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AURORA



As Rival Imperialisms Threaten the Planet...

Iranian Workers Raise the Banner of Class War

Conditions for workers in Iran are catastrophic. The collapse of the currency, corruption, inequality, austerity, unpaid wages and unemployment are coupled with average inflation of 42%, but much higher inflation for staples such as food which is 72% and bread 113%. These are figures for late December and have all since increased. The regime has offered a derisory monthly subsidy of 10 million rials ($6.50) for every Iranian, when average protein for survival costs 70 million rials ($45.5). All this led to strikes and protests in many cities throughout the country with isolated groups of workers bravely raising the banner of class interests and overthrow of capitalism. In particular, worker activists from Kurdistan and Azerbaijan have called for the unification of the fragmented working-class protests, for political consciousness and organisation of a political party. They end their statement: "Yes, to class organisation, yes, to the working-class revolution." They also warn against the protests being hijacked by imperialist forces and protesting workers being used as infantry by US imperialism in the struggle to overthrow the regime and make the country a client of the US, as it was under the Shah before 1979. They state,

"Today's subversion is not a project for liberation, but the domestic arm of American imperialism and global Zionism. [sic] … This project attempts to appropriate the legitimate protests of the subordinate masses and turn them into infantry attacks." (See Dispatches from the Uprising in Iran on our website)

The regime responded to the protests by shooting workers in their thousands. And unfortunately, the predictions that the protests would be exploited by rival imperialist factions have come to pass. The secret services of US imperialism, notably the CIA, Israel's Mossad and the UK's MI6, have set up cells within Iran and likely infiltrated fighters amongst whom were Kurdish Nationalists, Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MeK), ISIS and monarchists, provided them with training, arms and communication equipment. Some of these organisations have fought for many years against the regime and become US tools for overthrowing the regime. For instance, the MeK has a long and violent history of opposition to the Islamic Republic and was designated a terrorist organisation by the US, but that didn't stop the US taking it over as a proxy after the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Since 2013, they have been headquartered in Albania at the request of the US. These groups have undoubtedly taken advantage of the protests to provoke violence, burning of schools, libraries, buses, ambulances, mosques and even murdering the protestors themselves, all in order to provoke a violent response from the forces of the regime. Such a response, it was hoped, would trigger the planned attack of US military forces and give the regime its death blow. Now, with the dead numbered over 5,000, the Islamic regime has succeeded in getting control of the situation. The regime also cut off the Internet and mobile networks, making it difficult for the mass of the population to communicate, but also breaking down any communication between cells and their handlers in Tel Aviv and CIA centres. Massive numbers of Starlink terminals had been provided to mitigate that, but then that was also shut off. The technology used to shut down Starlink shows strong similarities to that used in Ukraine by Russia. Following the shutdown and the violent crackdown, the protests subsided and large pro-regime demonstrations occurred in Tehran and elsewhere.

Regime Change Plans

For the US, achieving regime change in Iran has become an important part in the struggle to reverse the erosion of US global hegemony. Knocking out Iran is important for US imperialism because of its importance for both Russia and China. It forms a key link in the Belt and Road Initiative linking China to Europe and in the North/South transport corridor linking India, the Persian Gulf and Russia. For the US, capturing Iran would disrupt these plans, cut off China's oil supply from Iran, which at present is about 15% of its imports, and both open the way to central Asia and a route to allow it to destabilise Russian southern republics. All this would make an attack on the main enemy, China, easier. What occurred at the end of December and early January was a classic regime change operation, a follow up to the failed attempt in June 2025. These are the steps of the US playbook: first, produce immiseration through sanctions or collapsing the currency, for example. Then cynically support protests and spread disinformation. And finally, if necessary, intervene militarily to give the regime its coup de grâce. What occurred in Libya was the way things were supposed to go. Although the US has aborted military intervention, at the time of writing, a massive armada of naval power and aircraft is being assembled. It is likely that this is only a temporary pause, because for the US, Iranian regime change is still unfinished business.

