Ukraine, the Middle East: Capitalism's only future is barbarism and chaos!

Cities completely devastated, hospitals in total collapse, crowds of civilians wandering the streets under the bombs, without water, food or electricity, families everywhere crying for their dead, children haggardly searching for their mothers under the ruins, others mercilessly torn apart... This terrifying apocalyptic landscape is not that of Warsaw or Hiroshima after six years of world war, nor that of Sarajevo after four years of siege. This is the landscape of "21st century capitalism", the streets of Gaza, Rafah and Khan Yunis after just three months of conflict.

Three months! It took just two short months to raze Gaza to the ground, take tens of thousands of lives and throw millions more onto roads that lead nowhere! And not just by anyone! By "the only democracy in the Near and Middle East", by the State of Israel, an ally of the great Western "democracies", which claims to be the sole repository of the memory of the Holocaust.

For decades, revolutionaries have been crying out: "Capitalism is gradually plunging humanity into barbarism and chaos!" Here we are... Down with the masks! Capitalism is showing its true face and the future it has in store for all humanity!

A giant step into barbarism

What is happening today in the Middle East is not just another episode in the long series of outbreaks of violence that have tragically punctuated the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for decades. The current conflict has nothing to do with the old "logic" of confrontation between the USSR and the United States. On the contrary, it represents a further step in the drive of global capitalism towards chaos, the proliferation of uncontrollable convulsions and the spread of ever more conflicts.

The level of barbarity on the scale of Gaza is perhaps even worse than the extraordinary violence of the Ukrainian conflict. All the wars of decadence have resulted in mass slaughter and gigantic destruction. But even the greatest murderers of the twentieth century, the Hitlers, the Stalins, the Churchills and the Eisenhowers, only engaged in the worst horrors after several years of war, multiplying the "justifications" for turning entire cities into heaps of ashes. Yet it is striking to note the extent to which the streets of Gaza already bear a striking resemblance to the ruined landscapes at the end of the Second World War.

This whole clique of barbarians has been swept along by the scorched earth logic that now dominates imperialist conflicts.

What strategic advantage could Hamas possibly have gained by sending a thousand assassins to massacre civilians, if not to ignite the fuse and expose itself to its own destruction? What are Iran or Israel hoping to achieve, then, if not to sow chaos among their rivals, chaos that will inevitably come back to hit them like a boomerang? Neither state has anything to gain from this hopeless conflict. Israeli society could be profoundly destabilised by the war, threatened for decades to come by a generation of Palestinians bent on revenge. As for Iran, while it stands to gain the most from the situation, this can only be a Pyrrhic victory! Because if the United States fails to curb the indiscriminate unleashing of military barbarity, Iran is exposed to harsh reprisals against its positions in Lebanon and Syria, and even to destructive attacks on its own territory. And all this at the risk of destabilising ever larger regions of the planet, with shortages, famines, millions of displaced people, increased risks of attacks, confrontations between communities...

Even if the United States is trying to prevent the situation from getting out of hand, the risk of a generalised conflagration in the Middle East is not negligible. Because, far from obeying the "bloc discipline" that prevailed until the collapse of the USSR, all the local players are ready to pull the trigger.

The first thing that stands out is that Israel has acted alone, arousing the anger and open criticism of the Biden administration. Netanyahu has taken advantage of the weakening of American leadership to try to crush the Palestinian bourgeoisie and destroy Iran's allies, thereby opposing the "two-state solution" promoted by the United States. The indiscipline of Israel, which is more concerned with its own immediate interests, is a huge blow to Washington's efforts to prevent the destabilisation of the region.

After three months of atrocities, it's more and more obvious that the war between Israel and Hamas will have dramatic global consequences: on the economic level, with the semi-closure of the Bab-el-Mandeb strait, a world commercial hub now being hit by Houthi rockets and drones, or on the humanitarian level with several million people forced into exile.

Above all, the recent clashes between Israel and Hezbollah, like the American and British strikes in Yemen, already risk opening up a new front with Iran and its allies. Such an extension of the conflict would be another step in Washington's loss of control over the world situation: obliged to support its Israeli ally, this would be a new blow to its policy of encircling China and supporting Ukraine, with all the dangers of escalation hanging over these regions.

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Northern Ireland: workers join the international revival of struggles

On Thursday 18 January there was the largest strike in the history of Northern Ireland.¹ In spite of icy, often sub-zero conditions there were 170,000 workers involved, members of 16 trade unions, making up maybe 80 per cent of the public sector. There were marches and rallies in towns right across the six counties, and across all the sectarian divides that have plagued the working class in Northern Ireland. There were pickets at schools and hospitals, stations and council depots, and many other public buildings. Nearly every school and further education college was closed. All public transport was stopped. The next day, Friday 19, hundreds of transport workers, cleaners, classroom assistants and gritter drivers, were on strike for a second day.

1. This obviously excludes the loyalist paramilitary-enforced action of the Ulster Workers' Council in 1974 – which was not a workers' strike ... and was not led by a workers' council.

Superficially, the reason for the strike (and the explanation given by parties of the left, right and centre) is all down to the unique status of Northern Ireland. Over the last two years, ever since the election in 2022 in which Sinn Fein won the most seats, the Democratic Unionist Party have ensured that there has been no Assembly and no Executive. Because of this, all pay demands in the public sector have been declared not possible as, according to the British government, only the devolved administration can allow any pay rises. In December the Tories offered £600m for pay in the public sector, all as part of a £3.3bn package, but depending on the re-establishment of the Assembly and Executive.

In response to this the DUP have accused Northern Irish Secretary Chris Heaton-Harris of trying to blackmail them, saying the money should be handed over regardless. Meanwhile Sinn Fein say that workers' can only be satisfied if the Assem-

bly and Executive are re-activated. At rallies on 18 January union leaders were divided between blaming the DUP or the British government or both. While the unions all agreed that the money was there, the reality is that workers are fighting against a system that can't satisfy their most basic needs.

Although the strike was very much controlled by the unions, and the different factions of the ruling class are certainly using the political chaos in Northern Ireland to try drag the workers behind their squabbles, this movement has not come out of the blue. In December there were strikes on the whole transport network, buses and trains, on four different days. Before that, in November, there were strikes in the transport sector and by school support staff. It's true that these were also controlled by the unions, but does show that there is real discontent with the pay levels workers

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The ambiguities of anarchist internationalism

The present war in the Middle East is a catastrophe for the workers and the general population in Israel/Palestine, killing over a thousand in Israel, tens of thousands in Gaza and hundreds on the West Bank, creating almost insurmountable divisions between the workers in these territories by compelling them to choose their imperialist camp, between the barbarism of Hamas or the barbarism of the Israeli state, while intense propaganda campaigns pressurise workers either to support Israel in the name of fighting anti-Semitism or to join the pro-Palestinian “peace” protests against the massacres perpetrated by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF).

A number of anarchist groups unreservedly defend the “Palestinian Resistance” or maintain a complete silence about the issue. This is quite normal for bourgeois groups and the ideologies of the radical petty bourgeoisie, whose job is to make their small contribution to the war campaigns in order to weaken the proletariat’s class consciousness and push it into a trap. Only a few internationalist minorities claiming the anarchist title have refused to choose between the warring parties, often with important ambiguities.

The CNT in Paris and the KRAS in Moscow have published an article called “Stop the Barbarism!” that indeed does not call for the defence of the national interests of Palestine or Israel. But at the same time it doesn’t clearly defend an internationalist position: it does not explicitly say that the workers have no fatherland and that the answer to war is the struggle of the exploited in all countries. In fact it doesn’t talk about the working class at all. Fortunately, the KRAS has also published a translation of another article “Against Israeli and Palestinian Nationalism”. This article is clearer than the CNT article as the preface admits: “*The published text expresses well the internationalist, anti-nationalist, anti-ethnicist and class position.*”

Other anarchist groups have published a more straightforward internationalist position, as have the organisations of the communist left. We have already referred to these statements in an article “Internationalist positions against the war” in *World Revolution* no. 398. But among them the Anarchist Communist Group (ACG) while defending an internationalist position in its first article¹, makes important concessions to bourgeois nationalism in a second article, called “The situation in Gaza”.

Anarchist Communist Group: a covert defence of national liberation

This second article by the ACG presents the war in Israel as a confrontation between a colonial and colonised nation in which Israel is “*the dominant aggressor, due to its status as a settler-colonial state*”. What, in the view of ACG, are the consequences of such an analysis?

* Whether a colonising or a colonised nation “*both are entities that ultimately stand in the way of the liberation of the Palestinian working class and the class unity of all workers in the region*”. Therefore the ACG is opposed to the Israeli state as well as to the Hamas regime.

* The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in the past, and Hamas today, cannot bring liberation to Palestinians. So this liberation must come from the Palestinian working class as “*the most oppressed section of the working class*” with “*strong political awareness*” whose struggle is “*a prerequisite to a revolutionary movement in the region*”.

* But the working class in Palestine cannot do this on its own, “*the Palestinian people ... can only be free as can all people, through internationalist class struggle*”. So the ACG calls “*upon the international working class to organise in support and defence of their Palestinian counterparts*”.

In itself, we might be in agreement with certain affirmations in this article, especially with the call for “internationalist class struggle”. But here it is the tree that hides the forest, because behind all these radical words, “internationalist class struggle”, “liberation”, “international solidarity”, 1. “Neither Israel nor Hamas!”, Anarchist Communist Group.

“revolutionary struggle”, hide some fundamental concession to nationalism. Why?

