

AURORA



A World On Fire

As Regimes Fall and "Ceasefires" Begin, the Capitalist Crisis Continues

As Trump takes office, announcing America's "rightful" undisputed place at the top of the imperialist world order is under threat, the Doomsday Clock moves ever closer to midnight. Despite all the talk of "peace" and "hope" in the Middle East the battlelines continue to shift. As ever, workers have little to celebrate in this latest turn.

The Anti-US Imperialists' Defeat In Syria

The most dramatic recent shift took place in Syria in December. After 54 years of the Assad family's anti-Western, and also anti-working class, rule in Syria, Turkish-backed opposition forces toppled the regime in just over a week. Back in 2011 the Arab Spring had resulted in populist movements successfully deposing their heads of state. However in Syria, Assad responded to the chant of "the people want the fall of the regime" with massacres in the streets. The intervention of other powers (notably Qatar and Saudi Arabia) who armed and financed different jihadist forces turned a popular uprising into a civil war. Assad lost control of much of Syria but was able to hold on and recover thanks to Russia and Iran. The Syrian Civil War became another imperialist proxy war fought on Middle Eastern soil caught between the interests of Russia and the US.

Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS, a militia with roots in both ISIS and Al-Qaeda, now constitute an indefinitely transitional government, with Ahmed al-Sharaa as Prime Minister. HTS had been designated as a terrorist organisation by the UK, US, EU, Canada, and Turkey, but consistency plays no part in imperialist strategy. Already British, French, German, and Turkish diplomats have visited the new government. The US has lifted the bounty from al-Sharaa's head and is also in conversation with the new government.

Yesterday's "terrorist" is today's "freedom fighter".

But the agony of the civilian population in Syria is not over. Kurds are in a particularly precarious position. While negotiations, encouraged by the US, are ongoing, territorial battles are still taking place in parts of eastern Syria where the Kurdish dominated SDF is trying to hold on to its autonomous oil-producing regions. The HTS government as a Turkish puppet aims to destroy the Kurdish autonomous region in Syria (aka Rojava). The US uses the Kurdish SDF to prevent oil wells falling into the hands of either Iran or ISIS which is why it has a military base in Kurdish territory. With Iran gone, the fate of the Kurds in Northern Syria will be a political football between the US and Turkey.

Indeed it was the withdrawal of troops of Iran's ally Hezbollah following Israel's assaults on it in Lebanon that started the collapse of Assad's regime. Israel lost no time when Assad fled. It scrapped the 1974 border agreement and moved forces into the former ceasefire zone in the Golan Heights, destroying Syria's weaponry and air defences at the same time to ensure that any government that does emerge in Syria will be no future threat.

Israel and the US are rejoicing in their success. Iran has lost the main supply route to Hezbollah and with Hamas decimated (but not destroyed) its "axis of resistance" against Israel is on life support. Russia too could lose its bases in Syria. This would not only weaken its presence in the Mediterranean but also its imperial reach in Africa since it is from Syria's Tartus that it supplies military equipment to Libya, the Central African Republic and other Sahelian countries.

"Ceasefire" in Gaza

Further south, hostages in Gaza and prisoners in Israel are released to the unimaginable joy of their parents. Briefly forgotten are the tens and tens of

thousands who do not make it back into their parents' arms. Even in the final days of ceasefire negotiations, Israeli forces were killing Gazans. This is not humanitarian peace-building but temporary restraint. Israel's gross daily massacres of the Gazans, mass displacement, and blockades on aid, weren't ideal for the US and Western powers, who prefer to look like liberal "democracies" compared to "totalitarian" China, "fundamentalist" Iran and "warmongering" Russia. The US often justifies its imperialism through institutions of "international law". Now, some of these same institutions are at odds with Netanyahu who has been accused of war crimes – but the US can't do without Israel, its strongest bastion in the Middle East. Without its costume of world policeman of democratic justice, US support for Israel can hardly be seen as anything other than a product of its imperialist interests. The ceasefire is a sham. The pro-Palestinian movement, which for months has been calling for a ceasefire, must surely be asking itself if this "win" is really much of a "peace" at all.

The early stages of the ceasefire mostly revolve around hostage and prisoner releases – the perfect chance for Netanyahu to try and regain some of his electoral popularity (mass demonstrations from within Israel during the war have always had hostage releases as a central demand). The younger brother Sinwar has used the publicity of hostage releases to display the strong support for Hamas still alive in Gaza. According to outside sources, Hamas have been recruiting at such a pace that operatives killed by Israel have already been replaced. Eventually, the ceasefire demands included permitting aid to Gaza, partial withdrawal of Israeli troops, an end to the blockade, and for Hamas not to rebuild its military. Even the most gullible of optimists must doubt whether Netanyahu, Sinwar, or indeed Trump, intend to see this out.

