

# The Communist Party

Newspaper of the International Communist Party

WHAT DISTINGUISHES OUR PARTY – The line running from Marx to Lenin to the foundation of the Third International and the birth of the Communist Party of Italy in Leghorn (Livorno) 1921, and from there to the struggle of the Italian Communist Left against the degeneration in Moscow and to the rejection of popular fronts and coalition of resistance groups – The tough work of restoring the revolutionary doctrine and the party organ, in contact with the working class, outside the realm of personal politics and electoralist manoeuvres

February - March 2024  
Issue 56  
50¢ 50p 0,50€

## GAZA PROLETARIAT - CRUSHED IN A WAR BETWEEN WORLD IMPERIALISMS

Yet another chapter in the Middle East war sees the concentration of the bulk of military operations in the Gaza Strip. Intense bombardments are hitting population centers already reduced to rubble and furious ground clashes pitting Hamas militias and smaller formations of the so-called "Palestinian resistance" against Israel's armed forces.

Casualties on the Palestinian side of the bombings now number in the tens of thousands, and by the time we are about to send this issue of our newspaper to press, the Gaza authorities report 24,000 confirmed dead from the bombings and clashes, plus several thousand missing whose lifeless bodies lie under the rubble.

These are the atrocious costs of an asymmetrical war, characterized by a considerable disparity in the weapons and means available to the two sides.

But the ground fighting is not cost-free even for the Israeli army, which has lost more than 180 soldiers in Gaza, which, added to the casualties of the Oct. 7, 2023 attack conducted deep inside Israel's territory, add up to 1,400 dead, including 500 military personnel and 900 civilians.

This gruesome accounting confirms our initial assessments of this frightening wave of violence: this is not a people's war but a war between bourgeois states. This is in no way mitigated by the disparity of losses in the two camps and the asymmetrical nature of the conflict. This is evidenced by the fact that both sides, gripped by blind nationalistic fury, declared from the beginning that they wanted to annihilate the enemy. From the outset, the manner in which the war operations were conducted and the further development of the conflict confirmed this: just as Hamas did not spare Israeli civilians and migrant workers in its fierce and unexpected October 7 attack, likewise the fury of the Israeli air force made no distinction between Hamas militiamen and unarmed Palestinian civilians. Blessing this nefarious assimilation of the entire civilian population to Hamas militias came the words of Israel's President Herzog who declared in mid-October, "An entire nation is responsible; the rhetoric about civilians not aware and not involved is absolutely false."

In this war, as much as the balance of power is very unbalanced in favor of the State of Israel, there is one element that makes the two sides very similar in the way the fighting is conducted: the lack of any scruples in slaughtering a very high number of civilians. Indeed, it seems increasingly evident that the orders given to the men-at-arms on both sides are precisely to reap the highest number of civilian casualties in the opposing camp, exacerbating nationalist sentiment, belligerent impulses and the desire for revenge.

This is the case even as the mid-term goals of the two sides differ in relation to the disparity of forces at their disposal, an aspect that propaganda on both sides uses to mystify the genuine exterminating character of the ongoing war. The bourgeois leadership of the "Palestinian resistance" insists on proposing a nonexistent national liberation struggle, but if it did, it would not have exposed the people of Gaza with such cynicism to Israel's appalling vengeance.

Moreover, the struggle against the odious national oppression imposed on the Palestinians might have won support even among Israelis, primarily among the working class, if it had not been placed on the plane of the massacre of civilians, in compliance with the deliberate program of killing Jews wherever they are, carried out by the obscurantist Hamas.

For its part, the current Israeli government harbors a confessional conception of the "Jewish state," which would belong to Jews and not to all its citizens. The Israeli bourgeoisie attempts to use the anti-Semitism entrenched in Muslim countries by about a century of nationalist propaganda, first pan-Arabist and then pan-Islamist, in order to tighten the ranks of the home front. Thus, if it succeeds in convincing the people of Israel that in the Middle East and the world, outside the confines of their little

ghetto, everyone wants Jews dead, Israeli workers will also instinctively seek protection in the military might of "their" nation and "their" state. In this the Netanyahu government knows how to wisely use the nightmare, in truth not entirely without foundation, that the State of Israel may see its survival challenged.

The bourgeois leadership of Hamas is housed in Qatar, a monarchy whose wealth rests on gas and oil mining and which, to complete the overall picture of capitalist rot, hosts on its territory, the most powerful U.S. military base in the Middle East. This is despite the fact that the United States has declared Hamas a "terrorist organization" for several years.

The government of Israel does not seem to rule out the possibility that the outlet for the ongoing military operations may be to force at least part of the Palestinian population out of the Strip, which has been rendered uninhabitable.

Today about 90 percent of the population of the Gaza Strip have left their homes and are wandering under the bombs in search of shelter, if more than 1 percent of the area's inhabitants have already met their deaths in the war events, if several tens of thousands of wounded cannot receive adequate health care while the rest of the population is forced into hunger and thirst, deprived of a roof under which to face the winter, it seems clear that what the institutions of the capitalist regime label a "humanitarian catastrophe" will impose drastic decisions among which the evacuation of a large part of the population from the Strip cannot be excluded.

By now, even the UN Secretary General says that a famine looms over Gaza and that the Strip has become uninhabitable. All of these statements could set the stage for a "humanitarian operation" aimed at concealing the reality of ethnic cleansing. It is hard to suppose that such an outcome was not in the vows of Israel's rulers from the outset when among those in that state's government there were those who went so far as to argue that one should literally "destroy Gaza" the favorite abode of "absolute evil." The promise of the "Delenda Chartago" was fulfilled.

But the military operations conducted by Israel's forces are not limited to Gaza. In the West Bank, too, Tsahal carries out police actions aimed at terrorizing, flaunting contempt for that subjugated population with attitudes of occupation troops that have long become habitual. In the West Bank since Oct. 7, more than 300 Palestinians have been killed in raids and air raids carried out by Tsahal and in shootings engaged in by Israeli settlers. Another 200 are Palestinian casualties from the previous months of 2023.

In the opposite camp, after the Israeli ground invasion it appears more difficult for Hamas and its political satellites to strike inside Israeli territory and sow death and destruction among the civilian population. Qassam missiles take off increasingly rarely from the Strip. Yet the sense of fear among the Israeli population persists, and in the hundreds of thousands are displaced in areas near the Strip and the borders of Lebanon.

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, after skirmishes on the border with Lebanon and missile launches by Hezbollah militias, threatened to teach those Shiite militias a harsh lesson and repeat in Beirut what he did in Gaza. In an Israeli airstrike conducted in a Beirut suburb on Jan. 2, Hamas military leader Saleh al-Arouri was killed, along with other members of his party. Indeed, the Israeli government had proclaimed from the beginning of the war that all Hamas military leaders should be considered "dead men."

This attack is a challenge to Hezbollah, the Lebanese militia organically linked to Iran, and in the ongoing conflict a lukewarm ally of Hamas. On Jan. 8, a new message was openly addressed to Hezbollah with the killing by Israeli drone of Jawwad al-Tawil, the commander of Hezbollah's elite militia, demonstrating by this Israel's readiness to open a new front with Lebanon.

By means of Hezbollah and the pro-Iranian militias stationed in Syria,

it has been said that Iran borders Israel, but Israel does not border Iran, a fact that places the regime in Tehran in a condition of strategic superiority over the "Zionist Entity," as the State of Israel is called by the media of Iranian obscurantism (and by Iran's leftist followers, who have become partisans of political Islam).

This explains the military pressure on Syria, with hundreds of Israeli air raids targeting pro-Iranian militias as well as military installations of the Syrian armed forces.

Moreover, Russia has never sought to defend the airspace of the Syrian state, which has always been its iron ally in the Middle East region. Russia had to offer something in terms of "security" to Israel, with which it maintains good trade relations. In contrast, the Israeli government never adopted the economic sanctions against Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine. This understanding, already in the shadows but surfacing in the sunlight for about a decade, allows Israel to push provocations against Iran, such as when in late December it killed in an air raid Seyyed Reza Mousavi, the top leader of the Iranian Pasdaran in Syria. The fact that the site of Mousavi's elimination was the town of Sayyidah Zainab, a Shiite pilgrimage destination not far from Damascus, implies a double threatening signal to Iran.

Embedded in the rivalry between Israel and Iran is the Red Sea side, where the Houthis, Yemeni Shiites allied with Iran, have come to threaten naval traffic in one of the major arteries of world trade.

Exacerbating the threat of missile attacks and Houthi raids is the treaty, which seals an understanding from the agreement reached between the Iran and Saudi governments in Beijing last March. Saudi Arabia, a rival of the Yemeni rebels, has lifted its blockade of the Houthi-controlled Yemeni port of Hudaayda and has not joined the U.S.-sponsored international coalition to counter disruptive actions in the Red Sea. These elements would suggest Riyadh's choice of ground, but things are not so linear now; any shift in the balance in the Middle East context seems destined for some backlash. If the Oct. 7 attack succeeded in its objective of preventing rapprochement between Saudi Arabia, Israel and other Arab states in the immediate term, this cannot fail to generate further backlash upon fragile regional balances.

