



world revolution

Faced with militarisation and war, we have to wage class struggle

The competing states and their leaders, whether they are presented as ‘authoritarian’ or ‘democratic’, are seeking to impose sacrifices on the proletariat everywhere in the name of the ‘indispensable’ war economy’

Whether it is Putin’s Russia, Xi Jinping’s China, Trump’s United States or Von der Leyen’s European Union, “*the time has come for rearmament*”! The new German Chancellor says: “*From now on, the following rule must apply to our defence: whatever the cost!*” President Macron wants to “*strengthen our armies as quickly as possible*”, as does British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who has announced military spending “*unprecedented since the end of the Cold War.*”

Intense warmongering and militaristic propaganda

To impose these colossal sums, in the midst of an economic and financial crisis, against a backdrop of staggering public deficits, the most effective strategy remains manipulation through fear: “*Who can believe that today’s Russia will stop at Ukraine?*” (Macron). Should we not at all costs “*deter tyrants like Vladimir Putin?*” (Starmer).

In reality, in this obsolete capitalist system, all states are imperialist, small or large, aggressors as well as the aggressed, all defending only the cold-blooded interests of the national capital. All are gangsters, greedy monsters wallowing in a sea of blood, who, when they are not drinking the blood of civilians are preparing the future carnage which they have calculatingly decided upon. And as always, these warmongers take the usual precautions to cynically justify the monstrosity of their barbaric enterprises, always in the name of ‘peace’ and ‘values’! Isn’t Putin himself fighting ‘Nazis’? Doesn’t the French Minister of the Economy, Eric Lombard, defend a democratic ‘economy of peace’ in order to buy his instruments of death?

Everywhere, the working class is subjected to this intense propaganda, to the media steamroller that tries to persuade us with nauseating speeches that military spending is ‘necessary’ and that arms production must ‘inevitably increase’. All for reasons presented everywhere as ‘ethical’! Polls then flourish, designed to gauge, manipulate and feed the same discourse seeking to persuade us that it is necessary to ‘defend one’s homeland’!

But to claim that war and the militarisation of society are a ‘necessary evil’, something obvious, against which nothing can be done unless we want to risk even greater massacres, is an odious lie. Militarisation and war are always the fruits of the barbaric decisions of the ruling class and the very expression of the impasse into which the decomposing capitalist system is sinking more and

more. The world wars of the past, like the abominable massacres in the Gaza Strip or in Ukraine today, are not the product of the ‘madness’ of this or that leader, but the expression of the historical dead-end reached by the capitalist system, of its inability to offer anything other than to drag the working class and all of humanity into ever more vast, apocalyptic spirals of destruction. What lies behind all the fine talk of ‘peace’ is nothing less than the transformation of ever larger areas into fields of ruins, into new Ukraines, Syrias or Palestines!¹

1. China’s military manoeuvres and provocations around Taiwan in early April, in response to Trump’s irrational decisions and recent provocations over tariffs and his imperialist intentions, are a brutal testament to this.

More anti-working class attacks

All this belligerent agitation in turn fuels the same arms race, and everywhere the rulers are asking the working class to foot the bill. The planned military budgets in Europe already exceed 2% of current GDP. The European plan ‘ReArm Europe’ envisages releasing 800 billion euros for the purchase of weapons of war. Germany alone plans to commit 1000 billion euros to its defence. The military programming law 2024-2030 in France provides for a sum of 413 billion!

The exploited are starting to feel the effects of all this in terms of attacks on their living conditions. By hammering home the message that we can no longer count on the ‘*dividends of peace*’, the bourgeoisie is paving the way for the acceptance of sacrifices in the service of mass murder.

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Belgium: the working class under pressure from the economic crisis and militarism

After the demonstration on 13 February, which brought together more than 100,000 protestors, the 24-hour general strike on 31 March confirmed once again that the indignation and anger against the federal government’s austerity plans¹ are deeply felt by a growing number of workers in all sectors and regions of Belgium, and that combativity remains high. However, the sectoral and regional fragmentation imposed on the movement illustrates that the bourgeoisie has launched its counter-offensive through its unions, and this is in a context of trade war and exploding defence budgets that herald massive new attacks on the working class, in Belgium and around the world.

A break with passivity and disarray

This major wave of struggles in Belgium is not isolated, but represents a break with years of passive submission by workers to the attacks of the bourgeoisie, of atomisation, but also the subterranean maturation, the ongoing process of reflection. “*The recovery of worker’s combativity in a number of countries is a major, historic event which does not only result from local circumstances and can’t be explained by purely national conditions. Carried forward by a new generation of workers, the breadth and simultaneity of these movements testify to a real change of spirit in the class and represents a break with the passivity and disorientation which has prevailed from the end*

of the 1980s up till now”². The summer of discontent in the UK in 2022, the movement against pension reform in France in the winter of 2023, and the strikes in the United States, particularly in the car industry, at the end of the summer of 2023, remain the most spectacular manifestations of the development of workers’ struggles around the world. The current movements in Belgium also illustrate the context in which workers’ struggles will develop, particularly in the industrialised countries, with attacks on all fronts as a result of the accelerating economic crisis, interacting as if in a whirlwind with the expansion of militarism and chaos.

The programme of the new De Wever government provides for a total of almost €26 billion in budget cuts in order to reduce the State debt (105% of GNP). The government’s programme includes deep cuts in social budgets, in particular savings on pensions (by penalising early retirement and attacking the pension schemes of civil servants and teachers), as well as limiting unemployment rights to a maximum of two years, which would result in the exclusion of 100,000 unemployed people this year. In addition, half a million long-term sick people risk losing their benefits because of ‘insufficient or uncooperative’ efforts to return to work. Payments for overtime and night work are also being drastically reduced. The ‘social partners’ are expected to propose a reform of the

Blowing hot and cold, coating speeches with a language of ‘truth’, the prospects is one of massive attacks on the social level: health, pensions, education... For NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, “*this cannot wait... Countries are investing up to a quarter of their GDP in pensions, health systems or social security. We need a small fraction of that money to strengthen our defence.*” What he is careful not to say is that this “*small fraction*”, taken from systems already bled dry, can only further impoverish millions of people. This is a cynical euphemism that in reality means the axing of social budgets, social security, unemployment or health insurance.

automatic indexation of wages and benefits (i.e. a cut!) by the end of 2026. What’s more, less than two months after the announcement of this programme, Europe’s generalised rearmament plans will mean that Belgium, which is lagging behind in terms of defence budgets, will see its budget almost double in the next few years.

Opposition to the measures was voiced as soon as the plans were first leaked. In order not to lose control of the situation, the unions decided to organise a first day of action on 13 December 2024, with the aim of diverting discontent towards the directives of the European Union. This first day brought together some 10,000 demonstrators.

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Capitalism has no solution to the global economic crisis!

After the crazy escalation of the last few months over customs duties and the resulting stock market and dollar crashes, the world is hanging on Trump’s every move, wondering what decisions he will or will not take, which ones he will back-track on... For the vast majority of the bourgeoisie, the current US administration’s policy is ‘absurd’ and Trump’s decisions are ‘crazy’; they threaten the development of an already faltering global economy, and first and foremost of the US economy. According to recent IMF forecasts, US economic growth will fall by nearly 1% compared to previous forecasts, the Chinese economy by 0.6% and finally the global economy by 0.5%.

In reality, what fundamentally threatens the global economy and humanity is decadent capitalism, which has entered its final phase of decomposition, where the effects of the economic crisis, wars, the climate crisis and all the manifestations of the rottenness of this society are now combining. Trump, like populism, is nothing more than a product of this dynamic.

The foundations of the great economic disorder

Since the reappearance of the historic crisis of capitalism in the late 1960s, a product of capitalism’s fundamental contradictions, the bourgeoisie has implemented palliative measures to try to postpone the most severe effects of the recession. The effectiveness of such policies depended on the ability of the major industrialised countries to agree on a certain level of international cooperation, based on the implementation of mechanisms of state capitalism which, in particular, formed the framework for the globalisation of the economy and initially enabled economic exchanges to escape the chaos raging, for example, on the imperialist front and in the political life of the bourgeoisie. Thus, at the height of the economic turmoil of 2007-2008, which had already hit the United States hard, and that of 2009-2011 with the ‘sovereign debt’ crisis, the bourgeoisie was able to coordinate its responses, which made it possible to mitigate the blows of the crisis somewhat and ensure an anaemic ‘recovery’ during 2013-2018.

But such a policy reached its limits in the growing tendency of the different national factions of the bourgeoisie to go it alone, making them less and less capable of providing a minimally concerted response, through palliative measures, to the global crisis of capitalism. Such an ‘evolution’ was the hallmark of the expansion of the decomposition of capitalism, in particular of the ‘every man for himself’ mentality at all levels of society, including the management of capital by the bourgeoisie. This was confirmed in a striking way with the 2020 pandemic and then the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, which led to the closure of borders and gave rise to a very significant trend in favour of measures to ‘relocalise’ production, preserve key sectors in each national capital, and develop barriers to the international movement of goods and people. All this has contributed to sowing chaos in monetary, financial and trade policies.

Trump2 as a factor exacerbating economic destabilisation

It is in this minefield that Trump is returning to business with his uninhibited, irrational, changeable and completely unpredictable populist policy. While being a product of the rottenness of capitalism, Trump is in turn an active factor in its decline. This is illustrated most convincingly by his actions at the head of the US executive in the trade war he has launched against the world. The ‘economic’ justifications put forward by the Trump administration in its crusade to increase tariffs on most imported goods are either bluff, ridiculous, or both.

One of them, almost laughable, is that until now the United States had been too generous with its partners, who never tired of taking advantage of Uncle Sam’s largesse (‘The whole world is taking advantage of us’). It was therefore necessary to ‘set the record straight’ by charging hefty customs duties on certain imported goods.

