

Preface to the Turkish edition of *The struggle against imperialism and for workers' power in Iran*

Keith Jones
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*Here below we publish the Preface to the Turkish-language edition of *The struggle against imperialism and for workers' power in Iran: A reply to a proponent of "Iranian Islamic socialism , which has just been issued by Mehring Yay?nc?l?k (Mehring Books) in Turkey. The Preface was written by the pamphlet's author, Keith Jones, the National Secretary of the Socialist Equality Party (Canada).**

I am very gratified that Mehring Yay?nc?l?k is publishing a Turkish-language edition of *The struggle against imperialism and for workers' power in Iran: A reply to a proponent of "Iranian Islamic socialism"*.

My essay, originally published by the *World Socialist Web Site*, addresses pivotal issues of socialist strategy in a country that for decades has been a target of US imperialist intrigue and aggression, and where the working class—as demonstrated by the repeated eruptions of mass working class protests since 2018—is now striving to find the road of independent class struggle. Based on an examination of Iran's history and the global struggle against imperialism, it demonstrates that a viable strategy to defeat imperialism can only be founded on the working class, and requires its mobilization as an independent political force in opposition to all factions of the Iranian bourgeoisie.

The struggle against imperialism and for workers' power in Iran was written in the first weeks of 2018 in reply to Iran Press TV journalist Ramin Mazaheri's criticisms of the *World Socialist Web Site's* coverage of the mass working-class protests that convulsed that country as 2017 ended and 2018 began. Mazaheri reproached the WSWS for championing the protests, which gave voice, albeit in a politically inchoate fashion, to the long suppressed social and democratic

aspirations of the working class, and for condemning their repression by the Islamic Republic, whose rulers, he claimed, were leading Iranian resistance to imperialism.

I will not repeat here what is said in my reply to Mazaheri, apart from saying that the WSWS welcomed his criticisms as an opportunity to elaborate the standpoint of the revolutionary socialist movement—that is of the International Committee of the Fourth International—to the defence of Iran against imperialist aggression and its relationship to the fight for socialist revolution in Iran and across the Middle East.

Since this essay was written, the crisis of Iran's bourgeois-clerical regime and the threat of a US war targeting Iran has only intensified.

In May 2018, the United States withdrew from the 2015 Iran nuclear accord, although Tehran had scrupulously adhered to all its conditions. In an act tantamount to war, it then unilaterally re-imposed punishing economic sanctions on Iran over the course of the next 12 months. With the publicly avowed aim of "crashing" Iran's economy, Washington has choked off all Iran's oil exports, crippled its trade, and frozen it out of the US-dominated global financial system.

The sanctions have had their intended effect. They have strangled Iran's economy and intensified the already deep conflicts within Iran's bourgeois nationalist regime over how to continue to maneuver between Washington, which is intent on returning Iran to the neocolonial bondage that prevailed during the bloody quarter-century dictatorship of the US-backed Shah; the other imperialist and great powers; and the increasingly restless Iranian working class.

2020 began with the US drone assassination of

Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard General Qassem Suleimani, a war crime that brought Iran and the US, and the entire Middle East perilously close to a catastrophic war.

As an appendix to my 2018 essay, Mehring Yay?nc?!?k is republishing three WSWS articles published in the days immediately following Suleimani's assassination. Two of the articles analyze the strategy and socio-economic and political crises that are driving US imperialism's reckless "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran—a campaign that as this preface is being written continues to escalate with the US deploying additional troops and weaponry to the Persian Gulf region. The third article reviews the response of the major parties of the Turkish bourgeoisie and its Republic to the Trump-ordered assassination of the general who was reputed to be second most powerful person in the Islamic Republic.

For the past three decades the United States has waged and fomented a never-ending series of ruinous wars across the greater Middle East, from Afghanistan and Iraq, to Syria and Libya. These wars have blown-up complex societies, but they have demonstrably failed to halt the decline in the world economic and geo-political power of US imperialism.

The Iranian bourgeoisie chafes under the domination of imperialism. But it does so only because the predations of the US and European imperialist powers impede its efforts to expand the exploitation of its "own" working class and to make Iran a regional hegemon. By virtue of its class position, the Iranian bourgeoisie and its Islamic Republic are organically incapable of, and hostile to, the revolutionary mobilization of the workers and toilers of the Middle East, across all ethnic and religious divides—the only viable struggle for opposing Washington's aggression and intrigues and defeating imperialism as a whole. This task falls to the working class and will only be realized in so far as the struggle against imperialism is infused with the struggle against social inequality and all forms of class oppression, that is the struggle for socialism.

Keith Jones, Montreal, 13 February, 2020

Since this short Preface was written, US imperialism has seized on the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic to intensify its aggression against Iran, one of the

countries hardest hit by the deadly disease. See: US imperialism exploits coronavirus as a weapon of war .



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