



May Day 2025:

Against Capitalist Crisis Against Imperialist War No War but the Class War

May Day 2025 finds capitalism, no matter who's in charge, drenching the world with the working class's blood. It's now 50 years since the end of capitalism's post-war boom. After decades of declining profit rates in the "real economy" the situation is becoming more and more dire and confronting capitalism's crisis by war becomes the final option. Local imperialist wars are burning across the world from Ukraine to the Middle East, from the African Sahel to the Congo and elsewhere, and a generalised world war looms on the horizon. The international working class has no interest in these wars which are caused by the capitalist system itself. They bring increased class repression, privation, displacement, death and genocide: all for a system far past its sell-by date. Reforms cannot solve this crisis: the solution of the working class can only be *revolution*.

What Peace?

Trump's promises of peace are just theatre. The US does not and never has aimed for peace. The present aim in Ukraine is to freeze the conflict and redirect military resources towards a future war with its real rival China. The aim in the Middle East is to cut off China's supply of energy.

The US's previous aim was to weaken Russia using Ukraine as a battering ram, fighting "to the last Ukrainian". Trump's plan is to break the alliance between a now-weakened Russia and China; it is not peace. US's junior partners in Europe have been told to rearm and continue the fight and now plan a "coalition of the willing" to do this.

In Gaza, "peace" was never more than a cover for massacre. During the ceasefire from January 19th to March 17th, at least 170 Palestinians in Gaza were killed, and, since Israel violated the cease fire on 18 March, over 1600 more have been murdered. While, on the one hand, Trump was gesturing at a ceasefire in Gaza on one hand, he was devising plans to remove the whole of the Palestinian population in Gaza – many of whom are in refugee camps at the border with Egypt – in order to create a "riviera of the Middle East".

The Road to WWII

The seemingly strange manoeuvrings of the Trump administration toward Russia and Iran are really about isolating China. The US intends to break up the alliance of convenience of which China is the true leader. For almost two decades, US policy toward China has thus been one of belligerence, and the current tactics under Trump are a continuation of those under Obama and Biden – protectionism against the Chinese economy, the undermining of China's allies, and the preparation of the NATO countries for war. All this is ultimately the response to the economic



crisis of capitalism, a crisis which also affects China. In the pursuit of an ever-expanding need for profit, both powers find themselves in competition. Their differences are irreconcilable. The massive tariff war which the US has initiated and China's response are only the prelude to a shooting war.

The US peace overtures in Ukraine are just an attempt to drive a wedge between Russia and China to make an attack on China easier. The talks with Iran are aimed at cutting off China's supply of oil and gas. Although China has supported Iran with sweetheart fossil fuel deals which help to hold the Iranian state together, the Iranian economy is weakening and its political sway in the Middle East is being undermined as its proxy forces are being weakened. Striking Iran is also striking a blow at the BRICS, since this organization, of which Russia, China and Iran are key members, represents a direct threat to US global hegemony and the international role of the dollar.

The War-Proofing of the Capitalist State

Although the civilian Russian economy has been hollowed out by the long and bloody war in Ukraine, Russia has been able to survive years of conflict by converting to a wartime economy. Russia and China both retain their industrial economic base and are more prepared for a global conflict than Europe and the US which lack the industries required for a long war as the Ukraine war has shown. US industry is only 8% of GDP. Hence Trump's attempts to bring back industry to the US through tariffs.

The turn toward a wartime economy has already begun in the form of promises to spend big on defence. Europe has outlined a planned €800 Billion in additional defence spending, while the US has scheduled a \$1trillion defence budget. War looms on

the horizon and it is clear, our rulers will demand that the working class pay for rearmament and head to the front lines when war breaks out.

Trump's administration has favored a "fortress America" approach: extreme protectionism, a closed-door immigration policy and cuts to non-military spending. Their threats to annex Greenland, Canada and Panama are attempts to gain control over critical resources for defence production and vital trade routes.

Internationalism in the Face of Rising Nationalism

The terrible sufferings wrought by the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza will pale into insignificance in comparison to those of a global war. There remains one question we must ask ourselves if the world gets dragged into a war of this scale: Which side are we on?

Nationalism is surging throughout the world. The call of the capitalist class to workers will always be the same; you must make sacrifices, accept rationing, take a cut in wages, or get conscripted! When they tell us to defend the nation and freedom, what they mean is defend their freedom to exploit us and their freedom to receive dividends. There is no greater lie than the lie of nationalism. Any fight against capitalist war will have to recognise that the working class must fight against the entire system of capitalism and its product imperialism, in which each and every nation plays a part. The antidote for nationalism is internationalism. It will never make sense for the working class to kill one another on behalf of their rulers.

