

# THE FREE COMMUNIST

For Social Revolution and Communism



ISSUE 7

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## National Liberation and Nationalism

In peace and in war, the bourgeoisie tries to get workers to identify with their 'own' country. For generations we have been told that we will all lose our jobs if we don't work as hard as workers in other countries, precisely the same message that is given to workers everywhere.

In times of war we are told that we must fight our brothers and sisters in other countries as if they are any more responsible for the crimes of their bosses than we are for the crimes of ours! Workers' interests are not those of the capitalists, if we remain entwined within the coils of competition with workers in other countries only the bosses will profit, and at our expense.

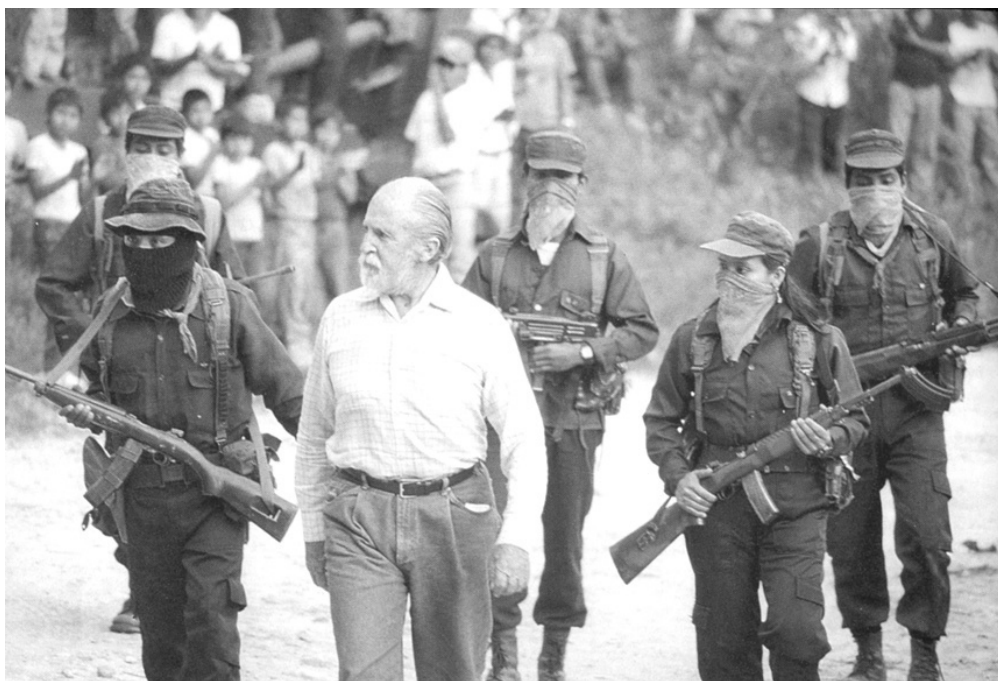
What of those countries which are in capitalism's periphery? The internationalist communist left has never supported the so-called national struggles in capitalism's periphery. We are told that these struggles are against oppression and are anti-imperialist. It is true that in many nations there are oppressed minorities but these minorities can gain little by identifying with the capitalist leaders of their nation or group.

The agony of the Palestinian people is not suffered by their bourgeoisie, with their apartments in New York, but by the proletariat of Gaza and the West Bank. Their real interests lie not with replacing their Israeli exploiters with Palestinian exploiters but in combining with workers everywhere to end all exploitation and

with it all national oppression. This goes for all such tragic situations. To encourage the working class anywhere to take part in national movements is to encourage workers to die for capitalism.

In a deeper sense these struggles are not anti-imperialist. In the first place, to be effective militarily they must find an imperialist backer. The Vietnam War brought untold suffering to

cannot stand aside from the network of imperialist relations making up the world economy. No state today can develop independently and, no matter how weak it's economy, must submit to the exigencies of capitalist competition on the world market. Again, "independent" Vietnam had no choice but to turn to Western investors and bow to the demands of the IMF.



