

# PERMANENT REVOLUTION



## MIDDLE EAST ON THE BRINK



# PERMANENT REVOLUTION

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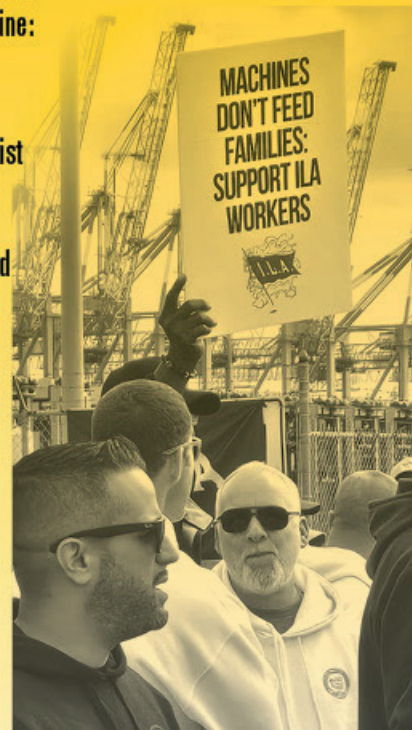
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# TRUMP and CAPITALIST DECADENCE

BY ALEJANDRO BODART

**Trump's return to power confirms that the rise of the far-right is a growing phenomenon of international extent. The systemic crisis that capitalism is going through and the deep deterioration of the traditional bourgeois parties and reformism in all its forms fuel the growth of these far-right expressions<sup>1</sup>. The billionaire's victory strengthens them at a global level.**

Attacks against migrants, women, and LGBT+ rights, the denial of climate change and a discourse of hate against all kinds of workers organizations and the left have become commonplace in just a few years. The lack of trust in bourgeois democracy in addition to unlimited austerity as a model, feeds the “cultural battle” driven by the worst of the right that tries to impose authoritarian ideas and individualism, which serves the concentration of wealth in the hands of the richest of the rich.

The moral compass of these far-right movements -and of the right in general- can be seen in their unconditional support for Zionism. Leading the genocidal State of Israel, Zionism illustrates just how far the right is willing to go to defend its class privileges.

However, none of the current far-right projects, including the one represented by Trump, will bring more stability or predictability to the world, both necessary for the development of capitalist

business. On the contrary, we are likely to see an increase in the disorder that began with the fall of the Soviet Union and worsened with the 2008 financial crisis. This will also provoke a growing response from workers and popular sectors, who, despite lacking political or union leaderships that truly represent their interests, continue to resist and fight in whatever ways they can.

What we are witnessing today in the uneven war waged by Ukraine to escape the clutches of Russia shows that reigning chaos. Trump's announcement that he will end economic and military aid to Zelensky when he takes office in January has prompted “Genocide Joe” Biden -before leaving office- to authorize the Ukrainian government to use American medium-range ballistic missiles (ATACMS) and British cruise missiles (Storm Shadow) to reach Russian territory. This provoked a swift response by Putin, with a new hypersonic ballistic missile (Oreshnik) and a change in the

protocol for the use of nuclear weapons, threatening to use them again. If such an escalation were to happen, it could have unpredictable international consequences. Although it is likely that this is part of a series of maneuvers between imperialist powers aimed at forcing an agreement to end the war (which would likely favor Russia), the situation is highly volatile and could spiral out of control at any moment.

The threats to close off the US economy, besides affecting its own allies, mainly in Europe, will deepen the *cold war* that has been developing for years between the decaying though still hegemonic US imperialism and China, which has become a new global imperialist power.

In addition to the trade and new technologies war between the superpowers, there are acute tensions over the sovereignty of Taiwan and other territories claimed by China in dispute with other countries in the Asia-Pacific area, which may also evolve into another armed conflict of international impact.

Inter-imperialist competition and regional conflicts that are accumulating have put the world in tension with the permanent threat of a new world confrontation, which, if unleashed, would put humanity in danger of a nuclear catastrophe. Only a socialist revolution could prevent a third world war from happening in the future. Never before has the question of socialism or barbarism been so present and, at the same time, never has the way out been so full of complexities. Workers and revolutionaries have to discuss how to overcome those difficulties so as to save the future of humanity and build a better world.

## ISRAEL IS A US HITMAN

Barbarism is already unfolding in the Middle East. Western imperialism's endorsement, along with its financial and military aid for the Zionist genocide against the Palestinian people, will likely be doubled down under Trump's administration. Trump is expected to encourage Israel to accelerate its offensive and then assess how to proceed once he assumes office.

The constant threat of Israel to use nuclear weapons against Iran, which could respond in kind, unleashing a conflict that would spread like wildfire throughout the Middle East, makes this one of the most volatile regions in the world.

The arrest warrant for crimes against human-

ity that the International Criminal Court has issued against the butcher Netanyahu, despite being more symbolic than effective, has already been rejected by Biden and Trump, showing that Democrats and Republicans are two sides of the same coin. The same has been done by other far-right governments, such as Orban or Milei.

The recent and fragile agreement of a ceasefire that Israel and Hezbollah have signed, promoted by France and the United States, reveals the limits of Zionism and its failure to defeat the Lebanese militias, despite the significant blows they received, the loss of civilian lives and the enormous suffering of the population. But it also further isolates the Palestinian resistance, which loses one of its few supporters in the region, facilitating Israel's plans of complete colonization of Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The State of Israel is a colonial enclave, artificially created and heavily armed by imperialism to safeguard its economic and geopolitical interests across the Middle East, one of the world's richest regions in natural resources.

On October 7, 2023, the Palestinian resistance inflicted a huge blow on Zionism, shattering the myth of its invulnerability. Beyond the irreconcilable differences that separate us from Hamas and Islamic extremist organizations, we defend the right of every oppressed people to resist and confront their colonizers.

The action disrupted the plans of Israel and imperialism with the Arab bourgeoisies, who were about to sign an agreement to definitively liquidate the Palestinian cause. As the days passed, Israel's brutal assault on Gaza sparked an enormous wave of global solidarity, which saw mass sectors in Europe, the youth in the US and many other countries mobilizing and leading the way. All this made it possible to unmask the nefarious role of Zionism among broad sectors of Western society, something that had never happened before beyond small activist circles.

However, after more than a year, it is necessary to make an objective assessment. The Palestinian cause managed to become the most widely felt issue worldwide, but the cost has been immense. It is evident that the organizations that carried out the action of the 7th were not prepared to face Israel's brutal response, which has already murdered tens of thousands -mostly women and children- destroyed Gaza's infrastructure, and is advancing a plan of radical ethnic cleansing to erase any sem-



blance of autonomy in Gaza and the West Bank. The hope that Iran would intervene in their support proved to be entirely misplaced. The Mullah autocracy is only driven by its own interests, which are entirely separated from those of the Palestinian or Lebanese people. This was completely exposed last year. The same can be said for the other Arab autocracies, which did nothing except repress the spontaneous mobilizations of solidarity with Palestine that took place in their countries.

It is also important to note the role of China and Russia. Beyond issuing some cynical statements, they have actively pushed for all Palestinian organizations to accept an agreement that recognizes the existence of the Zionist enclave. This would effectively mean renouncing the strategic goal of establishing a Palestinian state on its historic territory, a territory to which millions of refugees, expelled from their lands over the nearly 80 years of occupation, have a right to return to.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the brave Palestinian people alone cannot defeat this beast. The extraordinary global solidarity mobilizations, which must continue, have been crucial in making the genocide visible and pressuring some governments and institutions, like the ICC, to speak out against Netanyahu's crimes. However, these efforts have failed to shift the balance of power or halt Israel's plans.

Some organizations have expectations in the Israeli working class reacting in solidarity. But this has not happened in decades, and it does not happen for purely material reasons. The vast majority of the Jewish population is not native to the country and lives on land forcibly taken from hundreds of thousands of expelled Palestinians. They are well aware that a Palestinian victory would mean risking their privileged situation that only the occupation ensures.

The fate of the Palestinian people is fundamentally tied to that of the workers and youth of the Arab countries. The revolutions to come must complete the tasks that were begun in the Arab Spring: definitively getting rid of the various dictatorships that are in complicity with Zionism and not stopping until they succeed in advancing in unity towards workers' governments and a voluntary federation of socialist republics throughout the Middle East. This is the only way the Palestinian people, together with the rest of the Arab peoples, will succeed in definitively defeating Zionism, returning to their historic territory and



building a Palestinian State, which, in order to allow the peaceful coexistence of all religions, must be secular, non-racist and, above all, socialist.

Any alternative to this analysis, aside from being utopian, creates illusions that mislead fighters about the political battles they must engage in and the tasks that lie ahead. We must continue in the front line promoting the broadest solidarity with Palestine and with every people attacked by imperialism. But at the same time helping to build revolutionary socialist parties in each country and an organization that unites them internationally. Only by overcoming all obstacles can we ensure that the revolutions to come are transformed into socialist ones and do not stagnate or retreat. This is the only way we can begin the process of dismantling capitalism before this rotten system leads us to global barbarism. 🐜

1. "The Rise of the Far Right and the Tasks of Revolutionaries." In <https://lis-isl.org/en/2024/07/02/el-ascenso-de-la-ultraderecha-y-las-tareas-de-los-revolucionarios/>

## Middle East ON THE BRINK: Current situation and future prospects

Read Imran Kamyana's article here





# Syria: One **BLOODY DICTATOR LESS** and an **UNCERTAIN FUTURE**

ISL COORDINATION. *December 12, 2024*

**In a Middle East already severely devastated by the Palestinian genocide and the Zionist State of Israel's attack on Lebanon, Bashar al-Assad's draconian dictatorship fell in Syria a few days ago and was replaced in power by an Islamist sector in command of a heterogeneous rebel coalition. A new era full of uncertainties has begun in the country and the region.**

## **A TRANSCENDENTAL DEVELOPMENT**

For the Syrian people and other Arab peoples of the region, this change marks a very significant development. It ends 54 years of dictatorial rule by the Assad clan through the Baath party: 24 years under the recently deposed Bashar and the 30 previous years under his father Hafez. The regime, of a populist Arab nationalist nature, turned increasingly to the right, negotiated with different imperialisms, and, particularly in recent decades, never supported the Palestinian resistance to Zionist settler colonialism and genocide in any meaningful way. Instead, it practically confined itself to paying lip service to the Palestinian cause and using it for internal oppression. That is one of the reasons why many Palestinians, including Hamas, welcomed the fall of al-Assad.

It must be noted that the rule of the Baath Party in Syria started in the mid-1960s as a somewhat revolutionary, anti-imperialist project under leaders like Saleh Jaded. However, owing to the lack of a Marxist leadership, ideological confusions, zigzags and intraparty disputes, it ended up as a very corrupt crony capitalism, requiring unprecedented and endless state repression of the vast majority of the Syrian population. The degeneration of the regime accelerated after the 1990s with the adoption of pro-market, neoliberal economic policies, resulting in the loss of the popular support it once enjoyed. The desertions in the Syrian Arab Army and the rebel victory in just ten days confirm that the regime was in decay and had no social support. No democratic way forward could be made with the corrupt tyranny serving the interests of the Assad family and its cronies in power. That is why, after the fall of the regime, crowds took to the streets to celebrate, both in Syria and in several other countries. Currently, of Syria's total population of 24 million, 5 million refugees, who fled the civil war and the repression of 2011, are living abroad and have now begun to return.



## RUSSIA AND IRAN WEAKENED

For both countries, which have also been under dictatorial regimes for decades, the fall of al-Assad implies a significant weakening of their influence in the region. Both the Putin government and that of the Iranian mullahs were the fundamental political and military support of the Assad regime for years. The secret services of Russia, an emerging imperialism busy with its invasion and war against Ukraine, did not foresee the rebel offensive in Syria. The same can be said of a much-weakened Hezbollah and, above all, of Iran's theocratic dictatorship, which, instead of leading the anti-Zionist "axis of resistance" like it had promised, in practice betrayed the Palestinian struggle. In any case, both Iran and its proxy groups, as well as Russia, were in no position to support a hollowed-out regime that crumbled like a house of cards with just a slight push. In turn, Israel took advantage of the power vacuum generated these days to send troops into the demilitarized zone between the Golan Heights—which it has illegally occupied since 1967—and Syria.

## THE DIVERSE REBEL ALLIANCE

It is diverse, encompassing four sectors, at times in conflict with each other:

- **Levant Liberation Committee (Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, HTS):** A Sunni Islamist group that, in recent years, has tried to portray itself as a mainstream, "moderate." Its political wing is the Syrian Salvation Government, and its main leader is al-Chara (alias al-Jolani).
- **Syrian National Army (SNA):** Supported by Turkey, it was joined by the National Liberation Front and seeks to create a buffer zone on the Turkish border to prevent the advance of the Kurdish struggle.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF):** Kurdish militias led by the People's Protection Units (YPG). With support from the US, they control the Rojava region and suffer attacks from the SNA.
- **Free Men of Syria (Ahrar al-Sham):** Emerged in 2011 from the merger of several ultra-Islamist groups, influenced by the Afghan Taliban.

ISIS (Islamic State, Daesh) is not part of this alliance because it is a rival of HTS, but it still exists and could regain its presence in the current crisis.

## NO TO EXTERNAL INTERFERENCE

In 2011, as part of the Arab Spring, there was a popular rebellion against the Assad dictatorship in Syria. Al-Assad harshly repressed it, igniting a civil war that killed 600,000—including more than 100,000 civilians—and displaced ten million, half internally and half abroad. Among the rebel political and religious sectors—which were initially more independent—the influence of the US and Turkey has grown, and they will seek to maintain or expand it. Also, the support of other reactionary states, such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan and the UAE, for various factions cannot be ignored. Such is the complexity of the situation that these imperialist powers can be in alliance in one part of the country while confronting each other in another. These days, the HTS is negotiating with UN envoy Geir Pedersen, former Assadist Prime Minister al-Jalali and representatives of other countries regarding the Resolution 2254 of the United Nations Security Council, which proposes an 18-month "civil transition", a new constitution and fresh elections. However, the possibility of bloody infighting among the rebel groups during the process cannot be ruled out.

## WHAT IS THE WAY OUT?

The joy expressed by large sectors of the Syrian people at the dictator's fall cannot hide the risks that exist. As we mentioned, the situation is influenced by imperialist forces, the expansionist Turkish and Islamist sects, including HTS, whose strategy is a theocratic state that does not guarantee the long-postponed democratic, economic and social rights. A truly democratic solution should include the convening of a free and sovereign Constituent Assembly, in which returning refugees could also participate, in order to reorganize the country along a path of national and social liberation, in solidarity with the Palestinian cause, and in a secular state for the peaceful coexistence among peoples and religions. The ISL is committed to developing a revolutionary, anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist alternative that fights for a socialist Syria within the framework of a socialist federation of the Middle East. We emphasize that this is only possible through the revolutionary organization of the toiling masses and oppressed people of Syria, in alliance with the oppressed and exploited of the Middle East and beyond.

- Down with all kinds of imperialist meddling and in Syria
- Down with theocracy and religious fundamentalism
- No illusions in the proxy forces and facilitators of imperialism
- Democratic aspirations of the Syrian masses must be respected
- Solidarity and support for the Syrian people for a democratic, secular and socialist Syria 🌍

# Democrats out, Republicans in, **DOWNWARD SPIRAL CONTINUES** Build a workers' party!



BY PETER SOLENBERGER

This article updates and extends my previous articles “Capitalism, democracy, and the 2024 US elections” and “After the 2024 US elections”, both written for the Partito Comunista dei Lavoratori (PCL) and republished on the website of the International Trotskyist Opposition (ITO)<sup>1</sup>. The ITO is in a process of political discussions and joint work with the International Socialist League (ISL), which both organizations anticipate will lead to the ITO’s joining the ISL in the first half of 2025.

In 2020, many social democrats and neo-Stalinists, and even some activists from the Trotskyist tradition, urged workers and the left to vote for Joe Biden, motivating their pitch with the slogan, “Stop Trump, fight Biden.”

Four years later, the results are in: Electing Biden stopped Trump for four years, the fight against Biden didn’t happen, and now Trump is back.

A few prominent strikes or strike threats won relatively large wage increases, women and other reproductive rights activists won referenda to protect abortion rights and built networks to help women in anti-choice states get





abortions, and the Palestine solidarity movement challenged Biden as “genocide Joe.”

But the mass of workers and the oppressed did not mobilize, chiefly because the union and movement leaders lacked confidence in their ability to fight and didn’t want to jeopardize the Democrats’ electoral prospects.

Under little pressure from the unions and the movements, the Democrats ran as the party of moderation and the status quo. The strategy didn’t work. Trump narrowly won the presidency, and the Republicans won narrow majorities in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The closeness of the elections is important to emphasize. Trump and the Republicans do not have a mandate. Most of the workers who voted for them did so on the same basis as most workers who voted for the Democrats did. They were voting for the lesser evil, as they saw it.

The last four years have been bad, the next four years will be worse, and the future looks bleak — unless the working class intervenes to change the course of history. First, by taking to the picket lines and the streets to resist the escalation of attacks under the new administration. Then, by building a workers’ party to escape the trap of eternally chasing the capitalist lesser evil.

Revolutionary Marxists have a specific role in the resistance and in building a political alternative: using our understanding of history

and the workings of the capitalist system to show the way forward. We not only participate in and build struggles, we also explain the obstacles to their success under capitalism, and the need for a workers’ party and a workers’ government.

## A CLOSE ELECTION

As expected, turnout in the 2024 elections was high. Votes are still being counted, but as of November 15, an estimated 155.7 million people voted, out of 244.7 million eligible to vote, a participation rate of 63.6 percent. This is down from the 2020 participation rate of 66.4 percent, but quite high by US standards. Still, more than a third of eligible voters chose not to participate.

Trump currently has 76.1 million votes, 50.2 percent of the total. Kamala Harris has 73.1 million votes, 48.2 percent of the total. These numbers will change, as more votes are counted. Most likely, Harris will further narrow the gap, since most of the remaining uncounted votes are in Democratic areas, but the gap is too big for her to catch up. Trump has a 312 to 226 lead in the Electoral College, which is unlikely to change.

The Republicans have gained three Senate seats and are likely to gain one more, giving them a 53 to 47 majority. The Republicans have won 218 House seats, the Democrats have won 209 seats, and 8 races are too close to call. The Republicans will maintain their narrow majority.

At the state level, no governorships changed hands, and abortion rights won in seven referenda, gained a majority in eight, and lost only in two.

Trump's current count of 76.1 million votes is up 1.9 million from his 2020 count of 74.2 million. Harris's count of 73.1 million is down 8.2 million from Biden's 2020 count of 81.3 million. The gap may narrow as more votes are counted, but the main story is clear: millions who voted for Biden in 2020 did not vote for Harris.

The three leftwing presidential candidates got nearly 900,000 votes: 750,615 for Jill Stein of the Green Party, 140,524 for Claudia De la Cruz of the Party of Socialism and Liberation (PSL), and 74,079 for Cornel West, an independent Black radical.



## WHY DID HARRIS LOSE?

Trump's victory is an expression of the drift to the right of capitalist politics worldwide. But in the US, as in many other countries, this drift is mainly of the political parties and not of the working class. The Democrats did not present a credible left alternative to the Republicans. To grasp this, we need to understand why Harris lost.

Harris's loss is partly an expression of the racism and sexism endemic in US politics and stirred up by Trump's demagoguery. Barack Obama's candidacy broke through the racial barrier in 2008. Hillary Clinton's candidacy was unable to break through the gender barrier in 2016. Harris's candidacy was unable to break through the double barrier in 2024.

Looking at the campaigns more closely,

Trump won a majority of white working-class voters with two main issues: the economy and immigration. The Biden administration prided itself on how well the economy was doing — a “soft landing” from the Covid crisis. But for most workers, the “soft landing” was a return to where they had been under Trump before Covid, except that interest rates and the costs of food, energy, and housing were far higher. On immigration, the administration seemed to have adopted Trump's policy.

The Democrats had no adequate response on either the economy or immigration. They couldn't champion measures to redistribute income from the capitalists to the workers, since they're in the pockets of the capitalists. They aren't brave enough to say that the US needs more immigrants to compensate for an aging population, and immigrants deserve equal rights.

