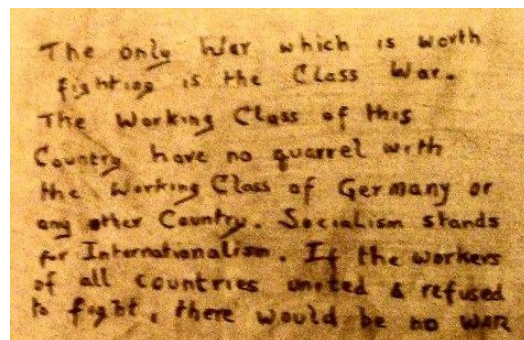




Graffiti from inside the war refusers' cellblock in

Richmond Castle, 1916

No Sacrifices for this System: Against War and All Forms of Nationalism

The capitalist crisis only gets worse and worse, with world war becoming increasingly likely. Every state is embroiled in an existential struggle within the imperialist pecking order. Their only 'way out' lies in massive destruction of capital, in the hope of being able to usher in a new round of profit-making.

All that's on offer is general 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 growing military spending and a sickening tempo of rearmament. Faced with stagnating profits, the ruling class is willing to accept immeasurable human suffering.

The wars in Ukraine and the Middle East are consolidating imperialist alliances and clarifying interests. The US is preparing for war against China by attempting to break up the China-Russia-Iran alliance of convenience. For decades the USA has seen China as its main threat. The Trump administration's policy towards China is largely guided by the same strategic premises of Obama and Biden. Increasing protectionism and sanctions to set back China's economy and military while 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 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.

Workers everywhere are facing mounting austerity, privation, death and displacement as the push for another worldwide slaughter grows. States are 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. Military spending is increasing at the expense of social welfare.

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 when we are told 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 labour power, which is exploited in the interests of "our nation".

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. Any and all proletarian self-activity is crushed for the defence of the "nation" (that is, profits). Domestic repression exponentially multiplies against workers as seen in the state's response towards workers in Ukraine, Iran, Gaza and the Middle East. In the USA and other imperialist states rearming for war, is accompanied by state repression and racist policies to divide the working class and create a more precarious section of terrified workers to brutally exploit.



Tehran March 2026. All Imperialist War is War on the Working Class. Image from Alamy

Only the working class can finally stop capitalism's wars

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 defence, while on the "home front" of warring capitalist states workers are put through misery in the war economy. Capitalist attacks on workers' standards of living have 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 booms and busts.

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 organised 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, they are not sufficient conditions for finally overcoming the capitalist system. Without an organised revolutionary force capable of providing an anti-capitalist movement with political direction and a revolutionary perspective, every uprising 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 organised revolutionaries is combined with the class's capacity for struggle and organisation, this system can be overthrown.

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 working class but as the left wing of capital. With the window of revolution still open, the Social Democrats (Germany's equivalent of the Labour Party) replaced the class struggle with 'law and order', the councils with parliament, and revolution with reform. 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, 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?

Despite the current weakness of our class, there is an acute need for those of us 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 support for the 'No War but the Class War' (NWBCW) committees, which bring together revolutionaries on the basis of internationalism and aim to intervene in local struggles. Although they are not a substitute for the party nor a path to its formation, these committees can organise a political response to imperialist wars that goes beyond the capabilities of individual organisations.

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 counter-revolution, including its offshoots – namely, Stalinism, Maoism and Trotskyism – we propose 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-organised 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 recognise the gravity of the current situation to set up such committees in their regions or to join existing ones.

Internationalist Communist Tendency

Taken from our May Day Statement (full version on our website)

Here in the UK: There's No Escaping the Capitalist Crisis

As we go to press, the impact of Trump's "war of choice" against Iran is making itself felt. His continual boasts that striking Iran "extremely hard" would finish the job "very fast" are increasingly hollow. They may help calm "the markets" but are scary news for the world's population (including those Iranian workers who have been resisting the Islamic regime for years). The lack of fertilisers, as a result of the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, comes at a time when African farmers, already facing climate change drought, are planting this year's crop. This will only increase widespread famine. And for the world's workers, the rise in the benchmark price of Brent crude oil has given a global jolt to the already rising cost of living, since higher fuel prices have a wider and longer impact on prices generally. In the richer states, after years of austerity following the bank bailout of 2008, increased inflation is going to cause more grief for workers everywhere, including in the UK.

Labour won the 2024 election largely because of 'discontent' over the economy and inflation after 14 years of Conservative government. With the prospect of a renewed surge in prices, the Bank of England's prediction of 3.5 per cent inflation in the third quarter of the year, already well above its 2 per cent target, is now a fairy tale. This government, like its predecessors, has few cards left to play. Government debt is at a peacetime high, so the government has to offer higher rates on bond issue to entice investors. But they won't buy unless there are cuts in spending, especially on welfare. Labour is thus in for a drubbing at the local elections in May. Nothing new about that. Local elections are traditionally occasions for votes against incumbent parties. What is (relatively) new is that neither of the old Labour/Tory dichotomy have found any

solution to a capitalist crisis which has now gone on for decades. Thus the electoral path is now open for not just one, but two 'upstart' parties: Farage's Reform UK - which began life as the Brexit Party in 2018 and now, financed by plutocrats like Christopher Harborne, has half a dozen MPs - represents 'right-wing populism' in Parliament. Whilst on the left, the Green Party, under Zack Polanski has already made electoral progress winning the Gorton and Denton by-election on February 26th on an 'eco-populist' platform that "*pits working people against the ultra-wealthy and big business*" (*Financial Times* 3/4/26). In the process it is also wooing supporters of Jeremy Corbyn's squabbling Left Labour relaunch. None of these offer any real solution to what is in fact a global crisis of the system.