Socialism or More Barbarism

No victory has been won for the working-class in the Middle East or anywhere else. As the global economic crisis of capitalism intensifies the imperialist camps are realigning and ironing out some creases. For the time being, these events look like positive results for Western imperialism. With the fall of Assad, Russia and Iran are both weakened. And, at the time of writing, the US' oil zones remain intact. The ceasefire has slightly reined Israel back under US control. But the situation really allows a calm footing for all parties to rebuild, re-strategise, and hold some quiet international negotiations before the next round of imperialist destruction. For us, victory never looked like a US-brokered ceasefire, or a military ousting of a dictator. For us, victory will only be won in the class war that ends all wars. Palestinians will only be free when all workers around the world are free. And to this end, the working class must become an independent social force that sides with no national flags or imperialist camps. Our interest is in a total restructuring of society in which the abolition of money and class, and production for human need, rather than profit, renders national conflict obsolete.

Attacks on our working and living conditions at home are linked to capitalist preparations for war abroad. As such, the defence of our conditions and opposition to war are an important start. But this has to translate into working-class organisation and revolutionary consciousness. Those of us who recognise the real interests of our class have to begin the translation.

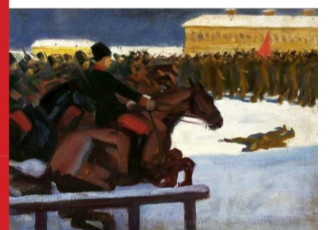
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Climate Disaster Intensifying

This January it was made official: the year 2024 was the hottest on record at an average temperature of 15.10°C – 0.12°C higher than the previous record set in 2023, and 1.55°C above pre-industrial temperatures. The sudden surge of temperature has scientists worried; average global temperature is measured on a 10-year average, and it is unclear whether two consecutive record breaking years is an anomalous blip or the

beginning of a trend of accelerated global warming. 2024 also set a new record for global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions with an increase of 1.9% over the last record set in 2023. Regardless, appeals from experts – themselves a broken record – that now is the time for leaders to act have been repeated just as they have been for many, many years, and one trend we can be certain of is no substantial action will be taken. We can be certain of this

because the capitalist system requires continual capital accumulation, which requires continual growth, which in turn requires continual consumption of energy through the plunder of raw materials, leading to continual trashing of the planet.

Disastrous Consequences

Worsening climate change means more

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intense weather and more frequent natural disasters. Floods in Europe caused over 337 deaths in 2024. In Spain the flooding was amongst the deadliest in history, causing 232 confirmed deaths. This was preceded by warmer-than-usual weather, with dried out soil less able to absorb groundwater, and record high temperatures in the Mediterranean, leading to increased evaporation and as such heavier rainfall. Meanwhile, rising ocean temperatures in the Atlantic made the 2024 hurricane season among the most destructive. Setting a new record for accumulated energy, it was the first season since 2019 and eighth since records began to feature multiple category 5 storms (>157Mph sustained wind speed). In the

process it has claimed 401 lives and caused \$130 billion (£105 billion) in damages, ranking as the third deadliest season in history behind 2005 and 2017. The 2024-2025 California wildfires, which at time of writing have finally been contained but continue to blaze, have burned through over 40,000 acres of land. Close to 200,000 people have been forced to evacuate and 29 have been confirmed dead, with many still missing. The fires have been caused by increasingly erratic weather patterns, with heavy volatile periods of rainfall followed by droughts causing grass and shrubs to grow in large quantities and then dry out, creating massive heaps of fuel for fires. Similar weather patterns caused flash flooding in

Afghanistan and Pakistan in 2024, killing over 1,000 people and displacing many more. Weather records are being broken more frequently, more people are dying and many more are displaced; in 2023, over 20 million people were displaced due to climate-related disasters and these numbers will only grow in the future.

means to secure at least their personal comfort and survival should the worst come to pass.

There is no innate conflict between human civilisation and the natural world; only between capitalist society and sustainable existence. There is also, however, class conflict: between the working class which is exploited for the production of surplus-value, and the capitalist class which must chase profit with reckless abandon. The pleas of scientists cannot fall deaf on the ears of the international working class, which will face the brunt of the fallout from climate catastrophe. And it is the international working class alone which holds the power to smash the destructive regime of global capital, seize the reins of society, and steer humanity away from climate apocalypse. Billions of workers share the same critical place as creators of the world's wealth, the same class struggle, and the same way to self-emancipation; if we unite across divisions, create self-organised bodies to coordinate our struggles, and take up a revolutionary perspective beyond the capitalist framework, this will be possible. Then, we can build a new world, where production is not designed to produce profit at any cost to people or the environment, but to provide for the needs of people and the world at large.

