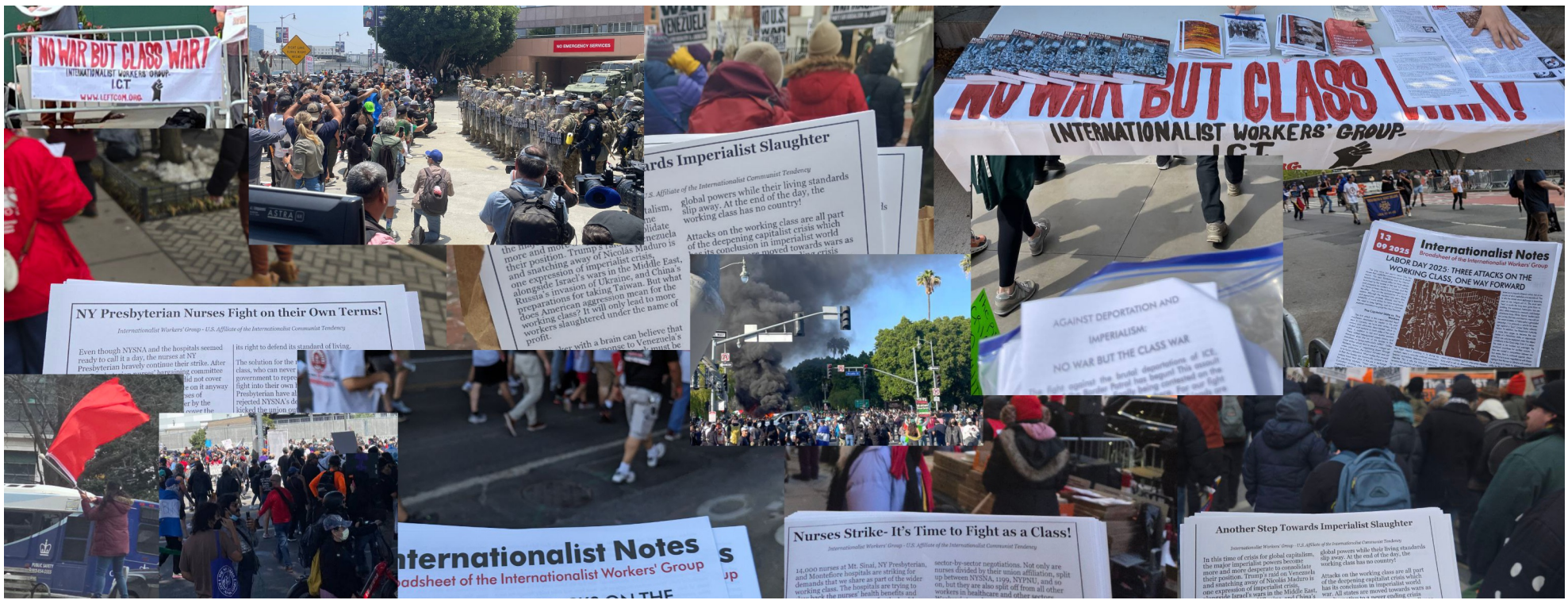
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Internationalist Notes

Broadsheet of the Internationalist Workers' Group

NO SACRIFICES FOR THE STATE AND CAPITAL: AGAINST ALL FORMS OF NATIONALISM



The capitalist crisis only gets worse and worse, with world war becoming an increasing reality. This crisis of a lack of sufficient surplus value is extending the competition between capitalists into a contest between states. Every state is embroiled in an existential struggle within the imperialist pecking order. The only 'way out' lies in massive destruction of capital, in the hope of being able to usher in a new round of profit-making.

The only solution they have to offer is generalized imperialist war.

Despite promises of peace, ceasefires or the "Board of Peace", imperialist wars are continuing to burn across the globe, whether in Ukraine, Sudan, Congo, Southern Asia, Gaza or Iran, and this does not even take in the "economic war" going on such as the continuing US blockade of Cuba. Not content with this, the capitalist system is gearing towards even more slaughter with ever growing military spending and a sickening tempo of rearmament. In the face of stagnating profits, the ruling class is willing to accept immeasurable human suffering. It is prepared to drive the system into even more unimaginable barbarism.

The wars in Ukraine and the Middle East are consolidating imperialist alliances and defined interests; they are a prelude for another world war. The US is preparing for war against China by attempting to break up the China-Russia-Iran bloc-of-convenience. For decades the USA has seen China as its main threat towards its expansive imperialist requirements. The Trump administration's policy towards China is largely guided by the same strategic premises of Obama and Biden. No matter which politician is managing the US, increasing protectionism and sanctions to set back China's economy and military and targeting China's allies are all bipartisan preparation for future war. Hostilities between the USA and China can only continue to grow with the pressures of imperialist competition. The USA is in a do-or-die situation to knock out its main rival as the crisis of profitability deepens.