As the article puts it, Israel occupies a nation, Palestine. So it advocates that the Palestinian workers should fight the Israeli state and organise armed self-defence. It thus affirms “*the right and necessity of the Palestinian working class to resist the Israeli state*”. The fight against the Israeli occupation is thus aimed at ejecting Israel from Palestine. But what else is this than a struggle for national liberation, not headed by the bourgeoisie but by a section of the working class? The ACG says “*we reject the idea of liberation under a national banner*”, but in the article it has already opened wide the window to that same idea.

Furthermore, the article says nothing about the necessity of the working class in Palestine to fight against its own bourgeoisie. The article makes no mention of the existence of a Palestinian state or a Palestinian nation. This is a way of smudging over the real issue. This is the open window to the idea that the workers in Palestine should not struggle against the Palestinian bourgeoisie. It only talks about resisting “*the Israeli state, including through the method of revolutionary struggle*” which “*can distinguish itself from the nationalist forces*”. But on such a basis, the working class in Palestine can in no way wage a real autonomous struggle and will not be able to distinguish itself from the Palestinian nationalist forces.

The article not only calls Palestinian workers to liberate themselves from the Israeli occupation, but it even appeals to the workers of the world to support this struggle for “liberation”. Leaving aside the question of whether the Palestinian working class is currently capable of fighting on its own terrain, something that is highly doubtful, it is not the task of the world working class to support a certain sector of the class to get rid of the yoke of a colonial rule. And even if it is true that the Palestinian workers are generally poorer than their Israeli class brothers, and their living conditions much worse, this doesn’t change the fact that any idea of “liberating” a particular nation is nothing more than a product of the logic of global imperialism, and thus can only take place on a bourgeois terrain².

The article suggests that liberation from that colonial rule will also bring about the liberation of the Palestinian workers as a class. But nothing is further from the truth. The liberation of the working class in any country can only occur through the destruction of capitalism on a global scale. And while the article underlines that capitalism is the basis of colonial ideology, it says nothing about the need to destroy capitalism in order to abolish all nation states.

In fact, the position defended by the ACG in this article is very dangerous because, at first glance, it seems indeed to be based on proletarian internationalism. But that is only in appearance. Because if you read it carefully, the opposite is the case. The article does not straightforwardly and openly defend Palestinian nationalism, but its logic, its whole reasoning points in that direction. It is a very sophisticated exposition of the national liberation ideology.

Under the conditions of decadence of capitalism any struggle for “national liberation” is by definition a dead-end, only leading to an uninterrupted chain of military confrontations, after which it’s not the working class that comes to power but a new bourgeois faction. In the history of capitalism there hasn’t been any struggle for national liberation in which the working class was able to autonomously liberate itself from occupation and repression by bourgeois factions. On the contrary, any attempt to be freed from foreign occupation depends on the positions adopted by other imperialist powers that use it in their own interests. The interests of the population that aims to “liberate” itself are completely subordinated to the imperialist appetites of these powers.

2. The article implicitly accuses the Israeli workers of complicity in the exploitation of Palestinian workers: “*the Israeli Jewish working-class are shamefully complicit with the oppression of the Palestinian proletariat*”, but it nonetheless calls the Israeli workers to express their solidarity with the Palestinian workers.

The absence of a solid basis to the proclamations of anarchist internationalists

As we recalled in a recent article, “*Anarchism has thus always been divided into a whole series of tendencies, ranging from those who have become part of the left wing of capital, like those who joined the Republican government during the 1936-39 war in Spain, to those who clearly defended internationalist positions against imperialist war, such as Emma Goldman during World War One*”³. The internationalism of the anarchists who sincerely want to defend this principle is not based on the universal conditions imposed on the proletariat by capitalism on a world scale, i.e. the exploitation of their labour power in all countries and in all continents. Proletarian internationalism has its point of departure in the conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat: beyond frontiers and military fronts, beyond races and culture, the proletariat finds its unity in the common struggle against its conditions of exploitation and the community of interest in the abolition of wage labour, in communism. This is the foundation of its class nature.

It’s precisely the absence, for anarchist internationalism, of a basis in the workers’ struggle against exploitation which explains why the ACG published this article. The reason is that the denunciation of war by anarchism is “*more tied up with its abstract ‘principles’ such as anti-authoritarianism, liberty, the rejection of any power, anti-statism, etc., than to a clear conception that this internationalism constitutes a class frontier that distinguishes the camp of capital from the camp of the proletariat*”⁴.

3. Between internationalism and the “defence of the nation”, *ICC Online*

4. “Anarchism and imperialist war (part 1): Anarchists faced with the First World War”, *World Revolution* no. 325.

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After Ukraine, the Middle East: Capitalism’s only future is barbarism and chaos

The war in Gaza like the war in Ukraine shows that the bourgeoisie has no solution to war. It has become totally powerless to control the spiral of chaos and barbarism which capitalism is inflicting on the whole of humanity.

Who can end war?

The proletariat in Gaza has been crushed. The proletariat in Israel, stunned by the Hamas attack, has allowed itself to be taken in by nationalist and war propaganda. In the main bastions of the proletariat, particularly in Europe, if the working class is not ready to sacrifice itself directly in the trenches, it is still incapable of rising up directly against the imperialist war, on the terrain of proletarian internationalism.

So is all lost?... No! The bourgeoisie has demanded enormous sacrifices to fuel the war machine in Ukraine. In the face of the crisis and despite the propaganda, the proletariat rose up against the economic consequences of this conflict, against inflation and austerity. Admittedly, the working class still finds it difficult to make the link between militarism and the economic crisis, but it has indeed refused to make sacrifices: in the United Kingdom with a year of mobilisations, in France against pension reform, in the United States against inflation and job insecurity.

While the Ukrainian conflict drags on, the Israeli-Palestinian war rages, and the bourgeoisie redoubles its efforts to fill the heads of the exploited with its despicable nationalist propaganda, the working class is still fighting! Recently, Canada has seen a historic movement of struggle. Unprecedented struggles, with expressions of solidarity, are taking place in the Scandinavian countries. The working class is not dead!

Through its struggles, the proletariat is also finding out what true class solidarity is. In the face of war, workers’ solidarity is not with the “Palestinians” or the “Israelis”. It is with the *workers*

One of the consequences is that, within the same international anarchist federation, nationalist and internationalist positions can easily coexist without causing problems or provoking heated debates. This lack of a consistent internationalist position is also shown by the reference at the end of the article of the ACG to “Palestine Action”, a totally pro-Palestine leftist group which targets arms suppliers to Israel. During the recent Radical Bookfair in London they refused to discuss the ICC’s argument underlining the inter-imperialist context of the war, even calling it an “infantile” analysis, recalling the Stalinist rhetoric against the communist left.

The failure of organised anarchism to fight imperialist war on a proletarian basis was clearly demonstrated in Spain 1936, something that is not recognised today by groups like the ACG or the internationalist minorities within the CNT. Both still speak about the Spanish revolution instead of the imperialist war in Spain, a rehearsal for World War II. But drawing the lessons of anarchism’s failure in face of the war is only possible by breaking with its abstract approach and calling into question the absence of a solid, materialist basis for its internationalist proclamations.

Faced with imperialist war, only one position rejects any identification with one of the camps in the conflict and at the same time outlines a perspective for ending all wars, and that is proletarian internationalism. This means that “*capitalism can only be overthrown and communism established on a global scale*” when “*the working class is united across national boundaries*”⁵. This viewpoint represents the only perspective that can put an end to capitalist exploitation, to the barbarity of war which increasingly threatens the very existence of humanity. **Dennis, 2.1.24**

5. “The need for internationalism in the face of the Boer War”, part 8 from the series on the struggle for the class party in the UK, *ICCOnline*.

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Northern Ireland: workers join the international revival of struggles

have been enduring. In Britain there have been at least some wage increases, but an effective wage freeze in Northern Ireland has made a bad situation even worse and workers can no longer put up with the effects of the “cost of living crisis”. The struggles have been undertaken because of a real deterioration in workers’ material conditions, which are under attack in all countries. In this the struggles of workers in Northern Ireland are in line with those in Britain from 2022, and with the subsequent movements in France, the US, Canada and Scandinavia. They are part of a break with the passivity of the previous 30 years, and the potential for further and deeper struggles in the future, in connection with the working class in Eire, mainland Britain, and in Europe. **Car 24/1/24**

Leftist support for Palestinian nationalism is a dose of capitalist poison – don't swallow it

A health warning against the lies of the left wing of capital, contributed by a close sympathiser of the ICC

The war in Gaza - Hamas's atrocious attack on civilians on October 7 and Israel's scorched earth response to it - has mobilised groups of capitalism's left, mainly Trotskyist, to offer their "solution" to this crisis of war and destruction. But their solutions, while coming from slightly different angles, are for more of the same: you fight nationalism and imperialism by supporting nationalism and imperialism. In this way the "critical" role that leftism plays for the ruling class is for it to mop up the genuine disgust that workers feel for the endless wars of capital (i.e. imperialist wars) and drag the workers into active support for them, via the pretext that they are expressing "solidarity with the oppressed". While they try to garner support for this or that nationalism or this or that "movement of the oppressed" the fundamentals of their positions are an attack on the basic tenet of the workers' movement: its internationalism, its watchword that workers have no country and no national interest to defend. The Communist Left has put a clear internationalist position on this war, denouncing all sides, while some elements of anarchism have tried, with difficulties, to do the same. But all varieties of leftism have sought to mobilise workers behind the military factions of the belligerents and against the intrinsic international unity of the working class.

