



Nationalism, War, Repression, Austerity Symptoms of Capitalist Crisis

"Ceasefires" Bring No Respite

Since the US-brokered "ceasefire" deal between Israel and Hamas, tens of thousands of Palestinians have returned to Gaza to find their home reduced to rubble, divided in half and still under near-constant fire. Not a single day has passed without Israel continuing to attack and kill civilians in Gaza, with over 100 killed on Tuesday 28 October alone. The "ceasefire", clamoured for by protestors across the world for years, is revealing itself to be nothing of the sort, as Gaza remains under siege while the IDF and Hamas carry out their grisly piecemeal exchange of the corpses of their hostages to be returned to their families to be buried. As part of Trump's bogus deal, a yellow "ceasefire line" has been drawn down the middle of Gaza, serving the function of a de facto border and provoking the suspicion that the stage has been set for an annexation by Israel of half of Gaza.

To Israel's north, Lebanon has likewise seen scarcely a day without another attack by the IDF since their "ceasefire" deal, also brokered by the US, a year ago. As in Gaza, so in Lebanon, Israel's government has claimed that the purpose of its continued attacks has been to "destroy terrorist infrastructure". The claim of "terrorism" remains key to Israel's PR strategy, as the infrastructure the IDF have destroyed in both territories includes hospitals, schools and agriculture as well as housing, while on the ground their recent operations in Lebanon have included the storming of a municipal building to kill an employee in his sleep. Yet there is nothing unusual about Israel literally weaponising the accusation of "terrorism" to justify their endless attacks on civilians in their brutal military assault on their enemies' territories; it's exactly the same basis that the US used to justify its invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003 respectively, it's how Russia justified its invasion of Ukraine and it's how China justifies its persecution of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

A Global Drive to War

Meanwhile, in Sudan, the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) were found to be using first French, then British military

equipment provided by NATO allies, the UAE. The RSF currently also face accusations of genocide, in a civil war where hundreds of thousands have been killed, many more displaced, and over 30 million are in desperate need of aid in what certain NGOs have condemned as "the world's largest humanitarian crisis", with the blood shed in the region visible from space.

The war in Ukraine, despite all the high-profile chatter between Trump and Putin, grinds on with tens of thousands dead on both sides. And following alleged sightings of Russian drones in Polish, Lithuanian and German airspace and reports of Russia testing a new nuclear weapon christened a "flying Chernobyl", the UK and US have now imposed sanctions on Russian oil, triggering a surge in oil prices and, more crucially for both warring factions, forcing their allies into increased dependence and more explicit loyalty.

But that's just the tip of the iceberg. According to various estimates, global military spending is reaching record levels while the world is already being torn apart by 56 active conflicts, numbers not seen since the Second World War.

US Reasserts Control

If this sounds like a demonstration of power on the part of the US, its motivation is just the same as any so-called show of force: the reality that its grasp on the global imperialist order is in fact slipping, with China hot on its heels. And in the absence of sufficient economic might to challenge its main rival, the US can only defend its position the same way as every capitalist organism under threat since the dawn of capitalism itself: with brute force. Since the advent of capitalism's imperialist era (roughly the turn of the twentieth century), where economic competition has taken on the form of competition between nations and national blocs, this can only mean one thing: the descent into generalised war.

While on the international stage this takes the form of arms deals with its clients, and military threats and sanctions on its enemies (the latest example being the conflict brewing in Venezuela), on the "home front" Trump has explicitly

threatened to use "dangerous" US cities as "training grounds" for the military. Trump's omission to mention to whom exactly these cities are "dangerous" is entirely deliberate – they map out neatly onto cities that have seen spates of resistance to raids by the federal ICE agency, to defend migrants against forced deportation.

A System That Breeds War

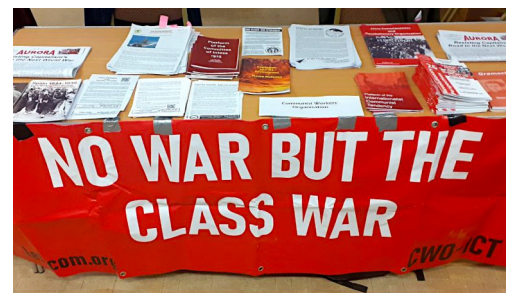
It is not our place to decide which ongoing humanitarian tragedy merits the greatest part of our horror – not only because there is nothing to be gained from this for either the survivors or the dead, but also because we recognise that, like many deadly shoots of the same poisonous plant, they share the same root. Wars are escalating all across the globe because their shared motive force, the crisis of the capitalist system whose basis is the constant accumulation of profit which cannot escape its tendential fall, continues to intensify. There is nothing abstract or metaphysical about this: it is clear as day that the wars we are seeing are military escalations of the competing interests of capitalist states, and while the ruling class fret over how best to defend their bottom line from the safety of their war offices, working class people are killing and being killed on their orders in our thousands every day.

