

The Islamic Republic, Imperialism, and the Endless Slaughterhouse of the Middle East

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War Diaries #3

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Israel is not a state; it is an imperialist occupying garrison at the border of a place called the “Middle East.” It is an artifact of colonial crisis that since the early twentieth century has plunged like a dagger into the heart of Arab peoples and other regional peoples, sterilizing every possibility for unity, liberation, and social justice. It is a crime apparatus fundamentally built on a racist and fascist ideology, which after more than seven decades of massacres and dispossession of Palestinians, has for months been openly executing, without restraint, a project of genocide and erasure against this oppressed and resistant people. This garrison is the armed extension of global capitalism and primarily American imperialism, wielding all military, intelligence, and technological tools to strip sovereignty and pose a constant threat to peoples.

Israel’s attack on Iranian soil is not an act of defense but aggression, not pinpointed strikes but an attempt to break the backbone of any independent resistance in the region. Israel’s military invasion of Iran is not merely targeting the Islamic Republic regime and its reactionary character, a regime that, from its very inception, has fully submitted to the

dictates of global capital and has waged a class war internally against the working class, yet has failed, even from the standpoint of its ruling class interests, to resolve its structural contradictions in the realm of international politics, and now stands at the outermost edge of these very existential contradictions. Israel's military aggression seeks not only the collapse of this regime but also aims to resolve this structural contradiction decisively, demonstrating to future generations that in this region, no alternative can emerge without submitting to Israeli guardianship. This is itself a counter-revolution!

From this perspective, the defeat of the Islamic Republic by Israel and the ensuing military and political domination over Iran would explicitly mean sterilizing any real possibility of collective political existence and the complete annihilation of any vision of a future beyond the Islamic Republic. In such a scenario, the ruling class's submission to the commands of global capital, which has been ongoing, would have to occur without any structural contradictions with the hegemonic international order, fully embracing Israel's role as its regional border garrison. Today in Tehran and throughout Iran, perhaps a legion-sized group is waging war for Israel: from drone navigation to car bombings, from giving coordinates to fighter jets to armed assassination. Such preparations can only happen once, and those making this investment expect the highest returns: another Syria scenario, replacing power with one that executes commands without friction.

However, the Islamic Republic's reactionary nature itself is not an alternative to global capitalism but rather part of it, intermittently rebelling within regional and international frictions against the hegemonic system. Yet it has wholly fulfilled its historical-class duties to this global system: physically and discursively destroying the revolutionary left, weakening class struggle and working-class organization, annihilating society, and transforming it into a production line for right-wing, racist, monarchist sentiments and various anti-social neoliberal traits. Such a society is fertile ground for counter-revolution, comprador rabid capitalism, a renewed slaughterhouse for the remnants of the revolutionary left, and a paradise for exploiting the working class. In these conditions, nationalism, both Islamic and secular, feeds off people's anger and fear. "Defense of homeland" replaces "defense of class." Flags, identities, and armies supplant councils, strikes, and communes. Here, war neutralizes class consciousness and accelerates mass absorption into reactionary projects. War is ruthless; it benefits one class or devastates another. Here, it will devastate the working class and its supporters, as they currently lack both organization and a visible horizon for it in the short term.

Simultaneously, we witness the rapid growth of right-wing and regime-change tendencies applauding Israeli attacks under the guise of freedom and progress. They seek the destruction of the Islamic Republic not to establish democratic freedoms that would include direct economic intervention benefiting the working-class majority, but to enforce even more brutal free-market policies, secure foreign investment at the expense of the working class, consolidate neoliberal order, enslave labor further, and widely suppress any opposition to such a regime. Their project is not revolutionary but counter-revolutionary. Any "liberation" project without a struggle for real equality perpetuates slavery in newer, updated forms.

Meanwhile, some attempt to position themselves as seemingly progressive by saying “No to the Islamic Republic, No to Israel,” yet this stance is practically ahistorical and non-strategic. In the current crisis, this position is highly ambiguous, analytically weak, and ultimately ineffective. It is not centrism but non-alignment, a retreat from the necessity of class alignment against both poles of reaction. It must be clearly stated: “No to reactionary war,” but “Yes to the oppressed’s resistance in its most radical forms”; “No to imperialist occupation,” but “Yes to the revolutionary overthrow of the Islamic Republic.” Yet, there is no revolutionary project here now. The slogan “No to the Islamic Republic, No to Israel” is simply standing in an aloof position during the weakest moment for revolutionary leftist forces and the working class, merely hoping future history applauds the refusal to side either with regime defense or Zionist-Imperialism.

To clarify further, we must emphasize that in “the Middle East”, the issue has always been “regional”, a fact many of us failed to grasp since the eight-year war ended. The defeat of the so-called “Arab Spring” and its inability to fundamentally alter capitalist order was our defeat, and the defeat of our revolution marked the beginning of imperialism’s victory in the Middle East. Revolutionary forces of the region failed to unite and were massacred; neoliberal projects advanced under structural adjustment programs; class organizations were shattered, impoverishing workers, leaving the region a battleground for regional powers and their proxies.

