

The Communist Party

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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

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THE CYNICAL CALCULATIONS OF THE WORLD BOURGEOISIES AND THE MASSACRE OF PALESTINIANS

In many Western countries, that is, those nations bound by an alliance with the United States, the Palestinian cause holds sympathy among the population and there are participatory demonstrations in its support, in some cases with large crowds. This has been seen recently in the United Kingdom, France and the United States itself.

The plight of the Palestinian people is identified as an exemplary case of oppression and injustice, reasoning that fighting against them is seen as a way to combat all injustice and political oppression, according to the motto “Palestine is the world”.

This conviction is fueled by feelings of indignation, compassion and solidarity, feelings which arise from the horrors of a war that, like the generality of conflicts in present-day capitalism, reaps terrible massacres among the civilian population, and which has a distinctly asymmetrical character as to the power relations between the parties involved in the conflict. This is, however, a dangerous simplification.

The asymmetrical nature of a war does not define its essence. In Gaza, the army of the bourgeois Israeli state is not up against proletarian masses and the dispossessed in revolt but armed militias of bourgeois parties, headed by Hamas, which is itself supported by regional and world imperialist powers.

The proletarians of Palestine are mere cannon fodder according to the cynical calculations of these clashing bourgeois formations, including, of course, the Palestinian bourgeoisie-in-waiting. The October 7 massacre perpetrated against Israeli civilians, in a kibbutz well known to have a pacifist orientation, and which also affected numerous immigrant proletarians, was one such calculation. Those who conceived, organized and implemented it knew that it would lead to the certain massacre of thousands of Palestinians. The assault was implemented in order to strike against the regional plans of Israel and its allies in the interests of another bloc of imperialist states headed by Iran.

The interests of the Palestinian working class, doubly oppressed, i.e., on both a national and class level, are at complete odds with the politics of Hamas and its supporters, allies and financiers. Seventy years of Israeli-Palestinian conflict—generated and aggravated by the maneuvers of regional and global bourgeois powers—confirm that a solution within the framework of imperialism is insurmountable.

World capitalism is marching towards what is both its salvation and the ruin of humanity itself: a third world war. The economic crisis of overproduction has left humanity at the precipice of the abyss. Even if the capitalist states reached the solution of “two peoples, two states” in Palestine, it would only be a continuation of a higher, more serious level of the conflict already underway. In other words, there would be an even higher number of victims, mainly proletarian, on both sides of the front.

Taking the side of the so-called “Palestinian resistance”, that is, for the establishment of a Palestinian state within the framework of capitalism, means setting out on the road that leads, not to the defeat of oppression or social and political injustice, but to the deployment of proletarians in the new world war that is rapidly developing before our eyes.

That the good intentions of the world's masses, who are mobilizing in reaction to the massacres in Gaza, are being used for the purposes of expanding and

continuing the war, is proved by the fact that these mobilizations are directed by organizations that, beyond calling for a “ceasefire”, line up behind the Palestinian national-bourgeois parties in this 70-year conflict.

These organizations offer no criticism of the Palestinian nationalist parties, nor of the imperialist regimes that support them, nor any appeal addressed to the workers of Israel, nor any solidarity arising from the massacre of Israeli proletarians carried out by the militias of the bourgeois parties of Gaza.

The ethical law that seems to arise from the politics of these pro-Palestinian is that it should be a matter of standing alongside those who suffer the greatest massacre, justifying the lesser massacre of civilians. The problem is that it is not the asymmetry of the number of casualties that explains the nature of the conflict; this asymmetry is a fact that is highly susceptible to change, in the development of a conflict that is bourgeois in nature, and which will entail the increasing involvement of other capitalist states.

By ignoring the bourgeois nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, haphazardly tucking it away behind the asymmetry of forces, the pro-Palestinian movements aim to enlist ever larger masses on an international level in a war that is not social, that is, between classes, but between states of the same class, the capitalists.

In this way, any distinction between oppressors and oppressed, including the harassment of women in Islamist regimes, disappears behind the clash of states: this means the end of the struggle against exploitation and class domination within those countries that are supposed to support the “Palestinian cause”. It claims to fight against exploitation, injustice and oppression; instead, any struggle in this sense is set aside in favor of a conflict between capitalist states, justified as a reaction against the national oppression of the Palestinian people.

Throughout the Arab-Middle Eastern region, the Palestinian question—the struggle against the US-Israeli devil—is fomented to mislead the proletarian masses from the struggle for their goals and against their respective bourgeois regimes. Turkey and Iran are perhaps the most striking examples of this strategy of the bourgeoisie to engage its proletarians in war propaganda and stifle their class aims.

In Western countries, the centers of mobilizations for a “ceasefire” and in support of the “Palestinian cause” are the universities. Students are the easiest social stratum to mobilize into the activist movement, even more so than the petty bourgeois, as they are concentrated and entrenched in academic institutions and putting off your studies for a while is not as difficult as it is for the petty bourgeoisie to interrupt its entrepreneurial enterprises. Even more so, the condition of the workers. They are all the more distant from the condition of workers, as they are not subject to corporate despotism; notably, they will lose no wages. So much so that it is certainly erroneous to speak of a student “strike”.

These characteristics, combined with the inter-class nature of their social stratum, and the passing nature of their individual class position, which propels most of them toward a higher social position than the proletariat, make students a mostly petty bourgeois movement from which the big bourgeoisie occasionally draws to renew the ranks of its political personnel.

Without a position or social function to provide a firm footing, as is—also—the case with the proletariat, the student movement is characterized by impotence and,

consequently, it makes a ruckus, disorients and leads ultimately to the same false radicalism. Proletarians have greater constraints to break, but when they finally succeed, they become aware of their social and, therefore, political power.

The student movement, due to its petty bourgeois nature, is bound to vacillate between the class positions of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, favoring the class with the stronger force. It is more susceptible to bourgeois ideology than that of the proletariat due to the culture disseminated through bourgeois institutions. It's consequently fertile ground for the renewal of opportunist parties, which find in it a fruitful environment to replenish their ranks, collectively parroting the motto “workers and students united in struggle”, which can only mean workers aligning with petty-bourgeois activism.

The mobilizations underway in American universities naturally remind one of the anti-war movement against the Vietnam war in the 1960s and 70s. At the time, the bourgeois American State was directly involved in the conflict and sent tens of thousands of young people to die through compulsory conscription. At the height of the stability acquired during the post-world war reconstruction, and by virtue of their established dominance in the theater of imperialist powers, young Americans were no longer interested in going to die in a war so far from the confines of their homeland. A segment of the American bourgeoisie itself considered the choice to continue the military engagement to be a mistake. The masses in action were far superior, whether in the university or out.

Today the situation is quite different. For decades capitalist society has burned away the illusions of growing prosperity and is shrouded in a despairing atmosphere of hopelessness. The middling petty bourgeoisie thins and crumbles by the day. Its desperation, a result typical of the kind of powerlessness which affects the class, manifests in fanatical and reactionary movements. The student milieu is no exception; its movement tends to embrace false radicalism, from various identitarian wings to being fatally attracted to spurious revolutionary solutions that mystify and replace social revolution with bourgeois war.

The International Communist Party shows young people, students and workers the path of the workers' and communist movement, of the social revolution against all wars between capitalist states. The end of the dual national and class exploitation of the Palestinian proletariat and its dispossessed, along with the other national minorities (such as the Kurds, for example) can only come about through the international communist revolution. The political directions which place us on the historic path to our goal are the opposite of those whipped up by the pro-Palestinian camp: in every country, workers must struggle against their own bourgeoisies, in Gaza and the West Bank as well. Proletarians of all countries must say “No!” to inter-class solidarity in the name of war. We must appeal to the proletarians of Israel, too, to urge them to struggle against the Israeli State, side-by-side with the proletariat of Palestine.

WHY WE DO NOT SUPPORT THE CALL FOR PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF THE RAILROADS

On October 5, 2022, the Railroad Workers United (RWU), an organization of railroad workers in the United States, adopted a resolution calling for public ownership of railroads. In the US, these are divided into various private companies.

Later on, the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) also issued a similar appeal. In light of these recent facts, we feel it is important to clarify the Party's standpoint on nationalization.

The communist view on nationalization under a capitalist regime has always been clear and consistent. Marx and Engels wrote much to attack Lassalle's myth of state socialism, and we, the inheritors of Marxist doctrine, are still fighting against it today. It is clear that there are recurring themes in the various ideological deviations that prevent the proletariat from recognizing its historical goals.

