

Free bulletin of the
Communist Workers
Organisation

Affiliate of the
Internationalist
Communist Tendency

No. 63 Spring 2023

AURORA



A New World is Still Possible but

We Have a Fight on Our Hands

Capitalism is dragging humanity into an abyss. Rampant price increases, rising interest rates, collapsing banks and ecological disasters accompany the capitalists plunder of the planet in their drive for profits. Growing numbers of refugees are fleeing from immediate hell to anywhere they can. Meanwhile the war in Ukraine is dreadful confirmation of the 'final solution' capital has in store for the whole world. For decades the world's rulers have gone from one expedient to another to avoid a depression like the 1930s.

Yet, no matter how much they turn the screws on the working class — whose labour produces the stuff they ultimately all make their profits from — they can't solve the crisis of declining profit rates. This demands the write-off of existing

capital values in order to restart a new round of accumulation. The big players are now threatening to overturn the game board and start afresh with most of the pieces kept in their own hands and the games room reduced to smithereens.

As it is, the richest 10% of people in the world now take 52% of all income. Or, put it another way, around 55% of the world's population survives on 1.3% of the total wealth in the world. Where war and 'natural' disasters haven't already punctured young people's dreams, ambitions of steady professional careers and a secure future are making way for insecure and precarious (aka "shit") jobs. Like all decadent societies, mental and psychological problems are on the rise as the gap between media-fed instant happiness and reality becomes a yawning chasm.

Over the last four decades workers have been in retreat everywhere. Now there are signs that something is beginning to change. Across the world, from Iran to Europe, Australia and the USA, millions are striking against rampant price rises and general decline in working conditions. For the moment, however, the majority of workers are still hesitant. The lost decades have left a legacy of low confidence and expectations. In a number of places, like Brazil, many still hope that some left politician will pull a rabbit out of the hat to make life more bearable. But at this stage of the capitalist crisis there is no chance of any general uplifting of workers' living standards. So our struggle must be more than just a fight for a few more crumbs from the cake.

We Need to Get Serious

For at least two years now workers in the UK have earned respect from others for their militancy in resisting wage cuts, increased workloads and now the intolerable drop in living standards in the face of rampant inflation. Currently it is public sector workers (i.e. employees paid by the state, including professionals like junior doctors who once thought they were above striking) who are making the running but many other battles are being fought from North Sea oil riggers to Amazon warehouse operatives. Whether the boss is 'public' or 'private', they all say the same thing: "there's not enough money in the kitty to pay you lot any more". In the case of the



Teachers rally in Trafalgar Square in March

current government led by millionaires and corrupt politicians who hived off £billions worth of contracts for their cronies to supply often useless Covid equipment during the pandemic this just doesn't hold water — especially as the same government has had no problem upping the money it supplies for weapons to Ukraine.

In terms of the number of workers who are ready to strike this is impressive. But it doesn't take a tactical genius to see that the potential strength of taking simultaneous strike action across union and sector boundaries is not being realised. No doubt some groups can have more impact than others. But how much stronger would we be if

workers came together across their union and workplace divisions and agreed on a common strategy and tactics? Instead we have a splintered on/off movement with different unions conducting separate campaigns where it's only an accident if other workers are on strike at the same time. Meanwhile, any momentum that is gained is lost by the unions meticulously following the UK's draconian anti-strike laws. (At least one week's notice to prepare a shall-we-accept-this-offer ballot,

never mind the endless palaver before a strike is legally permitted.) So far, this piecemeal approach has made it easy for the government to sit and wait for the movement to burn itself out.

Strikes and demos remain only token resistance unless they link up with other workers. Generally isolated workplaces or even regions cannot win on their own. (The supposed gains of union victories more often than not turn out to be less bad losses.) Effective collective action means everyone, regardless of union allegiance, has to actively participate. So don't expect anyone from the CWO to put themselves forward to be the union rep! On the other hand, strike committees elected by mass meetings (assemblies) of all workers and recallable by them have been the traditional methods of workers around the world to make their weight felt. This is in order that everyone, whatever their job designation, is actively

actively involved and is a crucial first step.