Among these contradictions is the action of those who, without being partisans of Israel or the United States, would like to prevent the strengthening of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia. One example is the Jan. 3 bombing in Kerman, Iran during the memorial services for Iranian General Qasem Soleimani. Soleimani, was killed during a U.S. operation in Iraq 4 years ago. The attack was claimed by ISIS, confirming the determination of a significant faction of the Middle Eastern bourgeoisie to oppose the growing regional influence of the Islamic Republic. Iran, in turn, does everything to appear the great promoter of the cause of the "Palestinian resistance."

The bourgeois war game of our time is as irrational, monstrous and twisted as one can imagine. Including, among its "side effects," for Palestinians and Jews, new decisive "final solutions."

Behind the veil of the mystifying self-representation that the contending forces offer of themselves, amidst unexpected agreements, sudden turns and betrayals, lies a very simple explanation: the bewitched world of capital carries on a permanent war of aggression against a proletariat still slumbering and whose awakening is feared, while rival bourgeoisies pull their hair out and at the same time hold hands so as not to dissolve in the vortex of the general catastrophe of the capitalist mode of production.

## GERMAN CAPITALISM IS IN CRISIS AND FASCISM IS ON THE RISE

Economic stagnation in Germany, traditionally the locomotive of the western European economy, has given rise in recent months to social discontent and a surge in support for the far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party as well as the reemergence of explicitly Nazi factions. The weekend of 20-21 January saw mass mobilizations against the far right in many German cities after it was revealed that the AfD and its allies had met to discuss proposals to deport millions of migrants and citizens of non-German heritage. For the most part, demonstrators rallied behind the banner of "defend democracy". Yet, as was the case in the 1930s, this new fascism is the direct product of capitalism in crisis and the political decisions taken by mainstream democratic parties to contain it.

Germany's economic performance has undergone a long period of relative decline. Growth in GDP has not fully recovered from the economic shocks of the pandemic, weak demand for its exports in other countries, disruptions to supply chains, inflation, high interest rates and the war in Ukraine. According to first calculations of the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis), the price-adjusted gross domestic product (GDP) was 0.3% lower in 2023 than in the previous year.

This weak economic performance has created turmoil within the federal government, which is led by the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and supported by the Green Party and the economically conservative liberal party, the Free Democrats (FDP): the so-called Ampelkoalition (traffic-light coalition) of red, green and yellow. After weeks of wrangling between these parties about where the axe should fall on public expenditure, on 18 January the parliamentary budget committee approved a federal budget of €476.8 billion with new loans totalling around €39 billion.

The government is constrained by the Schuldenbremse (debt brake), which has been in force since 2009 (introduced by Angela Merkel's Grand Coalition government). The Schuldenbremse limits new annual government debt to 0.35% of gross domestic product under Articles 109 and 115 of the German Constitution. It obliges the federal government to balance budgets without new borrowing and to reduce debt in the medium term. It was originally introduced to deal with the global financial crisis of 2008 and to keep Germany within the rules of the Eurozone, and may only be suspended in exceptional situations, which was recently the case during the coronavirus pandemic. Its authors did not envisage such prolonged periods of low growth.

To get round the restrictions, the coalition attempted to reallocate €60 billion euros from unused coronavirus funds to the Climate and Transformation Fund. However in November 2023, the Federal Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe ruled that this reallocation of funds was unconstitutional, and the €60 billion was removed from the budget.

After several years of exceptions, the Schuldenbremse is thus to take full effect again. Although factions of the coalition have spoken of suspending it again under certain circumstances, in the meantime swingeing cuts have been imposed and many government contractors have gone unpaid. The draft budget is being debated by the two houses of the German parliament for the final enactment in February.

Planned measures that will hit workers include higher prices for petrol and heating, a ticket tax on passenger flights, and tougher wage restraint in publicly funded services such as the rail network. The government also proposes cutting the federal subsidy to the pension insurance scheme by €600 million euros per year from 2024 to 2027.

But the measure that has provoked the most vocal opposition to date is the planned gradual abolition of tax relief on agricultural diesel fuel. Thousands of farmers and farm workers have taken to blocking city centres in tractors. The traffic light coalition has not backed down from its

plans to cut the subsidies, and although it has made some other concessions, these have failed to appease farmers' leaders, who have promised even bigger protests. Rising costs of fuel and imported animal feeds, fertilizers etc. have put small-scale farmers in financial jeopardy.

Meanwhile, inflationary pressures, though now easing, have further eroded the spending power and living standards of the German working class. Food inflation reached a high of 21.2% in March of 2023 and still stands at 4.6%. Young people are especially hard hit through rising rent prices. In the second quarter of 2023, rent for flats in Berlin averaged around €13.23 per square metre per month. At the same time last year, rents were still €11.02 per square metre. This corresponds to an increase of around 20%. Over the past decade, rents in Berlin have more than doubled.

If the Schuldenbremse is indeed suspended, this will bring little relief to the German working class: it will probably only happen in order to provide further finance for the war in Ukraine, which has already cost Germany in excess of €22 billion in terms of subsidies and weapons supplies. SPD budget minister Dennis Rohde recently stated, "I believe that the Ukrainian fight for freedom must not ultimately fail because of a conservative view of debt rules." German capitalism sees massive future opportunities for economic development in a Ukraine prised away from Russian influence. However, the immediate impact of cutting off Russian gas and disruption to food supplies has imposed a cost estimated last year by the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK) at between €100 and €160 billion, amounting to around €2,000 per inhabitant.

Rail workers lead the resistance. In this new round of austerity, rail workers are leading the resistance to mounting pressure on workers to do more for less. After two 24-hour warning strikes in November and December, the GDL train drivers' union held a ballot that resulted in a 97% vote in favour of an indefinite strike. However, the GDL leadership has thus far refused to carry out the wishes of its members. A three-day strike was called in early January and a further six-day strike commencing Wednesday, 24 January.

Deutsche Bahn has offered an 11% pay increase over 32 months, which works out at 3.7% per year, well below the current rate of inflation, and therefore a reduction in spending power. However, the strike is not primarily about pay, but working conditions. Under-investment has left the German rail network in disarray, and it is the drivers who are paying the heaviest price, with long working hours, changes of shift at short notice, and no recognition of the mental stress and damage to family life this causes. The drivers want a reduction in standard working time to 35 hours with full pay compensation – a longstanding demand on which there has been no progress.

On 5 January the employer, Deutsche Bahn (DB), made an "offer" whereby the drivers would be forced to finance the reduction in working hours themselves – effectively a 2.6% pay cut for every one hour reduction in working hours. DB is state-owned, and the government has set a fixed budget for the railway for this round of collective bargaining as part of its savage cuts on public expenditure. The proposed deal was (of course) dishonestly reported in the media, provoking further anger among drivers.

### ONE SECTOR IS BOOMING

Despite the economic downturn, one sector is booming: armaments. In 2023, the traffic light coalition (which includes the once pacifist Green Party) approved arms exports worth €12.2 billion, a 40% increase on 2022. German arms deliveries to Ukraine almost doubled in 2023 and accounted for the majority of exports in the second year of the war at €4.44 billion, according to figures released by the Federal Ministry of Economics.

Other major export markets include Norway (€1.2 billion), Hungary (€1.03 billion euros), the United Kingdom (€654.9 million), the United States (€545.4 million) and Poland (€327.9 million). Germany also has imperialist interests in the Far East. For some time now, South Korea has been the largest export market for German arms manufacturers outside NATO, accounting for €256.4 million in sales

in 2023. In December, Berlin and Seoul signed agreements to improve their intelligence and military-industrial cooperation.

Germany has also contributed massively to Israel's war in Gaza, with a tenfold increase in the value of its exports to €323.2 million. Germany is one of Israel's most steadfast allies and German armaments manufacturers such as Rheinmetall are among the largest beneficiaries. The company's share price rose by around 15 per cent within just five days of the start of the Gaza conflict and it is currently working with Israeli partners Elbit Systems to develop a new 155-millimetre wheeled howitzer, as well as advanced combat drones. Not that it is all one-way traffic: in 2024 Germany will spend €25 million on the delivery of state-of-the art PULS (Precise and Universal Launching System) multiple launch rocket systems from Elbit.

Indeed, Germany's own military budget is a notable exception to the spending cuts, climbing by €1.7 billion to a record €51.8 billion. Russia's invasion of Ukraine provided the rationale for an increase in the military share of the budget, with a €100 billion fund set up to modernize the German armed forces. Germany has committed to meeting the NATO target of dedicating 2% of GDP to military expenditure or, as the bourgeoisie prefers us to call it, "defense". In reality, the rise in spending points to Germany taking a more aggressive stance on the international stage.