Another justification invokes the fight against inflation, which is a sensitive issue in the United

States since the surge in prices under the Biden presidency had largely contributed to the Democrats’ electoral defeat in the last elections. It is not clear how higher prices for imported goods could lower prices in the United States, except through mysterious compensatory mechanisms. But that is not the point: what is really going on here is an attempt to mask the real cause of inflation. The increase in customs duties will certainly not prevent inflation, which has a completely different cause: *“The fundamental causes of inflation are to be found in the specific conditions of the capitalist mode of production in its decadent phase. Empirical observation allows us to see that inflation is fundamentally a phenomenon of this epoch of capitalism and that it manifests itself most sharply in periods of war (1914-1918, 1939-45, Korean War, 1957-8 in France during the Algerian war...) i.e. at times when unproductive expenditure is at its highest. It is thus logical to consider that it is by beginning with this specific characteristic of decadence, the immense role of armaments production and unproductive expenditure in general in the economy that we can attempt to explain the phenomenon of inflation”*.¹

In short, if the cost of living is rising in the United States as elsewhere, it is largely to pay for (unproductive) military spending. Indeed, maintaining a huge military lead over all its imperialist rivals – including the most powerful among them, China – comes at a cost that is far from negligible and has to be paid by the population.

The consequences of the tariff war

The ‘tariff war’ is just one economic illustration of the questioning of the world order established after 1945, which has already largely fallen apart on the imperialist level with the ‘transatlantic di-

1. “Overproduction and Inflation”, *World Revolution* 2 and ICC Online, and quoted in “Report on the economic crisis for the 25th ICC Congress”, *International Review* 170

vorce’, in favour of a totally irrational and unpredictable policy of everyone against everyone else. However, in economic terms, the lack of visibility about the future is a factor that inhibits economic activity for capitalism. In the case of Trump’s policy, it is more than a lack of visibility; it is the impossibility of predicting anything, since he is capable of changing his position overnight and several times in a row, depending on his immediate interests. His approach, which consists of trying to score points at the expense of his opponents of the moment, is not limited to economic issues such as customs duties, as we can also see it at work on the imperialist front in the peace negotiations in Ukraine.

Furthermore, responding to the economic depression by lifting customs duties completely ignores the lessons that the bourgeoisie learned from the Great Depression of the 1930s, namely that protectionism can only aggravate the crisis of overproduction by further reducing markets.

Finally, the Trump administration’s aberrant and authoritarian methods, often completely irrational not only in terms of the proper functioning of capitalism but also in terms of the United States’ own interests, project the image of a world power that is unpredictable and can no longer be trusted. As the world’s leading economic power, far ahead of all its rivals, particularly in economic and military terms, the impact of Trump’s policies on relations between nations across the globe can only be devastating.

The heaviest and most devastating effects of this global destabilisation will be felt first and foremost by the class exploited under capitalism: the working class. This will happen directly through inflation, which will severely erode its purchasing power and therefore its ability to survive in the current situation. But national capital will also have to find ways to compensate for the increased costs associated with the reconfiguration of production flows resulting from globalisation and

relocations. To do this, they will have no choice but to attack the proletariat, cut jobs, worsen working conditions to reduce marginal costs, and slash wages and indirect income linked to social protection. The announcements by various European governments about the ‘efforts’ to be made to ‘save’ the national economy are nothing more than ideological preparation for the blows that will rain down on the proletariat.

The working class everywhere must expect to be the first to pay for this plunge into uncertainty and chaos. The attacks will intensify and will inevitably be accompanied by ideological campaigns that will shift the blame for the situation onto Trump, onto the attack on ‘democracy’, onto the warmongers in America, Russia and no doubt elsewhere when necessary. The trade war will also serve to amplify nationalist rhetoric about protecting ‘our values’, defending ‘our economic heritage’ and ‘the greatness of our nation.’ We must not fall for this. The decomposition of capitalism is dragging the system in all its dimensions into the abyss. Nothing can pull humanity out of the abyss, neither the measures that have been tried time and again and have always generated more crises and wars, nor the workers sacrificing their wages or working conditions to cheapen the costs of production. Nothing, except a total and radical questioning of this system, its overthrow in favour of a society free from the domination of capital and for the sole benefit of humanity and its environment. This society, communism, is a project in the hands of the proletariat, which, in fighting against the attacks launched against it by the bourgeoisie, will increasingly be able to recognise its own power and its historical responsibilities. The road ahead is undoubtedly still very long, but the perspectives outlined by the current situation only serve to highlight the urgency of developing the struggle. **Syl. D.**

level of 3% of GDP, financed by even more brutal austerity measures. On the other hand, the massive investment in military budgets was seen as a provocation by many of those who mobilised against the 5.1 billion savings plans on unemployment and pensions.

The leftists are obviously trying to prevent the radicalisation of thinking and to bring it back within the ideological framework of the bourgeoisie: for example, Trotskyist groups are calling for a fight for a ‘real’ left-wing government and helping to strengthen democratic and pacifist campaigns. For its part, the populist left-wing Parti du Travail de Belgique (PTB/PvdA) is organising a march on 27 April under the slogan ‘Money for workers, not for armaments’. In so doing, it is fuelling the illusion that a ‘democratic’ choice within capitalism is possible.

The current context will therefore tend more and more to demand a more politicised level of struggle from the working class if it is to succeed in pushing back the bourgeoisie, as the situation in Belgium illustrates. Faced with a further worsening of the economic crisis, the pressure of militarism and the ever-present threat of barbaric war, we must resist the deceptive and misleading rhetoric of the bourgeoisie, which demands ever greater sacrifices from us. The economic crisis, ecological destruction, murderous wars, the massive flows of refugees thrown onto the paths of despair and death are the product of decomposing capitalism. Only solidarity and unity in the struggle against the attacks on our living conditions will enable us to develop demands that will unite the different sectors of the working class. A first step in this direction could be to use the trade union mobilisations to initiate the broadest possible discussion between workers on the general needs of the struggle, rather than passively listening to the rhetoric of those who are organising our division and impotence. **Lac, 15 April 2025**

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Belgium working class under pressure from crisis and militarism

The manoeuvre did not succeed, however, and discontent continued to grow, as was shown by the second day of action on 13 January, when the unions again tried to restrict the mobilisation to ‘defending pensions in education’. In reality, participation reached around 30,000 demonstrators from a growing number of sectors and all regions of the country. On 27 January, a ‘historic’ regional sectoral demonstration by French-speaking teaching staff brought together 35,000 participants against the drastic cuts imposed by the regional government. The formation of the new federal government and the announcement of its austerity programme only fuelled the protest and the third day of action on 13 February, organised under the misleading slogan of ‘defending public services’, brought together over 100,000 demonstrators from all sectors who expressed their desire to break the sectoral and regional division of the movement organised by the unions. The demonstrators called for a global fight against the government’s attacks.

The union counter-attack: controlling, fragmenting and exhausting workers’ fighting spirit

Faced with the rise in workers’ combativity and the push towards unity, the unions launched a counter-attack aimed at preventing any mass mobilisation against the full range of government plans: the feeling of belonging to a single class, of fighting together and in solidarity to build a balance of forces, had to be countered! At a time when solidarity in the struggle was becoming increasingly clear, the unions organised the fragmentation and division of movements between sectors, with specific demands, and between the unions themselves. Instead of joint demonstrations, scattered strikes lasting one or two days were organised in education, urban and regional transport and the railways, with a timetable spread over 6 months! A one-day general strike was de-

clared six weeks later, on 31 March, without any call for demonstrations. The message was now to remain passively at home, with a multitude of small pickets of strikers centred on their company or sector, well separated from each other. The so-called ‘general’ strike has been used as a means of paralysing mobilisations and isolating workers, exhausting their fighting spirit and against any tendency towards unification.

The counter-offensive by the government and the unions is therefore attempting to exhaust the movement before the summer period. A call for a new ‘general strike’ has been launched for 29 April. The fact that sectors such as rail transport and education still have strikes and days of action planned for April, May and June underlines the fact that the unions are ‘pulling out all the stops’ in order to isolate the combative sectors and above all, in the end, to exhaust them in actions cut them off from the rest of the working class³. If, on 22 May (three months after the previous mobilisation!), a new national demonstration is announced by the unions, obviously around demands specific to the public and voluntary sectors, it is clearly with the hope of being able to see that combativity is on the wane and that discouragement is setting in.

The trade union offensive is all the more necessary as new attacks are looming on the horizon: *‘Look at the international context’* said the President of the Flemish Socialists (the ‘Vooruit’ party). The bourgeoisie has less and less room for manoeuvre to cope with the effects of economic war and growing militarism. The decision to significantly increase the defence budget from 1.3% to 2% of GDP this year is eloquent proof of this, and is only the first step towards a

3. In particular, the unpopular strike action on the railways, with 19 days of strike action in March and dozens more in the months to come, illustrates this desire to organise attrition and isolation from the rest of the class.

Labour remains a party of war

The Labour government is ramping up the defence budget to 2.5% of GDP from April 2027, with an ambition to reach 3% in the next parliament. It is set to reach its highest level since the period of the Cold War.

Should we be surprised by the intensification of war preparations by the Labour Party? No, we should not: since the First World War, this party has a long history of supporting and waging imperialist war.

After 1914, an important instrument of Labour’s services to the ruling class was the War Emergency National Workers’ Committee, which started as an anti-war committee, but was quickly turned into a committee to contain workers’ reactions and recruit them for the war effort of their class enemy. In May 1915 the Labour Party even became part of the War Cabinet, participating in the decisions to massacre millions of workers in uniform.

In March 1918 the same government dispatched a small contingent of soldiers to Murmansk to fight against the Germans. But when the Whites in South Russia started an offensive against the Soviet power, Britain fully supported them with a huge amount of military material, including British tanks and aircraft. Labour had for the first time, even earlier than the SPD did in Germany, deployed armed violence against the workers’ revolution.

In September 1939 the Labour Party supported the decision of the British bourgeoisie to declare war on the Axis Powers. In May 1940 it joined a coalition government led by Winston Churchill, helping to boost the image of a ‘people’s war’ against fascism.