Harris and the Democrats campaigned mainly around democracy and abortion rights. Democracy was a strong argument with relatively well-off liberals, but it had little resonance with most voters. The Democrats were too involved in the deportation of immigrants, the breaking up of homeless encampments, militarization of police, and repression of Palestine solidarity actions to be credible. Their attempts to prosecute Trump seemed too much like using their offices to punish their enemies.

Abortion rights was the Democrats' strongest issue. Trump claimed that he opposed a nationwide ban on abortion and would veto one, if it got to his desk. But he was expected to back measures to stop women in states that ban abortion from getting medicinal or out-of-state abortions. The abortion argument was strong, but it wasn't enough.

War and peace weren't central issues in the 2024 US elections, since Harris and Trump fundamentally agree. Both are committed to an economically and militarily dominant US imperialism. Trump presented himself as a strong leader who would tell Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to cut his losses, tell Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to “get his victory and get it over with,” and tell Chinese President Xi Jinping to back off. Some voters believed that and voted for Trump to avoid war. Others thought his capriciousness made war more likely.



## WHAT COMES NEXT?

For the next two years, the Republicans have a trifecta — the presidency and both houses of Congress — as well as a six-to-three majority on the Supreme Court. The new Trump administration will certainly move to extend the tax cuts for the wealthy enacted by the first Trump administration and set to expire next year.

The administration will try to roll back regulations to limit emissions, to curtail drilling and fracking for oil and gas, and to promote electric vehicles. The rollbacks will be harmful, but the government was doing nowhere near enough to begin with. And the administration has its own internal conflicts. Trump's biggest booster is Elon Musk, who makes billions selling government-subsidized electric vehicles.

The administration will make border enforcement crueler, but the Biden administration had already reverted to the Trump policy of keeping asylum-seekers out. Trump talks of rounding up and deporting millions of undocumented immigrants, but the US economy needs them, particularly in agriculture, construction, meat-packing, restaurants and hotels. Trump himself makes millions from undocumented workers in his hotels, casinos, and golf courses. This will limit what he can do, other than rant.

The Supreme Court has ruled that states may determine the status of abortion rights. A majority of states now protect them, including the seven that voted to do so this year. It would be very difficult for anti-choice state governments to prevent women from traveling to other states to get abortions or obtaining mifepristone and misoprostol for medicinal abortions.

The Justice Department will likely revert to its 2017 position that Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination based on sex, does not apply to gender identity. In more progressive states, trans people will still be protected by state law, but their rights will be under constant threat.

Overall, Trump aspires to do more harm than he can. His administration will be cruel and nasty, but it will also be inept. It will almost certainly lose its trifecta in two years. It will likely preside over the next recession, which may well doom the next Republican nominee.

The task for workers and the oppressed is to resist. When Republicans went after immigrants

in 2006, millions of Latinos struck in protest, and Congress was forced to back down. When police murdered George Floyd in 2020, millions of Blacks took to the streets to protest. When the Supreme Court reversed *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, millions of women organized for pro-choice referenda and to help women circumvent anti-abortion laws. In each case, millions of other workers joined the protests.

Union strikes, although not yet political, have broad support in the rest of the working class. UAW President Shawn Fain proposed that unions coordinate their contract expiration dates for May 2028. Whatever Fain's intentions, a general strike then would be a fitting end to the Trump administration. A strike at Stellantis over jobs and working conditions now would be a promising start.



## DIVING DEEPER: THE US POLITICAL SYSTEM

The US political system is deliberately dysfunctional. The separation of powers, the system of checks and balances, the Electoral College, the Senate, the filibuster, lifetime appointment of Supreme Court justices, states' rights, the corrupting influence of money in politics, the revolving door between government and business, the corporate media, and all the other undemocratic aspects of the US political system mean that the government can do only what the ruling class wants it to do.

Overlaid on this structure is the two-party system. The Democrats and Republicans are both capitalist parties. They depend on donations from capitalists and recognition from the capitalist media. Their top politicians move back and forth between government, the mil-

itary, business, and academia. If they aren't wealthy when they enter politics, they quickly become so.

There are differences between the two capitalist parties. The Democrats favor more government intervention to promote employment, reduce poverty, and protect the environment. They're more supportive of civil rights, reproductive rights, and LGBTQ+ rights. They favor multilateralism in foreign policy.

The Republicans favor lower taxes, less government regulation, leaving economic matters to the market, and leaving political matters to the states. They have an isolationist wing that wants an "America first" foreign policy. They project a law-and-order image and assert the virtues of marriage, nuclear families, and religion.



The two-party system reduces most of these differences to rhetoric. The Democrats controlled the presidency, the House, and the Senate in 1992, 2008, and 2020, and changed nothing fundamental. The Republicans controlled the presidency, the House, and the Senate in 2000 and 2016, and changed nothing fundamental. In other years, the government was divided and could accomplish little.

The result is a governmental alternation at the federal level between the two capitalist parties, generally every eight years. One party makes promises, energizes its base, gets elected, fails to carry out its promises, discourages its base, and gets voted out, giving the other party its turn. The alternation between Democrats and Republicans traps workers into endlessly chasing the lesser evil.

The alternation of evils is the real problem. How do we escape it?

## THE NEED FOR A MASS WORKERS PARTY

In 2024, as in previous years, progressive voters were in a difficult position. Should they vote for Harris to protect abortion rights, knowing that she supports Israel's genocide? Or should they refuse to consent to genocide and risk further restriction of abortion rights? There's no way out of this dilemma within the framework of the two-party system.

The problem is more general. Working people want jobs, pensions, healthcare, education, time with those they love, and opportunities to pursue their interests. Most of them favor equal rights and opportunity. They want a clean environment.

They doubt that these things are possible, since they haven't seen them, and the politicians and media say they're impossible. They chase what they perceive as the lesser evil, since they see no path to anything better.

In the early 1990s, Labor Party Advocates (LPA) had a catchy slogan: "The bosses have two parties. We need one of our own." This view was shared by most labor radicals and the leaders of a few unions, including the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW), the United Electrical Workers (UE), the International Longshore and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU), the California Nurses Association (CNA), and others.

A convention in June 1996 formed the Labor Party, led by these unions. The convention adopted a social-democratic program that, inconsistently, did not include the right to abortion. A 1998 convention rectified this.

The Labor Party adopted what it called a "new organizing model for politics." The model was to "build power" before the party ran candidates. The language masked a compromise by which the major unions allowed the LPA unions their Labor Party sandbox, so long as they didn't actually run candidates against the Democrats. Having no real purpose, the Labor Party soon faded, dissolving in 2007.

This pattern has been repeated again and again in the unions, social movements, and social-democratic political organizations, including the revived Democratic Socialist of America (DSA). They grant the Democratic Party a monopoly on political representation. Their leaders claim that nothing else is possible. This makes the Democrats the lesser evil to the Republicans, which leads most activists to vote for them. A self-fulfilling prophecy.





## THE NEED FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

The kernel of truth in the model of building power before running in elections is that there's no way to win elections in the US without having extra-parliamentary power. The capitalists' power is their wealth and the control it gives them over political life. The capitalist parties spent \$16 billion on the 2024 elections, \$5.5 billion on the presidential election alone. Even the unions can't match that, let alone overcome the disadvantages of not controlling the media and the government.

Mass action could break the impasse — building unions and other mass organizations, organizing demonstrations, strikes, and occupations. These could create a situation in which the capitalists had to choose between abandoning democracy, with all the risks that entails, and implementing electoral and other reforms that would allow a workers' party to compete effectively.

The capitalists wouldn't like this and might try authoritarian measures first. But in all other advanced capitalist countries, the bosses long ago learned to live with bourgeois workers' parties, that is, parties with a working-class base and the politics of trying to reform capitalism through government regulation.

Revolutionaries should support even a reformist workers' party as a step forward for the US working class. But we propose for the party an anticapitalist transitional program — a program for jobs, healthcare, education, abolition of police

and prisons, reproductive rights, LGBTQ+ rights, drastic cuts in military spending, peace, and a just transition to clean energy, industry, transportation, construction, and agriculture — a program that only a workers' government could implement.

We propose that the party not just run in elections, but also mobilize workers to confront the capitalists and their government, to defend the workers' movement, to build councils and other organs of workers' power and workers' democracy, to establish a workers' government.

In Britain, Canada, and many other countries, the level of class struggle at which the working class gained political representation was too low for the workers' party to be revolutionary from birth. If that proves to be the case in the US, revolutionaries will be on the familiar ground of combatting reformism.

The tasks of revolutionaries fundamentally remain what they were under Biden and would have been under Harris: To build unions and other mass organizations, to promote democracy and militance there, to lead struggles, to expose capitalism, imperialism, and the two-party system, to resist militarism and war, to build solidarity with Palestine and all other struggles against oppression, to build workers' parties, and to build revolutionary parties and a revolutionary International.. 🐞

<https://ito-oti.org/capitalism-democracy-and-the-2024-us-elections/> ; <https://ito-oti.org/after-the-2024-us-elections/>

# ISRAEL, the escalation of a GENOCIDAL STATE

BY KHALED ABDALLAH



**With its genocide in Gaza, its invasion of Lebanon and its attacks on Iran, Israel is setting the whole Middle East on fire. What is its strategic project? What kind of state is it? What is the solution to this massacre? What is the role of the Israeli population? These are the political questions we address in this article.**

Since October 7, 2023, Israel has intensified its genocidal advance throughout the region. It took advantage of the Hamas incursion to deploy a brutal counter-offensive. For months it bombed Gaza and then advanced on the ground. It also carried out attacks in the West Bank. In September it began bombing Lebanon, including Beirut. And before that it had already carried out military operations in Syria, Yemen and Iran, increasing its missile attacks against Persian targets since October. We shall see what happens with the recent two-month cease-fire.

As denounced by the International Criminal Court, the UN and its commission of inquiry

and human rights organizations, Israel violates international humanitarian law and the conventions of war<sup>1</sup>. It applies collective punishment to the civilian population: it bombs schools, hospitals, bakeries, markets, mosques, infrastructure and caravans of fleeing civilians. It blocks the entry of food, water, medicine, electricity and fuel. And doctors' reports of children wounded or killed by gunshots to the head belie any pretext of "accidental deaths".

Attacks on UN, Red Cross and Red Crescent humanitarian facilities, refugee camps and UNIFIL<sup>2</sup> barracks, assassinations of journalists, the use of white phosphorus, and the abuse and torture of Palestinian prisoners, including dog attacks and impalements, are war crimes. In November, both the International Criminal Court and the Pope have questioned the commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity and possible genocide.

On October 28, the Israeli Parliament voted to ban the work of the UN Refugee Agency (UNRWA), 233 of whose employees Israel



has murdered since 2023. In Gaza, the Agency provided food aid, operated 183 schools, 22 health posts and 9 women's centers. The elimination of its humanitarian activity could cause tens of thousands more deaths from hunger, thirst and disease.

## WHAT IS ISRAEL'S STRATEGIC PROJECT?

Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich leads the Religious Zionist Party and considers himself *a homophobic fascist*<sup>3</sup>. He claims that “according to biblical texts”, Israel's territory should reach as far as Damascus, the Syrian capital. In turn, the Greater Israel project includes occupying Lebanon, almost all of Syria, Jordan, part of Egypt up to the Nile, part of Iraq up to the Euphrates and northern Saudi Arabia.

For now, only the most ultra-Zionist wing aspires to such expansion. However, since it was founded in 1948, the State of Israel has been occupying more and more Palestinian territory and establishing settlers in Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank. And Netanyahu has long been violating the borders he used to accept. In September 2023, at the UN General Assembly, he showed his map of the new Middle East, without Palestine. Last September, at the same event, he showed two other maps with mystical titles: *The Curse* (Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and northwest Yemen<sup>4</sup>) and *The Blessing* (India, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan and Israel, a supposed corridor of progress between Asia and Europe). In both, there was also nothing called Palestine.

It is not clear whether Netanyahu seeks to advance on southern Lebanon, as in 1978, 1982, 2000 and 2006, and then occupy it. Rather, he intends to impose a “buffer zone” up to the Litani River with no Hezbollah presence, violating Lebanese national sovereignty. And his plan for a “Gaza without Hamas”, under Israeli military control and a puppet Palestinian pseudo-government like in the West Bank, is another step in the Zionist's real strategy: to make Palestine disappear and annex all its territories. Moreover, Israel is already building military posts in two key corridors of the Strip: Netzarim, which crosses it in the middle, and Philadelphi or Saladin, at Rafah, the border with Egypt<sup>5</sup>.

The excuse is cynical: since I forcibly occupied most of your house and confined you to a small room from which you resist my occupation, I exercise my “right to self-defense”, occupy your small room and expel you to the backyard... stealing more and more. Such endless expansionism, which requires a permanent state of war, is the DNA of the Zionist state.

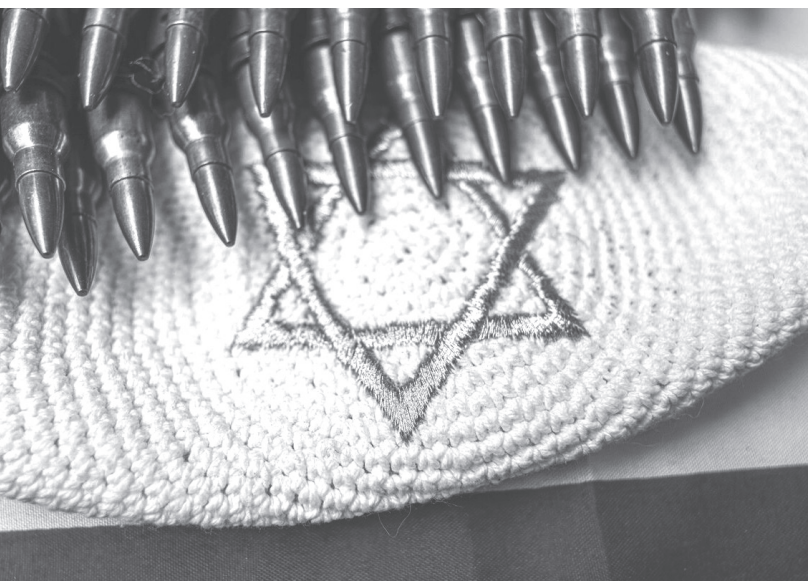
The Israeli plan to occupy Gaza generated internal divisions, such as the replacement of Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, in favor of leaving the Strip and negotiating the exchange of prisoners with Hamas. In addition, Gallant wants to force military service on the ultra-Orthodox Haredi Jews, until now exempt, an idea rejected by the religious parties allied to Netanyahu.



## WHAT KIND OF STATE IS ISRAEL?

In his book *The Jewish State* of 1896, Theodor Herzl, founder of Zionism, says this about Palestine: “We would form a European bulwark there against Asia; we would be at the service of the advance of culture against barbarism”<sup>6</sup>. In 1897, the first Zionist congress voted “to establish a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine”. In 1905, the seventh congress reaffirmed this plan under the slogan “a land without a people for a people without a land”.

In 1917, before Palestine passed from the Ottoman Empire to the British Empire, the latter's *Balfour Declaration* supported the establishment of “a national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine. In 1947, with its Resolution 181, the United Nations approved a Partition Plan that gave genocide a green light. Thus, on May 14, 1948, Zionism founded the



State of Israel, at the cost of razing 531 villages, murdering 15,000 Palestinians and expelling 750,000. That was the *Nakba*, the catastrophe.

*Israel's Declaration of Independence* sets no borders: it says only that the State is “*prepared to cooperate with the United Nations in implementing*” the 1947 Plan. It also promises “*full equality of political and social rights to all its inhabitants without distinction of creed, race or sex*” and offers “*peace and harmony to all neighboring states and their inhabitants*”. The text closes by “*placing confidence in the Rock of Israel*”, a concept that means the land of Israel for secularists and God for religious people<sup>7</sup>.

In 1949, a Constituent Assembly voted to draft a Constitution, but it was never done. Instead they adopted 14 Basic Laws, which regulate the Parliament (Knesset), the presidency, the ministers, the economy, the armed forces, the judiciary, the audit, labor and government. The tenth law promises “*to defend human dignity and freedom, in order to establish the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state*”<sup>8</sup>.

Others go further. The second law establishes “*the special relationship between the People of Israel and the Land of Israel and its redemption*”. The seventh designates all of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. And No. 13 in fact prevents the return of the Golan Heights that was stolen from Syria and East Jerusalem that was stolen from Palestine. Thus, they entrenched the Zionist ideology and the usurpation of land on the basis of the messianic myth about *God’s chosen people and the promised land*.

In 2018, a new reactionary wave produced

Basic Law No. 14, on the nation-state. It reaffirms Israel as the *homeland of the Jews*, making it a theocracy. It recognizes the right of national self-determination only to Jews and bans the return of Palestinian refugees. It makes Hebrew the only official language, demoting Arabic. And it considers new settlements in occupied territories to be of national value.

On this legal basis of settlement colonialism, the laws enshrine Jewish supremacism and racism against the original Arab-Palestinian population. The *Law of Return* grants residency to Jewish immigrants and denies it to Palestinian refugees. The *Absentee Law* allows the confiscation of homes from expelled Palestinians and the *Law of Land* prevents the Palestinian from renting them. The *Citizenship Law* denies citizenship to the spouse of an Israeli if he or she comes from Palestinian territory. For security offenses Jews are tried in civil courts, Palestinians in military courts, and they can be imprisoned from the age of 12. The educational and media system reproduces all these ideological pillars.

This anti-Arab *apartheid* is accompanied by growing authoritarianism within Israel. Netanyahu’s judicial reform, which sparked massive protests and was partially approved in July 2023, provides the political power more intervention in the selection of Supreme Court judges<sup>9</sup>. The latter annulled the chapter that prevented them from reviewing decrees and laws. The strong political crisis that was opened, then appeased by the war, is still latent.

In addition to the fact that there is no civil marriage but only religious marriage, the rights of women and LGBT+ people are at risk. The governmental parties of the so-called *religious Zionism* intend to further separate schools by sex, legalize “conversion therapies”, curtail anti-discrimination laws and prohibit homoparental adoption.

As for freedom of the press, since 7-O the government has been persecuting opposition journalists. It tightened its control over social networks and closed down the Arab channel Al Jazeera last May. To make matters worse, according to the Israeli press, 87% of the people are in favor of censoring pro-Palestinian news and 72% are in favor of censoring explicit images or videos about the war<sup>10</sup>.



Another essential feature distinguishes the Zionist state: American backing, since Israel is its imperial gendarme in the Middle East. For example, since 1948, the US has vetoed more than 40 UN resolutions in favor of Israel. And “according to data from the Departments of Defense and State, from 1951 to 2020, US military aid to Israel has amounted to 225.2 billion dollars”<sup>11</sup>. That’s about 3.2 billion a year, non returnable, destined to the purchase of U.S. weapons and investment in the Israeli war industry. Others estimate an annual average of 4.4 billion<sup>12</sup>. In the year since 7-O, Israel received 17.9 billion.

In short, in addition to being theocratic, the State of Israel is a pro-imperialist, colonialist, expansionist, racist and genocidal enclave, characteristics that, to a large extent, resemble a fascist type of state.

## WHAT TO DO WITH THE ZIONIST STATE?

The bourgeois and reformist policy of continuing to propose the coexistence of two States, one Jewish and the other Palestinian, as a solution, has demonstrated its total failure for 76 years. No one can coexist with a serial killer. That is why the capitulations of the PLO before -in Oslo- and Hamas now -in Beijing- recognizing the State of Israel, are serious. At the same time, the centrist variants held by some sectors on the left that propose a *bi-national state* or *two socialist states*, euphemisms that conceal an actual acceptance of the Israeli State, are utopian.

The only strategic solution to achieve a just and lasting peace is to abolish and dismantle the Zionist state and replace it with a single, democratic, secular and socialist Palestine in the framework of a federation of socialist republics of the Middle East, where all peoples, cultures and religions can coexist in peace.

To avoid confusion, when we say *dismantle*, *abolish* or *destroy*, we refer to the Zionist State and its institutions in the Leninist sense: the “*apparatus of government, separated from human society*”<sup>13</sup>. That is, to dismantle its armed forces, police, secret services and other super-structural institutions of colonialist oppression as a condition for any genuine national and social liberation in the region.



