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Report on the International Day of Mobilization against the Wars of Capital on February 24 – a first step of organized proletarian internationalism / Revolutionary Internationalist Tendency – SI Cobas



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The road to a first international day of action against the wars of capital on 24 February was not easy, but it was crowned with success. Most of the route towards the constitution of an international and internationalist proletarian united front against the wars of capital and against the tendency towards a third apocalyptic world war remains, of course, to be undertaken. **A first step, however, has been taken.** And we're already looking forward to **the next one to come with coordinated initiatives on 1 May**, which serve to consolidate and develop the network of international relations and relations developed in recent times.

Let's see, in brief, how we got to this day.

For two years, since the outbreak of the war between NATO and Russia in Ukraine, the SI Cobas and the Revolutionary Internationalist Tendency (RIT) have been carrying out constant and firm action against this war centered on the following thesis: "For what it is and for what it prepares, the war in Ukraine, imperialist on both sides, is a war against the Ukrainian proletarians and against the Russian proletarians, against the proletariat of all countries." For this reason, the political delivery can only be that of "defeatism on both sides of the front, against the oligarchs and generals of NATO and Ukraine, against the oligarchs and generals of Russia and its allies."

From the outset, our action took the form of statements with a clear class orientation, which were collected in the volume *La guerra in Ucraina e l'internazionalismo proletario* [*The War in Ukraine and Proletarian Internationalism*], and with numerous initiatives, which focused on denouncing the active participation of the Italian government and state in the war (supply of weapons, military deployments in the East, sanctions, rearmament and the first steps towards the war economy, Russophobic campaigns) summarized in Karl Liebknecht's formula "The enemy is in our own backyard," and in revolutionary defeatism.

We helped organize two national assemblies against the massacre in Ukraine: the conference in Rome on 16 October 2022 and the National Assembly on 11 June 2023 in Milan, with the presence - in both initiatives - of various organizations and local bodies that shared the defeatist position.

On this basis we have launched – together with other sectors of rank-and-file trade unionism and extra-parliamentary left-wing – first a national demonstration in the streets of Rome on December 3, 2022, "against the war and the high cost of living", and then on October 21 last year a second demonstration in front of the Italian military base in Ghedi, preceded the day before by the strike against the war and for the wages of part of the grassroots unions. The May Day demonstrations SI Cobas organized were also characterized by internationalist opposition to the war.

The next step was to take the anti-war initiative to the international level from a proletarian point of view, with the aim of forming an international and internationalist camp, or front, to oppose both imperialist camps in confrontation - initially in Ukraine, actually on a world scale. Indeed, **the war in Ukraine is not a contingent episode**: it is the result of the new framework of relations between capitalist powers, which sees the relative decline of the United States and the European Union, on the one hand, and the rise of the so-called BRICS, China in the lead, and other medium-sized powers, on the other. From the very first moment we have argued what today seems even banal: namely, that the war in Ukraine "marks **a point of no return in the shift of inter-capitalist contradictions on the world scale from an economic-commercial to a strategic-military one**", and contains within itself the growing risk of a third world war for the re-partition of the world. In fact, it has

already triggered an unbridled rearmist rush in preparation for this prospect. A perspective totally different from being the dawn of a multipolar, 'balanced' and finally peaceful capitalist world of certain narratives that it is difficult to say whether they are more propagandistic and fraudulent, or more childish.

It follows that the siding with this war has also marked **a decisive watershed in the anti-capitalist left**, between the internationalist-proletarian and 'camp' positions, as was the case during the First World War.

Aware of the urgency of the formation of an internationalist camp or front totally autonomous from both capitalist-imperialist camps in formation, we started a work that was immediately confronted with the fact that the war in Ukraine divided the various historical families of the anti-capitalist left between the proponents of the *false* self-determination of Ukraine (and willy-nilly NATO), the proponents of the *false* anti-Nazi mission of Russia, and the defeatists.