To answer the question above, our side is the working class. The international working class must resist the call for the slaughter of its class and turn its anger against the capitalists who give them their marching orders. This May Day we should look to those workers who chose to fight

the class war and who collectively brought down empires before they would fire another shot at their comrades. We can also look to contemporary examples of resistance, such as Palestinians protesting against Hamas, Israeli soldiers refusing to fight and Russians and Ukrainians deserting the war fronts.

The fight begins anew with every strike, every moment of self-activity of the working class. Our class is constantly facing *general attacks* from the capitalist class, be it precarity or bullets, inflation or bombings. What is needed is a general fight back of the entire working class, outside of the confines of nations, and the unions so that it can fight as a single, solidified, class.

However, for this fight to be carried to its logical conclusion, the revolutionary victory of the working class and the end of this system of profit and war, each step must be linked to our class's political objectives. It is for this reason that the ICT has helped form No War but the Class War (NWBCW) committees across the globe, grouping together internationalists of various political tendencies to defend working class politics within the wider struggle which so desperately needs it. Even more necessary is a true political reference point within the working class, one that is able to build deep roots inside the working class and lead it towards the revolutionary finale of this nightmarish saga. With the formation of an international revolutionary party, the slogan **No War but the Class War** will one day be made reality by the revolutionary action of the entire working class, and the creation of a new system of production - real communism.

No War but the Class War!

**Internationalist Communist
Tendency**

The Capitalist Response: "Guns not Butter!"

As capitalism's economic crisis gets more severe our rulers are unleashing a war of impoverishment on the working class at home while gearing up for a hot war on their rivals abroad. The chancellor has proposed to introduce £5bn of cuts to benefits, which is the biggest cut on record. Keir Starmer, justifying the cuts, described the welfare system as "unsustainable," which indicates that there is worse to come. Far from being generous, as the capitalists continually tell us, the British benefit system, as a percentage of the GDP, is the lowest of all the OECD countries with the exception of Chile. This system, which was part of the post war settlement between capital and labour, is being steadily demolished, and a similar process is occurring in all the major capitalist countries. The cuts, which are in the first instance an attempt to shore up profit rates, are today to go into rearmament. The government's increase in military expenditure from 2.3% to 2.5% represents £6.7bn, only slightly more than what will be saved from the benefits cuts. Meanwhile the government is quite happy to commit £10bn in military support, and another £5bn in other support for Ukraine. The capitalist class are preparing for war

and their watchword is, as coined by the Nazis in the 1930s, "guns not butter."

Cuts for war

The main aim of the cuts is to restrict eligibility for Personal Independence Payments (PIPs) and Universal Credit (UC). The Financial Times estimates that of the 3.7 million on PIPs half will lose UC and calculates that 1.2 million people will be £4,300 worse off. This alone represents a saving of £5.1bn! Of the 3.7 million on PIPs half will be unable to claim UC and thousands will lose two thirds of their present welfare payments. Many people losing PIPs and other benefits will be forced to look for work. The viciousness of the system is illustrated by anecdotal stories of blind people and cancer sufferers being told they are capable of looking for work or are insufficiently ill to claim benefits. The intention of these changes is to force people into work, but the system does not provide jobs suitable for sick and disabled people's capabilities. So instead, the consequence will be further impoverishment of under and unemployed people, millions more of whom will have to go further into debt to survive.

Another example of the miserable

conditions imposed on us is the housing and homelessness crisis. After World War 2, we were assured, all would get homes fit for heroes. Meanwhile, as capitalist landlords and banks continue to cash in on Housing Benefit, which was left untouched, 1.3 million people are on waiting lists for social housing. Over 164,000 children are homeless across the country, while in 32 local authorities the wait for a three-bedroom home is more than 18 years - a wait of nearly a generation.

We are being forced into deeper debt and poverty and as the drift towards war speeds up the unemployed will be urged to enlist in the army or just mobilised to become cannon fodder for the next round of bloodletting and destruction.

The fightback

What the government is doing illustrates once again that there is a direct link between the attacks on wages and conditions and the drive to war. How can we fight back?