The SWP: applauding capitalist terror

The ICC has already looked at the positions of the Socialist Workers Party and its open support for Hamas and its atrocities¹, but a bit more on this group given its size and its importance for the state: in an article entitled "Imperialist War and Violence" (*Socialist Worker*, 4.12.23) it actually says that "the solution to capitalist war isn't to back one imperialist side or the other – it's to tackle the system that produces war and competition head on". This sounds very much like an internationalist position and one that puts the class struggle at centre stage, but what is the content of this task – how is capitalism to be confronted "head on"? Their answer from the SWP is that it "means solidarity and support for oppressed peoples that revolt against imperialism"; in this case the murderers of Hamas! This is by no means the first time that the SWP has backed a ruling class with imperialist ambitions; in the 60's and 70's onward it supported the murderous gangsters of Mandela's African National Congress now running South Africa² where the vast majority of what the SWP call "the oppressed" remain in poverty and misery, or the Viet Cong, now running Vietnam with an iron rule of Stalinist terror and fully integrated into the imperialist machinations around South-East Asia between the USA and China. And in the decades in between then and now the SWP has supported and called for solidarity and support to any number of capitalist killing-machines that they say are fighting for their "oppressed people", whereas these factions that call themselves – or are called by the SWP – "anti-imperialist" are nothing but cogs in the machinery of capitalist barbarism. The SWP use or rather misuse V. I. Lenin's *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* and the weaknesses and hesitations of the past workers' movement on the question of national liberation in order to suggest that only a small number of countries are imperialist, whereas imperialism blankets the globe, "nestles everywhere"³ and necessarily sucks up any form of nationalist or "oppressed peoples" movement into itself. The SWP, through its trickery, is not behind the movement – which can only be a proletarian movement – to confront and "tackle the system that produces war and competition head on". Rather, it is one of capitalism's important recruiting sergeants for imperialist war,

which is clearly demonstrated in its support for the war-machine of Hamas and its "right" to murder civilians, including small children, and rape women. The military and political wings of Hamas – and the half-a-dozen or so Palestinian "anti-imperialist" groups that support them - are not "anti-oppressive" forces but forces of the capitalist state which like any national liberation "movement" is conjured up by the greater powers, using their ubiquitous secret services and military assets, and whose very existence is based upon the ruthless exploitation and repression of the working class that they supposedly represent. That is something which clearly defines their capitalist nature - and the capitalist nature of the Socialist Workers' Party along with it. Rather than fighting capitalism "head on", that is engaging in a class struggle against exploitation and war, the SWP is explicit over Gaza: "fighting for a free Palestine seeks to strike a blow against imperialism smashing Israel and backers".

We can only add that, for the SWP, "smashing Israel" necessarily involves "smashing" the Israeli working class. In a recent article⁴ the SWP carefully explain that "Israeli workers gain from the exclusion, repression and marginalisation of Palestinian workers. They secure some of the profits from the robbery of Palestinians... Individuals can and sometimes do make the break from Zionism, but not Israeli workers as a class. Socialists should look to a force that can lead to the end of Zionist terror. That's Palestinian resistance, the working class across the region and a protest movement in countries which fund and arm Israel". And so, by implication, Israeli workers are legitimate targets for "acts of resistance" like the massacre of October 7⁵.

Applauding capitalist terror, but with nuances

With its own particular nuances but generally going along the same lines as the SWP in supporting war with Israel, the International Marxist Tendency⁶ is generally more cautiously critical of Hamas, seeing it as a pawn of Israel (which used it for a long time to divide and control the Gaza Strip) but supports the Palestinian people having "the right to... defend themselves". In an article called "The Communist Party of Greece and the struggle for the liberation of Palestine: a necessary debate" the IMT take up the issue. There's plenty of "comradeship" between these two groups, one Trotskyist, the other Stalinist – which is correct seeing that they both belong to the left of capital – and turgid verbal gymnastics that are supposed to show their genuine "marxism", including quoting Lenin and the Third International, but the position of the IMT is exposed as equally supportive of aspects of imperialism as the SWP. After "comradely" criticism of the Greek CP (KKE) for supporting the "two-state" solution which "is not the struggle for socialism" and in order to give a "genuinely marxist position", the IMT agrees with the KKE "that the struggle for national liberation is a crucial part of the programme of communists in Palestine". While it spouts off endlessly about "socialism" and "Marxism", it peddles the lie that "national liberation", in this case "intifada until victory" which is the war of Palestinians against Israel, is a step towards socialism rather than the further descent into capitalist barbarity that it manifestly is. The IMT doesn't stop here: "March with us" they say "and boldly fight for world intifada". The idea that a world revolution could be achieved by a series of nationalist uprisings shows how Trotskyism cannot but support the world of imperialism.

The Socialist Party, formerly Militant, is less gung-ho about the war in Gaza than the previous

4. "What is the role of Israel's working class?", *Socialist Worker* 16.1.24

5. This idea of dismissing the Israeli working class as a mere bunch of "settlers" - an open attack on a section of the world proletariat - is by no means limited to the SWP. We will come back to this in a future article.

6. The International Marxist Tendency is a worldwide Trotskyist organisation that had its roots in the Militant left of the 1970's. It exists in 35 countries and its British section publishes *Socialist Appeal*, whose slogan on this is "Intifada 'til the end" with the "end" involved being that of Israel and its population.

two groups above, obscuring its support for imperialism with various democratic snake-oil remedies. "How can we build a movement to stop the war in Gaza?" it asks given its involvement in the mobilisation against the first Gulf War twenty years ago. It takes a different tack from the SWP's "unconditional support for Hamas" and criticises the latter for its October attack on Israel. It calls instead for "a socialist intifada" which is nothing but a more "left wing" form of war against Israel. And indeed, the SP go along with the SWP in that "we agree that it is essential to support the struggles for national liberation" - the difference being the language used in order to support nationalism and imperialism. The SP calls for the war against Israel to be run by "... democratically organised defence committees (fighting) for liberation" which according to them will result in "an independent Palestinian state alongside a socialist Israel..." (SP website). We should not be fooled by painting support for nationalism in red.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty offers a "softer", more pacifist tone in its response to the war. The AWL supports "workers' control", state ownership and "a fuller democracy", and its pacifist, democratic approach is equally dangerous to proletarian consciousness as the bellicosity of the SWP. It's another group going into verbal contortions in order to present its entirely capitalist programme as "socialist". Supporting a cease-fire and the release of Israeli hostages, the AWL calls for an arms embargo and the withdrawal of military aid from Israel before realising that the latter is more than self-sufficient in weaponry apart from hosting one of the biggest arms dumps of US weaponry outside of America. It supports what it calls the "growing peace movement" in an article on its website called "Full ceasefire, peace, two states!", which if "democratically organised" will result in "an independent Palestinian state alongside a socialist Israel". Such pacifism has always played into the hands of the ruling class and further undermines a real understanding of imperialism and its perspectives for humanity. And the AWL, with all its own nuances, is still very much putting forward the idea of Palestinian national liberation.

The various "solutions" to the war in Gaza from the menagerie of leftism above are entirely complementary, indeed part of the war fever now being generated by the bourgeoisie. "National liberation" and Palestinian nationalism are active factors in imperialism, part of the engine of the war machine of capitalism. Aside from the general confusions spread by the leftists about war, "socialism" and "marxism", groups like the SWP and the IMT want to aim more specifically at the working class. The SWP, which is strong in the trade unions, wants to "take the struggle against war into the workplace" and for "workplace days of action". The IMT suggest that workers should take strike action against the war in order "to bring down the war machine, hinder the flow of weapons to Israel", and it says that with such action "the Zionist war effort would come crashing down".

Against all these attempts to obscure the issue and drag workers behind the nationalist factions of the bourgeoisie, the working class needs clarity above all. Capitalist war, particularly on the scale it is spreading today, always brings inflation and greater attacks on the working class, where more and more sacrifices are demanded from them by the bourgeoisie. Therein lays the kernel of the class struggle against imperialism where the workers fight for their own interests against the ruling class and its national interest. All demands to support any kind of nationalism or nationalist movement contribute to undermining the fundamental aim of the class struggle – the destruction of the nation state. **Baboon 15.1.23**

Workers have no country!

Faced with the explosion of barbarity in Gaza, both sides and their supporters around the world are blaming each other for the crimes.

For some, Israel is waging a "dirty war" (as if there were such a thing as a clean one...) that even the UN and its very cautious Secretary General have had to denounce, going so far as to speak of "a serious risk of genocide". Some on the left of capital do not even hesitate to support the despicable atrocities of Hamas, painted as an "act of resistance" against "Israeli colonialism", which is claimed to be solely responsible for the conflict.

For its part, the Israeli government justifies the carnage by claiming to be avenging the victims of 7 October and preventing Hamas terrorists from again attacking the "security of the Jewish state". So much for the thousands of innocent victims! Never mind the "human shields" of 6 years! Never mind the ruined hospitals, schools and homes! Israel's security is worth a massacre!

Everywhere, we hear the sirens of nationalism defending a state that is supposedly the victim of the other. But what kind of deluded mind imagines that the Gazan bourgeoisie, thirsting for money and blood, is better than Netanyahu's clique of the corrupt and the fanatical?

"We're not defending Hamas, we're defending the right of the 'Palestinian people' to self-determination", all the leftist coterie at the head of the pro-Palestinian demonstrations sing, no doubt hoping, with this kind of ideological pirouette, to make us forget that "the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination" is only a formula designed to conceal the defence of what must be called the State of Gaza! The interests of proletarians in Palestine, Israel or any other country in the world should in no way be confused with those of their bourgeoisie and their state. To be convinced of this, we need only recall how Hamas bloodily repressed the 2019 demonstrations against poverty. The Palestinian homeland will never be anything but a bourgeois state at the service of the exploiting class! A "liberated" Gaza Strip would mean nothing more than consolidating the odious regime of Hamas or any other faction of the Gazan bourgeoisie.