Such a position is well-illustrated in Engels' text *Anti-Dühring* (1878), as we quoted also in *Il Programma Comunista* n. 13 of 1962: “the transformation, either into joint-stock companies, or into state ownership, does not do away with the capitalist nature of the productive forces. In the joint-stock companies this is obvious. And the modern state, again, is only the organization that bourgeois society takes on in order to support the general external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against the encroachments as well of the workers as of individual capitalists”.

Let us examine how this transformation occurred in the railways of the United States. As the RWU statement notes, the US Government effectively nationalized the private rail infrastructure in the US for 26 months due to the inability to effectively move the nation's freight during WWI.

Our Bukharin was in New York at the time, where he was editing the *Novij Mir*. His writings allow us to gain a more detailed understanding of the circumstances. On February 16, 1917, he wrote:

“The stronger the position of US capital, the stronger its appetites.

“To satisfy these appetites, strong means of fighting are indispensable: army, air fleet and navy, military fortifications.

“And so the period of so-called preparations has begun. With an infernal din, to the roll of drums and the singing of patriotic songs, they have begun to set in motion, at full throttle, a pump that sucks money to the people for militarism.

“...Economic life becomes a barrack-like entity. Plans to transfer the railways, telephone, and telegraph to the state are drawn up. Plans to transfer the railways, telephone, and telegraph to the state are drawn up. In addition, a series of institutions is established to draw up plans to transfer or subordinate important sectors of finance and production to the state. A central organization has already been set up to take care of raw materials (this business will be handled by the banker), labor (will it be assigned to Gompers?), and the care and repair of cannon fodder, etc. etc.

“...Of course, in the meantime, they do not forget the ‘fellow workers’. An attack against the right to strike is launched on the whole front. The federal government lashes out against the railroad workers. In a whole series of federal parliaments, bills are introduced, one after another, against the right of workers to defend their interests by strike.”

Indeed, the United States declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917, sending 116,700 proletarians to their deaths in the name of democracy. This was an ideological smoke screen used to hide the interests of US imperialism. RWU does not feel the need to recall this. While it provides a nostalgic account of Wilson's nationalization of the railways, it is important to remember that this was a war waged for imperialist measures, both at home and abroad.

In no. 80 of our Italian theoretical

review, *Comunismo*, we published Part XVIII of our text “The Labor Movement in the United States of America”; it provides a description which is more than suitable for our purposes here.

“During the summer of 1917, alongside the initiative against socialist and extreme left-wing organizations, a practice of cooperation between unions and the government in important sectors of war production took shape. It was based on a series of agreements that regulated working conditions and the very presence of unions within industries operating under government contracts.”

At that time, the government was facing a significant challenge.

“The unions, feeling particularly strong because of the enormous demand for labor and the urgency of the work, demanded that the wage conditions and union regulations and, above all, the closed shop, were respected in all contracts;

“The government was facing three main issues: the growing militancy of the workers, the unions' insistence on the closed shop, and employers' reluctance to accept wage increases”. After all, “profits in war industries were guaranteed by the state”.

In this context, it was the government's responsibility “to offset any additional costs resulting from pay raises”. The concessions made to the railwaymen were the price the American bourgeoisie was willing to pay to keep its imperialist war plans undisturbed.

In December 1918, the unions held a vote among railroad workers on whether they preferred the railroads to remain state-owned or return to private ownership. The results were overwhelmingly in favor of continued nationalization, with 306,720 votes cast in favor and only 1,466 votes cast in favor of a return to private ownership. These figures are not surprising. Nationalization was done to maintain control over the railroad's labor force, even in the face of wage concessions that individual capitalists were reluctant to make. And it was incredibly effective.

The American Federation of Labor, or AFL, the regime trade union confederation in the United States, and the American opportunist parties, were all enthusiastic when, in the eight years leading up to World War II, Roosevelt outlined his reforms, which consisted mainly of developing the National Recovery Act (NRA) and devaluing the currency. Our New York comrades, showing that they were very clear about the situation and the historical perspective, wrote then:

“The failure of the London Conference where US imperialism had intervened with the prospect of wresting from its contenders major concessions regarding industrial-financial expansion plans, employing all pressures ranging from diplomatic intrigue to open and direct threat, determined to a certain extent the new orientation expressed in the NRA, a parallel agency of the capitalist state for a more rational exploitation of the working masses.

“This plan was established on the basis of the existing worldwide power relations, the conflicting and antagonistic forces of the different imperialisms. These power relations manifested through unprecedented crises, industrial, financial, and trade failures. It is therefore inevitable that this plan rests on the prospect of a new conflagration for the conquest of new markets” (Prometeo, n. 94 of October 15, 1933).

In addressing the perspective well-outlined by our comrades, Roosevelt merely endorsed and further developed Wilson's lesson on the need to “concert”. It was not a matter of any alleged political masterminding, but rather of the general tendency of world capitalism having arrived at its imperialist stage, which imposed the authentic social-political content of fascism on to the bourgeois regimes. This content was the disciplining of the “productive forces of the nation” through the framing of workers' unions and employers' associations in the bourgeois State. In Germany and Italy, the process began with the physical destruction of the existing trade unions. It then continued with the formation of State-controlled trade unions. Finally, once the bourgeoisie abandoned its brown and black shirts, it continued with the establishment of regime trade unions,

which were reconstituted from above by opportunist political parties. These parties have since served as agents for the subordination of trade unions to the national interests of capital. In the United States, on the other hand, there was no need for open dictatorship; however, much of the process of destroying class-based labor organizations occurred, and certainly not without violence.

Roosevelt encouraged every industry to form a federation and submit a “code of fair competition” for the president’s approval. This code, in principle, “would bind each employer not to lay off anyone, to allow a minimum wage and a maximum of 40 hours per week, and to recognize the workers’ right to organize themselves to enter into labor contracts.

“The president had the option of amending each code before approving it. Once approved, each code acquired the force of law. . . . All or most of the employers had signed up, but they brazenly violated the code “in letter and spirit”. The government had neither the ability nor the will to take serious action against the violators. . . . Despite the pressure from the masses and the spontaneous spread of strikes, the AFL spicards had been the most vocal proponents of the presidential maneuver” (Prometeo n. 101 of March 25, 1934).

“It is clear that Roosevelt’s new economic policy was designed to provide a temporary solution until the outbreak of the world conflict” (Prometeo n. 105 of June 17, 1934).

It is a matter of historical record that Roosevelt decided to nationalize the railways once again during the second world war. Executive Order #9412 of December 27, 1943, clarifies the true reasons: “the continuous operation of some transportation systems is threatened by strikes called to commence on December 30, 1943”. The railroad workers were about to go on strike for wage increases. The mobilization remained confined within the railway sector because there were no class trade union organizations promoting the extension of the struggle to the rest of the working class and indicating opposition to the ongoing imperialist war. After all, the US bourgeois regime had good reason to comply with the proclaimed principles of cooperation. They granted the railway workers raises to placate them in lieu of continuing their struggle, which was crucial for capitalist productivity. Railway workers benefited not from nationalization, but from the concessions of the State.

After the war, we were just as clear: “The Marxist analysis of society and the bourgeois system of production is incomplete without acknowledging that State intervention and control in the economy is not a deviation from the fundamental laws of the capitalist economy. It is, in fact, the natural and inevitable outcome of all its historical development. This intervention can go as far as the elimination of the legal form of individual private ownership of the means of production. It will not eliminate the fundamental fact of the capitalist system of production: the exploitation of human labor through the appropriation of surplus value. The capitalist economy in the period following World War I was oriented toward generalized forms of State intervention and control. The Nazi-fascist totalitarian experiment fulfilled the function of permitting and fostering capitalist accumulation and counterbalancing the determining forces of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, a phase characterized by the succession of violent economic crises and, therefore, by the recurring threat of equally violent social crises. The American New Deal experiment had a similar effect.

... It is clear that in the monopolistic, centralizing, totalitarian phase of capitalism, the state’s policy of nationalizations is the ultimate weapon used to defend profit and exploit workers in the most brutal way.