#### THE RISE OF THE FAR RIGHT

Economic pressures, combined with the revival of German militarism, have driven a surge in support for far right populism in general and the AfD in particular, which, as in other countries, claims that there is a conspiracy between the "political establishment" and immigrants against the "indigenous" German population. It has sought to exploit the farmers' protests with rhetoric that echoes the "Blood and Soil" propaganda with which the Nazis appealed to rural communities following the economic catastrophe of 1929.

The AfD was initially founded (in 2013) by conservative economists and academics who had opposed the introduction of the Euro and closer political integration in Europe. But its policies and leadership changed after the arrival of a million refugees from the Middle East in 2015, welcomed by Angela Merkel as an answer to a profound demographic challenge to Germany: the rapidly ageing population and low birth rates. Today, many leaders of the AfD blame not only these recent immigrants but anyone of non-German heritage for every social and economic problem – and this amounts to one-fifth of the total population. High prices? Blame foreigners. High rents? Too many foreigners. Poor healthcare? Foreigners. Etc.

However, the AfD has also gained traction as the only major political party opposing the war in Ukraine. Not that it is doing so for any benign reason; it wants to keep the weapons at home for use by Germany's own armed forces rather than export.

The slogan of the German far right has now moved on from stopping or slowing immigration to "Remigration". High-ranking representatives of the far-right AfD met conspiratorially with other right-wing actors and business executives at Lehnitzsee, north of Potsdam, in November 2023 to discuss plans to expel people with foreign roots living in Germany. Two members of Germany's centre-right Christian Democratic Party (CDU) also attended, both part of their party's "Values Union" association (WerteUnion).

Martin Sellner, a leading Austrian figure in the "Identitarian Movement", presented plans to urge or if necessary force people who do not fit into a völkisch (Aryan) definition of German society to leave the country. This includes people who are German citizens but who are "not assimilated". In echoes of the infamous Wannsee Conference of 1942, there were only objections about the feasibility of mass expulsions, but no doubts were raised at the event as to the desirability of such plans. Ideas put forward included discriminatory laws subjecting migrants to "high pressure to conform" and making it easier to revoke their German passports and citizenship.

News of the conspiratorial meeting was first revealed by Correctiv, a pro-democracy media collective, on January 10, one of whose undercover reporters checked into the Lehnitzsee hotel and infiltrated the event.

#### GERMAN ANTIFASCISM

The news sparked a series of demonstrations, with around 250,000 taking to the streets in Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Hanover, Stuttgart, Munich and other German cities on Saturday, 20 January. They were, however, dominated by moralistic positions on tolerance and diversity that have no substance and little resonance for workers who are bearing the brunt of capital's attacks. Typical was the speech of the SPD's Mike Josef, Lord Mayor of Frankfurt, and a former organizer in the DGB trade union confederation: "As democrats, we are standing up together against the enemies of humanity in this country,

here in Frankfurt and in Germany. We do this together, we do it with determination – no matter where we come from and what we believe in."

The analysis of the antifascist "left" in Germany is, if anything, even worse. For them the problem is not that the mainstream parties such as the SPD defend capitalist democracy, the preferred political system of the bourgeoisie, but that they are not democratic enough. For example, the Trotskyist Socialist Equality Party writes that "When Scholz and Co. try to present themselves as a 'democratic' alternative and opponent of the AfD, it is pure hypocrisy." For the Left Party (Die Linke) the answer is "unity" across the class divide behind the slogan "Together against the right" through an amalgam of classless social media identity groupings such as "Grannies against the Right".

For us in the ICP, by contrast, there is no fight against fascism without a fight against the capitalist system that engenders it. Workers cannot choose between fascism and democracy; far from being opposites, the one flows from the other. (Indeed, the democratic Federal Republic already has constitutional powers to deny or withdraw citizenship from individuals it regards as undesirable or not "assimilated" or otherwise make their lives intolerable, as it has done with the infamous Berufsverbot, the ban on people it regards as extremists from entering certain professions.)

#### NATIONAL UNITY OR CLASS STRUGGLE?

As early as 1924 we wrote in our Report on Fascism, "From a social point of view fascism does not represent a major change; it does not represent the historical negation of the old bourgeois methods of government, it merely represents the completely logical and dialectical continuation of the preceding stage of so-called democratic and liberal bourgeois government." Democracy will resort to fascistic methods, and even put fascists in power, according to the needs of the epoch. And conversely, fascism will use democratic slogans such as "the will of the people" and democratic instruments such as plebiscites. There is even a German word, which first emerged in the First World War, that expresses this perfectly: the Volksgemeinschaft is rooted in the notion of uniting people across class divides to achieve a national purpose.

The only way to fight fascism and militarism is through class struggle. So long as key sections of the working class such as the train drivers (many of whom are themselves of "non-Aryan" heritage!) are ready and able to stand up and fight it will be impossible for the bourgeoisie to divide and rule us at will, or to pursue imperialist objectives through military means. It is therefore up to the working class to fight not fascism alone, but capitalism itself, in Germany and internationally!

# The proletariat is the only force that can stop the bourgeois war.

***The International Communist Party calls upon all Proletarians to break the internal front!***

A party manifesto  
For proletarian defeatism on both fronts of the bourgeois wars  
For the international brotherhood of workers  
– 17 November  
From Ukraine to Gaza – passing through Nagorno Karabakh and all the trouble spots ready to ignite, from the Balkans to Taiwan – capitalism promises an apocalypse of war.  
On both sides of the fronts, the bourgeois political regimes - be they democratic or authoritarian or disguised behind the most varied ideologies, from religious to falsely socialist ones - blame the war on the adversary, his politics, his civilization : Russian-Chinese authoritarianism, US hegemonic culture, Islamic extremism, Zionism...

Instead, capitalist economic interests hide behind these ideological screens. When ideological bombing is not enough, the bourgeoisies have no qualms about resorting to terrorist massacres to convince the proletarians that there is a foreign enemy to fight. The modern capitalist war is distinguished from all previous ones by claiming victims mainly among civilians, that is, among the proletarians.

The global economic crisis of capitalism is determining the ignition of more and more conflicts and the tendency towards a third imperialist conflict. The overproduction that has afflicted senile, so-called Western capitalisms since the mid-seventies, is now also manifested in the no longer young Asian capitalisms, starting with China, which for three decades have kept world capitalism afloat.

The inexorable advance of the crisis exacerbates competition between companies and capitalist states: the war goes from commercial to military. As in peace, bourgeois companies and states ask their workers for economic sacrifices to win in economic competition, in war they ask to sacrifice

their own lives for the supposedly superior interests of the country.

The workers' struggle against exploitation, to prevent competition against each other with lower wages and worse working conditions, is the first step towards their joint international action, and therefore towards opposition to the imperialist war which capitalism is leading all humanity.

Only the international unity of the working class can prevent or stop the war. But it is not based on vague references to moral values, in the name of social peace and good feelings, in the manner of the Churches or the hypocritical appeals of politicians, but rather on the need to fight together in defense of one's own conditions and of life itself against an enemy that is first and foremost internal, that is, against its own national bourgeoisie and its political regime. For this reason, in all countries the bourgeoisies indicate to the workers an external enemy, which would be the cause of their suffering, to be fought.

The Palestinian proletarians are cannon fodder for the interests of the Palestinian bourgeoisie, which for decades has used them by bargaining with part of the Arab-Middle Eastern bourgeoisies and with the world imperialist powers that back them. Even the proletarians of Israel are victims of their bourgeoisie, of its need to build its own capitalist living space, supported by US imperialism, and will be forced by it into a regional and global conflict, in which tens of thousands will die, if they will not be able to overthrow it politically with the revolution.

The Palestinian proletarian masses will put an end to their suffering not by pursuing the objective of "free Palestine" from the "Jordan to the sea", but with the international workers' revolution against all the national regimes in the area: from Iran to Egypt, from Iraq to Lebanon, from Syria to Turkey. Only a social revolution of the proletarian class that makes a clean sweep of the bourgeois regimes and their interests will be able to allow the true peaceful coexistence of workers today divided by ethnic groups and religions by the bloody machinations of the murderous bourgeoisies.

# Proletarians of all countries unite!

*A text distributed in Italy – November 24, 2023*

After the collapse of false communism in the USSR - with which the Stalinist counter-revolution masked the development of Russian state capitalism from the second half of the 1920s - and in the satellite countries, subjugated by that imperialism, the bourgeoisies of the so-called countries Westerners, allied and submissive to US imperialism, had celebrated the triumph of capitalism, which from then onwards had to proceed with its peaceful and progressive economic, social and political development.

With this ideological operation, the international bourgeoisie, including the Russian and Chinese ones, had to perpetuate the lie of false socialism to deprive the proletariat of all countries of any hope of overcoming capitalism and arriving at a society without exploitation, classes, poverty, wars.