And any attempt to use their own rules, their own laws, their own moral codes against them is a fatal waste of time. The rules of war exist to justify and moderate the systematic massacres of human beings, and when their rules stop working for the ruling class' own ends, they simply discard them; despite the best efforts of various governments to eliminate enemy journalists, thanks to social media, we are seeing this unfold in front of our very eyes. The war in Gaza, now considered a genocide by most major humanitarian organisations, provides a stark example. In the words of the UNRWA, "Gaza is becoming the graveyard of international humanitarian law ... We have made the Geneva Convention almost irrelevant. What is happening and being accepted today in Gaza is not something that can be isolated; it will become the new norm for all future conflicts." It matters not to the masses

slaughtered in Gaza, Lebanon, Ukraine, Russia, Sudan, Tigray, Kashmir, Myanmar, whether their deaths are ruled as "lawful" or "criminal". Not only will condemning their killers as criminals not bring back the dead, it will also not stop the massacres from continuing.

Nor can we hope for any respite in the redrawing of borders or the recognition of states. Since the dawn of capitalism, the formation of nations is anything but a peaceful process, and in the epoch of imperialism, the idea that a nation can be truly "independent" or "sovereign" in any objective sense is completely meaningless. There is no better example of this than Israel itself: formed by survivors of the last global imperialist massacre with the support of the victors of that war who then dictated the terms of the new world order, its existence as an "independent" state has in fact been as that of a client state of the US since the latter won the bidding war for its custom in the 1960s. It would be folly to expect any more favourable fate for a nominally "independent" Palestine than Israel's "chains of gold".

In this system whose inexorable need to accumulate profit generates increasingly brutal tyranny and wars without end, the only hope for any way out of the hell humanity has created for itself remains with the working class: the class whose labour produces the goods and provides the services from which all profit is produced and through which the system is reproduced. The class who across all nations of the world are sent to kill and be killed by one another in defence of the profits of our exploiters; yet who have no inherent quarrel with one another. In fact, across all nations, our interests remain one and the same: the overthrow of the capitalist system. It's in this sense that the choice for humanity remains: socialism or barbarism.



Nationalism: A Weapon of the Ruling Class

Nationalism on the Rise

Recent opinion polls put Reform UK well ahead of the parliamentary competition. If an election were held next week, it is possible the ex-banker ex-Tory Nigel Farage would become Prime Minister. But, whether or not they are successful, they have already won a major victory – the anti-migrant agenda has completely taken over mainstream politics, with both Labour and

Tory parties attempting to outdo Reform at their own game. The next election, whenever it happens, will be a contest of who can appear the most hard-line on migration – a repeat of the Brexit referendum, with the mask off.

Of course, Farage's party (or rather, 'entrepreneurial political start-up') does not offer much in the way of 'reform'. If anything, its policies are merely more of

the same asset-stripping and destruction of the social wage that we have seen from other establishment parties (whatever their supposed ideological orientation, 'right' or 'left') for decades. As always, it is the working class which will pay the price for it, though Reform is hoping to distract from this by posing as 'patriots' and taking a particularly conservative position in the 'culture wars'.

But Farage and the parliamentary right are only half of the story; protests by the far-right at asylum-seeker hostels continue, as do random attacks on 'foreigners' across the country. The 'Unite the Kingdom' march in September pulled in over 100,000 participants – arguably the largest far-right march in the UK's history. Undoubtedly, the capitalist far-right feels emboldened.

