



**Death to the Patriarchy!
Socialism or Extinction!
Proxy war in Ukraine
Theses on Imperialism
Brazil, South Africa
Socialist Aotearoa!**

Class Struggle No 143 Summer 2022/23

Editorial

COP 27, the official forum of global capitalism and its terminal Capitalocene project of destroying nature, recently met in Egypt. Of course, its purpose was to pretend to act against climate change. But in reality, it re-affirmed the course set by the Capitalocene for human extinction. At the same time, the convenors of the *Socialism or Extinction* conference held in Mexico City, put out a *Manifesto* calling on workers internationally to rally to the fight for international socialism to save humanity.

In the epoch of imperialism, of Crises, War and Revolution, the Capitalocene takes the form of the Bi-polar world as the two great imperialist blocs fight to win control of Eurasia and the world. Inevitably this leads to wars to redivide the world and drawing the working class into fighting workers against workers. The current proxy war between the US and Russia in Ukraine is the first of many wars that will spread across the world unless the working class rises to the task of turning imperialist war into class war and ending the reign of the Capitalocene once and for all.

Only the working class has the class interest to represent humanity by completing this task as the socialist revolution. The working class as part of the destruction of nature is being made to pay for war with their livelihoods and their lives. Workers' resistance to imperialist war as class war is fundamental to socialist revolution and our answer to the threat of extinction. In the attempt to smash our organised resistance, violent divisions in our class are created along nationalist, racist and sexist lines to weaken our class unity against fascist regimes, wars of mass destruction and nuclear war as the most immediate threat of extinction. To fight those attacks on our unity and class independence we repeat our call for a **New Zimmerwald** to mobilise the class war against imperialist war

The women's uprising in Iran following the killing of Mahsa Amino shows us that women's oppression is still used by the patriarchy to divide the working class. The national struggle of the Kurds and the solidarity of workers has deepened the uprising forcing the regime to resort to mass assassinations. It proves that the state repression of the most oppressed sex in the semi-colonial state serves not to divide but to unite the working class across national, racial and gender lines for a revolutionary, against a reactionary US backed regime change.

Women's resistance to war and human extinction is the key to class unity since women have always resisted the imposition of the original class society, the patriarchy. Unlike nationalism and racism that are the reactionary ideological forms of the Capitalocene, sexism originated as the ideology of the first ruling class, patriarchal men. That is why women's struggle historically represents nature in the contradiction between capital and nature. From the [cradle of humanity](#) to the Capitalocene the resistance of women is testimony to the future restoration of harmony between society and nature in a future communism.

We quote [Chris Knight](#) on Rosa Luxemburg: "she argued that *"primitive communism, with its corresponding democracy and social equality [was] ... the cradle of social development"*. She went on to claim that *"the whole of modern civilisation, with its private property, its class domination, its male domination, its compulsory state and compulsory marriage [is] merely a brief passing phase, which, because they first formed from the dissolution of primitive communist society, in future will become higher social forms ... A communist and democratic society, even if in different and more primitive forms, embraced the whole long past of cultural history prior to present-day civilisation. In this way, the noble tradition of the ancient past, thus holds out a hand to the revolutionary aspirations of the future, the circle of knowledge closes harmoniously, and the present world of class domination and exploitation ... becomes merely a minuscule transient stage in the great cultural advance of humanity."*

Following Luxemburg. the struggle to revive the commune will split Aotearoa/New Zealand over the indigenous name 'Aotearoa' replacing colonial 'New Zealand'. This debate will blow up the bridges in a war between two worlds. 'Aotearoa' represents the survival and revival of the original socialist commune locked in a fight to the death with old 'New Zealand', that of a reactionary semi-colonial capitalism trapped in the global terminal crisis of the Capitalocene.

For international socialist revolution against imperialist war!

For a new Zimmerwald and a new World Party of Socialist Revolution!

SURVIVING EXTINCTION IN A SOCIALIST AOTEAROA

COP 27, the official annual forum of capitalist states which represents the interests of the capitalist ruling classes to continue destroying the Earth, met in Egypt from November 6-18. With an attendance of thousands, dominated by the giant polluters, it succeeded in emitting much hot air and greenhouse gasses. Predictably it failed to take the 'transformational' measures necessary to halt the rush to extinction. Carbon neutrality by 2050 is a death cult. Capitalism is bankrupt and unable to halt its own demise. A Socialist Aotearoa would give us a fighting chance for our survival. How you may ask? The first step is to organise the resistance.

Socialism or Extinction

Recognising that no reforms can stop capitalism from destroying nature, the recent *Socialism or Extinction* Conference in Mexico City in October was convened to rally workers internationally to socialist revolution. Read its [Manifesto](#). Participating in this conference were revolutionary socialists from the Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, the United States, New Zealand, and Zimbabwe.

The conference agreed to four resolutions for united front action. The key resolution

states: *"characterising the Ukraine war as an inter-imperialist proxy war, and identifying the task of building a working-class united front for dual defeatism [we need] a new Zimmerwald that builds for a new International based on the method of the 1938 Transitional Program"*. Let's unpack this resolution.

The war in Ukraine is between Russia on the one side, and on the other the US/NATO using Ukraine as its proxy. Therefore, we are for the defeat of both imperialist powers and the national self-determination of Ukraine. The call for a *new Zimmerwald* is modelled on the World War 1 Zimmerwald Left formed in 1915. It resolved that the 'main enemy is at home' and that workers must 'turn their guns on their own ruling classes'. This led

to a revolutionary left movement around Liebknecht, Luxemburg and Lenin that resulted in the Russian Revolution two years later.

Today our resolution calls for a new communist international to replace the Third which surrendered to the Nazis in 1933, and the Fourth which degenerated after the murder of Trotsky in 1940. The new international will lead the workers'

revolution, 'turning their guns on their ruling classes', defeating imperialism, overthrowing capitalism, and building socialism against human extinction.

Against those who say the war in Ukraine

can be stopped by democratic uprisings of the people, we say: you are deluded! Beneath the surface appearances of chronic stagflation and market chaos is the true reality of capitalism rotting on its feet. In the epoch of imperialism, beset by crises, wars and revolutions, the concrete reality is the **Bi-polar world** where the two great imperialist blocs around the US in the West, and China in the East, fight by any means necessary to take control of Eurasia and the world.

Inevitably this leads to wars to re-divide the world drawing the workers into wars against other workers. Capitalist 'democracy' no longer serves to delude the masses and the state resorts to open repression. Individuals are reduced to pawns and cannon fodder in this great game. The current proxy



Māori protesters on Waitangi Day, 6th February 2006 (Credit: Charlie Brewer)

war between the US and Russia in Ukraine is the first of many wars that will spread across the world unless the working class unites around a new Zimmerwald conference to win workers to the Bolshevik position on imperialist war – to turn imperialist war into class war and ending the reign of the Capital once and for all. How does a Socialist Aotearoa fit into this scenario?

NZ as Capitalist Semi-Colony

First, New Zealand is a capitalist semi-colony– it is politically independent but its economy is owned and controlled by imperialist powers including Britain, Japan, China and the US. Its role in the world division of labour is to import advanced capital goods and some consumer goods while exporting commodities (including education and tourism) to pay for them. Its class structure is determined by its colonial history and economic role.

Who is in the working class and does it have political allies in other classes that have an interest in socialism? We determine class interest as arising from their *exploitation*, that is, producing surplus value which is appropriated by capitalists, landlords and banks as profits, rent and interest. Their common class interest is to end the exploitation and take back the surplus value appropriated from them by socialising the means of production, distribution and exchange.

We define the working class as those who are forced to work for wages because they do not own their means of subsistence. They must work or starve! Those who comprise the *paid workers* are about 70% of work age population. Add to this around 10% who are *unpaid workers* made up of domestic workers in the home, or voluntary workers. Third are the *self-employed*, in particular, those who are *workers disguised* as contractors, and those who own small businesses, e.g., family farms or shops, who pay themselves a wage but also have to pay rent and interest. The total of those who work to live is around 80% compared with 20% employers and small employers who live off the labour of others.

Within the working class the consciousness of class interest will vary from largescale production workers who are unionised, to those self-employed who don't see themselves as workers but as having escaping the working class into a 'middle class'. All are potentially part of the wider working class but will not necessarily hold the same class interest in socialism. It is vital to awaken the consciousness of disguised workers to their underlying interest in socialism to convince them not to join the hostile

petty bourgeois bloc against workers as occurred in the National Socialists in Germany in the 1930s.

Workers who define themselves as 'middle class', show that they are actually relatively high paid individuals who have little solidarity with other workers. Like the petty bourgeoisie historically, they see self-employment as a step to becoming petty capitalists. This may involve buying farms and employing labourers, buying houses to rent out to workers, or investing in SMEs and employing staff. All will attempt to escape rents and mortgages by appropriating the surplus labour of their tenants or employees. The middle-class interest can be summarised as that of aspiring to become capitalist and avoiding sinking back into the working class.

Overcoming divisions in the working class

Because of the potential power of workers and their allies, the national bourgeoisie and their imperialist masters try to smash our organised resistance, by creating violent divisions in our class along *nationalist, racist and sexist* lines, to destroy its solidarity and its capacity to fight the rise of fascism, oppose imperialist wars and global warming. In Aotearoa, these divisions are clearly the product of white settler colonisation where racism was and is still used to suppress Māori rights, and sexism remains alive and well in the patriarchy today.

To pour fuel on these fires the bourgeoisie play on the fear of the middle class, of being driven back into the working class by bankruptcy. The declining middle classes historically have been the main source of fascist fodder used by the bankers and financiers to attack workers, blaming them as the cause of crises rather than capitalism itself. In Aotearoa the current broad frontal attack on rising wages as the cause of inflation serves to stir up petty bourgeois hatred of the working class.

Socialist revolutionaries work to overcome the divisions in the working class and its potential allies. At the same time, we warn against making alliances with the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie as hostile class forces exploiting those divisions along race, gender and class lines. Aotearoa as a white settler semi-colony is something of a laboratory of the social divisions and conflicts that were a necessary part of colonisation.

These divisions have their origins on the wrong side of the history of colonisation. They are ingrained in the white bourgeois and petty-bourgeois class bloc that defends private property from the threat of 'socialism' or 'communism'. When unpacked this fear of revolution also includes hostility to Treaty

rights and a patriarchal hostility towards women in society. Referring to the Prime Minister as 'Cindy the communist' imposing Māori control of water rights, killing democracy as a biproduct, says it all. White nationalism, racism and sexism were not invented by Critical Race Theory, but are fused in the black heart of Eurocentric fascism. Meanwhile, the left is falling apart. Long-time Fabian socialist Chris Trotter has fallen for the revisionist settler narrative that somehow de-colonisation can be peacefully negotiated politely in parliament between the indigenous Māori thrown off their land facing near extinction, defrauded by the colonial state the mouthpiece of the settler gentry, while the stolen wealth of today's gentry who extort rent from all of us keeps piling up on the heads of Māori.

Co-Governance is not self-determination

Water is the new land grab. The gentry got its water rights with the stolen land, the dispossessed lost both the land and attendant water rights. Co-governance, is a token policy of redress sponsored by the UN serving the interests of the ruling classes and inseparable from the US state. Do you see the hegemonic power giving up its power and wealth without a nuclear war? Witness Ukraine as the beginning of the end of the world in motion.

To repeat the now obvious, we live in a bi-polar world in which the Eastern and Western blocs are now going to war in the Great Game to carve up the wealth of Eurasia. What room to manoeuvre is left for that small footnote in history, the NZ state, but to beg indulgences from these great powers?

What possible power do Māori have to shift this global balance of power to its own advantage. Clearly no more than negotiating the power brokerage within the Labour Party, itself stuck negotiating minimal power within the dictates of the semi-colonial template imposed by the real state power the Central Banks, not in Wellington, but in New York and Beijing. So, co-governance is a pathetically token gesture designed to pacify Māori living at the bottom of this historical heap of shit. Tino rangatiratanga will be sold off cheap.