As predicted by authentic Marxism, world capitalism was instead proceeding towards an ever deeper economic crisis, which would bring more exploitation, more misery, more wars.

Military conflicts have continued to become increasingly serious: Iraq 1990, former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, Afghanistan since 2001, Iraq in 2003, Syria since 2011, Ukraine since February 2022 and most recently the ongoing conflict in Gaza; to mention just the main ones.

In all these conflicts the bourgeoisies on both sides have always blamed the social and political culture of the adversary as responsible for the war.

For Western democracies, conflicts would be the product of a clash between civilisations, which would include both the Islamic world and the authoritarianism of regimes - and societies - such as the Russian one and, behind it, the Chinese.

On the opposite side of the front, the national bourgeoisies propose a mirror ideology, only reversed for their own use and consumption: wars would be a consequence of the hegemonic, militaristic and prevaricating culture of the dominant imperialism, which after the Second World War is that of the USA. Even for so-called anti-Americanism, a clash between civilizations is underway: produced by American civilization.

Giving support to these falsely pacifist ideologies of the - at the moment - weaker bourgeois front, which clashes with the dominant bourgeois front led by the USA, are also the political wreckage of the collapse of Stalin's false communism, those parties whose falsification is come so low as to present countries such as China, North Korea and, why not, Russia itself as alternatives to capitalism, nor do they disdain to indicate regimes such as the Syrian, Iranian and movements such as Hamas as allies.

All the bourgeois parties, on one side or the other of the imperialist alignments, right or left, operate a caesura between the political world, with its results on the military level, and that of the economy. Instead, politics is nothing but a concentration of the economy and all wars are the product of economic interests, not of cultures, religions, ethnic groups, etc.

The Palestinian proletarian masses are used as cannon fodder by the Arab and Middle Eastern bourgeois regimes, by the world imperialist powers that back them and by the Palestinian bourgeoisie itself for their economic interests. Palestinian national oppression – a tragic and undeniable fact – is only a pretext for them. The proletarians of Israel themselves are being led towards the massacre of an imperialist war for the interests of their bourgeoisie and that of the United States.

The world capitalist economy is sinking deeper and deeper into a crisis of overproduction. Senile – so-called Western – capitalisms have been suffering from overproduction since the mid-1970s. World capitalism has been able to survive in recent decades thanks to capitalist development in Asia, primarily in China. But now Chinese capitalism has also entered the phase of overproduction, as the bourgeois economists themselves admit. The result is the approach of a catastrophic collapse of the world capitalist economy.

The increasingly frequent and serious conflicts, ever closer to the centers of world imperialism, are a manifestation of the deepening crisis of the capitalist economy. It is increasingly difficult for all industrial and financial groups and bourgeois states to make ends meet. They are all attacked by the crisis which is eroding profit margins. And they all become aggressors.

War – that is, the utmost barbarism – is the only solution capitalism has to its economic crisis. What brought capitalism out of the economic crisis of the 1920s and 1930s was not the Keynesian policies of state interventionism in the economy, but the Second World War, with its destruction and 60 million victims, almost all of whom were proletarians and poor farmers. Imperialist war destroys the excess goods that prevent capitalism from continuing its crazy anti-human and anti-historical capitalist accumulation, which they call growth. But the imperialist war does not only destroy goods, factories, infrastructures, cities. It also destroys the commodity workforce, that is, millions of proletarians useless for the purposes of capital accumulation because they were made redundant by the closure of companies following the crisis or, if still employed, crushed by exploitation brought to ever higher levels.

All national bourgeoisies and their state machinery of domination are threatened, not by the economic crisis itself but, ultimately, by the revolt of the starving and exploited proletarian masses.

Above and beyond the wars for economic interests that oppose them, all the national bourgeoisies are interested in ensuring that the war is fought and that millions of proletarians are massacred in it, in order to avoid revolution and thus save their own dominion and their own privileges.

The imperialist war above the fronts is a single war against the world proletariat for the preservation of capitalism, of this society of exploitation and barbarism. War is not a political fact separate from the capitalist economy but is the inevitable consequence of a mode of production based on the exploitation of workers.

The only force that can prevent or stop war is that of the working class. This force begins to form in the fight against exploitation and leads to opposition to the greatest form of oppression which is war, the sacrifice of the very life of the proletarians for the economic interests of the bourgeoisie.

The workers' struggle against exploitation is an anti-national struggle: less exploitation means higher wages, shorter working hours, less intense pace. This implies less competitiveness of companies and national capitalism. This is why all bourgeois parties always appeal to the good of the country: they whip the beast of burden that is the proletariat!

Just as the bourgeois and their governments of all colors today ask workers to work harder to make the company and the country win in the market competition, so tomorrow they will force workers to go to the slaughter of war, with the most suitable pretext to the purpose: democracy, the Islamic threat, the response to an attack, to a massacre.

The working class is interested in uniting to prevent workers from competing with each other with low wages and high work rates from one company to another, from one country to another. Workers must unite today across divisions between companies, sectors, territories and even between countries to resist exploitation, tomorrow to oppose war.

Only the international unity of the proletarian class can stop the war. But this unity is not an ideal, moral fact, like the false appeals for peace of the church of Rome. The unity of wage

workers is the unity of the struggle and begins by declaring and practicing the struggle first and foremost against their own bourgeoisie, rejecting calls for national unity.

Even in Palestine, it is only unity between Palestinian and Israeli proletarians that will put an end to the conflict. It is only by fighting the bourgeois Palestinian parties that want a "free" Palestine from the Jordan to the sea, with the implicit massacre of millions of Israeli Jews, that the Palestinian proletarians can give the Israeli proletarians the strength to fight the parties of their bourgeoisie, which they push them to war against the Palestinians with the threat that they want their destruction.

And it is only with the struggle of the proletarians of Israel against their bourgeoisie, against its policy of segregation and anti-Palestinian ethnic cleansing, that the Palestinian proletarians can find the strength to fight the bourgeois nationalist Palestinian parties.

More generally, throughout the Arab-Middle Eastern area, the bourgeoisies use the external enemy represented by the USA-Israel combination to deflect the anger of the proletarian masses against it, and thus save their own domination and privilege. All national bourgeoisies around the world always try to divert the anger of the workers towards the external enemy.

Palestinian national oppression will end not with the formation of a Palestinian state but with the international proletarian revolution and the formation of a socialist republic comprising more and more countries in the area, in which all minorities, including the Jewish one, will be guaranteed all the rights.

Gaza reduced to rubble is not the result of hatred between peoples and religions but of the most modern and cynical bourgeois interests. It is the future that capitalism promises to most of the cities of Europe and the world.

The first slogan of communism is always the same and current, modern, just and necessary: proletarians of the whole world unite!

# Venezuela-Guyana Reject the Bourgeois parties and their dispute over the Essequibo Territory

The so-called Essequibo Territory is a geographical area, including both land and a portion of maritime surface, included between Venezuela's eastern border with Guyana and the Essequibo River, which cuts this country in two. That land, which represents more than half of Guyana's territory, has been the subject of a territorial dispute between the two neighboring bourgeois states for decades.

The Esequibo is rich in raw materials, above all oil and gas. The oil multinationals - first of all the American Exxon Mobil - in recent years have carried out operations to search for new hydrocarbon deposits with fruitful results, benefiting from the support of the Guyana government. The Venezuelan government protested these operations, denouncing the military support given to them by the United States government.

The regimes of Venezuela and Guyana, both of which are cloaked in socialist disguises, reveal their real nature in disputing this territory: the whole controversy is nothing other than a clash between bourgeois states, in which the opposing world imperialist powers intervene, at the end of control of raw materials and markets. Suffice it to say that Venezuela holds the largest proven oil reserves in the world.

Tension between the two countries began to rise when in 2015 Exxon Mobil discovered a deposit at sea, which was then the subject of a long-standing territorial dispute. Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro claimed that Exxon Mobil was destabilizing the area, given that the multinational had relied on the government of Guyana to carry out search operations in the area disputed between the two countries. Exxon had had commercial relations with the Venezuelan government in the past, but as a consequence of this affair, relations between Caracas and the multinational were interrupted.

Among bourgeois there are no relationships of friendship or ideological affinities but only of business and convenience. In fact, other member companies of the PDSVA, the Venezuelan state oil company, and the mixed capital companies present in the country, first of all the US Chevron and the Chinese state company CNOOC, also participate in the exploitation of the Esequibo resources.

For this reason, the accusations leveled by the Venezuelan government against Exxon Mobil are equally hypocritical as they are against the so-called "international community" for supporting this multinational and Guyana. On both sides there are only the interests of the various capitalist cliques at stake.

The workers are just labor to be exploited with the lowest possible wages and cannon fodder to be deployed in the event of a military confrontation.