## WHAT ROLE DOES THE ISRAELI POPULATION PLAY?

An open debate among Marxist currents is whether the revolutionary process in the Middle East will depend on the level of consciousness and mobilization of the Palestinian and Arab masses or, in equal measure, of the Israeli population. Although there is always a certain combination, for material and ideological reasons the essential protagonism belongs to the Arab working class, youth and popular sectors.

### Some facts

- 75% of Israel's 9.7 million inhabitants are Jewish. Out of them, more than two thirds are immigrants or their children, mostly from Russia, Morocco and Ukraine, with a higher standard of living than they had in their country of origin.
- 10% of the total population are settlers living in occupied Palestinian territories. And 8% are Haredi -settlers or not- who are engaged in biblical study and live on state aid.
- 34% of the working class is in the public sector. And 18% of industrial employment is in the arms and security branch, in fact forbidden to Arab Israeli workers.
- Military service is the longest in the world: three years for men, two for women. It is the most militarized state on the planet: 4% of the adult Jewish population is in the army (180,000 members), the police (32,000), the civil guard (70,000) or the secret services Shabak (internal, 5,000) and Mossad (external, 7,000).

At the political level, the Zionist far right has been growing since 2009. At the end of 2022, Netanyahu, leader of the Likud party, allied to six extremist religious parties, won the elections. At the same time, liberal and reformist Zionism is retreating. According to a French journalist specialized in the Middle East, in 2022, 64% of the population already supported the segregation of Palestinians, another third “prefers to turn a blind eye and tacitly accepts the crimes that are uncovered,” and less than 5% is opposed<sup>14</sup>.

Matzpen (Hebrew for *compass*), an Israeli Marxist and anti-Zionist organization active between 1962 and 1983, analyzed imperialist influence: “Israel is a unique case in the Middle East; it is financed by imperialism without being economically exploited by it... The influx of resources had a decisive effect on the dynamics of Israeli society, for the Israeli working class shared, directly and indirectly, in this transfusion of capital... The Jewish worker in Israel does



*not get his share in cash, but he gets it in terms of new and relatively inexpensive housing, which could not have been constructed by raising capital locally; he gets it in industrial employment, which could not have been started or kept going without external subsidies; and he gets it in terms of a general standard of living which does not correspond to the output of that society.”*

This is why Matzpen concluded that “although class conflicts do exist in Israeli society, they are constrained by the fact that the society as a whole is subsidized from the outside. This privileged status is related to Israel’s role in the region, and as long as this role continues there

*is little prospect of the internal social conflicts acquiring a revolutionary character... as long as Zionism is politically and ideologically dominant within that society, and forms the accepted framework of politics, there is no chance whatsoever of the Israeli working class becoming a revolutionary class.”* It therefore proposed that the activity of the Israeli working class “must be subordinated to the general strategy of the struggle against Zionism”<sup>15</sup>.

Since existence always conditions consciousness, most Israeli workers and youth are Zionists because of a concrete material interest: their access to land and housing previously stolen from the Palestinians; and to education, jobs and a high standard of living sustained by U.S. subsidies. This explains why anti-Zionists are such a small minority in Israel, more so today, under the prevailing warmongering atmosphere. A break of progressive layers from Zionist ideology can only take place if a revolutionary rise resurfaces in the region, a new Arab spring that shakes the Israeli population from neighboring countries. The ISL is working for that perspective. 🌍

1. <https://news.un.org/es/story/2024/11/1534126>
2. UN peace force in Southern Lebanon since 1978, it currently has about 10.000 members.
3. Haaretz, 01/16/2023.
4. Region under rebel Houthis, a Chiite pro Palestine movement supported by Iran.
5. The United Arab Emirates proposes another option for Gaza: that it be administered by a multinational force.
6. Herzl, Theodore; *The Jewish State*.
7. Taken from the *Torah or Old Testament* (Samuel II, 23:3).
8. *The 14 Basic Laws of Israel*, CIE Center for Israel Education.
9. Zionist as it is, the Israeli court has ruled against the legal use of torture on Palestinian prisoners and in favour of granting electoral status to Arab parties that do not question the State of Israel. Netanyahu wants to annul this relative judicial independence.
10. Haaretz, 09/05/2024.
11. BBC News, 17/10/2023.
12. ¿Cómo ha extendido EEUU el apoyo militar a Israel, su mayor aliado en Oriente Medio?, Agencia Anadolu, 26/2/2024.
13. Lenin, V.I.; Conference at Sverdlov University, 07/11/1919. In marxists.org
14. Cypel, Sylvain; *La memoria selectiva de la sociedad israelí*, Nueva Sociedad N° 302, November-December 2022.
15. *The Class Character of Israeli Society*, in <https://matzpen.org/english/1972-02-10/the-class-character-of-israeli-society/>



# Yesterday OSLO, today BEIJING

BY PABLO VASCO



Last July 23, leaders of 14 Palestinian organizations -including Hamas, the PLO, and the PFLP<sup>1</sup>- signed a political agreement in Beijing. Representatives from Russia, Turkey, several Arab countries, and Hezbollah also participated. The signed declaration is a political capitulation by the Palestinian nationalist leaderships that had not until now recognized the State of Israel, such as Hamas, the PFLP, and Islamic Jihad.

Point 3.A notes the “conformity with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, in particular, Resolution 181 (partition of Palestine into two States; from 1947)...”<sup>2</sup> Thus, although some of these organizations fight the Israeli forces, they accept the framework that enabled the establishment of the Zionist State.

It is a new version of the Oslo Accords I (1993) and II (1995) under which, with U.S. leadership, the PLO recognized Israel. This historic betrayal weakened the PLO, whose place was occupied by Hamas, among the Palestinian vanguard and masses... now thrown into the same trap.

Recognizing the Zionist state implies crossing a line that the Palestinian armed organizations previously considered impassable. For example, although in its new founding charter of 2017 Hamas already accepted the borders of 1967, that is, two states, in point 18 it still maintained that “the UN Resolutions on the Partition of Palestine are considered null and void”<sup>3</sup>. Now, on the contrary, they backed down in exchange for nothing.

This resignation, combined with U.S. support for Israel, the deep crisis in Lebanon, the limitations of Hezbollah, and Iran’s almost inconsequential military response, encouraged Netanyahu to intensify his offensive.

## WITH THE RESISTANCE AND DIFFERENT POLITICS

As Palestinian writer Munir Shafik, a former Maoist turned Islamist, points out, “the first and most important negative aspect of the Beijing Declaration, supported by various Palestinian political actors, is that it places all factions of the resistance -mainly Hamas and Islamic Jihad- under the umbrella of demanding the implementation of international resolutions. These resolutions, starting with Resolution 181 of 1947, which divided Palestine into two states -Jewish and Arab- have been an injustice to the Palestinians and a gift to the Jewish settlers who illegally entered Palestine under the bayonets of British colonialism.

“The Palestinians are required internationally, and by China and Russia, to recognize and implement all international resolutions that, from the first to the last, are unjust to Palestinian rights in Palestine, while the Zionist entity is not required to recognize these resolutions or to implement any of them. The ‘legitimacy’ of its illegal existence was and is based on Resolution 181 of 1947... We are faced with a repetition of the mistake of the PLO factions when they made the same concession, without any compensation.”<sup>4</sup>

Since its incursion into Israel on September 7, 2023, Hamas has been relying on insufficient support from Hezbollah. In turn, Hezbollah has sought military backing from Iran -crucial because Iran is a state, a factor that was not present before. The ISL section in Lebanon has already pointed out how Israel exploited this restraint to counterattack<sup>5</sup>. Political capitulation is essentially like fighting with your hands tied. This has led to some discontent within the ranks of both organizations. For example, despite the missiles Iran launched in April in response to Israel, Palestinian polls themselves acknowledge that “most Palestinians saw this attack as a spectacle or a theat-



er play rather than as Iranian determination to support the Palestinians”.<sup>6</sup>

Against the Zionist aggressor, we stand in solidarity with all forms of Palestinian and Lebanese popular resistance and recognize the courage of their fighters. However, this does not mean giving political support to Hamas, Hezbollah, or, even less, to Iran. We maintain complete political independence and continue to criticize their actions, their mistaken capitalist and Islamist projects, and the capitulation represented by the Beijing Declaration.

## CHINA AND RUSSIA BENEFIT ISRAEL

While adopting different rhetoric from the U.S., both Russia and China maintain a permissive attitude toward the Israeli genocide in Palestine and Lebanon. In contrast to the progressive character that *campists* attribute to these powers, the facts expose their negative role in the Middle East and on the international stage.

Neither China nor Russia has joined South Africa’s complaint at The Hague Court against the Zionist State of Israel for genocide, nor have they severed ties with Israel or even withdrawn their ambassadors.

China, which in March 2023 managed to bring Saudi Arabia and Iran closer, and maintains strong trade relations with the United Arab Emirates, was now key to achieving the capitulation of the Palestinian factions to Israel via the Beijing Declaration.

China has significant investments in Israel, especially in infrastructure and technology, and has maintained them throughout the conflict. Is China willing to risk its business interests in Israel by aligning more closely with Tehran?

As Munir Shafik rightly asks, “*is China’s role limited only to the Palestinian side? What will China do with its economic, technical, and military agreements with the Zionist entity? Will we hear a balanced posi-*

*tion that demands at least some of what the Palestinians proposed in the Beijing Declaration? For example, that Israel recognize international resolutions, immediately stop its aggression, or China will take measures to limit its vast cooperation agreements with the Zionist entity?”*<sup>7</sup> The answer is obvious.

Russia’s actions are not much different. At a conference with students and professors at Moscow State University of International Relations (MGIMO) last September, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov explained: “*We have repeatedly stated that ensuring Israel’s security is one of the pillars of our stance on Middle Eastern affairs. But there are also Palestinian interests. In 1948, it was decided to create two states: a Jewish state and an Arab state. The Jewish state was created immediately. Our country was the first to recognize Israel. However, the Palestinian state was not created. In addition, the territory planned at that time for the future Palestinian state was significantly reduced in 1967...*”<sup>8</sup> Yet, we add, Russia allows Israel to continue its actions.

Not at all progressive. 🐞

1. The Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Fatah), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Palestinian Resistance Movement (Hamas), the Islamic Jihad Movement, the Palestinian People’s Party, the Palestinian People’s Struggle Front, the Palestinian National Initiative Movement, the General Command of the Popular Front, the Palestinian Democratic Union (IFAD), the Palestinian Liberation Front, the Arab Liberation Front, the Palestinian Arab Front, the Vanguard of the People’s Liberation War (Al-Saiqa).
2. *Full text of the agreement between the Palestinian movements*, Pressenza Agency, 7/26/2024.
3. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/hamas-2017-document-full>
4. *On the Beijing Declaration*, 7/29/2024. In arabi21.com
5. *From Lebanon, Ali Hammoud: the choice for the Palestinian people is critical*, 9/3/2024. In lis-isl.org
6. Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, *July 2024 Report*, June data, p. 6. In pcpsr.org
7. *On the Beijing Declaration*, 7/29/2024. In arabi21.com
8. 2/9/2024, in <https://mid.ru/es/maps/il/1967598/>



# LEBANON: “A FRAGILE TRUCE”

INTERVIEW BY PABLO VASCO



We interviewed Comrade Ali Hammoud, a member of the leadership of the ISL's Lebanese section, about the latest developments in the country and the region.



The Lebanese Youth in resistance and solidarity.

**What assistance does your organization provide to refugees in Beirut? How many activists have you organized during this campaign?**

After October 7, when the support front was launched from Lebanon, it became clear that the situation would escalate into a major war. We immediately began preparing for action: we organized relief courses, provided social assistance, and conducted first aid training for treating the wounded in collaboration with health organizations and the Red Cross.

Our work currently focuses on securing housing for the displaced, managing several centers to collect materials for guaranteeing relief and shelter, and providing essential daily life goods. This includes distributing food, water, heating appliances, hygiene products, and coordinating with various Lebanese and international health organizations. The General Union of Students is also working to ensure that displaced students continue to have access to education.

In addition to our presence in displacement centers across Lebanon—from Akkar and Habla to the Bekaa Valley, Mount Lebanon, Beirut, and Sidon—we are trying to produce resources from scratch, in response to the siege and blockade imposed on Lebanon. Regarding food, in

addition to the kitchens we are running, we are launching an agricultural project that is beginning to take shape. Regarding clothing, in addition to donations, we have started a sewing workshop where displaced people work, and we plan to expand this initiative to other regions where we are active. In healthcare, we have opened two clinics so far, one in Beirut and one in Mount Lebanon, and we aim to expand to other regions. Science students are also working on a power generation project. All of this is being done alongside efforts to promote movements based on a culture of popular resistance.

The comrades involved in these relief efforts are organized into two main groups: the first group, “For the People”, and the second group, the Student Union. The comrades in the “For the People” group are working in several areas of the Metn, east of Beirut, with a total of 40 volunteers and eight coordinators. The comrades in the Students’ Union are active in three areas: Choueifat, Beirut, and Tripoli, with approximately 100 volunteers and 30 coordinators.

**What is the situation in the struggle against Israeli forces?**

The enemy continues its war against the Lebanese people, which has escalated dramatically from September

17 to today. The number of martyrs has reached about 3,200, with dozens still missing. Over 15,000 have been injured, and 55 attacks on hospitals have been recorded, including 36 direct attacks that caused full cessation of activities in eight hospitals and partial cessation in seven others. There have been 201 attacks on emergency services, and around 40,000 homes have been destroyed in Beirut, the south, and the Bekaa Valley.

The ground operation launched by the enemy on the southern border is still stalled in the villages at the front. The enemy has only managed to advance between one and three kilometers and has occupied and mined 37 border villages, almost completely destroying them. However, it has not been able to advance any further. The course of the military operation suggests a state of stagnation, in large part due to the firm resistance presented by Hezbollah's combatants, who have absorbed the heavy attacks and are now raising the level of their combat forces, both defensively and offensively, using precision missiles and drones.

In conclusion, the war continues. Israel is blocking all air aid to Lebanon, but the enemy's air force alone cannot determine the outcome of war. The ground fighting, which is taking place and will continue along the border, will ultimately determine who wins and who is defeated.

### **What do you think of the Beijing Declaration, in which Hamas and other Palestinian organizations accept UN Resolution 181 and therefore Israel?**

The Beijing Declaration was primarily an agreement between Hamas and Fatah. A total of 14 Palestinian factions attended the conference, marking the 13th agreement between the two sides. There have been 12 previous agreements, none of which have been implemented. This initiative was a Chinese attempt to assert its new diplomatic role in the region by facilitating reconciliation between the factions to end the division and unify the Palestinian position in negotiations for a ceasefire, in the genocidal war being waged by the enemy.

At this critical stage in the history of the Palestinian cause, with the threat of displacing the people of Gaza to Sinai and the enemy's intention to control the West Bank, we recognize the importance of ending the Palestinian division. The need to confront the Zionist project is urgent, and from this perspective, we support every effort -whether internal or international- that seeks to end the division. However, the essence of the dispute between the two movements remains unchanged, particularly regarding their different political programs and the conditions under which Hamas could join the PLO and the planned national unity government that would administer Gaza after the war.

As for Hamas' recognition of the enemy entity, this remains an ambiguous issue. Hamas is made up of several factions, each with its own regional support and political orientation. The faction supported by Qatar and Turkey tends to be less radical than the military and security wing, which is backed by Iran. Hamas often issues contradictory statements; the most recent of these was in 2023 when its leader, Mustafa Abu Marzouk, told *Al-Monitor* that the organization was ready to join the PLO and would respect its commitments. He quickly retracted this statement and affirmed that Hamas does not recognize the occupation.

We can see this contradiction reflected in the terms of the Beijing Agreement, where there is emphasis on achieving Palestinian national unity, including "*all forces within the framework of the PLO*", and the commitment to establishing an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital "*in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions*". Yet, they also reaffirm the right of the Palestinian people to resist and end the occupation.

Our position is clear: Palestine, from the river to the sea, belongs to the Palestinian people. However, at this critical moment in the conflict, in light of Hamas' consistently ambiguous stance, stopping the aggression has the highest priority. As we have stated, the leadership of the resistance expected a strong response from the Iranian government, but what they got is betrayal. The supposed "unity of the camps" turned out to be a lie in the face of Israel's attack. This is why the Palestinian position was weakened, and the Zionist offensive in Lebanon was then added. We are now focused on seeking agreements to halt the ongoing massacre and confront the project to displace the people of Gaza.

### **What do you think about foreign intervention in Lebanon?**

To begin with, it must be made clear that the key actors in Lebanon and the broader region are the United States, Israel, and Iran. Following them is Russia, which wields significant influence in Syria, and China, which has begun consolidating its presence after sponsoring the Saudi-Iranian reconciliation. As for the role of France, their influence is limited, and all their conferences or initiatives are incomplete attempts to restore a presence and influence that has largely faded.

On October 24, France organized an international conference aimed at supporting ceasefire efforts in Lebanon, providing financial support to the Lebanese army, reaffirming Resolution 1701, and electing a new president for the republic. The French envoy, Jean-Yves Le Drian, spent much of last year trying to persuade the Lebanese to elect a president and revive consti-



tutional life in the country, but to no avail. No local political force has been willing to make concessions to the French, whose influence is ineffective and unable to compel an agreement. Similarly, the United States attempted to implement a plan for international interference, but this too was rejected by Lebanon, until the recent agreement was signed for a two-month period.

### **What is your assessment of the ceasefire?**

We are currently facing a fragile truce, with a high risk of renewed fighting. The enemy is establishing checkpoints in the occupied border villages, and clashes are taking place with civilians who are returning to their homes. For instance, in one of the occupied villages, six civilians were killed, and four others were arrested.

Not all wars end with a clear victory, but most end with a shift in the balance of power, with one side gaining ground at the expense of the other. In this round, we see that the enemy was able to improve and strengthen its positions. It succeeded in separating the Lebanese front from the Palestinian front, which is the only place where the slogan of “unity of the camps” was genuinely real, unlike Iran’s hypocrisy. The enemy also managed to push Hezbollah’s military forces behind the Litani River, but it failed to achieve its primary objective: the occupation of all villages south of the Litani River and the destruction of military installations there.

### **How can the struggles of the Arab peoples help defeat the Zionist state?**

This is one of the most difficult questions facing our Arab societies, and the answer will take time to develop. I will attempt to present our vision as concisely as possible.

First, we must emphasize that the proposal to liberate Palestine is a *strategic* proposal, not a *direct, short-term goal*. It is our duty to explain to the masses, unequivocally and without deception, that it is a *strategic* position, especially while it is presented as a direct and immediate tactical position by the political parties of Islam, creating false expectations among the masses about the nature and scale of the conflict, leading to a further decline in their resolve.

The dangers of presenting the liberation of Palestine as a *tactical* slogan are evident in the sense of despair it can foster among the Arab masses in general and the Palestinians in particular, when their aspirations face another setback in the battle against Zionist colonialism.

For us, the central issue is not the establishment of a Palestinian state, but the elimination of Israel -this occupational colonial settler entity that seeks to eradicate

one people and replace it with another. Israel was implanted by imperialism in the heart of the Arab world, tearing the region apart and preventing its unity and the building of socialism.

Eliminating the Zionist entity means achieving the complete liberation of Palestine and establishing a Palestinian state where all residents of the occupied territory can live. This would guarantee the right of return for Palestinian refugees and uphold the rights of all religions and ethnicities.

The Zionist state functions as an advanced base for imperialism, safeguarding its interests in the region. Our position on the liberation of Palestine is intrinsically tied to the broader struggle for Arab liberation. Achieving clear victories in the international struggle against imperialism will contribute to shifting the balance of global power, ultimately weakening the West’s military, economic, and security support for Israel.

As Lenin noted, based on Clausewitz, “*war is a test of all a nation’s power, including its economic, organizational, and military powers; just as the power of the fist depends on the health and vitality of the political body and of society as a whole*”<sup>1</sup>. The key element in confronting the occupying entity is addressing the issue of Arab backwardness and fragmentation. What we mean by “backwardness” is the feudal colonialism and capitalism that have fragmented and divided Arab societies.