Noting that in the face of this war, all the components of the old workers' movement (Stalinist, Maoist, Trotskyist, communist left, anarcho-communist) have split more or less vertically into opposing factions, we turned to the only organisations that expressed positions similar to ours, or at least compatible with them, believing that the divisions of the past, while not at all meaningless, cannot and must not prevent unity of action in the present, **if the fundamental prerequisites for a common initiative are there**. This led to our

proposal for an international day of action against the wars of capital, which was accepted in principle as early as last summer by the Argentine comrades of the Partido Obrero, and later, in the autumn, by the German comrades of the MLPD and many organisations belonging to the international anti-imperialist United Front against fascism, war and environmental destruction, which was formed in September, and which the SI Cobas also joined. Other political and trade union organisations operating in Japan, Turkey and the United States also took up the proposal for an international day of action against the wars of capital.

This led to the drafting of a joint appeal with the MLPD and the United Front, and another more concise one with the Partido Obrero and the Polo Obrero, converging on the international day, set for 24 February, and its watchwords. The two appeals were signed by some 30 organisations from 21 different countries, and by a dozen internationally known militant intellectuals (see appendix).

In the run-up to this day, **the genocidal operation of the state of Israel against the population of the Gaza strip**, unanimously supported by the entire western imperialist camp, the USA in the lead and Italy in the pack, exploded after 7 October.

[Continua a leggere Report on the International Day of Mobilization against the Wars of Capital on February 24 – a first step of organized proletarian internationalism / Revolutionary Internationalist Tendency – SI Cobas](#)

Email dated 26th April 2024

Following the success of the International [Day Against the Wars of Capital on 24 February](#), we felt it was important to characterise the International Day of Struggle on May Day in the same direction, and therefore we proposed a joint communiqué to the participants on 24 February. The draft we proposed was accepted by the comrades of the Japanese trade union Doro Chiba, and with minor modifications by several organizations united in the International Anti-Imperialist United Front against fascism, war and environmental destruction, operating in Germany, Russia, India, France, Portugal, Congo, Cyprus, and among Turkish workers and women who have immigrated to Europe. The same draft was discussed with the comrades of the Partido Obrero, who have proposed some useful additions which strengthen the text in particular with reference to the genocidal operation of the Zionist State against the Palestinians in Gaza and the events in South America, but with whom some different assessments emerged on the role of the ascendant capitalist countries and on the nature of Russia and China. This did not, however, prevent us from drafting a joint communiqué, with almost the same final slogans, which was then also signed by other organizations in Latin America, the United States, Greece and Turkey, while we propose to discuss more deeply the points on which the differences emerged – through a careful analysis of the real processes, the only coherently materialist method. We publish both texts below, in the conviction that the ongoing acceleration in the direction of rearmament and war and the related nationalist propaganda in most countries makes it more necessary than ever to work to create an international front with a proletarian base against the wars of capital and for the overthrow of capitalism that generates them, bringing together organizations that, although coming from different paths, have come to the same determination.

Tendenza Internazionalista Rivoluzionaria – SI Cobas

see:

<https://pungolorosso.com/2024/04/25/per-un-primo-maggio-internazionale-e-internazionalista-contro-le-guerre-del-capitale-e-leconomia-di-guerra-italiano-english-deutsch-espanol-turkce-%d1%80%d1%83%d1%81%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%b8/>

Email dated 1st May 2024

i'm attaching a long overdue answer to the objections posed by some comrades of this network to the support of Palestinian resistance against the Israeli offensive in Gaza and the West Bank, and in particular a reply to the statement that we (SI Cobas and TIR) don't apply our defeatist position on Ukraine to Palestine, and to the interpretation of the slogan "no war but class war" as implying the refusal to support a national liberation struggle as that of Palestine.

I'm aware that my answer is not exhaustive, but I think it poses some fundamental questions that should be addressed for our communist aims to find the legs to walk in society.

I wish a great May Day to all!

Roberto

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/139NBEtFp9giMAfiC1EFrMZ96qa-4ieTp/edit?usp=sharing&oid=101481603694850777702&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Reply dated May 10th

Comrades

Below is a relevant extract from an Email that I sent to Roberto earlier today.

Internationalist greetings

Keith

I have read with interest your Email to the Beachcommunists list about the differing approaches to the background and current situation in Israel/Palestine.

I explored some of the background to these differences in

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/13jGrGiSVGXIPo3lj39HqluVx7Pu2QjNr-KTiapWhms4/edit?usp=drivesdk>
which was presented to the Beachcommunist assembly in Varna. The sections headed "Anti-imperialism - reshaping the power of capital or seeking its destruction" and "Imperialism and Anti-imperialism - Two interpretations" are particularly relevant.