Capitalism is Past its Sell By Date

Capitalism, with its interminable cycle of booms and busts, has had its day. The vast material wealth of the world economy could easily be put in control of the people whose labour power creates it: the global working class. We have no interest in border demarcations; no need for currency speculation; no need for parliaments where irresponsible representatives can sit for few years without fear of ejection. We have every interest in creating organs of direct democracy, from local neighbourhoods right to the top. Instead, however, global capitalism, comprised of 'nation' states, is subject to intermittent crises of profitability where the ultimate way to write off debts and unprofitable ventures is... the destruction of war. And who do the bosses, the multimillionaires and billionaires, enlist to do the fighting, the dying, the personal sacrificing? ...It won't be the plutocrats of this world.

For every plutocrat there are millions of increasingly impoverished wage workers:

- In 2025, the £468bn held by the richest 50 individuals continues to exceed the £466bn held by the poorest 50%. (*The Equality Trust*)

- Out of 38 OECD countries, the UK is 9th for income inequality. The top 20% take 36% of the country's income and hold 63% of the country's wealth, while the bottom 20% have only 8% of the income and 0.5% of the total wealth. (*Office for National Statistics*.)

- Over 700,000 graduates are out of work and on benefits (more than the current population of Luxembourg). Meanwhile 800,000 people graduate every year. The government says it has commissioned a review into "what's holding the younger generation back"!

- An estimated 12.8% (891,000, up 11,000 on the previous quarter) of all people aged 16 to 24 years in the UK were not in education, employment or training (NEETs) in October to December 2025.

In 1978 UK unemployment reached a post-war high with 1.6 million unemployed, or between 5 and 6%. Since then the unemployment rate has mostly stayed at or above these levels. The UK 'harmonised' unemployment rate for Q4 2025 was 5.2%, above the rate of Germany (3.9%) and the US (4.5%) but below that of France (7.9%). Which is to say we are all on the back foot when it comes to defending wages and jobs as long as we play according to the rules of the capitalist game. And we have been for a long time.

Now many workers have had enough of paying for this ongoing crisis of the system. Even professionals such as doctors and university lecturers are ready to strike over pay, workloads, job opportunities and insecurity... revealing how much they are

essentially in the same boat as the rest of us wage workers. They have been joined by hotel cleaners and other staff, railway workers, bin workers and many more. There is no end to workers' discontent. The unions are playing their part of 'calming' down militancy and implementing cooling off periods, keeping workers isolated from each other, union by union, sector by sector, even workplace by workplace.

The Working Class Needs its Own Political Compass

Truth be told, however, the current list is hardly likely to provoke a stock market collapse or threaten the very existence of capitalism. That threat comes from the dog eat dog world of the capitalist system itself which has now been so long lurching from one crisis to another that war is becoming the only option.

Alongside the strictly economic crisis of capitalism, but made worse by it, is capitalism's environmental crisis. This is wider than climate change but capitalism's feeble attempts to combat its own life-threatening damage to the planet are being thrown out of the window and sidelined by capital's more immediate concern: imperialist war and sharpening competition for the planet's vital resources.

Only the international working class has the potential to change this but there is a need for a political compass: not to indicate which party to vote for; not to line up with the anti-fascists; but to show the way out of this deep existential crisis of capitalism ... the way towards a global community of freely associated producers; working together to save what's left of this planet so that human beings the world over can live in dignity and harmony. That is what we are working for. Join us in this endeavour before it's too late.

More Than a Fight Against the Far Right, We Need a Fight Against Capitalism

The UK's problems are not unique. Since the post-war boom ended in the 1970s every state in the world is faced with the consequences of 'declining growth' (aka profit rates). Workers' share of the national income in all the rich countries has been declining for over four decades. Services such as the NHS, school budgets, social benefits, pensions — all funded by deductions from workers' pay — have all been cut. Finance capitalist outfits which speculate on international markets run the utility companies, meaning we get higher bills, as rivers and coasts are polluted with sewage. But you would think only "Britain is Broken" if you listened to the lies of the likes of UKIP or Reform. For them the cause is simple — it is all the fault of immigrants and asylum seekers. A simple "solution" that any fool can grasp. And they do not disappoint.

The thuggish, racist, anti-Islamic and anti-migrant Right which gained ground with little Englishers in the Brexit vote paved the way for Tommy Robinson's EDL (English Defence League) to morph into Unite the Kingdom. Thanks to easy mobilisation via 'social media', not to mention much financial assistance and public support from plutocrats like Elon Musk, Robinson and Co are intending to repeat their March mobilisation of tens of thousands of "far-right activists" in central London on 16 May. This is a provocation. Normally it is the day for Palestinians making their traditional

protest against the foundation of the Israeli state and the Palestinians' loss of their land in 1948, the Nakba (Catastrophe) Day. This year, however, the Metropolitan Police have not replied to their annual legal request to march. Instead they have given the go-ahead for Robinson and Co to have the run of Central London.

Many well-meaning "anti-fascists" and those who think the system is open to reform are already preparing for a repeat of March's huge demo against the Far Right in London. As history shows, it is not enough just to oppose the Far-Right racists but the system that spawns them. Capitalism and capitalists are not committed to any one political system — they can switch from democracy to dictatorship at will (as happened in Germany and Italy and many other places between the

wars). Whichever suits them best to control the working class.

Our fight is against capitalism, imperialism and all national sides in today's wars, wherever they occur. We are neither for Ukraine nor Russia; we condemn US imperialism's military aggression against Iran

but we don't therefore support the Iranian state. Nor do we support Zionist expansionist massacres in Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon.

The crisis of the capitalist system itself is bringing us poverty, massive inequality and barbaric warfare. It's time to end it.

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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