

# PERMANENT REVOLUTION

THE BATTLE-CRY MUST BE: THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION!  
ENGELS & MARX TO THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE, 1850

# 2023

**IRAN 3**

**1ST MAY 9**

**FRANCE 12**

**RUSSIA 15**

**MILAN CONFERENCE 19**

**BERLIN CAMP 20**

**NIGER 22**

**PALESTINE 26**





## IRAN

# NEITHER AYATOLLAH, NOR SHAH! WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' GOVERNMENT!

27 JANUARY 2023

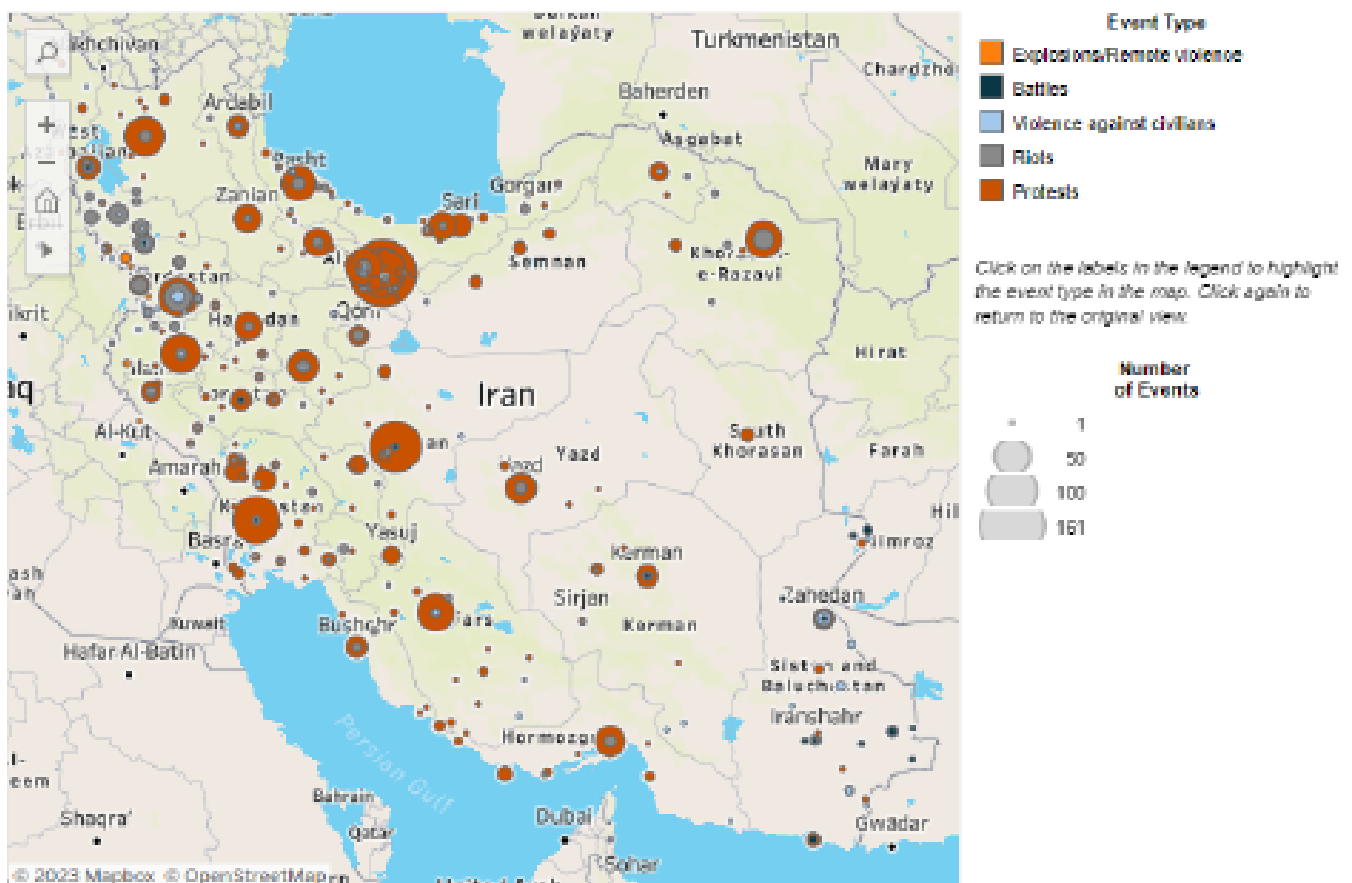
### The uprising against the Islamic regime

On 13th September, Masha Jina Amini, a 22-year student, while visiting her family in Teheran, died in the hospital Kassra. A few hours before, she was arrested by the morality police for having let a strand of hair out her hijab (headscarf).

Jina's murder caused a popular uprising which threatens the regime, which originates from the 1979 Islamofascist counter-revolution. The protests started in the Rojhilat (Kurdistan in the Iranian State), where she lived, and they rapidly spread to 140 cities, all over the country. As a whole, several million people demonstrated against the duty imposed on women to cover their limbs and head. The protestors were shouting: "Women, Life, Freedom!", a catchword from the Turkey's Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), and "Death to the Dictator!", which is aimed to the Supreme Guide, the Ayatollah (which is the title given to the Shi'ite Muslim clergy's dignitaries) Ali Khamenei, 85.

The young workers and students initiated the revolt. Despite the risks they were facing, many removed their headscarf and cut their hair. It is an historical revenge by working and student women, after the first protest against the Islamic counter-revolution in March 1979. It is a blow against all the world reaction, whether it is Christian, Muslim or Hindu, which discriminates women on a legal basis, which dictates them a dress code, which prohibits them from aborting, which subjects them to the male domination and to male-dominated violence...

Demonstrations were particularly huge in Kurdistan (West of Iran) and in Balochistan (South-East). On 18th November, the museum dedicated to the Ayatollah Khomeini, the founder of the regime, was burned down. Each day, mullahs (Chiite priests) have their turban torn in the street. More and more workers and small shopkeepers join the protests. All universities are hit.



As it is often the case in popular uprising, the established power and the media accuse the culprit abroad. The Supreme Guide, the president Ebrahim Raïssi, the TV channels and the journals (all are Islamic) denounced a plot from Israel and from the Western imperialist powers.

*These riots and the insecurity were engineered by America and the occupying, false Zionist regime [Israel], as well as their paid agents, with the help of some traitorous Iranians abroad... In recent incidents, it is above all security forces including the police and Basij, as well as the people of Iran, who were wronged. (Ali Khamenei, 3rd October 2022)*

The Pasdaran (revolutionary guards), the Basij (volunteers), some Corps of the Army (including the 65th airborne brigade) and Islamist militiamen from Lebanon (Hezbollah) or from Iraq (Hashd Al-Sha'bi), who name themselves as "God's whip", clubbed and arrested people, they used shot pellets and even bullets. 18,000 protestors, journalists, bloggers, singers, were arrested, some were tortured and forced to public confessions.

*Iranian security forces are targeting women at anti-regime protests with shotgun fire to their faces, breasts and genitals... While an internet blackout has hidden much of the bloody crackdown on protesters, photos provided by medics to the Guardian showed devastating wounds all over their bodies from so-called birdshot pellets, which security forces have fired on people at close range... Shots to the eyes... were particularly common. (The Guardian, 8th December 2022)*

During the night of 15th and 16th October, the Evin prison in Teheran –where the political prisoners are held – burnt, resulting in four deaths, according to the authorities. On 19th November, the forces of suppression entered Mahabad (Kurdistan) with tanks and fired with machine guns at everything that moved. At that time, the State repression occasioned 510 dead and thousands injured (Reuters). 18,000 people were arrested. National minorities paid a high price: besides the Kurds, more than a hundred Balochis were murdered. Islamic courts condemned many protestors to death for "enmity against God". The government Khamenei-Raïssi had Mohsen Shekari (server, 23) hanged on 8th December, Majidreza Rahnavard (seller, 23 too) on 12th December, Mohammad Mahdi Karami (sportsman, 22) and Seyed Mohammad Hosseini (worker, 39) on 7th January 2023.

On 28th September, on 14th and 21st November, in Iraq, the Pasdaran shelled the premises of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI) and of the Communist Party of Iran (CPI), which armed wing is now the Komala. At the same time, the Turkish State, led by Erdoğan and based on the Islamist AKP bloc and on the chauvinistic MHP, unleashed an attack against Rojava, the Kurdish territory of Syria controlled by the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its military wing YPG, connected with the PKK.

The 2023-2024 budget presented on 22nd January by president Raisi to the Parliament plans a 45% increase of the prisons' public funding, 50% for the police, 50% for the intelligence services, 50% for the Pasdaran, 55% for the office of religious propaganda.

Yet the popular movement has not ended. The masses are mobilizing to overthrow the Islamic Republic of Iran 44 years after it was introduced.

## **A despotic, patriarchal and colonial regime since 1979**

The 1979-1983 counter-revolution led by the clergy and its Islamo-fascist militias maintained the key element, the Shah army and officialised new punitive agencies, it established censorship, suppressed the women's movement, banned the workers' organizations and eliminated its activists, crushed the Kurdish resistance, discarded the workers' councils (shoras)...

Since then, the Shiite clergy has been enforcing its exclusive political rule, its incursion in private life, the sharia (Islamic law). Since December 1979 referendum, the constitution formalizes the rule of the Supreme Guide over the institutions, he is appointed for life by an "Assembly of Experts" which consists of 86 elected clerics. A "Council of Guardians" chosen by the Guide ensures that the laws comply with the Islamic religion and selects the candidates for running the elections of the "experts", the general elections and the presidential election. The president elected for four years by universal suffrage is in charge of governing under the rule of the Guide. The Majlis (Islamic assembly) consists with 285 deputies (elected among Islamist candidates), votes the budget and other laws under the control of the Council of Guardians. The State separates men and women within the public space, it sets out the dress code, it condemns homosexuality (from whip to death penalty). The Civil Code allows less rights to women than to men, it enables fathers to marry their daughters as soon as 13. In 2020, the Raisi government put an end to the free distribution of contraceptives and it restricted the right to abortion. The Penal code includes sentences of flogging, of blinding, of amputation... Even minors are killed. Torture is the rule during interrogations.

Because of the massive conscription of men during the war against Iraq, women were reintegrated in paid employment. To ensure the accumulation of capital, the bourgeoisie preserved education for the most. Building on the endeavours initiated under the monarchy, the higher education developed, including young women. The State also funds a parasitic clergy supervising the population, and a very large State bureaucracy offering jobs as civil servants or as paramilitary and military bodies to some of the urban outsiders and some of the ruined peasants. The repressive machinery (Pasdaran army, police, morality police, Basij, judges, jailers...) and the ideological apparatus (clergy, television...) of

the State absorb a large part of the social surplus value, which impedes the accumulation of capital.

The religious institutions were already big landowners during the Shah’s rule, in the name of charity, which serves as a social security. New capitalist participants appear, especially the religious foundations that are subsidised by the State and avoid any taxation (Mostazafan Foundation, Foundation of Martyrs...). The Islamist institutions (religious foundations, Pasdaran’s shell companies...) became real capitalist groups that produce and sell weapons, energy, telecommunications, chemical and pharmaceutical products, food. According to the official data, a third of the economy (building, telecommunications, mines...) is controlled by the Pasdaran’s firms.

Just as the Jewish and Christian sacred texts, the Koran condemns interest-bearing loans. A 1983 act on banking operations formalized the ban on interest in Iran. However, since no capitalist economy can work without any credit, it only amounts to a semantic change, where the words “profit” and “service load” replaced “interest”. Like in Saudi Arabia, the “Islamic finance” makes up all kinds of financial and legal arrangement for concealing the interest. The big banks that were nationalised in 1979 are facing competition from any sort of banks controlled by the Bazaari and by the Pasdaran, who often speculate, while they escape the control of the Central Bank (Bank Markazi Jomhuri Islami Iran).

Thanks to the oil rent secured on the world market, the State subsidises the domestic energy (fuel, heating) and the basic food commodities. Yet, even when the barrel price is high, these funds cannot satisfy the population, much larger that in Saudi Arabia.

Since 1979, the Islamic Republic fully continues the

monarchy’s attitude against minorities, whether they are Iranian (Kurds, Balochis ...), Turkish (Azeris, Turkmens ...), Arabic... who as a whole represent almost half of the population.

In 1984, Khomeini revitalizes the Shah’s nuclear program. This unleashed the anger of the US government, while it is not disturbed by the fact that Israel, India and Pakistan have it, regardless of the international conventions, not to mention what the imperialist powers (US, Russia, China, France, UK) have. The Persian bourgeois State takes a regional leadership with a role in Iraq, Lebanon, Gaza, Syria, Yemen, Sudan...