However, these are not the only criteria for success in the struggle. Much to the delight of the tabloids in Britain, Macron's government has beaten back the recent mass movement of workers in France against increasing the retirement age. (Albeit orchestrated by the unions.) The tabloid press here were jubilant but they overlooked the fact that the retirement age here is already higher than it is now set to be in France. The fact is that the only real gains we can make at this point are practical lessons in organising on the ground accompanied by a political awakening and consolidation beyond national borders.

Capitalism is hurtling towards its final response to its economic woes. The point at issue is no less than the abolition of capitalism itself. We can't do this gradually because we have no economic power to build up within the system. The only thing we can develop is our consciousness of what we are fighting for and awareness of how high the stakes are.

A Word on our May Day Banner

This joyful scene hales from revolutionary Russia in May 1919. Despite the fearsome difficulties threatening the working class and survival of their soviet power — not least continued isolation following the defeat of Spartakus and the workers councils (soviets) in Germany, but also desperate food shortages, typhus and other diseases, plus the growing military intervention of capitalist powers bent on suppressing them — the working class could still see a future worth fighting for. In these troubled times of economic crisis and growing nationalism it is essential that the world's workers realise that today, as yesterday, their combined power can change the world. **Long Live Working Class Solidarity Worldwide!**



Available from CWO address,
radical bookshops and
book fairs.

Imperialist War or Class War?

The Ukraine war is not just about Ukraine or Russia. It is the first step on the road to a wider war. Tomorrow we will be suffering what the population of Ukraine is suffering today. Both Russian and Ukrainian workers are suffering death at the fronts to defend ... what? The property and interests of their oligarchic cliques. For our rulers, defence of “the nation” makes sense since they own most of it. For the rest of the population, imperialist war means the loss of home and livelihood and for many, the loss of life itself.

We underestimate the consequences of this war at our peril. The US and its allies may not actually be sending troops into battle against the Russian forces, but the amount of Western weaponry deployed in Ukraine first provoked the Russian invasion and has made a material difference to the outcome. Worse, it has started an arms race. NATO has already sent so many weapons and munitions to Ukraine that they have now discovered their reserves are nearly exhausted. Weapon production lines which have lain dormant for almost three decades are now being turned back on. New investment has had to be made to get them up to scale. Arms spending was already on the increase after the Russians took back Crimea in 2014, but within a few months of the Ukraine War starting, global military spending passed \$2 trillion for the first time with at least 60% of it in NATO states. The US still spends more on arms than the next 9 states put together but all plan to spend more. Germany, which has pledged €100 billion to “military modernisation” since the war started, has overturned its long-standing position of refusing to sell arms into a war zone. This new arms race is an irrevocable step towards a wider conflict.

Globalisation (which brought cheap goods to the world on the backs of super-cheap labour in the periphery) is now in reverse gear. Protectionism is on the rise, with the United States in the lead. Biden’s Inflation

Reduction Act (IRA) involves billions of dollars in massive state subsidies to new ‘green’ businesses to promote the US position and undermine China in the ‘green technology’ race. On the military front, whilst Sweden and Finland are entering NATO, the “pariah” powers of Russia, China and Iran are militarily and economically closer together to evade Western (in reality, US) sanctions.

The USA’s bitterly divided ruling class agrees only about the China peril since it has the economic power to become a threat to the central plank of US hegemony — the still mighty dollar. But the war has done more to undermine it than all the cheap Chinese commodities did during peace. Today more countries are reducing their dollar holdings and others have stopped using it as either a reserve or trading currency. Blinken and Biden rarely make a speech without pointing to the greater threat posed by China whether via its technology (Huawei and TikTok) or its threat to Taiwan. A whole slew of US generals and ex-military men are currently competing to predict precisely when China will invade Taiwan, giving dates that range from 2024 to the end of the decade.