However, the differing reactions to the war in the Middle East has further brought to the surface differences amongst those claiming to be consistent revolutionary Internationalists.

I am currently drafting an update to the above document to take into account the escalation towards World War Three including the dreadful events in Gaza and other territories since October 7th. My few comments in

response to your document partly anticipate the content of that update but will also attempt to explore some of your specific points. Needless to say, the comments below are only my thoughts. Nevertheless, I expect that they are broadly consonant with comrades who have maintained an Internationalist anti-war/Revolutionary Defeatist position that resists adaptation to various "defence of the lesser evil" approaches.

I would argue that the positions expressed by you and your comrades fall into a segment of the latter camp. The key position underlying your specific approach is an acceptance that cooperation with anti-colonialism / national liberationism can be reconciled with presenting a Communist perspective. The latter is one based on the need and possibility for proletarian revolution, pointing to the drive for class unity across all territorial boundaries. In current circumstances, the approach of my comrades (I will use the term "narrow roaders" for convenience) explicitly rejects support militarily, politically or in terms of propaganda for any state or forces aiming at creating a new state. That approach coincided with TIR's conjunctural approach to the war in Ukraine but the events around Gaza have exposed a "weak underbelly".

At present, I will focus on your positions as presented in "On the Palestinian question and revolutionary defeatism".

Excuse me for starting with your concluding comment but often summaries provide a good entry point. You conclude that "Indifference towards the massacre in Palestine would not help the growth of such an [internationalist] awareness". For sure, indifference towards massacres in Israel/Palestine/Gaza or Sudan, Yemen, Myanmar, Iran etc. is an approach absolutely alien to Communists. On the face of it, the sentence merely states the obvious. However, it is hard to escape the conclusion that the accusation of indifference is being aimed at "narrow roaders". If not, why conclude in that way?

For evidence of "narrow road" initiatives that evidence our distance from indifference we can look at many forums - like myself, you are aware of many of them. Restricting ourselves to initiatives largely based in Europe we can readily point to examples such as the forthcoming Week of Action in Prague, the initiative called by International Perspectives/Controverses, the various initiatives under the banner of "No War but Class War", the

output from the Old Moles Collective or the activities of internationalists to oppose Ukrainian defencism in Beachcommunists.

I plead guilty to challenging political positions that connive with those who seek to replace one current state formation (for example, Israel) with a projected alternative state (Palestine). Such projects, in reality, seek to reorganise the exploitative order. This is not abstract but is amply evidenced by glancing at the United Nations where the majority of members - all locations for the power of capital - emerged from such a process. I totally reject any accusation, explicit or implicit, that distancing myself from national liberationist projects implies indifference towards the sufferings of our class.

If I may also be allowed to separate out one other specific about respective method then I must mention your uncritical reference to a statement from the Comintern in 1925. Even orthodox Trotskyists recognise that by the Fifth Congress (1924) that body was a tool of counter-revolution supporting the party-state controllers of the Soviet Union in their project of national reconstruction - at that time based on state supported NEP petty-proprietor capitalism, rural and urban. Your reference to their 1925 declaration is an arbitrary reference to a moment in the twists and turns of the CPSU's positioning. The reader can only guess why you highlight that statement from reactionaries rather than the, better known, 1948 position when contortions of Stalinism led the Soviet Union to be amongst the first states to quickly recognise and support the creation of the Israeli state.

While we're in that part of the text I would also challenge the ahistorical use of Marx on Ireland. The reality in Ireland today is that bourgeois factions have, for over a century, led layers of our class astray with false hopes in maintaining a "two state solution" or a 32 county (the whole island) national solution. In that sense, there may indeed be similarities with the false prospects that national solutions offer in Israel/Palestine.

Only patiently developing links between workers and the dispossessed across national, ethnic and religious boundaries provides an alternative to a staggeringly bloody process by which a unitary state "from the river to the sea" could be established either by Israeli or Palestinian nationalists. Likewise the quarter of a century of lower levels of violence on the island of Ireland can be expected to end very nastily when both sides will play their reactionary games aground a future "border poll" - a democratic device likely to be deployed in the next

10-20 years providing a worthless choice between the existing inter-state boundary and a single united state. Again, there will be no shortage of leftists stoking up the fires for the nationalist cause - "From the Ocean to the sea"????