After Egypt abandoned the struggle against our enemy and signed a peace agreement -particularly given its military, economic, and popular significance- it became extremely difficult to defeat it in a conventional war. The 1982 war stands as a clear example of this. The Syrian army and Lebanese forces were defeated, and the enemy was only pushed back on the borders of Beirut. Thus, history has taught us harsh lessons in how to confront them. The struggle must take on various forms, with the most important being to besiege the Zionist entity through the countries of the Arab region and inside Palestine itself. This requires the mobilization of armed popular groups and resistance forces that pursue national liberation projects, continually exhausting the enemy and surrounding it, isolating it from the region. Additionally, reintegrating Egypt and Jordan into the conflict is crucial.

As I have outlined, the liberation of Palestine is tied to significant regional and global changes. Our role as communists has always been, and will continue to be, to support Palestine and its people. Here in Lebanon, we will remain steadfast: we are combatants against Zionism.. 🌟

1. Quoted by the Syrian Marxist Yassin Al-Hafiz, in his book *The Defeat and the Defeated Ideology*.

# LEBANON: past and present of a COMBATIVE PEOPLE

BY VIKI CALDERA



**The Republic of Lebanon made headlines once again, this time because of Israel's attack, previously due to the explosion in the port of Beirut. But what do we know about the moving history of this country?**

Its surface area is small but its richness, history and beauty are incomparable. With a population of seven million inhabitants, of which almost 10% are Palestinian refugees, it survives the looting and siege that characterize its reality. Just like the Lebanese cedar that sinks its roots into the porous rocks, surviving in the most adverse conditions, its people resist. Here we present a brief review of its history and its present.

## **WITNESS TO THE FIRST STEPS OF HUMANITY**

The historical wealth that Lebanon houses is difficult to summarize. Suffice it to say that the first human records found there date back 45 thousand years. The strategic location of this ter-

ritory that connects three continents - Europe, Asia and Africa - makes it a privileged witness to the development of humanity. Lebanon is the cradle of the Phoenician civilization and a pioneer in agriculture, shepherding and writing.

Cities such as Beirut, Tyre, Byblos and Sidon were founded in the third millennium BC and are home to an invaluable historical heritage. The people of these cities and those of present-day Syria will be called by the ancient Greeks Phoenicians, derived from foinix, because of the purple dye they traded.

From the founding of these cities around 2500 BC until 332 BC, disputes and colonizations took place: Egyptians, Hittites, Arameans and Babylonians occupied the region at different times until Alexander the Great took Tyre and advanced in the area. That is, before Christ the Roman Empire already occupied Lebanon. In 312 AD, Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity and from there the presence of that religion in Lebanon began.



Then, in 638 AD, the Muslims assumed power throughout the region and fierce fights took place between different dynasties until the year 1516, when Greater Syria - which includes Palestine and Lebanon - was conquered by the Ottoman Turks, who dominated for more than 400 years.

## **CAPITALISM BROUGHT MORE HARDSHIPS**

In the 19th century, a strong nationalist movement grew in Lebanon fighting to free itself from the Ottoman Empire. The European imperialist powers take advantage of this independence energy to make these peoples fight in the First World War united to their interests with the promise of later creating an independent Arab State, which never happened. On the contrary, when the colonialist powers won, they took the place of the Ottoman Empire. In 1916, Great Britain and France signed the Sykes-Picot agreement, which established how they would divide the Middle East if they triumphed over the Ottomans. The promises made to the Arabs to fight alongside them were left out of the negotiation. Thus, at the end of the First World War, the Arabs elected a National Congress in order to establish the principle of sovereignty in the region, but its fate had already been resolved by others: France and Great Britain claimed the mandates from the League of Nations. which they had secretly agreed upon in 1916 and finally in 1920 the French mandate over Lebanon and Syria, and the British mandate over Iraq and Palestine, were established. The fictitious borders imposed by this agreement on the Arab peoples gave rise to many of the conflicts and sufferings in the region.

## **FRENCH MANDATE, WAR AND INDEPENDENCE**

As established in Article 22 of the Treaty of Versailles, the mandates were territories that had belonged to the losing powers (Germany and the Ottoman Empire) and were now administered by the victors (Great Britain and France). There were three types: a) those that, due to their level of development, were considered to be able to quickly obtain their independence, b) those that did not have much development and presented internal conflicts, and c) territories very far from Europe.

Lebanon was considered a type (a) mandate, but its independence, which France had promised it in 1936, did not come until after World War II.

In 1941, after France fell to Germany, Britain occupied Lebanon and Syria, in the so-called Operation Exporter. In 1943 Lebanon declared its independence, the French rejected it and imprisoned the president and members of the cabinet. But his power was greatly weakened and he had to accept it. In 1946 the last French troops withdrew from the country.

## **A UNIQUE POLITICAL REGIME**

Independence is declared by making a compromise - called a national pact - between Christians and Muslims: Christians accept that Lebanon is an Arab country, while Muslims renounce their pretensions of unification with Syria. A single form of government is established: a confessionalist parliamentary republic. That is, the parliament elects a Maronite Christian president, a Sunni Muslim prime minister and the speaker of parliament must be Shiite. This is based on the 1932 census, where the majority of the population was Maronite. More than 90 years later, the proportion has changed and Muslims make up 60%, but governments refuse to take new censuses. In turn, since 1989 the composition of the parliament is also established according to religious affiliation: the 128 seats are divided equally between the Christian and Muslim factions, 64 for each.

## **THE CIVIL WAR**

The religious balance imposed by the national pact began to crack. The Lebanese government responded to the Christian elites and Western imperialism, while the working population, with a strong presence of Palestinian refugees who arrived with the exodus of 1948 and 1967, identified more with pan-Arabism and the left. In 1975 armed clashes spread throughout the country between nationalist, right-wing, Christian and pro-Western organizations on the one hand, and leftist and Palestinian organizations on the other. The government requested the intervention of the Arab League, whose force was formed mostly by Syrian soldiers, who fought the leftist organizations.



Between 1978 and 1982, Israel, in alliance with the Christians, attacked the leftist and Palestinian organizations. It caused chaos in Lebanon with car bombs that killed hundreds of civilians. According to Israeli journalist Ronen Bergman, the main objective was “to pressure the PLO to use terrorism as a justification for an invasion of Lebanon”.<sup>1</sup>

Israel finally occupies Lebanon. In 1982 Hezbollah -Party of God- was founded in the heat of the resistance to the Israeli invasion, and it became a prestigious organization in the confrontation with imperialism in the face of the defection of the traditional leaderships such as the PLO.

Peace was signed in 1990. But the Syrian occupation in the north and east of Lebanon lasted until 2005 and the Israeli occupation in the south until 2000. In the 15 years of civil war, 250,000 people died, one million were wounded and another million left the country.

## THE “RECONSTRUCTION”

The imperialist powers, using as an excuse the devastation caused by the civil war, forced Lebanon, with the complicity of the local governments, to take unpayable loans that implied further domination and control of the country but no improvement for the masses. If in 2007 the Lebanese foreign debt represented 180% of its GDP, today that figure rises to 320%. The capitalist “reconstruction” included a systematic attack on the trade unions. For this reason, not having their own organizations, in the processes of struggle and subsequent insurrections the workers participated independently.

The US weakening in the Middle East caused by the 2008 world economic crisis and its military failures in Iraq and Afghanistan, allowed Iran - a partner of Russia and China - to increase its influence in the whole area and especially in Lebanon through its ally Hezbollah.

## THE ARAB SPRING

The revolts that started in Tunisia in 2011 and spread throughout the Maghreb were also echoed in Lebanon. Although the protests were not as intense as in other Arab countries, with the youth at the forefront there were demonstrations claiming against sectarian political rule, corruption and the economic crisis. In 2012 the Syrian civil war impacted the country fully, causing clashes that lasted until 2017. Between 2009 and 2018 there were no elections in Lebanon and the parliament extended mandates several times. In the 2018 elections Hezbollah triumphed and achieved a parliamentary majority.

## FROM THE ASHES THE REVOLUTION IS REBORN

The living conditions of the Lebanese masses are worsening and inequality is growing at an alarming rate: while the majority of the population lives in poverty and misery, the banks and the private sector linked to the ruling parties are getting scandalously rich. The foreign debt takes all the country’s resources and savage austerity plans are imposed, including unpayable taxes and banking restrictions on the population.

In this context, the government applies a tax on WhatsApp and the anger unleashes a pow-



erful rebellion. For the first time in decades, religious differences imposed from above are overcome and the demands are against all the sectors that have governed in the last 30 years. The demands are democratic, to put an end to the confessional regime and to be able to choose freely, and also economic: it is demanded to stop paying the debt and to allocate those funds to urgent social needs. The rebellion succeeded in ousting Prime Minister Saad Hariri in October 2019.

## THE EXPLOSION OF CORRUPTION AND NEGLECT

On August 4, a violent explosion in the port of Beirut devastated half of the capital, leaving hundreds dead, thousands injured and more than 300,000 people homeless. It was a severe humanitarian crisis. While the population turned out en masse to extinguish the fires, clear the rubble and help the wounded, the government demonstrated its uselessness in the face of the catastrophe and also proved to be responsible for it, since it had ignored repeated warnings about the danger of storing 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate in the port.

Once again, the indignation overflowed and once again all the demands of a very deep and unresolved economic and political crisis were massively expressed in the streets. The mobilizations were brutally repressed but did not diminish and ended with the sacking of Prime Minister Hassan Diab in August 2020. The new Prime Minister was appointed only 13 months later, in September 2021: Najib Mikati, Lebanon's richest businessman, whose main government objective was to obtain a financial rescue package from the IMF.<sup>2</sup>

## NEW ELECTION, WEAKER REGIME

In the midst of a serious economic crisis, with inflation over 150%, a 500% increase in transportation and a devaluation of the Lebanese pound of almost 100%, in May 2022 elections were held. On the one hand, the alliance between the financial and religious system and Hezbollah, which in the districts it controls is allied with the most corrupt elements of power, was confirmed. On the other hand, it became known that the "opponents" received money from the local banking mafia and the US administration. Even weak, the regime managed to hold on.

But abstention reached almost 60%, as an

expression of the anger and also of the concrete difficulties of the population: to go to vote they had to travel to their place of origin, the ticket is very expensive and also the banks had put restrictions on withdrawing money. And as another salient fact, the candidacies of civil society, which in 2018 had only won one seat, this time conquered 13. According to our Lebanese militants, this reflected the great rejection of the traditional parties, also the willingness of workers and young people to participate politically, and that it is possible to break the old regime of power.<sup>3</sup>

None of the parties of the sectarian system achieved a majority and therefore all parliamentary agreements are weak. Always at the service of the powerful and foreigners to the detriment of the Lebanese people, they even make huge concessions to Zionism. Although confirmed by numerous studies, the president, the government and the parliament refused to recognize as their own Line 29 -the last point of the Lebanese sea border- with gas and oil wealth, in an unprecedented cession of sovereignty to Israel.

## MILITANCY IN THE MIDST OF THE NEW CHAOS

The Palestinian genocide and the brutal siege of Lebanon by the fascist Netanyahu open a new chapter in the history of this combative people. The crisis sharpens the internal political friction between the Maronite and Sunni right wing against Shiite sectors. And in the south of the country there is a critical situation, with a fragile truce that includes the return of the displaced population and Israeli controls.

Among the young voices for change that were raised in 2019 and 2020 are those of activists who today, from the Lebanese section of the ISL and as part of the popular resistance, help assist refugees in the midst of the humanitarian disaster. Once again, like the cedar in the mountains, even in the most adverse conditions this people is reborn. The strategic task there is to organize into a political force that unites and directs the demands of all the exploited and oppressed sectors towards the revolutionary triumph in Lebanon and the entire Middle East. 🇱🇧

1. Bergman, Ronen; Rise and Kill First: The Secret History of Israel's Targeted Assassinations.

2. <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-internacional-585>

3. <https://lis-isl.org/2022/05/18/libano-un-equilibrio-de-po-der-cambiante/>

# IRAN: From a WORKERS' AND PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION to the Dominance of ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM

BY VERÓNICA O'KELLY



By the end of 1978, the world witnessed an unprecedented revolution. According to Western imperialism, it was an “Islamic” revolution. However, history revealed that it was a true revolution with its own unique characteristics. Iran was experiencing a powerful rise in its working class and youth. In an interview in Brazil about the Iranian revolution, Nahuel Moreno described it as “one of the greatest revolutionary processes,” even with certain features similar to the Russian Revolution.<sup>1</sup>

Forty-five years after these events, Iran is a country ruled by Islamic fundamentalism. The oppressive Sharia law, a religious system that, alongside the Koran, dictates every aspect of Muslim society, governs. To fully understand this transformative process, it is crucial to grasp the history of the Iranian

people, whose DNA is deeply marked by anti-imperialism and the struggle for survival and freedom.

## CENTURIES OF CIVILIZATION

Understanding the nationalism and anti-imperialism inherent in Islamic tradition requires knowledge of its roots. The Islamic world played a fundamental role in the development of humanity. As their society grew, they expanded trade throughout the Middle East and the Mediterranean, connecting different regions and uniting various traditions that left a cultural imprint over the centuries. It is in the Persian and Arab world that the first urban settlements emerged.

Due to the scarcity of fertile land, disputes over these areas were fierce. Those in inferior positions were often driven out into the desert, leading to the

development of the Bedouins — nomadic warriors who attacked tribes, villages, and trade caravans in search of food and resources. Over time, Bedouins formed alliances with the Arab bourgeoisie, who gained power through trade. This alliance enabled the Arab bourgeoisie to expand its markets, dominating territories from southern Spain to North Africa, and even reaching the Indus River.

To facilitate trade, the Islamic world cultivated a culture of tolerance and coexistence with non-Muslim populations. It was more profitable to integrate these groups as clients or partners than to engage in war. For centuries, even under Muslim rule, Jews and Christians lived alongside Muslims in an integrated society. The example of Palestine clearly illustrates this, as well as how Zionism ultimately destroyed that tradition.

Then, from the West, European commercial sectors initiated the Crusades. Under the cross and the sword, they spread terror across the Mediterranean, in an attempt to control the markets dominated by the Arab bourgeoisie. While European imperialism failed to achieve its objective of total domination, it succeeded in making significant conquests that left a lasting scar on the Arab world. Islam lost control over the Mediterranean and had to retreat back into the desert in search of new markets.

First the European and later the United States imperialism sought to influence the Islamic world to dominate the Arab territory. In Iran, they supported Shah Pahlavi, who promised to “westernize” the country and remain loyal to their interests. However, neither the Shah nor imperialism foresaw the latent anti-imperialist sentiment among the Iranian people. As later events proved, Islamic independence and class struggle movements gained strength beyond imperialism’s expectations.

## THE GROWING STORM

Shah Pahlavi was the successor to Reza Khan, who in 1925 seized power through a military coup, establishing a dictatorship and forcing Parliament to appoint him as Shah. In 1941, he abdicated in favor of his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the new Shah who would later suffer, firsthand, the full force of the Iranian people’s Islamic fury.

The new Shah presented himself to the world as a representative of *modernity*, amidst the backdrop of backward and militaristic Arab regimes. But in 1979, the true face of the monarchy, which the Iranian people had long confronted and denounced,



was revealed: an aristocratic regime based on savage repression, with the brutal tortures carried out by the Savak<sup>2</sup>.

Shah Pahlavi was a puppet of the United States imperialism. While oil production boomed, the Iranian people languished in poverty with low wages and appalling working conditions. In the 1950s, Iran faced a social turmoil, and could fall into the Soviet orbit, risking the flow of oil to the West. As anti-communist paranoia grew in the United States, Iran became a key target for CIA and all imperialism.

The Shah’s repressive policies and the Savak intensified, and even the cosmetic reforms of the White Revolution<sup>3</sup> only exacerbated the repression and deepened public dissatisfaction. In 1962, the Shah banned women from wearing veils in municipal and provincial councils while removing the requirement for members of the Majlis<sup>4</sup> to be believers in the Koran. These reforms, among others, gave the Shah an image of being “an enemy of Islam.”

The devotees in Qom, a city sacred to Shia Muslims, decided to confront the Shah. They called for a general strike, which was met with brutal repression. During this period, an imam named Ruhollah Khomeini emerged, who would later play a pivotal role in Iranian history. Khomeini was imprisoned and eventually deported. While the insurrection was initially defeated, it marked the beginning of the great storm.

In the 1960s, Iran’s economy grew significantly thanks to its oil exports. In September of 1960, Iran, along with Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, and Venezuela—then the world’s leading oil producers—founded the OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries). The aim was to counter the dominance of imperialist oil companies like Standard Oil, Royal Dutch Shell, Mobil, Gulf Oil, British Petroleum, and Standard Oil of California.

However, the immense wealth generated by oil did not benefit the Iranian working class. Instead, it



was concentrated in the hands of a small elite that worked in tandem with the foreign oil multinationals, and the Pahlavi monarchy, which flaunted its opulence through extravagant parties and lavish displays with royalty and international celebrities.

Meanwhile, the Mujahideen<sup>5</sup> increasingly resorted to bombing and armed resistance against the dictatorial regime. By the late 1970s, strikes and mass mobilizations were on the rise as the working class found living conditions unbearable.

## THE WORKERS' AND PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION BREAKS OUT

Between 1976 and 1977, the rise in mobilizations and strikes was significant. In 1978, an oil workers' strike paralyzed the country for 33 days, causing millions in losses to imperialism. On September 8, the Shah's army massacred thousands of protesters in Tehran, which further ignited public anger and triggered another general strike, this time involving all workers across the country's refineries.

In the absence of a revolutionary leadership, the mullahs<sup>6</sup> became the central figures for both rural and urban populations, many of whom were largely illiterate. Meanwhile, Khomeini, from exile, was agitating the masses against the tyranny of the despised Shah.

The full force of the Iranian working class surged forward, leading a revolution that challenged all forms of exploitation and oppression. From this process emerged workers' councils, or *shoras*, a unique form of self-organization that had never been seen before in the Arab world. These councils were primarily created in factories as decision-making bodies and mobilization tools for the industrial proletariat.

The movement was joined by the Mujahideen, a leftist populist militia, as well as the Shiite<sup>7</sup> clergy, which had strong ties to the bourgeoisie of the bazaar — both groups had been marginalized by the Shah's regime. Khomeini, now an Ayatollah<sup>8</sup>, became the figurehead for these classes.

On February 1, 1979, Khomeini returned from exile and assumed power. He appointed Mehdi Bazargan as prime minister and called for "order" and a return to work. Despite his anti-imperialist stance, Khomeini was a defender of the capitalist system. His main goal was to restore order and ensure that the bourgeoisie could maintain control of their businesses.

However, the Iranian working class continued to resist and organized *shoras* coordinators all over

the country. Unfortunately, without a revolutionary leadership capable of guiding this social force in an anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, and socialist direction, the counter-revolution rapidly began to take shape.

## COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY RESPONSE

Three key events marked the forceful counter-revolutionary offensive:

1. In December 1979, the Soviet bureaucracy invaded Afghanistan to contain the mobilization of Islamic peoples within the USSR's borders.
2. Iraq, with the support of the Soviet Union, the United States, and oil companies, militarily attacked Iran, initiating the Iraq-Iran War.
3. The Zionist State of Israel invaded Lebanon, weakening the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) significantly.

Khomeini, cornered, launched an offensive against the *shoras*, the Mujahideen, and oppressed nationalities — in other words, against the revolution's vanguard. By 1981, Khomeini succeeded in defeating the revolution. This was a brutal struggle, marked by the repression of the Iranian left and the oil workers whose class consciousness was unacceptable to the mullahs.

The Tudeh, the communist party that had supported Khomeini against the Shah, was persecuted and banned in 1983. This same fate befell all opposition groups. Once in power, Khomeini carried out a brutal repressive campaign against the working class and university students, dismissing over 60,000 teachers and state workers, while imprisoning and executing thousands of opposition activists.

This marked the beginning of a new stage of bourgeois rule in the country under the banner of Islamic fundamentalism, with its backward, oppressive Sharia law, deals with imperialism, and the perpetuation of capitalism. The defeat of the Iranian revolution and the consolidation of the Islamic fundamentalist theocratic government were the result of class struggle, beyond any religious or cultural factors.