... Nationalization does not suppress the market or the exploitation of labor. It merely regulates the economy according to market forces. Nationalized industries are guaranteed a monopoly within their own borders, but this does not affect the market as a whole. Nationalization also does not prevent the realization and appropriation of surplus value. In fact, it often helps to rescue deficit economic units. Nationalization guarantees capitalist profit in all cases. On the level of inter-imperialist relations, nationalizations are the most bare and obvious expressions of the tension of all national economic forces. . . . Finally, in the game of class struggles, nationalizations represent the most refined method of immobilizing the active energies of the proletariat and regimenting its fellow *popučiks*” (Prometeo, n. 4 of December 1946).

It is true that the Stalinized “Communist” parties prolonged the misconception that Europe was marching toward socialism by virtue of the use of nationalization after World War II. This claim is not only still

around, but is still believed. It has even survived the fall of those opportunist parties. The reality unveils the thoroughly bourgeois nature of this political claim and is explained by it. Moreover, as we have seen, it was fully implemented by both the bourgeois-democratic as well as the Nazi and fascist regimes in preparation for World War II.

The Communist Party stands in stark contrast to this social-imperialist watchword in the trade union movement. It supports demands that unite workers more and more broadly, without compromising their independence from the bourgeois class and its State. It rejects the division of workers into two camps: those in companies susceptible to nationalization because of their “strategic value” for national capital and the rest of the working class. Railroaders must be called upon to fight for a single collective contract for the category, beyond the divisions between different companies, containing substantial gains in wages and in working conditions, and this is achieved by organizing united, generalized strikes. Any benefit must be won through struggle, regaining courage, the spirit of independence and confidence in our own strength. We must not seek support from the ruling class. We must be careful not play into the possibility that, in given historical circumstances, it suits the interests of the bourgeoisie to nationalize a given industry and make limited concessions to small portions of the proletariat in order to better oppress and exploit the working class as a whole.

This is opportunism, plain and simple. It’s the sacrifice of the ultimate goals of the proletarian struggle for contingent benefits and only portions of it. Only by fighting collectively can strong wage increases be won, even when the bourgeoisie is unwilling to grant them. The labor movement will only be able to fight on political ground, including opposition to imperialist war, if it unifies workers above divisions between companies, categories, localities, and finally nations. This can only be achieved by a combative trade union struggle movement that unifies workers in the fight against Capital. The labor movement must fight for strong wage increases, reduction of working hours for equal wages, and full wages for unemployed workers.

GERMANY THE BURGRIEDEN THEN AND NOW

Opposition to the Gaza war has been relatively muted in Germany, where any criticism of Israel, however justified and however timid, is denounced as antisemitism, although there have in recent months been campus protests following the US model, notably at the Humboldt and Free Universities in Berlin, where many students and lecturers were arrested in the second week of May. As in America, these protests are devoid of any broader anti-militarist and internationalist content and easily isolated from the working class.

In Germany, bourgeois politicians and the popular press routinely describe opponents to the Gaza war (from whatever political perspective) as “Jew haters”, equating them with Nazis. Pro-Palestinian demonstrators (shouting slogans such as “From the River to the Sea, Palestine Will be Free”) are even threatened with prosecution under laws that were originally intended to limit the resurgence of the National Socialist movement.

What may seem more surprising to observers from outside Germany, however, is the cooperation between the trade unions and the authorities,

including the police, to suppress any protests or utterances that conflict with the “democratic norms” of the Federal Republic. “Jew-haters Agitate at the May Day Demonstrations” screamed the headline in the newspaper *Bildzeitung* following official trade-union-organized May Day rallies in large German cities including Berlin, Leipzig, Rostock, and Stuttgart.

The intention behind these attacks, however, is not merely to denounce expressions of solidarity with Palestinians, but also to eradicate any residual association of May Day with the revolutionary anti-capitalist and anti-militarist traditions of the German proletariat. The main German trade union confederation, DGB (*Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund*), made this abundantly clear by instructing its officials to clamp down on anything that went beyond a polite request to improve working conditions and increase public security. The bourgeois media and the German trade unions never present May Day as International Workers’ Day, but rather as the *Tag der Arbeit* (Labor Day) and do their best to obscure its origins in the US strike movement that led to the Haymarket massacre and the adoption of May 1 as a day of celebration and protest by the Second International.

In Leipzig, the DGB worked with

the police to remove supporters of “Handala Leipzig” from the May Day parade (Handala refers to a cartoon character who symbolizes the 1948 *Naqba*, when Palestinians were ethnically cleansed by European Zionists).

In Berlin, DGB officials filed criminal charges for “incitement of the people” against pro-Palestinian protesters.

In Stuttgart, DGB officials assisted police as they violently attacked demonstrators and arrested 167 people marching behind Palestinian flags.

The liberation of the working class will not occur under any national banner, including the Palestinian flag. However, the hypocrisy of the DGB was clear to see as its own flag hung alongside those of the Federal Republic, the European Union, Ukraine, and—yes, the flag of Israel!—at rallies in cities including Frankfurt.

Moreover, the alliance between the bourgeoisie and the regime trade unions serves a further purpose, to divide and weaken the working class, isolating minorities in the big cities, who are mainly of Muslim heritage.

In an echo of the *Burgfrieden*, the social peace between capitalism and the workers’ trade unions and social democracy in the First World War, today’s German trade unions and political parties are entirely at one in their support for Israel, or more precisely, German-Israeli capital. The DGB and the governing Social Democratic Party of Germany (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, or SPD) portray Ukraine and Israel as fighting “defensive wars”, just as they did to promote German imperialism in 1914.

The German political and economic establishment is one of the IDF’s most reliable suppliers of lethal weaponry, including tanks and armored vehicles. But German employers know that they in turn can rely on the unconditional support of the leadership of the DGB, together with individual trade union bureaucracies. These trade unions are thus directly complicit in the war crimes taking place in Gaza. *IG Metall*, the largest union affiliated with the DGB, and the world’s numerically largest trade union, regularly joins with employers to lobby for arms contracts with Israel. In February, the union published a joint paper with the SPD Economic Forum and the munitions lobby calling for a further strengthening of the arms industry.

Taking Sides From the Outset

The regime unions were very quick to take sides. A DGB press release (partly in English) on October 10, three days after the October 7 Hamas attacks and when the bombardment of Gaza had already started, made its position abundantly clear. It stated: “Israel is facing a challenging situation, and we are glad our government has quickly joint [sic] in and expressed its unconditional support for the people under attack in Israel.”

This support for German-Israeli capital is justified by antifascism and a “moral” response to the country’s dark history. In an open letter to the Israeli trade union federation, *Histadrut*, the DGB executive wrote: “we join our member unions in expressing our solidarity with Israel in light of the brutal attacks carried out by Hamas in recent days.” Note: solidarity with the State of Israel. Not with Israeli workers. The DGB continued: “As trade unions, we are committed to peace, freedom, democracy and a diverse society and oppose all forms of terrorism. We fight against antisemitism, in Germany and worldwide.” The DGB has expressed no such solidarity with the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian workers who, apart from being exploited by their own bourgeoisie, are under constant siege and bombardment.

The DGB trade unions and the employers’ associations BDA and BDI, together with all Bundestag parties (apart from the far-right *Alternativ für Deutschland*, *AfD*), the Protestant and Catholic churches, the German-Jewish Society and many other organizations signed the call for a rally in support of Israel in front of the Brandenburg Gate on October 22. The Left Party (*Die Linke*) announced its support for the war several times. It signed not only as a party, but also as the *Rosa Luxemburg Foundation*.

Rosa Luxemburg, the great internationalist and tireless opponent of the *Burgfrieden* must be spinning in her grave!

Taking its cue from the 85th anniversary of *Kristallnacht*, the DGB later went even further, equating any opposition to the Israeli war on Gaza with the Nazi pogrom launched on November 9, 1938. Under the headline, “Never again is now” it sought to delegitimize any protest as support for terror: “It is completely unacceptable for Islamists to take to the streets in Germany and abuse the right to demonstrate or openly violate it by

celebrating the Hamas massacre and glorifying it as an act of liberation.”

The DGB further justifies its naked support for German-Israeli imperialism with reference to democratic values: “Peaceful coexistence and cohesion in our diverse society depend on the values of the Constitution being accepted by everyone and our coexistence being characterized by tolerance and respect. This applies to all people living in Germany—regardless of their origin or religion.”