The post-war Labour government of Clement Attlee dispatched British military forces to Malaysia in 1948 for a “counter-insurgency campaign” against the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA). The UK army made a brutal military intervention, herded hundreds of thousands of people into fortified camps and heavily bombed rural areas, with thousands of deaths and injuries as a result.

The Labour government led by Tony Blair joined the US in the Second Gulf War that began in 2003. In the five years that followed this war resulted in the deaths of around a quarter of a million Iraqi civilians and soldiers, while the devastation of the economic and health infrastructure left tens of thousands more victims.

So, ever since World War One, Labour has defended the imperialist interest of the British bourgeoisie in times of war and ‘peace’.

Ukraine war: Britain searches for its lost prestige

It will therefore come as no surprise that this Labour government has decided to increase military spending so drastically today. Labour’s argument that this will lead to the creation of thousands of jobs, rebuilding British industry and boosting the economy, is nothing but a lie. Even if it can lead to an increase of jobs in the short term¹, investment in the war economy is totally unproductive, does not contribute to accumulation, and constitutes a sterilisation of capital.

Either in government or in the opposition, either in war or in peacetime, the warlike language of Labour never abates. Even Corbyn, the representative of the ‘anti-war’ current in Labour, argued that “*Britain does need strong, modern military and security forces*”². Therefore, he said, “*It is vital that [we] keep spending at 2 per cent*”³.

But why does Britain support Ukraine so stubbornly despite the changed policy of the US towards this war and the decision to concentrate its attention more than ever on China? What are British interests in this war and what can it gain from it? The UK has almost no trade with Ukraine. In 2023, Ukraine accounted for less than 0.1% of the total UK outward FDI stock. A comprehensive answer to this question is not possible within the scope of this article. But it is nevertheless important to give some elements of an answer.

First we need to understand that the British bour-

1. Direct job supported spending on weapons and ammunition is less than 1% of total jobs in the UK
2. Leader’s speech, Brighton 2015
3. Jeremy Corbyn, Chatham House Speech, 12 May 2017.

geoisie once ruled a world empire, upon which “the sun never set”. As a legacy of this period the British bourgeoisie has maintained a global approach to the imperialist conflicts and wars in the world, not always linked to its immediate interests as a national capital. Britain “*is a declining power, one that ruled the world a hundred years ago, one that still has interests worldwide but no longer has the strength to act independently to defend them*”⁴.

In the last hundred years, except for the period 1990-2005, the UK considered first the Soviet Union and later Russia as one of its main enemies, if not its main enemy. Already in the 1930s the British conservatives were the fiercest opponents of ‘Bolshevism’. During Chamberlain’s premiership, Churchill expressed his hostility towards the USSR in a number of speeches. Characteristic of his ‘anti-Bolshevism’ was the proposal in 1944 to organise an invasion in the Balkans to cut off the advance of the Russians. And then, in March 1946, Churchill made his famous Iron Curtain speech in which he made an appeal to the democratic world to be wary of the threat of the Soviet Union.

When the war in Ukraine started, the Biden administration made it clear that it favoured the escalation in fighting as an opportunity to weaken Russia, a geo-political rival of the US which was also involved in an alliance with the USA’s chief rival, China. The UK was in complete agreement with this policy, and stood with the US at the forefront of the efforts to entrench the conflict. Even today it still wants to see Russia confined to a status of global pariah and has therefore even countered some efforts to start talks with Putin about a truce.

On 24 February 2025, the UK announced its most significant sanctions package since the early days of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The unprecedented package is part of a global policy to bring Russia to the point of exhaustion of its military or economic capabilities, or both. Recently Defence Secretary John Healey declared that the Labour government will not be shy of using nuclear weapons. “*We have the power to do untold damage to them [Russia] if they attack us*”⁵.

So, all the talk of the Labour government about defending democracy and peace is nothing more than empty words. Britain, like all other countries, has its own particular motives for being involved in the war against Russia: the sordid defence of its national interests. And for Britain, regaining its lost prestige since World War Two, especially in

4. British imperialism: a chronicle of humiliation, *World Revolution* no. 319
5. UK won’t be ‘shy’ of nuclear weapon use against Russia, minister says, *The National*, 25 March 2025

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Faced with militarisation and war, wage class struggle

The growth of the war economy is also presented to us as a source of ‘industrial relocation’ to ‘promote employment’. This is also a sinister hypocrisy that aims to justify an intensification of arms production that will only come at the price of a headlong rush into debt, a plunge into global recession, but also an intensification of exploitation and a general deterioration of the living conditions of the proletariat. While arms companies may well reap substantial profits along the way, the economy, from the point of view of global capital, will be weighed down by an immense waste of resources; capital will be sterilised in unproductive arms stocks. At best, these weapons can only rust; at worst, they can kill and destroy, generalising the policy of ‘scorched earth’! In short, this means a greatly increased devaluation of capital, which already generates inflation, attacks and poverty!

Class struggle is a vital necessity

This nightmarish situation must not be accepted by the working class. We, as a class, can only denounce all the preparations for war and all the speeches aimed at mobilising the proletariat and the population behind the ‘nation’ for ‘peace’ and the defence of alleged ‘democratic values’. The

eyes of Eastern European countries, is one of its main motives to support this war against Russia.

Britain straddles a position between the US and the EU

Since the US is governed by a populist president, expressing the tendency towards every man for himself in international relations, the White House has made clear that it will no longer act as the primary guarantor of European security. It insists that the European nations should be responsible for their own defence and, above all, pay for it. But despite Healy’s boastful language, the UK is not able to deploy its full military potential and cannot use nuclear weapons without the backup of the US. Starmer knows that and therefore rushed to the US on 27 February 2025 to get reassurance of continuing American military support.

He actually wanted to know if the UK, because of its supposed “special relationship” with the US and its decision to raise the defence budget to 2.5 per cent of GDP, would be exempt from the Trump’s growing hostility to America’s former allies and could still count on the US nuclear umbrella. Although the US is turning its back on all international alliances, it seems that it will not yet withdraw from NATO. But Trump gave no positive answer to the question posed by Starmer. Without the deterrent of the nuclear arsenal, the UK is a toothless tiger, only able to roar.

In Washington Trump and Starmer also spoke about the tariffs the US intended to levy on British products. During that meeting Trump gave the impression that something could be “worked out” with Britain. But on 2 April the US nevertheless imposed 10% on British products. A decision that would have strengthened Starmer in his conviction that Trump is a president you cannot really rely on, although he refused to actually call him unreliable. The Labour government reacted with the publication of a 417-page retaliation list, slapping tariffs on 8,000 American products if further talks with the US were to fail.

Returning from Washington Starmer immediately decided to call an emergency conference of European states in an attempt to ensure their imperialist ‘defence’ without the military umbrella of the US. The result was the creation of a “*coalition of the willing*”. But this coalition has been forged in a rush and remains very volatile, i.e. without a solid foundation and far from unified on the strategy to support Ukraine. The only thing that unites the countries is an agreement on the military threat from Russia. So far, only France and the UK have officially committed to contribute soldiers for the “reassurance force” following

a putative ceasefire. Moreover the deployment of such a reassurance force depends on the existence of a US “backstop”. This refers to American air support, logistics, and intelligence. But so far the US has not said that it is ready to provide this. Various military officials have dismissed the initiative as political theatre. Steve Witkoff, Trump’s special envoy, derided the coalition as “*a posture and a pose*”. Branding it “*simplistic*”, he said that European leaders were caught in a “*Churchillian fantasy*”.

The project has stalled and the initiators have limited themselves to issuing declarations about their commitment to Ukraine. But since his plea for the security of Europe has been turned down by Trump, Starmer needs the platform of the “coalition of the willing”

* to present the UK (instead of the US) as the new leader in the military confrontation with Russia;

* as a lever to “reset” the United Kingdom’s relationship with the Continent;

* to boost its role as advocate for the security of the East European countries.

In 2024, while campaigning in the general election, Labour already made Europe its absolute priority and security in Europe as one of its favoured levers to “reset” the United Kingdom’s relationship with the Continent. “*We will begin work with European colleagues on our proposal for a new UK-EU Security Pact, bringing structured dialogue back to the relationship and a common focus on our continent’s security*”⁶.

Labours commitment to intensified militarisation will have a considerable impact on the economy. The increase of the military budget will certainly require more sacrifices. In the end it will imply further attacks on the incomes and living conditions of the population and of the working class in particular. The cuts in welfare services today are only a foretaste of what is yet to come: they are being used by the bourgeoisie to get a first impression of how workers will react to more economic attacks after the year-long strike movement of 2022-2023. The working class in Britain as in other central countries retains the capacity to defend itself from these attacks by fighting for its own class demands, and in the longer term to make a clear political connection between the immediate attacks on its living standards and the inability of the capitalist system to offer it any future except war and destruction. **Dennis**

6. Progressive Realism, Speech by David Lammy, 31 January 2024

making them believe that it would be possible to organise capitalist society in a more humane and just way, which is a gross lie: capitalism can no longer be ‘progressive’. Worn down to the bone, it has nothing left to offer! It is indeed bankrupt and increasingly destructive.

The miasma of its decomposition and the social fragmentation it engenders are themselves used for these ideological ends by the ruling class in an attempt to chloroform, to obscure the search for the only viable and possible perspective, the one bequeathed by the experience of the workers’ movement and the class struggle: the perspective of communism.