"But the struggle of a colonised country for its liberation undermines the imperialism of the colonising states", counter-attacked some Trotskyists and what remained of the Stalinists, without laughing. What a crude lie! Hamas's attack is part of an imperialist logic that goes far beyond its own interests. Iran helped to ignite the fuse by arming Hamas. It is trying to spread chaos among its rivals, especially Israel, by multiplying provocations and incidents in the region: Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthi rebels in Yemen, the Shia militias in Syria and Iraq... "all the parties in the region have their hands on the trigger", as the Iranian Foreign Minister said at the end of October. However weak it may be in the face of the power of the Israeli military, Hamas, like every national bourgeoisie since capitalism entered its period of decadence, can in no way magically escape the imperialist ties which govern all international relations. Supporting the Palestinian state means siding with the imperialist interests of Khomeini, Nasrallah and even Putin, who is rubbing his hands over the conflict.

But then the inimitable pacifists appear on the scene to complete the nationalist straitjacket in which the bourgeoisie is trying to trap the working class: "We don't support either side! We demand an immediate ceasefire!" The most naïve no doubt imagine that the accelerated plunge of capitalism into barbarism is due to the lack of "good will" on the part of the murderers at the head of the states, or even to a "failure of democracy". The clever ones know perfectly well what sordid interests they are defending. This is the case, for example, with President Biden, supplier of cluster munitions to Ukraine, horrified by the "indiscriminate bombing" in Gaza. It has to be said that Israel took Uncle Sam by surprise, opening up a new and potentially explosive front that the United States could have done without. If

1. *World Revolution* 398, The SWP justifies Hamas slaughter

2. On the the class nature of the ANC see *World Revolution* 257, South African strike wave comes up against ANC and unions

3. For more on the basis of imperialism see Rosa Luxemburg's *Junius Pamphlet*, available on marxists.org

Milei takes his chainsaw to the Argentine working class

Javier Milei has become president of Argentina using an ultra-right-wing rhetoric, despite the fact that two years ago he and his political party were completely unknown. This is another example of a populist party emerging within the accelerated decomposition of capitalism and characterised by the bourgeoisie's loss of control of its political game, as seen primarily in the most developed countries. The rise of populist or rightist parties has been confirmed by recent examples in Europe such as the electoral success of Geert Wilders' Party for Freedom (PVV) in Holland and that of Georgia Meloni and the Brothers of Italy who now lead the coalition government in Italy. This phenomenon has spread from the central countries but has also affected the peripheral countries for several years. For the working class, populism is a mystification and an obstacle to the development of its consciousness.

"There is no alternative", "... they left us no choice..." are phrases used by Milei in his inaugural speech, in which he announced plans for the series of attacks he has prepared against the exploited. The deepening economic crisis and the long chain of right-wing and left-wing governments, despite claiming to be 'cleaning up' the Argentine economy, have actually made things worse. This has meant that all confidence in the traditional parties of the bourgeoisie has been lost. Neither the Peronists, whether on the left or the right, nor the Radicals, nor the formation of electoral alliances, made restoring confidence in the traditional, institutionalised state political parties possible. This situation opened the door to the emergence of a messianic leader like Milei from the populist right-wing, who, although patronised by certain sectors of the bourgeoisie, was not in a position where he could count on the support of the entire bourgeois class or claim to exercise total control over the state.

Some sectors of the bourgeoisie did indeed get behind him at the beginning of his election campaign, seeking to benefit from his unbalanced personality, his outbursts and his economic measures based on the sanctity of the market and a staunch defence of private property. Then a larger part of the ruling class became concerned and tried to curtail his ascent, but without success. Since what has been established as the dominant trend in the current phase of decomposition is the bourgeoisie's loss of control over its own political strategy, this made it possible for a figure like Milei to "sneak in" as head of the government, with a team, described by Mauricio Macri as "immature and lacking experience without real resources and easily manipulated", so that, immediately in the first round, they tried to "soften him up" by accompanying and mentoring him with experienced members of the traditional political "elite" that he claimed to reject...

The arrival of a populist party in government certainly poses a problem for the Argentine bourgeoisie, but the bourgeoisie is nevertheless using this against the workers. The working class will be the main target of Milei's famous chainsaw.

The bourgeoisie has lost control of its political game

In riding the populist wave, Milei has upset the electoral machinery that was established between two coalitions, the centre-left wing of the Peronists led by the Kirchner husband and wife team, and the centre-right Peronist faction led by Mauricio Macri. This competition between two bourgeois factions, which dates back to 2015, had tried to restore new life to the stale two-party system that gravitated around Peronism and anti-Peronism. But the exhaustion of the traditional parties and their coalitions was clear to see, because at the moment that this process was repeating itself, with a 12-year centre-left Peronist government being replaced with a centre-right government headed by Macri, which then failed to manage the economy effectively, it was replaced at an early stage by a centre-left Peronist coalition.

This is what led certain sectors of the bourgeoisie to back Milei, who was vehemently opposed to this already worn-out and discredited political system, describing it as a "political caste" that had, moreover, been implicated in corruption scandals

for years, as was the case with the Kirchner and Macri governments. This is why, in order to limit the development of political uncertainty, the need to employ figures from the ranks of the "privileged elite", those whom Milei says he despises, has been impressed upon Milei, forcing him to give the key positions in the government portfolios to people such as Patricia Bullrich at the Ministry of the Interior and Luis Caputo at the Ministry of the Economy.

The worsening economic crisis has provided fertile ground for Milei's rise

Another factor that has aggravated the conflicts within the Argentine bourgeoisie, and contributed to the splits within traditional parties, has been the worsening of the economic crisis. The measures adopted by the Kirchnerist governments and by Macri's right-wing government, in their attempt to clean up the economic system, had significantly contributed to the rise in inflation. Public spending and the resort to credit, which they thought would stimulate and re-balance the economy, ended up being a liability, and although the bourgeoisie and its state had already transferred the main bulk of the consequences of the worsening crisis onto the backs of the workers, this did not prevent discontent developing within the bourgeoisie itself.

But the bourgeoisie is not alone in having cause for concern with these developments. There are sections of the working class that have become ensnared by the radical populist right-wing rhetoric which, with its attacks on past governments' records, has led workers into having illusions and false hopes of sweeping improvements, as the answer to the despair and nihilism that is rife within society.

The growing impoverishment of the Argentine population, whose wages are being eroded daily by accelerating inflation, has led to despair among a large mass of the exploited (especially the young), who, in the context of the loss of class identity, have ended up falling into the trap set by Milei's promises.

But with only a few weeks having gone by since Milei assumed power and with the economic blows and the threats they face being implemented, it is becoming clear to the workers that the bourgeoisie, no matter which party is at the head of the government, and no matter how outrageous its rhetoric, has no solution to offer in the face of the capitalist crisis. The only thing it can provide is greater exploitation, greater hardship and more repression.

Neither state ownership nor the free market offer a solution for workers

The choice between a greater state intervention in the economy or the liberalisation of the market are old arguments used by the bourgeoisie when explaining the direction of its economic policies, but they are a pure mystification, because whether it is with a greater share of state ownership or through private capital, the bourgeoisie is always looking to the conditions which will allow it to continue its exploitation in the most profitable way it can find. For a worker, it makes no difference whether his exploitation is managed by private capital or by the state.

Engels has already explained that: "the transformation, either into joint-stock companies and trusts, or into State ownership, does not alter the capitalist nature of the productive forces. In the joint-stock companies and trusts, this is obvious. And the modern State, for its part, is also no more than an organisation created by bourgeois society (...). The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine - the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital."¹ The danger presented by

1. In order to assess the scale of the burden that public



Milei does not, therefore, come from the threat of privatisation or the loss of "national sovereignty" that would be a consequence of adopting the US dollar as its currency as some leftwingers claim. As we are seeing, Milei's chainsaw is directed towards crushing the workers by adopting measures that will enable him to achieve his real objective: defending the profits and interests of the national capital by launching the most brutal attacks on workers' living conditions.

Reducing the deficit and "choosing" to dollarise the currency and remove the central bank, while giving full rein to market forces, will entail a large dose of austerity, which will quickly paralyse production and cause an increase in prices and tariffs. This will mean a steep rise in inflation, further degrading purchasing power and the value of pensions, all in the name of "protecting the national economy".

Ideological campaign of the ruling class against the workers

Populism, as a general phenomenon of capitalist society, "springs from within an element present in most advanced countries, the profound loss of confidence in the 'elites' (...) due to their inability to restore health to the economy and stem the steady rise in unemployment and poverty" This revolt against the political leaders "(...) can in no way lead to an alternative perspective to capitalism".²

In this sense, it directly affects the working class, because the populist campaigns of hatred and resentment against the "establishment" are looking for a scapegoat to try and explain what is "not working", thereby masking the fact that it is the capitalist system as a whole that is responsible and not this or that personality or political party. For the workers, there is nothing to celebrate in the bourgeoisie's frenzy around the celebration of 40 years of democratic elections in the country since 1983 after the end of military dictatorship, or in the fact that since the massive "protest vote" in the last election (56% of the total, the highest in 4 decades) against the traditional parties, there is now an "outsider" at the head of government since 10 December 2023. Alternating the parties in power in an electoral democracy is certainly a trap for workers, making them believe that their vote is what decides changes in government and public policy; but the "punitive vote" is nothing more than an offer to "get revenge", which merely keeps them bound to the ideology of democracy.