Why then, the hysteria about co-governance? Well, the gentry are dependent on nature, and nature is being burned up by the capitalocene, which is choking off the rent bounty to the gentry with inflammable pine trees. Water in the age of global warming has become the new gold. Just as the big powers are battening down the hatches to hoard gold ahead of the big bang of climate crash, economic slump and the threat of nuclear war, the

prospects for the gentry surviving by extracting monopoly rent from the land are dwindling fast.

And as for the peasants who scrape a miserable existence off the crumbs from this pillage, the only alternative offered is to squeeze out of the neoliberal Labourites, the token whiff of the dying earth. The apologists for neo-colonialism are running around in a panic while their Eurocentric, Anglo-American world collapses. We are with the wretched of the Earth, the dispossessed whose time has come. We have to wake and fight for survival socialism if we want to inherit a liveable Earth.

For a Socialist Aotearoa

The solutions are on the right side of history, that of decolonisation and socialist revolution. Here the revolutionary class bloc unites exploited wage workers, gender oppressed women, and nationally oppressed Māori within a wider working class. Their shared class interest is to fight for national self-determination against the national oppression of Aotearoa as NZ, the semi-colony of the UK, Japan, China and the USA.

This means that workers and their allies must be against Aotearoa supporting any imperialist country in an inter-imperialist war. We must demand that our ruling class breaks from the US/NATO alliance and refuses to participate in any war. Workers must refuse to go to war for profits. We must call for our troops to refuse orders to kill. And in the event of invasion by any imperialist power to defend the sovereignty of Aotearoa.

If in the struggle for national self-determination against imperialism Māori are suppressed, then the fight must also include support for the Māori right to self-determination, including secession. No national can be free from imperialism while it oppresses another. If in the struggle for national self-determination against imperialism, women are suppressed, then the fight must include the right to women's self-determination against the patriarchy.

Socialism can only guarantee the self-determination of the individual by removing the material basis for class, national and sex exploitation and oppression. Without Māori and women in the leadership of the revolution for socialism there can be no Socialist Aotearoa. Without a Socialist Aotearoa that is part of a federation of socialist republics from Argentina to Zimbabwe there can be no end to capitalism and the threat of extinction.

ILTT Report on the International Revolutionary Marxist Anti-Extinctionist Conference

On October 28th and 29th, 2022 the International Left (IL) convened an event entitled “*Socialism or Extinction*” to unite workers organizations in action around a manifesto of the same name.

The IL reports that the conference was held at the SITUAM (Workers’ Union of the Autonomous University of Metropolitana) building in Mexico City and attended internationally on-line. And that: *“Among the participants were representatives or members of four international streams. In addition to ours, the International Left, with its organizations from Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico and the United States that were the conveners, there were organizations that participated as observers of the Unified Secretariat, the LIT(CI) and members of the International Leninist Trotskyist Tendency. (ILTT), as well as members of other national organizations such as the Liga Che Comunista of Argentina or the Ecosocialistas of Bolivia and individuals. All the procedures and interventions, which exceeded 100, as well as the documents and draft resolutions, were made in Spanish and English.”*

The Communist Workers Group (NZ/Ao), a constituent organization of the International Leninist Trotskyist Tendency (ILTT), received the conference call. We reviewed the Manifesto, agreed with its general thrust and critiqued it both at the conference and in letters to the conference committee. We informed the conference organizers that we have also been explaining that the “anthropocene” is actually the capitalocene in our propaganda. The slogan for the conference recalls Rosa Luxemburg’s 1915 slogan against the inter-imperialist war in which she famously warned: “Socialism or Barbarism”! She organized for revolution against inter-imperialist wars and we know she would join us in raising the cry: *Socialism or Extinction!*

Since February the ILTT has reached out across the workers movement in search of a principled working class anti-war united front. In particular we looked for those who agree that the Ukraine war is an inter-imperialist proxy war. We looked for those who understand that capitalism has been restored in Russia and China, that State Monopoly Capital and the legacy institutions of the defeated deformed/degenerated/bureaucratized workers states have allowed China and Russia to escape

being subordinated as semi-colonies and emerge as new imperialist powers.

These understandings synthesize the struggle for class war against capitalist war concretized as the program and application of the strategy of revolutionary dual defeatism against both the NATO US/EU bloc and the Russia/China bloc, which can only be made real by stepped-up working-class struggle in all the imperialist centers, dependents, semi-colonies and proxy nations. For the working class as a ‘class-for-it-self’ to emerge internationally it needs a program that unites Leninism’s rights of oppressed nations to self-determination with Trotsky’s Theory of *Permanent Revolution*. Such an understanding proves that only an Independent Soviet Ukraine which extends self-determination as a right to Donbass and Luhansk can beat back the two imperialist blocs from dividing, subordinating and exploiting the workers and farmers of Ukraine. And for the Ukrainian workers to win their national democratic rights and socialist revolution it must spread beyond its borders in every direction. This war demands a New Zimmerwald to launch a New Workers international based on the method of Trotsky’s 1938 *Transitional Program* on the agenda.

We were enthused to learn that the comrades of the International Left agree on the nature of the war and the need for an international workers’ party that fights for the program of dual defeatism and an Independent Soviet Ukraine.

Based on these mutual understandings the ILTT participated in the conference. The ILTT IEC took the task of addressing its reservations about the LI’s Ukraine position in a draft resolution on Ukraine which the conference adopted. The ILTT also submitted its reservations, elaborations and suggestions on the Manifesto in a letter to the conference, the on-line chat and in oral contributions to the conference.

The conference resolved agreement on four points and assigned tasks to a continuance committee.

1. The necessity of overcoming the crisis of the leadership of the working class by bringing together discussions of the vanguard workers addresses the task of building a New International.
2. The general thrust of the Manifesto Socialism or Extinction and for the conference continuance committee to entertain discussion by the conference participants as regards reservations, elaborations, clarifications and amendments.
3. The resolution characterizing the Ukraine war as an inter-imperialist proxy war and identifying the task of building a working-class United Front for dual defeatism in the war with a New Zimmerwald the builds toward a New International based on the method of the 1938 transitional program.
4. The formation of a Conference Continuance Committee of five representatives, two from the LI, two from the ILTT and one from the Liga Che Comunista.

Organization; represented in the Continuation Committee of the Conference:

Left Party (USA)
 Communist Workers Group (USA)
 Socialismo o Extinción (Mexico)
 Grupo Marxista (Bolivia)
 Grupo Ecosocialista (Bolivia)
 Organization of the Revolutionary Left (OIR-Argentina)
 Liga Che Comunista (Argentina)
 Grupo de Trabalhadores Revolucionários do Brasil
 Revolutionary Workers Group (Zimbabwe)
 Communist Workers Group NZ/Ao (Aotearoa)

ILTT Nov 4

See "***Socialism or Extinction***" document (Spanish)

See ILTT Resolution for dual defeatism against the inter-imperialist proxy war

Resolution adopted by *Socialism or Extinction* Conference

For a Working-Class United Front against the inter-imperialist proxy war in Ukraine

ILTT Contribution to the [Socialism or Extinction Conference](#)

This contribution is a summarized version of our analysis of the character of the war and how the working class must fight against it as informed by both the International Left's resolution and blog statements as well as the work of the ILTT published on its organizations blogs. This dual defeatist statement on the war was signed by the International Left. The International Left and the ILTT also have agreement on the character of Russia and China as imperialist nations.

The war in Ukraine is an inter-imperialist proxy war between the decaying hegemonic US/EU/NATO bloc and the rising China/Russia/CSTO/ SCO bloc. It is counter-revolutionary and aimed against the interest of the workers and farmers on both sides! Because the war is reactionary and fought on behalf of imperialism on BOTH SIDES, soldiers and workers must take a dual defeatist attitude toward the war!

The semi-colonial world is in a three-way tug of war between the two imperialist blocs trying to redivide the world and the workers and oppressed subject to the consequences of the war in the form of a deepening economic and environmental crisis, disrupted flow of commodities and wasted resources. In the semi-colonial world, even while the

competing bloc attempt to redivide the bounty, imperialism is directing its permanent counter-revolution against the workers, small farmers and oppressed whose liberation is bound up with the unfinished tasks of the national democratic revolution.

In Ukraine today the tasks of national independence cannot be won by alliance with either imperialist bloc, those tasks fall to the working class struggling to emerge as a-class-for-itself with socialist revolution that completes the tasks of the national democratic revolution growing over across borders as the permanent revolution.

For both the Russian and Ukrainian soldiers and workers the lesser evil today is served by rejecting

“class peace” and national unity, breaking from the bosses and launching class struggles in work places, schools and on the front lines to fight for workers’ power against capitalist rule.

The capitalists have no way out of the inter-imperialist conflict. Negotiated settlements in the morning news are followed by threats of nuclear war in the evening. The imperialist blocs are trapped in a death lock which only the working class can resolve. The imperialists and pacifists’ call for ceasefire negotiations offer only a robber’s pact to divide Ukraine as always theirs is the ‘peace’ of the graveyard. Without the dual defeat nothing can be guaranteed.

This war can only end with permanent revolution during which the victorious workers can guarantee peace and hold bona fide plebiscites. National plebiscites must be the result of workers’ independent organizations defeating both imperialist parties and their national bourgeois proxies.

The worker’s united front must bring to the international working class a program to end the inter-imperialist war and the cause of war.

The organizations of the working class must take up the class struggle against their own ruling class to defeat the imperialist wars.

We call on this conference to develop the demands and program of the United Front and raise the banner of a New Zimmerwald.

We offer the following:

No to ‘No Fly Zones’! US-EU-NATO and Russia and their allies Out of Ukraine!

Organize workers self defense against fascists in the rear and imperialist invasions.

Workers of all imperialist countries your main enemy is the imperialist bourgeoisie at home!

Build anti-war committees in the factories and workplaces.

For general strikes and mass actions against the imperialist war machines across all of Europe, the US and Russia!

Hot cargo all imperialist belligerents’ freight. For workers’ control of logistics and distribution!

Expropriate the war profiteers and armaments industry under workers’ control.

Close US/UK and EU foreign and NATO bases!

No to Sanctions, they function as war on working people!

No to ‘No Fly Zones’!

For workers self defense militias!

For International Workers brigades to defeat the NATO covert and overt military forces and the Russian invasion forces!

No annexations!

For an independent Soviet Ukraine! For a Workers’ Russia!

For the self-determination of Ukrainians and Russian-speaking minorities!

Soldiers build a Come Home Now movement!

Soldiers refuse to handle, fire or use nuclear, biological or chemical weapons!

Soldiers in the field mutiny, arrest your officers, elect your own officers, fraternize across front lines and protect civilians!

Defeat the fascist battalions, their militia and their foreign nationalist fighters!

Open the secret pouches of the imperialist belligerents and open the books of the imperialist bourgeoisie and big capitalist enterprises!

No faith in the Hague or UN! For independent workers commissions to investigate and prosecute war crimes.

Free all anti-war protesters! Drop all charges!

Convene a new Zimmerwald conference!

For an anti-imperialist workers united front.

For “war against war” to “turn inter-imperialist war abroad into class war at home”!

[Can China Rescue Global Capitalism? The Terminal Crisis Unfolds from Sri Lanka to South Africa and Beyond](#)

BRICS Around the Neck of the Proletariat in <http://www.cwgusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/2014-07-JUL-Class-Warrior-Vol-001-No-6.pdf>

Why Russia and China are Imperialist Powers in [2014-07-JUL-Class-Warrior-Vol-001-No-6.pdf](http://www.cwgusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/2014-07-JUL-Class-Warrior-Vol-001-No-6.pdf) ([cwgusa.org](http://www.cwgusa.org))

Death to the Patriarchy! Death to Capitalism! For Women's Liberation through Socialist Revolution!