The United States' manic war-making across the globe is thus part of the preparation for war against China. By attempting to eliminate China's allies in Venezuela, Cuba, Iran, and Russia, they are gearing up for the main fight. In Latin America, where China has steadily increased its presence over the past twenty years, Trump is sending a message through the kidnapping of Venezuela's Maduro, and the growing threats against Cuba. The brutal war being fought in Ukraine has been taken up by NATO to bleed out Russia and isolate China. The U.S.-Israel permanent war in the Middle East can be seen as a small-scale example of the strategy against China – first the weaker allies of Hezbollah, Hamas, and Houthis, then an isolated Iran itself. This strategy will not go unanswered; the bloody war of positioning won't stop. Every capitalist, no matter their nation, is driven to continue to adhere to the dictates of capital accumulation, so as a class they choose war instead of continued stagnation.

Workers everywhere are facing extreme austerity, privation, death and displacement as the push for another worldwide slaughter grows. The working class everywhere has been made to pay for capitalism's insoluble crisis of profitability which is the cause for all the imperialist wars and barbarism. States are all rearming, choosing "guns not butter". It's the guns which can win them a greater cut of future profit while there's little to be found in "normal" capitalist exploitation. Budgets for military spending in Germany and Italy have roughly doubled over the last five years, while in France the retirement age was raised to balance the war budget.

Workers are experiencing a collapsing social situation – we feel it every day when our wages are cut by inflation or increasing workload, when the cost of food and essentials continues to be out of our reach, or when we are evicted and cut off from welfare. Worst of all is whenever your supposed nation demands you to fight and kill our own class sisters and brothers. What has your nation done for you? What is "our country" supposed to be? We own little to nothing of it – except our labor power, which is exploited in the interests of "our nation". This is the situation in every country – the world capitalist class is united in the exploitation of the proletariat. All wars are imperialist and reactionary and there's no perspective in them for the proletariat besides continued exploitation, humiliation, and sacrifices so our class enemy can give palliative care for the moribund capitalist system.

For the proletariat, there's no country to support. Even if they drape themselves with "anti-imperialist" slogans, those who support any current war pick one capitalist over another. Since the opening of the imperialist epoch in the First World War, the capitalist can only play a reactionary role and fight tooth and nail for the survival of their nation's social capital. Any and all proletarian self-activity is crushed for the defense of the "nation" (that is, profits). Domestic repression exponentially multiplies against workers as seen in every current war and the state's response towards workers in Ukraine, Iran, Gaza and the Middle East. In the USA and other imperialist states rearming for war, repression and xenophobia discipline workers by creating a more precarious section of terrified workers to brutally exploit.

Only the working class can stop the war

The working class – the majority of people of the planet – is the only force capable of halting our further immiseration, the degradation of the planet, and the forward march of all-out war. Workers' economic demands already run up against capitalism's drive for war. When workers fight for higher wages, safer conditions of work, shorter hours, or better staffing, they are met with stiff resistance from the bosses and their state. In various countries, governments declare strikes illegal in the name of national defense, while on the "homefront" of warring capitalist states workers are put through misery in the war economy. The capitalist attack on workers' standards of living has a direct political character. Once the working class's defensive fight also takes on an offensive, political, anti-capitalist character, it will have the tools necessary to end forever the cycle of imperialist slaughter.

The mass slaughter of the imperialist First World War was brought to an end by uprisings, mutinies and strikes. Revolutionary defeatism took concrete form when, in Russia, the proletariat organized in councils seized power and enforced an end to hostilities, and when mass demonstrations in Berlin and Vienna in 1918 forced an end to the war. This marked the beginning of an international revolutionary wave that shook capitalism to its very foundations. Spontaneity and independent action of the class are important and necessary. Yet, it must be noted, they are necessary but not sufficient conditions for finally overcoming the capitalist system. Without an organized revolutionary force capable of providing an anti-capitalist movement with political direction and a revolutionary perspective, every uprising inevitably runs the risk of being absorbed by the forces of this system. A revolutionary party, on the other hand, which has fought to gain recognition and establish itself within the class through active participation in the class struggle, can serve as a revolutionary political reference point and work to ensure that the working class does not stop halfway. When the theoretical and practical preparation of organized revolutionaries is combined with the class's capacity for struggle and organization, this system can be overthrown.