*Zapatista Army of National Liberation*

the Vietnamese but they could only wage it against the US by fighting with Russian imperialist support. Secondly, once the military struggle is over the newly 'liberated' state

To those who argue that Marx supported certain independence movements or that Lenin supported a policy of granting self-determination, we reply that such mechanical 'Marx-

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ism' is not Marxism at all. Marx was writing at a time when he could see that capitalism was developing a working class, new technology, machinery and scientific thought. All the things necessary to make communism possible. As a result, Marx and Engels supported some nationalist movements where they thought it would get rid of feudal and other pre-capitalist social structures. This was the basis for a new area for capitalist development. In this ascendant period of capitalism it was possible for new independent capitalist nations to emerge and thus widen the basis for the creation of the working class, the future gravediggers of capitalism.

However since the opening of the present imperialist phase of domination of the planet no such independent capitalist formation is possible. It was Luxemburg (1), not Lenin, who

grasped this reality better despite her erroneous analysis of the roots of imperialism. The further development of capitalism this century has only underlined the correctness of Luxemburg's position on the national question. Lenin had expected that the political struggle of the colonial nations would provoke a huge crisis of the system. In fact this did not happen because when decolonisation took place it simply cut the military costs of imperialism. It did not alter the economic relationship. In many instances decolonisation itself was part of an inter-imperialist struggle since it was forced on the older imperialist powers by the USA after its emergence as the dominant imperialist power in 1945.

Indeed, in the epoch of imperialism we can say that no imperialist power is independent since all states are part

of an imperialist hierarchy in which there are only degrees of domination. Those states at the edge of the system are in the weakest position. Here, the local bourgeoisie, will occasionally use 'anti-imperialist' (i.e. nationalist) rhetoric to disguise the fact that they have simply become an integral part of capitalism's global domination of the working class. The only sure path to liberation for the world's workers is through the international class war, not through support for some bourgeois national liberation gang. The aim of the proletariat is the abolition of all nation states and all frontiers.

(1) Luxemburg, Rosa, 1870-1919. Outstanding internationalist revolutionary, executed by order of the German social-democratic government.

Extract from Socialism or Barbarism, CWO, UK, 1994. (I.N. - Canada)

# The Bloodbath in Syria: Class War or Ethnic War?

## The Arab Winter

How long three years seems. In early 2011 it seemed that a fresh wind of revolt was stirring from the East and spreading throughout the Arab world[1]. Massive protests and workers' strikes in Tunisia and Egypt had terrified the ruling class to the point where they felt the need to depose their own heads of state. The embers of revolt were being fanned across the Arab world, and eventually even seemed to spread sparks across the world as a whole in the form of the occupy and indignados movements. All of this on the back of mass movements in Iran and Greece just a couple of years previously gave millions across the world the illusion that there was a massive return to struggle within the working class, that once again ordinary people were seizing the possibility of radically transforming their lives.

And yet coming towards the end of 2014, the situation is not looking

nearly so optimistic. In the Middle East the conflicts in Syrian and Iraq seem to have merged into one joint ethno-sectarian war, which even today is threatening to spill over into neighbouring countries, Lebanon and Jordan seem to be the most vulnerable. In Eastern Ukraine a low level civil war is continuing despite an initial ceasefire. We have travelled in these three short years from a situation where there seemed to be a return to class struggle to a situation where the working class instead of grasping its chance to struggle in its own interests has plunged headfirst into deeper and deeper ethnic-sectarian struggles.

The Arab winter seemed to have set in almost as soon as the first shoots of spring had emerged. While it may have been difficult for some to see as they were swept along with the enthusiasm of the movement without at all noticing the direction that it was going in, the signs were there from March at the very latest. In Tunisia,

and Egypt the working class was mobilised in defence of its own interests. In both countries it was strikes of masses of workers that shook the state. However, in other countries this was not the case. The conflict in Libya never possessed these characteristics even at its very beginning. In Libya, the Arab spring took on the characteristics of a fratricidal tribal war. The intervention of the Western powers on the side of the rebels did nothing but push the conflict further in that direction. Further to the East, however, potentially much more dangerous events were brewing.