The question of the Esequibo is used by the Venezuelan bourgeois government to revive nationalism and strengthen national unity, that is, the unity between the antagonistic classes, in the face of the wear and tear of its following among the proletarian masses, also in view of the presidential elections of 2024.

To this end, on December 3, the Caracas government called a consultative referendum, with 5 questions regarding the political conduct to be followed regarding the territorial dispute. The pro-government parties have formed a “Coordination for the Campaign for the Defense of the Esequibo”. The opposition parties, such as Democratic Action, marched in the same direction, announcing the formation of similar bodies and, like the government, giving indications of participating in the referendum and voting in favor of the questions posed by the government. The employers' associations also supported the government line and so did most of the trade unions.

The outcome, as expected, was a plebiscite with over 90% of votes in favour. There is much doubt about the veracity of the result. But, despite the frantic propaganda of all the apparatuses of the bourgeois regime in its various branches and the unity of all its political parties, officially only 10.5 million voters went to vote, approximately 50% of those entitled to vote. , which highlights the distrust of the proletarian masses towards bourgeois politics and its electoral procedures.

In the unity of intent between government and opposition parties regarding this territorial dispute, we can see the common bourgeois origin of the two political sides, in whose false opposition, which is by no means irreducible, they want to harness the working class to prevent it from fighting for its own immediate and historical interests.

Venezuelan workers have certainly not been consulted to decide on the level of their wages, their pensions, the conditions of employment, the quality of the working environment, and they must not participate in any of the electoral mechanisms through which their workers are chosen executioners in the factories and endorsed their policies.

The promotion of patriotism, in addition to being useful for parties trying to regain popularity, has other harmful effects for the working class and beneficial for capitalist exploitation. Nationalism unites the exploited with the exploiters in the false common interest of defending the homeland and the national economy, thus hindering the class struggle, distancing workers from the fight for their true immediate interests (increase in wages and pensions, reduction of the duration and intensity of work, health and safety), placing the proletarians at the service of the interests of the bosses (private or "state") to the point of making them cannon fodder in a possible war.

None of the managements and trade union currents that called to participate in the Consultative Referendum can be considered an authentic force in defense of workers. On the contrary, they are traitors to the immediate interests of the working class. Authentic class trade union forces must reject any appeal to support the Venezuelan bourgeois government in this territorial dispute and, if necessary, oppose the sending of workers in uniform and in arms to massacre themselves with their class brothers in Guyana, in a war between capitalist states, fought to grab mineral wealth.

The workers, both in Venezuela and in Guyana, must concentrate on the fight for wage and pension increases and for the affirmation of their immediate interests, fighting from below for the formation of a United Class Union Front and denouncing them as traitors to the class workers all those trade union leaders who join the bourgeois government and opposition parties by accepting their calls for the "defense of the Esequibo" to march in the direction of a crazy and criminal war against Guyana.

# Course of the Economy - an overview

### THE DECLINE IN INFLATION

The increase in interest rates has led to a slowdown in the world economy, to the point of a global recession. This led to a significant drop in inflation which, after reaching a peak in June 2022 of 9.1% in the United States and in October 2022 of 10.6% in Europe, fell to 5.5% in June 2023. % in Europe and 3% in the United States. However, inflation has started to increase slightly again in the United States, reaching 3.7% in August, a phenomenon that is ascribed to the summer season and government incentives to relocate industrial production and support the development of new technologies.

In Europe, the inflation gap between different countries is tending to narrow: in June, the highest value, in the United Kingdom, was 6.3% and in France 4.9%. A determining factor is certainly the increase in the price of fuel, linked to the increase in the price of oil

To boost oil prices, OPEC+ repeatedly cut daily production, so much so that the supply-demand imbalance in the third quarter reached 1.6 million barrels per day, the highest level since 2021. To offset this decline Oil-consuming countries are drawing on supplies: in August alone they withdrew 76.3 million barrels, bringing stocks to the lowest level in the last 13 months. The result was an increase in prices. North Sea Brent crude was selling (September 2023) at \$94 per barrel.

The monopoly of some countries on the production of hydrocarbons is not the only cause of the increase in prices. Added to this is the underinvestment of the last ten years in the raw materials and energy sectors, and speculation, which sees the opportunity to obtain fabulous returns.

But, in the chronic crisis of the capitalist mode of production, the recession will be followed by a new wave of deflation. Central banks will then once again have to rush to the rescue of capital to keep it on its feet.

### INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION

The general trend is not only towards a sharp slowdown, but even towards recession.

In the United States, despite the hundreds of billions of dollars paid by the government to support industrial production and to modernize it by developing new technological branches, since December 2022 we have witnessed a clear slowdown, with growth close to zero. For industrial production, which includes the production of shale gas and oil, only the small growth of 0.2% was recorded in the first eight months of 2023, compared to the whole of 2022. However, if we consider manufacturing production alone, we notice a decline of 1.7%, which comes on top of 15 years of decline, which brings the sector to -7.6% compared to the 2007 peak.

Even if a few hundred billion dollars in state aid will allow American industrial production to modernize and face the "energy transition", this will not prevent the spread of the historic crisis of the capitalist mode of production.

The Japanese economy continues to struggle. After a recovery of 5.1% in 2021, compared to -10.1% in 2020, and the very modest growth of 0.2% in 2022, Japan will record -1.6% in 2023, bringing the level of production at -19% compared to the maximum reached in 2007.

South Korea, after years of relatively strong growth, averaging 2.8%, is now in the midst of a recession with industrial production dropping 6.1% in the first seven months of the year! This is not a negligible figure. A strong downward trend that heralds a formidable crisis of overproduction.

Germany has been in recession since September 2021. Together with Belgium, it was one of the few Western European countries to have surpassed the peak reached in 2008, but has now lost its gains. From 2014 to 2018, growth in Germany was weak (1.5% annual average) but constant, while in the other Western European countries growth only resumed during the two-year period 2017-18, marked by a favorable international situation , and then fell from 2019 onwards in all the main imperialist countries, including China.

In the first seven months of 2023, the German industry recorded a very slight gain compared to 2022, of 0.21%. However, the level of production fell by 7.7% compared to the peak in 2018, while compared to that of 2008 we have a minus of 0.7%, in other words, German capitalism has returned to its starting point.

The energy tariff choice made by the German bourgeoisie was imposed on the whole of Europe by aligning the price of electricity with that of gas, so that German industry is not at a disadvantage compared to French industry, which benefits from cheaper energy thanks to nuclear power. The French bourgeoisie agreed to sacrifice its own industry, seeing the gains from the increased energy rent and aimed to enrich itself, at the expense of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie, by privatizing electricity production. A growing mass of parasites bought electricity from EDF at low prices and sold it at a higher price on the “free market”.

The German bourgeoisie had bet on low-cost Russian gas for energy supply. But after the invasion of Ukraine by Russian imperialism, Germany found itself forced to buy oil and gas from other suppliers at high prices, thus reducing the competitiveness of its industry vis-à-vis China and the United States. While the latter produce shale gas and oil, China buys most of its hydrocarbons from Russia at a 30% discount. The Kremlin thus becomes increasingly dependent on Chinese imperialism.

Like many old imperialist countries, Germany invests little in infrastructure and digital technology, and some of the industrial apparatus is obsolete. This weakens the competitiveness of

German capitalism.

For years, Germany has invested heavily in China to take advantage of that gigantic, booming market. The prodigious development of Chinese capitalism in the first twenty years of the century contributed greatly to offering the average rate of profit and increased a gigantic market, saving the capitalist mode of production for further decades. This was possible because, starting from the 1950s, Chinese state capitalism developed a formidable industrial base with the necessary infrastructure that allowed the flow of investments. The German monopolies in the automotive, mechanical and chemical industries, investing massively in China, have made fabulous profits for years. But Chinese capitalism, which in the meantime has seen its growth slow down, having acquired know-how from the West, is now able to compete in those sectors, such as machine tools, chemical products, motor vehicles, which are the strength of German capitalism.

China is Germany's main trading partner, trade between the two countries has reached 300 billion dollars. But Germany's trade deficit is continually growing. A trend that could be strengthened with the growing competition from Chinese electric cars, whose prices are competitive. Europe, and Germany in particular, is lagging behind in this sector and cannot compete with Chinese production. After years of refusing to invest in the production of batteries, magnets and electric motors, the European industry, and the German one in particular, is fighting for its survival. The succulent car market could completely escape the European bourgeoisie, incapable of producing competitive vehicles in terms of price and quality.

German capitalism in senile crisis thus risks having to bow to much stronger imperialist powers.

French capitalism, like German capitalism, with industrial production growth of 0.51%, fared slightly better in 2023 compared to 2022 which was a slight recession. But the general picture is even less rosy than the German one. Compared to 2019, production is 4.9% lower, while it remains 12% below the peak of 2007. In other words, the production level is very close to that of 2009, at the worst moment of the overproduction crisis. As we can see, despite all the tricks they have implemented, the older imperialist states are not able to get out of the 2000-2009 crisis.