## THE IRAN OF THE MULLAHS

Khomeini, as the supreme religious leader, consolidated his power and established a dictatorial re-

gime where the legislative, executive, and judicial branches were subordinate to the Ayatollahs. However, internal conflicts persisted, and political crises continued to emerge. Tensions between conservative and reformist sectors are ongoing. Moreover, social and democratic struggles led by the working class, women, and the youth have continued:

- In 1998 and 1999, university students led massive marches against the regime's authoritarianism.
- In 2010, the so-called Green Movement demanded electoral transparency, with large mobilizations.
- In 2011, the streets of the country were again filled with thousands and thousands of demonstrators protesting against the repressive regime.
- Between 2017 and 2020, social struggles and workers' strikes intensified due to the increase in fuel costs and other prices.
- In 2022, the death of Mahsa Amini, a young Kurdish woman arrested by the "morality police" for not wearing the hijab in public and died, sparking strong protests.

All these social struggles were met with brutal repression. While it is important to recognize the contradictions between the Iranian regime and both the United States and Israel, this in no way justifies the internal repression, as some campist currents attempt to do. Nor can the regime's political manipulation of the Palestinian cause be excused.

## IRAN TODAY

Oil exports are Iran's primary source of income. In 2023, it was the seventh-largest oil producer globally, accounting for 5% of the world production that year[9]. Despite the sanctions restricting its oil trade, Iran continues to sell millions of barrels on the global market, with China being a key buyer.

Nevertheless, Iran's economy remains heavily dependent on the world market, particularly in sectors such as food production, where its domestic industry is insufficient. The Iranian rial, its national currency, is highly devalued (with \$1 equaling 42,000 rials), and inflation hovers around 55% annually. According to World Bank data, in 2023, Iran's GDP per capita was \$4,500, compared to \$81,695 in the United States and \$52,261 in Israel.

Relations between successive Iranian govern-



ments and U.S. imperialism have remained tense. Khomeini's successor, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, continues to oppose Zionism and the U.S. There was a brief period during the Obama administration when relations appeared to be normalizing. Both sides signed agreements against the nuclear arms race in exchange for easing sanctions that suffocate the Iranian economy, especially the sale of oil, the main exports product.

However, this brief honeymoon phase ended with the first Trump administration, which re-imposed sanctions and revived the "war on terrorism"<sup>10</sup> rhetoric. In the 2024 U.S. election campaign, Kamala Harris referred to Iran as a "destabilizing and dangerous force," calling it "the greatest adversary" of the United States.

The reactionary and undemocratic regime of the mullahs operates under near-total control by the Guardian Council<sup>11</sup>. This, combined with the ongoing economic crisis and a declining standard of living, has generated significant social unrest and protests.

In the July 2024 presidential elections, only six out of 80 candidates were approved. The first round saw a low turnout of 40%, the lowest since 1979. In the second round, turnout rose to 49%, with the reformist Masoud Pezeshkian defeating conservative Said Yalili. Pezeshkian, the new president, has promised to end Iran's international isolation by renewing agreements on nuclear weapons in exchange for the lifting of sanctions. He has also criticized the morality police, proposed relaxing hijab enforcement, and called for the decriminalization of some drugs. However, he still identifies himself as *principled*, meaning he is committed to the core principles of the Islamic Republic, and seeks reforms based on those principles.

# Islamic Fundamentalism

In the Middle East, Islamic fundamentalism has been driven by US imperialism and Zionism. In the 1980s, the U.S. CIA and the Israeli Mossad financed the creation of Hamas and Hezbollah to weaken the influence of the secular nationalist leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

The CIA was also involved in Afghanistan before, in 1978. Once the reactionary Daud regime was overthrown, in the process called the Saur revolution, imperialism mounted Operation Cyclone to finance the counter-revolutionary mercenary mujahideen: the jihadists<sup>12</sup>.

The Afghan Taliban were also financed by imperialism, in this case Unocal, an American company that wanted to keep the Afghan oil and gas exploitation. In 1996 they took over Kabul and expanded, adding the Mujahideen to the Taliban army. The agreements did not last and tensions grew. On September 11, 2001, the attack on the Twin Towers occurred and, in response, the

United States invaded Afghanistan and declared war on Islamic fundamentalism.

This current has previous roots. The Muslim Brotherhood, which emerged in Egypt in 1952, is the wing that has spread the most. When Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956, the US sounded the alarm and the CIA helped train these religious fanatics to use them against nationalist and independent movements. After World War II, Islamic fundamentalism became increasingly reactionary. Unlike other sectors that propose to coexist with the non-Islamic world, Islamic fundamentalists display a violent character and strong neo-fascist tendencies.

Iran leads the so-called "Axis of Resistance"<sup>13</sup> an informal alliance of Islamic countries and armed groups, including Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas, the Houthis in Yemen, and Shiite militias in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The Iranian government provides financial, military, and technological support to these groups.

Regarding conflict with Israel, which has carried out assassinations in Tehran and attacked Iranian military facilities, Persian military responses have, for the time being, been measured and often preceded by advance notice. More than a year after the genocide in Gaza and then attacks in Lebanon, Iran's support for the Palestinian cause has been more rhetorical than action-oriented, as its primary focus remains its nuclear program and its own interests.

We continue to support the struggles of the Iranian working class, which has a long history of resistance, as well as the democratic demands of women, students, and other popular sectors. On this path, we advocate for the construction of a socialist and revolutionary leadership in Iran.

## SOME KEY DATA:

- Population: 87 million
- Language: Persian (Farsi)
- Economy: Agriculture and oil
- Religion: Shia Islam
- Unemployment rate: 9.1%
- Nuclear development: Yes 

1. Interview published by Cadernos Socialistas, a magazine of Marxist theory published in Brazil, in a special dossier on the Iranian revolution.
2. The Shah's secret police, created with the support of the CIA. They practiced terror by persecuting, torturing and murdering opponents of the regime.
3. Superficial reforms in order to modernize the country. They led to an enormous growth of the repressive apparatus of the state and reduced the social and political weight of the traditional bazaar bourgeoisie.
4. Members of Parliament.
5. In Islam, Mujahedin is the one who dedicates his life to military combat. In Iran, the Mujahideen were a left-wing petty-bourgeois guerrilla group that fought the Shah.
6. Shiite clergy, linked to the bourgeoisie of the bazaar.
7. Muslim religious side that considers Ali as the legitimate successor of Muhammad.
8. The greatest Shiite religious leader.
9. Data from the Brazilian Institute of Oil and Gas.
10. This is what the US called the military response initiated by Bush after the attack on the Twin Towers.
11. It consists of six clerics and six jurists, all appointed by the Ayatollah directly or indirectly. Among its functions, the Council authorizes electoral candidacies and endorses the president.
12. In Islam, jihad means a religious obligation. Jihadism transformed it into a military obligation.
13. The name was defined in response to Bush, who in 2002 called the group of Iran, Iraq and North Korea the "Axis of Evil." The goal of the "Axis of Resistance" is to fight Zionism.



# Interview of ZHALEH SAHAND, independent IRANIAN Trotskyist

We interviewed Zhaleh Sahand, an independent Iranian Trotskyist, about the situation in the region, the relationship between Iran and the Palestinian cause and a possible solution for the Middle East.

**What is your view on the new genocide that Israel commits?**

The Israel's occupation of Palestine and its genocidal war against the Palestinian people, began 75 years ago. Any entity that attempts to single out the attack that was carried out by Hamas on the October 7, 2023, or portrays it as an isolated terrorist attack, coming out of the blue or perceive it as an offensive move, and not in the line of defense in the Hamas war approach to Israel will inevitably leap to the wrong conclusion, platforming a broader spectrum of the apologists who wish to turn a blind eye on 75 years of continuous bloodshed by Israel against the Palestinian people, whom under the Article 51 of the UN Charter, are entitled to defend themselves in the occupied territory; in their own land.

No matter what professor Geir Ulfstein<sup>1</sup> has legally expanded in his piece about a non-state actor to be (Hamas) *"Israel does not have the right to use force on territory on which the Palestinian people is entitled to exercise its right of self-determination"* whether Palestine to be presented by PLO or a territorial power as Hamas, Israel still remains an occupier in Palestine and all the rules surrounding the Article 51, therefore applies.

The illegal and murderous state of Israel has already massacred more than 75% of Gazans, and the right to self-defense by any means necessary, is a just entitlement that Palestinians have- and that does not mean that the Hamas right to its self-defense or operating an offensive attack against Israel in the occupied Palestine, can take our right to unconditionally criticizing its bourgeois program away from us; its economic and political backwardness, transductions, resolutions, and its democratic limitations.

Our flagship organization in the Palestinian movement, is the BDS, that many Iranian activists and I, unconditionally support and follow.

**How do you evaluate Iran's role in the struggle of the Palestinian people?**

Many in the Iranian revolutionary socialist movement, and I, as one, prefer not to examine the political nature and the



authenticity of the Islamic Iranian regime's support for the Palestinian people, from outside. But only within the framework and power dynamics of the lessons learned from classic socialism and its materialist view of history and politics within our given territory, my first impression can be, who in the sane mind in our today's world, can watch the unleashed rabidity of the Israel in attacking everything and everyone who resists its barbarity- and refrain themselves from attempting to stand behind the Palestinian people -and their unwavering rights to self-defense, the taking back of their land, and the creation of a Palestinian state that opens its arms to everyone, including the Israeli occupiers, to live in one land, in one single state, and in one democratic state for everyone? What can refrain humanity from defending the defendable and justice?

So, if that is not the case about the Iranian regime, then my second impression is, that considering the political nature of the Iranian regime; to be a theocratic and authoritarian regime with a bloody track record of slaughtering its own people and numberless political and communist activists, extensively fueling the class gap between the rich and the poor, bringing the working class to its highest misery and exalting the rich and the capitalist class as never before- proving its loyalty to global capitalism by ranking itself among them not only through the signals it sends, but its socioeconomic approaches it takes in real time, it seriously needs a bloc of its own in the region, even if it is arbitrary, and based on the symbolic gestures and needs, to be able to guaranty its survival, to shield itself from disasters in case of an attack from outside, and on a mutual need, either to be monetary, ideologic, or political conformity, to buy credibility and silence to its 45 years of class oppression of the Iranian workers and the destruction of the fundamentals of democracy, through a power vacuum accepted by several groups within the diverse movement in Palestine in particular, and in the Middle East in general.

It is unfortunate that the Palestinian movement has produced not enough entities and groups within itself to stand beside the Iranian revolutionary movement, and against the criminal Iranian regime, and we clearly see that and do not glorify all the aspects of the Palestinian movement, but what first and foremost we made ourselves committed to, is to unconditionally stand behind and beside the Palestinian people, but critically support the entities and organization within the Palestinian movement that not in their programs, but on their rights to self-defense we are fully in agreement with.

### **What do you think of the political-religious regime of the mullahs?**

The Iranian Islamic regime, is a capitalist, utterly authoritarian regime with a feudal superstructure; a hodgepodge of blood, capital, Islamic rules, with zero democratic elements or respect for the democratic rights of its people, and resistant to cultural renaissance, but with all these flaws, in its credit, all these years it has learned how to survive an imperialist attack, not by the image portrayed from itself, but by the image of the Iranian people, who kept on their minds the resentful memory of the U.S. criminal coup d'état of the 1953, well alive.

It is not difficult, to discover that the Iranian regime's animosity first and most is with its own people, as the regime, has repeatedly showed since the start of its existence, that it can be used, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and in Syria, siding and cooperating with Imperialists and its so-called number one enemy, the U.S. government, when they needed to.

Both Shah, and the Iranian Islamic regime, have one element in common; as the first powerful Muslim country in the region, they knew and know that they will survive the U.S. attacks, as while as they can be useful for them, and if the U.S. knew that the son of the abandoned king can be brought back to Iran and be welcomed again, they would not hesitate for one moment to reinstate his throne, but they know well that Iranians want something and someone bigger, at least someone who is neither shah, nor the Iranian Islamic regime, and that is more fearsome than the Iranian Islamic regime for the U.S. and that exactly is what we need in Iran, a system that puts people before humiliating and oppressive politics and profits for imperialists.

The Iranian regime knows if there was a free referendum in Iran, 80% of Iranians will vote for its destruction, but we said that again and again, that till the Islamic Iranian regime, is in the power, we unconditionally defend its sovereignty in the face of a foreign attack, without pausing our class war and animosity or minimizing our propagandas and agitations against the regime, no matter what circumstances come along.

So, only the task of the revolution is upon us, and the regime change upon the others. We fight against the regime from own angles, till our people both objectively and sub-

jectively become ready to stand if not above us, beside and behind us.

### **How do you imagine a socialist future for the Middle East?**

As a Trotskyist, I do not see a victorious socialist revolution in isolation anywhere. And history is a witness to that. We must equate the urgency of an international socialist movement to bread, water, and air.

Iran and the Middle East is a part of the world oppressed by capital and its rulers, with one big difference; we live in this part of the world under the domination of the rulers who not only defend capital with their soul, life, and blood, but are far willing to shed blood and river it, but not to be forced to accept the breathless political superstructure of capitalism, which is the bourgeois freedom of speech and protest against capitalism and its fundamentals.

Imagining a socialist future in the Middle East, for someone who has lived there, is not going to be mystical; it is going to depend on many political factors at the global level, if we do not aim to narrate revolution as a form of fairy tale, or tragedy with a magical beginning and a tragic ending- and that is beyond the scope of the topic of our conversation today, and it should be addressed in another time and context.

But I will briefly can say that not all of the communist measures entailing the October Revolution, are going to be classically adoptable for our today's world and the class arrangements within the world's working class, regardless of the world and local concrete situations.

We need to break off from utopia, because the expansion of the aristocracy of the American and European working class is a decisive force in strengthening capitalism and a barrier in the spread of socialist revolution in the world. And though the rabid suppression of the working class in the global south is a huge factor in driving the socialist movements and revolutions in our territories, but a strong socialist movement in the heart of the imperialist countries, present itself as a compass for progress and the strengthening of the socialist movement of the other countries in the world.

I think the pain that the socialists of the global south are suffering from their capitalist regimes, will not have any effect on speeding up their socialist revolution if socialists all over the world, especially in the imperialist countries do not pick their fights at the same time with us. The fight for socialism is two-fold; it is local as well as international, and looking at the track record of the socialist movement around the globe, the lack of an international solidarity with the socialist movement in Iran and in the region as a whole, is pathetically apparent.

Socialism will never be established by the pacifists, but by the concerned and committed revolutionaries that above all see the world as their countries. 🐘

1. <https://www.ejiltalk.org/does-israel-have-the-right-to-self-defense-and-what-are-the-restrictions/>

# MIDDLE EAST: A Historical Overview

BY VICENTE GAYNOR

The current conflicts and their protagonists, as well as the geopolitical configuration of the Middle East itself, are products of the inter-imperialist power struggles of the last century and a half. This overview seeks to provide a historical context to help to understand the today's complex reality.



The region known as the Middle East<sup>1</sup>, due to its geographic position relative to Europe, located where the continents of Africa, Asia and Europe intersect, has been a central crossroads throughout human history.

The ancestors of all the peoples of the world beyond Africa passed through there from 70 thousand years ago. The first cities arose there: Ur, Lagash and Uruk, in Mesopotamia. The first battle between empires was fought there, when the Egyptians and Hittites faced off in Kadesh. The Persians passed through there to Greece, as did Alexander the Great to conquer Persia, Egypt and India. For millennia, it was the central node of the routes along which trade and cultural exchange flowed between China and India and Europe and Africa. It is where the monotheistic religions that still predominate in much of the world arose.

For most of the last 2,000 years, whoever controlled this crossroads was also the greatest economic and political power across all of Europe, Africa, and most of Asia. But today's Middle East is the result of the conquest of this strategic region by modern capitalism and its imperialist powers.

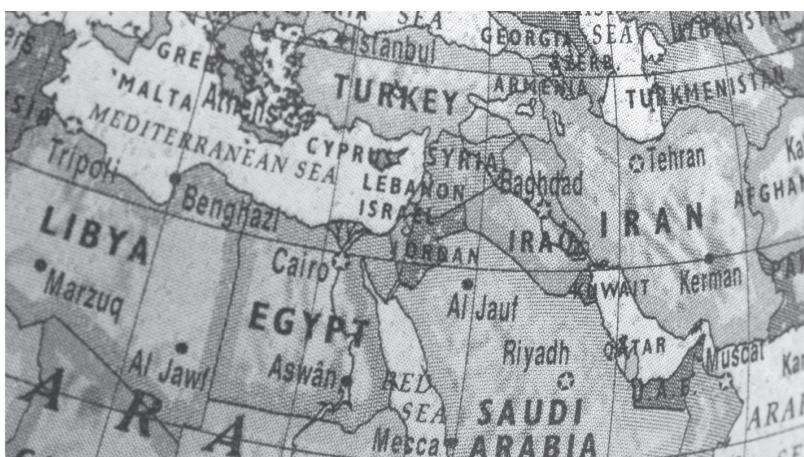
The Ottoman Empire was the last pre-capitalist power to control the Middle East, as well as North Africa to Morocco and the European Balkans almost to Vienna. But the superiority it held for 300 years over its European neighbors evaporated with the development of capitalism, in Europe.

## EUROPEAN IMPERIALIST COLONIZATION

The 19th century saw capitalism take over most of the planet. The imperialist powers of Europe colonized most of Africa, India, and Southeast Asia. They subjugated other countries as protectorates or dependent semi-colonies. The Middle East suffered the same fate, especially since abundant oil reserves were discovered there at the beginning of the 20th century.

Throughout the 19th century, a stagnant Ottoman Empire was dismembered by the emerging capitalist powers. France took Algeria in 1830 and Tunisia in 1881. Italy took Libya in 1911. Great Britain took Aden, Oman, the emirates of Arabia and Kuwait, and Egypt and Sudan fell under British control in 1899.

After the First World War, with the Ottomans on the losing side, the British turned Palestine,







Jordan and Iraq into protectorates and France took Syria and Lebanon. The Ottoman center of power in modern day Turkey, was occupied by British and Greek troops. Although the occupation was expelled and Turkey later developed a capitalist economy and regional political power, it would no longer play the dominant role that European imperialism had taken from it.

In 1917, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration, with which it began to encourage and finance the project of Zionist settler colonialism in Palestine to create a strong and dependent imperial bastion to help dominate the region.

Iran and Afghanistan were contested and divided into spheres of influence by the British - who established the protectorate of Mesopotamia to the West and colonized India to the East - and Russian imperialism, which was expanding from the North.

The borders of all these countries, like those of South Asia and all of Africa, were determined by this process of colonization and imperial division, ignoring or deliberately contradicting the will and territorial distribution of their peoples according to the imperialists' interests. For example, France divided Syria, creating Lebanon for their Maronite Christian allies to govern there. And the British divided Palestine, creating Jordan, and established the borders of Iran and Afghanistan, leaving regions of both in Pakistan.

There was resistance and massive rebellions against this entire process, but the European armies and local collaborators ended up defeating them. The dynasties that still rule Arabia and Jordan, as well as those that reigned in Iran and Iraq for decades came to power, and the region's de-

pendent and servile bourgeoisie that we see today developed with this process.

## 1948, ANOTHER BLOW

The founding of the Israeli state in 1948, with the massacre and mass expulsion of non Jewish Palestinians, was a severe blow to the Arab regimes. Some of them declared war on Israel, but this was largely a farce. The Zionist narrative about "massive armies" of invading Arab states is largely a myth.

The Transjordanian army launched an invasion, but its outcome was negotiated in advance by Emir Abdallah and the Zionist leaders Moshe Dayan and Golda Meir.

The Egyptian army was poorly trained and poorly equipped, and its disaster discredited the regime and led to its downfall in 1952. The two "armies" did not even coordinate their actions.

Syria's military role was very limited, and the Iraqi troops that entered Palestine on the eastern front quickly withdrew.

As a result, Transjordan annexed the West Bank and renamed itself Jordan, Egypt took over Sinai and the Gaza Strip and Syria retained a small area near Al-Hamah.

In 1967, the Six-Day War consolidated Israel as the preferred imperialist colonial enclave in the Middle East. Since then, it has enjoyed unconditional support from the US.