Capitalism Must be Overthrown

For the Iranian working class this massive bloodletting is a setback. It amounts to a huge loss of life, but caused by the interests of rival imperialisms. The class struggle has been undermined, and the end result has been large pro-regime demonstrations amounting to workers rallying to the nation and strengthening the barbaric capitalist Islamic regime. The few rays of light in this dark situation are the statements we have received from workers' groups in the country. The statements recognise that the Islamic regime is a form of capitalism with the Islamic bourgeoisie living on the exploitation of the working class. As one of the statements says, the root cause of the conflict, death and suffering is the "crisis ridden capitalist system itself." The only force which can end capitalism is the working class. In 2018 the Haft Tepeh sugar cane workers raised the slogan "Bread, Jobs, Freedom – Soviet Power!" (see Workers' Strikes in Iran: This Time it is Different on our website). This shows an understanding that it is necessary to move beyond capitalism and organise production through organs like workers' councils. This understanding is key. A higher system of production is needed by humanity. A system where production is for human needs, not profit, where wage labour, classes, money, and states are abolished. However, this can only be accomplished on a global scale and requires international class struggle and an international class party. The steps towards this must include continuing the class struggle, unifying the workers movements throughout the country and forming a political organisation which can give a lead in future struggles, as called for by the statement of the Kurdistan and Azerbaijan workers. A future party needs to be part of the international party of the working class. Iranian nationalism, as every other nationalism, must be rejected, and in the event of a renewed US attack, revolutionary defeatism must be our answer. No support for either side in the imperialist war. Foreign workers are not your enemies, the real enemy is your own capitalist class. The real enemy is at home!

No War but the Class War!



Venezuelans Suffer Under the Scramble for Oil

US Attack on Venezuela

The quality of life for the worldwide working class is plummeting as the burden of the international crisis of capital is placed on our shoulders. This burden is felt all the more acutely by the people who are made to suffer for the crime of living in contested territory. US sanctions on Venezuela have contributed to a complete crash in living standards, with the average Venezuelan losing 11kg of body weight, reaching near-famine levels as even inputs for agriculture become scarce. The rentier nature of the Venezuela state, so dependent on oil, combined with the sanctions, have led to a falling income and a boom in participants of the informal economy and welfare recipients. Humanitarian exemptions could not reverse the crippling effect of sanctions on healthcare, with access to vaccines, insulin, and other drugs severely hampered. More than 7 million people have fled this brutal siege becoming refugees, facing hellish conditions trying to reach any sense of safety, and then being condemned to a slave-like existence abroad as they are persecuted by state bureaucrats and exploited by callous capitalists who salivate at the opportunity to underpay and overwork these vulnerable people. In the US itself, a recent crackdown on migrants involving the hired thugs of ICE, and using the usual techniques of racial profiling, disappearing of individuals and violent separation of families, has given rise to widespread protests. Dealings with ICE have resulted not only in deaths in custody, but now also in the killings of protesters.

The Roots of the Crisis

Tensions between the US and Venezuela are not a new development, however, they have increased with the global economic crisis and the present explosion is, at root, an expression of this crisis. The recent history of this crisis starts in 2017, when the US banned the Venezuelan state and its state oil company PDVSA from access to Western financial markets. In 2018, they banned the use of Venezuelan petro crypto tokens. In 2019, the US and Bank of England seized Venezuelan assets and imposed a total blockade.

Venezuela's resources are its primary attraction and bargaining chip. Venezuela has the largest oil reserves in the world at approximately 303 billion barrels. Despite the US mainly producing light oil, in the 1990s the US invested huge sums into oil refineries that require heavy oil to run efficiently – heavy oil which Venezuela holds. Venezuela also possesses around 300,000 metric tonnes of rare earth minerals such as neodymium, dysprosium, cerium, lanthanum, and thorium, worth around $200 billion in total. With this in mind, in 2025 China had signed a $18 billion deal with Venezuela to obtain

Article continues on page 2...

gallium, antimony, and gold. Venezuela has strongly aligned itself with the Chinese imperialist bloc; from 2000 to 2010, China invested $62 million in Venezuela to be repaid in crude oil, and from 2018, China started buying oil from Venezuela in 100% renminbi, completely sidelining the US dollar, and Venezuela even applied to join BRICS in 2023, but was vetoed by Brazil's Lula.