### A capitalism relying on the world imperialist system

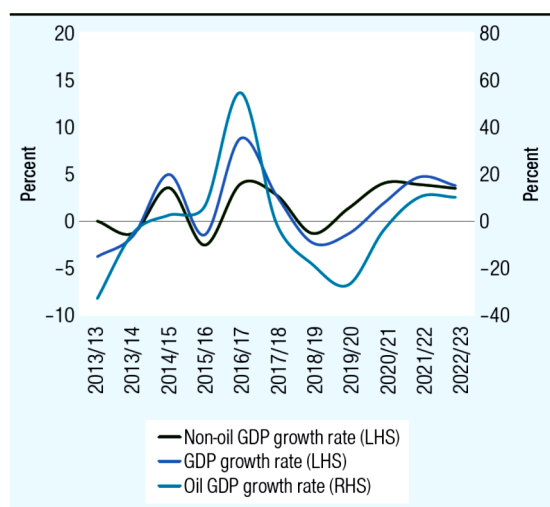
The Iranian economy ranks 2nd in the region, after Turkey. Its GDP recently exceeded Saudi Arabia’s. Yet, the extended reproduction of capital keeps stunted, the inflation doesn’t stop, the unemployment is important, the bourgeoisie favours trade and housing over manufacturing industry.

Since 1979 the US, sometimes followed by the European Union, imposes economic penalties to Iran, on an almost permanent basis, under different pretexts: occupation of the embassy, war with Iraq, attacks, path to the nuclear weapon. Besides, Israel is repeating military incursions in Syria against the Iranian troops, as well as attacks in Iran itself. The recent setting up of the Netanyahu-Gvir-Smotrich increases the risks of conflicts.

Even if the effect is tempered by the connivance of several neighbouring States or of other imperialist powers (Oman, Tajikistan, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Af-

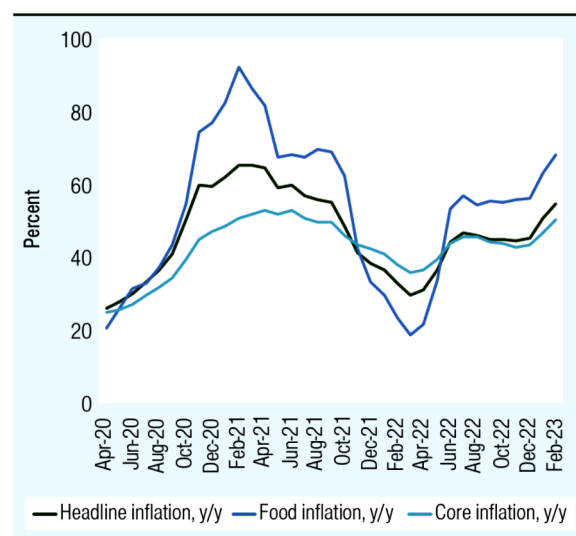
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FIGURE 1 • GDP Continued Its Moderate Growth in 2022/23...



Source: Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and World Bank staff calculations.

FIGURE 12 • Inflation Accelerated Further in 2022/23...



Source: CBI and World Bank staff calculations.

ghanistan, Emirates, Turkey, Russia, China...), the working class is the main victim of this economic pressure, as always in similar cases. In contrast, the quasi-public sector (foundations, guarding companies) builds its wealth on smuggling, on black market and on currency trafficking. From 2013, income and wealth inequalities increased. In addition, the Ayatollahs' regime is using the argument of the penalties for justifying underdevelopment, for stirring up nationalism, for justifying repression. Ostensibly burning the US flags in front of the cameras does not prevent the Islamic Republic to cooperate with the US when they invade Afghanistan in 2001.

To make up for the US enmity, Iran is dealing with other imperialist powers, especially Russia and China, that became capitalist since the early 1990s, but the competition in gas and oil exports restricts the exchange with Russia. In March 2021, the Islamic Republic and the PRC signed a 25-year strategic partnership. In 2023, Iran will join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) under Beijing's patronage. On the one hand, in case of an open conflict between Beijing and Washington, Iran is the only oil exporting country that escapes the US pressures. On the other hand, the Iran-US tensions represent an opportunity for China, in order, inter alia, to acquire the Iranian firms cheaply and to export its commodities, from consumption goods to new technologies (5G, artificial intelligence). Obviously, the relation between the two States is basically asymmetrical. The combination of Iran's diplomatic isolation with the US sanctions and with a strong economic crisis forces the country to seek sponsorship of another power. On the Chinese side, Iran is an option among others.

Like in most capitalist dominated countries, State corruption is not the exception but the rule. Since 1989, the Ayatollahs' State, as well as the other American, European, African and Asian capitalist governments, has privatized, reduced the subsidies on essential products, enhanced the job flexibility. In gas and electricity for instance, 90,000 workers have permanent contracts, while 160,000 (64%) have fixed-term or temporary contracts. The informal sector occupies 40 to 50% of the labour force, as more or less independent workers or as wage-earners with no contract. Besides, the bourgeois State

has systematically repressed the strikers and union activists since they appeared.

With 130 000 deaths, Iran is the country in the Middle East most hit by the covid pandemic. If oil export benefits from the war in Ukraine and the rise in energy prices, if economic growth is at 3%, unemployment is officially at 9,4% of active population and the prices on consumer goods officially rose by 40% within one year, probably much more. Wages and pensions did not follow. The majority of the 82 million Iranians lives below the poverty line defined by the UNO, one quarter of the population is poorly housed.

Youth is more educated than in many other countries in the region, but can hardly find employment, so that a significant part of graduates emigrates, joining a political and economic diaspora of 2 to 3 million people. Small shopkeepers are ruined by new commercial centres (400 created between 2010 and 2015). After having been self-sufficient in food until the years 1960, Iran has become one of the greatest world importers of agricultural products (from 30 to 50% of its needs). Agriculture is more and more capitalist, with big private farms from 100 to 200 hectares that become local poles of production where are hired working farmers from neighbouring villages, as a complement to their own small family farming. Others try their luck in towns because of the concentration of lands and repeated droughts.

Within 5 years, the Iranian rial lost 90% of its value on the exchange markets. The public deficit could be of 7% of the GDP (equivalent to 10 billion dollars), which raises the question of the extent of military spendings and of the help provided to other governments in the region, especially as Iran draws less economic gains than Russia from its military and financial help to Syria (one exception is the acquisition of the majority of shares of Wafa Telecom by a Malay society in the hands of the pasdars of Iran).

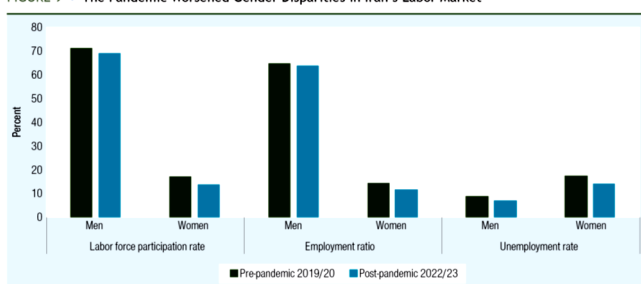
To pandemic and economic difficulties, one must add an environment crisis. Air pollution, caused among others by 3 million cars (of which there are 1.2 million in Berlin and 1.4 in New-York), harms the health of inhabitants of the capital city. Water shortage is dependent on the climate disturbance, but it is aggravated by the bad management of the natural resource, wasted by capitalist agriculture. For instance, the Salt Lake of Urumiyeh has lost half of its surface.

## For the working class to take the lead of the movement

National minorities hate the yoke of the Persian State. A significant part of the working class is Kurdish, Azeri, or Arab.

Youth longs for freedom: in 1999, student riots are violently repressed by the Basidj in several towns.

FIGURE 9 • The Pandemic Worsened Gender Disparities in Iran's Labor Market



Source: SCI and World Bank staff calculations.

In 2009, the proclamation of results of the presidential election leads to a mobilisation of the petty bourgeois classes of towns in support of a wing of Islamism that does not question the regime, but belongs to it and lives from it. 150 demonstrators are killed. The multiple rapes by the Basidj are denounced. But this protest prepares others, much more plebeian.

In 2017-2018, the most authoritarian fraction launches demonstrations against the so-called liberal wing, but they get overwhelmed by workers who attack the whole regime. The power accuses the United States. The repression causes around 20 deaths.

In 2019, inflated prices lead to demonstrations on a wide scale, crushed at the price of hundredths of deaths, particularly in Kurdistan. As usual in totalitarian regimes, arrested demonstrators were tortured in order to wring from them public confessions. In 2021, workers and farmers demonstrated in the province of Khuzestan, at least 8 of them were killed.

Since the beginning of the century, strikes take place. Even trade unions independent from the regime appear in public transports and refineries, despite a ferocious repression.

Since several months, the spontaneity of Iranian masses is formidable and attracts the admiration of the exploited and the oppressed in the whole world. Despite all, the murderous regime is still in place. The Iranian bourgeoisie has lost nothing essential and the ayatollahs are not overthrown. They still hold the bourgeois State, its finances, its armament, its tribunals, the centralisation of information, the means of communication, the intelligence and repression forces, facing workers and students who remain without strategy, without programme, without leadership. That is why one needs watchwords beyond first wave slogans. That is why one must identify the class able to overthrow the old order and to create a new one. That is why one needs self-defence and self-organisation organisms. That is why one needs a strategy of permanent revolution. That is why one needs a party.

Otherwise, the terrain will be occupied by “reformers” of the regime, by monarchists supported by Washington, by “democratic” bourgeois, by Balochi jihadists who want to imitate the Taliban, by Kurdish bourgeois nationalists who want to imitate the Barzani clan in Iraq, by false communists (Tudeh) who want to fit up the Islamist regime, by false communists (WPI, PCOI-WCPI) who call on monarchists to speak in demonstrations of exiles or who call on imperialist States, by the Mujahedeen sect sold to American secret services.

The enemies of the enemies of the proletariat are not necessarily its friends. In 1978, in the name of the anti-imperialist united front, opportunists (Tudeh, Fedayeen ...) were ready for anything, including submission to Islamists, in order to overthrow the Shah, which facilitat-

ed the counter-revolution of 1979-1983. Today, in the name of democracy, they are ready for anything in order to overthrow Khamenei, including submission to western imperialist powers.

But the imperialist States had in 1953 helped to set up the monarchy in Iran with the help of Islamists, they betted on ayatollah Khomeini in 1979, they have since destroyed Iraq and Libya, they gave up Afghanistan to Islamists.

The priority is to answer in a progressive and proletarian way to the watchwords launched by the masses: “Woman, life, freedom!” and “Death to the dictator!”.

How to prevent the formidable repression apparatus from killing, from tearing life out of youth, women, and oppressed national minorities? How to conquer equality for women? How to obtain freedom? What to replace the dictator?

### For the hegemony of proletariat

In order to defeat repression from a State that is not dislocated, in order to thwart attempts at patching up the regime from its pro-Western fraction, in order to bring the finishing stroke to the Islamist regime, in order to avoid the restoration of monarchy, in order to thwart the manoeuvres of the “democratic” opposition to save Iranian capitalism, the proletariat must rush on as a class in the fight. It can do it only through a party regrouping the vanguard and linking with its brothers and sisters in the whole world, in the tradition of the League of Communists, of the International Association of Workers, of the Workers’ International, of the Communist International, of the 4th International.

Without delay, all workers’ organisations must establish a united front in order to organise the general strike, to defend themselves by arming working women and men, to create shoras in enterprises, administrations, universities, neighbourhoods, in the open country, and to centralise them.

A decisive way to give confidence to the working class and to open a revolutionary political perspective to society is the general strike. Iranian revolutionary forces must not act with an economist perspective or to obtain concessions from the regime, but with the perspective of bringing the working class to power. The destruction of the Islamist bourgeois State, the dispersion of its forces of repression, the establishment of a workers’ and farmers’ government resting on workers’ councils must be the central aim of revolution.

A general strike shows the strength of workers, arising from their position in production. Beyond immediate demands, the mass strike with occupation puts into question the sacrosanct capitalist property, the appropriation by a minority of society of the means of production created by producers, which makes of it capital

and transforms producers themselves into the exploited. The general strike may not last long, but it raises practically the question of knowing which class must lead society.

From the aspiration to freedom, from self-defence, the general strike and workers' control, will the shoras inevitably be born again. Strike committees, workers' councils must not limit themselves to places of work, and must extend to places of education, to places of life, to unite all workers together, to unite them to future and former workers, to the unemployed. They must instore a direct democracy. Each party, each current will be able to present its analysis and make its propositions. The shoras will settle.

### **For a federal workers' and farmers' Republic**

Communists are, without restriction, for democratic freedoms. Their conquest was sketched in Iran in 1905-1906 and again in 1979. Knowing that never, even in 1906, there was an assembly elected at universal suffrage, communists support free elections for a national or constituent assembly, having done away with the political monopoly of the ayatollahs, the institutions of the Islamic Republic, the censorship ...