## PAN-ARAB NATIONALISM

As in other parts of the world, after the Second World War, a period of rebellions and revolutions

against the capitalist order dependent on imperialist hegemony began in the Middle East. Some of them were successful and installed new nationalist regimes. The US, which emerged from the war as the central imperialist superpower, backed reactionary Islamic fundamentalist groups in order to sabotage these progressive regimes. From the 1950s to the 1980s, it funded and developed these forces from Egypt to Indonesia and from Syria to Pakistan.

In the post-war period, the communist parties played an important role in the emergence and leadership of the region's working class movements. But they were led from Moscow by the Stalinist line to form alliances with "patriotic" capitalists supposedly to confront imperialism - the notorious mistaken theory of revolution by stages.

In Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Ethiopia and other countries there were left-wing coups and the overthrow of rotten feudal/capitalist regimes that led to the creation of Bonapartist or deformed "workers' states." In others, there were strong mass movements with left-wing populist leaders at the helm. In the context of the Cold War, some of them even challenged Western imperialism and carried out nationalizations and radical reforms that the bureaucracies in Moscow and Beijing did not approve of.

One of these leaders was Gamal Abdel Nasser, head of the Free Officers, who became president of Egypt in 1952, taking advantage of a mass rebellion. He developed as a pan-Arab leader. Although Moscow rejected his offer to join the Warsaw Pact and nationalize the largest economy in the Middle East, he did nationalize the Suez Canal, which damaged imperialist interests, particularly British and French. This culminated in the Suez (or Sinai) War of 1956, in which the British and French were defeated by Egypt. In the 1956 Constitution, Nasser included a one-party system: the National Union, or class collaboration.<sup>2</sup>

In Iraq, the communists played a key role in overthrowing British control. However, in 1963 they helped their ally, the nationalist and "socialist" Baath (renaissance, in Arabic) Party, take power. Soon after, the Baathist government turned around and crushed the communists, killing thousands of their members.

As for Iran, in 1951, with great popular support, parliament voted to nationalize oil, then largely in British hands. In 1953, the US launched a military coup to overthrow the government and

reinstall the Pahlavi Shah, turning the country into a semi-colony until the 1979 revolution.

## ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM

The main current of modern political islamism was based on the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwanul-Muslimeen) in Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries, and the Society of Islam (Jamaat-e-Islami) in Pakistan. The Brotherhood was founded in 1928. Compared to Sufism and other moderate Islamic currents, the Brotherhood and the Society had a reactionary character with strong neo-fascist traits. In the following decades this led to the growth of more fanatical versions.

A pillar of US foreign policy was to support and arm Islamic fundamentalism as a reactionary weapon against the wave of rebellions and revolutions. The Brotherhood and the Society were chosen for this task because of their cruelty and fanaticism. After their defeat in Suez, the imperialists prioritized this policy. However, in these countries it was difficult for the fundamentalists to gain a social base because of successive waves of leftist movements.

The CIA's largest covert operation in relation to Islamic fundamentalism was in Afghanistan. In 1978, radical army officers overthrew the reactionary Daud regime in the Saur Revolution. As the USSR supported the new progressive government, the US backed Islamic guerrillas as a counter-revolutionary battering ram. Although the Russians withdrew in 1989, the civil war continued until the Taliban came to power in 1996. In 2001, after the September 11 attacks, a US military intervention brought another Islamic sector into power. Both factions negotiated without success and since 2021 the Taliban has dominated.

In turn, Islamic fundamentalist organizations like Hezbollah and Hamas were financed by Israel to undermine the PLO and counter left-wing radicalization in the Palestinian movement. The main reason for the fundamentalist resurgence is the huge political vacuum created by the collapse of Stalinism and the left in these societies. Amidst severe socio-economic deprivation, unemployment and poverty, the masses are at a dead end. The arrogance and contempt of the monarchs and dictators further fuel popular hatred and anger.

Despite all this, fundamentalism fails to develop a mass base in most Muslim countries. They have no real plan to solve the people's problems and econom-



ic crises. They only thrive on corruption and crime, with fascist and barbaric methods. And the so-called liberals and bourgeois democrats who crow against the danger of fundamentalism are the same ones who created the conditions for its existence.

The main source of financing for Islamic fundamentalism comes from drug trafficking and other sectors of the underground economy. In turn, they are divided into numerous sects immersed in internal wars between Shiites and Sunnis, Deobandis and Wahhabis, and any mafia faction against others.

## US OCCUPATIONS AND WITHDRAWALS

In 2001, George W. Bush rose to the presidency of the United States with a strategy of global imperialist reorientation: the Project for a New American Century, which warned about China's advance as a competitor and proposed that, to maintain itself as the only global superpower, the US needed to re-legitimize the use of its armed forces in the world - weakened since its defeat in Vietnam - and establish direct control over regions that could condition the resources that China needs, particularly the Middle East and Central Asia.

The September 11 attacks that year gave them the opportunity to put this plan into action under the pretext of fighting terrorism. A villain created by the US itself: Al Qaeda and the Taliban emerged from the mujahideen they trained and financed in Afghanistan and Bin Laden himself had been supported by the CIA.

In 2002, the US invaded and occupied Afghanistan, and in 2003 Iraq. They massacred millions of people, destroyed crucial infrastructure and stoked ethnic divisions. But they failed in their objectives and withdrew, defeated, from Iraq in 2007 and from Afghanistan in 2011, leaving power in the hands of the same Taliban they used as an excuse to invade.

That same year the Arab Spring broke out, which toppled dictatorial regimes in several countries.

The US withdrawal from the region allowed a relative strengthening of regional powers such as Iran and Turkey, and greater Russian interference. Turkey invaded northern Syria to attack the Kurdish people - which it oppresses within its borders - and supported ISIS, which came to control regions of Iraq and Syria. In turn, Iran positioned itself as the main regional force together with its Shiite proxies in Lebanon and Yemen. In 2019 and 2020, a new wave of the Arab Spring shook the region, with rebellions in Lebanon and Iraq and a general strike with mass mobilizations in Iran in 2023.

In this context, together with the beginning of negotiations between the US and Saudi Arabia to normalize relations with Israel, the incursion launched by Hamas on October 7 and the beginning of the new Zionist genocide took place.

## SYRIA, AGAIN IN TENSION

In 1945 it became independent from the French mandate. After several coups, from 1958 to 1961, it formed the United Arab Republic with Egypt and from 1961-1963 it consolidated as a separate country. Until 2011, the Baath Party, which leads the National Progressive Front, ruled. Under successive governments, the Assad family has held the presidency: from 1970 to 2000, General Hafez al-Assad, and from then until today, his son, the dictator Bashar al-Assad, who has the support of Russia and Iran.

In the heat of the Arab Spring, there were strong protests against the dictatorship in 2011. Al-Assad repressed the country fiercely and started a civil war, which forced five of the 23 million inhabitants into exile. Among the rebel sectors, initially more independent, the influence of the United States grew. ISIS was also active and was finally defeated in 2022. Al-Assad remained in control of 70% of the territory and the rebels 30%. In November, the latter resumed armed actions in Aleppo, the country's second largest city. 🌍

1. We will refer to the broader Middle East, including Iran, Afghanistan, Türkiye, the Arabian peninsula and Egypt, in addition to Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Iraq.

2. "Communism automatically considers all entrepreneurs to be exploiters. But Arab socialism differentiates between entrepreneurs who exploit and those who are based on justice and work." Al-Ahram (Egyptian official newspaper), 4/8/61.





# THE ARAB SPRING: A Massive Popular Rebellion with UNFINISHED TASKS

BY CHAIAA AHMED BABA BEIRUK AND RUBÉN TZANOFF

The rebellion in the Arab world provided deep contradictions and valuable lessons. The underlying causes of these uprisings, along with the ongoing consequences of the Zionist genocide, have alerted global powers to the potential for future upheavals. The dilemma of “socialism or barbarism” presents revolutionaries with both immediate and strategic opportunities and challenges

both peace and conflict, loyalty and betrayal. These ties are primarily defined by a shared language, Muslim culture, and a long history of struggle. In this context, the Arab Spring (2010-2012) stands out as the first major mass rebellion of the 21st century, with the Arab peoples themselves at the forefront.

## THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE MAGHREB: MORE THAN JUST NEIGHBORS

Global attention has been drawn to the mass rejection of Israel’s genocide in Gaza and its wider escalation across the Middle East. When discussing the Arab world, it is impossible to ignore the Maghreb<sup>1</sup>. These two regions, both part of the MENA<sup>2</sup> (Middle East and North Africa) area, form a complex tapestry of intertwined economic, political, and social relations, shaped by centuries of coexistence marked by



MENA zone  
on the map



## THE SELF-IMMOLATION OF MOHAMED BOUAZIZI

The social upheaval began on December 17, 2010, in the small Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid. On that day, Mohamed Bouazizi, a young street vendor, set himself on fire in protest of the confiscation of his fruit cart and the humiliation he endured when he approached municipal authorities to file a complaint. The drastic decision of taking his own life was both an act of personal despair and a public statement of rejection of systemic injustice and the absence of a future.

## THE SPROUTS OF THE REBELLION

It quickly became clear that Bouazizi's outrage was shared by millions across the region. His sacrifice sparked a revolutionary dynamic, with protests, strikes, and uprisings spreading through various Arab countries. These movements were driven by the hope for improved living conditions, encapsulated in the slogan "The people want..." — completed by demands for jobs, wages, healthcare, education, equality, and freedom. This wave of discontent led to the downfall of rulers that had been entrenched for decades, such as Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia (1987–2011), Hosni Mubarak of Egypt (1981–2011), Muammar Gaddafi of Libya (1969–2011), and Ali Abdullah Saleh of Yemen (1990–2012). The revolts also affected other countries, such as Lebanon (due to the economic crisis, corruption, and undemocratic government decisions), Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Syria, Palestine, Sudan, Western Sahara, and Mauritania. It should be noted that the repressive violence caused the death of at least 61,000 people.

## THE NEW ARAB SPRING

The struggles sparked by the original Arab Spring continued to evolve, giving rise to a New Arab Spring (2018–present). This new wave of protests has spread to Tunisia, Jordan, Sudan, Algeria,

Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Morocco, and Oman<sup>3</sup>. In addition, the protests reached Iran, challenging the mullahs and their reactionary regime, first in response to rising fuel prices (November 2019) and later condemning the death of Mahsa Amini, who was arrested and beaten by the morality police for not wearing a hijab<sup>4</sup> (September 2022). Women played a central role in this ongoing regional wave, which was further empowered by the fourth global feminist wave. This global interconnectedness is evident as movements learn from and support one another, feeding off international experiences.

## IN THE HEAT OF CHANGES IN THE WORLD SITUATION

The Arab Spring emerged two years after the onset of the systemic crisis of capitalism in 2008, a crisis that marked major shifts in the world situation. In this context, the New Arab Spring was part of a broader surge of struggles worldwide: *"There has been a change of enormous magnitude. In different regions of the planet, workers and the excluded are rising against their governments and the political regimes that sustain them. At the forefront of the rebellions and revolutions that are taking place is the youth, which the capitalist system in its decline is leaving without a future. It is much more than a new conjuncture: we are witnessing a change in the world situation."*<sup>5</sup>

## THE PLAGUE IS THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM

Some media outlets, in clear reference to social media, have coined terms like *Facebook Revolution* or *Arab Spring 2.0* to describe the New Arab Spring. It would be just as foolish to deny the influence of virtual platforms on contemporary social and political processes as it would be to attribute the causes of these uprisings solely to them. The real causes lie in the material living conditions of the Arab working class.

The societies of the region can be summed up in three words: poverty, inequality, and precariousness. The vast majority of the population suffers from poverty, structural unemployment, low wages, informality, and limited access to essential services. In contrast, a small minority of monarchs, bourgeois elites, and their entourages live in extreme wealth. At the time of the protests, the region had lower per capita growth rates than other areas of Asia and Africa, and youth unemployment was reaching unprecedented levels.

This dire situation is further compounded by corrupt and authoritarian institutions, controlled by right-wing or far-right nationalist parties, monarchs, and Islamic fundamentalists. In short, the root of the region's problems lies in the capitalist system, which, in the face of its own crisis, becomes increasingly exploitative, oppressive, and predatory.

## A LONG-TERM PROCESS

The term *spring* might suggest an ephemeral event, but in reality, it evolved into a long-term process, marked by polarization dynamics, revolutionary changes, and unfinished goals. As a general assessment, the uprisings succeeded in defeating and/or weakening governments and regimes, forcing them to make partial economic and political concessions. For instance, they called for elections to renew leadership and implemented constitutional reforms with legal continuity. However, the substantive demands of the protests were not met by the replacement governments. This raises important questions: What will happen if the Zionist attacks continue? What if they stop? The answers depend on such a wide array of factors that it is difficult to make accurate predictions. Nonetheless, the scale of these events suggests that nothing in the region will ever return to the way it was before.

It should be borne in mind that an important part of the population, especially the youth, has taken up the Palestinian cause as a banner of national dignity understood as anti-Zionism and anti-imperialism, even in opposition to the governments of their countries. This, added to the unresolved democratic and social problems, makes the rulers panic that a third spring will break out and reposition them in the eye of the storm. That is why they act accordingly, limiting the protests against the Israeli-American genocide.

## OF IMPERIALISTS, TRAITORS, AND FUNDAMENTALISTS

Imperialist powers act on social processes and movements by deploying policies that serve their own interests. This was evident in Libya, where, seizing upon the uprising against Gaddafi, NATO formed an air coalition to attack the dictator, thus intervening militarily in the region. A pattern of political interference was repeated in other processes, depending on the degree of alignment with the existing power structures. In this sense, the Arab



Spring confirmed that imperialist intervention does not bring democracy, development, or humanitarian aid. Instead, it seeks to strengthen its allies and local enforcers, whose role is to contain, redirect, or crush the revolutions of the Arab peoples.

Arab governments are full of traitors to their peoples: Mohammed bin Salman, crown Prince of Saudi Arabia; Abdullah II bin Al Hussein, King of Jordan, and Mohamed VI, king of Morocco, share the list with other monarchs who have sided with imperialist powers against their people. Fundamentalist organizations such as Hamas, Hezbollah and ISIS have also gained power, from which insurmountable differences separate us. In the Middle East and the Maghreb there are powerful enemies to confront and directions that cannot be trusted, which reaffirms the need to put new revolutionary directions on their feet.

## BETWEEN CONTRADICTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

The workers' movement played an active role, participating in general strikes and popular demonstrations. One notable example was in Tunisia, where workers transformed the initial spontaneous revolt into a massive general strike, which became a national expression of resistance. Amid this movement, Ben Ali was forced to resign and flee the country. In Egypt, after large mobilizations and strikes, the 30-year rule of Mubarak collapsed. However, when examining the process as a whole, the working class was not the predominant driving force. Even if there were expressions of self-organization, such as the Tunisian resistance committees, dual power structures remained embryonic, a key issue was reiterated: *"The most important contradiction of the stage remains the absence of strong revolutionary leaderships, with sufficient strength in the workers' movement to influence the outcome of the struggles and rebellions that have unfolded. This has allowed treacherous leaderships some room for maneuver and*





*explains why decisive victories have been difficult to achieve, with many processes diverted by democratic reaction or defeated by state repression.”<sup>6</sup>*

## FOR NEW VICTORIOUS SPRINGS

The Arab Spring revitalized the democratic and social aspirations of millions of people within the Arab world and beyond. Its future recurrence will depend primarily on the will of the masses to mobilize. Revolutionaries must make every effort to build international solidarity and establish consistent socialist parties in each country, firmly rooted in the workers’ and youth vanguard. These parties must be forged in the struggles for rights that challenge bourgeois governments, monarchies, and Islamic fundamentalists. They must promote independent

self-organization and adopt a transitional program that includes “bread, freedom, and social justice,” the rejection of the State of Israel, and opposition to imperialist interference in the region and for the establishment of a workers’ and people’s government that guarantees broad democratic freedoms. These strategic objectives can only be achieved by defeating imperialist capitalism through a socialist revolution of the Arab peoples and the creation of a free federation of socialist republics. 🌍

1. Maghreb: “The place where the sun sets.” The westernmost part of the Arab world, located in North Africa and predominantly Islamic. It includes Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, and Western Sahara.
2. MENA: Acronym for the Middle East and North Africa, also referred to as the Greater Middle East or the Arab world
3. Notes on the new Arab Revolutions (<https://lis-isl.org/en/2019/03/18/notas-sobre-las-nuevas-rebeliones-arabes/>).
4. Hijab: A veil that covers the head and often other parts of the female body, mandatory for women in Iran to wear in public.
5. A new revolutionary ascent shakes the world (<https://lis-isl.org/en/2019/12/01/un-nuevo-ascenso-revolucionario-conmueve-al-mundo/>).
6. ISL World Document 2024: Socialism or Barbarism. Available at <https://lis-isl.org/en/2024/01/31/dom/>

## Western Sahara and Democratic Rights

In October and November 2010, the largest Saharawi protests against Moroccan oppression since Spain’s withdrawal from its former colony in 1975 took place in Gdeim Izik, El Ayoun, and Smara. The regime of Mohamed VI responded with brutal repression. These events preceded the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia, but can be considered part of the broader prelude to the Arab Spring. Bridging the gap, there are similarities to the 2012 Palestinian protests, which also arose in response to worsening living conditions under the rule of the Palestinian National Authority.

The Saharawi people under occupation and the Polisario Front form the backbone of their social and political life as an oppressed nationality. They are fighting for the recognition of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) with territorial integrity and the right to self-determination. They resist with weapons in the military friction points, maintain their identity in the cities and towns under occupation, organize in the refugee camps of Tindouf and promote solidarity mobilizations in exile. And they face the plundering of their resources on land and at sea, as they did in 2020 with the blockade of the Guerguerat pass and with the subsequent triumphant claim before the Court of Justice of the European Union for the annulment of the agricultural and fisheries trade agreements between the EU and Morocco.

Diplomatically, the Saharawi people demand the full im-

plementation of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). They reject the deceptive proposals of the Moroccan king for “autonomy” and the territorial divisions suggested by UN special envoy Staffan de Mistura which serve Western imperialist interests by seeking a “mutually acceptable solution” between the SADR and Morocco. The only viable roadmap for achieving a just and lasting peace is one based on the united mobilization of African and Arab workers and peoples for a free Sahara and with the international solidarity actions supporting resistance to the State of Israel in Palestine and Lebanon, all under the framework of a socialist resolution for the Arab peoples as a whole.

The ISL supports the struggle for the self-determination of the Saharawi nation on the path towards a socialist way out for all Arab and African peoples. This is why the ISL embraced the Saharawi cause at the Pan-African Congress in Nairobi, visited the Tindouf camps, and participates in annual demonstrations in Madrid to denounce the Tripartite Agreements, in which Spain gave away Western Sahara to Morocco and Mauritania. The ISL will continue to promote solidarity actions in support of the Saharawi people.

Read more about Western Sahara here





# A thousand days of Russian aggression against Ukraine: **IN DEFENSE OF MARXISM!**

BY OLEG VERNYK

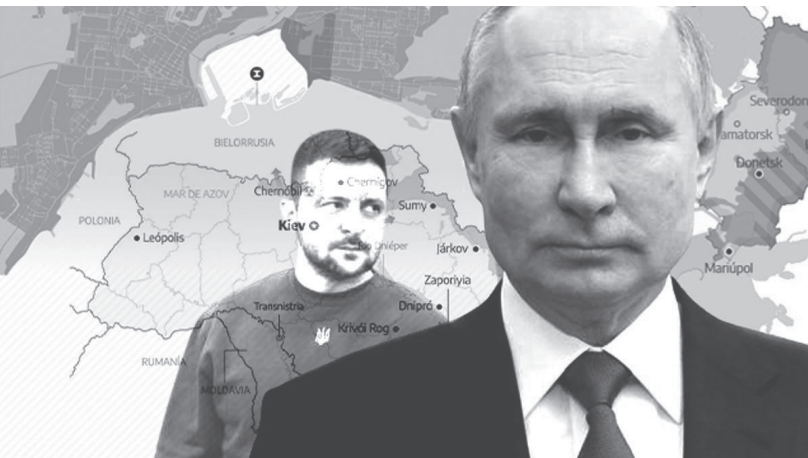
November 19, 2024 was a sad date for the Ukrainian people: exactly one thousand days have passed since the aggression of Russian imperialism against Ukraine on a large scale. Of course, the language of numbers is not able to fully illuminate that tectonic fracture in the lives of millions of people who faced the biggest European catastrophe since World War II. However, it is the language of numbers that helps to properly immerse us in the context of the problems of the current Russian-Ukrainian war.

