

Socialism and the Fight Against Imperialist War

Statement of the International Committee of the Fourth International

3 July 2014

1. One hundred years after the outbreak of World War I and 75 years after the start of World War II, the imperialist system is once again threatening humanity with a catastrophe.

2. The breakdown of global capitalism that erupted in 2008 has vastly accelerated the predatory drive by the imperialist powers for a new division and redivision of the world. Already, in the two decades since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the major imperialist powers have visited destruction and death on millions of people in wars in the Balkans, Middle East, Central Asia and Africa. Time and again they have proven their indifference to human suffering. Now, a qualitatively new stage in the crisis of imperialism has been reached—one in which the major powers are risking a nuclear conflagration.

3. The danger of a new world war arises out of the fundamental contradictions of the capitalist system—between the development of a global economy and its division into antagonistic nation states, in which the private ownership of the means of production is rooted. This finds its most acute expression in the drive of US imperialism to dominate the Eurasian landmass, above all those areas from which it was excluded for decades by the Russian and Chinese revolutions. In the west, the US, in league with Germany, has orchestrated a fascist-led coup to bring Ukraine under its control. But its ambitions do not stop there. The ultimate objective is to dismember the Russian Federation, reducing it to a series of semi-colonies to open the way for the plunder of its vast natural resources. In the east, the Obama administration's pivot to Asia is aimed at encircling China and transforming it into a semi-colony. Here, the objective is to ensure domination of the cheap labour that is one of the key global sources of

the surplus value extracted from the working class and the life-blood of the capitalist economy.

4. At present, Washington is pursuing these objectives with the collaboration of the other major imperialist powers. However, there is no permanent coincidence of interests among them. German imperialism, which fought two wars with the US in the 20th century, is reviving its imperial ambitions. Having secured the dominant position in Western Europe, it is seeking to become a world power. Likewise in Asia, Japan is remilitarising in order to pursue its own longstanding ambitions for regional hegemony. To legitimise this turn, systematic efforts are being made to whitewash the monstrous crimes of the Nazis and the Japanese imperial army in the 1930s and 1940s.

5. All of the imperialist powers—including Britain, France, Canada and Australia—are taking full part in this struggle for spheres of influence. Every area of the globe is a source of bitter conflict: not only the former colonies and semi-colonies in the Middle East, Africa and Asia but also the Arctic, Antarctic and even outer space and cyberspace. These conflicts, in turn, are breeding tensions leading to separatist tendencies, ethnic divisions and communal fighting.

6. The Russian and Chinese regimes do not constitute a counterweight to the imperialist war drive. Both represent a criminal oligarchy that emerged from the restoration of capitalism carried out by the Stalinist bureaucracies, and seek only to defend their interests. Not only do they bear political responsibility for the terrible dangers now facing the Russian and Chinese masses, but the nationalism they are whipping up serves to divide the working class.

7. Another imperialist bloodbath is not only possible; it is inevitable unless the international working class

intervenes on the basis of a revolutionary Marxist program. The two world wars of the 20th century arose out of the contradiction between global economy and the outmoded nation-state system. Each of the imperialist powers sought to resolve this contradiction by striving for world hegemony. The globalisation of production over the past three decades, resulting in a further qualitative leap in the integration of the world economy, has brought the fundamental contradictions of capitalism to a new peak of intensity.

8. The collision of imperialist and national state interests expresses the impossibility, under capitalism, of organising a globally-integrated economy on a rational foundation and thus ensuring the harmonious development of the productive forces. However, the same contradictions driving imperialism to the brink provide the objective impulse for social revolution. The globalisation of production has led to a massive growth of the working class. Only this social force, which owes no allegiance to any nation, is capable of putting an end to the profit system, which is the root cause of war.

9. All the great issues confronting the working class—the growth of social inequality, the resort to authoritarian forms of rule—are inseparable components of this struggle. There can be no fight for socialism without a struggle against war and there can be no fight against war without a struggle for socialism. Imperialist war must be opposed by the working class, leading behind it the youth and oppressed masses, on the basis of a socialist program: the fight to take political power, expropriate the banks and major corporations and begin the task of constructing a world federation of workers' states.

10. The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) resolves to place the struggle against war at the centre of its political work. It must become the international centre of revolutionary opposition to the resurgence of imperialist violence and militarism. There is no other organisation that even aims to carry out this task. Innumerable former pacifists, liberals, Greens and anarchists have positioned themselves behind the imperialist war drive under the fraudulent banner of human rights. Similarly, the pseudo-left tendencies such as the Pabloites and the state capitalists, having denounced “knee jerk anti-imperialism”, are lined up behind US aggression against Russia and China.

11. The building of the Fourth International, under the leadership of the International Committee, is *the* central strategic question. It is the only conceivable means through which the working class can be unified internationally. The online May Day rally held on May 4, attended by people from 92 countries, revealed the growing support for the revolutionary perspective of the ICFI and the potential for its development as the world party of socialist revolution. The task of the ICFI now is to work for the development of sections in new countries and areas of the world.

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