In response, the International Communist Party’s message to German workers is clear: the slogans of “German values”, “democracy” and “respect” are just a mask for the waging of a lethal imperialist war. Your interests are aligned not with Israel or Hamas but with the proletariat of all countries!

THE HYPOCRITICAL PACIFISM OF TRADE UNIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

In the face of the Gaza conflict, several anti-war appeals have emerged from the trade union movement in the USA—which has been back to expressing important struggles for about three years now. We will attempt to highlight their merits, limitations, errors and opportunist slips, and indicate what the correct communist trade union direction against the imperialist war should be.

The appeal that gained most prominence was the one drawn up on the initiative of the rather minuscule UE and a local of the United Food & Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW).

The United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) is a small union, but one with an important history. Today, it has only 35,000 members, a size on the scale of the major base unions in Italy, and therefore very small for the United States. It was established in 1936 and was one of the first affiliates of the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations), the confederation of industrial unions that had been formed a year earlier, in 1935, as distinct from the American Federation of Labor (AFL), which was the old confederation of craft unions, founded in 1886.

In the 1940s, UE reached 600,000 members. In 1949, due to the CIO’s refusal to take action to stop raids by other unions, which they opportunistically undertook in response to UE’s refusal to file the affidavits of non-communist leadership required by the Taft-Hartly Act to participate in the NLR process, it left the CIO, which had by then become a regime union on par with the AFL. In 1955, the two would merge, forming today’s AFL-CIO.

Competition with the powerful CIO marked the beginning of UE’s decline. Another decisive cause was the crisis in the home appliance manufacturing sector, to which most of the members of this union belonged, which, since the 1990s, has seen a vast process of relocation of production to outside the USA to newly-industrialized countries where labor costs are lower (a process commonly referred to as “outsourcing”). Nevertheless, it has maintained a certain vitality and recognized prestige in the North American trade union movement to date, concentrated mainly in the eastern part of the country. Conflict-ridden and with a union life based on member participation, UE, however, has an opportunistic leadership. For example, in 2019 it supported the social democrat Bernie Sanders in the Democratic Party primaries, ahead of the 2020 presidential election.

The appeal was published on October 20, just days before the Israeli army entered the Gaza Strip, in the midst of carpet bombing in preparation for the ground operation. It was signed by more than 200 local unions and 5 national labor organizations:

- the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT), with 100,000 members, joined on Oct. 24;
- then the National Nurses United (NNU), with 225,000 members;
- then the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), with 200,000 members;
- on Dec. 1, the United Auto Workers (UAW), with 390,000 members, joined; and,
- finally, on Dec. 28, the Association of Flight Attendants-Communications Workers of America

(AFA-CWA), with 50,000 members.

These 5 unions, totaling nearly 1 million members, belong to the AFL-CIO, which has 55 union federations with about 12 million members. So roughly 1/10th of the AFL-CIO’s member unions, corresponding to 1/10th of the membership, have joined the roll call, which is a substantial minority of the labor movement, even given the still-low temperature of the class struggle.

However, the appeal remains in the realm of bourgeois pacifism, thus deluding the workers that peace can be achieved by appealing to governments to cease military operations, and not through a social struggle of the working class that imposes this goal by force, in the knowledge that confronting each other are not different ideas or even “good versus evil”, but enormous conflicting material interests: on the one hand, those of Capital and on the other, those of the proletariat. Thus, the goal of stopping imperialist wars can only be accomplished in an definitive and total way if the class struggle transcends into a revolution that overthrows the political power of the ruling class in all states.

The appeal therefore boils down to asking the bourgeois regime for a policy of peace: “We call on President Joe Biden and Congress to push for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the siege of Gaza. . . . In making this appeal, US labor unions join the efforts of 13 members of Congress and others calling for an immediate cease-fire”.

This conduct conceals an enormous mystification. Militarist policy is not a free choice on behalf of governments but is an obligation for them, a vital necessity. To it all bourgeois states, whether democratic or authoritarian, right-wing or left-wing (however little these distinctions may count), must comply. Capitalism generates and needs war as its only escape from the abyss of world economic crisis and, consequently, from the revolution of the increasingly immiserated and starving proletarian masses.

On the one hand, the advancing economic crisis of overproduction brings capitalist competition, between enterprises and states, to paroxysm, making the shift from commercial to military confrontation increasingly frequent. Each bourgeois state is threatened by the others. On the other hand, all bourgeois states are threatened and attacked, together and without distinction, by the economic crisis that, by creating the material conditions favorable to social revolution, deteriorates the living conditions of the proletariat. Capitalist war, therefore, represents the at once economic and social solution to the crisis of capitalism.

This appeal by UE is fabricated in order that the UAW leadership can use the union’s base as support for President Biden in the upcoming presidential election, both by instructing its members to vote for him and by providing more or less substantial financial resources. That is, it is an appeal to a bourgeois political party, passed off as a “friend” of working people, by the UAW leadership.

Placed in these terms, the call for workers’ solidarity and unity above all national and religious divisions loses its vigor, being deprived of a practical indication of struggle: an abstract statement that does not set out to combat the bourgeois forces advocating militarism and war, but rather, seeks to dialogue, appeal and even genuflect before them.

There was then a whole series of less widely-circulated calls against the war in Gaza, for a “cease-fire”, which saw these characteristics reversed. That is, they have had the virtue of providing practical directions for struggle on how to fight against the militarism of US imperialism, but by holding the Israeli and US governments alone responsible for the conflict and avoiding any attack on the opposing bourgeois line-up constituted by Hamas and the equally bourgeois powers that support it and their equally cynical warmongering and murderous policies, they end up deploying workers on one side of the conflict, thereby giving ideal nourishment to the imperialist war, instead of its sabotage.

For example, we read from the February 28th appeal of Local 48 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), an affiliate of the AFL-CIO with about 820,000 members: “WHEREAS...the workers’ struggle has no boundaries...WHEREAS, working-class opposition to this US-Israel war goes hand in hand with the union motto ‘An injury to one is an injury to all’ and the appeal ‘Arabs, Jews, blacks and whites, workers of the world unite’ . . . IBEW Local 48 supports the Palestinian trade unions’ call for workers around the world to stop the shipment of arms for the US-Israel war; we salute the dock transport workers in Barcelona, Belgium, Italy and elsewhere who have declared that they refuse to handle arms shipments for this war; and we support and encourage the actions of these workers in the US to stop arms shipments. . . by opposing what is in effect yet another US

war, this time against the people of Gaza...” [emphasis is ours].

The call for international proletarian unity and the direction of struggle to oppose the imperialist war on practical grounds are thwarted by the mystification of the character of the ongoing war in Gaza, described as imperialist and bourgeois on one side only.

The only extenuating circumstance is that this stance goes against its own bourgeois regime, that of Washington, which has in Israel, not its only, but a crucial, ally in the Middle East.

The practical indication of sabotage through strikes, blocking the transportation of war materials, etc., is insufficient if these actions are understood in themselves as decisive. They must be seen as intermediate steps to finally arrive at a general mobilization of the working class against the militarism of their own capitalist states. Moreover, each imperialist power has often found itself simultaneously arming states at war with each other. For example, Qatar, now hosts concomitantly the largest US base in the Middle East and the political leadership of Hamas.

If “the workers’ struggle has no borders” and if “an injury to one is an injury to all”—inasmuch as the interests of the working class are unique on the international level and its struggles must be unique and coherent if they are to be victorious—it is not acceptable to limit the plan of action against the imperialist war to the national level alone, disregarding its repercussions for workers in other countries. If the practical direction of struggle in the US is right, but the definition of the nature of today’s war in Gaza is mystified, on the international level, the result is to push workers toward supporting the bourgeois front that backs Hamas.

For a country such as Italy, whose bourgeoisie, owing to material determinations, always plays on several tables and, since Mussolini’s time, has been cultivating a relationship with the Arab-Palestinian ruling classes as part of its imperialist policy in the Mediterranean area, an approach such as the one in this latest appeal means leading the working class to support one of the ruling class’s foreign policy options, instead of fighting for its own class interests.

A practical direction to place the movement squarely on the terrain of the international unity of the proletariat, and not on the terrain of bourgeois warfare (which can only destroy that unity), should:

- denounce the war as bourgeois and imperialist on both sides;
- express solidarity with the proletarians of both countries, thus also with the workers of Israel by appealing to proletarian brotherhood;
- identify and denounce both bourgeois regimes that lead workers to fratricidal slaughter;
- give the proletarians of all countries and all imperialist alignments the same practical direction of struggle against militarism and war.