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Unemployment and Poverty are not Caused by Migration

There are real underlying reasons for people’s anger. Real wages are falling behind inflation. Workers’ share of national income has been in decline for decades. Generational unemployment, casualisation, precarity and under-employment are all realities for huge numbers of people. Declining social services after years of austerity, homelessness, rising rents and utilities bills, the collapse of the NHS – all of these factors and more make people’s lives increasingly miserable. More people than ever are turning to food banks and many of them are, at least on paper, employed, but unable to make ends meet. None of this is caused by migration – it is the consequence of a system founded on the exploitation of our labour, which finds itself in a drawn out crisis of profitability. It has survived this long by tightening the screw, making us work harder for less, creating a situation where the richest 1%

now have more wealth than the bottom 95% of the world’s population put together. The far-right – backed by investment bankers, property moguls and hedge fund tycoons – hopes to capitalise on people’s misplaced anger. Blaming the failures of capitalism on ‘the other’ is a very old tactic of the ruling class. As long as workers are divided against each other we will not unite to defend our interests as a class. A divided working class can also be more easily dragooned into accepting war, and the austerity that pays for war. In fact, the drive to war is what underpins the current rise in nationalism. The ruling class has no real answers to the crisis facing it. All that is left is an increasingly desperate scramble to ensure resources and strategic supplies as re-armament takes place. Economic competition turns into military confrontation. We are heading for increasingly dangerous times, and the drive to generalised war is now out in the

open. Nationalist campaigns are a vital propaganda tool for the ruling class – obviously, not just in the UK. In every country, workers are told to direct their anger not at the bosses and the politicians but at their neighbours. Our Answer to Racist Division: Class Unity! We must defeat the far-right politically with working class unity and reject the divisions capitalism seeks to exploit. We must tell workers the truth – the boss who looks like you is not your friend, the worker from the other side of the world is not your enemy. It is not the fault of migrants that capitalism cannot give you a decent life, it is inherent in the contradictions of the system itself. Fighting for a better life today means fighting against the economic reality that pits us against each other in an endless race to the bottom. Let’s be clear however: this fight cannot be delegated away to left-

wing politicians or trade union leaders. Neither the compromised Labour, nor the opportunist Greens, not even the splintered Your Party will save us from the storms capitalism is brewing. Ultimately, these false friends want to preserve the current system of money and wage labour, just by dressing it in nicer clothes. Like the bosses, they are afraid of independent working class initiative which could point towards a higher system of production, governed by human needs and solidarity, not making profit. Such a solution does not lie in parliament, but in the streets and workplaces. We in the ICT see it as imperative that workers recognise their class interests against the false communities that the ruling class promotes to protect their rule – whether these are nationalist, religious, racial or whatever else. A united working class is the only force that can halt the drive to war and overthrow this obscene system.

The Working Class is Still Fighting! But What World Are We Fighting For?

The picture may seem bleak, but don’t be disheartened! Across the planet, the working class are proving that just as we face the same attacks and conditions everywhere, our struggle is the force that can fight them everywhere. Workers are relearning how to fight, developing an arsenal that can be turned against the capitalist system itself.

Workers are Fighting Back in the UK...

Though days lost to strike action this year are a fraction of the 2022-3 strike wave, the embers of class struggle are still glowing across Britain. You’d be forgiven for missing it, since, in the hands of the unions, so far the strikes have remained limited to single sectors, single workplaces, and single days – carefully timed to prevent them crossing over. Nonetheless, more and more sectors are joining the wave. Cleaners, tube workers, and TEFL teachers in London; bin workers in Birmingham and Sheffield; healthcare workers in Blackpool; power plant workers in Cumbria and Somerset; museum staff in Wakefield; hospitality workers in Glasgow, London, and Nottingham; bus drivers in Manchester and Bristol; Lindsey oil refinery; and resident doctors and university lecturers around the country. In many cases, unions have been in the awkward situation of leading strikes against their own Labour chums in local and national government. On the other hand, this also makes it much easier for them when the time comes to negotiate a deal with them behind closed doors, after which the strikes are abruptly suspended before they can expand (or even before they start, as with bus drivers in Manchester). Do we want their goal – to

manage our own decline – or to end the system behind it?

...and in Europe...