We are witnessing an indisputable pre-revolutionary and in places a revolutionary situation developing in Iran. Led by young women, youth have taken to the streets and are fighting and dying in pitched battles chanting easily understood slogans: “**Death to the dictators**”, “**Down with the Islamic Republic**” and “**Women, Life, Freedom**”! The reactionary Mullah capitalist theocracy’s morals police’s arrest, beating and the subsequent death of **Mahsa Amini** (cover photo) in their custody ignited an anti-patriarchal powder keg which may soon bring down the regime. Imperialism is trembling as this movement has potential to upset the capitalist apple cart by inspiring workers revolutions across the region. The ultra-patriarchy and mosque control of the state and oppression of women, terminally unbearable, has boiled over.

The powerful and historically militant Iranian working class has now entered the fray against the Islamic theocracy, notably the strategic oil and petrochemical workers. No sooner had Khamenei declared that henceforth those arrested will not be released than defiant oilfield workers walked off the job *en masse*! Waging refinery strikes, oil workers have been seen shouting “*death to the dictators*”. The entry of the working class in the defense of women is an important development in the struggle. ***Spread the strikes region-wide to all sectors of the economy!*** What is lacking is a revolutionary workers party, a tribune of the workers and all the oppressed, to lead and direct the struggle.

Iran is a multi-ethnic nation. The women and protesters are showing inter-ethnic solidarity chanting “**Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Lors, are together**”. The [protests have spread](#) to Sistan-Baluchistan, the Kurdish regions and the Arab Khuzestan provincial capital Ahvaz.

As reported in the *Wall Street Journal*, “**The protest movement sweeping Iran spread to a Tehran prison known as a symbol of political repression in a new challenge to the Islamic Republic, with detained dissidents chanting anti-government slogans before violence erupted and a deadly fire engulfed the facility, activists said.**”

Women's Oppression, the Theocracy and Imperialism

The oppression of women is directly tied to the exploitation of the working classes and poor in the cycle of social reproduction of the laboring classes. The question of women's liberation has been brought to the forefront as an urgent democratic question in Iran. Internationally, the woman question is a strategic question for the international working class and the fight for socialist revolution. Women, internationally half the working class, have never achieved full social, political or economic equality under capitalism even in the

imperialist nations, as demonstrated by the gutting of abortion rights and the prevalence of domestic violence in the United States. In the semi-colonies and colonies, the conditions for women are far worse.

In Iran as in the U.S.A. and other quasi-theocratic states the church is used to reinforce patriarchy and prevent women from experiencing the benefits of modernity. Women are locked into the kitchen and kinder for fear that they will rise up the permanent revolution in the streets. The patriarchy enslaves women by restrictions on the right to abortion. 300-600,000 illegal abortions are conducted under back room conditions in Iran today ([Iran: Repeal “crippling” new anti-abortion law – UN experts | OHCHR](#)).

We say unequivocally that all state restrictions and control over women's bodily agency and reproductive rights enslaves women to the patriarchy. With reproductive rights under attack around the world, the history of bourgeois democracy warns women that their rights can only be won and retained by a workers' government wherein working-class women play a leading role. Will Iran find its path to permanent revolution or will patriarchy defeat the uprising? Will the worker and women militants be able to build their revolutionary party before the counter-revolution defeats the struggle?

In addition to capitalist super-exploitation women workers face horrible gender oppression based on their sex. The enforced veil in Iran and other nations, female genital mutilation, child brides, family 'honor killings' and other femicides, violence and rape worldwide are the brutal terrors meted out upon women who at most remain second-class citizens, effectively reduced to chattels.

In developing nations subject to the laws of combined and uneven development, traditions and practices of pre-capitalist social backwardness are carried over into the modern period. The theocracy is an effective means

to keep the working class and the poorer strata of the peasantry divided and blind to their objective class interests, which is the fight for workers' revolution to break the imperialist yoke. This social backwardness reinforces the conservative bourgeois institution of the family, forces women into domestic servitude and subjects families to the necessity of selling their labor power and the task of social reproduction of labor.

Maintaining social customs, traditions and ideology from a pre-capitalist era ensures social control and profit flows that maintain the class rule of the comprador bourgeoisie, thus feeding imperialist super-profits and countering the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Fall (TRPTF). The extreme Sharia law and dreams of a new theocratic caliphate are carried into the modern world as a result of the temporary victory of the permanent counter revolution via the agency of the Mullahs against the permanent revolution which in 1979 deposed the Shah. Iran is trapped in this double bind – without victorious workers' revolution nationally and spreading regionally the 1979 defeat – opened the road to the theocratic reaction.

In Iran, women workers are a “last hired, first fired”, highly exploited reserve pool of labor. Of some 20 million employed persons only 3 million are women.



“In Iran, the labor market is generally male. In 2019, the official total number of employed women was 3 million, of whom 1 million were out of work by the end of 2020 due to Coronavirus-related conditions.

....
Despite their many talents, efforts to remain independent, and ability to help their families, Iranian women are considered cheap labor. They receive lower wages and fewer benefits than their male counterparts. Moreover, women are the first to be fired or laid off.

....
The situation of female workers in Iran cannot be compared to that of other groups. Women in Iran work under harsh, substandard conditions in exchange for meager salaries with no benefits or insurance. About 80% of uninsured employees are women (The report of the Social Security Organization, 2017).

*Nobody oversees the work of **underground** female workers in Iran. Most of these workers earn 700,000 or 800,000 Tomans per month (\$27.3 -\$31.2), which is less than the minimum wage set by the regime's labor laws (The state-run ROKNA News Agency – August 1, 2021).*

Labor laws do not apply to female workers in Iran. Laws against women working in difficult and dangerous jobs, staffing night shifts, and carrying heavy loads are routinely ignored.” – [The deplorable conditions of female workers in Iran \(ncr-iran.org\)](https://ncr-iran.org)

What will the masses need to do to defeat the theocracy? What needs to happen to stop its replacement with a ‘color revolution’ by a wing of the divided capitalist class seeking accommodation with one or the other imperialist bloc? How can women, exploited workers and all oppressed people and nationalities in Iran liberate themselves?

It was the Russian Revolution of 1917, that despite the Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Workers state, raised the status, equality and rights of women by centuries across the old defeated Tsarist Russian Empire. Those gains were won by a revolution which was pushed forward in its crucial moments by factory women initiating strikes and demonstrations. Those gains then exerted pressure on the ‘enlightened

West’ and across the working class to raise women’s demands for Bread and Roses in the forms of work, suffrage, sexual freedom, and bodily autonomy including free abortion on demand and childcare. Such remain among the unfinished tasks of women’s liberation

across the globe. Imperialism and patriarchy are very concerned that women across the world will take inspiration from the women of Iran.

Iran torn between two imperialist blocs

The [on again off again](#) nuclear negotiations and ever increasing sanctions squeeze the masses while the Mullahs are split over which imperialist camp to lean toward. Lean toward the West and it may go easier on the sanctions for cutting a nuclear deal; lean toward Russia and China on a well-placed bet that the Chinese behemoth currently eclipsing the West—is the future world power hegemon.

The regime leans on the anti-imperialism of the masses towards the West’s history and current wave of sanctions attempting to rally to national defense against western feminist influence. However, the anti-western sentiment is deep among the besieged masses. It is unlikely to dissuade the women from their goals.

The regime is condemning the uprising as a product of the influence of the West and present themselves as the people’s only defense against the western imperialist

bloc. Will the masses buy this? The masses no longer buy the regime's excuse that repression is necessary to protect Iran from imperialism. The workers and poor have been in the streets year after year with economic demands, proof in fact that the regime does not protect them from the crisis of imperialism. Rather it mediates on behalf of the ruling class and theocracy, between imperialism and the condition of the workers. Women can no longer tolerate having to pay the price for the regime's faux anti-imperialism.

Today the question is of winning and defending women's most fundamental democratic rights. The struggle unites women across the country against being blacked out as nobodies on the streets, against being reduced to nothing! Where it comes to freedom and equal rights, the women's revolution has proved capable of winning the support of the masses.

Western imperialism is not just standing in the wings watching the uprising, it is hoping to save capitalism. Some support a 'color revolution' for regime change that wins Iran for the West. To succeed the revolution must assert its working-class character in order to defeat imperialism both east and west and win an independent workers Iran.

Despite the turf war with Saudi Arabia over Syria, Occupied Palestine, and Yemen, the Mullahs have to navigate the new power bloc of the OPEC Plus. Russia is bucking the West as the [security guarantor for the the Gulf Cooperation Council states](#). Russia and Saudi Arabia came together in October in an agreement to cut oil production, kicking the West right in their petro dollar subsidized kiester. Mid October Crown Prince (PM) Salman told South Africa's [Ramaphosa](#) that Saudi Arabia is interested in joining the BRICS. With tumbling stock markets, the sabotaged NordStream pipelines, unrestrained inflation, hollowed out industrial capacity in the U.S. and winter coming in northern Europe, Russia has played the OPEC card mightily showing that it is far from a weak powerless dependent semi-colony, sub-imperialist, or solely a regional power. No, it is a full-blown imperialist power capable of navigating and seducing combatant national leaderships (Saudi Arabia vs Iran) into its alliances.

The question of defeating the color revolution becomes one of rejecting the regime's appeal to the Russia/China bloc. Iran today has moved decisively toward the Russia/China bloc by joining the SCO. The world situation is rapidly changing. As a result of the war in Ukraine, the rivalry between the two blocs west and east is escalating rapidly to envelop the whole of Eurasia. The completion of the national democratic revolution in Iran confronts the threat of widening war. In this context the national question in Iran becomes subordinated to the class question. The women's revolution can only succeed if it becomes part of the permanent revolution not just in Iran but globally. For the permanent revolution to advance it is necessary to oppose both the attempts by the U.S. to impose its 'color revolution' regime change,

and Iran acting as a semi-colony of Russia and China in expanding its imperialist bloc in Asia and the Middle East.

Vacuum of Proletarian Leadership in the Face of Terminal Capitalism

As regards how the Mullah regime in a bloc with Russia and China can be anti-imperialist, our opponents, self-professed revolutionary tendencies, [practically say 'don't ask!'](#) There are reasons we see and hear them act this way. Let's look at some reasons.

There are defenders of the regime of the Mullahs, ostensibly celebrants of the 1979 Republic that drove out the Shah. The real basis of their support for the Khamenei dictatorship is their characteristic "anti-imperialism," where their monopolar world view sees the U.S.-led imperialist bloc as the world's sole perpetrator of the oppression and super-exploitation of peoples and continents. Though this is the usual world view of post-Stalinist parties, it is what we see from "Socialist Action" in the U.S.A. Under cover of the calls for mass actions ([flops across America!](#)) against all U.S. wars, their project United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) holds sub rosa celebrations of the Khamenei dictatorship's ascension to full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the China/Russia alliance, and make no mention of the women's uprising at their anti-war actions. Internal eruptions in the Workers World Party (WWP) have left Socialist Action the big dogs in UNAC. With WWP thus demoted, War Resisters League has just adhered to UNAC, even calling the Syrian revolution a "U.S. war."

There are also unconscious defenders of the patriarchy, the ideology the "Islamic Republic" defends. Left outfits such as the [Workers World Party \(WWP\)](#) ignore the predicament of women in Iran today. They are silent on the role of Iran's repression of women so as to avoid putting the regime in a bad light for sending drones to Russia to use against Ukraine. While they rallied against the U.S. role in the war in Ukraine, they ignored the equally important uprising of women in Iran for the world revolution.

Women are not stopping at the removal of the hijab. All their freedoms and democratic rights for education, work, bodily autonomy right up to executing the dictator are on the agenda and being raised by the masses. The moment is now that the vanguard workers and women must come together and build their revolutionary party. When they consider their program what will they find? Will they find their revolutionary program and party in time?

The revolutionary moment must be advanced by victories or it will stall and retreat. To navigate what starts as spontaneous, the masses need coordinated revolutionary leadership. The revolutionary moment which raises up all the contradictions of society will be resolved by the women's revolution sparking the workers

revolution, or by the mullahs or by other forces of capitalist reaction crushing the struggle.