In the absence of these elements, which alone make the union’s direction truly internationalist, the result is to align the proletariat with the belligerent policy of the international bourgeoisie.

Such proclamations can help align the proletarian masses with the federal government’s foreign policy. The US Congress, in a bipartisan vote, elected to fund the \$95 billion rearmament of Israel, Ukraine and Taiwan. At the same time, Biden, who also pushed for and signed the military aid package, feigns a non-interventionist, negotiation-ready stance of the peacemaker in both the Middle East and Ukraine. “Isolationist” positioning was a tactical expedient to which the US resorted in the aftermath of both world wars. In this way, the US government succeeded in imposing the propaganda motif of the great power whose political clout compels it to fight for the sake of humanity, democracy, and planetary prosperity.

We must remember how unions have been used in the past by capitalist states to orient the masses and shape them ideologically with a view to intervention in capitalist wars. The collaboration of trade unions with governments has often served the function of managing social crisis in the run-up to war.

The policy of subordination of the American trade unions to the State, pursued by then-President Woodrow Wilson during World War I, was significant in this regard. It was then a matter for the bourgeoisie to cope with problems such as rising inflation and labor shortages through the granting of moderate wage increases. Wilson was re-elected to the White House in 1916 thanks to a campaign inspired by neutralism. Then, when the war was over, Wilson himself was the promoter of the League of Nations, a transnational body which was supposed to prevent new wars. Meanwhile, the United States had intervened in the final throes of World War I to sit at the victors’ table. The path of wartime interventionism also passed

through the cooperation of the trade unions, while pacifist proclamations quickly turned into the calls to arms still heard ‘round the world.

RETAIL LAYOFFS BEST BUY RESTRUCTURE LEAVES WORKERS OUT ON THE STREET

Best Buy, the multinational retail chain in the US, has been the subject of several controversial activities, as of late.

Less than a week after a Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filing went public detailing the company backing down due to pressure from a known conservative think tank to begin screening donations to LGBTQ+ nonprofits, hundreds of employees have been laid off, affecting both corporate workers and in-store employees. A decline in projected revenue and a changing work landscape are the proposed reasons behind this “snap” (a term used by Best Buy employees to explain mass layoffs), with this projection in revenue being based on sales recorded in the previous quarter. Given this reasoning, one would expect layoffs to be a natural response—yet, in an earnings call from late February, the CEO of Best Buy, Corie Barry had said, “[w]e are confident that our industry will return to growth after two years of declines”. His confidence probably also rested on the knowledge that the company was about to proceed with mass layoffs. Why, then, would a company confident in industry growth, decide that downsizing is their best option? Could there be a different reason for these layoffs?

Since the COVID-19 lock-downs began, many retailers, including Best Buy stores, have switched to a delivery method of distributing purchased goods. Customers order items off of the retailer’s website, then drive to a physical store location to pick it up or wait for their purchases to be delivered to their home. When restrictions began to lessen in late 2021, Best Buy introduced a subscription service, “Totaltech”, which provided free delivery and standard installation with hardware purchases. This resulted in the need to hire more skilled labor (known as Field Agents within the company’s Geek Squad division) to make up for this increase in installations. The unexpected cost of training and loss of revenue from paid installs resulted in “major losses” according to Best Buy, leading to a major snap hitting in 2023 and a change in the service from “Totaltech” to two separate subscriptions, “Plus” and “Total”, neither of which provide free installations.

Layoffs occurred once more in April of 2024, this time hitting even more Field Agents, some of whom have worked for the company for more than a decade. What did these workers get for their years-long commitment to the company? Next to nothing. The company then merged several field positions into one, giving those who remained more work for little to no additional pay. New expectations are placed upon those who “survived the snap”, and are even re-opening these new positions rather than moving the employees who know the skills, effectively resetting both their pay and time at the company if they wish to reapply.

Only a few days before this massive Geek Squad layoff, Best Buy’s “Customer Care” (i.e., customer support) team was massively downsized as well. Most of these jobs were moved overseas to reduce costs, demonstrating the company’s desire to save money at the expense of its employees.

Both of these restructurings follow a change in management, where a focus on making additional profits through subscriptions and credit card sign-ups is placed above the ability to do the work. Once again, the motives of capital are prioritized over the needs of workers; the demands of the workload on the job only seem to increase, and the workers are forced to live with being minimally compensated for the time they’ve sold to the company.

Though citing increased sales online and record profits over their historic average, Best Buy still does nothing to compensate their long-term employees, instead opting to fire them and rehire them in lower-paid positions, regardless of experience.

Once again, the needs of capital prove to be irreconcilable with those of the workers, and the proletarians’ individualist illusions of finding “a place in the sun” in either capitalist society or the company are destroyed. In fact, there seems to be nothing new under the sun.

There is hope for these employees, however. Discussions between employees have led them to the idea of unionizing their workplace. Even a union could ensure job security, even if corporate management makes profit-driven restructuring decisions. With a union, those selling the products, those installing them, those servicing the installations, those building and maintaining the company infrastructure, those who are

providing their labor to allow the company to exist, the working class of Best Buy, can ensure future stability for workers. While layoffs are inevitable due to the instability of the capitalist economy and its tendency toward crises, union contracts can include provisions for severance or re-hire, preventing some of the actions Best Buy has recently taken.

Organizing in a union, according to class methods and principles, would offer them greater protection from further layoffs and worsening working conditions. Not absolute protection, since capitalism, in order not to sink into the crisis of overproduction, marches in the direction of maximum exploitation of the working class. Workers must march in the direction of strengthening their trade unions and linking up with their revolutionary political party if they do not want to have their lives destroyed by this social system, first by exploitation and then by imperialist war.

Unionization in the workplace is a positive fundamental step, but it is only the first of a longer path. The second, equally necessary, is to organize in the union by crossing company boundaries, then category or trade boundaries, and then territorial boundaries, in a process of broadening the unity and cohesion of the working class, which is not an abstract statement but means the ability to strike in unison. We can only hope that the workers will make the right decision in the interest of themselves and their fellow workers, not that of management and the ruling class.

For this process to be accomplished in the most effective, rapid and robust way, the presence within it of communist workers, organized in the union fraction of the communist party, is indispensable.

THE CHIMERA OF ARAB UNIFICATION THROUGH INTERSTATE UNDERSTANDINGS

FROM IL PROGRAMMA COMUNISTA NO. 10 1957

The latest news from Jordan heralds the opening of the “purge” phase after the crackdown carried out by conservative forces coalesced around King Hussein. Special courts have taken over with broad powers, including the power to issue death sentences; in the Abdali concentration camp some three hundred personalities from the pro-Nasserite and pan-Arabist camp await the judges’ sentences; the army, police and bureaucracy are being subjected to an extensive purge, said to be taking place under Hussein’s personal direction. Thus, while the VI Fleet keeps a watchful eye on the countries bordering the tiny Hashemite kingdom, and marines land, albeit in tourist guise, on Lebanese shores, the court party, backed by Bedouin hordes and Circassian mercenaries from the king’s bodyguard, gives free rein to long brooded impulses of revenge.

In the days of old colonialism, it was the imperialist occupier’s turn to personally lay the halter. In the present day imperialism is able to escape such a must by being able, without occupying the disputed territory, to land the rebels and consolidate the power of the local “bojas”. This is another confirmation of what we have been repeating about the process of substituting “thermonuclear colonialism” for Anglo-French “historical colonialism”, resoundingly beaten into the breach in front of the Suez Canal by Washington’s wide-ranging maneuver. However, looking back at the events in Jordan, one realizes that other factors were played in favor of Hussein and the Court party, in addition to US financial and military intervention. In fact, the Jordanian crisis, which at first seemed to be expected to increase the number of Middle Eastern republics, has summed up in itself all the contradictions that bedevil the so-called Arab world, foremost among them that in which pan-Arabism is struggling when faced with the choice of means to achieve “the unity of the Arab Nation from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic”, as Colonel Nasser himself likes to express.