But communists do not hide that their goal is much more than a falsely democratic regime where capitalist groups govern in the shadow of the parliamentary chambers, and where apparatuses of professional liars serve them while filling their pockets in passing. They support a much superior democracy, of the type of the Paris Commune of 1871, or of soviets in Russia of 1917, which is the adequate form of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The generalisation and centralisation of councils demands the armament of the masses, they prepare their taking power and the expropriation of national and foreign capitalist groups. All the wealth of society comes from nature and the collective labour of producers, workers must take the control of social wealth while sparing nature.

Facing Pasdaran, Basidj, policemen and professional militaries, the self-defence of demonstrators, the creation of workers' militias, their armament, are urgent tasks. The working class produces weapons, transports them; it manages bank accounts, the pay of policemen and militaries. It must disarm the mercenaries of the bourgeoisie. Within the army, one must wage a systematic work of agitation and propaganda to win conscripts to the revolution, so that they turn their weapons against the generals and political leaders who are the executioners of women, of workers and of national minorities.

The activity of workers' militias will start with self-defence. But, as in 1979, it will have to go through the offensive: to capture by storm police stations where activists are detained and tortured, in order to liberate them, the caserns to arm themselves, the ministry of intelligence

to paralyse it, the seats of Islamist power in order to disperse them and destroy them, the Islamic tribunals in order to punish executioners.

- Internationalist solidarity of workers' and women's organisations in all countries with the struggle of Iranian masses!
- General strike! Self-defence of demonstrations! Creation of shoras on places of work, of life and of study, in caserns!
- Freedom for women to wear or not to wear the veil and to dress as they want! For equality between men and women!
- Down with the Islamist dictatorship! Abolition of the supreme guide, of the assembly of experts, of the council for discernment! Constituent Assembly!
- Dissolution of the bodies of repression! Democratic freedoms for conscripts! Election of officers!
- For the freedom of relations between youths! For the respect of homosexuals and lesbians!
- For the respect of religious minorities and atheists! For secularism! Separation between the State and the Shia clergy! No subsidy of the State to any religion!
- For the liberation of political prisoners! For all democratic freedoms (freedom of expression, freedom of organisation, right to strike, right to demonstrate ...)! For free elections!
- Right to self-determination of national minorities! Right for the Kurds of Iran, of Syria, of Iraq, of Turkey to establish, if they desire it, their own State!
- Freezing of rents, immediate indexation of wages on the cost of life!
- Expropriation of lands of big capitalist farms and of religious foundations! Collective management of water! Cooperatives based on voluntary participation!
- Workers' control over production and distribution! Expropriation of big enterprises and of foundations! A single public bank!
- Social protection! Secular, public and free education and health!
- Lift all American sanctions and end all Zionist assassinations!
- Close all military bases (French, Chinese, Russian, British, American) in the Middle East and in the Mediterranean, exit of the American fleet from the Arabo-Persian gulf, from the Indian ocean and from the Mediterranean!
- Workers' and farmers' government! Socialist Federation of the West Asia!





during the last world recessions, including that of 2020-2021. Therefore, the phases of economic expansion that follow them are of a restricted scope and seem shorter: the world growth should be limited, according to the IMF, to 2,8% in 2023.

To it adds the rise of protectionism in all its forms that leads to some fragmentation of the world market, limits world growth and feeds inflation: international trade of goods and services would rise, according to the WTO, by only 1,7% in 2023.

The last recovery was accompanied by a surge in inflation: a price rise of 8,7% on a world scale in 2022, according to the IMF. In several States, money does not play correctly its role anymore: in 2022, in Turkey, inflation exceeded 64%, and in Argentina 94%. In reality, the rise of prices for food, energy and housing exceeds by far the average rates of rise of prices, and reached a painful level for wage workers in all countries.

Faced with inflation, the restrictive monetary policy of the main central banks tends to raise interest rates in the world at the expense of the weakest national economies, of the most indebted States, of unprofitable “zombies” enterprises, among which the most vulnerable. The rise of bank rates particularly affects indebted working families in States where bank credit is at a variable rate.

### **Imperialist rivalries unleash a worldwide military escalation**

In the period of decline of capitalism (the imperialist phase), the main States, inevitably, defend the ancient division of the world that was advantageous to them, or challenge it to open the way to their capitalist groups against their foreign competitors.

The world situation is marked by the growing rivalry between the United States, which remains the first imperialist power, and China, an ascending imperialist power that calls into question the division of the world. The other imperialist powers (Japan, Germany, Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy ...) are torn between these two poles.

So, the American State attempts to strangle Chinese capitalism by limiting its exports and by depriving it of electronic components necessary to the upgrading of its industry (and of its army). In military terms, the American State has by far the biggest military budget in the world. With the excuse of the imperialist war of Russia against Ukraine, it reinforces NATO. Furthermore, it concluded in 2021 a new military cooperation with Australia and Great Britain (AUKUS), and it multiplies military manoeuvres with its allies, among which the Philippines and Japan, in the China Sea. On its side, the Chinese State rallies Russia and Brazil. With the 2<sup>nd</sup> military budget in the world, it strengthens its control over Hongkong, militarises islets in the China Sea, and multiplies military manoeuvres in the Taiwan Strait.

The worldwide rise of generalised militarism is done without concern for limiting pollutions or for saving energy. The bourgeois army, its secret services, constitute not only a tax burden for workers, but also a repressive tool against their emancipation.

### **Reaction all the way through**

In the most advanced economies, States go back on previous social achievements. Even the most established bourgeois democracies restrict freedoms: systematic spying of their population, restriction to the right to strike, to move about, to demonstrate, to publish ... Former presidents (Trump, Bolsonaro) question the elections when they are unfavourable to them and unleash fascist gangs to pressure institutions. Everywhere, bourgeois political parties and populist demagogues bet on xenophobia, religion, racism, machismo, and conspiracy theories ... Immigrant workers, working women and ethnic, religious, or sexual minorities are the first victims of the rise of worldwide reaction.

The Indian State persecutes Muslims and occupies militarily Kashmir. Israel, based on the colonisation of Palestine, inevitably pursues it in the West Bank and in Jerusalem, while aggravating the apartheid against Arabs in its midst. Capitalist Russia can defend itself, facing military and economic pressure from the United States and the European Union, only by denying Ukraine's right to exist and by increasingly repressing its own population. Turkey persecutes Kurds within its borders, its army attacks them in Iraq and in Syria. In Iran, the ayatollahs' regime oppresses ever more women and national minorities. The quasi-feudal regime of the Taliban back in power in 2021 now prohibits urban women from working and girls from studying.

### **The leadership crisis of the labour movement**

Since May the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, the working population led large-scale struggles in all continents, in particular: in Peru, against the impeachment of the elected president and police repression; in Iran, against the compulsory veil; in China, against excessive lockdown; in Great Britain, in Sri Lanka, in Belgium, in Austria, in the Czech Republic, in Germany, in the United States ... against inflation; in France, against raising the retirement age.

But the current leaderships of the world working class do not really serve the interests of workers. The majority trade unions remain in the hands of corrupted bureaucracies, sometimes linked to bourgeois parties, as in the United States, in Argentina, in Algeria ... Therefore, in Great Britain, in Belgium, in France... the trade union chiefs refuse to call for the general strike until victory. In Great Britain, they even suspended strikes when the queen died.

The restoration of capitalism in 1992 in Russia and in China aggravated the crisis of the labour movement. The old bourgeois workers' parties ("Labour", "social-democrats", "communists") obey more than ever their ruling class. The parties created on their model (Brazilian PT, German DL, British Respect, Greek Syriza, Spanish Podemos, French LFI, Belgian PT, Brazilian PSOL ...) are no better.

The British LP, ever more monarchist, is in favour of NATO and refuses to support strikes; the German SPD governs with the Greens and the Liberal Party; the PSOE, the PCE and Podemos form in Spain a social-imperialist government enraptured by the military escalade of NATO; in Brazil, Lula has as vice-president an old bourgeois politician, opposes the right to abortion and kneels in front of the army staff; in Nepal, the PCUN-M is presently member of the bourgeois government; the same for the SACP in South Africa; the Russian KPRF supports the invasion of Ukraine; the DSA of the United States are in the Democratic Party and serve as infantrymen to the imperialist Biden; etc.

### **Centrism contributes to confusion and dispersal**

The leadership of the 4<sup>th</sup> International, created to replace the Workers' International and the Communist International, revised its programme in 1949-1951. The ensuing and ongoing break-up engendered an abundance of sterile sects and twenty or so rival opportunist currents that have all adapted to "reformism" or to bourgeois nationalism.

The Argentine PTS and PO have voted on September 3, with the bourgeois parties in power, a motion in the regional parliament of Buenos-Aires "for social peace". In recent months, the French LO, NPA-B, CR and RP, the British SWP, SP, AWL, ACR and WF aligned themselves on the trade unions apparatuses that multiplied the "days of action" and scattered strikes. During the covid pandemic, "Trotskyists" (French LO, NPA and RP, US SL, Austrian RKOB ...) supported demonstrations against masks and vaccines led by conspiracy theorists and fascists.

Some organisations embodying "Trotskyism" in their country entered into blocks avec with Islamists: the British SWP with Respect in 2004, the Algerian PT with the Rome platform in 1995. From 2011 onwards, several groups claiming to be Trotskyist (Brazilian CST, Argentine IS, Austrian RKOB, New Zealand CWG ...) have presented jihadists as leading a revolution in Syria, and one of them (Argentine LOI) even provided them with troops.

Several organisations advance the constituent assembly in countries where it can only have a counter-revo-

lutionary function: the PTS, PO and MST in Argentine, the PTU and CST in Peru, the POI and POID in France ... Others present cops as workers like any other: British SP, French LO, Brazilian PSTU, Irish SP ... All refuse to advocate and organise self-defence against the police, the army, and fascists.

Numerous are "Trotskyist" currents that refuse to condemn the invasion of Ukraine or that put on the same footing the Zionist oppressor and the Arab people in Palestine/Israel. Some refuse to decide in favour of the opening of borders to refugees, workers, and students.

### **For the revolutionary workers' international, for the world socialist revolution**

The bourgeoisie, even in dominated countries, cannot any more play a progressive role. The strategy that responds to the imperialist phase is the permanent revolution adopted in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the 4th International.

It is possible to bring an end to all this rotten world if, beyond borders, the workers' vanguard regroup itself in a revolutionary workers' international based on Marxism. In each State, the international will help building a party of the Bolshevik type to expropriate big capital and destroy the bourgeois State, instore a workers' government based on armed councils of urban and rural workers.

Then, the working class will be able to take power at the head of struggles against exploitation and oppression, for democratic freedoms and the right of oppressed nations, for the equality of women and for the defence of environment. The dictatorship of proletariat will open the way to world socialism-communism rid of the state, a mode of production based on equality and solidarity, where workers will consciously manage resources, production and distribution for the benefit of present and future humanity.

## FRANCE

WHY DID THE POWERFUL PENSION MOVEMENT  
END IN DEFEAT?

23 JUNE 2023

*No revolutionist who weighs his words will contend that a victory would have been guaranteed by converting the economic strike into a political strike. But a victory was possible only on this road. (Trotsky, The Third International After Lenin, 1928)*

For 6 months, between January and the beginning of June 2023, there were powerful demonstrations in France, including in small towns, and strikes against the government's plan to attack pension rights.

This government attack on the pension system is not the first. In the early 1980s, the common rule in France was:

- The right to retire at 60 with a full pension after 37.5 years of contributions. It was even more favourable for "special pension schemes" for workers in certain sectors, such as the national rail transport company (SNCF) and the Paris metro (RATP), where drivers could retire with a full pension at 50.



A series of attacks by the bourgeois state has since considerably eroded workers' rights. With the Macron-Borne government's last counter-reform, now voted and promulgated, the situation will be:

- The right to retire only from the age of 64, and to have a full pension you'll need to have contributed for 43 years (otherwise it will be 67).

In the space of forty years, the bourgeoisie has succeeded in forcing the working class to work almost 6 years longer to qualify for a full pension!

There have already been numerous attacks, and each time the working class has fought back, ending in defeat, except in 1995, when the government partially backed down.

Why did this happen? The answer is quite simple: because each time, the governments were not confronted with a general strike by the working class, drawn up and organized in a single bloc to make them give in, but only with strikes broken down into days of action, a day's strike here, a day's strike there, spread out over several months.

In 1995, the government had to back down in part, by postponing the attack on special schemes, because the situation was increasingly likely to spill over into the general strike that was taking shape at the SNCF, the RATP, the public education system...) and because young people at school were joining the employees' fight in droves.

However, in 2003, the government extended the contribution period for civil servants from 37.5 to 40 years. Despite massive general assemblies and demonstrations, the CGT-FO-UNSA-FSU-Solidaires inter-union refused to call a general strike. Throughout the movement, the union leaders agreed to discuss the government's plan and asked for "real negotiations for another reform". After ten or so "days of action" (action strike limited to 24 hours), the government won.