Europe's other big sufferer is the United Kingdom. After the strong recovery in 2021 from the fall of 2020, Great Britain has been in recession again since October 2021. If we compare the index for the first seven months of 2023 with those of 2022, we have -1.4%, a decline which follows that of -3.7% in 2022. If we compare the 2019 index with the maximum reached in 2000, we discover that in 2022 industrial production is still 6.6% lower than that of 22 years earlier. So British capitalism has been in recession since the 2000s. But, as if by magic, the statisticians of the British bourgeoisie have manipulated all the indices. If we take the average of the first seven months of 2023, a recession year compared to 2022, also in recession, we obtain a surplus of 1.5% compared to the 2000 index! So the British bourgeoisie would have us believe that British capitalism is doing better than German capitalism.

This ignorance is also a confirmation for us of their decadence: soon the bourgeoisies of all countries will no longer be capable of producing reliable statistics. Instead of industrial production they will rely on the much more dubious GDP statistics.

The situation in Italy is not any rosier. After a strong recovery in 2021, +11.7%, which followed an 11% decline in 2020, growth fell to +0.4% in 2022, before turning negative in 2023 at -2.7%, based on the indices of the first nine months of the year. After the two positive years of 2017 and 2018, Italian capitalism had reduced the gap with the peak of 2007 by a no less staggering -17.6%. Despite the post-pandemic recovery, industrial production is still 20% lower than in 2007.

In Poland, the accumulation of industrial capital for some years stood at an average annual rate of 5.4%, a notable growth when compared to the decrepit capitalisms of the Old Continent. But with the recession that began at the beginning of the year, production recorded a decline of 1.7% in the first six months.

World trade sees a slowdown in exports as of October 2022, but they have fallen sharply for most major imperialist countries. Exports from China, Korea, the United States and Belgium fell by about 10%. Those of Japan by 5%. Chinese imports fell 15% in July year-on-year. As always, the decline in imports is synonymous with internal recession.

We can conclude that, as expected, after two years of growth in 2017 and 2018, global capitalism is once again in recession. It should be noted that the old imperialist countries, with the exception of Belgium and Germany, have never regained the level reached in 2007: all the recovery of these two years has been lost, and the scale of production in most of the major imperialist countries is now close to that

of 2009!

China is also hit by recession and in the real estate sector there are spectacular failures, such as that of Evergrande. The general picture is that of high unemployment, with at least 20% of young people out of work, a decline in consumption and a return to deflation. With this crisis, an entire sector of the Chinese lower middle class and middle class risks being ruined.

On a global scale, this adds up to the colossal debt of companies, families and states, not to mention the devaluation of trillions of bonds. As a result, the situation is much worse than in 2009.

In the current situation, with every capitalism fighting for survival, we can expect an increasingly fierce trade war.

But the time will come when the failure of a few large companies, which in turn leads to the failure of a large bank, will cause all the dominoes to fall. The "every man for himself!" sooner or later it will break out for the large imperialist states and some of them could be forced to declare bankruptcy.

## Miners in South Africa Continue the Proletariat's Struggle Against Regime Unions

The latest clash in the ongoing struggle of the South African mine workers against the regime union NUM (National Union of Mineworkers) is the fight of the gold mining workers at the Gold One Modder East operation in Springs, a major gold mining centre on the Witwatersrand, 30 kilometres East of Johannesburg. The present conflict began with a sit-in which started on the night of October 22-23 when the workers stayed in the mine following their night shift. Of the 1,800 workers employed at that operation, 562 were there at the time to conduct this sit-in, and many others showed up in the morning to demonstrate their support for the action, which they affirmed was in fact an action that the workers had agreed on and planned the night before, in contradiction with the lies of the bourgeois press, which claimed the workers were being held against their will by a radical minority of supporters of the AMCU (Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union). The AMCU is really supported by the vast majority of the mineworkers, and its recognition by the company was the primary demand in this sit-in. The "closed-shop agreement" between the NUM and Gold One, according to South African law, allows for the recognition of only one union, the one with a proven majority—proven, that is, according to balloting processes set up by the conspiracy of the NUM and Gold One.

We commended the determination of the 3,000 workers of the Lonmin platinum mine in their struggle at Marikana in 2012 against the bosses and the NUM, which culminated not with the crushing defeat of the miners that the bourgeoisie hoped for when it shot down 34 of them in the first week of the strike, but rather with a partial victory on wages after the workers pressed on for four more weeks. But more significant than the wage increase was the consequence that the continuation of the strike after the massacre, and its spread to other mines and even beyond the mining sector, eventually led to the recognition of an AMCU majority in the mine and in other platinum mines, and to a general weakening of the NUM's hold on the class—along with that of the COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions), with which the NUM is affiliated and which constitutes one third of South Africa's tripartite alliance, next to the ANC and the Stalinist SACP. Hence the real significance of the battle is its place as a major victory against the regime union and in the progress made towards the unification of the workers' struggles.

Since then this long and arduous campaign has continued with periodic clashes in several other mines, and gradually the stranglehold of the COSATU is being weakened further, thanks to the combativeness and intractability of the proletariat in Africa's most industrialized nation—and particularly of the workers in the mining industry, because this sector places such large numbers of proletarians (around 475,000 directly employed workers, as well as around a million who are indirectly employed by the industry) in conditions which are totally intolerable.

The gold mines have been a major front of the struggle against the regime union since those victories in the platinum mines. By 2016 the AMCU had the same number of members as the NUM in Sibanye Gold. In 2019 the AMCU attempted to win a higher wage than the one negotiated by the NUM, by going on strike. This led to several violent clashes between union members; according to the NUM and the media, AMCU workers were attacking NUM workers, but the AMCU held that in fact it was once again violence of the NUM against AMCU workers and against the NUM's own militant unionists, which is what occurred in the Marikana strike and in other instances. Following the 2019 strike the government threatened to

deregister the union on various pretexts.

Over this entire period the bourgeois press has maintained the narrative that all of these conflicts are instigated by AMCU officials, that they constitute a long-running contest between the two unions for influence in the mines, in which the workers themselves are mere pawns. The actions of the NUM have repeatedly proven that this is essentially fiction; the fight is between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and the so-called power struggle between union leaders is in reality just one chapter in this class war, the toppling of the regime unions and the construction of a strong class union.

The bourgeoisie's labelling of the sit-in at Gold One Modder East as a “hostage situation” is thus consistent with its usual narrative, but not with reality.

However, while the fight against the regime union has made consistent progress, the dangers which we have commented on previously continue to threaten the formation of a strong class union. AMCU's president Joseph Mathunjwa continues to make frequent calls for respect for the bourgeois order, even reminiscing about the superior management of the apartheid bourgeoisie, and condemning the post-apartheid presidents for ruining a “functioning state”. His calls for national unity and encouragement of racialised struggle reveal a wide gulf between the combativeness of union's membership and the politics it officially espouses.

On October 25 the sit-in ended. At one point, Gold One alleged, 109 workers forced their way out, after a violent struggle with the “hostage takers”. Eventually the company determined that around 450 were hostages and 100-110 were hostage takers; consequently, the company dismissed 74 workers, which it says were found to be guilty of misconduct after a thorough investigation, for which there is scant evidence, as many of the dismissed workers said they never received their alleged hearings.

In the following weeks, Gold One, the NUM, and the AMCU scheduled the termination of the closed-shop agreement, thus opening the possibility of AMCU being recognised at the mine, but only the possibility, since NUM and Gold One certainly haven't given up their resistance yet. On November 14 the agreement was set to terminate a month later, on December 14. At this point, it seems, those three parties felt the matter was resolved, including AMCU officials, whatever there involvement in the sit-in had been. The workers essentially got what they wanted, and the company demonstrated that there would be consequences for the their militancy.

But, characteristically, the mineworkers were unfazed. Following the night shift of December 7-8, a second sit-in was staged, this time of 447 workers, which lasted until December 11. Their demand was the immediate reinstatement of all 74 dismissed workers. The press, Gold One, and the NUM initially maintained their confusion as to what the issue was this time, since the workers got what they wanted with regards to the closed-shop agreement. They claimed that it was difficult to communicate with the workers inside the mine, and as with the previous strike, little effort was made to communicate with the other workers gathered outside the mine, because doing so would have confirmed their support for the sit-in, and that it was in fact another planned sit-in and not a hostage situation. On the 9th, Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy Gwede Mantashe was brought in to give credence to the “hostage situation” story: Mantashe insisted that brutal beatings were occurring at the mine, as well as threats to execute hostages if food and water were not delivered. These stories were parroted by Gold One and NUM's regional organiser, but Mantashe is the only source anyone can give. Mantashe insisted that since this was a hostage situation, the police would need to be brought in. The minister also lamented how these indisciplined workers had gone “behind our backs” in seeking the termination of the closed-shop agreement.