As things stand in the Middle East, Arab unification remains an unattainable utopia as long as it is entrusted—as it is now—to the politics of states. The insoluble contradiction of pan-Arab demagoguery consists in advocating national unity of the Arabs of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, the various principalities of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, but in claiming to achieve it through inter-state understandings, while it is clear that an “Arab nation”, constituted as a unitary state, is conceivable only through the demolition of the existing state scaffolding and the founding of a new political structure of a modern type. Indeed, a fundamental characteristic of the bourgeois revolution is the overcoming of the state particularism

proper to feudalism. Now, in the central and eastern parts of Asia—as in India and China—unlike in what Europeans know under the misnomer of the Middle East, the process of centralization of political power is at a very advanced stage; in the “Arab world”, on the other hand, in spite of ethnic and linguistic unity, centralization of political power is still far from being a reality. The new and deep inter-Arab rifts caused by Jordan’s about-face stand to prove it.

Arab unification, of which agitators obsequious to the Cairo government fill their mouths, if and insofar as it remains entrusted to constituted governments, would be achievable on one condition only, and that is that modern Genghis Khan or an Arab-bred Tamerlane capable of crushing with force of arms the particularistic resistances to pan-Arabism would arise. But this would presuppose the existence of an economic and therefore military potential that—as the Egyptian army’s stampede in the Sinai campaign proves—does not exist, nor can it objectively arise. Aware of its economic and military weakness, Nasser’s government has attempted in recent months to achieve a federation of Egypt with Syria and Jordan, to be implemented within the framework of the alliance that already unites these three states and in which Saudi Arabia also participates. It is known that this kind of Arab NATO had even gone so far as to unify the command of the armed forces of the member states. But the events in Jordan have sufficiently shown how Egypt and Syria, which remain the major centers of the pan-Arabist movement, can only rely on their own forces while the Saudi and Hashemite dynasties, holding to feudal preservation on the one hand and friendship with the US on the other, have joined the Cairo move for the sole purpose of either neutralizing the action of pro-Egyptian currents fueled by Palestinian refugees, as is the case with Jordan, or to get paid higher royalties by US oil companies, as is the case with Saudi Arabia.

Until the defeat of the extreme forces of pan-Arabism in Jordan, Western imperialism could, in its maneuvers to divide the Arabs and neutralize the Cairo alliance, focus only on Iraq. However, today, not only has the adversarial military array named after the Baghdad Pact, coalescing Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, Iran and Britain, been strengthened by the entry of the United States after the Anglo-American conference in Bermuda last March; but its strengthening has been matched by the serious weakening of the Arab alliance as a result of the political conflict now erupting between the Cairo-Damascus axis and Jordan. By taking an open stance in favor of King Hussein, just as he was hunting down local pan-Arabists, King Saud of Arabia threw his allies in Egypt and Syria into isolation. On balance, the great contest that erupted in the winter of 1955 between the camp opposed to anti-Western pan-Arabism headed by Iraq (in line with the interests of imperialism) and the camp advocating Arab unification under the banner of nationalism and anti-colonialism, which accepted Egypt’s political direction, ended, at least for the time being, in a stinging defeat for the latter. Nasser’s government sees itself back to square one, that is, isolation. Worse still: it wields blunt propaganda weapons, since the accusations leveled against Western imperialism and Israel presuppose, in order to exert an effective hold, the existence of real inter-Arab cooperation; and this has proved to be only a phrase.

The meddling of the United States, along with other imperialist powers, in the Middle East plays precisely on the deep cleavages that divide the Arab “world”. The Arabs are divided: that truth escapes no one. But is the cause of these persistent and indeed acute political divisions merely identifiable in the “intrigues” of the diplomacy of the imperialist powers, as the pan-Arabist press, echoed by that of international national-communism, unanimously declares, or is the opposite true, that is, that imperialism has good play in pitting Arabs against Arabs precisely because the cleavages that tear them apart are inherent in the situation in the Middle East?

The organization of the “Arab Nation” into a unitary state stretching from Iraq to Morocco is certainly—in the bourgeois framework—a revolutionary aspiration. But industrial progress and the breakdown of pre-bourgeois social compacts into the classes that characterize bourgeois society (Arab unification could not go beyond that goal, absent the communist revolution of the proletariat in the countries of accomplished capitalism) are revolutionary facts when they move within the framework of old semi-feudal structures; while the ideology and politics of Nasserist pan-Arabism, whatever the Kremlin-affiliated parties may claim, far from being revolutionary fall within the

ranks of conservative utopias. Like or not, Nasserist pan-Arabism dreams of procuring for the Arabs of Africa and Asia what the North American Confederation procured for the Americans, the Soviet Union for the Russians, the Indian Union for the Indians; but it does not understand, for class reasons, that at the origin of these state bodies acted great revolutions, which introduced, or are introducing, new modes of production and new forms of social organization. Now the angry pan-Arabists in Cairo and Damascus, who dream of a modern edition of the Caliphate, are revolutionaries as long as the targets of their hatred are located outside their respective borders; they are no longer revolutionaries as soon as they deal with matters at home.

The political unification of the Arab world is possible on the sole condition of marching together with a movement of economic and social unification, which can only be a revolutionary movement. Only a revolution that shakes up the archaic feudal, or even pre-feudal structures—how else to define the nomadic Bedouin tribes, saviors of Hussein’s faltering throne?—can mark the beginning of the erasure of divisions that render the “Arab nation” powerless. Think of the formidable force of inertia opposing societies such as those prevailing in Saudi Arabia or Yemen or in the Arab principalities of the Persian Gulf, “petrified” in very ancient social structures. Consider, on the other hand, the extraordinary social political evolution of a non-Arab state in the Middle East, the State of Israel, where a true form of “transplantation” of modern industrialism is taking place. But pan-Arabists à la Nasser claim to reap the fruits of the revolution, striving to destroy even its revolutionary seed. No one ignores the fact that the Napoleon of Egypt uses an iron fist and harsh imprisonment for anyone who attacks, or seems to attack, Egypt’s internal social stability.

To conclude: two modes of unification of the Arab world are conceivable in theory: one, military conquest by a hegemonic state that erases the prevailing state partitions in the territories inhabited by people of the Arab language group and ethnicity; and two, a revolution of the lower classes that, by destroying the established order, lays the groundwork for the founding of a unitary state.

The first alternative is marred by the absence of a militarily-strong and politically-influential Arab state capable of performing the same functions that, under other historical conditions, Prussia and Piedmont performed for Germany and Italy, respectively. On the other hand, the existence of the great imperialist blocs headed by the United States and Russia easily suggests that any inter-Arab war would turn, through the direct or indirect, overt or covert, adherence of certain countries to one bloc and of certain others to the rival bloc, into a war involving non-Arab states. Since the US VI Fleet rushed into Lebanese waters, who would still doubt it?

Indeed, the question of Arab unification is inextricably linked to the worldwide struggle for oil sources and military bases. US imperialism cannot jeopardize the position of strength it enjoys, it is able to deal with the Arab states taken each in isolation, if not in competition with the others. The proclamation of the Eisenhower Doctrine did not occur by accident; its primary objective is the maintenance of the status quo in the Middle East. Declaring itself opposed to any measure likely to “threaten the independence and integrity” of the Arab states—under such principled cover, the State Department rushed the VI Fleet into the waters of the eastern Mediterranean—US imperialism, which inherited supremacy in the Middle East, aimed above all to bar the way for the pan-Arab movement. And, as long as there is the overwhelming military power of the United States to watch over the preservation of a political order characterized by the division of the Arabs into several sovereign states, each jealous of its independence and the economic privileges enjoyed for its dealings with foreign imperialism; as long as any attempt at political unification bumps, like the planned federation between Egypt, Jordan and Syria, against the indomitable resistance of US imperialism, the pan-Arabist movement will remain in the conditions of vain impotence that we observe today.

Missing so far, on the other hand, is the second perspective: that of a social revolution. The Nasserist movement, despite the heated demagoguery of its leaders, can in no way be called a mass revolutionary movement. It was not accompanied by any social upheaval, merely grafting into the same social structure on which the monarchy rested a political regime that differed from the one supplanted only (and even on this there would be many reservations to be made) in its foreign policy orientations,

which in turn were made possible only by the urgency of new power relations among the world's great powers. In other words, it was not a revolutionary push by the Egyptian masses that imposed the “new foreign policy” that Nasser followed beginning on the day he nationalized the Suez Canal. Colonel Nasser and his followers, echoed by the Russian-Communist press, pass off the expropriation of Canal shareholders as an aspect of their purported social revolution. In reality, this has not even touched the deep layers of Egyptian society, which continue to live in the iron meshes of backward productive relations, nor has it expressed the overbearing will for the rise of a bourgeoisie worthy of the name.