In 2010, the government decided the retirement age from 60 to 62. There were up to 14 days of action over more than 6 months! The government didn't care about these scattered strikes, with no perspective. Each time, it waited until the day after the strike, and then everything went back to normal, until the next one. And so, little by little, the workers' fighting spirit vanished.

At the end of 2019, the government decided to put an end to the "special pension schemes". The union bureaucrats at the SNCF made workers go on strike for up to 50 days, alone, for nothing, while other workers were called out for days of action from time to time. The SNCF and RATP workers, who represented organised and combative sectors, were defeated.

Similarly, in 2023, the government won, after 6 months of struggle and mobilization by the working class, after 15 days of action, and the renewable strikes that lasted several days, even weeks, in certain sectors such as the SNCF, garbage collectors in major cities like Paris, oil refineries, etc. All the bureaucrats are still claiming that "nothing is lost", that "the battle goes on", but in reality, counter-reform is starting to take hold, and workers know it perfectly well. But the bureaucrats are lying because they need to conceal the fact that they have led the masses to yet another defeat.

Why hasn't there been a call for a general strike? Because the union leaders, the leaders of reformist parties like the PS, PCF or LFI don't want a general strike. And why don't they? Because union bureaucrats and reformist parties don't want to harm French capitalism or challenge the bourgeois state.

Trade union division is at an all-time high in France: CFDT, CGT, FO, SUD-Solidaires, FSU, CFTC, UNSA and others. The trade union leaders are so tied up in maintaining capitalism that they all agree to discuss and negotiate all the attacks wanted by the employers and the government, as if something positive could come out of it for the working class. For example, they agreed to discuss the pension counter-reform project for over 6 months.

They first tried to make workers believe that, by negotiating, they could turn it into "a good reform". It was only the mobilisation that forced the leaders of the "Intersyndicale" to ask for the withdrawing of the draft bill. The union leaders refused right to the end to call a general strike, on the pretext that "a general strike cannot be decreed". But they themselves decreed 15 days of action, including May 1<sup>st</sup>, which were completely ineffective! And where the workers were the most combative and sought to go beyond the framework of the days of action, some union leaders (CGT, FO, SUD) called for extendable strikes. They are therefore proposing that workers extend the strike the next day, or even the day after that, or even longer if necessary. But these are strikes decided site by site, sector by sector, each in its own corner, isolated and without any prospect of a centralised fight, all together, at the same time, against the government.

The bourgeois workers' parties PS, PCF and LFI, which are linked to the trade union bureaucracies, have made every effort to make people believe that a "parliamentary battle" in the National Assembly with

their MPs could lead to victory. This is parliamentary cretinism, as Lenin put it. The government already has a reactionary constitution that gives it almost every means of controlling debates and votes. What's more, the PS, the PCF and LFI, who have formed an alliance with the bourgeois ecologist party in the NUPES, are in the minority in the National Assembly. So all their parliamentary activity has consisted of appealing to MPs from the bourgeois LR party, the old Gaullist party which is a competitor to Macron, and even to votes from Le Pen's xenophobic party, the RN! So together they voted motions of no confidence to try to bring down the government, without succeeding. The same people who called on workers to vote for Macron in the 2017 and 2022 presidential elections on the pretext of putting up a barrage against Le Pen's fascist party have this time put their votes together with Le Pen's fascist party to try to bring down Macron's government. But what would have happened if they had succeeded in getting the motion of censure passed? There would have been new elections for deputies and then it would have been a boulevard for the RN! No "reformist" party has called for a general strike any more than the union leaders have. They don't want it because it would mean opening up a potentially revolutionary situation.

Actually, the general strike means the fight for elected, mandated and revocable strike committees, the coordination of these strike committees, neighbourhood committees, etc., the constitution of a central and national strike committee, the only one empowered to lead the strike, supported by the immense force of the working class gathered together, which stands as the embryo of a dual power facing the bourgeois state. This is why the general strike frightens the government and the bureaucrats, because it contains the seeds of the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the seizure of power by the working class, the government of the workers supported by the workers' councils. In short, the general strike is the very movement of revolution.

But why does the working class always follow the leaders when they are leading it to defeat? The answer to this question is decisive:

1) Obviously, a section of the working class, and even more so of young people, realised that the bureaucrats' days of action, the bogus actions such as torch-lit retreats, balloon releases, etc. were leading nowhere. So they looked for another way forward. But what did they find? They found organisations that were revolutionary on Sundays and that followed and covered up the betrayal of the bureaucrats every day of the week. LO, the NPA, RP, the POID, the POI, the UCL, the PCOF... told young people and workers: "the days of action are good, they're a support, they're a springboard, we have to support them". "Their only fault is

that they're not enough". So what else is needed? Renewable strikes. We need to "broaden the scope of renewable strikes". The plural indicates the difference with the general strike.

*These are not craft strikes that have taken place. These are not just strikes. This is the strike. This is the open rallying of the oppressed against the oppressors. This is the classic beginning of revolution.. (Trotsky, The French Revolution Has Begun!, 9 June 1936)*

Not one of these centrist organisations has fought for the general strike, has called for organising for the general strike, for setting up general strike action committees as soon as the bill was announced, for getting trade union sections and general assemblies to take a stand for the general strike, as the GMI has done to the best of its ability. Why do LO, NPA, RP, etc. do this? Because they don't want to break with the trade union apparatuses, in which they hold positions. So they continue to follow them, while adopting a more radical stance.

2) The second reason why the working class didn't manage to overrun the counter-revolutionary apparatuses, why school-going youth didn't mobilise en masse, is the weight of previous defeats and the absence of a revolutionary workers' party, or even of an internationalist communist organisation on a national scale, which would fight with all its might to impose a general strike against the bureaucrats. The GMI is not that party, it aims to build it, but our forces are weak. And yet, however small, we manage to score points: for example, in Lyon, the firefighters' union, then a general assembly of higher education workers; in Nantes, an assembly of water treatment workers; in Toulouse, a general assembly of a university.

*The government doesn't give a damn about repeated days of action, "high points" or "long-term actions"! It always waits until the next day for everything to return to normal. Isolated rolling strikes in one sector or another exhaust the most determined fighters, without producing any results. To win, it's not a question of lasting as long as possible, it's a question of striking together as hard as possible to win as quickly as possible, that's the general strike until withdrawal. Trade union leaders, call an immediate general strike until the plan is withdrawn! Let's get organised for a general strike! (Lyon Higher Education and Public Research General Meeting, 31 January)*

That's all well and good, but for example the NPA student activists who voted for this motion didn't take it up afterwards, either in Lyon or elsewhere, despite our proposal.

The class struggle doesn't end because of a defeat. The government has already moved on to new attacks on the working class. A little sooner, a little later, the

working class will take up the fight again. Because it has no choice. It will have to build on the lessons it has learned from this mobilisation in defence of pensions.

The GMI (International Marxist Group) has fought with all its might to open up this path, ever since the government announced the bill. But in order to succeed, we need a firmly established revolutionary organisation whose programme will openly include the arming of the people, workers' government, the expropriation of big capital and the United Socialist States of Europe. Such an organisation will fight for a united workers' front against all the attacks of the bourgeoisie, for the independence of the trade unions and for their unification, for workers' control over production and distribution, for the self-defence of social struggles and workers' organisations. It will also prepare the general strike against the next attack, without fear of confronting the agents of the bourgeoisie within the workers.

*"Bourgeois labour parties," as a political phenomenon, have already been formed in all the foremost capitalist countries, and that unless determined and relentless struggle is waged all along the line against these parties—or groups, trends, etc., it is all the same—there can be no question of a struggle against imperialism, or of Marxism, or of a socialist labour movement. (Lenin, Imperialism and the Split in Socialism, October 1916)*

For the bourgeoisie draws its strength not only from its state apparatus, from capital, from the dominant ideology, but also from the powerful intermediaries it has in the reformist parties and at the head of the trade unions. Dedicated above all to the defence of French capitalism, bound by a thousand ties to the bourgeois state, and fearful above all of revolution, these counter-revolutionary apparatuses refuse any real struggle to defend demands because it would inevitably lead them to be swept away by the movement of the working class.

For all those who want to build this revolutionary organisation, there is no middle way. We have to choose.

## RUSSIA

# THE PROLETARIAT CAN STOP THE WAR IN UKRAINE

29 JUNE 2023

### The Russian imperialism entangled in the war

Putin's decision to invade Ukraine on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022 was a double mistake. It was a mistake on its army's capacities, and it was a symmetric mistake on Ukraine's capacity for resistance. Yet, despite all Patriarch Kirill's blessings, the initial failure of invading Kiev in a couple of days, the poor reception to the troops while Putin explained that they were about to tear down a fascist, the disorderly conduct of the military operations with many human and material losses were a sign of the Russian imperialism's weakness.

Ukraine, while rallying the national sentiment, while receiving help from the Western intelligence, troops' training and military equipment from NATO's member states, Ukraine even managed to push the Russian army back in the North, in the East, and partly in the South. The latter still occupies 20 % of the territory of Ukraine. Since then, it the stalemate in the front without any significant advance from both sides, despite tens of thousands of deaths.

Like in 2014, during the annexation of Crimea and the carving up of Donbass, Putin resorted to several independent militia that are independent from the Russian regular army, including Ramzan Kadyrov's Ismailist battalions, to whom Putin delegated Chechenia's management, and the private armies Patriot, Redut and Wagner.

As well as the US companies Academi (ex-Blackwater), KBR, MVM, Vinnell, Custer Battles... the Wagner Group is a capitalist firm closely related to the top of the State apparatus. It is under the control of Prigozhin, an oligarch, it is led Outkine, a neo-Nazi and it consists with mercenaries with diverse expertise and with habitual criminals. The Wagner militia had already intervened for account of the Russian, in the 2018 Donbass war, in the 2015 Syrian civil war, in the 2020 Libyan civil war, in the 2020 Central African Republic's confrontations, in which Rwanda was also involved...

Yet this militia's involvement in Ukraine proceeds under Prigozhin's autonomous command, concurrently with the regular army, which is an additional illustration of the weakness of the arrangements of the Russian imperialism. As for now, Ukraine's resistance to the imperialist Russian attack is the main reason of the increasing political problems of the Russian power.

Indeed, the vast majority of the Russian proletariat remained passive, nor without showing any spontaneous support to the war waged by Putin, neither without proving a strong organized opposition. With clubbing and arrests (2,000 according to *Novaia Gazeta*), with fines and prison, the authorities managed to deal with the repeated and brave demonstrations by thousands of opponents in big cities

However, it did not have the political means to prevent hundreds of thousands of draft evaders from fleeing the country following the partial mobilisation decided in September 2022.

### Russia is imperialist

Only the British SWP believed that the USSR was capitalist in Stalin's time. Today, there are still "Marxist" organisations which believe that Russia has not become capitalist: LO in France, the PTS and the PO in Argentina, etc.

The entire Russian bourgeoisie has emerged from the same mould: the break-up of the Soviet Union -where the workers had no control over the collectivised economy- in 1991 and the restoration of capitalism in 1992



("the Shock Therapy"). After Gorbachev's failure to modernise the economy by introducing more market forces, Yeltsin abandoned the plan, turned labour power into a commodity and let the best-placed former Stalinist bureaucrats, businessmen and gangsters share the spoils of the degenerated workers' state. Hence the commodification of the economy, the reappearance of unemployment and a surge in inequalities of income and wealth.

The oligarchs who were prepared to auction off what could be converted into cash to foreign capitalists were dismissed or liquidated by Putin from 1999 onwards. The former secret service FSB member put in the saddle by Yeltsin consolidated global industrial and banking firms and re-established a structured bourgeois State on a shrinking territory, reactivating Russian nationalism and the Christian religion. Russia has become at least as imperialist as it was in 1914 (Lenin clearly characterised the Russian empire as an imperialist power despite its backward features), by maintaining national minorities by force, by trying to loosen the military encirclement operated by the United States on its borders, by intervening in Asia and Africa to guarantee its place against its rivals (the United States, China, Germany, Japan, France, Great Britain...).

There is no difference of class between a Putin, a Prigozhin or, for example, a Sechin, the head of the Rosneft oil corporate group who was for a time Putin's deputy prime minister. They all know each other, did business together. Business and political ramifications are closely intertwined.

### Divisions in the Russian bourgeoisie

But faced with the difficulties on the military front, and the sanctions imposed by the United States and its allies, with their political and economic consequences, including increased dependence on neighbouring China, the national bourgeoisie is divided over what to do.

While there is inevitably a significant faction of the Russian bourgeoisie that wants to put an end as quickly as possible to this disastrous adventure in Ukraine, which is resulting in substantial losses of revenue, it does not have the strength to appear publicly until now in the context of a semi-dictatorial regime. Navalny's imprisonment serves as an example.

The two factions which are publicly confronting each other today are both in favour of continuing the imperialist war. But they are opposed on the means to be implemented and, from there, on the form of the regime which should lead them.