Against Reaction in All Its Forms

As a challenge to the institution of the bourgeois family, the rights of LGBTQ persons are intrinsically bound up with the fight for women's liberation. As we have written in the past, as the Revolutionary Trotskyist League in 1993:

"It is thus within the nuclear family that the oppression of children and youth, and of lesbians and gay men, is firmly rooted....The stark fact that lesbian and gay sex is openly non-reproductive directly challenges the bourgeois "norm" of the heterosexual, monogamous, child-bearing family. This provides some insight into exactly why the nuclear family is so vital to the capitalist class. Put bluntly, without this social unit, capitalism would not be able to sustain itself profitably; it would not be able to endure" (The Struggle Against Women's Oppression In The 90's: A Working Class Perspective)

This fight includes liberation from [transactivism](#), internationally, a bourgeois/petty-bourgeois movement, promoted by the post-modern ideology of neoliberalism, which places the individual above the collective. It is a major attack on women, on homosexuals, especially lesbians, which most of the left supports, erasing women from the map and their historical oppression as a gender based on the reproductive and productive capacity of their sex, dividing the class unity between working men and women. In Iran, homosexuality is a [crime punishable by death](#). Not just as dogma of the faith but as the reactionary cultural terror policy of the state.

And in a particularly brutal, disgusting practice, gay people in Iran have reportedly been [intimidated into undergoing gender reassignment surgeries](#) (in essence, forced mutilation) in order to avoid being punished or executed. The Islamic regime takes a more "tolerant" view of transgender persons, but not by much as they face the loss of family support, loss of employment, face discrimination and are targets of physical violence.

Everywhere in Iran there is super exploitation of the female right to work, where this right is not denied. This super-exploitation prevents women and their families from living full-fledged lives of developed selves, as it exerts a crushing downward pressure on securing the means of life. But tendencies who took identity politics overboard in pushing aside the crucial fight for women's liberation by adaptation to the anti-materialist "trans ideology" now have to figure out how to support revolutionary female leaders without reference to gender oppression from birth or the material facts of womanhood and social class. Being determines consciousness is the Marxist byword, and in Iran we are watching it operate.

So we would not be tempted for a moment to go for the Cartesian "I think therefore I am" proposition like the 'left' union officials of the [UE-COGS](#) or the post-

Morenoists of "Left Voice" who arrange pronouns and delete nouns to suit thought fashion in academia in the imperialist center. Consciously or otherwise, opposition to women's liberation is anti-worker and patriarchy supportive, advancing the chaos of a non-material identity at the expense of real women and a wholesale rejection of materialism. This is opportunism run amok and a methodological departure from Marxism.

Competing for the Most Objectivist Prize

Then we come across historically sectarian abstentionist outfits who predictably held up the absence of the big battalions of labor (ILLEGAL ORGANIZATIONS IN IRAN!!!) as proof that this is little more than a democratic rights struggle. Now with the entry of the strategically important oil workers into the struggle which leads to mass actions exceeding the anti-regime struggles and illegal strikes of the last 5 years, fighting the regime's police and law, this is still, for them, only a "democratic revolution" movement. These Menshevik stagists span "[International Viewpoint](#)" with its reportage and cheerleading opinion which concludes without any programmatic contribution, across to a bashful [Fraccion Leninista Trotskista Internacional \(FLTI\)](#) who, in a wide departure from their habit, have a minimal program for Iranian fighters. They have joined the ranks of the stagists who abandon the fight for permanent revolution. The FLTI's program leaves the workers organizing for dual power but they do not raise the ultimate transitional demand: **the workers' government based on workers' councils and workers' militias**. Nor do they call for the formation of the revolutionary party to popularize this program or for the new workers' International, necessary to spread the revolution across western Asia.

You see, the objectively revolutionary working class will, or will not, know what to do and at some later opportune moment these groupings will offer more particular advice. Of course, the historical record, where every mass struggle begins to mobilize and spontaneously elaborates democratic demands, is not deviated from at all in this case. The fact that women's liberation demands are leading the masses onto the revolutionary road is a gauge of the movement's power, not a stagist limitation as actual counterrevolutionary forces wish. The fight for bourgeois democratic rights in Iran is completely bound up with the fight for workers revolution. This is the theory of the Permanent Revolution that Trotsky elaborated over 100 years ago and that became a historical reality with the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Forms of organization matter. The masses will self-organize, first in familiar ways and with forms proven in previous struggles. What the new situation calls for are forms of organization that are up to the tasks of seizing power from the capitalist class and mobilizing the great masses to wield it for their own class ends. These forms, and just as importantly the revolutionary internal logic of escalating transitional demands, are the guts of a

transitional program the many bashful objectivists just can't seem to mention. Thanks to the Mullah's regime and the Pahlavis before them, British colonialism and Rockefeller imperialism, modern Iran strains to hatch from its shell as a petrostate. That Khamenei's government looks to Chinese oil demand and wholesale repressions of the masses (that he calls "flies") occurs exactly at the moment when world mass sentiment wants to eclipse oil consumption and reject theocratic laws, that tells us how weak his dictatorship's grip on power is!

We look across 'the West' and ask where's the revolutionary optimism? The firm conviction that the socialist revolution is required and that its program is species and planet rescue itself is the program of the International Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency (ILTT)!

The Constituent Assembly: A Halfway House to Defeat

Forms matter and some who know better, or ought to, fetishize Constituent Assemblies. These are almost always a bad idea. Let's see who wants them and why.

It is no accident that the Saudi royals want the elevation to the throne of the son of the Shah. The guy himself is less than convinced, posing with his weight on his modernist foot. Does he want to be a "constitutional monarch" instead? He makes those noises. We know he'll find some western imperialist support for that idea if he makes more than a private effort to gather it. One way to gather it is to get the 'color revolution' and regime change forces lined up to promote a Constituent Assembly. This is so far not the preferred course of the Biden government or the "strategic stability" majority thought at the State Department, however much of the Stalinist-led left internationally yells otherwise. But as if to make Stalinist lies about Trotskyism come true, the ex-Workers Power, ex-Cliffite RCIT, a small international current with a big Viennese publishing operation jumps onto the platform calling for a "revolutionary" constituent assembly. We see this as backdoor stagism and not just their habitual opportunist adaptation to mass consciousness we have seen from them on too many occasions. Certainly, Lenin called on revolutionaries to be tribunes of all the people. But it is no good to popularize an obstacle to proletarian power when no one but the class enemy calls for it. In the 21st century their "RCA" has worse than no utility for proletarian victory.

To win, the movement must attract and trigger labor to step forward and put the weight of the working class and its historic program into the equation at the head of the masses. The working class must assert organizational independence from the state, use class struggle methods, manifestations, factory occupations, popular assemblies, and form up workers councils and a workers' militia with authority to lead political general strikes that smash the capitalist theocratic patriarchal state to win a workers' government. And most importantly, build a

revolutionary Leninist workers party so that the workers' victory is not fragile or ephemeral.

Independent labor organizations are banned in Iran. All legal organizations of workers are mediated by the state despite Iran signing on to the International Labor Organization (ILO). The government runs a tight ship to extract maximum surplus value from the laboring class. Labor needs to break the confines of Sharia domination and use workers' democracy to elevate new leadership independent of the state and dedicated to the historic interests of the oppressed and exploited. As in Egypt in 2011, the time to organize fighting unions and struggle organizations of every kind is NOW!

Break the Military from the Regime

Iran has a regular army, a political army, a paramilitary plain clothes militia (Basij) and regular police. The Islamic Republic of Iran Army has the typical four branches tasked with territorial defense and war. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp (IGRC-Pasdaran) and the Basij were organized after the defeat of the democratic anti-Shah revolution by the theocracy. Founded in [1979 by order of Ayatollah Khomeini](#) they are political enforcers out of which the "morality police" emerged.

Military service is compulsory for males at the age of eighteen who are denied passports until they serve. With an average monthly salary of \$200.00 per month the rich were allowed to buy their way out of service for between [\\$10-20,000](#) until January of 2022 when [public pressure forced the regime to formally abolish that option](#). Thus every working class male has basic military training. The ruling class, on the other hand, after evading service for decades, depends on the loyalty of workers in uniform under the watchful eye of the Ayatollah's political police.

Soldiers conscripted into every capitalist army are workers in uniform. We distinguish conscripts from the professional volunteer corps and mercenaries who are contract killers of workers in uniform. The job of the officer corps is to keep the soldiers from thinking outside the official ideology lest they realize and fight for their class interests! But during times of revolution conscript soldiers are torn between the interests of their social class and those of the capitalist state and the regime. This is a truism that every military strategist understands and every capitalist class fears. Every military expert knows how the Russian revolution was won by workers and soldiers councils which elected their own officers. Every historian knows that during the crucial moments of indignant revolutionary upsurge the soldiers' waiver when facing off against their own class in the streets. Soldiers are even more vulnerable to awakening class consciousness when asked to fight in the meat grinder of imperialist wars. The news of [ten dead](#) IRGC trainers in areas of Russian occupied Ukraine must weigh heavily on the conscripts who surely want to just do their two years and get out!

The class struggle and success of the revolution demands the masses break the soldiers from the regime and in turn open the arsenals to the workers. The soldiers, the 18-20 year-olds, all with mothers and sisters, need to see a new authority assert its power in order to be persuaded to arrest their officers and the political police. Don't think for a minute that the conscripts are not watching how bravely their sisters and the youth are standing up to the political police. Don't think they are not watching their fathers and older brothers going on strike in the oil and gas fields, the refineries, the sugarcane industry. The arrest of 100 strikers and their replacement with Chinese scabs at the Asalouyeh complex will not inspire the conscripts to either support the regime or its dependence on Chinese imperialism to break the strike. The masses have signaled to the conscripts with their defiance, blood and determination. To win them to act on behalf of the revolution the working class and women must create their own assemblies and councils, defend them and use that power to break the army from the regime.

A lesson in Trotsky's [History of the Russian Revolution](#) was written for just this occasion:

"The critical hour of contact between the pushing crowd and the soldiers who bar their way has its critical minute. That is when the grey barrier has not yet given way, still holds together shoulder to shoulder, but already wavers, and the officer, gathering his last strength of will, gives the command: "Fire!" The cry of the crowd, the yell of terror and threat, drowns the command, but not wholly. The rifles waver. The crowd pushes. Then the officer points the barrel of his revolver at the most suspicious soldier. From the decisive minute now stands out the decisive second. The death of the boldest soldier, to whom the others have involuntarily looked for guidance, a shot into the crowd by a corporal from the dead man's rifle, and the barrier closes, the guns go off of themselves, scattering the crowd into the alleys and backyards. But how many times since 1905 it has happened otherwise! At the critical moment, when the officer is ready to pull the trigger, a shot from the crowd – which has its Kayurovs and Chugurins – forestalls him. This decides not only the fate of the street skirmish, but perhaps the whole day, or the whole insurrection.

The task which Shliapnikov set himself of protecting the workers from hostile clashes with the troops by not giving firearms to the insurrectionists, could not in any case be carried out. Before it came to these clashes with the troops, innumerable clashes had occurred with the police. The street fighting began with the disarming of the hated Pharaohs, their revolvers passing into the hands of the rebels. The revolver by itself is a weak, almost toy-like weapon against the muskets, rifles, machine guns and cannon of the enemy. But are these weapons genuinely in the hands of the enemy? To settle this question the workers demanded arms. It was a psychological question. But even in an insurrection, psychic processes are inseparable from material ones.

The way to the soldier's rifle leads through the revolver taken from the Pharaoh."

For Permanent Revolution in Iran and All Western Asia!

The 'Revolutionary Guard Corps' has demonstrated its role in the state to brutally suppress the masses. The workers organizations must take the lead and organize workers armed self defense militias. In order to win, the working class needs to be committed to expropriation of the means of production from the national bourgeoisie and imperialist holdings and to initiate a centrally planned economy run under workers control which asserts its monopoly of foreign trade. History demonstrates that the masses' victory is dependent on the workers' own vanguard party committed to these ends. The alternative is defeat, the dungeon, [the whip and the hangman's noose](#) of the Mullah or the next comprador capitalist regime.