Only the social revolution, when the premises are ripe for it, will be able, by demolishing old structures, to suppress the mushrooming of states, large and small, that derive life from them. It is to such a path that the pan-Arabs in Cairo and Damascus are turning their backs by entrusting their political fortunes to state-to-state intrigues, but it is safe to predict that future historical conditions, brought about by the resumption of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat in capitalist countries, forcing imperialism on the defensive, will also enable the Arabs to free themselves from subjection to imperialism on the one hand and from the survivals of feudal particularism on the other.

ON THE MARCH 31ST LOCAL ELECTIONS IN TURKEY

Following the general elections of 2023, in an article from the 4th issue of *Komünist Parti* titled “The Crisis of the Bourgeoisie in Turkey”, we wrote:

“One of the internal contradictions of the Turkish bourgeoisie is between the organizations of the industrial bosses. The big industrialists have traditionally been organized in TÜSIAD, which was founded in 1971 and has more than 2,100 members, representing 4,500 companies that carry out 80% of foreign trade, employ 50% of the workforce and pay 80% of corporate taxes. In contrast, a new, relatively small but rapidly growing group of bosses is organized in MÜSIAD, which was founded in 1990 and has 13,000 members controlling 60,000 companies. TÜSIAD declares itself secular and pro-Western, while MUSIAD is Islamist and pro-government.

“On the external front, TÜSIAD favors close relations with the West, especially the US, while MÜSIAD supports the policies of the current government, which aims to become a relatively independent regional imperialist power.

“... Erdoğan's first move after the elections was to extend an olive branch to the big bourgeoisie. Mehmet Şimşek, known for his closeness to rigid Western-style economic policies, was appointed as the powerful Minister of Treasury and Finance...

“... TÜSIAD immediately accepted Erdoğan's generous offer, calling for stability and reform. Some opposition journalist and economists went even further and endorsed Mehmet Şimşek's appointment, saying ‘we are all in the same boat.’”

After nearly a year in which bourgeois politics was less polarized than before the 2023 elections, the local elections have painted a picture with important clues about the future of Turkish politics. We will discuss this process before and after.

AKP's Performance After the General Elections

After the 2023 elections, ground had been created in the bourgeois political arena that would allow the economic policies of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) to succeed. Not only Şimşek, but also Interior Minister Ali Yerilıkaya and the former head of the National Intelligence Organization, Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, were praised by the bourgeois opposition. BuŞimşek and his team were also faced with an economic situation whose downward trend was well advanced. After 22 years of AKP rule, with no chance to intervene in the cumbersome, meritless and corrupt system of relations, Şimşek tried to keep the economy under control through austerity and interest rate hikes that violated Erdoğan's previous commitments. Şimşek's policies have prevented the economy from collapsing completely, but have not led to any recovery. Erdoğan was forced to turn a deaf ear to the economic demands of wider society, especially the demands of a raise for pensioners, which he used to be able to accept, even if only symbolically.

Election Results

The March 31st elections resulted in an historic victory for the CHP and an

historic defeat for the AKP. The CHP not only won most of the metropolitan municipalities, especially Istanbul and Ankara; it also won electoral majorities in municipal assemblies in many regions. Moreover, it increased its traditional vote share from 25% to 38% and emerged as the first party. The CHP was successful not only in metropolitan and coastal areas but also in conservative Anatolia thanks to its racist candidates. The majority of Good Party supporters moved away from their party and towards the CHP. The DEM Party maintained its vote in Northern Kurdistan but lost significant votes in Western metropolitan areas. The drop in voter turnout from 85% to 78% also played a role in these results, as many of those who did not go to the polls are thought to be AKP voters who are unhappy with the economy. The YRP's 6-7% of the vote did not change the result for the ruling front, but contributed to clinching the defeat. The YRP is a misogynist, homophobic and anti-Semitic party, and its reaction to the AKP government's trade relations with Israel seems to have significantly increased its vote.

CHP as the First Party

The election results not only strengthened CHP leader Özel's position considerably, but also significantly increased the weight of the CHP in the country's politics. Erdoğan, on the other hand, announced after the election that they would take the results seriously and make self-criticism. Thus, an air of negotiation began to blow across the country. With demands such as the release of Gezi prisoners and the opening of Taksim Square for May Day demonstrations, Özel said he would sit down with Erdoğan and negotiate a new constitution if his outstretched hand did not remain in the air. Although it is difficult to predict what the outcome of the negotiations will be, it is safe to say that the next four years hold the potential for previously unthinkable changes in Turkish politics. Özel, who does not want a new Kılıçdaroğlu disaster, has already announced that the opposition candidate for the presidential elections in four years will be İmamoğlu or Yavaş. It is worth underlining that both mayors are in a much stronger position than before thanks to their municipal assembly majority.

Road Map of Dissident Fascism

The Good Party suffered perhaps the biggest defeat in the elections. The scale of the defeat was such that Meral Akşener had to declare that she would not run for the position of party chairman again and lead her party to an extraordinary convention. Since announcing that it would not support the CHP in the elections, the Good Party has lost many of its key members to the CHP and is facing an existential crisis. Yavaş, the Grey Wolf mayor of Ankara, has become the favorite leader of opposition fascism. The biggest threat to the Good Party is that opposition fascists are gathering around Yavaş in the CHP instead of the Good Party. As a result, two candidates competed in the extraordinary congress of the Good Party: Musavat Dervişoğlu, who was supported by Akşener and agreed with the party's electoral strategy, and Koray Aydın, who criticized the party's electoral strategy for being too hard on the CHP. Akşener's candidate, Dervişoğlu, was the winner at the congress, where the options of making the Good Party tail the CHP or the AKP, or perhaps a “free and independent” party were put to a vote. Dervişoğlu is unlikely to stop the blood loss in the Good Party. Another possible destination for dissident fascists, apart from the Good Party and CHP, is the Victory Party, which stands out for its xenophobia and has maintained its strength in the municipal assembly elections. The road map that dissident fascism will follow is of great importance for the future of bourgeois politics in Turkey.

Elections and the Trade Union Movemen

As we stated in our article “Istanbul Municipal Workers Strike Against Social-Democratic Bosses”, published in April 2021: “The leftist DİSK is not only prepared to be a regime trade union, it does not hesitate to act as a regime trade union because its leadership acts in the interests of social democratic politicians, not workers. However, DİSK and other leftist trade union confederations and professional organizations remain, in many cases, the only viable option for struggling workers. It remains to be seen whether these workers can prevent the left unions from becoming full-fledged regime unions”. The direct impact of the municipal elections on the trade union movement will be the increase in the growth of the DİSK-affiliated Genel-İş union in CHP municipalities. Genel-İş is one of the unions within DİSK with the closest ties to the CHP. Nevertheless, as in the past, there will still be struggling workers among Genel-İş members who

will take a stand against the leadership of the union and the confederation. The greater danger is the growing influence of the CHP on DİSK—which emerged from the elections with considerable strength—an influence that has led to, for example, dialogue with TÜSIAD, which was criticized at the last DİSK general assembly.

The Illusion of Victory Serves the Bourgeoisie

The March 31st elections were considered a great victory by the broad opposition masses, especially by all the colors of the bourgeois left. This is an illusion and serves the Turkish bourgeoisie, especially the big TÜSIAD confederation. The working class of Turkey has gained nothing in these elections, just like in past elections and just like it won't in future elections. Already in 1920, in the “Theses of the Abstentionist Communist Fraction”, our line wrote:

“The electoral conquest of local governmental bodies entails the same inconveniences as parliamentarism but to an even greater degree. It cannot be accepted as a means of action against bourgeois power for two reasons: 1) these local bodies have no real power but are subjected to the State machine, and 2) although the assertion of the principle of local autonomy can cause some embarrassment for the ruling bourgeoisie, such a method would have the result of providing it with a base of operations in its struggle against the establishment of proletarian power and is contrary to the communist principle of centralized action”.

Accordingly, of course, the transfer of the State institutions called municipalities from one bourgeois party to another can only mean a false victory for the proletariat. The will of Capital always emerges from the ballot box, and municipal elections are, by no means, an exception.