As the AMCU is not officially recognized at the mine, it remained at a distance through both strikes, but did assert that the version of events presented by the bosses and the NUM was completely false. However, it does not seem to have made any attempt to organize actions in solidarity with the Gold One mineworkers.

The strike ended on the 11th as miners gradually emerged. As with the previous sit-in, the bourgeoisie's narrative was that hostages who had been starved and beaten were gradually forcing their way out, and consequently their captors gave up. However, the accounts of all the workers who emerged once again contradicted this: the private security and the police had in fact been the real “captors”, who clashed violently with the workers and then attempted to prevent them from leaving to receive medical attention (and the same goes for workers who were not injured, but needed to leave to get medicine, for diabetes, etc.). They also prevented those inside the mine from communicating with the outside, or from receiving food from their families; then, after starving the workers, they

restricted their eventual retreat from the mine, only allowing the workers to leave in ones and twos so as to prevent a crowd from forming outside the mine. The ease with which the police and security can enforce starvation, and prevent aid or communication between the workers inside the mine and those outside, are major weaknesses of the sit-in strike tactic.

When the mine reopened after the holidays, many workers were suddenly prevented from getting into the mine for their shifts; over the first weeks of January, at least 445 workers were fired, mostly over text, and 140 more were suspended. The practice of mass firings in order to break the workers' resistance is extremely common in this sector, frequently followed by a rehiring of the same workers after the wave of militancy has died down, though in this case the company will probably look for replacement workers who are not so set on opposing the regime union. The NUM has helped them in this regard by promising to advocate only for the dismissed NUM members who haven't shown a desire to join AMCU.

But once again the mineworkers show that their willingness to fight is extremely difficult to stamp out. Gold One reportedly cancelled a shift on January 10 over threats of another sit-in, this time over both waves of dismissals, against the replacement of those workers by contractors, and over the company's refusal to pay the workers their December salaries. The company has said the situation is becoming "unsustainable"; in the second sit-in it claims the workers cost the mine 12 to 15 million Rand per day. Hence despite the short durations of the sit-ins due to the factors mentioned above, the workers have been able to apply pressure to the company through their resolve and solidarity, which continue to shine in spite of the efforts of all the bourgeois forces united against them.

*In our tradition - historical articles of the ICP*

## WHAT HAS BECOME OF GIUSEPPE SENSI?

*[From Seme Comunista, March 1939, Organ of the Italian Fraction of the International Communist Left. We found it interesting because of the story existence and repression of Italian communist left militants in the USSR as well as documenting the contacts the Italian Left had in the English speaking world]*

Centrism in the USSR, which has physically suppressed the old Bolshevik guard, all those who were of "Lenin's time", has at the same time acquired full control over foreign political emigration, especially over that Italian emigration which as a whole would tend to be "infected with leftism". Calligaris was re-arrested in the vast net that was spread in 1937 prior to May 1 and the elections' - not to mention along with him, Mosca da Silva, Lazzaretti, Manservigi, Cerquetti, Visconti (Allegrazza). All the Italian political emigres were taken to Odessa at the end of last year. Their fate? It is unknown and for many we can fear the worst.

Today we examine the case of Giuseppe Sensi. Sensi, if we are not mistaken, is from the province of Arezzo. He had become a political emigree when he was sentenced to more than twenty years in the galleys of Fascism. He was arrested the night of April 22, 1937 by the GPU which was lying in wait for him on his return from work. Sensi had been expelled from the party on suspicion of belonging to our fraction, or of being a "Trotskyist", according to the formulas. He was one of those who could have re entered the party, if he had permitted himself to be convinced; moreover he had committed the error, which must have proved fatal to him as well as to many others, of becoming a Soviet citizen. This placed him in the power of Stalinist terror, while the Italian authorities could wash their hands of the case. Since the day of his arrest, little or no news has leaked out. Only in December, 1937 en route to his deportation, did Sensi obtain a means of getting word to his wife - Sensi had a Russian wife and child. To her he wrote that he had been sentenced to five years of deportation in Siberia" for having been a member of the 1927 Opposition", and he concluded by advising her to "seek another life for it may be that I shall never see you again."

In this brief line one feels a certain presentiment of the fate which awaits many communists, Russian or foreign, accused of having been members of the 1927 Opposition.

### NO INFORMATION

The brother of Sensi, & communist militant, who served ten years in Italian jails, has sought for information in vain. All his efforts at the Soviet Embassy have borne no results, although at the beginning they were supported by that good centrist, Deputy Duclos, The brother

of Sensi did not ask that the party intervene, but only begged to know that had become of his brother, if he were still alive, and, if not, that they should give him news of his brother's son and wife, The laconic reply of the Soviet Ambassador was always the same. Here are his exact words: "We have no information about your brother and thus we are unable to furnish you with any news of him," The GPU does not reveal whether or not it has already assassinated its victim. The assassin, centrism, will have to recanena account of its misdeeds, and as far as we are concerned, that account will reveal responsibility for these crimes. The banditti who framed them was the Communist Party of Italy. Have no illusions about that! In the debt which the Italian Communist Party will have to pay to the Italian proletariat the name of Sensi will not be forgotten. Nor will the names of all those others assassinated in Russia and Spain.

### IN MEMORIAM

#### GIOVANNI CASERTANO

Our comrade Giovanni has left us. He was the last comrade of the old guard that we still had among us. A great scholar, he continued to correspond from Naples until late in life, never lacking in his and our work and regularly collaborating with the party's editorial committee.

Having said that he disliked "commemorations", we write this to inform his comrades and those who knew him and rejoiced in his vitality, brilliant intelligence and spirit, and loved him.

#### MOTHER GINEVRA

Our party's comrades all embrace comrade Alessandro who has lost his mother. Ginevra was not a communist but she approved that her son was a member of the party. She had proletarian origins and instincts and she has always placed herself on the side of the oppressed. On the occasion of party meetings in Turin she willingly opened her house and she did her best to host comrades who came from abroad.

#### MAURO

With enormous sadness the Party informs all those who knew and loved him of the untimely death of comrade Mauro.

Born and raised in one of Turin's most proletarian and combative neighborhoods, Le Vallette, from his early teens Mauro proved himself a soldier at 14 years old when he joined in street clashes against the police. He joined the ICP in 1986, and remained in the party for the remainder of his life. Mauro distinguished himself for his great ability to organize workers, with acute sensitivity in the direction of workers' struggles in the defense of working conditions. He helped found the COBAS union of railroad train crews.

Generous, intelligent, endowed with a gentle irony and helpfulness to everyone, he was loved by workers and all who knew him.

We all find ourselves more alone now, it is true, and it cannot be otherwise.

We communists reject the theories of religions, fake flowers to embellish the chains that imprison humanity. But from the point of view of material physics we know that Comrade Mauro is not dead. It remains present in the four-dimensional space of events. It is we human beings who perceive time as an inexorable flow from past to future, and from birth to death of every living individual. But this is an illusion, produced by the evolution of the species, suitable for ensuring our survival, but not corresponding to the reality of the world universe. As communists we reject this reduction to personalism and operate, and feel, according to science and class consciousness.

Bourgeois and petty bourgeois slime, who fear wisdom and is inaccessible from it, are steeped in selfish and competitive individualism. They can only conceive of life as an extrinsic and enflant of the selfish self. For us communists, true human value is determined by freeing themselves from the self, merging into the community of social man, until we realize ourselves as part of the energy matter of the universe, self-organized stardust.

Mauro participated in this embrace of all our comrades, dead, living and unborn, as he is alive today in the memory and social struggle of all fighters for a liberated social humanity.

St. Paul stated that Christians were of this world but were not of this world. Mauro was also of this world but not of this world. He lived like all of us in the world of selfishness, greed, the alienation of money, the competition of individuals who like beasts fight to snatch the piece of meat to take to the den called the family. But, unlike St. Paul, the new world we communists do not place in Heaven but on Earth: the world of the attracted humanity, of the social man who realizes and empowers his individuality in the community of humankind. A humanity that does not see in the other an enemy competitor but a brother with whom to joyfully share the fruits of the earth and social labor.

Comrade Mauro participated in this great dream and pressing, urgent, necessary and mature need. And in this he was a man.

## Strike at Özak Tekstil

A very important struggle and actual strike has been taking place for the Turkish working class at Özak Tekstil, operating in Şanlıurfa, since November 2023. The United States-based Levi Strauss company is among the main customers of Özak Tekstil, which operates a factory in Istanbul as well as Urfa. In this context, as the International Communist Party, we found it appropriate to focus on this struggle.