If there is no difference between the Kirchnerists and Macri's supporters when it comes to de-spending and debt have become, we can relate them to GDP, bearing in mind that public spending represents 40% of GDP and that the level of debt, from 2018 to the present day, is evolving within a range of between 80% and 100% of this GDP. It should be added that these credits have hardly had a positive effect for the capitalists, who have created numerous fictitious companies to pretend they need capital investment, enabling them to acquire "cheap" dollars and shelter them in other countries. The outgoing government of Alberto Fernandez is presenting the bill according to which, of the \$45 billion in credits obtained by Macri from the IMF, around 90% ended up being squandered in this way.

2. Report on the impact of the decomposition on the political life of the bourgeoisie (23rd ICC Congress), *International Review* no. 164, 2020.

defending national capital and targeting the workers, it is clear that Milei has taken charge of the government precisely to continue this defence by attacking the working and living conditions of the working class; he has also demonised workers by naming the "beneficiaries" of state welfare benefits as accomplices in the crisis, in other words scapegoats whom he describes as lazy, profiteers and thieves.

In short, if the phenomena of decomposition such as populism affects its political game, the bourgeoisie still has the means to use its effects against the working class, for example by reinforcing the myth of democracy, with its alternating governments based on the illusory power of the vote, etc.

What can the working class do in the face of the attacks of the Milei government?

Milei's entire election campaign was based on his being a "libertarian", a critic of the traditional political elites, who had succeeded in frightening the "establishment", and therefore offering an alternative. But as soon as he took office, he began a head-on attack of the working class, which are reminiscent of the "shock measures" widely used by the dictatorial regimes in Latin America in the 1980s.

The old bourgeois recipe of alternating carrot and stick also means there are measures that are claimed to "improve social welfare". For example, the new government has announced a 50% increase in the amounts granted for programmes such as "universal child support" and the "credit card for food", which are in fact crumbs that are sprinkled around to appear to be "more caring", but which are also used as an instrument of control, with the threat of taking them away from anyone who is involved in street protests.

This "anti-piquetero" policy, "is a counterpart to the proposed plan, announced by the Minister of the Interior Patricia Bullrich, to crack down hard on demonstrations, making those people taking part in strikes and demonstrations pay the costs of the police operation! Furthermore, these fines will be imposed on parents who bring their young children with them on the demonstrations. What arrogance and contempt the bourgeoisie has for the exploited and oppressed class!

For our part, we are convinced of the fact that the Argentine workers, who have a historic tradition of struggle, will be pushed to fight back in the face of attacks on their living conditions. A glimpse of what workers are capable of was evident on the night of 20 December. Following Milei's televised presentation of his "Decree of Necessity and Urgency" (DNU), which, among other aspects, set out "the deregulation of the economy" and the ban on strikes, in many places in Buenos Aires as well as in the provinces, large crowds of workers spontaneously gathered in the streets banging on pots and pans, and hundreds of them in the capital marched to the parliament to protest.

Such responses, even if they are still quite weak, are important in highlighting the workers' discontent. They reflect a recognition of the need to break the chains of their illusions in the promises of the government, to show that they will not readily sacrifice themselves to further pauperisation.

The proletariat in Argentina must learn from the experience of the recent mobilisations of its class brothers and sisters in Europe and the United States. These mass mobilisations show that the working class "... 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, that 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".³ **JRT (7 January 2024)**

3. "Strikes and demonstrations in the United States, Spain, Greece, France... How can we develop and unite our struggles?" *World Revolution* no. 398

A symbol of the cynicism of the bourgeoisie

The 28th annual United Nations climate conference, held in Dubai at the end of November 2023, ended after two weeks of meetings with a new agreement that supposedly urges countries to (very) gradually phase out fossil fuels, accelerate “ongoing actions” to achieve “carbon neutrality”. And all this in a “fair, orderly and equitable” way ... by 2050. *Après moi, le déluge!* – capitalism’s cynical catchphrase.

The President of COP 28, Sultan Al Jaber, who is Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology in the United Arab Emirates and CEO of the oil company ADNOC, praised the agreement, which was approved by delegations from nearly 200 countries. “For the first time, our agreement makes reference to fossil fuels”, he said. According to him, it is a “historic package” of measures that provides a “solid plan” for keeping within reach the goal of limiting global temperatures to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

What a grim farce! While world leaders have hailed the agreement as an important step towards ending the use of fossil fuels, experts are critical, to say the least: the resolution contains very helpful loopholes that offer the oil industry many ways out, relying on unproven and unsafe technologies. It would be naïve to expect anything else from the summit organisers. The leaders of this region of the Middle East, known as the Eldorado for all mafias and the massive laundering of money from drugs, arms and anything else you can think of¹, are, like their counterparts the world over, well versed in petty arrangements and the exploitation of “legal limitations”. While they present themselves as the promoters of the energy transition,



“At COP28 in Dubai Emmanuel Macron made bombastic pledges, affirming that “these are not just nice words, France has a plan [...] to move away from fossil fuels and reduce its emissions”. Yet, while he expounded his plans, his emissaries in Brussels played a completely very different game. They voted against a new EU law that should prevent banks and other financial actors from funding projects tied to climate breakdown and environmental damage”. (“Macron’s climate hypocrisy will sink us all” Euronews)

concerned about the climate, they live off fossil fuels and obviously never stop promoting them.

The assessment of each state’s progress in reducing emissions imposed since the supposedly binding COP 21 in Paris in 2015 to limit the increase in global temperature by 2030, comes up against the depressing reality of the capitalist system. Today, fossil fuels (coal, natural gas and oil) still account for 82% of total energy supplies! Instead of falling, global emissions are rising: by 6% in 2021 and by 0.9% in 2022.²

This demonstrates once again that these international summits are incapable of having the slightest impact on global warming and its catastrophic consequences for humanity, and that they are in fact nothing more than talking shops designed to reassure people that “something is being done”

2. See the report: *CO2 Emission in 2022* (iea.org)

and that there is no longer any option but to get used to it. The year 2023 illustrates this dramatically, with violent storms and widespread flooding from China to Europe and North Africa, devastating forest fires in North America, southern Europe and Hawaii, and drought in large parts of North America, Europe and Africa.

“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.”³ Fears are growing that the planet is approaching a series of “tipping points” where envi-

3. Read our article “The bourgeoisie is unable to stem the tide of climate change”, *World Revolution* no. 398 (Autumn 2023).

ronmental damage will spiral out of control and lead to new levels of destruction.

Global warming, combined with more direct manifestations of environmental destruction such as deforestation and the pollution of land and sea by chemical, plastic and other wastes, is already threatening countless animal and plant species with extinction.

The same bourgeoisie that claims, at these conferences, to be looking for “global solutions to global problems” is itself involved in ruthless economic competition that is the first major obstacle to any real international cooperation against climate change. And in capitalism’s phase of decomposition, national competition is increasingly taking the form of chaotic, destructive and hyper-polluting rivalries and military confrontations. The ecological crisis is therefore not just approaching a series of “tipping points” that will exacerbate and accelerate its consequences, but is part of a series of interacting phenomena that are leading humanity ever more rapidly towards the abyss.

Saving the planet and humanity will not come from a bourgeoisie which, by its very nature, is trapped in a logic that rules out any questioning of capitalist accumulation, its thirst for profit and its apocalyptic dynamic. For it is capitalism that is responsible for these disturbances; it is its laws that force every capitalist to produce more and more at lower cost. In capitalism, everything has to be sold. And that’s all there is to it! An anarchic, short-term approach. In fact, it’s suicidal! **Louis, 29 December 2023**

1. As revealed by the Panama Papers in 2018, the Pandora Papers in 2021 and most recently by *Dubai Uncovered*.

Gaza War The reality behind the bourgeoisie’s slogans

Destroy Hamas?

The Israeli government has announced that the aim of its devastating bombing campaign and land invasion of Gaza is the destruction of Hamas, and that it is not targeting civilians but the infrastructure and command centres of Hamas. But “collaterally” killing thousands of civilian men, women and children is certainly the best way to recruit more converts to the so-called “Palestinian Resistance”, even if it may regroup and rename itself, fired by a growing desire for revenge, whether in Gaza, the West Bank, or Israel itself.

A spokesman for the Israeli government, Avi Dichter, agricultural minister and former Shin Beth (intelligence service) member, possibly in an unguarded moment, provided a better insight into the real aims of the Israeli onslaught: “We are now rolling out the Gaza Nakba. From an operational point of view, there is no way to wage a war – as the IDF seeks to do in Gaza – with masses between the tanks and the soldiers.”¹

In the Nakba or catastrophe of 1948, over 700,000 Palestinian refugees fled the territory designated as Israel, “stimulated” to leave by terrorist atrocities by Zionist militia (most famously the slaughter at Deir Yassin by the Stern gang) and further encouraged by triumphalist proclamation from the invading Arab states, who promised that the refugees would return following their imminent military victory. The Arab armies were defeated and the refugees were never allowed back; hundreds of thousands have remained in miserable conditions in refugee camps ever since. In short, the Nakba was the ethnic cleansing of Israel, so the Gaza Nakba would be the expulsion of the vast majority of its inhabitants, fleeing death, destruction and a permanent blockade. Such a “solution” reflects the

1. <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-11-12!> While probably meant as a criticism of the official policy, this statement has the merit of “letting the cat out of the bag” regarding the war aims of the Israeli government.

total lack of any long-term perspective held by the present Israeli government, since it could only be a prelude to further instability and wars. But the cruel policies of the Netanyahu government merely reflect a deeper reality: that the ruling class in all countries, the guardians of a dying capitalist world order, has no perspective to offer humanity, and is being more and more drawn in to an irrational and suicidal spiral of destruction. NATO’s attempt to bleed Russia dry in the war in Ukraine, and Russia’s desperate efforts to annex the eastern reaches of that country, are proof that this spiral does not spare the biggest powers on the planet.