Clearly, the bourgeoisie is trying to mask the fact that militarisation necessarily goes hand in hand with attacks on the working class. And it is precisely on its own class terrain, in the dynamic of workers’ struggles against current and future attacks, that the proletariat will be able to develop its strength and its awareness of the bankruptcy of capitalism. The only way to offer the prospect of a viable alternative society is therefore to refuse and reject the bourgeoisie’s ideological campaigns outright, to fight against the logic imposed against the bloodthirsty monster that is capitalism. **WH, 5 April 2025**

The upheaval in alliances is exacerbating the war of each against all

While NATO states on its website: “*NATO condemns in the strongest terms Russia’s war against Ukraine. The Alliance remains resolute in its commitment to support Ukraine and to help it exercise its fundamental right to self-defence.*” Trump humiliates and berates the Ukrainian president in front of the world’s media, even blaming him for the barbarism in Ukraine, while renewing ties and entering into negotiations with Putin’s Russia. These provocative statements publicly and brutally highlighted the ideological and strategic break between Trump’s America and the central axis of NATO policy. Furthermore, Trump cast doubt on the solidarity between NATO countries, the quintessence of the Atlantic Alliance: “*If they don’t pay, I’m not going to defend them*”; “*My biggest problem with NATO (...) is that if the United States had a problem and we called France or other countries that I won’t name and said ‘We have a problem’, do you think they would come and help us, as they are supposed to do? I’m not so sure...*” (France 24, 7.3.25). In a matter of weeks, Donald Trump torpedoed the Atlantic Alliance, politically demolishing the collective defence pact that had united the USA and Europe since 1949. America no longer intended to support its allies in the defence of Ukraine, nor did it even guarantee the unconditional solidarity of the United States in the event of an attack on one of its partners.

The definitive end of the imperialist relations established since 1945

These events have profound historical significance, as they mark the open collapse of the imperialist relations between the major powers that have been in place since 1945. In reality, they are the culmination of a whole process initiated by the collapse of the Eastern bloc at the end of 1989, which also marked the beginning of the period of decomposition. At the time, the ICC pointed out that the collapse of the Soviet bloc would be accompanied by the disintegration of the Western bloc: “*The difference, in the coming period, will be that these antagonisms which were previously contained and used by the two great imperialist blocs will now come to the fore. The disappearance of the Russian imperialist gendarme, and that to come of the American gendarme as far as its one-time “partners” are concerned, opens the door to the unleashing of a whole series of more local rivalries*”¹.

1. “After the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, destabilisation and chaos”, *International Review* 61

Read International Review 173

- * The great imperialist upheaval
- What kind of world are we going to have to face?**
- * **Trump 2.0: New steps into capitalist chaos**
- * Three years of war in Ukraine
- A spiral of chaos, massacres and militarism**
- * **The dynamic of the class struggle since 2022**
- * **The national question according to Bordighist legend**
- * Ideologies of imperialist war
- Anti-Semitism, Zionism, Anti-Zionism: All are enemies of the proletariat (part 1)**
- * Debate in the proletarian political milieu on the decomposition of capitalism
- “Counter-theses” or “counter-sense” on decomposition?**
- * Who is Controversies and the individual C. Mcl?
- The defence of our organisation and the real tradition of the communist left**
- * Marxism and ecology
- Andreas Malm: “Ecological” rhetoric in defence of the capitalist state**
- The “green Trotskyism” of Andreas Malm against the communist perspective**

The disintegration has been gradual since then, with ups and downs, culminating today in the explicit manifestation of the transatlantic divorce. In their attempt to defend their status as the sole superpower governing the world, the United States initially exploited NATO to support them in their role as world policeman and enable them to keep their ‘partners’ of the Western bloc under control (1st Iraq War, 1991, Afghanistan, 2001), to integrate the Eastern European countries of the former Soviet bloc into their sphere of influence and, most recently, to support Ukraine against the Russian attack, which allowed Washington to counter the European countries’ desire for independence at the same time. However, these ambitions emerged in the early 1990s with the manoeuvring of France, the United Kingdom and Germany during the war in the former Yugoslavia and became more pronounced with the refusal of the main European countries in 2003 to participate in the second Iraq war under Bush Jr. More generally, the empowerment of European countries (particularly Germany) has been expressed through a significant reduction in their military contributions to NATO and their broad energy and trade openness towards Russia and China.

“Behind Washington’s abandonment of Ukraine, the questioning of transatlantic solidarity within NATO and the rapprochement with Russia, it is the very structure of the world since 1945 that is being swept away.”

Faced with its irreversible decline in the face of the explosion of ‘every man for himself’ and the emergence of China as a challenger, the world’s leading power now intends to use its military, economic and political power to impose the defence of its interests, by brute force if necessary, on all other countries, both adversaries and allies. Behind Washington’s abandonment of Ukraine, the questioning of transatlantic solidarity within NATO and the rapprochement with Russia, it is the very structure of the world since 1945 that is being swept away.

The irreversibility of the Transatlantic divorce

NATO Secretary General Rutte, like certain European military and political circles, still hopes that Trump’s thunderous statements are essentially intended to raise the stakes in a ‘transactional’ negotiation on NATO funding, and that the drastic increase in military budgets decided by European countries will calm Trump’s anti-European aggression. While the concrete form and speed of the divorce between the ‘long-standing allies’ remain difficult to predict, various factors confirm that the process is irreversible.

1. “*But Trump has politically disarmed NATO, he has stripped it of what makes a collective defence alliance strong: reliability.*”². The absolute guarantee of military intervention in support of NATO and the American nuclear umbrella is no longer to be counted on. It’s quite to the contrary, as indicated in a recent Pentagon memo, the ‘Interim National Defense Strategic Guidance,’ based on guidelines from Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, which the *Washington Post* (31 March 2025) was able to consult. It specifies that in the event of aggression, Europe will only be able to count on non-essential troop reinforcements against China. Furthermore, Trump continues to claim Greenland from Denmark, as well as the annexation of Canada, both of which are NATO partners. No wonder Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney concluded that the United States was no longer a reliable partner! Whatever the subsequent rever-
2. Column by Alain Frachon, *Le Monde*, 6.3.2025.

sals, doubts have been sown about the indestructibility of the Transatlantic Alliance and American support for Europe.

2. The irreversibility of the divorce is also highlighted on an ideological level. The conclusion of the Transatlantic Pact and the founding of NATO after 1945 were ideologically justified by the defence of ‘Western democracy’. Trump’s questioning of unwavering support for Ukraine in favour of a rapprochement with ‘dictator Putin’, and Vice President Vance’s attack at the Munich Forum on the concept of democracy defended by the European bourgeoisie, while the Trump administration continues to support populist and far-right parties in Europe, completely tear apart this common ideological cover. Trump is removing all ideological glue from the Atlantic Alliance.

3. A crucial ally of the United States against the USSR for more than fifty years, Europe has lost its geostrategic importance with the rise of China, becoming above all an economic competitor and a source of dissident countries, even enemies, in armed conflicts. “*We are also here today to state clearly and unambiguously an unavoidable strategic reality: the United States can no longer be primarily focused on the security of Europe. The United States faces direct threats to our own homeland. We must — and are — prioritising the security of our own borders. (...) This will require our European allies to fully engage and take responsibility for their own conventional security on the continent.*”³ Europe, and therefore the Transatlantic pact, is no longer a priority, or even a necessity, for American imperialism, and the Trump administration is expressing this without diplomatic embellishment.

4. Among European countries, differences are still emerging as to whether Transatlantic ties should be maintained: some, such as Italy’s Meloni and Poland’s Tusk, hope that substantial arms spending by European countries will preserve the essence of the alliance and calm the Trump administration’s anti-European aggression; others, however, see the final breakdown of the Transatlantic link and are pushing for the development of an alternative policy to that of the United States. The latter will undoubtedly exploit the situation by increasing pressure to break up the ‘European pole’. Trump will therefore tend to develop a ‘transactional’ policy that is more favourable to certain countries, such as Poland, and less favourable to others, such as Germany.

5. “*Listen, let’s be honest, the European Union was designed to screw the United States*” (statement by Trump, 26 February 2025). The proliferation of tariffs imposed by the United States on imports from European ‘allies’, accused by Trump of treating the United States much worse than certain ‘enemies’, as well as European ‘retaliation’, will only exacerbate tensions between the two sides of the Atlantic and constitute the economic aspect of the divorce. This trade war clearly illustrates how the European ‘partners’ of yesteryear are now seen as rivals to ‘America First’. The imposition of huge military investment on European countries due to the end of the American military umbrella is aimed in particular at forcing all EU countries to ‘waste’ part of their economic reserves on developing their military capabilities so that they lose their competitive edge vis-à-vis the United States. In addition, changes in customs tariffs are also a potential means of sowing discord between European countries.

The United States at the head of a war of all against all

The questioning of imperialist relations between major powers not only has significant historical significance, but will above all lead to a tremendous acceleration of every man for himself, irrationality and chaos at the global level.

The Trump administration’s priority objective, in line with Biden’s policy, is to use all economic and military means to prevent China from threatening the declining supremacy of the United States. To this end, Trump is seeking to detach Russia from China and, to do so, he is prepared to sacrifice Ukraine and the stability of Europe, and even the

3. Speech by P. Hegseth on 12.02.25 at the meeting of the NATO Contact Group for Ukraine

cohesion of the EU. However, while Russia can only welcome the rapprochement initiated by the United States, given its mistrust of China’s growing economic stranglehold on Siberia, at the same time, it is wary of the fluctuating nature of Trump’s decisions, hence the reluctance of the Putin faction to commit to ending the fighting on the basis of the ‘deal’ proposed by Washington. In fact, Trump is taking a gamble, without being certain of success and without concern for the consequences. In this sense, Trump is a caricature of how the bourgeoisie in decomposition develops its imperialist policy: ‘taking a gamble’ with a short-term vision, without worrying about the longer-term consequences.

One major consequence of the Transatlantic divorce is undoubtedly the widespread explosion of arms spending and, more generally, militarism in Europe. Meetings between major European countries are multiplying to increase military production and ensure support for Ukraine. Across Europe, increases in military budgets for the coming years are being announced: this is the case in Britain, France⁴, Germany⁵, and the EU is announcing support of 800 billion euros for the next 10 years. Germany has voted to reform its constitution to remove a clause that prohibits it from running public deficits so that it can borrow to increase military spending. However, differences are already emerging between states: there are nuances between France and Great Britain on the one hand and Italy and Poland on the other, for example, on what to do about Ukraine; similarly, what will be the attitude of the other European powers towards Germany, the EU’s leading economic force, which also wants to become the EU’s main power? In the Netherlands, the prime minister has been outvoted within his own majority on commitments to Ukraine, with populists arguing that money should first be spent on the Dutch people. If strategic rapprochement emerges with the United States and within the EU, the trend is towards the end of stable military alliances, a dynamic that exacerbates the ‘every man for himself’ mentality in the phase of decomposition and is already widely evident in various conflicts around the world.