While the conflict in Libya was essentially a struggle between rival tribes, the struggle in the Levant and Mesopotamia took on a much deeper sectarian character, which had the potential to spread far beyond the borders of a single state, and engulf the entire region. The struggles in both Syria and Bahrain took on these characteristics. Syria, a country where the majority of the population

are Sunni Arab Muslims, is ruled by members of a minority Shia offshoot, who have a tendency to rely upon the country's other minorities for support. Conversely in tiny Bahrain, a Sunni monarchy rules over a majority Shia population. Worried about the Shia minority in their own countries the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), an organisation of the Gulf oil monarchies led by Saudi Arabia sent in tanks to crush this Shia uprising in mid-March. At this point it became absolutely clear that the conflict had ceased to be a series of 'national' events and was now becoming a sectarian struggle across the entire region, the main protagonists being Saudi Arabia, and the GCC along with Turkey on the Sunni side, and Iran, Syria, and factions in both Iraq and Lebanon on the other.

Of course there were many on the left, who just as they had in Libya, saw a genuine workers' revolution in Syria. Others, aware of the reactionary sectarian nature of much of the protest movement, defended the Syrian state in the name of secularism, anti-imperialism or whatever ideology they could use in an attempt to cover up the gore of a murderous bloody state. Anarchists in particular, but not alone, were particularly vulnerable to talk of democratic committees and self organisation of the revolt. Many insisted on these characteristics even as it became increasingly obvious that the war was turning into a multi-sided blood-bath where different ethnic/sectarian gangs controlled the populations that

they controlled by force. Of course, as communists we too agree that there can be no genuine working class movement without workers' self organisation. However, we also insist that there can be no workers councils without workers' struggle. Local democracy in itself is not a revolutionary thing. In many countries workers can vote for their local representatives who are responsible for running municipal services, and in many countries few of them bother to.

What invests workers' councils with their revolutionary content is not their democratic forms, but the fact that they are representative of workers in struggle. The war in Syria saw an initial burst of enthusiasm in the struggle against the regime. People created various committees and councils, but this was not a workers' struggle. Ultimately as armed gangs took control of what rapidly became a war, enthusiasm and popular involvement died down. Of course some committees remained, but it was armed men giving the orders. Much, but not all of the left, seemed to realise its mistake. As internationalists had stated from the start there was no progressive side in this war. It seemed like some sort of lesson had been learned.

And then came Kobanê...

The Protagonists -The Da'esh, and the PKK

Since the middle of September the small city of Kobane on the Turkish-Syrian border has become the centre

of world attention when the Da'esh began a siege aimed at capturing the city. Once again the left has renewed its cheer-leading of what is essentially just another phase of the larger sectarian struggle being waged across the region. This moment, within the larger struggle, is almost being portrayed as a struggle between light and darkness by much of the left. In the corner of good and light we have the PKK, the Kurdistan Workers' Party, and in the corner of darkness and evil we have the Da'esh, now newly



*Leadership Cult of Öcalan*

renamed as simply the Islamic State.

The Da'esh's origins lie in Iraq in at the end of the 1990s. It underwent various mergers, and name changes including being known as Al-Qaeda in Iraq, and eventually settled on the name Islamic State of Iraq in late 2006. The thing that really built the Da'esh during these years was the development of the situation in Iraq into open civil war in 2006. Although presented in the West as a struggle against the US occupation, the Iraqi civil war had more of the characteristic of a sectarian struggle between Sunni, and Shia Muslims.

Iraq had traditionally been a state run by members of its Sunni minority ruling over a Shia majority. After the last Iraq war the newly promised American democracy, gave the Shia majority more representation and control of the Iraqi government. Now the boot is on the other foot. The Shia majority is using its power against the Sunni minority. Acts of ethnic cleansing similar to those being committed by the Da'esh are also being committed against the Sunni population further south in Iraq. The Da'esh managed to place itself as a leading

### About The Free Communist

**The Free Communist paper puts forward a revolutionary internationalist perspective and is anti-statist in outlook. What this means in practice is that we are against all forms of nationalism including the leftist notions that nations have a right to self-determination and so-called 'national liberation'. We also oppose all forms of parliamentarianism and do not see the unions as vehicle for either change or to defend our immediate interests. In contrast we put forward the idea of self-organisation of the class struggle, workers directly controlling their own struggles through "mass meetings" and assemblies free from union control. We draw our inspiration from the best traditions of both Dutch/German and Italian left communists as well as anarchist-communism, but doesn't hold to one camp or the other.**