Palestine will be free, from the river to the sea?

Hundreds of thousands of people have taken part in demonstrations across the world denouncing the devastation of Gaza and calling for a ceasefire. No doubt that many, perhaps the majority, are motivated by genuine indignation against this merciless bombardment, which has claimed around 16,000 victims, and left many more wounded or homeless. But despite this, the truth is that they are taking part in *pro-war* demonstrations, where the guiding slogan, “Palestine will be free, from the river to the sea” could only be achieved through the military destruction of Israel and the massive slaughter and expulsion of Israeli Jews – a Nakba in reverse. And on its ruins, an Islamic Palestine on the model of Iran?² The indiscriminate mas-

2. Another slogan often raised on these demonstrations: “2-4-6-8, Israel is a terrorist state”. And this is indeed true. But find us a state in the world of capitalism that does not use terror, either to crush dissent at home or wage its wars. The main backer of Hamas, Iran, is a case in point: having savagely crushed the “Woman, Life Freedom” demonstrations on the streets of its cities, it has executed 127 people since the latest Israel/Palestine war began, many of whom had taken part in the protests. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/dec/02/iran-using-gaza-conflict-as-cover-to-step-up-executions-of-protesters>

sacre carried out by Hamas on 7 October, almost never condemned and even openly celebrated on these demonstrations, has clarified the real methods and aims of the “Resistance”

The impossibility of a “free Palestine” also reflects a deeper reality, again expressing the advancing decay of this system: the impossibility of all so-called “national liberation” struggles and nationalist movements being anything more than an adjunct to the bloody rivalry of imperialist powers large and small for control of the planet.

Humanity will only be free when the capitalist prison of the nation state has been dismantled and it lives in a world community without exploitation and without national borders.

Israel and Palestine, two nations living in peace?

There are those who do indeed condemn both the decimation of Gaza and the Hamas atrocities. Some are engaged in dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians despite the growing wall of hatred created by this war. They put their hopes in a “political solution” in which local and global powers will sit down and come to a workable agreement, in particular the idea of peaceful coexistence between Israel and a newly formed Palestinian state.

But appealing to the good will of imperialist states has never stopped wars and neither could a more “liberal” Israel or a future Palestinian state escape the drive towards war and imperialism, from which as Rosa Luxemburg explained in 1915, “no nation can hold aloof”. As we say in our international leaflet:

“History has shown that the only force that can put an end to capitalist war is the exploited class, the proletariat, the direct enemy of the bourgeois class. This was the case when the workers of Russia overthrew the bourgeois state in October 1917 and the workers and soldiers of Germany revolted in November 1918: these great movements of struggle by the proletariat forced the governments

to sign the armistice. This is what put an end to the First World War: the strength of the revolutionary proletariat! The working class will have to win real and definitive peace everywhere by overthrowing capitalism on a world scale”³.

Whatever their good intentions, those who fall for the slogans of pacifism are spreading illusions in the inherently violent nature of the present system of exploitation. The road to a world human community lies through the class struggle in all countries, and this struggle is necessarily obliged to develop the means to defend itself from the assaults of a ruling class which will fight to the death to defend its privileges. Pacifist illusions disarm the working class ideologically and materially.

Faced with the cacophony of delusions and false slogans generated by all capitalist wars, the principle of proletarian internationalism, the solidarity of the exploited across the world, remains our only defence, the only basis for understanding how to respond.

Amos, December 2023

3. “Massacres and wars in Israel, Gaza, Ukraine, Azerbaijan... Capitalism sows death! How can we stop it? (international leaflet)” ICCOnline

Continued from page 3

Workers have no country

Biden has raised his voice to Netanyahu, it is not to “preserve world peace”, but to better focus his efforts and military forces on his rival China in the Pacific, and on the latter’s burdensome Russian ally in Ukraine.

There is therefore nothing to hope for from “peace” under the rule of capitalism, any more than after the victory of one side or another. The bourgeoisie has no solution to war! **EG, 16.12.23**

Despite the “Swedish model”, workers in Scandinavia respond to the deepening crisis of capitalism

Scandinavia is witnessing a wave of strikes on a scale not seen since the late 1970s. At the end of October, the US car manufacturer Tesla – Elon Musk’s electric car enterprise – refused to sign collective agreements with the Swedish IF Metall union, guaranteeing a minimum wage. A strike was declared in the company’s 10 repair workshops. It was followed by expressions of solidarity by postal workers, who blocked all mail bound for Tesla’s workshops, by dockers in four Swedish ports, who joined the strike on 6 November, and by electricians who refused to carry out maintenance work on electrical charging points. At the beginning of November, faced with the risk of a strike for wage increases at the Karna bank, the unions and bosses rushed out a collective agreement.

The conflict with Tesla has also rapidly taken on an international dimension, with solidarity actions in ports to the company’s repair workshops in Denmark and Norway, and at the Tesla factories in Germany.

There had already been signs heralding this outbreak of workers’ militancy. In April, 2023 a wildcat strike broke out among public transport workers in Stockholm, which lasted for four days. This is significant as it was the first wildcat strike for decades in Sweden. Workers struck against the worsening conditions, and despite the fact that the strike was limited to one part of public transport, the train drivers, there were strike meetings open to other workers. Also, the workers were supported by fund-raising and expressions of solidarity on social media. Unlike the present ongoing Tesla strike, this strike was not publicised, unless newspapers reported on the “chaos” it created.

Part of an international movement

With the exception of the transport wildcat in April, all these strikes since October have been tightly controlled by the unions. But this does not alter the fact that this movement can only be understood as part of a world-wide revival of class struggle in reaction to capitalism’s dire economic situation, and above all to the inflationary pressures behind the “cost of living crisis”, which is now also affecting workers in the Scandinavian countries famous for their “quality of life” and wide-ranging welfare services. The unions in Scandinavia have had plenty of warnings from the upsurge of struggles in other countries (Britain, France, USA, and now Canada), and their mobilisations and “solidarity actions” are part of a policy aimed at derailing a real development of consciousness in the working class. What concerns bosses and unions alike is the return of a genuine sense of solidarity within and between sectors of the class, and even across national borders, and thus the beginnings of a recovery of class identity, the awareness that workers in all sectors and countries are part of a class exploited by capital and facing similar attacks on its living standards.

Equally significant is the fact that struggles occur at all today in Sweden, which is on the verge of joining NATO, which contributes significant resources to the arming of Ukraine, and where propaganda around the war with Russia is virtually incessant. In January two top defence officials warned that Swedes must prepare for the possibility of war: “Civil Defence Minister Carl-Oskar Bohlin told a defence conference ‘there could be war in Sweden’. His message was then backed up by military commander-in-chief Gen Micael Byden, who said all Swedes should prepare mentally for the possibility”¹.

And yet despite the bourgeoisie’s attempts to whip up war fever, workers have put their own living standards first. This does not mean that the workers are reacting directly to the threat of war, but their willingness to fight on their own terrain against the impact of the economic crisis is the basis for a future development of consciousness about the link between economic crisis and war, and thus about the need to confront capitalism as a whole system of plunder and destruction.

The bourgeois slogans of the unions

It remains the case that these advances in class

1. “Swedish alarm after defence chiefs’ war warning” – BBC News

consciousness are very fragile and, as ever, the trade unions are there to block and distort them. The main slogan of the unions has been the “defence of the Swedish model” of collective agreement between unions and bosses.

For over five years, IF Metall has been calling for collective agreements for the workers on the existing Tesla workshops in Sweden. Tesla has refused, categorically, which left IF Metall with little alternative but to call the strike on 27 October. The conflict was from the start highly coordinated by the unions. On the 7th of November, the Transport Workers’ Union and Harbour Workers’ Union joined the conflict and blocked all ports in Sweden where Tesla cars are loaded and unloaded. During November, several official trade unions announced sympathy measures: the Electricians’ Union, the Painters’ Union, the Government Employees’ Association and others. Important customers of Tesla, such as Stockholm Taxi, announced that they will no longer buy their cars unless Tesla signs a collective agreement, and that “*The Swedish model with collective agreements is an important principle that must be defended*”.

News about the blockade was publicised daily in the Swedish media, as well as continuous updates on the conflict. As the strike continued, this media interest was not limited to Sweden, since prestigious bourgeois publications like *The Economist*, *Financial Times* and *The Guardian* followed it closely, as well as representatives of the EU, who described the “Swedish Model” as part of “Social Europe” against “US anti-union policies”. Throughout, the spotlight on the personality of Elon Musk as an exceptionally ruthless billionaire has been used to divert attention from the reality that all capitalists need to increase their attacks on workers’ wages and conditions. Even better for stoking up nationalism is the fact that this particular attack is being spearheaded by an American company.

The other face of the “collective agreement” ideology is the promotion of divisions between unionised and non-unionised workers. In the Tesla strike, workers who were not unionised, continued working, which led IF Metall to set up picket

lines outside the workshops, accusing these non-unionised workers of being “scabs”.

Union methods lead to defeat

Today, a few days into the new year, the strike is still ongoing, with no prospects of an outcome, since Elon Musk and Tesla refuse to negotiate. Some unionised workers have gone back to work, risking exclusion from IF Metall, and also being labeled “scabs” in the leftist press. Since the beginning of December last year, no news has appeared on the strike. Portrayed originally as a struggle between David and Goliath, the media interest seems to have vanished.