If Britain’s sluggishness is getting you down, across the Channel the fire is burning brighter. General strikes have involved large parts of the workforce (particularly transport, healthcare, and education). In Greece, a 24-hour general strike was called after a law was passed allowing 13-hour work days, a year after 6-day working weeks were allowed (Greece already has the longest average work week in the EU, at 39.8 hours). The Belgian general strike was called as both federal and regional authorities announced austerity measures and longer workdays, bringing the second-largest port in Europe to a standstill. In France, workers responded to the Bayrou government’s 2026 budget, proposing €43.8 billion in social spending cuts, with strikes and demonstrations under the slogan *bloquons tout* (‘let’s block everything’). Protesters reinforced pickets, and a general assembly of rail workers and protestors was even held outside Paris Gare du Nord to discuss courses of action – an example of the independent self-organisation which is essential if we ever want to take the steering wheel from the bosses’ cronies in union offices. In Italy, a mix of mainstream and ‘base’ unions called general strikes in protest against Italian participation in the Gaza War, after the Global Sumud Flotilla was seized by Israeli authorities.

In all these cases, the Capitalist Left (the trade unions, the social democrats, the leftist parties) has kept a hand around these movements’ necks. They work tirelessly to hide the reality that these attacks cannot be ended without ending capitalism – instead, they dream of putting their politicians in charge of managing them! This is particularly evident in Italy. Although the strike is the key weapon of the working class against the wars that massacre us, in the hands of the unions and the left – with their pacifism, support for capitalist democracy (i.e. the ‘democratic’ rule of the bosses currently viciously assaulting workers), and national solutions – they are impotent to change a world whose essence is imperialist butchery and constant attacks on our conditions. Their humanitarian sympathy for Palestinian workers is no substitute for real proletarian internationalism: the recognition that all workers share the same class condition and class interest, world revolution. Even though the leftist trap must be fought at every step, the strike wave shows that more and more workers are unwilling to accept the situation.

...and All Around the Globe!

Nor is the fire limited to Europe. Workers have taken to nationwide protests in Togo, Timor-Leste, Mongolia, Serbia, Nepal, Morocco, Peru, Madagascar, Paraguay, and Indonesia. In the mainstream press, some of these have been dubbed ‘Gen Z protests’. In fact, these are revolts that cannot be limited to generational or national boundaries. From one side of the world to the other, they all have similar complaints: high unemployment and no job security; corruption and inequality; low pay and high prices; cuts and underfunding of social services (especially healthcare and education), and the needless deaths they cause. The protestors have persevered as the state responds with tear gas, beatings, kidnappings, mass arrests, and killings. In Nepal, the protests – involving not just students, but informal economy workers, gig workers, and unemployed graduates – even seemed to actually topple the government. The spark that lit a powderkeg of frustration with daily working class drudgery was a wide shutdown of major social media platforms, announced on 4 September by the Oli government, led by the ‘Communist’ Party of Nepal (UML) – which has been in government in some form or another since 1990 – and their social-democratic coalition partner the Nepali Congress. Officially, this was to compel the platforms to pay a new VAT: however, it also conveniently silenced a trend criticising rampant corruption and aching economic conditions (similarly, social media bans have been used against protests in many

countries). On 9 September, protesters set fire to the parliament building, the government palace, and the prime minister’s house. Two days later the finance minister was chased half-naked through the street. Unfortunately, Nepal also shows exactly what happens if workers, without their own independent class organs to coordinate the struggle and without a political organisation able to put forward a distinct revolutionary programme, are not able to seize power for themselves. This is no easy task in a country like Nepal, suffocated by a Stalinist/Maoist legacy. Although the democratic facades were toppled, the movement in Nepal also showed where power really lies in a bourgeois ‘democracy’. The rest of the capitalist state was left intact, and the army was easily able to step in. They allowed protest leaders the honour of picking a new interim prime minister, who might pass a few paltry reforms, only to be rolled back once ‘law and order’ is restored. So far, the capitalist system has been able to absorb these revolts. In no small part this is thanks to the valiant efforts of its cronies on the left and right. But we also need to realise that demonstrations without strikes are just street parties, and strikes without taking control of society’s production are just begging. It’s still up to us as workers to transform strikes back into a weapon of our class against the bosses and the state; to take control of our own struggle through strike committees set up by mass meetings of the whole workforce. More than this, we have to organise politically and internationally to decide that we no longer want to beg for scraps from this capitalist world but replace it with a new one. We aim to be a part of that struggle. If you want to join in, get in touch.

Journal of the Communist Workers' Organisation
Summer/Autumn 2025

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Revolutionary Perspectives

Fifty Years of the CWO

Rare Earth Magnets are Pulling the World Apart

Adventures in the Culture Wars

"End Times" - Can Capitalism be Saved?

Two Speeches by Onorato Damen from 1925

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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