Billions of workers worldwide produce all the wealth of the capitalist system for a few thousand capitalists who control the system, force cuts in wages and conditions and the drive towards imperialist war

against their rivals. If workers were conscious of their collective strength, they could not only prevent war but overturn the whole rotten system. At present the international proletariat is a sleeping giant unaware of its collective strength and unaware of how dangerous the present drive to war is.

Class struggle, initially at the local level, but later internationally is the only weapon we have against what capitalism has in store. A fightback has to start with a refusal to accept cuts in wages and conditions and cuts in the social wage. Such a fight needs to be spread as widely as possible and be organised outside of the normal systems of control such as unions. It needs to be organised by elected strike committees with revocable delegates and decisions put to mass meetings. The local fightback needs to be linked to the fight against war, in order to give the struggle an international dimension and raise class consciousness internationally. This is why some internationalists across the world are forming committees of resistance under the banner of "No War but the Class War". Join us!

Higher Education: Redundancies and Restructuring

The funding crisis affecting schools, which has led to staff reductions and deteriorating buildings, has now impacted universities. This is another symptom of the general crisis of capitalism which the capitalist class tries to solve by cutting the social wage of which education is a large part. Today 40% of higher education institutions face severe budget deficits, and many are on the brink of bankruptcy. More than 50 universities are undergoing redundancies, where currently over 5,000 jobs are at risk. According to the unions if the university bosses plug their financial problems solely through axing staff, 5,000 more jobs could also go.

The present problems at universities have their origins in the funding reforms of 2012, when tuition fees increased from £3,225 to £9,000 a year; this was while government support was decreased. Since 2012, tuition fees have only gone up to £9,250; while an increase in line with inflation would have increased them to £12,750. In addition, the rise in employer national insurance contributions will cost universities an extra £900 per worker on average wages. There are estimates that English universities are annually losing approximately £2,500 per domestic student. For years universities had offset this by attracting international students, who, until recently, had no limits on tuition fees; but the last Conservative government introduced stricter policies on immigration, including making it harder for students to bring dependants with them. This has meant that Britain is less attractive for international students compared to other countries, with the result that applications for study visas in 2024 were 17% lower than in 2023. This source of funding is consequently reduced.

The Starmer government proposes to increase tuition fees to £9,535 from August



2025, but this won't be anywhere near far enough. One suggestion from Universities UK is to link tuition fees to inflation like student debts. The cost of education would then spiral making education available only for the rich and excluding the working class from higher education. Putting the onus on students to pay more isn't going to solve the problem either as a large proportion of these debts won't ever be repaid. What it will do is put students into ever more debt and potentially put off the poorer sections of the working class from going into education. We recall that the last Labour government's slogan was, "education, education, education." It is the present Labour government which is now refusing to put money into education, while they are quite happy to spend £15bn on the war in Ukraine and increasing defence budgets to 2.5% GDP. Instead of "education, education, education" the new slogan is "cut education, cut welfare and rearm."

The response from workers at a handful of universities has been to fight the redundancies. We have recently seen strikes at the University of East Anglia, University of Kent, Newcastle University, Sheffield Hallam University, Brunel University and University of Sheffield International College, while more strike ballots are underway elsewhere. While we

support workers coming together to fight for their jobs, if these struggles remain isolated under the control of the unions, they are unlikely to win. Another attempt by universities to save money has been outsourcing work like cleaning and security

and other services to private contractors. The workers in the outsourced sectors suffer appalling exploitation and are also fighting back. A united fight of workers facing redundancy, contract workers and students in one struggle across all universities could halt these attacks. This is the way forward. If we remain divided across sectors and by unions, we will fight losing battles on terms dictated by the bosses.

Education needs to be freed from the profit motive. But this is not possible within the current system where all activities can only exist if they are profitable. We have to look beyond the capitalist horizon. As the crisis of capitalism deepens, we will continue to see ever more attacks on our pay, conditions and standards of living particularly in welfare and education. The only solution is to get rid of the rotten system of capitalism that is failing, and will continue to fail, in fulfilling the needs of the working class. We need to replace this system with a system that does look after our wants and needs. Creating a world "wherein the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."

What We Stand For

Aurora is published by the Communist Workers' Organisation (CWO), the UK affiliate of the Internationalist Communist Tendency (ICT).

The CWO 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 organisations 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 organisation – 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 is more and more faced with the consequences of a crumbling capitalist system it will have to unite and confront capitalist power.

We are not in competition with other organisations but seek to unite on a clearly agreed political programme to prepare the way for the majority of the world's population, the exploited of the earth, to overthrow the capitalist system and its bloody imperialist appetites.

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