Generation after generation of the Iranian working class have fought for their economic and democratic demands only to be beaten and killed in the streets, workplaces and universities. In this period of the terminal multi-crisis of capitalism, with inter-imperialist wars and proxy wars exploding in Syria, Yemen, Myanmar and Ukraine, the ruling class offers nothing but more poverty, more oppression and more wars. It is no surprise this generation of young women are throwing off the hijab with their anger aimed directly at the regime. Clearly these youth are their own agents, not proxies of the U.S. and Israel as the regime claims.

The regime of the Mullahs has always been caught by the contradictions of running a medieval theocracy in the age of imperialism in its terminal crisis. Indeed, the rule of the monarchy was western imperialism's way to stall the national democratic revolution which exploded in the 1890's tobacco protests and the 1905-11 constitutional uprising. The monarch stymied the tendency of national revolutions to go permanent and international.

In 1953 the last Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, initiated a ["White Revolution"](#) to win the peasantry to his side at the expense of the landlord class to forestall a "red revolution" with land reform and economic liberalizations. This period saw the growth of the working class and urban intelligentsia against which the secret police, the blood drenched SAVAK, were employed to prevent the workers' vanguard from consolidating a revolutionary party. All the while the Shah administered a dependent nation subordinated to imperialism creating the economic and political pre-conditions for the revolutionary moment in 1979.

The Mullahs based their rule ideologically on the clerics, economically on the power of the Bazaar merchant middle class capitalists. They rallied the lower classes and urban poor against both international capitalism and Soviet 'communism' with promises of a third way, the Islamic Republic – a chimera that for 43 years has failed

to deliver. In a manner reminiscent of Peron (Argentina) and Vargas (Brazil), Khomeini carved a Bonapartist path to unite the masses in a cultural and political reconstruction of an Islamic Republic, despite lacking the economic and social base upon which to raise Iran up from its condition of a dependent capitalist rentier welfare state.

Today is not the first-time women have demanded an end to the veil. *"In March 1979, tens of thousands of women marched in Tehran against the then-new law of compulsory hijab, among other laws which attacked women's rights instituted by the new Islamic Republic."* Those women revolutionaries, assistant professor [Alborz Ghandehari](#) reminds us, chanted, *"We did not carry out the revolution in order to go backwards."* What few understood then and many observers and participants misunderstand today is that, both in the advanced imperialist countries and the dependent semi-colonies women can only win liberation by socialist revolution that sweeps away "all the old crap!"

Far from completing the tasks of the national democratic revolution, the aborted 1979 revolution removed the Pahlavi monarchy and the Peacock throne, becoming an autarchic oil rentier state subject to the deepening crises of imperialism and the aggression of the western hegemony. U.S. imperialism has ever since been licking its wounds at the loss of primary dibs on the oil and the geo-strategic access to the Straits of Hormuz, the Caspian Sea and a land mass on the Russian southern border.

The national democratic revolution of 1979 did not 'grow over' into a permanent revolution necessary to liberate itself from the grip of imperialism but was hijacked by the Ayatollahs, with the assistance of much of the fake Socialist left who abandoned the workers and courted the new leaders. The masses who died by the thousands in '78-'79 and the aftermath did not put Iran on its path to liberation from the status of a semi-colonial dependent nation navigating its way in the imperialist world system.

**For Women's Liberation through Socialist Revolution
No to the enforced hijab! Down with France's racist anti-veil laws!**

Spread the struggle! For labor political strikes across Iran! For a general strike against the brutal theocratic regime!

Immediately free all protesters! Free all political prisoners and prisoners of the morality police!

Build a multi-ethnic workers and women's self-defense militia to disarm and disband the police, security forces and all forces of state repression!

Abolish the death penalty!

For full political, social and economic rights for Iranian women!

For guaranteed employment for all women!

30 hours work for 40 hours pay and a sliding scale of prices and wages under workers' control!

For free quality education, housing, healthcare and childcare!

**For free abortion on demand! For bodily autonomy!
For the right to divorce!**

Organize all women workers in the workplaces and the homes!

**Build genuine, class independent unions today!
Invalidate, break all state labor "contracts!"**

Unionize foreign and precarious workers! Full time living wage jobs for all!

Down with the Islamic Republic! For the strict separation of Church and State!

For the democratic right for the Bahai and all others to practice their religion!

Down with the death sentence for gays and lesbians!

Down with forced gay and lesbian conversion by the regime!

For full democratic rights for LGBTQ persons including the right to employment, education, housing and healthcare!

For the right of all to marry whomever they please and express themselves as they wish!

For organized self-defense against attacks on LGBTQ persons!

For the right to language of choice! For the right of self-determination for the Azeris, the Kurds, and all the oppressed nationalities in Iran!

U.S. hands off Iran! Down with U.S. imperialist sanctions!

For the right of Iran to defend itself against imperialist powers by any means necessary!

Rebuild the worker Shoras!

Build factory committees, neighborhood committees and workers councils to challenge the power of the Islamic Republic!

Down with the constituent assembly!

Build soldier and sailor councils!

Split the military and turn the guns against the regime!

For a revolutionary workers party in Iran!

Iranian workers to power at the head of the masses!

For workers revolution in Iran!

For a workers government based on workers councils and a workers' militia!

Break the chains of imperialist subordination and exploitation!

Expropriate the commanding heights of the economy under workers control without indemnification!

Build a centrally planned economy for social needs, not imperialist profits!

For Permanent Revolution across Western Asia!

For a Socialist Federation of Western Asia!

For a new revolutionary Workers International, the World Party of Socialist Revolution!

***International Leninist Trotskyist Tendency (ILTT),
October 24, 2022***

Brazil: The Outcome of Election - Break with the Popular Front and organize the struggle now!

The October 30 election had an extremely close result, giving victory to Lula and the Popular Front (FP) with a difference of less than 2 million votes out of a total of almost 120 million, consolidating the polarization in the country.

The day after the vote, the roads were blocked by truck drivers and Bolsonaro supporters. The situation was worrying, with the beginning of a shortage of fuel and other goods, when a meeting of ministers was called and a statement from Bolsonaro was awaited, until then in silence since the day of the election. Bolsonaro's statement came at the end of the second day of blocked roads, in a tense and highly pressured situation, which discouraged the blocking of roads. It is speculated that at the ministerial meeting, Bolsonaro did not get support for a coup. Since then, roadblocks have been dissolving, and supporters of a military coup are mobilized in front of barracks in various cities across the country.

Lula made a broad alliance to win the elections and has already warned that his government will not be of the PT, but of this Broad Front that supported him. Lula's next government will be in the hands of his bourgeois allies, former rivals such as PSDB, PMDB, PSD and several other ruling class parties. Unlike previous PT governments, most ministers and other second- and third-level positions will not belong to the PT, and Lula may have to deal with dissatisfaction within his own party. As we had already warned, the new Lula government will be much more dependent on the bourgeoisie than the first governments were.

Lula is assembling the transitional cabinet and negotiations with bourgeois parties do not stop, including even the president of the chamber of deputies, Artur Lira, a supporter of Bolsonaro, so that he can be re-elected in the position that has an election scheduled for next February. The cabinet has its biggest propagandist in Rede Globo television, a coup leader in 1964, which prepares the Brazilian people for the "difficult" task that the next government will have, of granting social benefits while at the same time having to cover the hole in the supposedly public accounts, left by Bolsonaro. That is to say, preparing the workers and poor people for the attack measures that the government will take to guarantee the bankers'

profit and that the workers pay the price of the crisis.

Just as the bourgeoisie overthrew Dilma by saying that the recession was due to the "theft" of the PT, now the gap in public accounts was made by Bolsonaro's spending, not to mention the effects of the global crisis of capitalism that since 2008 has diverted public money to save money. Banks and large companies and withdraw workers' rights so that they pay the price of the crisis, generating political, economic and social instability around the world. Lula and Globo know that they need to put an end to the false hope they gave in the electoral campaign that Brazil would grow again and Lula would repeat the achievements of the past, before the outbreak of the crisis. A crisis that today leads us to extinction and inter-imperialist war.

Faced with the coup threat and growing fascism, leftist parties and organizations that claim to be revolutionary and socialist have called for a vote for the Popular Front (FP), as a lesser and necessary evil to combat fascism. The self-identified as Trotskyists said that the day after the election, it would be opposition to FP. However, the more the fascist movement grows, being camped today in front of the army barracks asking for a military coup, and with the bourgeois democratic regime increasingly demoralized, the left clings to the defense of the reactionary institutions of the regime in crisis and the alliances with the "democratic" bourgeoisie, that is, the PF.

Lenin's relentless struggle against the popular front was what made possible the first and greatest successful socialist revolution in history. Lenin and Trotsky warned the workers that the PF was the breaking of the Marxist principle of class independence as an indispensable condition for ending capitalism and the bourgeoisie. Trotsky tirelessly warned workers about the rise of fascism in the 1930s, characterized it as a movement based on the petty bourgeoisie and lumpenproletariat to crush the working class and that this movement could only be defeated by the workers and their class movement and methods. For Lenin and Trotsky, the PF is the greatest obstacle for the working class, as it demobilizes, disorganizes and delays class consciousness, paving the way for fascism.

Now that the obvious has been confirmed, that bourgeois elections and the democratic bourgeoisie are not capable of defeating fascism, the capitulating left once again calls on the workers to break the principle of class independence, to support the FP and defend the moribund Brazilian bourgeois democratic regime to guarantee Lula's inauguration. The PSTU, in its note, calls on workers and left-wing organizations to fight the coup and guarantee Lula's inauguration so that, in January, he can start fighting for his government to serve the workers.

The situation of the class struggle in Brazil completely lays bare the reformist and staged program of the reformist/centrist left. In 2016, the PSTU supported the impeachment of Dilma, denying the coup threat and the rise of fascism. In that year's election, they supported the Popular Front "to fight fascism". Now, the way out for the working class is to defend the moribund bourgeois democratic regime to guarantee the ownership of the FP. There is no time for the program of permanent revolution. At no time, for the PSTU and the left as a whole, is it time for the workers to organize themselves independently with a revolutionary program, which defends democracy as a transitory claim that the workers can only achieve by advancing with strikes, pickets, taking over factories and state power.

The governance of the next government seems increasingly difficult. Lula's broad front is really big and the future government needs to accommodate all of it in the state apparatus. The media closely follows the formation of the transitional cabinet, the negotiations between the parties and speculates on names for ministries. While Lula and Globo say that it is the conformation of a Broad Front government, the give-and-take of Brazilian politics, which the people see as a cause of corruption and which led to Bolsonaro being elected in 2018, as he said to be against the "system", is resurfacing with force in the eyes of society.

On November 11, the Armed Forces released a note, in practice, supporting the coup camps throughout Brazil, which have been taking place since the roads were unlocked. There is no doubt that the security forces of the bourgeoisie, such as the military police and the federal highway police are ready for a coup call. These reactionary institutions have made this clear when on election day the PRF set up barriers throughout the country making it difficult for several poorer people who were potentially Lula voters to vote. The military police, as always, quite

complacent and even seen fraternizing with the coup movement.

We call the workers to fight the coup leaders, either before or after Lula's inauguration. Therefore, we support the call of the PSTU and other leftist organizations to mobilize against the fascist movement that is in the streets today. But without breaking with the Marxist principle of class independence and without giving any political support to the PT and the popular front. The struggle for democratic rights must be carried out with independent organization and the methods of struggle of the working class. The call to struggle must include the call for a United Front of workers, which includes not only the leadership, but the bases of the organizations, with the formation of committees in the workplace, study and housing and which advances in class consciousness, training of workers' militias, strikes, occupations and pickets.

Workers cannot wait to demobilize the coup movement or fight for their demands while Lula does his best to serve the financial market, agribusiness and all sectors of the bourgeoisie. Workers need to have a voice; their claims are many and long standing. For the repeal of the social security and labor reform, no payment of the public debt, end of the fiscal responsibility law and many others. For this we need class independence in our organization and action.

Workers need to be aware that the new government will have to attack the class hard and it will be necessary to fight for democratic rights and freedoms and be prepared for self-defense. He must be aware of the demobilization attempts by the populist leaderships that try to demoralize the workers' struggle, even labelling him a "fascist" and "playing the game of the right", as he has already done since the June 2013 days.