In 2025, Venezuela started exploring the unit currency as a settlement instrument for BRICS nations. The value of this 'unit' was to be split between a basket of BRICS currencies and physical gold. If Venezuela moved its gold reserves into this, it could prevent a repeat of the 2019 assets seizures by America. This is all in line with Venezuela's concerted efforts to completely ditch the US dollar in trade, threatening the petrodollar and US hegemony. All the while, the trade war for rare earths has been raging on for a while, with rare earths being especially important as the entire US economy is going all in on the AI bubble gambit. The US has tried securing both oil and rare earths from Ukraine and now Venezuela – the US cannot allow China to cut Venezuela off.

China's challenge to the US is not restricted to Venezuela but extends throughout South America via its Belt and Road Initiative. China is the largest trading partner for at least 4 major South American countries and has built a large deep-water port in Chancay, Peru, from which to ship raw materials. The US sees all this as an intolerable threat to its domination of the Western hemisphere. Previously US economic power would have been all that was needed, and sanctions would have been sufficient to produce a compliant regime in Caracas. The fact that it has had to use military power to attempt regime change in Venezuela is a measure of its economic weakness and its desperation. However, there can be little doubt that the US sees its actions in Venezuela as a step in the process of kicking China out of South America and undermining its competitors.

Bolivarian "Socialism": The Enemy of Workers

The ruling capitalist class of Venezuela is no stranger to imperialistic ambition. They themselves have laid claim to foreign oil, with ambitious plans to seize large parts of Guyana's oilfields. After a rigged referendum in 2023 to manufacture consent for the invasion, and having assigned a military governor to the plan, Venezuela was ultimately deterred by the international support for Guyana. At the same time as conducting imperialist adventures, the Venezuelan ruling class claim that Bolivarian so-called "socialism", introduced by Chávez, via a new constitution in 1999, has greatly benefitted the Venezuelan workers. Bolivarian so-called "socialism" is a variation of state capitalism and has involved nationalisation of key sectors of the economy. This is why sections of the private capitalist class have fled. There have been some benefits to the working class in improved social services such as health and education, but these have been undermined by sanctions. Another result is that corruption has resulted in sections of the economy, particularly oil, being in the hands of groups from the military. They will be reluctant to give these up to US capitalists and this is likely to frustrate US plans to loot the country. The US has not yet succeeded in placing a puppet regime in control, consequently the fantastic benefits for US capital which Trump boasts about may be illusionary.

The Venezuelan capitalist class only perpetuates this system of absolute international exploitation. Workers in Venezuela find themselves in the midst of an imperialist conflict just like the Iranian workers at the other side of the world. If the US sends forces into the country, Venezuelan workers will be asked to die for Venezuelan national capital. As in all the imperialist conflicts raging around the world the response we must give is revolutionary defeatism. Continue the class struggle! No support for either side in the imperialist war. The only power that can stop the drift to war and break free from the constraints of the system is the power of the working class. Another world is possible and necessary but can only be built by the global working class after the destruction of capitalism. It will be a world not based on exploitation, but on worldwide cooperation and production for need, controlled by the working class itself.

Your Party and the Green Party – Two More Dead Ends

Since the failure of the Corbyn project in 2019, the capitalist left in Britain has been politically homeless. It has taken a rudderless Labour Party presiding over economic stagnation and crumbling public services, as well as playing second fiddle to the fake-populist Reform Party by copying its anti-immigrant and authoritarian rhetoric, to force left-wing groups to action. Like the proverbial buses, there have suddenly appeared on the scene two separate left-wing projects at once: Your Party and a rebranded Green Party. Both make radical claims but, even if somehow elected, any changes they bring about are doomed to be temporary and ineffectual.

This is not just because they choose to operate within the capitalist legal and electoral framework, but also because they are hitting against the objective limits of a world economy that is marked by declining profit rates and rapacious imperialism, where governments have to squeeze as much as they can out of the working class in order to compete. The situation is such now, that "developed" nations like Britain have to compete with "developing" nations for investment. These "developing" nations have lower labour costs and are more profitable. To compete against this, Britain has to cut taxes on the rich. During the last century, the creation of a welfare state helped to dampen class antagonisms, however this is no longer affordable and consecutive governments have borrowed and taken the national debt to giddy heights. This causes higher repayment rates on the debt which ultimately forces governments to impose austerity. While these leftist parties may bring a few temporary concessions, the situation necessitates austerity. Leading politicians, like German Chancellor Merz, now openly admit that "the welfare state, as we know it today, is no longer economically sustainable". The choice between far-right populism and left populism is simply a choice between immediate decline and managed decline, our misery is thus the inescapable result.