The faction behind Putin is in favour of continuing the war, but without pushing foreign and domestic policy beyond what it believes it can control. Internationally, this faction is well aware, for example, that the use of tactical nuclear weapons to defeat Ukraine, while technically possible, would lead to a considerable worsening of

economic sanctions and the isolation of Russia. On the domestic front, this faction fears that a total militarisation of society, a "general mobilisation", would meet with such resistance from the working class, national minorities, women and young people that it would be threatened and could be overturned, because even if the workers have not moved collectively for the moment, it would be a different matter if the majority of young men had to go to the front. This majority fraction governs by sight, empirically.

The other faction that emerged was in favour of stepping up the war effort, militarisation, mobilisation and the repression of opponents. Prigozhin was its leading light, but he necessarily had support in the state apparatus and in the bourgeoisie, if only because of the position he had acquired. Prigozhin is openly defending the path of fascism, mixing populist accents against those in hiding, the incompetent generals, the profiteers and the corrupt (of whom he is one...) with excessive militarisation...

*If ordinary Russians continue to collect their children in zinc coffins while the children of the elite bask in the sun, Russia could face a crisis of the kind that led to civil war in 1917. The division could end, as it did in 1917, in revolution. We are in a situation where we could quite simply lose Russia. (Prigozhin, 24 May)*

He advocates the introduction of martial law, general mobilisation and a war economy. In this way, the opposition between the two factions takes on a political dimension and not just a military one.

### Prigozhin's attempted coup d'état

The struggle between these two factions took a turn for the worse after the clashes between the Russians in Bakhmout, with the capture and detention of a high-ranking Russian army officer by Wagner's troops, Wagner's accusations that the Russian army had bombarded his positions and refused to supply him with arms and ammunition, etc. In agreement with Putin, who had until then protected Prigozhin, the Russian army command resolved to bring all the militias, particularly Wagner, into line and to silence him.

In agreement with Putin, who until then had protected Prigozhin, the Russian army command decided to bring all the militias back into line, in particular Wagner, and to silence any criticism of its conduct of operations. Firstly, the direct recruitment of Wagner in prisons was stopped, and then the obligation to sign a contract of allegiance to the Russian military command was introduced. This triggered Prigozhin's reaction and his attempt at a military coup, probably well before he was fully prepared, because it meant the disappearance of his forces in the very near future.

On 23 June, with disconcerting ease, Wagner's mercenaries seized Rostov "without firing a shot", then travelled



in columns of thousands of men and military equipment almost 800 km (500 miles) by road towards Moscow, to within 200 km (130 miles) of the Russian capital without encountering any strong resistance, except for the engagement of a few air force aircraft which were shot down. On the contrary, at least one regular army regiment pledged allegiance to them, while others refused to fight. Prigozhin called on the National Guard and the population to "liberate", but the scenes of fraternisation remained limited.

*It was Putin who started the civil war. Instead of sending one or two degenerates into retirement, he gave the order to neutralise the most combat-capable unit in the whole of Russia. The lives of one or two traitors were placed above those of 25,000 heroes. (Prigozhin, 23 June)*

Given the gravity of the situation, Putin mobilised the FSB and made a speech to the nation.

*Today, Russia is fighting the most difficult war for its future, repelling the aggression of the neo-Nazis and their sponsors. All the West's military, economic and information machines are turned against us. [We are fighting for the life and security of our people... Anything that weakens us must be put aside. Our external enemies use every argument to undermine us from within. So actions that divide our unity are acts of betrayal against our people, our brothers in arms who are currently fighting on the front line. It is a stab in the back to our country and our people. This is exactly what happened in 1917, when our country took part in the First World War but was robbed of victory. The intrigues and quarrels behind the army's back turned out to be the greatest catastrophe, the destruction of the army and the state, the loss of huge territories, leading to tragedy and civil war. Russians killed Russians, brothers killed brothers. But the beneficiaries were various politicians of fortune and foreign powers who divided the country and tore it into several parts. We will not let that happen. (Putin, 24 June)*

Prigozhin immediately replied on Telegram: *"Putin made the wrong choice. The worst for him. Soon we will have a new president"*.

### **A last-ditch agreement that settles nothing**

But, as the Greeks used to say, "it's a long way from the cup to the lips". Despite his appeals to the "people", Prigozhin has not seen any significant political or military support for his attempted putsch. On the contrary, the main military and political leaders are cautiously lining up behind Putin or keeping quiet. Deprived of decisive relays and support, on the one hand Prigozhin steps into the void.

On the other, Putin is not sure of anything, and in particular of the loyalty and valour of the armed forces

that he will have to oppose to Prigozhin's mercenaries. His reference to 1917 shows that he is on the side of the Tsar (or Kerensky), condemning the revolution as a betrayal of the fatherland. But this could not reassure him about the solidity of his regime. If he did not have the means to immediately crush the 25,000 men marching on Moscow, as their lightning advance suggested, anything was possible.

The opponents agreed to ward off any risk of revolution, even though, unlike in 1917, there was no revolutionary workers' party in Russia.

As a result, on the afternoon of 24 June, the two opposing forces, who seemed to be inexorably pitted against each other, surprisingly reached an agreement, the exact content of which was not made public. The leader of the "traitors" made his men turn back. They were all granted amnesty and would not be prosecuted. Belarusian President Lukashenko, who has appeared like the rabbit in the hat, will accommodate Prigozhin and the mercenaries who wish to follow him. The others were invited either to return home or to sign a contract to join the Russian army.

The very next day, Lavrov, Putin's foreign minister, confirmed that Wagner's missions in Africa consisted mainly of protecting corrupt dictators and heads of state in no fewer than 12 countries, in return for payment, and also benefiting from rights to exploit and plunder resources on behalf of Russian capitalism.

New missile and drone strikes are raining down on Ukraine, as if nothing had happened.

### **To lay the foundations of a revolutionary workers' party in Russia**

However, this coup d'état, even if aborted, is a sign of the profound weakening of the Russian regime, which is entangled in an imperialist war that it wanted and from which it cannot emerge victorious by force of arms or defeated by withdrawing from Ukraine. Putin's pusillanimity towards the "traitor" Prigozhin, even though he would be poisoned or killed in a traffic accident a little later, bears witness to this weakness. It augurs other possible rifts between the fractions of the Russian bourgeoisie that Putin will have less and less means of keeping under wraps. But it may also herald the arrival of the Russian proletariat on its own class terrain.

For that, what the Russian proletariat lacks above all is a class programme and a class political organisation. The slightest economic demand on a national scale, the slightest democratic demand, immediately clashes head-on with the semi-dictatorial capitalist regime now embodied by Putin. This means that they are immediately revolutionary, in the sense that satisfying them means dealing mortal blows to the regime, putting forward its overthrow. So this class political organisation can only

be revolutionary if it is coherent and faithful to the objectives it puts forward.

We need to revive the tradition of the Bolshevik Party and start putting together the building blocks of this programme to enable the Russian working class to build its revolutionary organisation. At the forefront of this programme must be:

- The working class, the vast majority of the Russian population, needs peace, not imperialist war against our Ukrainian neighbours.
- Immediate end to the colonial war that the Russian bourgeoisie has unleashed against Ukraine!
- Withdraw Russian troops, return conquered territories to Ukraine!
- Soldiers at the front, turn your weapons against your generals and force an immediate halt to the fighting!
- Immediate repatriation of all soldiers from the front to their homes!
- Democratic rights for non-commissioned soldiers!

The Ukrainian government is a capitalist government. It is strongly supported by the North American and West European imperialists opposed to Russian imperialism, grouped in and around NATO. But the Russian proletariat has no interest in clashing with the Ukrainian proletariat. On the contrary, if the Russian proletariat succeeds, against its generals, in imposing peace, it will be able to find the means to renew ties with the Ukrainian proletariat and fight together for their emancipation.

Putin's government cannot tolerate any opposition; it arrests, truncheons, judges and imprisons.

- Immediate release of all political prisoners!
- Legalisation of the Memorial association!
- Respect for democratic freedoms and national minorities!
- Separation of the State and the Orthodox Church!

The perpetrators of the imperialist war are the Russian capitalists, their government with Putin and all his clique who are monopolising the wealth produced by the working class in Russia, who are stealing and seizing the wealth produced in Africa and who have set their sights on Ukraine for the same purpose.

- No Putin, no Prigozhin!
- Down with the capitalists' government!
- Form workers', students' and soldiers' councils!
- Expropriate all the oligarchs!

- For a workers' government in Russia that revives the October 1917 revolution, and in particular proletarian internationalism!

As for the workers' movement in other imperialist countries, it must remember that the main enemy is its own bourgeoisie and it must encourage the class struggle of its brothers and sisters in Russia by fighting for:

- The abolition of NATO,
- The withdrawal of American troops from Europe, the closure of all American, French and British military bases, the withdrawal of war fleets from international waters, an end to foreign interference by their own state,
- The restoration in Ukraine of the democratic freedoms suppressed by Zelenski, respect for the Russian language by the Ukrainian state, self-determination for the population of Donbass,
- The overthrow of all bourgeois governments, a socialist United States of Europe open to Russia and Ukraine.

## WORLD

# RESOLUTION SUBMITTED TO INTERNATIONAL MILAN CONFERENCE

15 JULY 2023

Lotta Comunista and 5 other Italian organisations called internationalists of all the world to a meeting in its headquarters in Milan the 15th and 16th July. In spite of its success, nothing came out of the meeting. The organisers did not put this draft resolution to a vote.

### **Decadent capitalism drags humanity towards barbarism**

The profit-driven capitalist mode of production is destroying the human environment. Economic crises are recurrent, each time leaving tens of millions more workers unemployed and impoverished. The great imperialist powers that dominate the planet either want to preserve the current division of the world, or call it into question. War ravages Ukraine. Bourgeois states are annulling social conquests, restricting freedoms, repelling immigrants and reinforcing the apparatus of repression and war. Bourgeois political parties look for scapegoats, taking advantage of religion, xenophobia, racism, misogyny, homophobia...

### **Russian troops, out of Ukraine!**

The Russian imperialist state invaded Ukraine, and Putin attributed Ukrainian independence to a betrayal by the Bolshevik Party. On account of inevitable national sentiment and the lack of motivation of Russian troops, Ukraine was not conquered. The Russian proletariat is potentially capable of putting an end to the war, conquering democratic freedoms and forging fraternal relations with the national minorities in its midst and with the neighboring peoples of Europe and Asia.

### **Death to NATO, Socialist United States of Europe!**

The responsibility of the mass workers' organizations of the USA, China, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Canada, Italy... is to end the military alliances of their imperialist state, to dismantle its military bases and fleets, to fight their own bourgeois government.

### **Rights of oppressed nationalities!**

The Rohingyas are persecuted by the Burmese state. Kashmir is a victim of the Indian state. The Kurds are a minority oppressed by several capitalist states (Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran); they have the unconditional right to separate and unify. With the support of the United States, Israel continues its brutal colonization of Palestine. The progressive solution can only come from the unity of the area's proletariat, overthrowing the Zionist colonial state and the Jordanian monarchy to establish a secular, multi-ethnic and

democratic Palestine. Such a state can only exist within the framework of the socialist federation of West Asia.

### **Women's emancipation, sexual freedom, secularism!**

The Afghan state has driven girls out of school. The Iranian state imposes the wearing of the veil. Even in the world's most economically and scientifically advanced state, the fascist clerical wing of the bourgeoisie is restricting abortion rights and waging a homophobic campaign. Everywhere, the working class must take the lead in the struggle to make religion a private affair, to advance towards real equality for women, and for respect for the sexual orientations of all.

### **No to class collaboration and subordination to the bourgeoisie!**

The repeated betrayals of "reformist" parties and corrupt trade union bureaucracies help the survival of rotting capitalism. This is demonstrated by the refusal of union leaderships to call a general strike in France and Great Britain. It is also shown by the impasse of the constituent assembly organized by the CCP and the SP in Chile, the DSA's support for Biden in the USA, the SACP's participation in South Africa's Ramaphosa government, the policies of the PSOE-PCE-Podemos government in Spain, the support of Russia's KPRF for the invasion of the Ukraine, and so on.

### **Abolition of capitalism, social revolution, workers' international!**

To halt the march to barbarism, conscious workers must band together, while helping the masses to impose a break between workers' organizations and movements of the oppressed and the exploitative, reactionary bourgeoisie. The aim is to expropriate big capital, destroy rival bourgeois states, replace them with workers' governments based on the arming of the people and workers' councils, and plan production and distribution in a way that spares the planet. To achieve this, we need a program of action, a genuine workers' party in every country, and a revolutionary communist international on a global scale.

## WORLD

# SPEECH AT THE L5I INTERNATIONAL CAMP

15 AUGUST 2023

The League for the Fifth International invited CoReP, ITO and RSO at its camp near Berlin, from 14th to the 19th August. It organised a debate on building a new international today.