THE LEZITA STRIKE AND INTERNATIONALISM

The Lezita strike, which started on March 7 in the Kemalpaşa district of Izmir, is still ongoing. Workers organized with Öz Gıda-İş, affiliated to Hak-İş, started the strike after the Lezita bosses refused to sit down with Öz Gıda-İş. When Lezita bosses realized that a strike was coming, they tried to use foreign workers from India as strike breakers. The International Communist Party rejects all discourse that seeks to divide the working class, be it religion or race. Based on this, we need to state from the beginning that reaching out to foreign workers to include them in the strike is essential for the success of the Lezita strike.

The strike of nearly 2,000 workers against poor working conditions, low wages and overtime pressure has still not reached a definitive conclusion. Two days before the strike, on March 5, the company hired foreign workers in order to use them as scabs. It must be added that in this case the hired workers are not to blame; the blame lies with the boss himself and his cheap scab tactics. Of course, when it comes to profit, the bourgeois do not refrain from such acts. In order to break the strike, they first tried to buy the vacant area where the strike was taking place. When that didn't work, they surrounded the strike site with wires and tried to drown out the workers' voices with loudspeakers. When that didn't work, they hid behind their biggest defenders: helmets and gendarmes. At the request of the gendarmes, the service shuttles attempted to illegally prevent participation in the strike. But despite the outrageous efforts, workers' participation in the strike continued to grow. Workers demonstrated in the squares as a symbol of the determination of the striking workers. Both fascist and bourgeois left-wing parties tried to use the sensation created by the strike for their own ambitions, linking it to a struggle for national identity. The International Communist Party will tirelessly repeat what has been said, from Marx to Lenin: Workers have no homeland! The main enemy is at home! The efforts of the bourgeois parties to hide the class struggle behind a national identity will bring nothing but harm to the working class. In order to destroy proletarian class unity in the strike, the bourgeois left is attempting to exonerate the bourgeoisie, the perpetrators, by portraying the strike as a struggle between people with Turkish identity and those without, i.e., Indian workers. The bourgeois left has once again shown its ineptitude in hiding its nationalism under the name of patriotism, at the slightest opportunity showing once again that it prefers the national flag of the bourgeois nation to the flag of proletarian internationalism.

Abaloğlu Holding, to which Lezita belongs, grew aggressively between 2004 and 2016. Founded in 2006, Lezita, which grew with employment incentives

and loans, was of course not satisfied with this and did not pay overtime wages to its workers. In short, Abaloğlu Holding, and therefore Lezita, benefited from the current government as much as possible. But by August 2016, Baha Abaloğlu was arrested in a FETÖ (Fetullah Gülen Terrorist Organization as the Gülen Cult is referred to in Turkey) investigation and released after a night in custody.

It is unusual and misleading for a Hak-İş union to appear so instrumental and even leading such a strike. Lezita workers should not lose sight of the fact that the Hak-İş leadership stands behind their strike only for show, while simultaneously calculating how to undermine and end the strike at the first opportunity. It should not be forgotten that the regime unions, as an apparatus of the bourgeois state, have historically served the interests of the current government, not the interests of the working class, and that Hak-İş, which was founded to represent bourgeois Islamist ideology in the trade union arena, is the private sector confederation most preferred by the current government.

The enemy of the Lezita workers is not the foreign workers brought in to break the strike and who are unaware of what is going on. In reality, the enemies of Lezita workers are the company bosses, the bourgeois parties that try to use the struggle for their own ambitions, and the Öz Gıda-İş and Hak-İş piecarks who look for every opportunity to undermine the struggle.

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THE GENERAL ELECTION IS NOT IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING CLASS

The date announced for the General Election of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, on July 4, 2024, was unexpected. It had been thought that the Conservative government would wait until the autumn, or even later, in the hope of better economic news, or at least less bad news regarding growth and inflation affecting the cost of living for most of the population. The indications were that this was unlikely to happen, so an election was called with little notice. The growing political crisis in the Tory hierarchy was obvious, with a large number of MPs abandoning the sinking ship. It is now increasingly clear that taxes will increase, and cuts will be made to public spending, no matter what the politicians promise, and whichever party forms the next Government.

As in all elections, the various openly capitalist parties are competing for votes on the basis that their policies will make people better off, while being “costed” responsibly. Yet, no matter which party is involved in the next Government, an economic crisis is coming—and attacks will be made on the living standards of the working class, in the interests of the capitalist class as a whole.

No matter which gang wins in any general election, the government will be called upon to implement measures that will try to protect the national economy. The interests of capitalism come first, last and always. The working class has no champion in this fight.

The Labour Party has been historically projected to be the political wing of the labor movement, in part financed by the political levy of trade union funding. But it has always distanced itself from its origins as a representative of organized labor, defending the fiction of the “national interest”, which merely disguises the reality of conflicting class interests. There may be the occasional hint at state control or public ownership, but this is never in the interests of the working class, but in this “national interest”, i.e., the interest of the capitalist system as a whole and the UK's capitalist national interests in particular. There is not a shred of socialism in any of it, and never has been. The Labour Party as a whole has never wanted to do anything which undermines capitalist society. There may be the occasional rebels who make a lot of noise. They serve to give the party some credibility but always end up being pulled back into line, or quietly sidelined.

Indeed, the Labour Party is certainly capable of sounding more or less radical depending on the political climate. Under the leadership of Sir Keir Starmer, it looks and sounds almost identical to the Tories. It has no program for reform and has purged itself of any left-leaning “unreliable elements” such as the Corbynites. It has even refused to consider reversing some of the worst welfare benefit cuts implemented by the original coalition Government of 2010-5

when the Conservatives went into partnership with the Liberal Democrats to attack the poorest sectors of society. Ever since the Blair leadership, the Labour Party has increasingly marketed itself as the party of business, openly courting—and being courted by—various large capitalist enterprises.

Many trade union leaders and Labour Party activists get misty eyed harking back to the 1945 Labour Government, which brought in measures that were needed to rebuild society after the Second World War. The National Health Service and welfare reforms were an improvement on the Poor Law Provisions, which were not formally abolished until 1948. But they were essentially put in place to ensure that the working class was just about healthy enough to get back to work, and to bring up the next generations of wage slaves. There was nothing remotely socialist about any of this, and nothing which could lead to the emancipation of the working class.

The reality is that, in contrast to 1945, or, for that matter, subsequent electoral victories for the Labour Party, very few people are now taken in by promises of reform. Consequently, the pressure is on, from all quarters, to get people involved in, and engaged with, the election debates. Just vote for somebody, even without illusions, or while holding your noses, because the future of the country may be at stake. The entire spectrum of the bourgeois media leveraged the D-Day anniversary on June 6, for example, to persuade the public that thousands had died to protect democracy, to protect “your right” to vote (after all, nothing guilt workers into voting like patriotism). So much so that when Prime Minister Sunak left the D-Day celebrations early, the opposition parties all kicked up a fuss and the PM himself offered a groveling apology for his “error of judgment”.

Elections Settle Nothing!

An election cannot change the course of the capitalist economy (other than in the most superficial and short-term movements of economic indicators, based on investor confidence in the incoming administration's ability to steer the ship that is the State in the interests of the capitalist class). The attacks that the working class will face because of the growing crisis of capitalism will be implemented by whatever government is elected, regardless of the promises made and regardless of party affiliation. Members of Parliament are employed by the State to look after the interests of capitalism. In return, they are allowed to feather their own nests, insofar as this is not perceived as outright corruption that brings the system into disrepute. Meanwhile the exploitation of the working class, the great majority of society, will continue whoever occupies Number 10 Downing Street.

The working class instinctively knows this but is yet to take the next step towards taking power for itself.

The working class makes and remakes this world every single day. Because of this, the working class can look forward to a better world to come, without exploitation, poverty, insane economic crises and wars. In this election, which is dominated by the issue of immigration, the working class can also look forward to a world without national borders and without the compulsion for millions of workers to migrate in search of work. But this can only be brought about by the overthrowing of capitalism and its replacement with a communist society in which people give according to ability and take according to need. Communism will end the worldwide regime of insane overproduction, waste and perpetual threats to the ecology of the planet. Rational production to meet humanity's true needs will be well within the resources of the planet, without capitalism's current “greenwashing” babble about sustainability.

Communism will end poverty and war. But this can never be achieved, in whole or in part, by voting for any party—especially those which falsely claim to be communist or socialist. It can only be achieved through the seizure of power by the only force that can transform society—the working class, led by the International Communist Party.