Only the Working Class Can Stop Climate Disaster

Despite numerous international agreements, global targets, NGO climate commissions, and net zero advocacy groups pushing to keep emissions below 1.5°C before 2030 or net zero by 2050, little is set to significantly change. Current climate targets set by individual countries party to the Paris Agreement signed in 2016 would only reduce emissions by 2.6% compared to 2019 levels (if achieved) – far, far below the 43% required to avoid breaching 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, and in many cases they are not being met. Among Trump's first slew of executive orders upon return to the White House was to, once again, pull the US out of the Paris Agreement. The pleas of scientists fall on the deaf ears of our rulers who view the world, its people and nature as sources for the generation of profit, content in the understanding they have the wealth and



Communism: An Idea Whose Time Has Come?

"Despair is typical of those who do not understand the causes of evil, see no way out, and are incapable of struggle. The modern industrial proletariat does not belong to the category of such classes." (Lenin, 1910)

The world stands at a crossroads. Economic crisis, the drive to war, ecological disasters, and societal collapse signpost a future full of suffering and destruction which is already the reality for many around the globe. Gaza, Lebanon, Sudan and Ukraine serve as a warning of what's to come. As new horrors confront us each time we switch on the TV, listen to the radio or check our social media, it is easy to become despondent. The one question that few seem to be asking is: what's the alternative?

The challenges facing humanity in the 21st century are not some accident of fate, nor are they simply a result of bad choices made by bad individuals. They are all branches of the same tree, a product of historically specific social relations which we call the capitalist mode of production. Fundamentally, we live in societies organised around the **pursuit of profit**, not the fulfillment of human needs. It is the profit motive which influences the significant decisions humanity makes at the international, national and even interpersonal level. Of course, one small section of society gets more of a say than everyone else. Those with money, property, land – in other words, owners of capital – control the real levers of power. The rest of us only get to sell our labour-power, and maybe vote every four or five years for which representative of the rich gets to rule over us. Ultimately, capitalism as a system was established by force and dispossession, and at every level cut-throat competition, exploitation and oppression are its hallmarks.

One of the great tragedies of the 20th century is undoubtedly the fact that all the societies which, in one way or another, claimed to be an alternative to capitalism proved to be shams that only reproduced the system, sometimes in catastrophic ways. Whether it was "social

democracy", "national socialism", or "actually existing socialism", fundamental characteristics of the capitalist mode of production (wage labour, money and commodity production) remained in place, but under conditions of intensified government intervention. That is why we consider all these regimes to be expressions of state capitalism, rather than any real alternative.

But then, what do terms like socialism or communism even mean, if anything? To us, they herald a **stateless, classless, moneyless society** based on humanity collectively producing and distributing the products of our labour for the **satisfaction of our needs**. And it is only the mass movement of the working class – those of us who create the profits which allow capitalism to function – that can bring such a world about.

Relations between humans don't have to take the form of exploitation and oppression. We don't have to live at war with nature and each other. We know this from history. Humanity as a species emerged some 300,000 years ago and most of our existence was spent in small stateless, classless, moneyless societies where cooperation and solidarity were key to our survival. We can't turn back the clock and nor would we want to – humanity, with all the latest technological and social advancements at hand, is better placed than ever to consciously organise new and better ways of living. We know this is possible also from our present. Despite the pursuit of profit above all else being the most "rational" behaviour under the current system, humans continue to display acts of cooperation and solidarity every day. Sometimes this even takes on a mass scale, as we have seen with revolutionary movements seeking to transform society.

Which brings us to another point – communism or socialism is not just an idea, but a real **class movement** born out of the contradictions of capitalist society. To borrow Marx's metaphor, that class movement is like the old mole, which digs and digs underground and

only periodically emerges on the surface. Sometimes it digs so deep that even would-be revolutionaries lose hope or start looking for short-cuts, while the ruling class and their apologists celebrate, declaring class struggle to be over. This is only a temporary victory, for as long as class society exists, class struggle will continue to reappear, in another place, at another time, in a new form.

For more than a century now the capitalist edifice has been ripe for overturning, becoming more and more rotten by the decade. The imperialist states of today are like "the New Leviathan, beside which the fantasy of Thomas Hobbes looks like a child's toy" (Bukharin, 1915). But they are running out of options for keeping the profit system going.

Marxism, understood as a critical and revolutionary method of analysis, is a weapon against commodity society. It allows us to see that twists and turns and sudden breaks are also part of human history. And one way or another,

we are gradually approaching such a period. The question is: will the working class be able to enter the stage of history as a real social force or will it remain a sleeping giant to whom history is done?



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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