Defeat the fascist movement with class methods and organization!

No support for FP!

For workers' self-defence committees and militias!

For a Classist United Front! For a National Congress of Workers with delegates elected in the grassroots committees to draw up a struggle program!

For a Revolutionary Party in Brazil!

For a World Party of Socialist Revolution based on the method of the Transitional Program of 1938!

Towards Permanent Revolution!

Report on South Africa: China, Economy, Labour Movement and Resistance

On 18 October the South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU,) in alliance with other organisations held a protest against the proposed structural adjustments at Eskom, the state energy company, proposing instead to reclaim and build a green new Eskom. This follows the unprecedented electricity blackouts and power cuts that have become the norm in South Africa resulting in a number of protests and anger directed towards Eskom and the government. The power outages that are being caused by failure to plan for alternative sustainable energy sources are but a reflection of the general crisis of the South African economy as a result of unplanned and wasteful capitalist motivations seeking profit at the expense of the livelihoods of the majority and the planet. One major coal plant's lifespan has come to an end with nine others expected to do so by 2035 at a cost of 55,000 jobs. To resolve the energy crisis an estimated 1.2 trillion Rands (\$70.6 Bn US) is required, according to liberal bourgeois planners.

China appears to be the most favoured candidate to bail out the state-owned enterprise having made several large loans including one from the China Development Bank for R33 B in 2018. We argue that the Eskom crisis is a natural product of a system that is motivated by profit at the expense of human need and nature evident clearly in a large semi-colony facing capitalism's terminal crisis. Only a socialist revolution smashing capitalism and imperialism can save humanity and the earth.

South Africa is currently experiencing what mainstream liberal sources are calling a technical recession caused mainly by the incessant power cuts and the Ukraine war on the basis of the global economic crisis that started around the 2008 recession and slowdown and compounded by the Covid 19 crisis. The national crisis is characterised by high unemployment, extreme poverty, social inequality and limited access to social services by the majority who are the working and poor masses as well as lack of skilled workers and significant drop in private investment (to insert source). In the second quarter of 2022 Gross Domestic Product, GDP, shrunk by 0.7% whilst the October consumer price inflation was 7.6% according to [Statistics South Africa](#), the country's official statistics body. Also, according to the same source, seven industries contracted with the biggest contractions being in

the key agriculture, manufacturing and mining sectors.

We assert that the bourgeois analysis of the crisis in South Africa fails to take into account its main cause - the tendency for the rate of profit to fall. A 'technical recession' is defined as no growth in output over a given period. What this really means is that the production of value is stagnating in the country. The ability of imperialism to extract value and super profits cannot avoid stagflation as new investment is not made unless profits are guaranteed. When no growth combines with rising prices stagflation results, with the accompanying stagnation of jobs, wages, and livelihoods.

That is why in Africa the national bourgeoisies are driven into the [arms of China](#) to make 'win-win' state-to-state deals, investing in infrastructure and production of energy and minerals to restore the conditions for making profits. China claims that 'win-win' deals benefit both economic partners, so that it is not a colonial power. This is only true insofar as its national comprador regime partners are the ones who 'win' as they, and not the working people, profit from their share of the value produced. China also hides behind its history of 'friendly' relations with SA going back to the days of Maoism.

The role of China in the political and economic affairs of South Africa started during the apartheid days when China, through the Stalinist South African Communist Party (SACP), which captured a significant layer of the African National Congress (ANC) leadership. China propped them up organisationally and financially especially against their Pan-Africanist adversaries in the party and alliance. In 1994, when nominal majority rule was ushered in, the Stalinist capitalist-restorationist Communist Party of China (CPC) had already gained a foothold in the Alliance of ANC, SACP and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). This was further buttressed by the growing economic might of China as it emerged as an imperialist power escaping dependency on western, becoming a major creditor, trading partner and FDI source, after the restoration of capitalism.

Based on China's 1953-1976 insulation from the law of value because of the central plan and the monopoly of foreign trade with the global

markets, the slow road to capitalist restoration made use of the legacy institutions of the Degenerated Workers States (DWS) to ward off subordination as a semi-colony of the west like the smaller former DWSs. Using those legacy institutions, state monopoly finance capital is used to exploit labour at home and abroad as in its role at Eskom. Today China is a fully fledged imperialist power fulfilling criteria identified by Lenin in *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. [China is South Africa's biggest trading partner](#) and investor country [over the last ten years](#).

China has an inherent and logical interest in controlling the labour movement to ensure unfettered imperialist exploitation of resources. It is not enough to control a section of the ruling elite. It is imperative that workers are kept in tow in order to maximise on profits through paying slave wages and bad working conditions. [IOL reports](#), "China was the largest investor in Africa during the five-year period by jobs and capital...." A compliant labour force is a must for any imperialist power, especially a new one seeking to displace or compete with the historically entrenched western imperialist powers.

The traditional tool for labour pacification has been the COSATU bureaucracy until it compromised itself starting around 2007 to 2010. When key private sector strikes took place the COSATU and affiliate union bureaucrats did everything to try and stifle the development of the strikes towards a prolonged and general strike that could shake the capitalist class. This ruptured their iron grip over the militant workers seeking to resolve the crisis for their class. Marikana put the last nail on the coffin of COSATU as a historically militant federation and bulwark and vanguard of the working class. Today with a third of the working class unemployed, Ramaphosa, COSATU leaders and business owners unite to drive down wages under the cynical campaign the ["Framework for a Social Compact"](#).

The National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA) "moment" that resulted in the formation of SAFTU and the Socialist Revolutionary Workers Party (SRWP) offered hope to a host of many well-meaning activists, workers and organisations. But alas, the hope was to be short lived. The leading members in NUMSA did not abandon their Stalinist (ML) political baggage, bureaucratism and opportunism. What resulted was the same political culture and traditions albeit

a different name. China made sure that the new formations would stick to the Stalinist [Now Xi thought] doctrine despite radical and sometimes contradictory rhetoric. Through their middle man, one Roy Singham, they are busy channelling lots of money to control NUMSA, SAFTU and SRWP in order to protect their imperialist interests. Events surrounding the recent NUMSA congress reveal the bureaucratic and dictatorial tendencies of the controlling faction and it is safe to say that the expulsions, suspensions and harassment of critical voices will continue on a higher level.

Resistance to China's role in the economy and labour movement is developing unevenly due to the historic relationship between China and the Alliance leadership especially those in COSATU whose role has been to deliver workers to the altar of capitalism in exchange for parliamentary and government seats as well as personal perks. China's involvement in NUMSA, SAFTU and SRWP has made the task of winning working-class independence from all imperialisms more urgent. Workers are organising in small but persistent ways, to build alternatives to the bureaucratic Stalinist faction that is based materially and politically on shop stewards. Recently the Shaun Magmoed branch in Western Cape region of the SRWP wrote a scathing attack on the Stalinist reformist faction acting as the willing grave diggers of the advanced working class of South Africa.

The labour movement must bury the notion that China is a progressive ally of South African workers. It must also realise the independent interests of China in controlling and capturing the labour movement in order to advance its own interests. China does not act on behalf of the USA or any other western imperialist power-the US/UK/EU bloc has whips and chains of its own operating under the guise of [USAID Africom](#). Failure to appreciate the imperialist nature of China, and Russia, leads to political sterility and blunders in the labour movement and socialist organisations. Orientation should be towards the rank-and-file workers to create radical class struggle caucuses as opposed to orienting towards "progressive" elements of the leadership who opportunistically use radical postures to hoodwink and capture workers and who would use every opportunity to close ranks in the name of unity.

ILTT 6 December 2022

Draft Theses on Imperialism and Terminal Crisis*

(1) World events are being shaped by the rivalry between Western (US, EU, and UK) and Eastern (China and Russia) *imperialist powers* to redivide the world at the expense of their rivals. Lenin explained imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism, that of capital's decline and decomposition, in which *state monopoly capital* (SMC) is engaged in a zero-sum contest, inevitably wars, to *repartition the world*, to extract *value* and hence *super profit* or *absolute rent* from labour to the point of its, and potentially, humanities, destruction.

(2) *Monopoly ownership* of land or any scarce commodity allows the owners to extract excess profits or rent from non-monopoly owners. Competitors are prevented from entering the market thereby allowing their share of value to be extracted as super profits or absolute rent. This *transfer of value* occurs when *prices of production* determined by the market approximating labour cost plus 'average' profit are distorted by monopoly power to prevent the equalization of wages and profit to its advantage, that is, low wages plus super profits.

(3) This leads to the *concentration and centralization* of capital in increasingly large corporations as *monopoly capital*. Add the nation state, which backs its own monopolies, essentially through the central bank, law and the military, and we have SMC, or, *state monopoly capitalism*. Henceforth SMC, in the *form of imperialist states*, competes on the global market economically and politically, including warfare, to expand their sphere of interest at the expense of their rivals.

(4) Ukraine is the main current fracture point between imperialist rivals where a *proxy war* between the US and Russia (and their respective allies) is being staged over who controls this semi-colony, and ultimately, over who controls Eurasia, the long-time key to world power. A proxy war is a war between imperialist powers regardless of the lesser dependent powers that are involved. This means that in the war in Ukraine, Russia must be understood as an imperialist power engaged in war with the US/EU powers over its partition, rather than a war between Russia and Ukraine.

(5) A similar fracture is looming over Taiwan where the US and China (and their respective imperialist and dependent allies) are preparing for a war that will repartition East Asia and the Western Pacific. Taiwan is the prize here as whoever gains Taiwan

will control East Asia. Taiwan is recognised by the UN and the US as part of China, so if the US succeeds in winning a war over Taiwan this can only be at the expense of massively weakening China.

(6) While the Western imperialist powers led by the US are encroaching on Russia from Europe, the US and its Pacific and South Asian allies are encroaching on China from the East to move into East Asia. The pincer movement from East and West demonstrates that the *aging Western bloc* led by the US must go to war to prevent the *rising Eurasian bloc* of China and Russia from retaining control of Eurasia and therefore the world.

(7) The fact that the Western bloc must encroach on Russia and China to weaken and break their control of Eurasia reflects the extent to which the Western imperialist powers have declined since the early 20th century. Today they are in a *terminal crisis* because they can no longer maintain the conditions for the production and extraction of value sufficient to restore the rate of profit. Their only recourse is the *zero-sum* game of winning control of Eurasia so as to gain access to scarce and vital resources and cheap labour to maximize profits at the expense of Russia and China.

(8) Similarly, Russia and China have the capacity and interest to defend their spheres of interest, Eurasia, so as to have competitive advantage over Western imperialism globally. While all imperialist powers are capitalist, the Russia/China bloc has *special advantages*. These relate to their origins as new imperialist states born of degenerate or deformed workers states which *underwent a qualitative restoration of capitalism* after 1990. These advantages are threefold. First, both inherited their respective expansive Soviet territories. Second, they inherited 'workers' property' in the form of the material wealth of science, technology and infrastructure. Third, the bureaucratic caste that formerly administered state property could use the state machine to regulate the capitalist economy as 'state monopoly capitalism'.

(9) These *special advantages* account for why the Russia/China bloc is expanding at the expense of the US/EU/Japan bloc. All are state monopoly capital regimes where monopolies rely on their dominance of the market to extract super profits or rents. Prices of production which assume that the market will equalize profits according to share of the market, no longer prevail. *The state intervenes with subsidies*

and regulations that restrict competition and allow monopolies to dominate the market. The critical difference that arises here between East and West is in the *qualitative character of state intervention*, often crudely reduced ideologically to the “*democratic*” and “*authoritarian*” character of their states.