- During these 1,000 days, the fighting covered approximately 109,059 km<sup>2</sup>, 18% of the entire territory of Ukraine. Since February 24, 2022, they have been taking place on the territory of 11 out of 24 Ukrainian regions. They are currently continuing in five regions - Kharkov, Lugansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhia and Kherson. The Chernihiv, Sumy, Dnipropetrovsk and other regions are also under regular attacks with high-precision missiles and bombs.
- Remaining under occupation are the 66,932 km<sup>2</sup>, 11% of the total territory, which the Russians captured after the start of the invasion. In total, since 2014, Russia has occupied 10,725 km<sup>2</sup> of Ukrainian territory (18.3%), including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, and the territories of Donetsk and Lugansk regions.
- According to UN reports, at least 12,162 Ukrainian civilians have been killed and 26,919 wounded during the full-scale war as of the end of October 2024, figures that do not include deaths in Mariupol. The Russians have carried out more than 1,600 shellings of residential buildings in the rear or frontline areas with which as of November 18, 2024 they have killed at least 2,600 civilians.
- According to the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine, at least 593 children have died, another 1,686 were wounded, many were deported and more than 20,000 Ukrainian children illegally taken to Russia have been identified.
- According to the Operational Data Portal, 6.79 million Ukrainians became refugees, the vast majority of whom found asylum in European countries. Another 560 thousand

left for countries in North and Latin America, Africa, Asia and Australia.

- According to the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, during the invasion, the Russians destroyed about 250 thousand residential buildings. This includes buildings destroyed by shelling and those washed away after the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station was destroyed on June 6, 2023.

One could go on for a long time with these horrifying statistics on Russian imperialist aggression. The language of figures is merciless in its verdict on the aggressor, but it is clearly insufficient to describe the heroism of the resistance shown by the Ukrainian people. Let us recall that at the beginning of the Russian aggression the Western intelligence services of the NATO countries predicted that the resistance would not last more than a week. Today, there is more and more information about the agreement between Western impe-



rialism and Russian imperialism on the eve of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. In 2014, U.S. President Barack Obama categorically prohibited ("did not recommend") post-Maidan Ukrainian authorities to offer armed resistance to the Russian army in the occupation of Crimea. Much later, i.e. in 2023, Obama tried to justify his policy by the significant number of pro-Russian people in Crimea. Russian imperialism, as is traditional for it, first sent troops and seized all strategic facilities in Crimea, achieved the withdrawal of Ukrainian units without resistance, under US guarantee, and only then organized a pseudo-referendum on the "annexation of Crimea to Russia". Even according to

bourgeois international law, referendums held under military occupation lack legal force and their results of validity. With the occupation Putin trampled on and annulled the right of the Crimean people to real self-determination. Not to see in the situation of 2014 the obvious complicity of Western imperialism with Russian imperialism is to "put on rose-colored glasses" and ignore the analogies with the Munich Agreements of 1938.

On February 24, 2022, when Russia launched the full-scale offensive against Ukraine, the U.S. High Command attempted to expel senior government officials out of the country to neutralize any attempt to organize resistance. However, in the spring of 2022, it was the resistance of the Ukrainian people to the Russian occupation that became the decisive factor in repelling the "blitzkrieg" and not the actions of the bourgeois high command of Zelensky and his U.S. "partners". It was the popular resistance at the national level that forced Western imperialism to start supplying arms and financial aid to Ukraine in the summer-fall of 2022.

This aid was and remains grossly insufficient, as Western imperialism is panicking about a military defeat of Russian imperialism. Analysts have long argued that the basic idea of U.S. and European military aid to Ukraine is to supply weapons in the quantities necessary to ensure that Ukraine does not lose the war and, at the same time, does not win it. Donald Trump's team, which came to power in the USA, has already declared that its main task is to destroy the military-political alliance between Russia and China and drag Russia to its side. Of course, this can be done only at the cost of giving concessions to Putin, i.e. at the cost of dividing Ukraine and occupying a significant part of its territory.

At this point of the analysis it is important to remember that at the world level imperialism continues to exist in its complex dialectic of unity and struggle of opposites coexisting simultaneously. Any aggravation of inter-imperialist contradictions also gives rise to various manifestations of imperialist unity. The unity of the imperialists is all the stronger as stronger is the unity of the working class regarding the destruction of capitalism, and that is when imperialism is most afraid of the threat of a new



and qualitative world *spring of nations*. Western imperialism is frightened by any prospect of the fall of the Putin regime, of chaos and disintegration of the Russian Federation in case of a defeat in the war with Ukraine, since it would provoke a wave of national liberation movements of the oppressed peoples which, probably, would follow the socialist version of its development.

## THE SITUATION ON THE FRONTLINE OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR

Since the beginning of 2024, the Russian occupation army continued its offensive in the Donetsk region, trying to capture it completely, as it had already done earlier with the Lugansk region. On October 30, 2024, the large mining city of Selydove was finally captured. For many months, the town was defended, among others, by heroic mining warriors of our trade union organization Protection of Labor at the Selydove-Ugol company.

The Ukrainian army, in a situation of severe shortage of weapons and fighters, was forced to retreat. In October 2024 alone, Russian troops captured more than 470 km<sup>2</sup> in eastern Ukraine. In August 2024, Ukrainian troops attempted to seize the strategic initiative with a strong attack on the Russian Kursk region and thus force the Russian army to transfer part of its forces and resources from the Donetsk region. However, this calculation did not come true. Despite the fact that the Ukrainian army captured more than 1,200 km<sup>2</sup> in Kursk, the Russian army never moved its active units there from the Donetsk front and continued its offensive there. Then, Ukrainian troops were forced to take defensive positions in the Kursk region and today they control no more than 600 km<sup>2</sup>.

The situation on the front is not much affected by mutual missile attacks by the warring parties. The administration of outgoing U.S. President Joe Biden, as part of its dispute against newly elected Republican President Trump, has allowed Ukraine to use long-range American ATACMS ballistic missiles to attack military targets on Russian territory. The number of such missiles in Ukraine's possession is negligible and unlikely to make significant changes to the situation on the battlefield. Neither M1 Abrams tanks nor F-16 aircraft have made any relevant change. These supplies are so meager

that they have more of a propaganda effect than a significant one on the combat front.

At the same time, Putin took advantage of the propaganda background of the authorization by the USA, Great Britain and France for their missiles to enter Russian territory to use, for the first time, on November 21, 2024, the new medium-range Oréshnik (hazel, in Russian) missile system against the city of Dnipro. Both sides escalated the armed confrontation. In turn, Putin is trying to use the launch of the missile, capable of carrying nuclear weapons, to intimidate the world community with the threat that the Russian-Ukrainian war will escalate into an international nuclear conflict and trigger World War III.



It is clear that the situation in Ukrainian society has changed a lot compared to 2022. The general patriotic uprising of that year is gradually giving way to weariness and disappointment. It is important to note that this disappointment of the Ukrainian people does not refer to the very idea of resistance to Russian aggression, but to the actions of the bourgeois government. After 2022, when the resistance to Putin and Russian aggression was really grassroots and nationwide, gradually a layer of society began to form around Zelensky's power vertical, corrupt from top to bottom, which not only adapted to the war, but became its beneficiary as it learned to earn very good money. After almost three years of full-scale war, the Ukrainian society became accustomed to witness endless scandals surrounding the theft of money from the budget, organized from above for almost everything: purchase of food for the army, construction of defensive fortifications,

transfer of funds from the Ministry of Defense abroad, etc. Recently the country has been rocked by corruption scandals related to the so-called Territorial Recruitment Centers. The agencies in charge of mobilizing Ukrainians have turned out to be literally a mafia concentration which, in exchange for bribes, releases some from the army (generally representatives of the bourgeois class) and, often violating all laws, sends to the front representatives of the working class who, in conditions of war and total poverty, have no money to pay bribes.



The corrupt bourgeois-bureaucratic elite has defended Zelenski's team in power, and will continue to do so because for them it is a guarantee of continuity of war and profits. It is clear that the main burden of the war, in conditions of corruption and robbery in all echelons of Ukrainian bourgeois power, falls on the shoulders of the working class, both those who dress up for mobilization in military "overcoats" and those sections of it who work selflessly in the rearguard.

## IN DEFENSE OF MARXIST ANALYSIS

The analysis of the situation of imperialist aggression acts as a litmus test for the international Left. Their reflections, their application of the Marxist method, as well as their moral and ethical paradigms for the evaluation of the situation turned out to be very different and sometimes even diametrically opposed. The Marxist axiom that the public conscience does not usually keep up with the changing social existence in its reflection has been confirmed once again. Unfortunately, the qualitative transformation

and complication of the imperialist world, the emergence of new young and aggressive imperialisms such as Russia and China, were not the subject of adequate reflection and analysis by a considerable number of subjects of the left camp. Traditional and largely obsolete formats and clichés of analysis were applied to both the radically transformed world situation and the aggravated inter-imperialist conflicts.

The ISL does not deny the planetary dominance of U.S. imperialism, but to ignore the dynamics of its transformation and significant weakening on a global scale is to deceive oneself, to make a false analysis and to disorient the world working class.

The flight of US troops from Afghanistan and Iraq, the displacement of French troops from North and Central Africa by Russian military units, the openly pro-Russian foreign policy of two NATO countries -Hungary and Slovakia-, the independent foreign policy of another NATO member country -Turkey-, the impotence of US imperialism in the face of the situation in Venezuela and Cuba and the growing presence of China and Russia there; are factors that are still subject to a more careful analysis in their complexity and dynamics. But it is clear that U.S. imperialism and Western imperialism as a whole, and its political-military bloc, NATO, are weakened and going through difficult times.

In this situation, any manifestation of campist analysis on the left takes on threatening characteristics for the development of the autonomy and independent politics of the world working class. Support for Russian or Chinese imperialism according to the formula *the enemy of my enemy is my friend* or within the framework of the traditional "anti-Americanism" of many expressions of the left is not only categorically unacceptable for us and our analysis, but also extremely harmful for the perspectives of the left. It is not surprising that the Stalinist camp has supported almost 100%, directly or indirectly, the imperialist attack of the Russian Federation (the second largest and most armed army in the world, possessing nuclear weapons) against a weak and dependent Ukraine.

It should be recalled that Ukraine was greatly weakened militarily after 1994, when under the simultaneous and synchronized pressure of Russian and Western imperialism it was

forced to sign the so-called *Budapest Memorandum*. According to this document, all nuclear weapons located on the territory of Ukraine were transferred to Russia, as well as all nuclear weapon carriers (long-range missiles and strategic aviation). It is precisely these transferred missiles and aircraft that are now destroying the Ukrainian people and their resistance. The reaction of the Stalinists to the armed aggression of Russian imperialism was to be expected since their campism is well known. But what is really worrying is that several organizations claiming to have a Trotskyist political heritage found themselves in the same camp as the Stalinists. We will not enumerate these organizations; they are known and they are in all countries. But beyond the arguments they use to cover up their theoretical and political capitulation to campism, they coincide on two issues: total disregard for the right of the Ukrainian people to their independent and sovereign development, and complicity with Russian imperialist aggression.

In recent times, the key thesis of campism has been the following: *“a real defensive war of national liberation is only possible with the seizure of power by the proletariat and under the leadership of a revolutionary party. And if the proletariat is not in power in a country subjected to imperialist aggression, then any call for resistance by that country will only play into the hands of the bourgeoisie of that country, and not its proletariat.”* That is, the call to abandon resistance to imperialist attack disguised in a beautiful wrapper of pseudo Marxist rhetoric and rejection of the Leninist principle of unconditional support for self-determination and the right to independent development of all the nations of the planet. To be truly internationalist implies not turning a blind eye to national oppression and supporting in every possible way the national liberation struggle of peoples oppressed or subjected to imperialist aggression. Revolutionary Marxists understand the dialectical relationship between the national form of oppression and the basic form of oppression: class oppression. But we also understand perfectly well that to suggest to the workers that they should only fight for the power of the proletariat and to lie to them by telling them that proletarian power alone will automatically solve all the

other problems of inequality, oppression and exploitation that accompany the world of capital is to mislead the proletarian masses!

It is to suggest that the Hindus in the 19th century fight for proletarian power and offer no resistance to the aggression of the British Empire.... It is to suggest that revolutionaries in Ireland renounce resistance to the British occupiers on the pretext that the Irish proletariat is still far from seizing power.... It is to suggest that 19th century Polish revolutionaries abandon resistance to the Tsarist/Russian occupiers and direct their potential for resistance solely against their feudal overlords.... It is to suggest that the Palestinian, Kurdish, Catalan, Basque, Saharawi and many other revolutionaries abandon the slogans of self-determination and independence of their peoples on the grounds that it is not yet the proletarian party that is in power in their countries...



But Karl Marx condemned the *“British rule in India”* and supported the resistance of the Indian people, even if it was not under proletarian slogans and was led by the feudal caste elite. He did not urge the Hindus to turn their arms against their Brahmins and abandon resistance to the British occupiers. In Poland, Marx and Engels consistently supported the uprising against the tsarist regime, and did not cynically call on the Polish rebels to *“turn their arms”* against their feudal overlords. As for Ireland, the position is reflected in a mirror! The fact is that the classics were excellent for setting the priorities of the



moment and analyzing social processes in their internal logic and dynamics of development.

The conclusion is simple: class liberation cannot be achieved in a continuing situation of national oppression and imperialist attacks on the legitimate rights and interests of the peoples fighting for their independence and sovereignty. Campism's latest attempt to support Russian imperialist aggression is linked to a profoundly false appeal to the legacy of the so-called "Zimmerwald left" of the 1915-1917 model and its calls for *No war credits! No support for their governments in imperialist war!* Only our deeply misleading and anti-historical campist opponents deliberately forget that these slogans were addressed by the Zimmerwaldites to the working class of the imperialist warring states!

In small Serbia, which was attacked by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the context of the analysis was different. In his famous work *The Collapse of the Second International* (1915), Vladimir Lenin noted that *"the national element in the present war is represented only by the war of Serbia against Austria.... It is only in Serbia and among the Serbs that we can find a national-liberation movement of long standing, embracing millions, 'the masses of the people', a movement of which the present war of Serbia against Austria is a 'continuation'. If this war were an isolated one, i.e., if it were not connected with the general European war, with the selfish and predatory aims of Britain, Russia, etc., it would have been the duty of all socialists to desire the success of the Serbian bourgeoisie; this is the only correct and absolutely inevitable conclusion to be drawn from the national element in the present war"*. And, as is well known, Lenin's refusal to support Serbia was ultimately connected precisely with the fact that Serbia in 1914 had already joined the imperialist Entente bloc and that the main armies comprising it (Great Britain, France, Russia and Italy) were already directly (!) engaged in military operations on the territory of Europe.

### **WHAT DO WE SEE IN THE SITUATION OF RUSSIAN IMPERIALIST AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE, WHICH ENTERED ITS FIERCEST PHASE IN 2022?**

1. NATO has persistently and consistently rejected Zelensky's requests for Ukraine to join the alliance.

2. NATO has persistently and consistently avoided direct involvement in the war against Russia.

3. NATO is significantly limiting arms deliveries to Ukraine, to the minimum it considers sufficient to prevent Ukraine's defeat and clearly insufficient to defeat the aggressor.

This combination of factors belies the camp mythology that NATO imperialism is fighting Russian imperialism.

The ISL has repeatedly pointed out that if Western imperialism as a whole and its politico-military bloc, NATO, go directly to war against Russian imperialism, the situation will change radically for our analysis, we will immediately call for the defeat of both imperialist blocs and for transforming the imperialist war into a world proletarian revolution. But for now the perspective of NATO entering the Russian-Ukrainian war does not appear as the most probable.

For almost three years the Ukrainian people have been resisting almost single-handedly against Russian imperialism. And often when the resistance is effective it is not thanks to the Ukrainian bourgeois government but in spite of it. It is important for revolutionary Marxists to participate directly in the anti-imperialist resistance movement not to help *their* bourgeoisie to *free itself* from the attacks of the *foreign* bourgeoisie, but precisely to tirelessly expose their bourgeoisie before the working masses in this struggle, which is an integral part of the class struggle; to expose its inconsistency and its betrayal of genuine national interests.

Only by participating directly in the national liberation struggle of the masses against the foreign invader will the proletarian vanguard be able to travel the thorny road of unmasking its bourgeoisie. To turn away from this struggle leads to the self-liquidation of the proletarian vanguard as a true political force.

More than a thousand days have passed since Russia launched its full-scale aggression against Ukraine. For us, the international solidarity of the workers is the most important factor, it gives us hope and helps us to survive. Ukraine continues to resist. In spite of everything... 🇺🇦

# INCOHERENCES and CAPITULATIONS in the world stage

BY SERGIO GARCIA



**The international situation showcases the crisis of global imperialist capitalism. At its center loom ever deeper political and military tensions and acute inter-imperialist frictions. It is the world in which the bloody Russian invasion of Ukraine, the genocide perpetrated by the State of Israel in the Middle East, the threats of war around Taiwan and the tensions between the two Koreas have been unfolding for over two years now.**

These are all elements of an unstable situation, of imperialist power in dispute, intertwined with economic crisis, the rise of far-right political forces and greater development of the class struggle, in a world marked by social and political polarization.

The anti-capitalist and socialist left must intervene in this complex social and political context. And there is no revolutionary policy without first intervening correctly in the great events of the class struggle, the wars of diverse nature that mark the situation and a correct position of independence from the different imperialist camps that contest world domination.

These scenarios of deep crises, wars and global dispute, test imperialist forces and their armies,

traditional political parties and emerging forces. They also test the left, revealing that some organizations fail to overcome the political challenge that this reality poses. One of those organizations is the Trotskyist Fraction, led from Argentina by the PTS, which has incurred in a series of significant political and mistaken characterizations that have led them to various kinds of capitulations.

## **THE ABANDONMENT OF THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION**

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Ukrainian people and working class have shown heroism and sacrifices in defense of their territory, their cities and their lives against



an invading force that is one of the world's main military powers: Putin's Russia, which plays a clear role of gendarme and imperialist aggressor throughout Eastern Europe and part of Asia.

Two processes, and therefore two important political axes, are combined. The first and essential one is always to denounce the invaders. Not just that, but also to advocate for their political and military defeat, actively supporting the self-determination of the Ukrainian people through policies of solidarity with their popular resistance. Of course, this policy must be raised from an independent position of opposition to the Zelenski government and all of NATO and Western imperialism's plans. Precisely to confront them better, the left in Ukraine must be part of the struggle for its self-determination and in defense of Ukrainian territory. And international organizations should support that struggle and its needs.

Unfortunately, the Trotskyist Fraction has turned its back on that struggle for over two years now, hiding behind general statements that criticize the Russian invasion but refusing to lift a finger to help defeat that invasion. Thus, in deeds, which is the most concrete element for any Marxist, they favor the invader. They do so to such an extent that the only concrete actions that the TF has carried out and defends were opposing arms shipments to Ukraine. That is, it boasts having helped to weaken the military defense of the invaded country, forgetting that there can be no neutrality in a war between an invading imperial power and an invaded semi-colonial country, which is the one that needs clear and concrete signs of material support in a military conflict.

This mistaken policy is being carried out even knowing the military difficulties and disadvantages that the Ukrainian people endure. This is even recognized by PTS comrade who wrote:

*"The determining factor continues to be the weakness of the Ukrainian army and the crisis of strategy of the United States and the European powers that lead Ukraine through NATO. Ukrainian forces were already under heavy pressure along the more than 1,100 km-long front line long before Russia launched this offensive. Even its defensive capacity has been weakening since the failed counteroffensive of Spring 2023. It lacks sufficient ammunition, weapons, soldiers and even engineers to develop the trench system that would enable it to resist the Russian offensive."*<sup>1</sup>

## **THERE IS NO WORLD WAR III, BUT THEY ABANDON A COUNTRY INVADED BY AN EMPIRE**

In some statements of the international current of the PTS and in articles published on its websites, they establish that there is not yet an open world war:

*"Although there is not yet an open (military) dispute for hegemony, that is to say, we are not at the beginning of the 'Third World War', an interregnum has opened in which transitory phenomena prevail, typical of stages in which the relation of forces is still undefined. How long it will last will ultimately depend on the development and outcome of the class struggle".*<sup>2</sup>

This current does not, however, develop correct politics from its own characterization. Because, if we are not facing an open World War III, the right to self-determination of Ukraine has to be a central political cause, as the defense of that right has always been in the entire history of the revolutionary movement.