**The views expressed in the paper and on the website are not necessarily the views of the Free Communist.**

Sunni force in the sectarian civil war in Iraq. During this time, they reduced the number of foreign fighters, and professionalised their military structure by bringing in former Ba'athist military and intelligence officers. It was during this time also that they gained the mastership of tribal politics, which has served them so well in the years since.

With the beginning of the war in Syria, one faction within the Da'esh began to infiltrate militants across the border. Again positioning itself as the defender of Sunni Muslims against atrocities perpetuated this time by the Syrian state, and slowly through its use of tribal alliances and divergences, and its struggles and mergers that have been constant within the Syrian opposition, it has manoeuvred itself to the top. Of course, the support, in political financial, and manpower terms came from Saudi Arabia, and certain of its allies in the GCC, not to mention the support received from Turkey. For the Gulf states in particular, the Da'esh was a weapon that could be used in the wider struggle, pointed at the Shia

strike a blow against its enemy of thirty years, the PKK.

The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) has been fighting a war in the South-East of Turkey for the last three decades. Like the Da'esh it is essentially an ethnic militia. Its origins lie not in Syria, but in Turkey. However, during its long war, it has established sections in neighbouring countries with Kurdish populations. Like the Da'esh the PKK has also received support from various foreign states, primarily Syria, but also Iran (until the PKK's Iranian section began to bother the Iranian state), and Russia. It is also suggested that its Iranian section, PJAK, has received aid from the US, and it has certainly tried to deepen whatever contacts it has with America, with PJAK spokesperson Ihsan Warya going as far to declare that "PJAK really does wish it were an agent of the United States".

The Syria section of the PKK, the Democratic Union Party (PYD) stood apart from the majority of factions at the start of the Syrian war, standing apart from the Kurdish National

PYD took control of the vast majority of the Kurdish region. This take-over was accomplished with very little violence, and it has been suggested by many that a deal was done between the PKK/PYD, and the Syrian state. What the PYD has done in Syrian Kurdistan since then, has been seen by many as a social revolution.

### Revolution in Rojava

The PKK has been running a massive propaganda offensive in the West. Articles talking about the struggle in Syrian Kurdistan are appearing all over the Western media, from leftist magazines to women's magazine, Marie Claire. What was once seen in the Western mainstream media as an authoritarian Stalinist nationalist group has now repositioned itself as an democratic, ecological, feminist movement, moved by a philosophy called 'democratic confederalism' adapted from that of the anarchist Murray Bookchin. To many in the region, who are familiar with the PKK's mode of operations, this seems very difficult to believe. The PKK is an organisation with a dark past. Even their imprisoned leader Abdullah Öcalan talks about periods of "gangs within our organization and open banditry, arrang[ing] needless, haphazard operations, sending young people to their death in droves". The history of the PKK is something that has been well documented by internationalist critics[3]. It is not what we want to engage with here.

For us the problem is not that the PKK has a bloody history of crimes against both its own members and the working class. It does have this history of course. This is no surprise though. Virtually all nationalist gangs have a similar sort of history, and while many on the left who back these gangs may wish that they didn't, it does go with the territory. Even if there were some pristine nationalist movement unstained with the blood of the working class, and its own members, the nationalist logic would still propel it in the same direction, so



*PKK Female Fighter*

government in Baghdad, and the Alawite government in Damascus, two of the three main allies of their ultimate enemy, Iran.

The Da'esh now seems to have lost the support of its backers in the Gulf[2]. Turkey though seems to still see them as having some use, as a tool in the struggle to overthrow the Syrian state, and as a hammer to

Council backed by the PKK's rival, Massoud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party, and the Syrian National Council, which it saw as too closely connected to Turkey. In July 2012, the Syrian state made an operational decision to withdraw the majority of its troops from the Kurdish areas of the country in order to enable them to redeploy against an opposition offensive against Aleppo. Shortly after the

here we intend not to concentrate on the PKK's bloody past, but to concentrate on its position today.