(10) “*Democracy*” in this context, is the bourgeois ideology of the market rooted in the sovereign individual and the constitutional separation of powers between legislature, judiciary and executive. Fundamentally this separation of politics from business is held to prevent business from using the state to protect monopolies. But such ‘democracy’ is merely a front for the state acting as the *committee of the ruling class* in all capitalist countries. In the Western ‘democracies’ the rule against monopolies is broken, and brokered, by politicians, the state bureaucracy and central banks. Yet politicians, all lobbying for their ‘special interests’ grounded ultimately in buying and selling on the ‘free’ market, will resist bringing any *authoritarian* regime into existence that circumscribes their special interests in the interests of ‘capital-in-general’.

(11) Capital-in-general is an abstract concept derived from the method of abstraction Marx used in *Capital*/Vol 1 to describe the totality of individual capitals for purposes of exposition. However, at the complex, concrete level of reality, beyond that assumed in Vol 3, and left unfinished in the remaining planned volumes of *Capital*, it explains the role of the state in intervening to regulate the market to set the conditions for production that promotes the concentration and centralisation of individual capitals. Subsidies, bailouts, nationalization of failing firms, are some examples.

(12) In Western economies these interventions are usually made to counter crises and substitute for new capital formation which cannot be met by private capital. This meets the special interests of private capital, such as state provision of infrastructure, or state bailouts in times of falling profits and bankruptcies. These state interventions help create the return to the conditions of profitability at which point private capital deems these interventions as interference in the market and lobbies to privatize and deregulate the market.

(13) In the former bureaucratic workers’ states (BWSs) (see footnote 1) however, state monopoly capital emerged directly from the centralized soviet state. China’s restoration of capitalism took the path predicted by Trotsky of a change in the class

character of the state from the defense of workers property to the defense of capitalist property – namely *state capitalism*. Critical in this change of state character was the switch from planned prices to market prices according to the Law of Value (LOV).

(14) The bureaucracy by suppressing democratic planning botched the plan and failed to meet workers’ basic reproductive capacity by destroying *labour time as measured by need*. It was forced to adopt the *law of value* to define socially necessary labour time to increase productivity as measured by the *rate of exploitation* and make the transition to state capitalism. However, while the LOV became a measure of value, it did not become a free market doctrine. The state used its *political authority* to regulate the market to manage the business cycles and prevent the special interests of private capitalists threatening the interests of *capital-in-general* in economic and political stability.

(15) Thus, in Russia and China the state machine, inherited from the former bureaucratic states, now uses its political ‘authority’, or popular legitimacy, to retain state monopoly ownership in key economic sectors, industry, finance, transport and communications in particular, and to regulate the market. *The result is that the uncertainty and instability of the market is countered by state planning and administration. Thus, the state acts to ensure that capital-in-general is served at the expense of private capital that is devalued and incorporated into state owned monopolies.* Both Russia and China have used their authoritarian central state to resist being swallowed by Western imperialism, and to out-perform it during the GFC and the economic warfare since.

(16) We have shown how Russia and China are both state monopoly capitalist regimes which differ in important respects from Western imperialism. Before we look at the future course of the rivalry between the two blocs over Eurasia, we want to exclude other interpretations of this rivalry and critique their political import. There are *three broad positions* on the left that fall short of what is expected of Marxists. *First, there are those who see these two states as capitalist but not imperialist. Second, those who see them as some form of hybrid of both ‘socialism’ and capitalism where ‘socialism’ still predominates. Third, are those who continue to argue that China is still a deformed workers’ state that has not yet undergone capitalist restoration.*

(17) Regarding the first category, we have shown above that Russia and China made the transition to

capitalism from Bureaucratic Workers states (BWSs) under the basic laws of capitalist development, specifically the law of value. It is evident that their recent development as authoritarian SMC regimes made them rival imperialist powers to the Western imperialist bloc. *There is nothing to sustain the view that Russia and or China are states dependent on imperialism.*

(18) No colony or semi-colony can accumulate and export capital in excess of its inward FDI. No dependent state can militarily challenge existing imperialist states. Also, there is no category of 'independent' capitalist state balanced somewhere in idealist space/time, since their 'independence' can only derive from becoming imperialist, or overthrowing imperialism. To defend Russia and China against their Western rivals as oppressed, dependent, or supposedly 'independent', capitalist countries, is to mislead workers into fighting wars of national defense of Russia and China, rather than a class war against both imperialist sides, doing massive harm to the struggle for socialist revolution.

(19) Second, there are those who view Russia and/or China as a hybrid state: a capitalist market and a state that behaves like it is 'socialist'. They misunderstand the class character of the state. What they are confusing is a former central state that functioned in a BWS based on planned prices, with a SMC regime where prices are determined by the law of value. Michael Roberts shares this view, confounding matters by suggesting China is 'state capitalist' as understood by Lenin. He advises the CPC to further regulate and control the market to prevent it from restoring capitalism, as if this is what Lenin claimed he was doing in Russia.

(20) Lenin's use of 'state capitalism' was referring to capitalism under the control of a healthy democratic workers' state. He used it to counter any confusion that it was more than a temporary retreat necessary to allow the market to stimulate competition and bring down prices. *But Xi and Putin are not Leninist leaders of healthy workers' states.* They are the authoritarian leaders of SMC new imperialist states. The failure to identify Russia and China as capitalist simply because state ownership dominates the market is empiricist and meets the same objections made above. *Mischaracterising the class character of the state is an abuse of Marxism which leads to a reactionary counter-revolutionary program.*

(21) Third, those who regard Russia and/or China as surviving BWSs confuse market reforms with capitalist counter-revolution. *The class character of*

the state reflects the social relations it defends. Under a BWS the state defends workers' property. *Workers' property comprises state owned property that cannot be privatized by the ruling bureaucracy for fear of workers' revolution.* As we explained above, the reason that the market reforms were introduced in Russia and China in the 1980s was to overcome the stagnation of the planned economy.

(22) The introduction of the LOV to determine prices worked to increase the efficiency of the plan. But unlike state capitalist reforms in Russia under Lenin's healthy workers state in the 1920s, by the 1990's both Russia and China had gone from quantity to quality where market reforms turned into state capitalist counter-revolutions. *As Trotsky predicted for Russia, once the LOV became dominant in determining prices, and the threat of political revolution was defeated, the BWS was transformed to defend state capitalism and the dominant capitalist social relations.*

(23) Those who regard Russia and China as BWSs have to explain how they can overtake Western imperialism without the transformation of the state as the servant of *capital-in-general* in the epoch of imperialist SMC, thus converting the bureaucracy into a new bourgeoisie. They may try to credit the bureaucracy with managing a BWS to enrich itself and pull millions up out of poverty, buy billions of US\$ securities with excess profits, and balance the needs of workers with profits. But as we argued above, this is only possible when Russia and China outcompete Western imperialism at their own game, by converting the former bureaucratized state into the authoritarian SMC regime and rapidly expanding state-owned capital-in-general to give them a competitive advantage over their rivals.

(24) The claim that the Stalinist bureaucracy has the ability to develop the forces of production (FOP) rejects Trotsky's position in *The Revolution Betrayed* that this is not possible (*see footnote 2*). It represents the Pabloism of generations of former Trotskyists who abandoned the political revolution to overthrow the bureaucratic caste and tail the Stalinists as 'progressive'. Far from being progressive, it bears out Trotsky's grim prognosis that the failure of the world revolution arising out of World War 2 would give rise to a new form of bureaucratic state calling into question the socialist revolution. His prognosis was premature. The historic defeat came 50 years later when the restoration of capitalism in the 1990s created bureaucratic dictatorships in the form of SMC capable of developing the forces of production. But

far from invalidating Trotsky's program in the imperialist epoch, it vindicates it. The new SMC regimes in Russia and China joined the imperialist powers to redivide a world facing a terminal crisis of wars, slumps and pandemics destroying the conditions for capitals survival and creating the conditions for world socialist revolution.

(25) The rivalry of the Russia and China bloc with the US led bloc is now taking the form of inter-imperialist proxy war. Russia backed by China has fought NATO to a nuclear standoff in Ukraine. The CPC run state accommodated itself to imperialist FDI yet accumulated surplus capital requiring capital export and purchase of US Treasury bonds. Its 'win-win' deals with its semi-colonies extracting super profits from its ODI is a 'revolutionary' foreign policy only insofar as it ferments revolution. Its SOE's and Joint Ventures are accountable to the LOV, rather than the planned control of prices and wages. Such startling developments, it is claimed by these fantasists, are all accomplished by a BWS. Who needs a socialist revolution when the CPC proves Pablo rather than Trotsky right.

(26) Social imperialists who claim Russia and China are progressive and must be defended, disarm the workers in the class war sending them to fight wars on behalf of imperialist powers. Workers act on the war policy of Lenin and Trotsky to turn imperialist war into civil war, that is, class war. Inter-imperialist war is the highest stage of class war. Workers have no interest in fighting such wars. Our position is dual defeatism, for the defeat of both sides. Nor does it make a difference if one or other is fascist since this is the political expression of imperialist finance capital.

(27) National liberation wars are subordinated to inter-imperialist wars because no oppressed country can be free. Whether the outcome is a victory to one or other imperialist power, or a ceasefire, this reflects a division of the spoils between imperialists while the dependent countries involved remain oppressed by one or both powers. *Since the national question is subsumed by the class question, it is the obligation of workers in the imperialist states to defeat the enemy at home in a civil or class war. In the oppressed countries workers and peasants fight to overthrow their national bourgeoisies.*

(28) The Marxist revolutionary program on war is critical to the success of socialist revolution. The social imperialist camp followers of the ruling classes take a counter-revolutionary stand on war and join forces to support their own imperialist motherland. Their national chauvinism becomes an objective

force in the counter-revolution. Exposing and defeating the pro-war left mobilizes the subjective factor of class-conscious workers for international class war and socialist revolution. Dual defeatism renounces national chauvinism and turns its guns on the imperialist ruling class and its national bourgeois lackeys. Defeat of inter-imperialist war creates a revolutionary situation and the class forces capable of overthrowing capitalism and making the transition to socialism.

(29) Only the overthrow of capitalism and the building of socialism can resolve the terminal crisis of capital and what drives it, the contradiction between capital and nature. Marx insisted that Capital's destruction of nature, including humanity, would destroy the conditions for its existence as a mode of production. To avert the inevitable destruction of the terminal crisis, the compounding economic crash, climate breakdown, pandemics and nuclear war, workers led by the new world party of socialist revolution, must overthrow capitalism, build socialism, and thereby create the conditions for communism.

1. *Here we use Bureaucratic Workers State (BWS) to include degenerated and deformed workers states as the bureaucracy was mediating capitalism and workers property in both cases.*

2. *The stagnation and decay of productive forces (due to the inherent waste of capitalist economies and inefficiencies of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the DWSs) does not mean new technologies and advances in the FOP cease, rather it is understood that without the world revolution the social relations act as a fetter on the advances of the FOP relative to what is possible in world liberated by the socialist revolution.*

* These Draft Theses have been written as work in progress to open further discussion on the rise of Russia and China as imperialist states that form part of the BRICS entering into an escalating rivalry with the declining US led imperialist bloc. We anticipate comments and criticisms that develop our understanding of the current world situation to advance our struggle for a new world party of socialist revolution grounded in the method of the 1938 Transitional Program.

International Leninist Trotskyist Tendency (ILTT), 11/18/2022

Stop the inter-imperialist war destroying Ukraine!

For the defeat of US/NATO and Russia/China imperialist blocs!

The following is an ILTT leaflet to be distributed at the United Front Committee For A Labor Party rally "[STOP US NATO Drive Toward World War – International Day Of Action](#)" on 12/02/2022 in San Francisco:

Build the Workers' Anti-Imperialist United Front and A New Zimmerwald

The International Leninist Trotskyist Tendency (ILTT) and the Communist Workers Group (CWG-USA) joined this action against US imperialism to **"Abolish NATO, to Shut Down US Bases Around The World" – to launch class war against Our "Main Enemy at Home"–(That's U.S. Imperialism!, we say!)** We support the call **"For Working Class Strikes Globally To Stop The War!"** Not as a pressure tactic to push for negotiations but as a fight to take power!

These slogans press the working class to identify that its class interests are **uncompromisingly opposed to those of the capitalists and imperialism.** Workers want to know: What does the slogan "*The Main Enemy is At Home*" mean; and what does the call for international strikes against the war require from our social class?