By abandoning Ukraine, torpedoing the Transatlantic Pact, turning towards Russia, in short, by destroying the last foundations of the international order that had survived the fall of the USSR, the United States will face an imperialist world that will be even more hostile and less controllable, because nothing stable will come out of this ‘upheaval of alliances’ that can never produce lasting ones. In fact, Trump has told the world: the word of the US government is worthless, you cannot trust us. Clearly, he and his clique are not seeking to establish solid international alliances, but rather bilateral ‘deals’ that are valid ‘right now’. Thus, after the successive failures of the American bourgeoisie to impose its order and limit the every man for himself mentality, Trump has acknowledged the impossibility of halting this dynamic, but instead has placed himself at its head by declaring open war of each against all. This is the real vandalistic ‘strategy’ of the new American administration: “*The world order has become a weapon used against us. It is once again up to us to create a free world out of chaos. This will require an America (...) that puts its own interests above all else.*”⁶ From now on, there will be no real turning back.

For the working class, the Transatlantic divorce and the ‘upheaval of alliances’ fundamentally herald two things: a significant intensification of attacks on its living conditions, caused by the exacerbation of militarism, and the multiplication of horrific war confrontations, such as those that massacre thousands of people every month in Ukraine or Palestine. Faced with campaigns aimed at mobilising them in defence of the democratic state, faced with the war of each against all’ workers must instead maintain their unity on their class terrain in order to fight against the attacks of the various bourgeoisies.

- R. Havanais / 20.4.2025**
4. The appropriations voted in the 2024-2030 military programming law amount to 413 billion euros.
 5. A massive fund of €500 billion is planned to position Germany as the leader of European defence
 6. Secretary of State Rubio, Senate Committee, 15.01.25, in “Atlantic Alliance or Western Schism?” *Le Monde Diplomatique*, April 2025

The historical significance of the divorce between the United States and Europe

The ICC regularly holds public meetings, both in person and online. That of 28 April was held online, bringing together participants from different countries and continents. Discussion focused on developments in the international situation, which are particularly serious and complex. The aim was to gain a better understanding of the dynamics at work, and to be in a better position to set out the conditions for class struggle as clearly as possible.

The course of the discussion

An introduction by the ICC set out the political framework for understanding the significance and implications of the transatlantic divorce between the United States and Europe, which have since been widely amplified and confirmed. The global dynamic that has been at work since 1989, culminating today in the election of Trump and the shattering of the alliances sealed at the end of the Second World War, has implications at different levels of the life of society. In particular on the imperialist level and with the class struggle.

On the basis of our presentation, participants were asked to intervene more specifically on the following themes and issues:

- Behind Trump's promises of peace, can we expect anything other than more militarism and escalating war? Has the dynamic at work since 1989 now reached a new historic level?

- Does the capitalist class have any other choice, in order to finance vast arms programmes, than to attack workers everywhere and in the most ruthless way?

A definitive divorce

The comrades who spoke after the presentation expressed general support for the positions defended by the ICC on the question of war tensions, although there were some nuances, and even a different vision on the part of one comrade concerning the way in which the world is sinking into war and barbarism. In his view, we are witnessing a strengthening of three rival imperialist blocs.

But for the purposes of this meeting, we thought it preferable to leave this very important question to one side in order to focus on the analysis of the historical change brought about by the divorce between the United States and Europe.

Many of the interventions went in the direction of confirming the reality of the development of each against all, particularly within the EU, highlighting a phenomenon aggravated by American pressure and Trump's erratic policies as an expression of decomposing capitalism.

“In this period of deepening decomposition, there is growing chaos in the political workings of the bourgeoisie, fuelling militarism. The rise of populism, which does not correspond to a considered, rational policy of the bourgeoisie, leads to chaotic and aberrant political orientations.”

A number of comrades focused on the points that we consider essential, in particular trying to grasp the significance of what we describe as a ‘divorce’ between the USA and the EU, sealing the break-up of their alliance: *“it is difficult to predict a definitive break-up between the USA and the EU, but it is clear that the EU will have an urgent need to increase its military spending and strengthen its independence [...] Beyond Trump, US policy towards China tends to divide the EU. There are many factors that divide countries: a close alliance that has been fragile over the last thirty years, but which will not happen again”*. Another comrade

underlined the importance of the phenomenon and its seriousness: *“We are seeing a split between the United States and Europe. This confirms what has been happening for some time. It's shock and awe in the face of Trump [...] Even the bourgeoisie is saying that the world has become more dangerous [...] Trump's election is a new qualitative step for capitalism towards barbarism”*.

Many of the interventions also referred to the weight of populism and its reality. One comrade sought to highlight *“a profound acceleration in the crisis of all the bourgeoisies”*, pointing out that *“the American bourgeoisie still has the upper hand over Russia, with the aim of creating havoc in Europe in an attempt to retain world leadership and outflank China. We're in a kind of mad race to nowhere and the bourgeoisie has no choice: whatever it does will backfire [...] The United States has to disorganise Europe and do everything it can to thwart European competition”*.

The comrades who spoke underlined the difficulties involved in grasping a changing and complex situation. The ICC tried to contribute to the debate with the aim of providing a framework that placed greater emphasis on the historical depth of the changes taking place at an international level. To understand the situation, and in particular the question of the divorce between the former allies of the Western bloc, we believe it is necessary to start from the balance of alliances in the traditional imperialist relations established since 1945. After the Second World War, there was always a strong alliance and a certain dependence between the United States and Western Europe. Even after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, despite the threat of the disappearance of the Western bloc and its gradual disintegration, the former allies remained partly united because of their ‘victory’, but also because of their concern and caution in the face of the collapse of the Eastern bloc, which was reshuffling the cards on the imperialist front. Advocating the ‘victory of the free world’ and ‘democracy’, then the ‘death of communism’, there were still political links within the former allies, links that were subsequently weakened by the growing contestation of American authority without, however, disappearing altogether.

In February 2025, the Trump administration entered into talks with Putin's Russia without the participation of European countries and Ukraine. Trump went so far as to adopt Russia's arguments, thereby justifying intervention in Ukraine, in total opposition to the vision of most European countries. The meeting between the humiliated Ukrainian President Zelensky and the Trump/Vance couple in Washington confirmed this official alignment of the Trump team with Russia's claims against the ‘dictator Zelensky’. So, on both the Ukrainian question and NATO, Trump 2.0 marks a real break with the old European allies. The tenuous links have been broken.

Contrary to groups in the proletarian political milieu who believe that we are heading towards military blocs and a Third World War, the stubborn facts show that this is not the case. Even historic allies like the United States, Great Britain and Canada no longer march together as they did in the past. This does not mean, however, that militarism and war are no longer a threat - quite the contrary!

In this period of deepening decomposition, there is growing chaos in the political workings of the bourgeoisie, fuelling militarism. The rise of populism, which does not correspond to a considered, rational policy of the bourgeoisie, leads to chaotic and aberrant political orientations. We have mentioned examples, including the spectacular one in Britain with Brexit, unwanted by the most enlightened part of the bourgeoisie. One of the most experienced bourgeoisies in the world thus lost control of its political apparatus!

Today, we see that the world's leading power is in turn giving itself a team of irresponsible adventurers as rulers. Never before in bourgeois diplomacy has such behaviour been observed, even during the worst moments of the Cold War, when rogue behaviour gradually became the rule. Numerous examples were also given of the irrationality and stupidity of populist tendencies, such as the systematic attack on science, which deprives

the ruling class of certain tools, proving the extent to which the rise to power of the Trump team is a complete aberration in the face of the need for the various bourgeois fractions in power to defend the interests of the American bourgeoisie and its state.

The perspectives for the class struggle

The second point dealt with during the meeting concerned the prospects for the class struggle. Unfortunately, although it was very lively and interesting, this second part of the discussion lacked time, in particular to explore the question of the dynamics of the workers' struggle.

Overall, the contributions emphasised that, in the face of brutal attacks, the proletariat will have to fight: *“All the imperialist powers are increasing their military budgets and developing a war economy. It is the world's working class that will bear the brunt of this war economy and austerity policies, suffering a fall in its standard of living. The working class will be forced to respond with class struggle”*. Similarly, this insistence: *“Clearly, it is impossible to avoid attacks on the working class, and this is true everywhere, because of the crisis. In Europe in particular, as I mentioned earlier, the necessary increase in military spending, a doubling, is at the expense of the working class. The situation is only getting worse”*.

Many interventions were based on the analysis that *“the proletariat is not about to be mobilised for war”*, which is indeed very important and verified in those parts of the world where the proletariat has the strongest historical experience.

Some of the speakers also insisted lucidly on the obstacles facing the working class, particularly on the ideological level. The working class: *“must resist the dangers posed by certain leftists or democrats (i.e. the false dichotomy between democracy and fascism) and remain committed to its independent struggle. The only progressive path is the class struggle”*. Another intervention went in the same direction, drawing on the experience of the history of the communist left: *“the defence of democracy against fascism or populist irrationality is an essential aspect of the ideological attacks of the bourgeoisie against the working class [...] At the same time, other factions of the bourgeoisie are talking about resistance and defending democracy against the autocratic dangers of Trump. The communist left has always been aware of the danger of this kind of ideology. Bordiga said that the worst product of fascism is anti-fascism”*.

A more difficult question, however, was whether the proletariat would be able to fully recover its class identity, its consciousness of constituting a historic class with interests opposed to those of the bourgeoisie, and whether it would be able to strengthen its struggle to overthrow capitalism. This is a very important question, which is key to the process of developing the consciousness of the working class. For the ICC, this process has begun and is being expressed both underground and more visibly, as at the time of the struggles in the United Kingdom in the summer of 2022, which constituted a break in the global dynamic of the class struggle.