A lot has been made in the Western media of the female only militia units with pictures of young women in combat fatigues with guns gracing the pages of magazines, and websites. To be cynical it sells. Here we have these brave young women fighting off these 'Islamic barbarians'. The PKK marketing department certainly knows its audience. When you stop to think about it now, it's not really exactly that radical. The Da'esh also have women only groups of combat troops. You can't imagine them having mixed groups in an ultra-Islamic group, but then neither does the PKK, and nor does the Iranian state, which also has female combat troops. In fact the PKK, has a long history of separating the sexes and sexual relationship between the sexes have long been punished, just like in any other bourgeois army.

However, it is a big propaganda selling point for them. The aim of this campaign in the West is twofold. One aim is to have the PKK removed from lists of terrorist organisations in various states. With the emergence of the Da'esh devil, the PKK line for the mainstream is that these young women are the ones fighting against the terrorists. The line they sell to the left is that this is some kind of social revolution, where relations between the sexes are being overturned. Anarchists have been making comparisons to the Spanish revolution, which we discuss in the accompanying article[4]. The second goal of this campaign is to get US and European practical support for the fighters in Kobanê, which has so far been successful with the Americans dropping weapons and ammunition to the besieged troops, and providing air support.

To return though, to the question of revolution; for us as communists, a revolution is a creation of the working class in struggle for its own

interests. Within the course of this struggle the working class not only transforms society, but also transforms itself. In Syrian Kurdistan, there was no movement of the working class. Control of the towns in Syrian Kurdistan was taken by an armed group filling the power vacuum left after the withdrawal of the Syrian Arab Army. That's not to say that there was no support for the PYD, as everywhere today nationalism in the Kurdish regions is strong. Local committees were thrown up which took control of the necessary tasks usually undertaken by the municipal level of the state. The Da'esh too, has in many cases left local people in charge of local issues, and like the Da'esh, the armed men have maintained power at the top. The supreme ruling body of Rojava, the Kurdish Supreme Committee is a body, not composed of delegates from lower level committees, but an alliance between two political groups, the PYD, and the Barzani backed KDP. Despite all of the democratic pretence, ultimate control is wielded by nationalist gangs with guns.

And a nationalist gang is what the PKK is. As we mentioned before the PKK despite a somewhat patchy history with minority groups in Turkey has now set itself up as the defender of the minorities of Kurdistan. This, however, does not apply, and can not apply to Arabs. On more than one occasion, Salih Muslim, co-leader of the PYD, has talked about 'expelling Arabs', and the possibility of 'war between Kurds and Arabs'. Just to be clear, Muslim is not talking about expelling all Arabs, "One day those Arabs who have been brought to the Kurdish areas will have to be expelled". The Arabs that he is talking about here are those who were transplanted to the region in the states 1973 Arabisation campaign. Given the demographics of Middle Eastern countries though (Syrian has a median age of just over 22), the majority of "those Arabs who have been brought to the Kurdish areas" will actually have been born there. Mus-

lim himself admits that these Arabs are 'victims' in all of this. This doesn't stop him though from proclaiming that "All the villages where they live now belong to the Kurds".

Of course these Arabs can no longer be separated from Arabs who were previously there. There are many of them who were born in Kurdistan, who have married with local Arabs, and had children and even grandchildren. How will the PYD discriminate between them, and more importantly how will other Arabs react to this talk of ethnic cleansing? This is the path to ethnic conflict that we have seen across the Middle East, particularly in neighbouring Lebanon, and in places such as ex-Yugoslavia, and Northern Ireland in Europe, all too many times before. Whatever the left talk of some of the protagonists in these struggles, they follow an ever deepening

## Useful Websites

For Social Revolution and Communism  
<http://www.freecommunism.org/>

A Voice for Libertarian Communism  
<http://www.anarchist-theft.net/>

Anarchist Federation  
<http://afed.org.uk/>

Libertarian Communist Resource  
<http://libcom.org/>

Collective Action Notes  
[http://www.redemmas.org/collective\\_action\\_notes/](http://www.redemmas.org/collective_action_notes/)