Imperialism, if not through direct military presence in the country, then through incentive packages and privatization directives led by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization, first pushed class struggles into a defensive position, and then dragged them into the mire of racist infighting and cheering for the right-wing opposition. Revolutionary communism, at best, was reduced to a kind of radical-sounding cultural leftism with no real social base, while the revolutionary tradition was stigmatized in public memory as the “seditionists of ‘1979.” Those who saw neoliberalism merely as the result of a factional conspiracy within the regime, or as the leadership being misled by ignorant advisors, treated the imperialist project of conquering the Middle East trench by trench as a joke. By discrediting the revolutionary left as being stuck in the 1970s, and placing their hopes in a justice-oriented tendency within a faction of the regime, they led revolutionary energies one by one to the ballot boxes, throwing dust in the eyes of revolutionary struggle.

So, despite the regime’s repression, all of us bear responsibility for *not organizing*, for realizing *the need to prepare for revolution too late*, for *failing to organize the working class*, and for *losing the battle over the hegemony of the socialist discourse*. It is likely that, in the event of the regime’s collapse, it won’t be Reza Pahlavi but rather an unknown figure (like the Hamid Karzai *project* in Afghanistan) who will be installed above us under the banner of a “transitional government” or “interim period”, so that, in a state of statelessness and chaos, the remnants of the revolutionary front will be unable to take any effective action against right-wing reaction.

Yet we let slip, one by one, the opportunities for revolutionary preparation since December 2017. We preferred the unorganized enthusiasm of taking to the streets over sweating through the work of building organization for the day after spontaneous uprisings. And ultimately, in the name of defending “the revolution of all oppressed identities,” we threw stones at *class discourse* and at *disciplined, strategic, and necessarily non-horizontal organization*, while the concern for “democracy” and “transparency” in organizing took precedence over the very act of organizing itself.

When all the “what not to do’s” had finally run their course, suddenly a new voice emerged: *“Maybe regime change wouldn’t be such a bad thing after all; once the repression is gone, we’ll start organizing the next day!”* Yes, the regime may fall, but it will collapse with its full weight upon us. And as the boots of imperialism march over the corpse of the regime, it is we who will sink deeper and deeper into the ground.

Because in the aftermath of the regime’s collapse under imperialist assault, the main target of repression will be precisely that emerging force which seeks to continue the struggle in line with the ideals of the 1979 Revolution, or more explicitly, the ideals of freedom and equality. And this does *not* include the decaying remnants of the regime, who will rebrand themselves and be integrated into Netanyahu’s “New Middle East” order.

China and Russia, seen by some as the economic and military arms of the anti-imperialist bloc, are quietly watching this regime change, negotiating their future share of the new Middle Eastern pie. At the height of the Arab Spring, the Institute of International Finance, a policy organization and lobbying group of the world’s largest financial institutions, made it clear in early May 2011: “While addressing the immediate issues of security and political reconstruction is crucial, it is equally imperative that those in charge of the political transition also prioritize deepening and accelerating structural economic reforms. Governments, both during and after the transition, should pursue a credible, medium-term framework for reform and stabilization... and should focus on creating a legal and institutional environment that supports entrepreneurship, investment, and market-oriented growth.” At the beginning of 2011, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development announced that it was planning to enter the Middle East. The bank was founded in 1991 to help Eastern Europe transition to capitalism, based on a comprehensive privatization plan, and had never before operated outside Europe... This is the established ‘world order’ — and this is the ‘golden opportunity’ some thought they smelled coming!

Those who, during the Haft Tappeh and Steel strikes in 2018, criticized the revolutionary left for adopting the slogan “Bread, Work, Freedom / Council Administration”, calling it “the unmediated politicization of union protests” or dismissing it as “the illusion of labor control”, and who instead pursued the “democratization” project in hopes that the left would also be recognized in public opinion as “democratic,” can now reap the rewards. This is the “democracy” behind closed doors they had been waiting for.