Permanent  
Revolution  
Collective



Platform

### Permanent Revolution Collective contribution

Thanks to the L5I for the invitation to this Summer Camp and for giving us the opportunity to have that discussion.

The profit-driven capitalist mode of production is destroying the human environment. Economic crises are recurrent, provoking more unemployment and poverty. Bourgeois states are repealing social conquests, are restricting freedoms ... Bourgeois political parties look for scapegoats and take advantage of religion, racism, homophobia...

The Russian imperialist state invaded Ukraine, and Putin attributed Ukrainian independence to a betrayal by the Bolshevik Party. Because of national sentiment and the lack of motivation of Russian troops, Ukraine was not conquered. The Russian proletariat can put an end to the war, earning democratic freedoms and forging fraternal relations with the national minorities and with the neighbouring peoples.

The Rohingyas are persecuted by the Burmese state. Kashmir is a victim of the Indian state. The Kurds are a minority oppressed by several capitalist states. Israel continues its brutal colonization of Palestine. The Afghan state has driven girls out of school. The Iranian state imposes the wearing of the veil. Even in the most advanced state – on economic and scientific terms –, the fascistic or clerical wing of the bourgeoisie is restricting abortion rights.

Yet repeated betrayals of "reformist" parties and corrupt trade union bureaucracies have helped capitalism to survive, at many times, including their recent refusal to call a general strike in France and Britain. Reformism is the most influent trend within the workers' movement. They are corrupt bureaucracies of the social-patriotic parties and of the unions. Entryism in these organizations is an option. The workers' united front is about workers' organizations. Communist strategy today, that is permanent revolution, conflicts with any kind of popular front, including in dominated countries, the anti-imperialist united front.

It has not been part of the communist programme for almost a century. When the term was coined in 1922 by Zinoviev and Radek, it had already been invalidated by the 1921 massacre of the Communist Party of Turkey by the bourgeois nationalist regime. The counter-revolution led by the Guomindang in China in 1927 led the International Left Opposition (in the Communist International) to substitute the strategy of permanent revolution for the anti-imperialist united front. The reintroduction by Pablo and Mandel of the anti-imperialist united front in 1951 led to the betrayal of the Bolivian revolution in 1952, when the international leadership supported the left wing of the bourgeois nationalist MNR.

To halt the march to barbarism, conscious workers must band together, in order to expropriate big capital, to replace bourgeois states with workers' governments based on workers' councils, with planned production and distribution in a way that spares the planet. To achieve this, we need a program of action,

a genuine workers' party in every country, and a revolutionary communist international on a global scale

It will rely on the tens of thousands of activists who want to overthrow the bourgeoisie, to confront its armed gangs, to find again the way of the October revolution. The construction of the communist international and of its sections as revolutionary workers' parties in every country will be the result of a long struggle. It is a matter of gathering, with patience, on an international scale and in each country, internationalist communist activists, whether they come from so-called Trotskyism, from other currents of the labour movement, or from the nationalism of the oppressed.

Questions of national tactics (on the activity in unions, on the vote, on the opportunity to present candidates...) can be better solved only on an international basis, in a centralised and democratic basis. It tries to separate what is revolutionary in the labour movement from opportunism and sectarianism. Communists fight in the whole labour movement for workers' democracy. On these bases, communist organizations work together at the construction of the revolutionary workers' international that will allow the definitive victory of socialist revolution, freeing humanity from exploitation, opening the way to socialism-communism, to a society of plenty that will allow the fulfilment of all.

### **CoReP conclusion**

Thank you very much for that discussion. The comrades' interventions from the room gave much inspiration, with several good points. They include the youth issue. This is decisive, both for the present and for the future, and it is crucial to have an autonomous youth organization within the International and within each of the sections.

A comrade wondered about reformism. How to delineate ourselves? What posture to adopt? It refers to parties and unions' bureaucracies which defend the idea that socialism can be reached through reforms instead of revolution. Before WW1 it was an illusion, after WW1 it is a betrayal. It was the practical demonstration that no compromise can be made with capital, we know it. Between reformists and revolutionaries, there are centrists who vacillate between the two, neither reformists nor revolutionaries. At some point they decide one or the other, but as centrists they are not revolutionaries.

Now, how to coordinate? Which steps? What we have to do is to be clear, both programmatically and practically, this why we need to delineate, like Marx and Engels did against the anarchists, like Lenin did

against the reformists, like Trotsky did against the Stalinists, like the revolutionary communists did against the centrists.

The crucial point is: no alliance with the bourgeoisie. This is the main issue of our discussion about the Anti-Imperialist United Front: no coalition with the bourgeoisie. Here is one of the points that we need to discuss between our organizations, both in practical terms and in theoretical terms.

## NIGER

# FOR THE CLOSURE OF FRENCH AND AMERICAN MILITARY BASES!

9 SEPTEMBER 2023

*We do not renounce the right to pit one imperialism against another and to use their antagonisms, but only a revolutionary people's government can do this without becoming the instrument of one imperialism against another. (Trotsky, 11 August 1937)*

In Niger, in the early hours of 26 July 2023, the presidential guard, commanded by General Abdourahamane Tiani, sequestered President Mohamed Bazoum, elected in 2021, inside the presidential residence

in Niamey. Troops took up positions at strategic points in the capital.

### The influence of French imperialism collapses in the Sahel

The July coup d'état in Niger follows a series of others, in Mali in August 2020 and May 2021, in Guinea in September 2021, and in Burkina Faso in January and September 2022. It precedes that in



Gabon in August 2023. What French imperialism considered its "private preserve" is collapsing like a house of cards, weakening its state in France as well as in the rest of the world.

Shortly after the putsch, the General Staff met in a barracks on 26 July and created the "National Council for the Safeguarding of the Homeland" (sic).

*We, the defence and security forces united within National Council for the Safeguarding of the Homeland (CNSP), have decided to put an end to the regime you know. This follows the continuing deterioration of the security situation, and poor economic and social governance. (CNSP, Press release, 26 July 2023)*

Niger is the world's 4th largest producer of uranium, with 4 deposits in the north-west:

- a site at Azelik is part of a joint venture between the State and the Chinese capitalist groups CNCC and ZXJOY;
- the one at Akouta has been exhausted but is currently being rehabilitated and cleaned up, the one at Arlit is running at full capacity, and the one at Imourarem is still under study; all three are in the hands of a joint venture between the State and the French capitalist group Orano (ex-Areva, ex-Cogema).

85% of the population has no access to electricity. The Chinese group Gezhouba (CGGC) is currently building the Kandadji dam, which should double electricity production, while the Chinese group CMB has already delivered a cement plant to Badaguichiri.

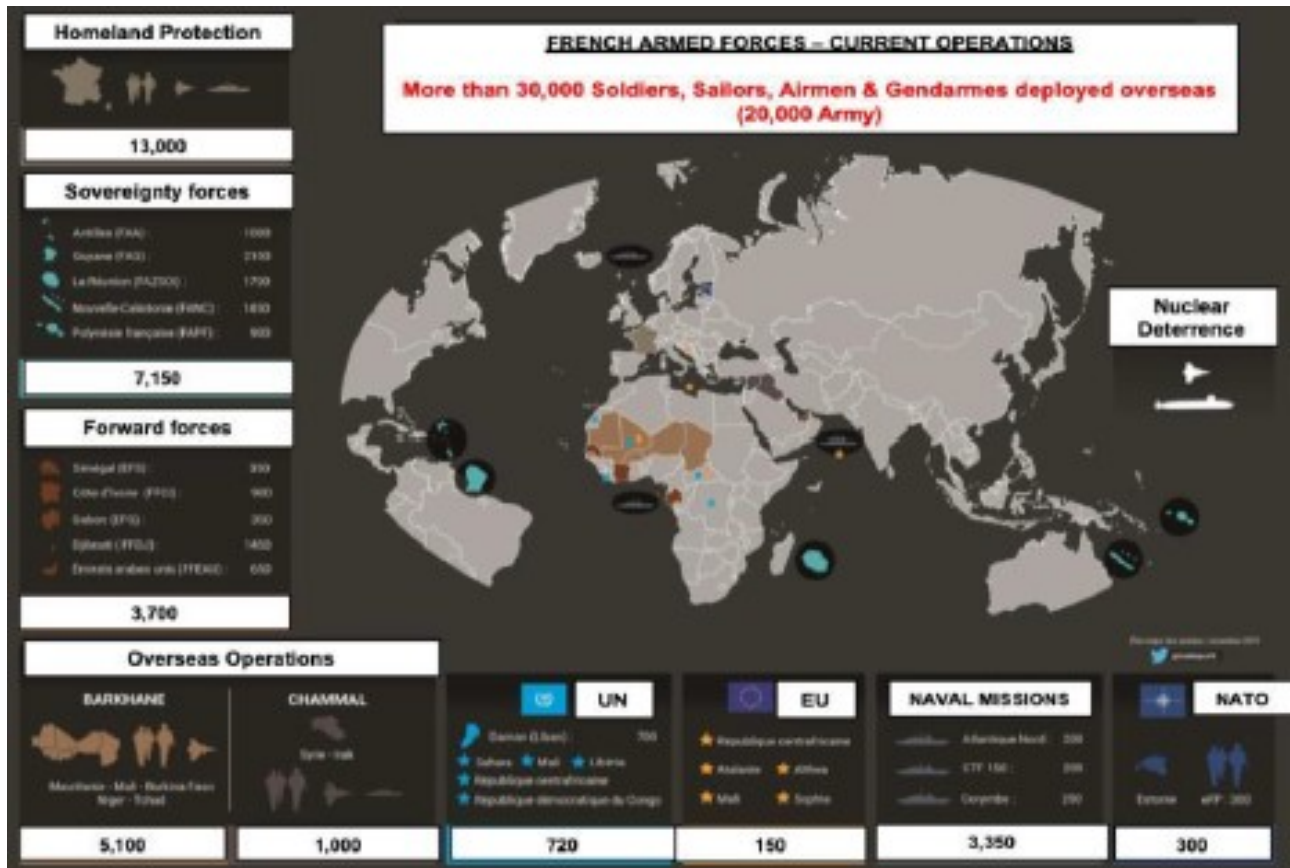
The extraction and refining of oil from Agadem (south-east Niger) have been entrusted to a joint venture between the State and the Chinese multinational CNPC. CNPC is also building a 2,000 km (1,300 miles) pipeline, the longest in Africa, to the port of Sèmè-Kpodji (Benin) to export crude oil.

The main gold mine is a joint venture between the State and the Canadian firm Endeavour.

The perpetrators of the coup, like their counterparts in Mali and Burkina Faso, are banking on hostile sentiment towards France, the former colonial power and main foreign army in the country.

The French government refuses to recognise the authorities that have emerged from the coup and maintains its ambassador and its troops. The Nigerian government and several other elected members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS, to which Niger belongs) are protesting the coup and threatening to reinstate the elected president, as they have already done.

April 2023. Since, the French army has withdrawn from Niger



## An anti-imperialist united front at the service of the generals

The Sacred Union to Safeguard the Sovereignty and Dignity of the People (M62) was formed in August 2022 from a group of "around fifteen civil society organisations."

*Niger's civil society organisations are calling on all trade unions, civil society organisations, academics, members of the media, transporters, farmers, herders, and religious leaders to join them in defending and safeguarding the sovereignty and dignity of the people, which are under dangerous threat. (M62, 2 August 2022)*

A year later, the M62 immediately rallied to the coup.

*The M62 hopes that this coup de force will be the last opportunity to redress the excesses of the deposed regime and restore the dignity of the people of Niger. (Mahaman Sanoussi, General Secretary of M62, 27 July 2023)*

Staff and M62 are working hand in hand for the time being. The latter called for a march in support of the putschists on 30 July in Niamey, during which hundreds of young people chanted anti-French slogans and converged to the French embassy.

For their part, the leaders of the salaried workers' unions bowed down to the junta.

*The Union of Niger Workers' Unions congratulates and lends its unwavering support to the National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland (CNSP) for denouncing the military defence agreements with the French state. The USTN encourages the CNSP to persevere in its patriotic fight against insecurity and to safeguard territorial integrity. (USTN, 13 August 2023)*

Some do so in the company of an organisation of small and large bosses.

*Niger's Trade Union Action Unity (UAS), made up of Niger Workers' Alliance (ATN), the Niger Workers' Convergence (CTN), the Niger Traders, Importers, Exporters and Wholesalers Union (SCIEDN) and the Niger Workers' Inter-union (ITN), has reiterated that all the people of Niger stand behind their army and salute the dignified, courageous, fraternal and courageous decision taken by the Niger Workers' Alliance, Niger Workers' Inter-union (ITN) recalled that all the people of Niger stand behind their army and salute the dignified, courageous, fraternal and pan-Africanist decision of the brotherly countries of Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea-Conakry. (UAS, 2 August 2023)*

On 11 August, in response to a call from the M62, several thousand demonstrators marched past the French

military base, flying national and Russian flags. On 14 August, the courts decided to release the coordinator of Niger's M62, Abdoulaye Seydou.