Communist Workers Organisation  
<http://www.leftcom.org/en>

International Communist Current  
<http://en.internationalism.org/>

Marxists Internet Archive  
<http://www.marxists.org/>

Internationalist Perspective  
<http://internationalist-perspective.org/>

spiral into more and more vicious ethnic/sectarian conflict. At first the worst atrocities might be 'mistakes', shootings of civilians undertaken without direction or permission of the leadership of the various nationalist militias. However, to the families and friends of the victims, this is of secondary importance. They strike back, and murder is followed by atrocity and massacre.

In the midst of a civil war between a Kurdish militia, and what is essentially a Sunni Arab militia, these events will happen. It matters not how progressive the PKK portrays itself. The logic of the situation dictates what will happen. A good example would be the Kingsmill massacre in County Armagh, Northern Ireland in 1976. The IRA, like the PKK, was viewed as a 'progressive, socialist' organisation, but the day after Protestant paramilitaries shot dead five Catholic civilians, Irish Republicans went out and stopped a bus of building workers, and took off the eleven protestants on it, and shot them, killing ten of them. The IRA denied involvement in the attack. However, that didn't stop the Protestant paramilitaries from enacting their revenge, and the tit for tat killings continued.

For communists a revolution cannot be enacted by armed ethnic/sectarian militias and fighting between the militias of different ethnic/sectarian groups will only lead to the working class being divided and being used to massacre itself.

### Class War or Sectarian War?

It is this threat of ethnic/sectarian war, which heralds the danger for the future. Ultimately despite the differences between the PKK and the Da'esh, the similarities between the two are what links them. A socialist veneer does not stop an ethnic militia from playing its part in the escalation of the cycle of ethnic conflict, and ethnic cleansing. It is clear in this struggle that the Da'esh is the aggressor, and that the PKK is merely

defending its turf. It is also clear that compared to the Da'esh, the PKK looks positively progressive. None of this stops either of them playing their roles in the intensification of ethnic conflict.

Of course we have sympathy for Kurds being massacred by the Da'esh. However, unlike others on the left, internationalists recognise that those dying on the side of the Da'esh, also come in the main from the working class and the peasantry. Like amongst the Kurds, there will be many fighting with the Da'esh who have lost loved ones in sectarian massacre performed by Shia militias in Iraq, and by the Alawite run state in Syria. Also on the side of the Da'esh, as with the Kurds, there will be many young workers and peasants who have been conscripted into these gangs.

In a struggle like this where workers and peasants are butchering each other in the name of nationalism and religion, communists do not take sides. Those who take sides in this war will not contribute in the long term to any progressive victory, but merely to the further ethnic division, and increased militarisation of the region, neither of which will be of benefit to the working class. It also seems ironic that many on the left, especially those aligned to the PKK in Turkey, who for so long sided with whichever local imperialist power, or proxy, opposed America is now cheering the US on. Of course, they must know that American intervention in this war is certainly not for the benefit of the people of the Middle East, but they seem to have forgotten it very quickly.

The working class, neither in the Middle East nor in the rest of the world, is not strong enough to stop this war just as in 1914 it was not strong enough to stop World War One or the Armenian genocide a year later. To pretend otherwise is to be prey to illusions. However, that does not mean that revolutionaries should dive headfirst into taking sides in it,

and acting in a way which will almost certainly lead to the prolonging and intensification of ethnic/sectarian conflict. It is important to remember that the siege of Kobanê is but a moment in a larger struggle across the entire region being fought out by the proxies of various local imperialist powers. Turkey along with Saudi, and the GCC, will continue to try to overthrow the Syrian state, and Turkey will continue its terrorist war against not only the PKK, but also the civilian population in Turkish Kurdistan. It is almost inevitable that in return other powers opposed to Turkish policy will begin to channel arms to the PKK to continue its fight against Turkey. Recent demonstrations in Turkey in support of the fighters in Kobanê left over thirty people dead, the majority of them murdered by the Turkish state, and some of them by Turkish nationalist gangs, and saw the state using tanks against demonstrators for the first time since the 1980 coup. The Turkish armed forces have also, after a period of ceasefire, renewed their attacks upon the PKK in Turkey. Of course, Turkey is the aggressor here, but when the PKK replies in kind, and kills some Turkish conscripts that won't be the first thing in the minds of grieving mothers, relatives, and friends...and so the spiral of ethnic hatred, which in turn leads, to violence, murder, and massacre will go on.