Today, the top officials of IF Metall have no intention of calling for solidarity from other workers in the same sector. The Tesla workers are locked into a dynamic of defeat, which the current campaigns on “scabs” bears witness to.

In the face of the sacrifices that will be increasingly demanded of them in the name of the national economy and the defence of the country, workers need to come to their own collective agreement: the agreement to gather together and make decisions in general assemblies that are not controlled by the unions, to spread their struggles to other enterprises and sectors whether unionised or not, and whether inside or outside the rules of the “Swedish model”. **Eriksson and Amos, January 2024**

Addendum: What is the “Swedish model”?

The expression “the Swedish Model” has often been used to describe the Swedish welfare state generally, but originally it meant a very strict regulation of conflicts on the labour market. In the 1930s, strikes were commonplace in Sweden and the Social Democratic government, who had come to power in 1932, did not want to intervene, but turned to LO (the Swedish central union apparatus, like the TUC in Britain) to stop this. In 1938, LO signed a historic agreement with the employers’ federation, the SAF, where it was stated that central negotiations should be held, union by union, where no unions should take advantage

but follow a maximum limit of wages. In this way, the state was guaranteed a stable economy without needing to intervene to keep the wages down (very practical for the Social Democratic state apparatus). In this agreement, it was stipulated that no industrial action was allowed during an agreement period. In effect, this was a ban on strikes that effectively was in action until the wildcat strikes began to appear in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Swedish Model means in reality “peace on the labour market” and a ban on strikes – so of course the trade union and the bourgeoisie in general support this!

To have a collective agreement at a certain workplace means that workers are guaranteed limited working hours, holidays and overtime payment as well as insurance and unemployment benefits, which in Sweden are regulated by the unions. It is therefore a part of the general welfare system. Having no collective agreement means in this case that, except for the general benefits and insurances, Tesla decides about your wage through their own premium system and you must sign a confidentiality contract before you start working (one worker was sacked because his wife posted on X/Twitter about the conditions at his workplace).

Of course, these conditions are appalling, but it is a profound illusion to think that union legality and “collective agreements” can really protect workers from the assaults of a capitalist class which is being driven to the wall by the world economic crisis and the growing weight of the war economy. Furthermore, the unions’ link to the wider state machinery means that they are themselves part of these assaults. IF Metall, the strongest and most influential union in Sweden, has a history of close connections with the Social Democratic state apparatus. Stefan Löfvén, the former Swedish PM, honed his leadership credentials as an IF Metall chairman when he managed to cut down the wage demands in the central agreement just after the financial crisis in 2008, declaring that workers must be “responsible” in the face of the crisis.

The ICC’s fight against opportunism and parasitism

Reader’s letter

Faced with the growing danger of opportunism within the proletarian camp, the ICC has intervened on numerous occasions in its press¹ and has organised several discussions with its contacts and close sympathisers. While at first sight this struggle may seem anecdotal or secondary, the history of the workers’ movement, since the determined battles of Marx and Engels (already described as “parochial quarrels” at the time), has amply demonstrated that this is not the case. You only have to look at how the Internationalist Communist Tendency (ICT), an organisation of the Communist Left, can wallow in the illusory quest for influence in the working class at any price to be convinced of this: the ICT prefers to renounce the defence of the fundamental political principles of the workers’ movement (in particular, the serious defence of internationalism) and jeopardise the revolutionary perspective, in the hope of winning a handful of militants.

Nor has the ICC hesitated to defend the revolutionary camp tooth and nail in the face of the complacency and “openness” of organisations of the Communist Left towards petty snitches (like the IGCL, the “International Group of the Communist Left”) or parasitic groups and individuals. Parasitism, and the inability of revolutionaries to oppose it rigorously, has always been a scourge in the history of the workers’ movement, as the strug-

gle of the First International against Bakunin’s manoeuvres already showed. The raison d’être of the parasitic movement, full of semi-intellectuals with over-inflated egos, is to hinder clarification between the real revolutionary organisations and their fight against capitalist society.

That is why we warmly welcome the letter below from one of our contacts in support of this struggle. **ICC**

Letter from Osvaldo

Dear comrades,

In continuity with my criticism and rejection, through my previous statements, of the various forms of parasitism that have been undermining the proletarian political camp for years, today I also express my broadest condemnation of parasitism and my full solidarity with the ICC.

But, at the same time as making this declaration, I want to issue a warning to the organisations that are still part of the proletarian political camp: beware of opportunism, another irrepressible scourge of the workers’ movement and in particular of its avant-gardes. For it insidiously opens the door not only to the renunciation of proletarian principles which distinguish this same camp (to the point of leading it to betrayal, see for example the case of German social democracy on the eve of the First World War), but also to adventurism, and worse still, as the ICC report rightly says, to giving parasitism an entry ticket to the communist left. This can lead to a really pernicious contagion of the proletarian political camp, endangering its survival, without which there will be no party tomorrow, the indispensable organ for leading the

proletarian revolution to victory.

And in this respect, I want to denounce the parasites and spies of the GIGC who, as shameless liars, in addition to other unfounded accusations duly denied by the ICC – documents in hand – through its press and in public meetings, take the liberty of attacking the latter by attributing to it non-existent councilist weaknesses, precisely on the conception of the party, thereby giving a wink to the other formations of the proletarian political camp. Now, there can be and there are differences on the conception of the party between, for example, the ICC and the ICT or the Bordigist groups, and these can and must be discussed fraternally and publicly with the different groups, precisely in continuity with the tradition which the communist left has bequeathed to us. Instead, we find the comrades of the ICT collaborating with, and even accepting into their ranks, unworthy and dangerous elements like those of the IGCL. This is setting a bad example to the milieu, especially concerning the importance and necessity of its existence for elements who are evolving towards class positions (see the NWBCW committee meeting in Paris²). Unfortunately, I fear that the opportunism of the ICT is leading it into a dangerous drift, which threatens both its survival as a group belonging to the proletarian political camp and that of the camp as a whole.

I therefore fully agree with your presentation and will fight relentlessly against opportunism, adventurism and parasitism. Osvaldo, 15-11-2023

2. ‘On the recent meeting of NWBCW in Paris’ on our website.

1. See for example ‘Public Meetings of the ICT in France: a real political failure’ and ‘The 1872 Hague Congress of the First International: How the ICT denies the lessons of Marxism on the fight against political parasitism’ on our website.

Historic mobilisations in Quebec as well

"Enough is enough!" The same feelings of revolt, anger and frustration have spread within the ranks of the working class from Britain to the United States, with similar expressions in France and the Scandinavian countries along the way. Widespread attacks on our living and working conditions, and the brutal, arrogant and cynical attitude of governments and employers, have only strengthened our fighting spirit and our determination to continue the struggle. This same mood is strong in Quebec, Canada, where 565,000 public sector workers employed by the federal government (15% of the active population) came out on strike en masse when faced with rising prices and deterioration in their working conditions. Increasingly many proletarians in capitalism's central countries, as in the United States, find themselves being plunged into poverty.

Strikes by public sector workers in Canada have been underway for over a month and are further confirmation of the revival of working class struggle internationally. It's over fifty years since the last strike on this scale which was in April, 1972, when Quebec was paralysed with factories and mines occupied by strikers.

Today's strikes are a significant extension to the wave of struggles in the United States that affected the car industry in particular, with the UAW (United Autoworkers Union) finally signing an agreement with the management at Ford, Stellantis and GM, between October 25 and 30, which was considered a clear "victory" and was able to bring an end to more than a month of strike action.

On a broader level, it confirms the 'rupture' with thirty years of retreat and passivity as referred to in the "Reports and Resolutions of the 25th ICC Congress", where we explain how the revival of workers' combativity in numerous countries at the vital economic centres of capitalism, was a major historical event.

Workers' solidarity and combativity

A powerful wave of anger, determination and outrage was evident in the strikes where the public sector mobilised en masse in Quebec, expressing the very strong combativity of the working class there, and the continuing international revival of working-class struggles, particularly in North America, following on from the car industry strikes in the United States.

The provocative and arrogant attitude of the federal government gave rise to increased attacks on teachers and health care workers alike, increasing their job insecurity and by making already intolerable working conditions even worse. The number of teachers who have resigned has doubled in the last four years (more than 4,000!), at a time when there is a crying shortage of teachers in Quebec's public schools, with classes having been closed down for one month for one million pupils. This massive response has reached across all levels of the teaching profession (primary, secondary and higher education), as well as school transport, day-care centres and administrative staff.

The same frustration is being expressed in Health and Social Services, with the threat of a "major reform" hanging over the health system. Living and working conditions are under attack from the bourgeoisie here too. The federal government plans to further increase the number of independent and private clinics that will require increased staff mobility and flexibility and the need to accept voluntary relocations according to departmental needs, meaning more redundancies and existing staff facing an increased burden of already exhausting individual tasks and unpaid overtime. As one lab technician put it: *"We already work like dogs on weekends, holidays and nights. And they tell us it's not enough."*

In this situation, the government has been intransigent, contemptuous and totally cynical, offering to negotiate on further wage increases only in exchange for the workers agreeing to increased and more widespread flexibility, with deliberate intentions of letting negotiations drag on. This is demonstrated by the hard line taken by both Premier François Legault and Sonia Le Bel, who is President of the Public Finance Council.

However, the anger and mass mobilisation has

already succeeded in breaking with the tendency toward individual despondency and the kind of profound demoralisation that existed previously.