On 26 August, the Seyni Kountche stadium in Niamey (30,000 seats) was two-thirds full to support and listen to the generals. The flags were Nigerian, Russian and Algerian.

## The Islamists of the CUAFVC enter the scene

The Islamists, who had not been very active on the streets until then, are trying to rival the M62. Their Single Framework for Action by the Driving Forces of Change (CUAFVC), whose leader is Sheikh Djibril Soumaila Karanta, President of the Islamic Association of Niger (which officially received the American ambassador at its headquarters on 21 July 2021), called for demonstrations across the country on 1 September.

*The crowd gathered at the Escadrille [the square near the French base] performed a collective prayer, some on their rugs and others on the ground. The aim is to implore the Almighty on this holy day of Islam, to protect Niger and its people from the mischief and plots that target it. Thus, after the prayer, a succession of ulemas took to the podium to deliver sermons and enlighten the demonstrators on the noble struggle that Nigeriens have been waging since 26 July. (National Press and Publishing Office, 3 September 2023)*

The spokesman for the clerical bourgeoisie urged the population to obey the military junta.

*History teaches us that whenever a people and its leaders rally around the defence of strategic interests, they emerge victorious against their enemies. This is why the CUAFVC has called on all the nation's active forces to rally behind our military grouped within the CNSP. (Boulamine Moustapha, 1 September 2023)*

Above all, history has confirmed the warning of a leader of the Communist International (1919-1923).

*As for backward States and nations, it is particularly necessary to bear in mind ... the need to fight against the clergy and other reactionary and medieval elements ...; against pan-Islamism and other similar currents ..., against the tendency to dress up the bourgeois democratic liberation currents of backward countries in the colours of communism. (Vladimir Lenin, First draft of theses on the national and colonial question, 5 June 1920)*

The following day, 2 September, the M62 demonstration, which was more massive, noisier, and younger, surrounded the French army base. None of the speakers cared about the American military presence. Among them was the junta-appointed Minister of Trade and Industry.



*Present at this memorable revolutionary event, Niger's Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr Seydou Asman, accompanied by economic operators, came to lend his support ... And no Nigerien should stay behind in this march towards sovereignty. For the Minister, this mobilisation is the starting point of the greatest revolution in our country, because, he says, many things are going to be reviewed so that it can only benefit the people. (National Press and Publishing Office, 3 September 2023)*

In her speech, the M62 treasurer endorsed the conspiracy fable that the jihadists were created and armed by the French state.

*We have come together here, men, women, civilians, and soldiers, for a single objective, which is Niger ... It is not these terrorists who are fighting us because they cannot carry out this massacre of hundreds of civilian and military deaths ... This terrorism does not come from the sky, it does not grow out of the ground, it was created by France, otherwise we cannot understand someone who has never been to school making weapons, ammunition, setting up ambushes. (Souleymane Falmata Taya, 2 September 2023)*

Far from the media hype, Orano continues to extract uranium.

### **The other imperialist powers are playing their card**

Russian imperialism gained a foothold in Central Africa in 2018, and in Mali in 2022. In return, Wagner's private capitalist army is plundering natural resources on behalf of itself and of the Russian state. On 11 August, Russia warned against any attempt to dislodge the putschists.

China is increasingly influential in Africa, where it has a military base. It is the leading supplier of goods to Niger and the second largest investor after France. The Xi government was taken by surprise by the coup, which it did not condemn. On 4 September, following a meeting with the prime minister of the government appointed by the junta, the ambassador announced that his country was ready to act as mediator.

The United States has a strong military presence. Its main concern is to prevent Russia from supplanting France. The Biden government condemned the overthrow of the President, but did not call it a coup. Like the UN, he continues to provide humanitarian aid. On 7 August, he sent Deputy Foreign Minister ("Under-Secretary of State") Nuland to Niamey for talks with the junta. On 9 August, Foreign Minister Blinken called Niger, ECOWAS and France to order, calling for a "peaceful resolution" to the crisis.

Germany is trying to take its place in Africa. Chancellor Scholz visited Niger, Senegal and South Africa in May

2022, Economics Minister Habeck went to Namibia and South Africa in December 2022, Finance Minister Lindner visited Mali and Ghana in February 2023, and so on. After the coup, the EU followed France's lead and decided to impose sanctions. Over time, Sweden and Germany separated themselves from France and came out clearly against any military intervention, even an African one, an option that France encouraged. The German ambassador is not threatened with expulsion.

### **Class independence and international workers' solidarity!**

In Niger, the working class must emerge as a class, fight against all forms of exploitation and oppression, oppose Islamist reaction in all its forms, and wrest the fight against imperialism from the hands of corrupt and impotent generals. To achieve this, the working class needs to create a revolutionary workers' party whose immediate slogans would be:

- Close all military bases!
- No news censorship by the junta!
- Break of the salaried workers' unions with the junta!
- Creation of workers' and peasants' militias against jihadists and threats of intervention!
- Cancellation of public debt to the IMF, the WB, and the major powers!
- Workers' control over the production and export of gold, uranium, and oil!

In neighbouring countries, workers must stand up to protect the people of Niger and, with them, pave the way for a genuine democracy based on workers' and peasants' councils:

- No threat of military intervention by ECOWAS in Niger!
- An immediate end to sanctions!
- All the foreign troops out!
- Abolition of colonial borders by a socialist federation of Sahelian Africa!

In France, in a country where the working class includes thousands of workers of Nigerian origin (and where hundreds of young Nigerians are studying), the workers' parties, salaried workers' unions and student unions must take a stand against their rapacious bourgeoisie and its government:

- Withdrawal of French troops from Niger! Closure of all French military bases!
- An end to sanctions against Niger! Cancellation of debt owed to banks and the French state!
- Freedom of movement and establishment for workers and students from Niger!

## ISRAEL/PALESTINE

# IN DEFENCE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAM AND ORGANIZATION IN PALESTINE!

16 OCTOBER 2023

*Every day brings us new evidence that Zionism cannot solve the Jewish question. The conflict between Jews and Arabs has become increasingly tragic and threatening.* (Trotsky, 18 January 1937)

On Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October, barbarism took a further step in Palestine. First with the Hamas' attack in the South-West of Israel, with some 1,400 people being deliberately slaughtered, the vast majority of whom consisting of civilians, women, children, young and elderly people, with more than 4,100 injured and between 150 and 200 kidnapped people. Then with the continuous bombing of the Israeli army over the 2 million Palestinians locked up within the Gaza strip (25 miles / 41 km long, from 3.7 to 7.5 miles / 6 to 12 km wide), which caused more than 2,800 deaths and more than 9,700 injured. They suffer a complete blockade, which includes vital supplies, like water, fuel – necessary for producing electricity –, drugs... The hospitals are overwhelmed by the amount of injured people, they are deliberately attacked by the Israeli army. A likely Israeli ground military intervention in the tiny and overpopulated Gaza strip will

inevitably cause thousands supplementary deaths and injured, and countless destructions.

This violence in Palestine, which has never ceased, originates in the colonization of that country since 1882 by the Jewish bourgeois nationalism (Zionism) which pretended that the Jews' home was neither in Europe nor in America, but only in Palestine, where a Jewish minority was living in peace with the Muslim and Christian Arabs. The colonial project was not about exploiting the Arabic workforce, but about expelling it and replacing it with a Jewish proletariat, which would be subject to the new bourgeoisie through the national ideology.

The British imperialism was the first to support Zionism with the 1917 Balfour Declaration, in order to expand its own positions in Middle East after the First World War. When Hitler came to power in 1933, the US State closed its borders for the Jews from Europe. The Zionist movement attempted, to no avail, to collaborate with the Nazi regime with a view to sending the German Jews in Palestine. With the complicity of the British State, Jewish nationalism set up terrorist organizations in Palestine (Haganah, Irgun), as soon as 1920, in

### British Mandate Palestine



B B C

### 1949 Armistice Lines

■ Jordanian occupied ■ Egyptian occupied □ Armistice lines



B B C

order to intimidate, to murder and to plant bombs against all those who were resisting them.

After the Second World War, and the genocide of the Jews from Europe by the German imperialism, Zionism became prevalent in the Jewish diaspora, even if most of the Jews from Western Europe and from North America did not settle in Palestine. Of course, the international communists who were organized in the Palestine's Revolutionary Communist League and in the 4<sup>th</sup> International opposed the colonization.

*As to Palestine, the 4<sup>th</sup> International supports the idea that the full repudiation of Zionism is a prerequisite to a merger of the Jewish workers' struggles with the Arab workers' emancipating, social and national struggles. It states that demanding a Jewish immigration in Palestine is deeply reactionary, as calling on oppressors' immigration in colonial countries is reactionary, in general. (4<sup>th</sup> International Congress, May 1948).*

In 1948, the State of Israel was founded on the eviction of 700,000 Palestinian Arabs from their lands, from their cities and towns, with the support of the US imperialism and of the Kremlin's Stalinist bureaucracy. The majority of the Jewish workers' movement (the Labour Party-Mapai, the pro-Stalinist party Mapam, the Histadrut's union bureaucracy) in the new State was Zionist. The union excluded the Arab workers, and the Mapai founded Israel. Under the Kremlin's influence, the Israeli Communist Party accepted Israel.

Since then, there is in Palestine a colonial State, Israel, and a colonized people, the Palestinians, hundreds of thousands of which being parked in camps, including more than 1.5 million in Gaza. Besides, a part of the Arab people of Palestine had to exile, most often in Lebanon's, Jordan's, and Syria's miserable camps. Ac-

ording to the UN, 4.7 million of them are surviving there. Zionism has become State's terrorism, using systematically the military violence against the Arabs.

Against this oppression, the Palestinian people has always stood up. But there has never been a proletarian and revolutionary political leadership. After the foundation of Israel and its provision of the atomic weapon thanks to the French State, the resistance shifted from the Muslim religious to the Pan-Arab nationalists, with their faintly socialist speech, clustered in the PLO (Fatah, PFLP, DLFP...), who were actually related to one particular nationalist regime of the bourgeois States in the region or the other, and to the USSR bureaucracy.

But one of these regimes, Syria, converged with Israel, with the Jordan's monarchy set up by the British State, and with the Christian wing of the Lebanon's bourgeoisie backed by the French State, for crushing the Palestinian resistance clustered in the PLO. With the restoration of capitalism in the USSR in 1992, the PLO negotiated the Oslo Accords with Israel under the auspices of the US State in 1993. This ratified the partition of Palestine into two States: actually, it was the recognition of an overarmed colonial State and the creation of two Bantustans without real army.

This is the moment when Islamism ( Hamas, Jihad) became popular among the oppressed while relying on religion and on antisemitism. Fatah, who has chosen to become the lackey of the US and of Israel, keeps West Bank's formal government ("the Palestinian Authority"), and as of now has refused any election. Hamas, which was initially favoured by Israel, took control over the West Bank with the support of the Iran's dictatorship of mullahs (which persecute the Kurdish, Arab, Azeri... minorities), of the Emirs of Qatar (who

### After the 1967 War

■ Land occupied by Israel in 1967



B B C

### After Israel-Egypt peace treaty, 1982

■ Land occupied by Israel □ Armistice lines



B B C

fiercely overexploit Palestinian proletarians within their borders) and of a part of the Lebanon's Muslim bourgeoisie, while suppressing all those who refer to socialism.

At the same time, the colonialist, theocratic and racist character of the State of Israel was being more and more affirmed, while all its military, monitoring and suppression means against the Palestinians were developing. For the first time in 1977, Mapai (Labour Party), then majority in the colonial State, lost the government. Matzpen, an organization who was bringing together Arab and Jewish activists against Zionism in 1962, who was reaching out the DLFP and the PFLP in the 1970s, was disrupted by the suppression.

After the 1993 Oslo Accords had been signed, the West Bank was divided into three zones, leading to a full control of 60% of the land by Israel. The number of settlers has not stopped growing and the West Bank turned

into a construction of settlements which were gradually suppressing any possibility for the Palestinians.