The alternative that internationalists pose to this is that of class struggle. It may seem far away now, but it is only four years ago that the TEKEL strike in Turkey really seemed to be breaking down barriers between Kurdish, and Turkish workers, and led to a much wider strike wave. 2013 saw massive demonstrations across Turkey sparked by police brutality against protestors in Istanbul's Gezi park. The three years since the Arab spring may seem like a long time now, but in times like these changes can occur very, very quickly. Although the working class seems weak today struggles where the working class is fighting for its own interests

will return in the future, and they are the only solution to overcoming the ethnic and sectarian divide by uniting workers as workers, not as Kurds, Turks, Arabs, and Persians, or Sunni, Shia, Christian or Yazidi.

D.Valerian 28/10/14

## Glossary

Who's Who in Kurdistan – A Brief Summary

**PKK Kurdistan Workers' Party.** A Turkish Kurdish political and military organisation, originally Marxist-Leninist (ie. Stalinist) founded in 1978 by Abdullah Öcalan (in prison in Turkey since 1998). At war with the Turkish state since 1984.

**PYD Democratic Union Party.** Syrian branch of the PKK founded in 2003.

**YPG People's Protection Units.** Military wing of the PYD.

**KNCS Kurdish National Council** in Syria. A heterogeneous grouping of Kurdish political organisations opposed to the PYD and under the patronage of the KDP.

**KDP Kurdish Democratic Party.** Founded in 1946 by Mustafa Barzani and now led by his son, Massoud. It is the ruling power in the KRG.

**KRG Kurdistan Regional Government** formed after the fall of Saddam Hussein in Iraq under Massoud's KDP it is a staunch ally of the USA.

**PUK Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.** Founded in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1975 after a split within the KDP. It is dominant in the southern part of Iraqi

Kurdistan and its leader Jalal Talabani was President of Iraq 2005-14

## Notes

[1] For our take on this see [leftcom.org](http://leftcom.org)

[2] See this article for more detailed discussion of the wider imperialist conflict [leftcom.org](http://leftcom.org). There is also an update on the material roots of the conflict at [leftcom.org](http://leftcom.org).

[3] See [en.internationalism.org](http://en.internationalism.org) has many details on the history of the PKK including an interesting section on its attitude towards women.

[4] See [In Rojava: People's War is not Class War](#)

Friday, October 31, 2014

# No State Solution in Gaza

Statement distributed by the Manchester and Sheffield Anarchist Federation groups on the conflict in Gaza, in solidarity with the victims of the conflict, and for internationalism.

One thing is absolutely clear about the current situation in Gaza: the Israeli state is committing atrocities which must end immediately. With hundreds dead and thousands wounded, it has become increasingly clear that the aim of the military operation, which has been in the planning stages since the signing of the original ceasefire in June, is to break Hamas completely. The attack follows the crippling blockade throughout the supposed 'ceasefire', which has destroyed the livelihoods of Gazans, ruined the civilian infrastructure and created a humanitarian disaster which anyone with an ounce of humanity would seek an end to.

But that's not all there is to say about the situation. On both sides of the conflict, the idea that opposing Israel has to mean supporting Hamas and its 'resistance' movement is worryingly

common. We totally reject this argument. Just like any other set of rulers, Hamas, like all the other major Palestinian factions, are happy and willing to sacrifice ordinary Palestinians to increase their power. This isn't some vague theoretical point – for a period recently most deaths in Gaza were a result of fighting between Hamas and Fatah. The 'choices' offered to ordinary Palestinian people are between Islamist gangsters (Hamas, Islamic Jihad) or nationalist gangsters (Fatah, Al-Aqsa Martyrs brigades). These

groups have shown their willingness to attack working-class attempts to improve their living conditions, seizing union offices, kidnapping prominent trade unionists, and breaking strikes. One spectacular example is the attack on Palestine Workers Radio by Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, for "stoking internal conflicts". Clearly, a "free Palestine" under the control of any of these groups would be nothing of the sort.