Thus, without hesitation, we must oppose the military aggression, loudly proclaim the name of the aggressor, and unquestionably link this stance to the cause of Palestinian liberation (because, as we said, the issue in the “Middle East” has always been “regional”). The side that has even violated international law and has received and will continue to receive political, military, and security support from the West is none other than Israel, the same border outpost of the imperialist West in the region, the same colonial cancerous tumor. The realization of the project of Israeli domination over Iran and the advancement of its subsequent goals means, first of all, is the destruction of the possibility of a proletarian struggle for the working class of Iran and the region. Of course, this does not mean in any way that such a struggle was possible and feasible during the Islamic Republic. Our emphasis on the class war that this regime has waged against the working class from the beginning is itself a confirmation of the difficulty of this struggle to this day. However, we believe that this difficulty, in its most severe form, contained within itself possibilities that could have paved the way for the transformation of this resistance into a conscious class struggle against the Islamic Republic. The fact that such a struggle has not been able to take shape in an effective way to date is not only the result of the severity of the regime’s repression and the historical defeat of the previous revolutionary left organizations in Iran, but also the product of decades of imperialist interventions that were made possible with the complicity of the ruling class in Iran. Those interventions have now manifested themselves in their most brutal and direct military form, this time without the structural contradictions that the Islamic Republic represented. Therefore, Israel’s military aggression against Iran is not just an attack on a political regime, but an attack on a future that could only be achieved through class struggle against this same regime.

So, what matters most is the quality of this opposition to aggression. At this point, one may choose to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Islamic Republic, armed with various theoretical and emotional justifications, even composing poems about a “Great Patriotic War” and similar narratives, but the real issue is a vision for the future. Regardless of how this war ends, only a force that has planted or sustained the theoretical and practical foundations of organization at the heart of this situation can carry the struggle forward. These foundations are nothing other than the understanding that opposition to Israeli aggression must not come from a standpoint of patriotism or international law, but from a fundamental confrontation with the hell such aggression will unleash upon the proletariat in the event of “conquest.” And it is precisely from this perspective that one cannot stand alongside the Islamic Republic. For if the Islamic Republic survives this war, it will emerge more repressive, more violent, and more resolute in enforcing its class policies. A force that today, in opposing Israeli aggression, puts everything about the Islamic Republic in quotation marks, will be unable, once the war is over, to fight either against the Islamic Republic or against Israel, or against any other force that may ascend to power on Israel’s behalf or in collusion with it. Because if one can set aside the class line today under the pretext of war, one will certainly be able to do so again tomorrow under a dozen other pretexts, just as we see today, when some forces claiming lineage from leftist and anti-imperialist traditions are doing exactly that under the slogan of “prioritizing the overthrow of the Islamic Republic.”

Thus, when it is said, “Without hesitation, one must rise up against military aggression and name the aggressor,” it is clear that taking this position against war only makes sense when it generates, from within itself, a possibility for action, for determining “what must be done,” even now. The fact that today we find ourselves without any effective material force, whether for the revolutionary overthrow of the Islamic Republic or for halting the Israeli imperialist war machine, does not imply passivity or a denial of the necessity of intervention. On the contrary, acknowledging this desperation, if done from a revolutionary position, is itself a form of action. Every analytical effort, every independent stance, and every attempt to draw a clear, decisive line between the two poles of this counter-revolutionary dichotomy matters, precisely because each is linked to the horizon of working-class organization, even if that horizon appears distant. To organize amidst despair means to create possibilities, weak and scattered as they may be today, that, if not denied, could one day serve as the foundation of genuine resistance. Therefore, acknowledging despair is revolutionary only when it does not mean becoming resigned to it, but instead seeks a material and grounded path to overcome it.

On the other hand, this position in no way implies indifference to military occupation or direct imperialist aggression. If the day comes when Israeli or American soldiers appear on the streets of Iranian cities, the revolutionary response will be neither silence nor surrender, but an independent defense, from below, and in the language and logic of the working class itself. It is in that critical moment that the class struggle, in all its dispersed cells, must be tied to the anti-imperialist struggle, a connection that has been tragically absent from Iran’s political landscape for at least three decades.

Just as imperialism, long before any military occupation, advanced its projects as a capitalist state, with the relative complicity of the Islamic Republic over more than four decades, so too, after securing military and political domination, it will reproduce class relations in even more intensified forms. In Iran’s specific case, this reproduction becomes a necessity, driven by the need to resolve the structural contradictions between the political systems of the Islamic Republic and Israel. This may result in the rise of a new hegemony, but one that still operates within the same class logic. And that is precisely the problem: a hegemony that may first emerge through naked domination amid the bloodshed of the current war, only to later solidify into a stable hegemonic order, one that could set the Iranian working class back by decades.

Thus, the inevitable and realistic emphasis of this text on the horizon of the future in no way implies a disregard for the catastrophic moment in which we now find ourselves. On the contrary, we believe that no way out of this catastrophe can be found without overcoming today’s political confusion and the inability to distinguish between past, present, and future. We must simultaneously learn from what we have left behind: from past failures in organizing, from the removal of radical forces from the field of struggle, and from surrendering to the dualities of power. At the same time, we must open a perspective that sees the present, not as a static moment or a dead end, but as a moment filled with the potential for the emergence of alternative possibilities, even amid

horror. Maintaining, strengthening, or rebuilding this independent, communist, and anti-imperialist line, however limited it may be, is not only a condition for action today, but also for the very possibility of any struggle in the future.