Until then, the working class had been a prisoner of the bourgeoisie's ideological campaigns on the supposed ‘end of the class struggle’ and the ‘non-existence of the working class’. This propaganda was based on the collapse of the Eastern bloc, which was presented as ‘proof’ of the ‘death of communism’. In reality, the recovery of class identity and consciousness will be a long process, further hampered by the many ideological traps set by the bourgeoisie to try and divert it, as various speakers have pointed out.

To understand the meaning of the rupture in the depths of workers' consciousness, we need to take a step back historically and proceed methodically. For the ICC, while we cannot equate the strikes in Britain with those of the late 1960s, we can look at things by analogy. The 1968 strikes were historically far more important. However, the strikes in Britain in the summer of 2022 bore witness to the reality of a new qualitative dynamic of class struggle. As one comrade recalled, *“this struggle broke out at the same time as the war raging in*

Ukraine, with a vast media campaign on the war and a political crisis within the bourgeoisie around Johnson, just after the pandemic. Despite this, the working class put its interests before those of capitalism. So it wasn't a Pavlovian response to the attacks, but the fruit of reflection”.

In this process, we must also understand the importance of the British proletariat, the oldest in the world. In the 1970s, it was in the vanguard of the struggle of the world proletariat. Compared with countries like Italy, Great Britain, particularly in 1979, was the scene of many more strike days. The proletariat was extremely combative during this period, culminating in the miners' strikes in 1985. But this was a trap set by the bourgeoisie, which isolated and defeated the proletariat. A defeat that led to great passivity for decades. There was then a slowdown and an ebb in workers' struggles almost

“A more difficult question, however, was whether the proletariat would be able to fully recover its class identity, its consciousness of constituting a historic class with interests opposed to those of the bourgeoisie, and whether it would be able to strengthen its struggle to overthrow capitalism.”

everywhere in the world. The fall of the USSR worsened the situation in Britain.

However, after a period of passivity lasting several decades, the UK was the scene of the great strike movement of the summer of 2022. From that moment on, we saw a change in the mood of the working class, in the balance of power between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in various places. A change that continued with struggles in France, the United States and Belgium, the likes of which we haven't seen since the 70s and 80s. This change in the atmosphere of workers' combativity does not therefore involve Britain alone, but is the sign of a profound change taking place within the international proletariat.

Of course, we should not mechanically expect a rapid development of proletarian struggle and consciousness. There is a long way to go. The working class will need time to develop its class identity and its strength, and it will have to face up to the obstacles, as various interventions clearly illustrated. This is a necessary step for the working class, before it can develop its historical consciousness and give a political perspective to the struggle.

Emphasis was placed on the fact that these attacks will also provoke resistance from the working class. The working class will therefore be attacked as brutally as in the 1930s. Faced with this situation, it must fight more than ever on its own class terrain, namely the defence of its economic interests. Although the working class is facing great difficulties, it is not defeated and has begun to raise its head.

Faced with these prospects of class struggle, we reaffirmed that revolutionaries must be ready to intervene in order to support the resistance of our class, to defend self-organisation, the unification of struggles and above all to participate in the slow and difficult process of politicising the struggle.

The ICC (23 April 2025)

Workers must not let themselves to be drawn into demonstrations for the defence of democracy

Since the beginning of the year, the world has seen a spectacular resurgence of demonstrations, often politically motivated. These movements, the likes of which we have not seen in a long time, are an unmistakable sign of political and social crises in various countries: South Korea, Turkey, Israel, Serbia and, more recently, the USA.¹ But should we necessarily rejoice at seeing these events unfold around the world? Revolutionaries know that “*tout ce qui bouge n’est pas rouge*” – “*not everything that moves is red*” - and it is important to see what lies behind them and analyse the real political source of these movements.

South Korea

In a country with a large working class which has experienced struggles in the past and where there is a group of the Communist Left, President Yoon Suk-yeol’s power grab on 4 December led to major demonstrations, with those on one side defending the president’s coup and those on the other side supporting his impeachment and arrest. At the head of the demonstrations, MPs from the main parties in the Korean parliament rallied their supporters, awaiting the decision of the Constitutional Court.

It is clear that theses demonstrations have no relevance to working class interests whatsoever and what we see on either side is nothing more than manoeuvres in support of one bourgeois clique against another. This situation is the result of the political deadlock between bourgeois cliques in the parliament, who have been unable to pass a budget due to a lack of a sufficient majority. It was this that led to the president’s attempted coup. The resulting political chaos clearly illustrates the situation of the Korean bourgeoisie, which is deeply divided and fragmented with all parties acting in their own interests, as illustrated by the assassination attempt in January 2024 on the main leader of the opposition party and the coup on December 4th.

The radicalisation of right-wing factions towards a Trump-inspired conspiracy ideology, the grotesque episodes that unfolded during the president’s arrest by the police, an episode of presidential impeachment that has already occurred three times since 2004, followed by the dismissal of the interim president due to his lack of cooperation with the parliament, show the weight of decomposition on the ruling class of this country.

“Cooperation with the Democratic Party, a faction of the capitalist class, will only bury the workers’ struggle. Proposing a reform of capi-

1. See our article “The bourgeoisie is trying to lure the working class into the trap of anti-fascism”, P.7 of this issue.

talism through ‘social reform’ without fighting the capitalist system itself obscures the fact that the cause of the current crisis and tragedy is the capitalist system and propagates the illusion of a healthier capitalism” (Internationalist Communist Perspective, “The dismissal of Yoon Seok-yeol is the beginning of a class struggle against the capitalist regime and the capitalist system!”, 04.04.2025)².

The challenge for the Korean working class is to not let itself be drawn into defending one bourgeois camp or the other, in a country that will inevitably suffer from the impending recession following the measures taken by Trump and his clique, which could have a particularly severe impact on the South Korean economy.

Turkey

The arrest on 19 March of Ekrem Imamoglu, leader of the opposition to President Erdogan’s Republican People’s Party (CHP), and until recently mayor of Istanbul, comes as the culmination of a crackdown on the opposition in the run-up to the next presidential election - Imamoglu having been nominated as a candidate for this election by his party, a member of the Socialist International. There was an immediate reaction in the streets with the largest mobilisation since the attempted destruction of Gezi Park in Istanbul in 2013 to make way for property development. But the slogans put forward show that the CHP has control over these demonstrations: they are about “*defending Turkish democracy*” threatened by an “*authoritarian government*” that has stage-managed elections in which President Erdogan would choose his opponents after eliminating his most dangerous rivals. They are thus focused on defending the legitimacy of the election process. In response to this, we support the conclusion of *Internationalist Voice*, a group from the proletarian milieu, which has published a well-documented article on the developments in Turkey: “*Only through class struggle, and from the class terrain, can we repel the attacks of the bourgeoisie. We must extend our struggle independently of all bourgeois factions and movements, directly opposing capitalism. Our interest does not lie simply in a change within the ruling class - i.e., in replacing Erdoğan with Ymamodlu - but in the class struggle itself.*”³.

Here again, this is a struggle between bourgeois cliques, completely alien to the class interests of the proletariat. Turkey’s catastrophic economic

2. Internationalist Communist Perspective (ICP), <https://communistleft.jinbo.net/x>

3. “Neither Erdoğan nor Ymamodlu—Class Struggle is the Only Path Forward!”, <https://en.internationalistvoice.org/>

situation is dragging the Turkish working class into a spiral of never-ending poverty, which will in all likelihood be exacerbated by the imperialist conflicts for which the entire Turkish bourgeoisie is preparing: clashes with Israel in Syria, with Russia in the Caucasus and Central Asia, with the Kurds in Iraq and Syria and with Greece in the rivalry for supremacy in the Aegean Sea... The spiral of war in the region and the Turkish bourgeoisie’s dependence on its armed forces will not be altered in any way by a democratic change of the faction in power in Turkey; the CHP still sees Kemal Atatürk as its guiding light. So, to fight for one bourgeois clique against another when the capitalist system as a whole is in deep crisis and there is a whirlwind of phenomena linked to the decomposition of the world capitalist order, is to ask the working class to fight over who will lead it into poverty and war!

Serbia

The collapse of the roof of the Novi Sad railway station in Serbia (with 16 dead) on 1 November, a result of major structural defects linked to the corruption that is gripping the country, led to a series of giant demonstrations whose motives were “*the fight against corruption*” and “*to live in a country where there is a justice system and it works*”. These huge demonstrations, such as the one on 15 March, brought together a large mass of people with diverse political allegiances, ranging from democrats opposed to the authoritarianism of Serbian President Vucic to pro-Russian ultranationalists. Farmers even joined the procession with their tractors.

The diverse nature of the participants and the motives behind these protests, as well as the opposition’s support for the president’s party in the form of actions within Parliament (such as the setting off of smoke bombs in Parliament on March 4th), make it clear that this is not about defending the interests of the working class, which is drowned out by the mass of demonstrators who are in fact defending democracy and demanding a better judicial system for the country. This inter-classist movement at its core is entirely under the control of bourgeois cliques who want to force the president to resign and organise new elections. It is on a terrain that is completely alien and opposed to the struggle of the working class. In a country destabilised by a profound economic crisis and which is the battleground of various imperialist influences - the ultra-nationalists support Russia, the opposition wants to join the European Union, while China is building the new railway line between Belgrade and Budapest - the working class must more than ever defend its own

interests, independently of any bourgeois faction. The working class in Serbia will have to break free from this movement as soon as possible: fighting against corruption in the capitalist system means fighting against the side-effects of its bankruptcy, not against the system itself.

The struggles are ahead of us

The proletariat has only its unity and consciousness in the fight against the bourgeoisie. Supporting one bourgeois faction that is more ‘progressive’ than the others was certainly a strategy that Marx and Engels advocated during the 1848 revolution, but the goal at that time was primarily for the national project of the bourgeoisie to be realised and for the working class to develop and unify in a context where capitalism was in its ascendant phase, in its full development. This vision is now completely obsolete in view of the historical bankruptcy of the capitalist system: all factions of the bourgeoisie are now reactionary and the working class has no interest in supporting any one of them against the others. The working class must maintain its political autonomy and defend its own class interests without mixing them up with those of the bourgeois factions whose raison d’être is to prevent any development of the class struggle. In any case, it is illusory to want to fight corruption or demand more ‘democracy’ in a world where the main aim is to maximise profits and where the ruling political power is everywhere a class dictatorship!