These international strikes we talk about need to arm the workers to take power from the capitalists. This is what "*The Main Enemy is at Home*" requires! Does it mean workers do not have any other enemies? No! We unite with workers internationally to defeat their own capitalist and imperialist masters.

We need to unite the international working class in a class political anti-war united front against all its imperialist enemies. Imperialism is a system not a choice of national capitals.

The Class Character of the War in Ukraine!

The [statement](#) on the Ukraine war adopted at the [Socialism or Extinction](#) Conference held in Mexico City October 28-30 2022 explained:

"The war in Ukraine is an inter-imperialist proxy war between the decaying hegemonic US/EU/NATO bloc and the rising China/Russia/CSTO/ SCO bloc. It is counter-revolutionary and aimed against the interest of the workers and farmers on both sides! Because the war is reactionary and fought on behalf of imperialism

on BOTH SIDES, soldiers and workers must take a dual defeatist attitude toward the war!"

And as we wrote in July, 2022 in "[Ukraine: For a New Zimmerwald!](#)":

"Today the world is at war in an inter-imperialist conflict for control of the semi-colonial world, their markets and securing spheres of dependency. The hegemonic US/EU/NATO imperialist bloc's orientation to, and subordination of, Ukraine, accelerated since the EuroMaidan, is militarily challenged by the competing Russia/China imperialist bloc, which if it is to advance internationally, must secure its near periphery-both for economic and geo-strategic reasons.



We say the inter-imperialist conflict is overarching and predominates, not just in Ukraine but across the globe. The war cannot be understood outside the growing confrontation between the two imperialist blocs. There is no other explanation for the Eastward movement of NATO since the fall of the USSR, for the refusal to negotiate a solution as demanded by Russia, and for the deliberate use of hitherto extreme economic sanctions against Russia in response to its invasion. Those who think it's not a proxy war have no appreciation of the meaning of imperialist as understood by Lenin and are blinkered by NATO propaganda. Those who think it is not an inter-imperialist conflict because there are apparently no NATO troops' boots-on-the-

ground have a great number of facts contradicting their position, ...”

Self Determination vs Imperialism

Today the workers organizations are being drawn into supporting either Putin’s invasion or the Ukrainian proxy regime and the US/NATO encirclement of Russia and China. We are being told that Ukraine as a nation has no right to exist by Putin and that Donetsk and Luhansk have no right to self-determination by Zelensky.

Only revolutionary Marxism shows that national self-determination is a democratic right that, in the age of imperialism, can only be secured by socialist revolution. As long as the imperialists are around to chop up your homelands, workers will have no national rights the bourgeoisie will observe for long. This goes for either the US/EU/NATO imperialist bloc or the [China/Russia imperialists](#).

To turn the imperialist wars into class war against the cause of war–monopoly finance capitalism, the working class must remove all of Capital’s agents and servants–and smash the capitalist states!

For Class Struggle Against Imperialist War!

Our class needs to employ a united front tactic. The united front tactic is activated not just by a unity of action but by its dialectical counterpart, critique! And critique is the debate the working class must have in order to chart its politically independent course, to resolve in our favor the terminal crisis of capitalism, which by war and commitment to the fossil fuel economy puts the dictum **SOCIALISM OR EXTINCTION** front and center!

Imperialism in the terminal crisis of capitalism is dependent on wasteful militarization which workers organizations and all oppressed must unite to stop at points of production and distribution. Strikes, sympathy strikes, occupations and hot cargoing of goods are historically working class means of struggle. Without us nothing moves!

We know that if the US railroad workers strike, the war industry comes to a stop! First order of business is the AFL-CIO must declare sympathy strikes with the rail workers! But we know that won’t happen under the current leaderships which imposes the union neutering ‘team concept’ at the work site and as social patriots teaming up with imperialism. Their job is to police the labor movement for the capitalists to prevent class struggle at work or in politics.

Our task is to build class struggle caucuses in the unions and action committees in the workplace

which fight for class independence in all things: **No to labor management unity!, No to the bosses’ parties and the bosses’ wars!** Class struggle caucuses unite workers to defeat the influence of the bosses ideology in the workplace by raising transitional demands to bring workers into action to resolve all economic and political issues. We need to raise up a mass cadre of militant rank and file leaders committed to class independence and class struggle methods to drive out the hacks and bureaucrats which tie labor’s hands to the bosses and the Democrats.

We need to win workers and soldiers here and internationally from fighting each other over their bosses’ national frontiers to fighting their capitalist masters. When the military enlistees see their sister and brother workers using class struggle methods and as all social stratification is reflected in the military, the mass struggle will also be reflected in the military. All the old crap will come to the surface. The contradiction of the unresolved class, race, sex and gender oppression seething just below the surface fuel potential for class struggle to erupt in the military. Remember fragging during Vietnam? The officer corps does!

We need to split the lower ranks of the military along class lines against the officer corps. Most military enlistees in the US are recruited by economic conditions–the ‘poverty draft.’ Enlisted ranks need their own industrial union with a class struggle program. They need this now!

When the rank and file take up the fight for a **“Build a Come Home Now Movement! And Convene Soldiers councils to elect rank and file officers.”** This will show workers internationally that the US working class are not their enemy. When the US working class fights national imperialism at home, workers of Russia, China and Ukraine will welcome the internationalism of US workers and unite and rally to apply the “dual defeatism” necessary to resolve all the international conflicts in the workers interests. This is our task!

Smash the Obstacles to Working Class Political Independence

How then can workers resolve this crisis in leadership to unite to build the international strike against war? And what exactly are the goals of the anti-war strike? For the international working class to put their hands on the levers of power strikes must build workers’ councils and workers’ militia, that is our strategic goal. What stands in the way?

Where is the party prepared to use class struggle methods to stop the imperialists? It has to be built in class struggle against the misleaders, reformists and centrists. Workers in every nation need to build their revolutionary workers party and unite in a new workers' International coordinate the fight against world imperialism.

Such a party must resolve the crisis of working-class leadership and develop rank and file factory (work-site) committees to assert the workers historic program at the point of production. As the working class become conscious internationalists, only then do we become capable of ending all imperialist wars.

First the “[progressive](#)” and Democratic war hawks like Barbara Lee and Nancy Pelosi rally the traditional liberal base including the unions to keep funding the war in Ukraine. Second, the ‘isolationist’ Republican bloc against military aid is expanding in the new Congress. Calls like ‘[Don't send another penny...](#)’ are GOP talking points. Fox's Tucker Carlson, [Trump](#) and the GOP majority forged a “front” uniting, separately and severally with ‘realpolitiker’ Kissinger and Noam Chomsky, and Stalinist stooge Vijay Prashad advocating negotiations. [Sergei Lavrov](#) on behalf of Russian imperialism is being dragged along kicking and screaming that the “Terms are Unrealistic.”

Ultimately the calls for negotiations by the anti-war movement is a pressure campaign of the ‘let's you and him talk it out’ variety (i.e., Blinken and Lavrov) and will not “end (the inter-imperialist) conflict.” This would be excluded, even if backed by mass strikes, unless these strikes are escalated and lead the working class to power.

Still the biggest obstacle blocking the workers from initiating militant class struggles against the war is the labor bureaucracy loyal to the capitalist Democratic Party. They act as a transmission belt delivering the Democratic wing of the ruling class's objectives and ideology down to the rank and file. The churches, the CBO's and NGO's and anointed leaders of unorganized and specially oppressed workers also block the fight for class political independence and a workers' anti-imperialist united front.

Their main role is to stop the working class from becoming self-conscious to the point of launching its own ***fighting workers labor party*** that unites with the unorganized and specially oppressed in class struggle which challenges the capitalist class for power under the demands for a workers' government. In order to win, workers must

overcome entrenched organizational and ideological obstacles in the labor movement and the movements of the oppressed!

Those nominal socialists who do not call for “dual defeatism” fall in line as social patriots for one camp or the other. They offer their minimum demand for peace with maximalist calls for socialism with no transitional bridge. The workers' anti-imperialist united front builds a transitional bridge to power via the class struggle that resolves the crisis of the leadership of the working class. It is the working-class anti-war movement that must fight for a New Zimmerwald today! A New Zimmerwald must prepare the left anti-imperialists to launch the new workers revolutionary international.

The text of the United Front Committee For A Labor Party (UFCLP) [call to action](#) shows their intention for mass strikes to be a pressure tactic, not for the working class to take power. It maintains that the US is a declining empire under control of a reckless ruling class. The UFCLP holds the view that the US is at the beginning of military conflicts with Russia and China. They obscure for the moment whether their position is that Russia and China are imperialist powers; indeed, it does not even characterize US policy as imperialist in the front's call. The UFCLP opinion is that for decades the US pushed NATO expansion, goading Russia into a proxy war with Ukraine, and that the Democrats and Republicans are opposing any negotiations with Russia which “*could bring an end to the conflict.*”

This faith in negotiations is another episode in idealist abandonment of historical materialism. The China/Russia bloc badly wants the world to believe they (nowadays) want a negotiated end to this conflict. It is going badly for them. The U.S. bloc says two can play at this and employs General Milley to send a mixed signal.

This is where the working class is misdirected! Here, as at the Peoples Forum last week, the goal of the anti-war movement with all its actions from ones and twos on picket lines to mass demonstrations all the way up to international general strikes are designed to get the negotiations started. And who could argue with such a sensible understanding? Noam Chomsky at the Peoples Forum, introduced the most obvious real politic observation that at some point the war will end in negotiations. Here the ‘left’ abandons class struggle and class against class warfare for the fake peace of imperialism which kicks the conflict down the road.

So, from the Peoples Forum to this action here today the working class is being told to launch anti-war actions to win negotiations between the belligerents. This, my friends, does not bring the “end to conflict.” No it does not because it leaves the imperialists in power to negotiate with each other at our expense; and to wage new conflicts when negotiations fall apart. The capitalist nations and the imperialists cannot resolve the right of nations to self-determination because subordination and dependency are the only options other than the smashing of imperialism and the founding of workers states and federations of workers states on a world scale. These are the proletarian solutions that the workers of both the US/NATO bloc and the China/Russia bloc must unite around.

No to No Fly Zones!

US/EU-NATO and Russia and their allies Out of Ukraine!

No to Sanctions, they function as war on working people!

Workers of all imperialist countries your main enemy is the imperialist capitalist class at home!

Build anti-war committees in the factories and workplaces.

For general strikes and mass actions against the imperialist war machines across all of Europe, the US and Russia!

Hot cargo all imperialist belligerents' freight.

For workers' control of logistics and distribution!

Expropriate the war profiteers and armaments industry under workers' control.

For workers self defense militias!

For International Workers brigades to defeat the US/NATO covert and overt military forces and the Russian invasion forces!

Defeat the fascist battalions, their militia and their foreign nationalist fighters!

No annexations! For an independent Soviet Ukraine!

For a Workers' Russia!

For the self-determination of Ukrainians and Russian-speaking minorities!

Soldiers build a Come Home Now movement!

Soldiers refuse to handle, fire or use nuclear, biological or chemical weapons!

Close US/UK and EU foreign and NATO bases!

Soldiers in the field mutiny, arrest your officers, elect your own officers, fraternize across front lines and protect civilians!

Open the secret pouches of the imperialist belligerents and open the books of the imperialist bourgeoisie and big capitalist enterprises!

No faith in the Hague or UN!

For independent workers commissions to investigate and prosecute war crimes.

Free all anti-war protesters! Drop all charges!

Convene a new Zimmerwald conference!

For an anti-imperialist workers united front.

For “war against war” to “turn inter-imperialist war abroad into class war at home”!

Build revolutionary workers parties and a revolutionary workers' International based on the method of the 1938 Transitional Program.

For world socialist revolution to end imperialist wars once and for all!

*International Leninist Trotskyist Tendency (ILTT),
12/01/2022*



International Leninist Trotskyist Tendency

Class Warrior: Theoretical Journal of ILTT http://www.cwgusa.org/?page_id=594

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