This ongoing situation has both aroused and inspired a wave of mutual support and solidarity. In the case of the teachers, for example, a support group has been set up on social networks to help unpaid strikers on the picket lines with donations of food and clothing. The strikes, including those in the private sector, continue to enjoy the sympathy and support of 70% of the population. In addition, the number, frequency and scale of the mobilisations have demonstrated the great determination of the strikers to not give in.

The bourgeoisie sabotages the struggle and divides workers

The trade unions had already consciously taken in hand the leadership so as to be able to channel the anger and to exert control over the movement to disperse and divide it. The teachers' union (Fédération autonome de l'enseignement (FAE)) called on its 66,000 members to come out on an indefinite strike from 13 November, while the four main trade union confederations that make up the "Common Front" in the public sector, representing 420,000 employees, only called for sporadic strikes from November 21 to 23, then from December 8 to 14. For its part, the health workers union (Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé) called on its 80,000 members to stop work on November 6, 8, 9, 23 and 24, then from December 11 to 14. Some of the organisations had promised tougher strike action if negotiations with the government were unsuccessful, but they were stalling for time in order to delay this eventuality until after the festive season!

At the same time, the government had a trump card up its sleeve with which it was able to exploit to the full in its attempt to defuse this combativity

and to stir up divisions and competition: it conducted negotiations with each sector in turn and also separately with each national trade union, and it was able to rely on the work of undermining, dividing and controlling the struggles by the various unions. Thus, as early as 20 December, part of the "Common Front" in education began to fracture, with the FSE-FSQ expressing its desire to conclude a separate agreement with the government and the Treasury Commission. At the same time, the most "radical" fraction of strikers behind the FAE, which was on indefinite strike, was engaging in spectacular minority "commando operations" such as blocking access to the ports of Montreal and Quebec City, before it finally reached an agreement of its own, that put an end to the teachers' strike on 28 December. In this way, the unions and the Quebec government managed to find a solution through specific measures to improve salaries and pensions on a case-by-case basis, as well as to limit overcrowding in the classrooms. On the other hand, no agreement has apparently yet been reached in the nursing sector, which seems to demonstrate a tactic of 'divide and rule' with this particularly combative sector having to continue striking on its own. The possibility of further strikes in other sectors in the near future, given the depth of discontent cannot be ruled out.

Continuing maturation of working class consciousness

Despite the actual limitations and the warning it contains concerning the real dangers facing the development of future struggles, letting the struggle get trapped in the manoeuvres of the bourgeoisie and those of the unions, the public sector strike in Quebec illustrates most of all the potential of the international revival of workers' combativity and determination, in a broader context of unfold-

ing struggles and maturing workers' consciousness in the central countries of capitalism. Above all, it reaffirms the clear capacity of the working class to develop its struggles in response to the blows of the global crisis and the all-out attacks by the bourgeoisie and its governments, no matter whether left or right wing, the expression of a dying and decaying capitalist world. These struggles are a major step forward for the working class on the road to the recovery of its class identity and its consciousness.

In the face of all the propaganda and the shower of lies spewed out since 1989 about the supposed bankruptcy or death of communism, these struggles demonstrate that the working class has not gone away and more than ever constitutes the only class with a revolutionary perspective for the overthrow of capitalism and a future for humanity, that will overturn the inexorable sinking of capitalist society into a sea of misery, chaos, generalised war and barbarism. **GD, 4.1.24**



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Bourgeois parties divided, but united against the working class

Interne conflict between the different factions of the Tory party continues, whether fighting over covid, economic growth, or sending refugees to Rwanda. The populism embraced by parts of the party will not be discarded, an expression of the loss of control by the British bourgeoisie of its political apparatus. The ruling class is worried about the state of the Conservative Party, which was once such a reliable element in British capitalism's political apparatus. This is not just a 'Tory crisis', it's an impasse that is part of a much deeper, global political crisis of the ruling class, which will continue regardless of who wins the next general election.

It's in this context that the Labour Party is trying to present itself as a responsible team able to manage British capitalism effectively. On finance it's very cautious on making expensive promises, saying it would not "turn on the spending taps". On refugees and asylum seekers, Starmer says that immigration and small boat crossings are "matters of serious public concern" and Labour would "bring order to the border". With British imperialism's support for Ukraine and Israel, Starmer has lined Labour up with the Tories, and guaranteed that there will be no cuts in military spending. At the beginning of 2023, after Sunak announced his five goals (the "peoples' priorities"), Starmer responded with five "missions": there were no contradictions between the two lists. When Starmer defended Thatcher as a leader who brought about "meaningful change", it was ironic, as, whatever Labour promises in its election manifesto, no actual change of any significance is envisaged.

For some on the left, whether inside or out of the Labour Party, this is a massive betrayal orchestrated by Starmer. This of course implies that everything was fine under Corbyn, an equally devout supporter of state capitalism. Some Trotskyists seem, superficially, to have more thoroughgoing critiques. The Socialist Workers Party says "the problem isn't just one leader. It's a condemnation of a whole method that is centred on parliament. The answer is not the long slog inside Labour but a total break from it. For those left in Labour, it'd be right to conclude that it's time to look elsewhere for change." (Socialist Worker 4/12/23). Yet, for decades the SWP called for a vote for Labour, and, as an example of its method, in its analysis of the 2017 election, said that Corbyn had offered a "progressive and internationalist" alternative,



Equal defenders of war and exploitation

who had campaigned on a "left wing anti-austerity manifesto" (*International Socialism* 155). Examples of this so-called "internationalism" can be found in Corbyn's support for Hamas and Hezbollah in wars in the Middle East, or support by the SWP for Iran in the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s. Other Trotskyists see Labour's 'betrayal' in the advent of Blair's New Labour, or the expulsion of the Militant tendency in the 1990s. In reality, the transformation of social democratic parties took place more than a century ago.

When Social Democracy went over to the side of capital

Before the First World War, in the Congresses of the Second International, the Socialist Parties proposed the international solidarity of the working class against the drive to war by imperialism, right up to the Manifesto of the Basel Congress of 1912. But, when war broke out in 1914, most of the Socialist/Social Democratic parties rushed to the support of their ruling classes, joined in recruitment for the imperialist massacre, and took their places in capitalist governments. This betrayal of the working class marked the end of social democracy as a political current of the working class, but the confirmation of its utility for the bourgeoisie. This was not just in time of war, but as much in times of workers' resurgence: the example of the role of the SPD in crushing the German revolution immediately comes to mind. The

Labour party in Britain was no exception to this trend. From the Cabinet table to the unions on the shop floor, Labour and the unions have played an essential role for the bourgeoisie. It was precisely because of its continuing role in contact with the working class that it was able to tell how workers responded to the policies of the bourgeoisie, and to sell and manage capitalism with a more radical language than the Liberals or Conservatives.

This functioning of the Labour Party as an integral part of the political apparatus of the state has continued in both government and opposition. In coalition during the Second World War, in government after 1945, reorganising public services, enforcing austerity, trying to pursue the needs of British imperialism, or, during the 1950s, a time of a brief economic stability, preparing for future crises, Labour played a number of roles for British capitalism. This applied during the governments of Wilson/Callaghan or Blair/Brown, or in periods of opposition where it provided illusions of future alternatives and reinforced its relations with the unions.

The parliamentary procession of changing governments is not just a matter of teams automatically taking their turn in Downing Street. While the Tories have been wracked by inter-factional conflict, a clear expression of the divisions worsened by decomposition, Labour has also shown itself not to be immune to serious divisions. After the removal of Corbyn, Starmer has done his best to secure his position and bring 'responsible' positions to the fore. This has not been a bloodless matter; MPs like Corbyn and Diane Abbott have remained members of the Labour Party, but have lost the parliamentary whip. Alongside existing divisions, like the row over antisemitism in the Labour Party, the response of Starmer to the war between Israel and Hamas has shown that Labour is far from a united party. Councillors have resigned from the party; frontbenchers have also resigned from the shadow cabinet so that they can express their opposition to Starmer's policy; MPs have voted for a ceasefire in the conflict in the Middle East (against official policy) and there's a continuing undercurrent of dissatisfaction with the direction that Starmer is taking the party. On economic policy there's unhappiness with the prospects of the purse strings not being loosened, and with the perceived slackening of commitment to previous 'green' promises.

False Labour 'alternatives'

The divisions within the Labour Party, like those of the Tories, show the political difficulties the bourgeoisie has in a period of growing decomposition. But the bourgeoisie isn't only concerned with the economic crisis and the accumulation of capital, not only preoccupied with ongoing imperialist conflict, and the preparation for future wars: it also has to deal with the struggles of the working class, and specifically the break with the previous period of passivity, starting with the struggles that began in Britain in the summer of 2022. This presents Labour with a number of problems. On one hand, they can criticise the Tory government's economic policies, and its responses to a period of strikes and protests, but they also have to appear to be offering something different. Labour's quest for a reputation for fiscal responsibility doesn't offer anything to a militant working class. This is a further source of divisions within the Labour Party, between those who want to pose as the workers' friend, and those who want to balance the books.

Labour is not alone in trying to undermine the class struggle by providing false alternatives to the working class. While there are limitations to what Labour can present, the unions and the leftists can give reasons to support Labour as a 'lesser evil', or even to pose supposedly radical alternatives. Union leaders like Mick Lynch, Mick Whelan, and Sharon Graham have already said that it's not a matter of relying on Labour to fight against the Tories' recent 'anti-union' legislation (the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023), it might be necessary to break the law. But whether giving reasons to support Labour, or reasons to get lost in the defence of unions, or, like some leftists, campaigning for various alternative political causes or parties, the unions and leftists still function as an important part of the political system of the bourgeoisie, as institutions functioning against the immediate and historic struggles of the working class. **Car 15/12/23**

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 stratified 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*.