Retaking Taiwan as it aims to become the world’s dominant superpower by 2049 has always been Beijing’s goal. China has carefully built up its economic power, but the global capitalist crisis has not spared it either. It is now bailing out its banks (already reeling from a burst property-boom bubble) as various parts of the infrastructure of the Belt and Road initiative have turned out to be white elephants. Now, Chinese rhetoric is beginning to match that of the US, especially since the US (which already has some 400 bases with 300,000 troops and 60% of its navy in the Pacific) has built a series of anti-Chinese alliances across Asia. Although China trails well behind the US in military hardware, it would be fighting a regional war in its own backyard on more equal terms. Certainly China’s recent three day military exercise in the Pacific involving 120 flight ‘sorties’ just east of Taiwan and south of Japan emphasise China is gearing up to follow Xi’s ‘dare to struggle, dare to win’ mantra.

These are the sort of calculations that preoccupy the rulers of the global imperialist order. The world’s workers have absolutely no interest in any of them. Our war strategy has to be about how to develop and strengthen our collective resistance to ALL capitalism’s attacks, no matter where they occur.



Latest News

As capitalism steps up its war propaganda it will once again call upon us to die “for our country” or “democracy”. But “workers have no country”. We don’t own land or factories, which are the wealth of nations. That is the prerogative of the property-owning capitalist class. Workers have no material interest in supporting either side in these imperialist wars. We reject all the excuses and alibis that are trotted out to make us give our lives to protect their wealth. Their democracy is a sham. They have drawn up the rules of a political game that ensures the safety of the system no matter who wins. It is “democracy for the moneybags”, as recent history has confirmed in the corrupt awarding of contracts to government supporters everywhere.

We cannot win more than temporary palliatives as long as we play by their rules. Whilst they are stepping up their violence at home and abroad, we have to step up the resistance. Whilst their weapons are tear gas, batons, bombs and missiles, ours are consciousness that a new world is yet possible and our collective organisation. The latter involves not only creating organisations of struggle wherever wage workers live and work but also an international political organisation to coordinate and guide that struggle against, not just this or that state, but the entire global system. There are many internationalists around the world who can see all this but who are trapped in the debates of the past. The issues today are too serious for useless polemics, which generate voluminous academic tomes, or sitting on the sidelines. We need a positive engagement to begin to build an international body to lead the global fightback. This is why we have joined with other internationalists, both in and out of organisations, in *No War But Class War* committees to prepare resistance. This is not a quick fix and we don’t expect dramatic early results but we guess it will be too late to organise once the war wave engulfs us all.

Starting in Liverpool, committees have been organised around the world on the basis of the five points they drafted:

- * Against capitalism, imperialism and all nationalisms. No support for any national capitals, “lesser evils”, or states in formation.
- * For a society where states, wage-labour, private property, money and production for profit are replaced by a world of freely

associated producers.

- * Against the economic and political attacks that the current war, and the ones to come, 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 coming together of genuine internationalists.

Since then further committees have been formed across the world in Montreal, Toronto, Lambertville, Paris, Glasgow, South Korea, and Turkey. In the week we go to press two further committees have been formed in Chicago and Miami. For the latest information start with the Miami page:

<https://nwbcwmiami.wordpress.com/nwbcw-groups/>

and find a group near you or get advice on how to set up a group where you are from the existing groups.

The content of this *Aurora* is based on the collective May Day statement issued by the political groups of the Internationalist Communist Tendency to which the CWO belongs. See our website for the full version.

CWO Public Meeting
LONDON
6th MAY

*The Present Wave of
Strikes and
The Way Forward for
the Working Class*

Time: 14.00 hrs
Lucas Arms
245A Gray's Inn Road
WC1X 8QY

What The CWO
Stands For

We stand for a global society in which production is for need and not profit, where the state, national frontiers and money have been abolished, where power is exercised through class-wide organisations like workers councils. It is a society which can only be created through the activity of millions of human beings. Only such a society can rid us of the capitalist offspring of poverty, hunger, oppression and war: We call it communism but it has nothing in common with the Stalinist state capitalism of the old USSR.

In order to get there we are working to create a world proletarian political organisation: a 'party' for want of a better word. This organisation is not a government in waiting. It does not rule but it does lead and guide the struggle for a new world. We by no means claims to be that party but only one of the elements which will need to come together in its formation.

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<http://www.leftcom.org>
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