Since 2022, there has been a recognition shared by pro-revolutionaries and the most blatant bourgeois reactionaries that the existing world order is sliding towards the Third World War. That tendency is global, inevitably connecting and exacerbating apparently local tensions as they are subsumed by the competition between corporate entities, states, alliances and emerging blocs.

It is absolutely clear that the current wars and repression in Israel/Palestine/Gaza are inextricably linked with a wider drift to war, the development of blocs and the jostling for control by state powers both within and beyond the region. Many of the flag-waving leftists have developed their own contradiction of advocating defence of the Ukrainian and Palestinian state military/diplomatic projects - on opposite sides of the military alliances and emerging blocs. Therein lies the anti-revolutionary confused perspective of support for the latest victim.

As you write, like yourselves, "narrow roaders" "denounc[e] the massacre of children, women and men". On the other hand we have nothing in common with ambiguous approaches to Hamas that define it as "the most radical resistance organisation ... not criticising its reactionary traits". Exercising state power in Gaza, albeit with clear externally imposed limitations, they have implemented all the repressive features of that rule including repression, murder and the exercising of the whole range of social domination under the cover of religious dogma. Having connived with Israel to establish their dominance over their former Fatah rivals, they have since exercised their oppressive statist control with the connivance of the Iranian clericalist regional power and their "arc of resistance". Your description of them as "radical [with] reactionary traits" is a piece of misrepresentation. It does not challenge the misconceptions amongst left-wing or liberal youth but reinforces the power of the false prophets - leftists, national liberationists and Islamists.

However, this is not the only point where your Marxism evaporates in favour of a Palestinian nationalist narrative. And from your perspective - Why not? The project to establish a Palestinian state is part of the project to strengthen the anti-colonial forces. You write that "The war on Gaza ... has been going on since 1948 - or since

the Balfour Declaration of 1926 [actually 1917 but I am sure that was a typo rather than a mistake - KIT]". That selective view of history feeds into the argument that Palestinian nationhood is an essential task of "historic fairness" - as if such a wondrous condition can be achieved short of the world-wide overthrow of the power of capital and its political superstructure.

The settlement at Versailles and the subsequent treaties carved up the ex-Ottoman territories into a series of autocratic kingdoms and mandate territories in line with the Sykes-Picot plan. Workers and peasants across the Middle East were handed over to their new rulers to experience exploitation in their new state entities. As well as in Palestine, generations have suffered oppressions, exploitation and state violence across these territories. Even as we write the bourgeois media has woken up to the killings that were carried out to implement the insane Neom project in Saudi Arabia, a new barbaric element in a state where women suffer extreme discrimination and state executions happen at the rate of one every two days.

The Naqba of 1948 was one of many acts of brutal "ethnic cleansing" during the years immediately after the end of the Second World War. The power of the victorious allies along with the redrawn boundaries prepared the way for the brutal treatment and enforced expulsions of ethnic Germans from Czechoslovakia and Poland, Crimean Tartars suffered mass deportation in the Soviet Union and the partition of India resulted in mass population transfers in all directions across the sub-continent. The phenomenon did not finish in the 1940s. In the last few years the Muslim minority in North West Myanmar have been forced out while even more recently the Armenian-identifying inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh Republic have been driven out. Raising the banner of an imagined bourgeois right, "the right of return", provides no way forward for those who suffered or their descendants. The use of the slogan by both the Israeli and Palestinian nationalists is ample proof that "right of return" only provokes more state-inspired violence rather than any miraculous righting of wrongs from 75 years ago.

At the root of our differences are differing views of the relationship between the perspective for Communist Revolution and the national liberationist projects that have given new bourgeois layers the power to exploit during the last century. Those differences are mentioned briefly in the document presented to Varna. The update on the descent since then will need to return to them.

I recognise that the somewhat polemical tone of this short reply might not appeal to some on this list. However, I beg them to understand that those of us who have striven for a better world for many decades have certain forms of behaviour and interaction from which we will not easily break away.