Today we find ourselves in a difference situation from that of the past and are far from having formed a communist world party. Nevertheless, the fundamental conditions of capitalist exploitation remain the same. This does not relieve us of the task of working towards the creation of an international revolutionary party. This has been confirmed by the historical experience of our class. The absence of a firmly established revolutionary party had dramatic consequences for the German Revolution of 1918–1919. The working class had indeed succeeded in overthrowing the German Empire. But now, with the Social Democrats, a different actor began to set the political agenda. They presented themselves as a moderate 'socialist mass party'. Yet in reality, they acted not as the moderate right wing of the labor movement but as the left wing of capital. They replaced the class struggle with 'law and order', the councils with parliament, and revolution

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with reform. When the window of revolution still remains open, this is what the absence of a workers' party fitting its name can look like. Whilst it politically disarmed and disoriented the broad majority of the working class through all manner of maneuvers, as the mainstay of the Weimar Republic it gave free rein to the proto-fascist Freikorps against the radical elements. The bloody terror of these units laid the groundwork for the later fascist dictatorship.

The defeat of the German Revolution had fatal consequences for the international revolutionary wave. The isolation of the Russian Revolution ultimately led to its transformation into its opposite – the establishment of a dictatorial state capitalism which, to the delight of all reactionaries, masqueraded as 'socialism'.

What is to be done?

The traumatic experiences of Stalinism have led to much confusion and, at the same time, have significantly bolstered the ruling class's arsenal of ideological propaganda. The deep-seated defeats of the 20th century have weakened our class's solidarity and fighting spirit, with the result that successful defensive struggles are rare and face major challenges. The rule of capital appears unchallenged. The chances of revolutionary politics gaining a foothold in the class struggle are not good. Political organizations that defend the internationalist principles of the proletarian revolution have, at best, a limited presence in the struggles of the broader working class. This is merely one expression – albeit perhaps the most decisive one – of our class's profound weakness.

With this in mind, we must recognize and clearly articulate both the danger of a general imperialist war and the extreme weakness of revolutionary politics. The political differences between revolutionaries reflect real issues. Yet we cannot afford to get bogged down in endless polemics and aimless debates.

Instead of wallowing in criticism and squabbles that lack purpose or direction, for us, truly overcoming the controversies among revolutionaries requires a new life within the working class, through which the political issues raised by the struggle can form the basis upon which to build unity among revolutionaries; for it is only in the concrete dynamics of the class struggle —no longer sporadically and in isolated incidents, but on a mass scale—that the various theoretical and political positions will descend from the "heavens" of theory to find confirmation, or refutation, in the material reality of the class struggle itself. Those who think they have the sole monopoly over the truth will be relegated to irrelevance.

Despite the current weakness of our class, there is an acute need for those who uphold internationalist principles and reject all forms of nationalism to unite under a common banner. Wherever it is waged, the class struggle inevitably clashes with the ongoing preparations for war. This opens up the possibility that internationalist positions will be taken up in the struggles – particularly among the advanced sections of the class – and that the fight against capitalist war will be placed on the agenda. Against this backdrop, we reaffirm our, we reaffirm our support for the 'No War but Class War' committees, which bring together revolutionaries on the basis of internationalism and aim to intervene in local struggles. Although they are neither a substitute for the party nor a path to its formation, these committees can organize a political response to imperialist wars that goes beyond the capabilities of individual organizations.

Our bases for such cooperation, which takes an unequivocally class-based stance and excludes the political legacies of social democracy (old and new) and of the Stalinist counterrevolution, including its offshoots —namely, Stalinism, Maoism and Trotskyism - are the following five points:

•Against capitalism, imperialism and all forms of nationalism! No support for any national bourgeoisie, lesser evils' or emerging states!

• For a society in which states, wage labour, private property, money and profit-driven production are replaced by a world of freely associated producers!

• Against the economic and political attacks that the current and coming wars will unleash on the working class!

• For the self-organized struggle of the working class, for the formation of independent strike committees, mass assemblies and workers' councils!

• Against oppression and exploitation, for the unity of the working class and the alliance of genuine internationalists!

We once again call on all those who identify with these points and recognize the gravity of the current situation to set up such committees in their regions or to join existing ones.

As always, No War but the Class War!

Join us for a disscussion on Working Class Self Activity



Online Public Meeting on May 23rd

DM to participate (IG: @iwg.offical)

Who We Are

"The IWG stands for a global society where production is for need and not profit (and is therefore sustainable), where the state, national frontiers and money have been abolished, where collective power is exercised through class-wide organizations like workers' councils. This has to mean the active, daily participation of the majority aiming for the interests of all. Only then can the world be rid of the capitalist offspring of poverty, hunger, oppression and war: we call it communism but this vision has nothing in common with Stalinist state capitalism and the old USSR.

In order to get there we are working to create a world working class political organization - a 'party' for want of a better word - not a government in waiting but a guide in the struggle for a new world. We by no means claim to be that party but we do aim to be one of the elements which will need to come together in its formation. As the working class, the majority of the world's population, is more and more faced with the consequences of a crumbling capitalist system, it will have to unite and overthrow the capitalist system and its bloody imperialist appetites."

The Internationalist Workers' Group is the US affiliate of the Internationalist Communist Tendency.

For more information about our organization and answers to frequently asked questions: https://www.leftcom.org/en/about-us

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