In South Korea, Turkey, Serbia and elsewhere, the challenge today is to defend our class interests faced with worsening living and working conditions, redundancies, the drive to re-arm and the ultimate war of each against all. No bourgeois faction is able to defend our interests! The most concentrated and experienced parts of the working class, especially those in western Europe and the USA, must set an example of deciding on our own methods of struggle: uniting around the defence of our living standards and working conditions; fighting against the effects of the economic crisis and the warmongering policies of all the bourgeoisies; organising in demonstrations to build solidarity and engaging in the most widespread strikes possible in order to develop a balance of forces in our favour. Only then will we be able to have a clear understanding of what the stakes really are, who are our friends and enemies, how to be able to push back the state and the ruling class and what are the political perspectives open to the working class. And what is certain is that we will clearly not achieve this by defending the capitalist state and bourgeois democracy!

HG (24 April 2025)

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What policy for the working class faced with the increasing danger of war?

agitation against imperialist war⁸.

For us, this was a new case of sectarianism towards the left accompanied by an opportunist approach to the swamp – the NWBCW initiative was particularly aimed at the anarchist milieu, and prior to the Prague conference was offered as a way forward for all its very heterogeneous components, the majority of whom see opposition to war in completely activist manner. In fact, as we argued in an article looking back at the conference, one of the more positive elements to come out of this gathering was the tentative beginnings of political cooperation between the ICC and the Communist Workers’ Organisation (the ICT’s affiliate in the UK) in putting forward a critique of individual or small group activism based on a clear recognition that opposition to imperialist war can only grow out of the mass struggle of the proletariat in defence of its own class interests⁹.

8. For a more developed critique of this initiative, see The ICT and the No War But the Class War initiative: an opportunist bluff which weakens the Communist Left

9. “Prague Action Week: Some lessons, and some replies to slander”, *World Revolution* 401

In our view, this fragile moment of unity between the forces of the communist left (which encountered real hostility on the part of some of the ‘organisers’ of the conference) was a vindication of the approach adopted by the left wing, in particular Lenin and the Bolsheviks, at the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences during the First World War. The Bolsheviks understood the need to participate in these conferences despite the fact that they brought together pacifists and centrists as well as consistent internationalists. The essential issue was to be present to put forward a rigorous critique of pacifism and centrism and to outline a real internationalist position (which at that moment was best expressed by the slogan “turn the imperialist war into a civil war”). The same conclusion can be applied to today: yes, we must go out and encounter all those who want to fight against imperialist war, gather together with them and discuss with them, but without making any concessions to the groups’ confused notion of organisation, their political incoherence and concessions to bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideology. To do this, a unified stance by the groups of the communist left is an essential point of departure.

This is not to deny that there are important disagreements among the groups of the communist left, such as whether the current war drive is seeing the reconstitution of imperialist blocs and heading towards a third world war, or whether the dominant tendency is towards an imperialist chaos which is no less dangerous. These are points for discussion which we will return to in a second article, which will focus on the significance of the ‘divorce’ between the USA and Europe. But what Prague showed is that the communist left is really the only current capable of addressing the problem of war from a class perspective. In our view, applying this perspective in today’s conditions leads to the conclusion that the possibility of a mass proletarian opposition to imperialist war will come predominantly from the workers’ struggles against the attacks on their living standards demanded by the economic crisis. The fact that these attacks are more and more being accompanied by calls for sacrifice in order to build up the war economy will certainly be a factor in enabling workers to draw the link between the struggle for economic demands and the question of imperialist war, and ultimately to politicise their struggles,

but this remains a long-drawn out process which should not lead to impatient actions which tend to substitute for the necessary mass struggle of the proletariat. After decades of retreat in the class struggle, the working class can only recover its sense of itself as a class – as a world force which has no homeland to defend – by going through the hard school of the defence of its living standards. The organisations of the communist left will certainly play a key part in the recovery of class identity, and ultimately of the perspective of revolution, but they can only do so as distinct political organisations based on a coherent platform, and not as loose ‘fronts’ which misleadingly appear to offer the possibility of more immediate success in opposing or even stopping war. **D’nA**

The bourgeoisie is trying to lure the working class into the trap of anti-fascism

In recent months, Trump has been constantly in the spotlight: not a day goes by without him making a statement that confounds the entire planet: his desire to annex Greenland or Panama, his public humiliation of Zelensky, his purge of the administration, the unceremonious dismissal of thousands of federal civil servants, the intimidation of journalists... In just a few weeks, his gangster-like behaviour and brutal exercise of power have made such headlines that the American and world press are now singing their most hypocritical democratic refrains in unison: the ‘greatest democracy in the world’ is supposedly turning into an ‘illiberal regime’ or even a ‘dictatorship’. The bourgeoisie is pushing the envelope very far, as he has already been publicly denounced as a ‘traitor’, a ‘despot’ and a ‘fascist’. Some are even drawing parallels between Trump and Mussolini!

Trump, a fascist?

The more Trump’s ineptitude and brutality are exposed, the easier it is for the rest of the bourgeoisie, led by the Democrats, to blame the President and his band of incompetents for the economic and imperialist chaos and the attacks on the working class. The deafening campaign around his ‘crazy decisions’ and ‘authoritarianism’ is a classic strategy of the bourgeoisie to make people believe that chaos, barbaric destruction and massacres are the fault of ‘irresponsible’ or ‘delusional’ individuals (Trump or Putin today; Hitler, Mussolini or Stalin yesterday...) and not the expression of the historical bankruptcy of the capitalist system.

In reality, the election of Trump in the United States, like that of Milei in Argentina, and the rise of populism almost everywhere in the world, particularly in European countries, are merely the manifestation of the growing difficulty of the various national bourgeoisies to maintain control of their political apparatus under the pressure of rotting capitalism.

The situation today is very different from that of the 1930s. At the end of the First World War, an impressive revolutionary wave swept across Europe. In some countries in particular, Germany, Italy and Russia, the working class was particularly combative and even managed to seize political power in Russia. So much so that after seizing political power in the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia, it forced the warmongering bourgeoisies to end the war in order to confront their mortal enemy, not only in Russia, but also and above all in Germany. Unfortunately, this revolutionary wave ended in defeat and led to fierce repression by the bourgeoisie.

In Germany, where the working class suffered more than anywhere else (except Russia) from the consequences of a terrible physical and ideological defeat inflicted by social democracy, Nazism, like fascism in Italy in the 1920s, finally appeared to the German bourgeoisie as the most effective means of completing the crushing of the proletariat and rushing headlong into the extreme militarisation of production necessary for the march towards the Second World War.

In the ‘democratic’ countries, where the bourgeoisie had needed to maintain the weaponry of parliamentary and electoral mystification, it was also engaged in preparing the working class for war and making it accept all the necessary sacrifices, presenting it with the need to oppose the threat of fascism and defend democracy: this is the full anti-fascist ideology that traps the working class into supporting struggles that are not on its own terrain and lead it to lining up behind a so-called ‘lesser evil’: the ‘democratic’ bourgeoisie.

Anti-fascism is therefore, just like fascism, a consequence of the physical and ideological crushing of the proletariat. They are part of a period of counter-revolution that leaves the bourgeoisie free to lead the workers into world war.

Is the context comparable with today? Since the end of the counter-revolution, which manifested itself in the events of May 1968 in France and other struggles around the world (from Italy in 1969 to Poland in 1976 and 1980), the working class has not suffered any significant defeats opening the way to a period of counter-revolution. There have been moments of advances in consciousness, periods of stagnation and setbacks of

varying degrees, but never a definitive defeat. No comparison can therefore be made with the 1930s, especially since today, breaking with a period of disarray and passivity, a slow revival of militancy and the development of class consciousness has been underway since the end of 2022, manifested in significant struggles on an international scale, in Britain, France and the United States.

Populism and anti-fascist campaigns

Unlike fascism, which was a product of the crushing of the proletariat, the current populist wave is an expression of the phase of the decomposition of capitalism. It is no coincidence that populist parties have really developed and achieved such an impact since the beginning of the 21st century. Their development coincides with the expansion of the harmful effects of the decomposition of capitalist society. As the economic crisis intensifies, imperialist confrontations flare up, tensions between factions of the bourgeoisie are exacerbated, rivalries within it become increasingly uncontrollable and, as a result, there is a growing loss of control of the political apparatus. Populist cliques denounce the political elites and dominant factions that monopolise power and propagate thuggish policies that destabilise and that make more irrational the politics of individual states. Populism therefore expresses a reality that is radically different from that of fascism: while it destabilises the political apparatus of the bourgeoisie, it is quite incapable, in the face of a working class that resists attacks, of imposing the sacrifices necessary to prepare for war, let alone a world conflict.

This is why the bourgeoisie uses anti-fascist ideology, through its left-wing factions, to turn populism into a bogeyman, equating it with fascism. The left-wing parties thus aim to divert the momentum of the workers’ struggle into an electoral dead end by positioning themselves as the true “bulwark” of democracy and equality, capable of providing an answer to the crisis of capitalism.

The identification of populism with fascism therefore serves above all to enable the left to launch an intense campaign denouncing Trump as the source of economic collapse and war-mongering, thus obscuring the historic bankruptcy of the capitalist mode of production. It conceals the harsh truth that attacks on the working class can only multiply.