### WHAT HAPPENED

The struggle began on November 19, when approximately 450 of the 700 workers working in the Urfa factory came together and declared that they left Öz İplik-İş, the collaborative regime union affiliated with Hak-İş, and joined the combative BİRTEK-SEN (United Textile Workers Union). It started with. Thus, BİRTEK-SEN, which until then was a small combative textile union based in Antep, not only increased its number of members several times, but also became the authorized union in Özak Tekstil. Workers also complain about ill-treatment, swearing, poor quality food, service problems, increased workload, union-boss cooperation, daily wages cut despite being forced to work 7 days after the February 6 earthquake, verbal harassment against the private lives of female workers, and uncertain work that sometimes lasts until four in the morning. They were against working conditions such as working hours.

This was not the first rebellion against the regime union in the region where the textile industry is widespread. About three years ago, Özak Tekstil workers, together with the workers working in the Urfa Uğur Tekstil factory, resigned from Öz İplik-İş again, this time the regional manager at that time became a member of the DiSK Textile Union, now the president of BİRTEK-SEN, and a hard struggle lasted for months. It resulted in a win even though DiSK Tekstil did not stand behind the workers. BİRTEK-SEN itself was born out of the necessity of creating an alternative to the betrayal attitude of DiSK Tekstil.

As a reaction to the organization of BİRTEK-SEN in the factory, company managers and Öz İplik-İş managers began to pressure the workers to return to the collaborative union, blackmailed them by calling them for one-on-one meetings, and went so far as to threaten female workers with intervening in their private lives. When the company was about to lay off one worker on November 27, approximately 450 workers went on strike. In the following days, workers would face barricades and gas baton attacks by the gendarmerie and police many times, and workers and unionists, including the president of BİRTEK-SEN, would be detained many times. Ultimately, on December 6, the gendarmerie attacked the workers with batons and pepper gas and detained 19 workers and three union leaders. As a result, workers who continued to work in the factory went out and joined the strike.

The strike of Özak Tekstil workers had a remarkable repercussion in the militant sections of the working class. BİRTEK-SEN called for action on a national and international scale in solidarity with the struggle of Özak Tekstil workers. In addition to many grassroots unions in Turkey, especially members of the Deriteks union affiliated with Türk-İş protested for Özak Tekstil workers or commemorated Özak Tekstil workers in their actions. At the international level, formations such as the Free Workers' Union from Iran and the Class Struggle Action Network from the USA tried to organize solidarity with Özak Tekstil workers. Despite all this, DiSK Tekstil continued its hostile attitude towards BİRTEK-SEN with the support of DiSK headquarters.

Ultimately, Özak Tekstil laid off more than 400 workers and began trying to force the workers to end the struggle by accepting compensation. This attitude of the boss was effective enough to cause the number of workers engaged in active struggle to fall to around 150. Still, the struggle of Özak workers continues with the support of most of the workers who accepted

compensation.

### LESSONS OF STRUGGLE

The fact that the Urfa-Antep region has a very large industry and that a significant part of this industry is concentrated in the textile sector revealed the possibility that what happened in Özak Tekstil could have great effects throughout the country. The Özak Tekstil strike could have triggered a massive attempt by the region's textile workers, most of whom are organized in Öz İplik İş, to change unions, similar to what happened in the metal industry against the mafia regime union Türk-Metal in 2015. Although this possibility seems far from reality for now, the only chance for Özak Tekstil workers to win is to expand their struggle by spreading it to the workers of enterprises facing similar conditions. For this purpose, rather than focusing only on the Özak Tekstil factory, mobile pickets can be sent to other textile factories.

The main weakness of the Özak Tekstil struggle is the illusion that Levi's company taking action against Özak Tekstil will bring victory. In fact, the arch enemy of the strikers is the Levi's company itself, even more than Özak Tekstil itself. Levi's is one of the textile monopolies that constitute world imperialism. Although its headquarters is in the USA, it produces in countries such as Bangladesh and Haiti, as well as Turkey, by taking advantage of the inequalities between countries' conditions created by the imperialist system. Workers' struggles against the Levi's company have taken place in these two countries in recent years. In this process, BİRTEK-SEN's mistake was that they addressed Levi's bosses rather than Levi's workers and took their declared working condition commitments seriously. This attitude can be explained by the illusions that the grassroots trade union movement in Turkey carries about democracy in general and Western democracies in particular.

Similarly, bourgeois left parties, both "solidarity" by organizing unions and political parties together under the name of "democracy platforms" and promising a solution to the issue through the parliament through their deputies, contributed to preventing the perspective of the spread of the struggle from becoming the focal point of the Özak Tekstil struggle. The struggle of Özak Tekstil workers has been embraced as another focus of activism to be supported alongside many issues unrelated to the class struggle.

These weaknesses do not overshadow the heroic struggle of Özak Tekstil workers under the leadership of their union BİRTEK-SEN. Ultimately, in this strike, which took place in a relatively small enterprise, Özak Tekstil workers fought a tough struggle alone in the region and in their sector, under difficult conditions, and did not give up and resisted the pressure of the boss, the regime union, the gendarmerie, the police and the court. In this context, they have undertaken an exemplary struggle for the Turkish working class, but all this is not enough for the strike to win. It is time to address all workers in the region, especially in the textile industry.

Struggles such as the Özak Tekstil strike, especially to the extent that they unmask the opportunists leading DiSK, will encourage workers at the base of DiSK to turn their faces away from the regime unions and bourgeois left parties that their leaders are inclined towards, towards the small but combative union focuses that have had to organize outside DiSK. Thus, a grassroots class union front that emerges can draw workers under the influence of the regime unions into a much more struggle than establishing fronts from the top with the regime unions and bourgeois left parties.

From KOMÜNİST PARTİ #7

## The Communist Party is printed and produced by

**Associazione La Sinistra Comunista - Casella Postale 1157 - 50121 Firenze - Italy**

**I.C.P. Editions - c/o 96 Bold Street - Liverpool L1 4HY - United Kingdom**

**C.L. Publishing - POBox 14344. - Portland, OR 97214 - U.S.A**

**international-communist-party.org**

*The following leaflet was distributed at Levi Strauss store locations in the*

*United States.*

## Internationalist Class Solidarity from the United States with the struggling Özak Tekstil Workers in Turkey!

For the past 10 days, factory workers at Özak Tekstil, a textile factory in Urfa, southeastern Turkey, have been on strike and fighting heroically against the company, the collaborationist union, and the boss's regime.

It all started on November 19th, when about 450 workers out of 700 employed at the factory gathered in an assembly and announced that they were leaving the yellow, collaborationist union, Öz İplik-İş (Real Thread Workers Union), a member of the Hak-İş regime trade union confederation, and joining the confrontational union Birtek-Sen (United Textile Workers Union).

The leaders of the company and the Öz İplik-İş leaders reacted by starting to pressure the workers to return to the collaborationist union, summoning them to one-on-one talks in which they were blackmailed, going so far as to threaten the women workers with intrusions into their private lives!

It was when the company went so far as to lay off a worker - on November 27th - that about 450 workers went on strike, first organizing a procession inside the factory and then coming out into the street.

On November 29th, the Urfa governorate issued a ban on demonstrations in the city, the police attacked workers outside the factory, and the leader of Birtek-Sen was arrested and then released.

The next day, the army had deployed to prevent workers from approaching the factory entrance thus allowing scabs to enter. Since December 1st, the army has even erected a wall of iron gates and armored cars to prevent workers from entering the street leading to the factory!

On December 2nd, workers demonstrated in downtown Urfa and were again attacked by police forces.

On December 5th, on the ninth day of the struggle, the company reported the workers to the court for an "illegal strike."

On Dec. 6th, the army attacked workers with batons and tear gas, arresting 19 workers and three union leaders, including again the head of Birtek-Sen. Resulting in the workers who were continuing to work inside the factory coming out and joining the strike!

This struggle is very important because the area is an industrial district with many other textile factories, including the city of Gaziantep, 150 km west of Urfa, where Turkish and Syrian workers united in a foundry strike last January, dealing a blow to the racist propaganda of the ruling class.

This struggle is important also because it points the way for the entire working class in Turkey on striking and organizing outside and against the regime unions!

The strike has gained national prominence. In the city of Izmir (Izmir), workers who are members of Deriteks, the textile workers' union that is a member of the Türk-İş regime trade union confederation, staged a demonstration demanding wage increases and expressed solidarity with their struggling class brothers and sisters at Özak Tekstil in Urfa.

This textile factory has among its main clients; Levi Strauss & Co, a United States based company. This is why as workers in the U.S. and as CSAN (Class Struggle Action Network) we want to express our solidarity with our class brothers and sisters at Özak Tekstil, claiming their freedom to organize into a genuine fighting union like Birtek-Sen, and to denounce the anti-worker front composed of the bosses, the government and state, and regime unions!

We denounce Levi Strauss & Co. owners and bosses as complicit in the exploitation and oppression of our fellow workers in Turkey.

Long live the struggle of the workers of Özak Tekstil!

Long live class unionism, against collaborationist and regime unionism!

For the extension of the strike above factory and category boundaries!