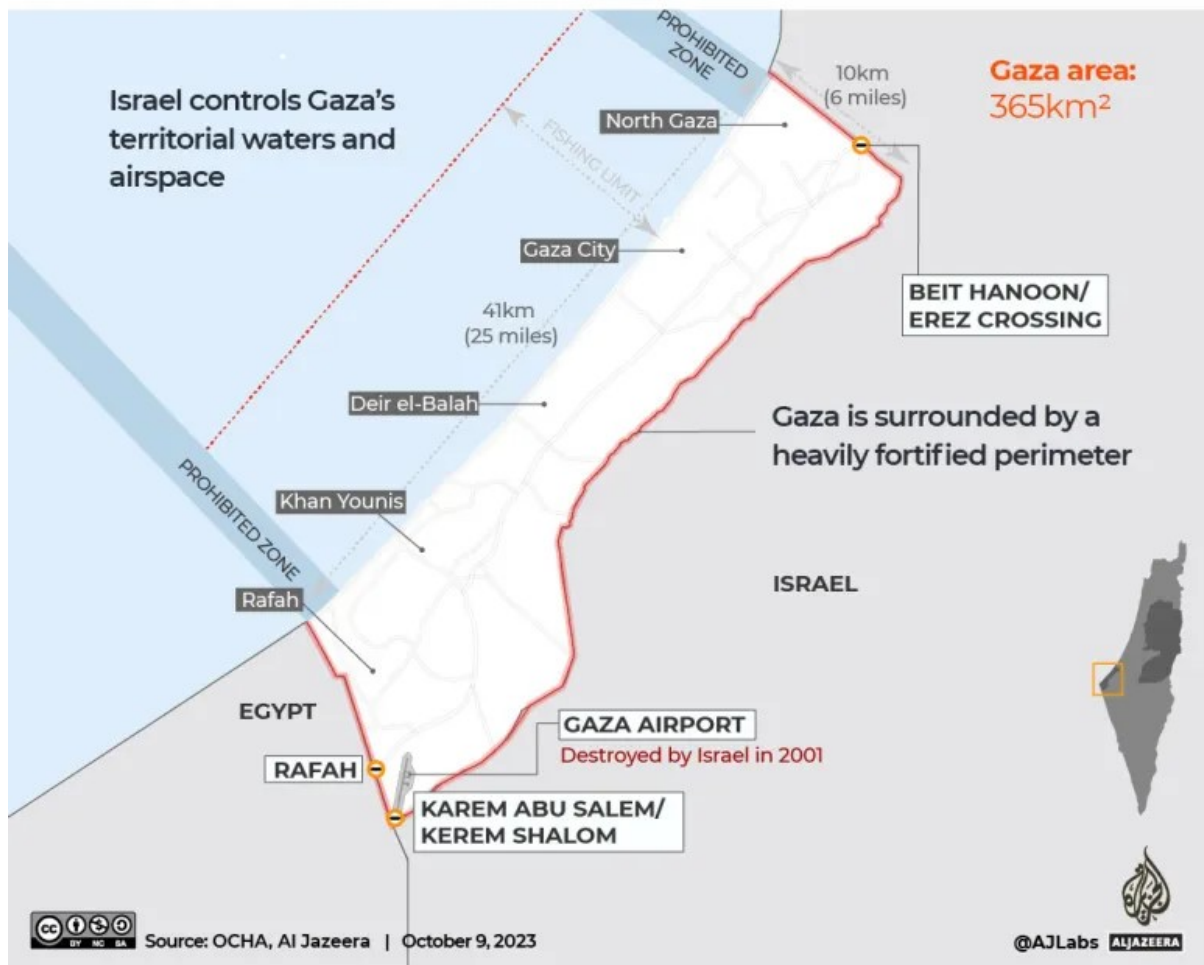
Therefore, from 2002, the State of Israel erected a more than 700 km (430 miles) wall that has been infringing upon the lands of the West Bank Palestinians and has submitted them to relentless controls and hassles for moving. Then, the illegal construction of settlements, which started in 1967, accelerated in the West Bank, and then around East-Jerusalem and on the Golan Heights, with the illegal appropriation of lands, of water resources, with the army's protection. For example, the Basic Law adopted on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2018 sets as a principle of constitutional value the superiority of the Jews' rights over the rights of the Arabs living in Israel.

Under the Trump's auspices in 2020, the Abraham Accords consecrated the rapprochement between Israel, Bahrein and the United Arab Emirates, followed by Morocco and Sudan, while talks are underway with

## ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

### The besieged Gaza Strip

The Palestinian enclave – home to some 2.3 million people – has been under an **Israeli air, land and sea blockade** since 2007.



Saudi Arabia. The Egyptian military dictatorship makes no secret of its close cooperation with Israel and it plays a part in the Gaza blockade, in collaboration with the Zionist State.

It turned out then that the Oslo Accords, that were approved by the Fatah, backed by all the imperialist powers, praised by the agents of the bourgeoisie within the working class ("reformist" parties, union bureaucracies), were nothing but a deception against the Palestinians. As the internationalist communists had announced, the myth of the creation of two States that are peacefully coexisting totally shattered against the reality of the situation.

Emboldened by the gains achieved day by day against the Palestinians' rights behind the Oslo Accords, the most determined fraction of the Israeli bourgeoisie decided to move up a gear. The sixth Netanyahu government, established on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022, is a coalition between the Likud and the ultrareligious and fascist parties, that represent the cutting edge of the conquering Zionism, which is very well established within the settlers in the West Bank. Indeed, among 120 deputies to be elected, the November 2022 elections assigned 32 seats to the Likud and 32 seats to the ultrareligious and fascist parties. The names of these parties speak for themselves: Shas (Sephardic, Guardians of the Tora), the Religious Zionist Party, the Unified Torah Judaism, Otzma Yehudit (Jewish Power, the new name of Kach, classified as a terrorist organization by the United States and by the European Union) and finally Noam (Pleasantness – sic! – based on the abhorrence of the LGBT and other sexual minorities). In fact, out of 40 ministers and deputy ministers, the ultra-religious and fascist parties hold 20 positions, and not the least of them, ranging from Deputy Prime Minister to National Security, from the Interior to Finance, including Health, Construction and Housing, a deputy Minister of Education to defend the "*national Jewish identity*" in the curriculum, and a position specially created for the development of settlements in zone C. Zone C, as defined by the 1995 Oslo Accords, in fact represents the occupied territories, i.e., 60% of the West Bank.

One of the leading figures in these fascist parties, Smotrich, leader of the Religious Zionist Party, made no secret of his intentions when he announced in a programmatic document that one had to impose a "Greater Israel," thus to put an end to the fiction of two states, and to put an end to any hope the Palestinians had of forming their own state. Firstly, by stepping up colonisation:

*The first and most important stage of the decisive "One Hope" plan will be colonisation. At this point, we will establish the most important basic fact: we are here to stay. We will make it clear that our national ambition of a Jewish state from the river to the sea is a fait accompli, a fact that cannot be discussed or negotiated.*

*This stage will be achieved by a political and legal act of imposing sovereignty over the whole of Judea and Samaria, and by concomitant acts of colonisation: the establishment of towns and villages, the provision of infrastructure as is customary in "little" Israel and the encouragement of tens and hundreds of thousands of residents to come and live in Judea-Samaria. In this way, we can create a clear and irreversible reality on the ground. (Just one Hope, 2017)*

This process, which has been under way for several years, has been further strengthened since the installation of the latest government allying Likud with the fascists and religious fanatics. Palestinian villages are regularly attacked by settlers and deadly raids by the Israeli army are on the increase. The definitive aim is to crush resistance attempts militarily, to make recalcitrant Palestinians emigrate and to deprive of almost all political rights those who agree to stay, such as the right to elect deputies to the Knesset. It is not all very democratic? Who cares, Smotrich has other values:

*The State of Israel was founded on the strength of a belief in the justice of biblical history, and on the strength of the agreement of the nations of the world - at a rare moment in history - to realise the vision and return the Land of Israel to the people of Israel. [...] This belief in the justice of our cause is vital, and those who lack it will indeed find it difficult to defend the demand that the Arabs of Judea and Samaria abandon their national ambitions in favour of ours. (Just one Hope, 2017)*

What has changed since then is that the author and his cronies are now in government as equals, hand in hand with the Likud, and that Smotrich is Minister of Finance and Deputy Speaker of the Knesset ... Netanyahu had set out to limit the powers of the Supreme Court, obviously to avoid prosecuting himself and his crooked cronies for various corruption offences. But also, to have a free hand in his enterprise against the Palestinians and not risk being censured by the opinions of a few judges who are a little less under the sway of "*biblical justice*" than his government and who might consider his measures "*unreasonable*".

The Hofshim be Artzenou (Free in Our Homeland) organisers of the massive demonstrations against the reform of the Supreme Court (300,000 people in total on 25 February) confined themselves to defending the democracy of the colonial state and waved the Israeli flag, deliberately excluding any participation by organisations defending Palestinian rights, without ever questioning the colonial policy of the State of Israel. Nevertheless, taking advantage of the demonstrations, some associations attacked the settlements and waved the Palestinian flag in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. In addition,

the reservists' strike weakened the main instrument of colonialism, the Israeli army, especially in the air force.

The policy already adopted by the pan-Arab guerrillas of the 1970s against Jewish civilians, taken up by Hamas in recent years and which it has just taken even further, is powerless to destroy Israel. On the contrary, it reinforces chauvinism and racism among the Jewish population. Without a moment's hesitation, Havoda (ex-Mapai Labour Party), Meretz (ex-Mapam) and the leadership of the Histadrut trade union confederation are now lining up behind Netanyahu. A war cabinet of national unity has just been formed between the Likud and the National Unity Party; the religious fascist ministers are not part of it, but that does not matter because it is their policy that is being applied. The Jewish diaspora, which had distanced itself from the 6th Netanyahu government incorporating the fascists, is now rallying around the colonial state.

Today, a section of the Palestinian people is once again the victim of large-scale state terrorism, with the blockade of Gaza, incessant bombardments, and the threat of a murderous military invasion of Gaza. It is once again the Palestinian civilian population, much more than the Hamas leaders, who will pay the blood price under the bombardments, with the eighth Israeli military operation in Gaza in ten years. For the Palestinian resistance that has taken up arms, the situation is deadlocked. The Israeli military forces are much more powerful than the Palestinian fighters, with a whole arsenal of military equipment ranging from aircraft to armoured vehicles, etc.

Conscious workers the world over stand shoulder to shoulder with any oppressed people, whatever their current leadership, but that is never enough. To offer the Palestinian people any prospect, first and foremost a revolutionary political programme is needed.

- Against most reformists (and also "Trotskyist" organisations like LO/France, the SP/Great Britain, the PO/Argentina, the AWL/Great Britain, the POI/France ...), one must put an end to the myth of the constitution of a Palestinian state in the few shreds of fragmented territory that Israel has not yet annexed, which is totally unviable and which enshrines the colonisation of Palestine. Any democratic solution requires the prior dismantling of the Zionist state, an apartheid state, warmongering, and an instrument of the Western imperialist powers in West Asia.
- Against some of the debris of Stalinism (and also many centrist currents such as the Pabloite FI, the Morenoite TF-FI and IWL-FI, the Healyite FI-WSWS...), we must put an end to the so-called anti-imperialist united front with the Islamists of Hamas, with the reactionary Arab, Persian or Turkish bourgeois regimes. They turn around according to

their interests and the pressures of the various imperialist powers. On the contrary, the working class of the whole world must support the struggles of the workers, women, and national minorities of the region, against their government corrupt to the core as in Lebanon, against dictatorship as in Syria and Iran, against the princes and monarchies of Saudi Arabia and Jordan ... One must put an end to the submission to the Palestinian bourgeoisie, whether it be its clerical, misogynist, and anti-Semitic wing, financed by the ayatollahs and the emirs, or its comprador wing, dependent on Israel.

One needs a revolutionary workers' party to unite the proletariat and wrest it from Zionism and Islamism. The Palestinian workers must forge fraternal links with the conscious elements of the Israeli proletariat. The Israeli proletariat can only exist as a class and wage a struggle against its bourgeoisie by recognising the democratic and national rights of the Palestinian Arabs, the first of which is the right of return. The watchwords of the conscious proletariat are therefore:

- Liberation of all Arab fighters, unity of Palestine,
- Equality for all Palestinians (Jews and Arabs; men and women; Muslims, Jews, Christians, atheists), separation of the State and religions,
- The right of Hebrew workers in these conditions to live in Palestine,
- Workers' government, expropriation of capitalist groups.

The only social force capable of establishing a unified, democratic, secular Palestine where all those who want to can live with equal rights is the Arab, Jewish, Turkish, Kurdish, Persian, ... working class of the region, which will abolish the borders inherited from colonisation and establish the socialist federation of the Middle East.

All the imperialist powers reaffirmed their support for Israel and its "right to defend itself". But the right of the Palestinian people to defend itself against the fate that has befallen it since 1948 is totally ignored, even by those who defended Ukraine's right to exist against the Russian state that wanted to annex it! More than ever, anti-Zionism is deliberately equated with anti-Semitism by bourgeois governments, and demonstrations in solidarity with the Palestinian people are sometimes banned. A united front campaign bringing together all the workers' organisations, trade unions and parties must therefore be developed at the international level in defence of all anti-Zionist activists and organisations, against all arms deliveries to Israel and in solidarity with the Palestinian people.



# PERMANENT REVOLUTION COLLECTIVE



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**revolucionpermanente.com**

**EKIB Turkey**

**patronsuzdunya.com**

**GKK Austria**

**klassenkampf.net**

**GMI France**

**groupemarxiste.info**

**IKC Spanish State**

**ikcirklo.org**

**OR Argentina**

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