Your Party

The first of the two parties is Your Party, which is an attempt to revive Corbynism from the remains of his base in the Labour Party. However, due to its claim to be a "new kind of political party" where everything, including the name, would be decided by its membership, it is unclear what exactly the party stands for. On one side are the Corbyn true-believers who want to make a Labour Party Mark 2 complete with its bureaucracy, centred around the figure of Corbyn. Presumably they stand for more or less what the Labour Party stood for when he was leader. Namely, increasing funding for the NHS and other public services, strategic nationalisations, and increasing taxes on the wealthy. Rather than being "a new kind of politics" this is just Old Labour, which was also the politics which oversaw the retreat and demoralisation of the organised working class during the post-war period. On the other side is an uneasy coalition of Trotskyists and Social Democrats rallying around the former Labour MP Zarah Sultana who want greater intra-party democracy and more aggressive rhetoric. Sultana has had the fieriest words of all, at one point even calling to "nationalise the entire economy". Although it's not clear what exactly she meant by this, the call for widespread nationalisation is not as radical as it may seem. Nationalisation and capitalism can co-exist perfectly well, and may even be beneficial as nationalisation can prop up essential industries with low profit margins using taxes on the higher profit industries. Regardless of who ends up in control of Your Party, acrimonious infighting and skullduggery from both sides may have already sunk the ship before it has launched, with thousands of disillusioned supporters already departing for greener pastures.

The Green Party

Many people are flocking to the Green Party because it seems to be a much less dysfunctional organisation. And it has a much more charismatic leader in the fresh-faced Zack Polanski. Polanski has moved the rhetoric of the Greens away from its usual environmental focus to questions of affordability and the cost-of-living crisis. His big idea is a wealth tax of 1% to 2% on the richest inhabitants of the UK in order to reduce inequality. Drawing on the ideas of the popular YouTuber and former market trader Gary Stevenson, he is blaming the affordability crisis on the increasingly unequal distribution of wealth. Although Polanski identifies as socialist and anti-capitalist, his solution is essentially technocratic and believes that the government, through clever laws and policies (he has admitted that the civil service would have to work out the details of his plans) can fundamentally tip the balance of power in society towards workers. While the distribution of wealth may be grotesquely unequal, and this inequality may be a source of a temporary problems for the capitalist class, any reforms that they enact will be curtailed to ensure that the existing balance of power stays as it is. The evidence for this is the Greens' record in local government, where in order to not fall foul of the law they have had to enforce draconian budget cuts on their electors. An experience of the Green Party as a potential junior party in a coalition government would then just be a repeat on a much larger scale of the same betrayal.

Reforms will never be enough. We need communism!

Whatever vehicle the left in Britain uses for its electoral and reformist aims, it will have the same effect. They may call for solidarity with migrant workers, yet by funnelling popular anger into the parliamentary morass, they rob the working class of the ability to actively create solidarity with all workers through our own struggle. They call for wealth taxes yet don't question the system that robs that wealth from workers in the first place. Worse yet, they take from us the very words to describe our situation and the means by which we may free ourselves, by describing "capitalism" as merely a few of the most obvious injustices of the system, and "socialism" as a few superficial tweaks to a fundamentally oppressive system. Capitalism is not just a few bad apples, but the underpinnings of our entire society. It is the fact that we are fundamentally unfree. We have to sell our life away to the bosses to make their profits, and in return we get war, poverty and environmental destruction. That is capitalism, and attempts to reform it over



the last century have all failed. The crisis of profitability means that any breathing space the system gains through reforms will be short-lived and put us quickly back on the path to war. Again. And again. In this process, the system is destroying our planet and erasing our future. The fundamental injustices, and tendencies of the system are inherent and cannot be reformed. The system needs to be overthrown. Socialism can only be built after the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism because socialism means the ending of the system of wage labour, production for profit, social classes, money and nation states. This can only be achieved by workers organising ourselves politically, destroying capitalist production and implementing communist production for human needs. The capitalist system is now a threat to humanity itself. The choice we face is either destruction of humanity under capitalism or the revolutionary reconstruction of society as communism. If this system is not overthrown, we may not even have a world to live in.

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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