It is worth recalling Lenin's example of Serbia when it was invaded by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. As that invasion quickly led to the first imperialist world war, he explained that the struggle against all the powers in dispute and defeatism became the central politics, and that in that context of international war, unfortunately, the self-determination of Serbia, which was very important, shifted to a second degree of importance. But Lenin said this once there was already an imperialist world war taking place. There is not one taking place now, the Trotskyist Fraction knows it and writes that there is not one taking place, but still does not side with the Ukrainian people and their right to self-determination. This is a complete capitulation and abandonment of a Marxist



principle concerning national wars for self-determination and the rights of invaded peoples.

In this war, the fact that the US and NATO intervene, not on the ground with their own troops, but indirectly by sending arms, money and support to Zelenski, does not eliminate the need to fight for the self-determination of the invaded country. It actually strengthens the need to do so with criticism and independence from all those imperial powers and the Ukrainian government. In fact, those same powers, more so after Trump's victory in the U.S., will be re-evaluating how and how much to remain involved. Today the debate is between the use of longer range weapons over Russian territory and Trump's declarations to end the war. We will see how it all plays out.

In this context, our comrades of the Ukrainian Socialist League always held an active policy of struggle for self-determination and maintained their independence from all imperialists. That is why they stated months ago:

*"For us it remains completely obvious that as long as the Russian army of occupation remains on Ukrainian soil, nothing will change in our slogan for the 'defeat of imperialist Russia and defense of Ukraine'. It is interesting to note that for Western imperialism, the Ukrainian attack on the Kursk region was also unexpected. The official representatives of NATO member countries were forced to hold consultations with the Ukrainian side on this situation. The Ukrainian military quite openly used predominantly Western armored vehicles during this attack and obviously this was done intentionally so that the West would have to accept the next round of escalation on the front. And in this overall international aspect of the war, our analysis remains the same: in case of an open and direct entry of NATO in the war against Russian imperialism, we will call for the defeat of both sides of the imperialist confrontation, without eliminating the slogan of protecting Ukraine from Russian imperialist aggression."<sup>3</sup>*

## TROTSKY, SELF-DETERMINATION AND IMPERIALIST INTERFERENCE

In a situation and a war that had clear points of contact with the present one (the invasion by imperial power of a semi-colonial country and the intervention of other imperialist powers on the other side), Leon Trotsky had completely dif-



ferent politics from those the Trotskyist Fraction defends today. This was several years before the Second World War, in 1937, with the invasion by the Japanese empire of its then semi-colony of China. In that complex situation, Trotsky did not hesitate for a second to side with China and its right to self-determination, fighting against the invasion. He was well aware that the US, a rising imperialist power at the time, was sending arms and money to China to weaken Japan, with whom it competed and clashed. In spite of that complexity and that the Chinese government, an enemy of the working class, controlled the military leadership of the resistance, Trotsky had this to say:

*"Lenin devoted hundreds of pages to demonstrating the basic necessity of making the distinction between imperialist nations and colonial and semi-colonial nations, which comprise the great majority of humanity. To speak of 'revolutionary defeatism' in general, without distinguishing between exploiting and exploited countries, is to make a miserable caricature of Bolshevism and to place that caricature at the service of imperialism... To participate actively and consciously in the war does not mean 'to serve Chiang Kai-shek' but to serve the independence of the colonial country in spite of Chiang Kai-shek. And the words directed against the Kuomintang are the means to educate the masses for the overthrow of Chiang Kai-shek. By participating in the military struggle under the orders of Chiang Kai-shek, since he unfortunately has the command of the war for independence, we prepare ourselves politically for the overthrow of Chiang Kai-shek. That is the only revolutionary policy."<sup>4</sup>*

Trotsky himself, who never lost sight of how to organize revolutionary politics in considering a strong and varied imperialist intervention in the Japanese war and occupation, also said:

*"The imperialist bandits are engaged in an isolated combat against a semi-colonial country in order*

to completely colonize it. The Japanese workers must say: 'My exploiters have imposed this dishonest war on me'. The Chinese worker must say: 'The Japanese bandits have imposed this defensive war on my people. It is my war. Unfortunately the leadership of this war is in the wrong hands. We must severely scrutinize that leadership and prepare to take its place'... I have also heard arguments of the kind: by upholding this war led by Chiang Kai-shek against Japanese imperialism we do a service to British and American imperialism and may become their instrument. Again, ultra-leftism becomes a handicap to revolutionary action... Ultimately, it is false that we 'help' Britain. A people who are capable of defending themselves with arms in hand against one bandit will tomorrow be capable of repelling another. A revolutionary party that understands this and consciously and courageously takes its place at the head of a people that is defending the remnants of its independence, is the only party capable of mobilizing the workers during the war, and of wresting power from the national bourgeoisie after the war."<sup>5</sup>

In short, among the various positions of the left towards the war in Ukraine, there are two sectors that, for different reasons, make the same political mistake: not having supported the Ukrainian people nor defended their right to self-determination in over two years of invasion. Some currents did not do so because they mistakenly characterize that there is already a third world war underway, so develop their politics around an international conflict that does not yet exist. On the basis of such an error, their politics today lead to capitulating to the Russian invader. And the Trotskyist Fraction, recognizing that there is not yet a third world war, has abandoned, from the beginning of the Russian invasion, the principle of the right to self-determination of Ukraine and its military right to defeat the invaders. In both cases, these currents raised and maintain a policy that is far removed from the best experiences and lessons of Leninism and Trotskyism in the face of wars of this kind.

## **CHINESE IMPERIALISM: NO, INCOHERENCES: YES**

Complementing these gross political errors, the Trotskyist Fraction and the PTS have been debating for years on the nature of China and its role in this stage. Going through articles and different studies published on their sites, we find

that, in general, they defend the idea that China cannot yet be defined as an imperialist power.

According to one of its writers, we are facing a "reactionary capitalist bloc led by China that seeks to emerge as a power by deepening its imperialist features".<sup>6</sup> Another of its leaders, some time ago, directly questioned whether China could continue to rise: "Taking the set of internal and external elements that we have raised, perhaps the most adequate provisional definition of China today is that of a 'dependent capitalist state, with imperialist features'. This descriptive formula has the advantage of better showing what China is today, highlighting its contradictory features, its dependence and at the same time its imperialist features. But above all it has the merit of not taking for granted the enormous leap that China's transformation into an imperialist power implies, taking into account the difficult challenges and obstacles, both internal and external, that it should still overcome in spite of its progress, leaving the way more open to eventual setbacks in China's upward dynamic".<sup>7</sup>

Finally, just a few months ago, in the midst of political and military tensions in various regions, that China is a protagonist in, another of its writers minimizes this reality in contrast to another central concern: "At the present time, while tensions between U.S. imperialism and the rising power of China remain at maximum levels, beyond the bilateral initiatives that sought to encapsulate the dispute, the government of Xi Jinping has to focus increasingly on its economic and social difficulties".<sup>8</sup> In order to defend this definition, the Trotskyist Fraction-PTS argues that China has not yet developed all the characteristics that Marxism and Lenin in particular attributed to a particular country in order to consider it imperialist. This way of approaching such a current and complex question is at least unilateral and schematic. Among other reasons, because a power may well not yet have all its imperial characteristics very well developed, but the combination of the development of some of those characteristics with its concrete role on the global stage points to the unequivocal position of an imperialist power in dispute.

Taking the debate to its logical end, it is incoherent of the Trotskyist Fraction to raise the perspective of a possible imperialist world war if one of the two sides is not imperialist, since they consider neither China or Russia an imperialist power. And if they are not imperialist powers, then it is impossible to consider a third world war of

any inter-imperialist character. In other words, it anticipates a future capitulation in its mistaken characterization: in a hypothetical world war, if they consider only one of the camps to be imperialist, they will be unable to independently oppose both imperialist camps in dispute.

Reality is much richer and more concrete than the mistaken analysis of this current. China today is clearly a developing imperialist power competing with the U.S. for world hegemony. The struggle is economic, commercial, political, technological and military, although China still lags far behind in several of these areas. It is true that in different aspects it is still developing and is not catching up with the U.S., for example, in the military and in some technological branches. But this delay is not the qualitative element to be taken into account, but rather the development of all the progress made by China and the way it is positioned in the global struggle, where it clearly has an imperialist objective and role. It is also decisive to see its dynamic, which is unequivocally imperialist. For this reason there is more and more friction and clashes with the US and NATO, although China, knowing that it is not yet fully prepared, does not seek to precipitate a third world war. Instead, it continues to advance along the economic, commercial and technological path. But at some point along the way, these contradictions and struggles will advance to a higher plane.

Not seeing this phenomenon in its globality or trying to reduce it in a unilateral way by taking only one aspect of reality (its less developed part in the imperialist sense) disarms the necessary confrontation and denunciation of China's entire policy in Latin America, Africa and Asia, where it directly attempts to strip many countries of their resources and become their new moneylender. As we said before, the TF will refuse to confront China in concrete terms tomorrow, just as today it refuses to confront Russia, whose defeat, not by chance, but because of the same political mistake, it does not advocate, as it is not an imperialist power either. Putin's Russia is clearly less developed financially, commercially, in capital exports and in various branches of technology compared to the US, Germany and China itself. But it cannot be denied that, in its region and in military terms, it is a major imperialist power. It is hence correct to denounce and confront it, not to hide behind abstract definitions to avoid doing so.

## A PERISHED INTERNATIONAL MODEL

As a counterpoint to this entirely mistaken political position, we see the expression in this current, which is stagnant in its international development, of a sectarian and not at all useful policy for the construction of a revolutionary international project. In general terms, it has been developing the obsolete model of believing itself to be "the" revolutionary international. For this reason, it seeks to force anyone it relates to to accept all the theoretical and political positions that emerge from its leading group in Buenos Aires. It is the model of the obligation to agree with 100% of its positions and with the unique validity of its tradition.

This narrow-mindedness makes any qualitative and progressive leap impossible for them, since very few are willing to accept the method of revealed truths, of accepting them as the owners of universal certainties or representatives of a history with no mistakes, when it is plagued with deficits and mistaken positions. From that questionable place, its construction method would have everyone follow their lead, allowing no nuances or debates of opinions within the single great international.

We are building the ISL in opposition to that method, on the basis of a common revolutionary program, respecting the previous and current experiences of each organization, their origin and tradition. And trusting that experience, democratic debate and the joint construction at the international level will solidify a new superior tradition, politically and theoretically richer. Without believing ourselves to be the only revolutionaries in the world, contributing with all our strength to a healthy method of militant internationalism. 🌱

1. "The Russian offensive in Ukraine and the specters of a 'pre 1914' situation," Claudia Cinatti, May, 2024.
2. "The convulsive interregnum of the international situation," Claudia Cinatti, February, 2024.
3. "Ukrainian army attack on the Kursk region," Oleg Vernik, September 2024.
4. "On the Sino-Japanese war," Leon Trotsky, September 23, 1937.
5. "The Sino-Japanese War," Leon Trotsky, October 27, 1937.
6. Ibid. note 2.
7. "China's place in the hierarchy of global capitalism," John Chingo, January 2021.
8. "The US and China in the international concert: unknowns of the conjuncture," Esteban Mercatante, September, 2024.



# For a REGROUPMENT of REVOLUTIONARIES

## AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ISL, THE LSI AND THE ITO

The International Socialist League, the International Trotskyist Opposition and the League for the Fifth International have agreed to begin a process of collaboration, exchange and discussion with the aim of trying to reach a fusion of our international organizations before the end of next year.

This convergence arises from profound agreements on the characterization of the world situation, the revolutionary policy towards the main events of the current class struggle and a common perspective on the need to regroup revolutionaries on a programmatic and principled basis and a sound democratic centralist method to advance in the construction of a strong International.

The three organizations came together at the Milan Internationalist Meetings, where we noted significant agreements regarding our analysis of the world situation, the characterization of China, Russia and the inter-imperialist conflict, and the revolutionary policy towards Ukraine and Palestine.

We see a perspective of a deepening systemic crisis of capitalism, with growing unequal social and political polarization, with a rise of right-wing and extreme right-wing expressions, even reaching the government in many countries, combined with resistance, mass mobilization movements, strikes waves, rebellions, revolutions and the emergence of a new and young radicalized militant vanguard in the world class struggle. However, while one pole advances in consolidating a political representation with the extreme right in the lead, the other pole fights in the streets but does not materialize a clear political representation. The crisis of the revolutionary leadership of the

working class and popular masses is more acute than ever. Hence the need for a new International rooted in the worldwide struggles of the exploited and oppressed to build a leadership and a program based on the legacy of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg and the experience of over 150 years of the working class movement's struggles against the bureaucracy, bourgeoisie and imperialism.

We agree on the characterization of China and Russia as emerging imperialist powers that are beginning to compete with a Western imperialism that is still hegemonic but in decline. We see a dynamic of a sharpening of the global inter-imperialist dispute between the US and China and their respective allies, which will lead to increasing friction, conflicts and regional and proxy wars. Although a direct global confrontation is not the most probable scenario in the short term, we face a global stage in which that perspective may arise in the future and only the victory of socialist revolution on a planetary scale can avoid it.

We agree on the revolutionary policy towards Ukraine, where we identify the combination of two processes: the invasion of a country by the imperialist power that historically dominated it; and the global inter-imperialist conflict that is also being waged in the trenches in Ukraine. To the extent that there is not a direct confrontation between NATO and Russia, we identify the resistance of the Ukrainian people to the invasion of Russian imperialism as the predominant process. Therefore, a revolutionary policy implies supporting the resistance for it to win and defending the right to self-determination of the Ukrainian people, as well as of the Donbass, and at the same time confronting Zelensky's anti-workers policies and fighting for the dissolution of NATO.

We agree that there is no possible solution

for the Palestinian people without defeating the genocidal state of Israel and replacing it with a single, secular, democratic and socialist Palestine within the framework of a voluntary federation of socialist republics in the Middle East. And that the struggle for this goal implies supporting the resistance of the Palestinian people, as well as that of Lebanon, and of any other people attacked by the Zionists, and building a revolutionary leadership that fights for socialist revolution throughout the Middle East against Israel, the Arab regimes and all bourgeois leaderships.

These points of agreement are substantial. It is not a question of agreeing on two or three arbitrary, conjunctural/contingent issues, but on the global perspective, the main events of the class struggle and the central tasks of revolutionaries in the world.

It is no less important that we also agree on the need to regroup revolutionaries internationally on the basis of a principled revolutionary program and a healthy method of construction, a democratic centralism that allows us to discuss everything in an atmosphere of camaraderie, to process nuances and disagreements, to intervene in the class struggle with common international positions and campaigns and to assist each other in the construction of our national organizations.

In this way, we believe it is possible to help overcome the theoretical, political and methodological limits of a large part of the current political currents of Trotskyism, whose politics and models of construction have been proving inadequate for facing the global reality for decades which has caused increasingly recurrent

crises and splits in the different tendencies.

The currents we, who are in a process of confluence, come from have not been exempt from mistakes that we intend to correct. On the basis of this critical evaluation of the past, we see the need for a patient convergence of diverse experiences, taking the best elements that each current has to contribute, but in the service of laying the foundations of a new revolutionary tradition that we will build together.

In a series of meetings in recent months, the ITO, the L5I and the ISL have confirmed that there is a basis of sufficient political and methodological agreements to begin a process of discussions, exchanges and coordination with the goal of merging our forces.

We have begun a work of coordination and joint intervention and a process of debates on the program, strategy and tactics for the world revolution with this goal. Although divisions and splits have long predominated among revolutionary organizations, from the ISL, the L5I and the ITO, we promote a dynamic of unity and fusion. It is a process that is open to the integration of other revolutionary forces that share the need to regroup in order to contribute to the construction of a revolutionary international that, over time, can become the political representation that the working masses need and lead them towards the world socialist revolution.

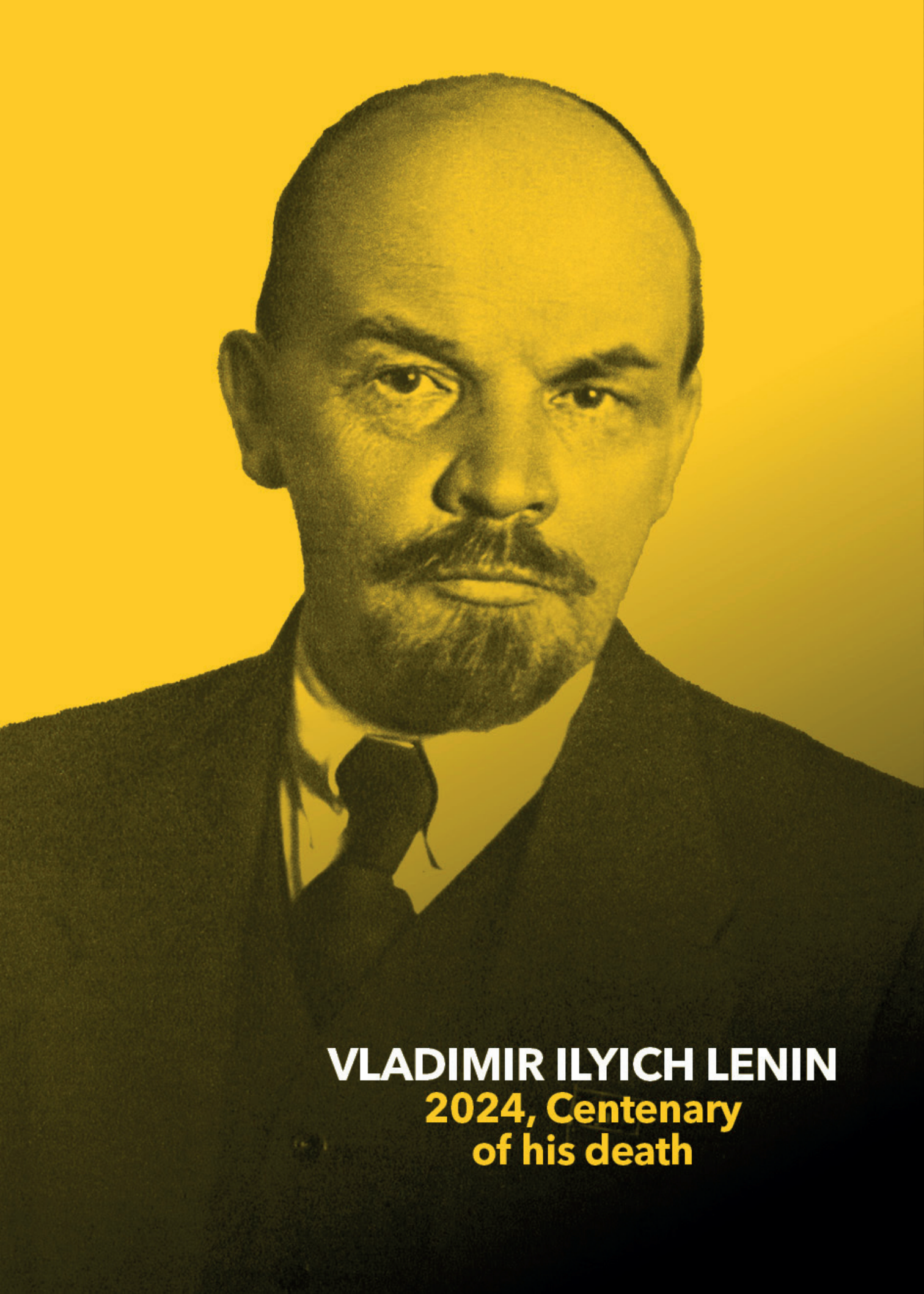
**International Socialist League (ISL)**

**League for the Fifth International (L5I)**

**International Trotskyist Opposition (ITO)**







**VLADIMIR ILYICH LENIN**  
**2024, Centenary**  
**of his death**