The trap of demonstrations in defence of the bourgeois state

It is with this in mind that Sanders, Ocasio-Cortez and Warren, the most ‘radical’ factions of the Democratic Party and the trade unions, have pushed workers to take to the streets en masse in many American cities, rallying them behind the movement organised around the slogan ‘*Hands off!*’ to denounce Trump’s ‘autocracy’. These factions of the bourgeoisie took the lead and channelled the protest as growing working class anger emerged, not only against the dismissal of tens of thousands of civil servants but also against the savage cuts in all social budgets, including education and health services, and the spectacular rise in the cost of living. To make matters worse and further drown out the proletariat’s response to these attacks, piecemeal demands were added and juxtaposed, from the LGBT movement to charitable organisations, all of a bourgeois ideological nature, under the banner of defending ‘citizens’ rights’ and ‘democracy.’

The ultimate aim was to divert the workers’ combativity, to prevent the working class from mobilising on its own class terrain, where solidarity, collective reflection and the unity of the working class are built. This is also why the trade unions are calling on the dismissed civil servants to mobilise, alone and cut off from the rest of the working class, against Elon Musk, who has been set up as the ‘embodiment of evil’, the source of all ills. The ‘*Hands off!*’ movement has promised to amplify the ‘response’ on this rotten and prepared ideological terrain in the coming weeks, while Sanders and Ocasio-Cortez are stepping up their meetings and rallies.

In opposition to the campaigns to defend the democratic state, the American working class must

International online public meeting on the ecological crisis

The ICC has recently published a Manifesto on the ecological crisis giving answers to the question ‘Is it possible to stop the destruction of the planet?’ from the point of view of the working class and the future of humanity.

All the ‘solutions’ to the ecological crisis proposed by the ruling class are futile... Capitalism has been an obsolete, decadent form of society for over a hundred years. This long decline has now reached a terminal phase, a dead-end in which war, crises of overproduction and ecological destruction have reached the point at which all these manifestations of the impasse are acting on each other to produce a terrible whirlwind of destruction. But there is an alternative to the nightmare being realised by capitalism: the international struggle of the exploited class for the overthrow of capitalism and the construction of a world communist society.

To discuss these important questions we are holding an **international online public meeting on Saturday 21 June at 14:00-17:00 (BST)**. To participate in this meeting **contact international@internationalism.org**.

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lead the fight against layoffs in federal agencies and education, as well as in companies, against the reduced pensions indexed to collapsing stock market indices, against the reduction of social assistance and the dismantling of social security on its own class terrain, rejecting divisions between its different sectors. Faced with the intensification of the crisis, the ‘war effort’ and all the attacks imposed by the bourgeoisie, faced with the effects of decomposition, it is essential that the working class, in the United States as elsewhere, develop a united struggle against the attacks and sacrifices that the crisis and war are imposing on it. The capitalist system has nothing to offer it. The empty promises of the bourgeoisie are only there to better shackle it to further exploitation.
Camille, 21 April 2025

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What policy for the working class faced with the increasing danger of war?

The barbaric wars in Ukraine and the Middle East seem to go on endlessly, as do the many wars in Africa, in particular those in Congo and Sudan. Meanwhile, European powers are more or less abandoned by their former US “protector” and demand a significant increase in military spending for their ‘defence’, which will undoubtedly involve increasing attacks on workers’ living standards. Tensions between the US and China continue to sharpen. So the question of war and the struggle against it is posed more and more acutely for all those who aim to defend the international interests of the working class.

However, any attempt to develop a clear position against war today is immediately confronted by a number of obstacles.

On the one hand, there are the sheep in wolves clothing: the organisations of the ‘far left’ of capitalist politics who present themselves as authentic revolutionaries. Foremost among these are the Trotskyist organisations, and a number of these have been moving even further to the left to soak up any real questioning about the nature of war today¹. The leftist organisations of the bourgeoisie present themselves today as real defenders of internationalism. But their internationalism is only a cover for their downright chauvinist credentials. Thus some leftist groups (including anarchists) call for support for Ukraine as the ‘lesser evil’ in the fight against Putin’s Russia; others still consider Russia today as some kind of anti-imperialist force, and support its war against NATO, such as the World Socialist Web Site. But a more ‘radical’ Trotskyist group, the Revolutionary Communist Party (formerly International Marxist Tendency) *seems* to take an internationalist stand: “*We cannot support either side in this war, because it is a reactionary war on both sides. In the final analysis, it is a conflict between two groups of imperialists*”. But towards the war in the Middle East this internationalism of the RCP has completely disappeared: “*From day one of this horrific conflict, we have participated in the solidarity movement for Palestinian liberation*”. What leftists can never put forward is the conclusion already drawn by Rosa Luxemburg during the First World War: in the decadent period of capitalism, the era of “unbridled imperialism”, all nations and all wars are imperialist. Furthermore, all wars are

1. See our article “The quarrel between ‘Révolution Permanente’ and ‘Lutte Ouvrière’: Two Trotskyist varieties of the same nationalist positions”, ICC Online

links in the same chain of destruction: for example, those who support the military forces fighting for “*Palestinian liberation*” necessarily support the “Axis of Resistance” sustained by Iran, which in turn is a supplier of deadly drones to Russia in its attack on Ukraine.

But there is a whole landscape of political forces which inhabit an area we often refer to as the “swamp”, “*that intermediate zone which brings together all those who oscillate between the camp of the proletariat and that of the bourgeoisie, who are constantly on the way to one camp or the other*”².

Faced with the war in Ukraine, a number of groups, mostly from an anarchist background, defend an unambiguously internationalist position of opposition to both camps, strongly criticising those anarchist groups who have formed ‘autonomous units’ within the Ukrainian army. This internationalist position was the starting point for the Prague ‘anti-war’ conference which we attended last summer³. But as we also saw in Prague, anarchism is at odds with a coherent political framework based on the working class as the only historical subject capable of overthrowing capitalism and thus ending all wars. They are often tempted by the search for immediate results based on the activism of small groups (for example, attempt to obstruct or sabotage the production or supply of weapons). And in some cases, this kind of activism spills over into outright leftism, as in the case of the Anarchist Communist Group, which rejected both Israel and Hamas from the beginning of the war but at the same time publicised the activities of “Palestine Action”⁴, an ‘action group’ which has clearly chosen its camp. Revolutionaries need to intervene actively in this landscape, exposing its confusions and pushing forward to a higher level the clarity it has attained. But what about the ‘revolutionary milieu’ itself: the organisations of the only tradition which has maintained a consistent internationalism for the last century or more, the international communist left?

2. “The two teats that suckle the communisers: Denial of the revolutionary proletariat, denial of the dictatorship of the proletariat”, *International Review* 172
3. “Prague ‘Action Week’: Activism is a barrier to political clarification”, *International Review* 172
4. <https://www.anarchistcommunism.org/2025/04/14/palestine-antimilitarist-jackdaw-special-out-now/>, and our article “The ACG takes another step towards supporting the nationalist war campaign”, ICC Online

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 statified 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

Imperialist war and the tasks of the communist left

Like the proletariat as a whole, which Marx in “A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right” termed “*a class of civil society which is not a class of civil society*”, revolutionary organisations are an “alien body” inside this system, a living expression of the communist future, and yet they live and breathe inside this system, and this means that they are never immune to inhaling the poison of the dominant ideology.

The disease that this ideology brings with it is known as opportunism – adapting to the underlying assumptions of this system (such as the idea that nations are something eternal and above the division of society into classes) and watering down principles in order to gain an immediate echo within the masses.

Bordigists and the national question

The penetration of opportunism into the existing milieu of the communist left is most obvious when we look at the response of the various Bordigist groups (International Communist Parties) to the war in the Middle East. Having taken a clear position on the Ukraine war, their statements on Gaza and the Palestinian question, like many groups in the swamp, are often highly ambiguous, tending towards support for the struggle of the “Palestinian masses” specifically against the Israeli occupation, or demanding that Israeli workers first mobilise in support of the Palestinians before they can join in a common class battle against the exploiters of in both camps. As we show in a new article in *International Review* 173, the Bordigists’ confusions on the national question have deep historical roots, reflecting a real difficulty in recognising that capitalism is no longer, and not anywhere, an ascendant system with possibilities of national or bourgeois revolutions as it was in the days of the Communist Manifesto⁵.

Concessions to bourgeois ideology and practices, the distinguishing feature of the ‘right wing’ in the workers’ movement, have always been accompanied by sectarianism towards the ‘left wing’ of the movement, towards those whose adherence to principles and capacity to understand the profound changes in the situation of capitalism and the proletariat is an irritant to those who want to carry on with their opportunist schemes.

5. “The national question according to Bordigist legend”, *International Review* 173

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

This is clearly the case with the Bordigists, who have almost always made refusal to discuss with other currents of the revolutionary movement a new ‘eternal principle’, one which is totally at odds with the practice of the Italian Fraction of the Communist Left in the 1930s, who always argued that the confrontation of political positions was a vital need for the development and ultimate unification of the revolutionary movement.

When the Ukraine war broke out in 2022, the ICC called for a joint declaration in defence of internationalist principles by all the genuine groups of the communist left⁶. This was subsequently followed by other appeals (around the war in the Middle East, the bourgeois campaigns around the ‘defence of democracy’ against the populist right). With some exceptions, whose importance we don’t want to diminish, these appeals have been systematically rejected by the other groups.

The response (or in most cases, the non-response) of the Bordigists was to be expected, since it fits in with their classically sectarian idea that their various organisations have already achieved the exalted position of being the one and only class party. But we must also note that the Internationalist Communist Tendency, whose programmatic positions, especially on the national question, are much closer to ours than the Bordigists, also rejected our appeal, as their predecessors have done at other moments of acute imperialist conflict, such as the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, the war in ex-Yugoslavia, etc. A joint declaration of the communist left was rejected on various grounds: of being too general and ignoring important differences of analysis, because it was not sent to groups which we define as parasitic but which they want to accept as part of the communist left (eg the IGCL⁷), and above all because their main concern has been to bring together a wider range of internationalist groups and individuals. Hence their No War But the Class War initiative, forming groups on a reduced set of principles in order to carry out propaganda or

6. “Two years on from the Joint Statement of the Communist Left on the war in Ukraine”, *International Review* 172
7. “Attacking the ICC: the raison d’être of the IGCL”, ICC online

Continued on page 6

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*.