As anarchists, we are international-



ists, opposing the idea that the rulers and ruled within a nation have any interests in common. Therefore, anarchists reject Palestinian nationalism just as we reject Israeli nationalism (Zionism). Ethnicity does not grant “rights” to lands, which require the state to enforce them. People, on the other hand, have a right to having their human needs met, and should be able to live where they choose, freely.

Therefore, against the divisions and false choices set up by nationalism, we fully support the ordinary inhabitants of Gaza and Israel against state warfare – not because of their nationality, ethnicity, or religion, but simply because they're real living, feeling, thinking, suffering, struggling human beings. And this support has to mean

total hostility to all those who would oppress and exploit them –the Israeli state and the Western governments and corporations that supply it with weapons, but also any other capitalist factions who seek to use ordinary working-class Palestinians as pawns in their power struggles. The only real solution is one which is collective, based on the fact that as a class, globally, we ultimately have nothing but our ability to work for others, and everything to gain in ending this system – capitalism – and the states and wars it needs .

That this seems like a “difficult” solution does not stop it from being the right one. Any “solution” that means endless cycles of conflict, which is what nationalism represents, is no

solution at all. And if that is the case, the fact that it is “easier” is irrelevant. There are sectors of Palestinian society which are not dominated by the would-be rulers – protests organised by village committees in the West Bank for instance. These deserve our support. As do those in Israel who refuse to fight, and who resist the war. But not the groups who call on Palestinians to be slaughtered on their behalf by one of the most advanced armies in the world, and who wilfully attack civilians on the other side of the border.

Neither one state nor two states, but no states

Whoever dies, Hamas and the Israeli state win

## **Declaration of Internationalists against the war in Ukraine**

WAR ON WAR!

NOT A SINGLE DROP A BLOOD FOR THE “NATION”!

The power struggle between oligarchic clans in Ukraine threatens to escalate into an international armed conflict. Russian capitalism intends to use redistribution of Ukrainian state power in order to implement their long-standing imperial and expansionist aspirations in the Crimea and eastern Ukraine where it has strong economic, financial and political interests.

On the background of the next round of the impending economic crisis in Russia, the regime is trying to stoking Russian nationalism to divert attention from the growing workers’ socio-economic problems: poverty wages and pensions, dismantling of available health care, education and other social services. In the thunder of the

nationalist and militant rhetoric it is easier to complete the formation of a corporate, authoritarian state based on reactionary conservative values and repressive policies.

In Ukraine, the acute economic and political crisis has led to increased confrontation between “old” and “new” oligarchic clans, and the first used including ultra-rightist and ultra-nationalist formations for making a state coup in Kiev. The political elite of Crimea and eastern Ukraine does not intend to share their power and property with the next in turn Kiev rulers and trying to rely on help from the Russian government. Both sides resorted to rampant nationalist hysteria: respectively, Ukrainian and Russian. There are armed clashes, bloodshed. The Western powers have their own interests and aspirations, and their intervention in the conflict could lead to World War III.

Warring cliques of bosses force, as usual, force to fight for their interests us, ordinary people: wage workers, unemployed, students, pensioners... Making us drunkards of nationalist drug, they set us against each other, causing us forget about our real needs and interests: we don’t and can’t care about their “nations” where we are now concerned more vital and pressing problems – how to make ends meet in the system which they found to enslave and oppress us.

We will not succumb to nationalist intoxication. To hell with their state and “nations”, their flags and offices! This is not our war, and we should not go on it, paying with our blood their palaces, bank accounts and the pleasure to sit in soft chairs of authorities. And if the bosses in Moscow, Kiev, Lviv, Kharkiv, Donetsk and Simferopol, Washington and Brussels start this war, our duty is to resist it by all available means!

NO WAR BETWEEN “NATIONS” – NO PEACE BETWEEN CLASSES!

KRAS, Russian section of the International Workers Association

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