

# **From Gaza to Global Conflict**

**Capitalist War and Internationalist Solidarity**

Anti-War Internationalist Assembly

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# Contents

Gaza: From a genocidal attack to mass displacement and ethnic cleansing . . . . .	3
The expansion of war in the Middle East: Capitalist Crisis and Imperialist Rivalry . .	3
The Palestinians of Gaza as surplus proletariat and the multiple facets of anti-Palestinian racism . . . . .	3
Hamas and the trap of “anti-imperialist” campism . . . . .	5
Greece on the side of Israel: Economic Interests and Geopolitical Rivalries . . . . .	5
From the crisis of “globalization” to state capitalism and war economy . . . . .	5
Against “campism”: an internationalist class response to capitalist war . . . . .	6

## **Gaza: From a genocidal attack to mass displacement and ethnic cleansing**

For more than 20 months, Israel has launched an unprecedented assault on the Palestinian population in Gaza. The war waged by Israel deliberately targets civilians, taking on genocidal proportions and nearly completely destroying infrastructure, homes, hospitals, schools, and human lives. It has led to the mass displacement of Palestinians from their homes, aiming ultimately at ethnic cleansing to facilitate settlement expansion under the vision of establishing a “Greater Israel.” Simultaneously, Israel’s military operations in Gaza and the broader region (Lebanon, Syria, Iran) serve as the spearhead for the “Western” imperialist bloc to shift power dynamics and impose a new order in the Middle East, directly linked to the broader conflict between imperialist blocs. Evidently, these military operations have borne fruit, weakening Hezbollah in Lebanon, contributing to Assad’s fall, diminishing Russia’s influence in Syria, and delivering major blows to Iran.

## **The expansion of war in the Middle East: Capitalist Crisis and Imperialist Rivalry**

This expansion of the war in the Middle East, with the active support of the US and its direct involvement in the military conflict, marks a qualitative escalation. The danger of a wider regional and, possibly, global war is now more real than ever, as highlighted by the continuing war between Ukraine and Russia, the growing tension in the South China Sea between China and Taiwan, the Pakistan-India conflict, the rapid rearmament of European countries, and the attempt to strengthen militarism and the militarization of society throughout the world. **It is the capitalist crisis driving heightened inter-state rivalry and escalating military conflicts.** War acts as “creative destruction” and as a mechanism to overcome stagnation and reproduce capitalist domination, among other things, through the violent cleansing of a surplus proletariat.

## **The Palestinians of Gaza as surplus proletariat and the multiple facets of anti-Palestinian racism**

This precisely describes the condition of the overwhelming majority of Gaza’s Palestinian population. In the 1980s, nearly 45% of Gaza’s population worked in Israel in low-wage jobs without labor rights. Completely deprived of the protections granted to the Israeli working class, Palestinians served as a reserve army of cheap labor. During the 1990s, Palestinian workers were increasingly replaced by migrants from Thailand, the Philippines, and Romania, who today represent the most exploited labor force in Israel, often earning even less than Palestinians did. From 2007, with the total blockade of Gaza by Israel and Egypt, and the establishment of a siege regime, up until October 7, 2023, the number of Gaza residents working in Israel was reduced to just 1% of the population. Gaza’s economy suffered massive damage, with imports and exports conducted only illegally through tunnels at the Egyptian border, leading to an unemployment rate around 50% and nearly half of Gaza’s population dependent solely on humanitarian aid programs for survival. Clearly, this population represents an entirely disposable surplus proletariat from both

the perspective of the Israeli economy and the enforcement of “national purity” in the region. This has fostered extreme racism against Gaza’s Palestinian population within Israeli society, reaching a point of dehumanization. Palestinians are labeled as “human animals,” and even Israel’s president, affiliated with the Labor Party, declared that in Gaza “there are no innocents.” This nationalist state ideology further legitimizes the massacre and war within Israeli society, constructs the defensive narrative the state of Israel needs to justify military aggression in Gaza, and articulates Israel’s territorial expansionist ambitions.

However, anti-Palestinian racism also exists in many Arab countries. The majority of Palestinian refugees remain undocumented and stateless in neighboring Arab states, often confined within refugee camps with no freedom of movement. They are treated as outsiders, as a burden on the local economy and as a “foreign body” vis-à-vis the local population, as is the case today with refugees throughout the world, serving as scapegoats for social ills. Furthermore, they are seen as a destabilizing force, with politically radicalized segments of Palestinian refugees historically engaging in armed conflicts with state authorities (e.g., “Black September” in Jordan), participating in Lebanon’s civil war, and supporting Iraq during the invasion of Kuwait, resulting in the displacement of 300,000 to 400,000 Palestinians from Kuwait after 1991 and stricter migration restrictions in other Gulf states. Palestinian proletarians have been consistently treated by Arab states as pawns rather than human beings in the diplomatic and military chessboard of the Middle East.

In Europe and, more broadly, in the “Western” world, anti-Palestinian racism has been reinforced in recent years as a version of broader racism against Muslims, which has been systematically promoted in recent years by both far-right theories of “great replacement” and the moral panic cultivated by governments—both social democratic and right-wing—towards the entry of Muslims into the West. Discontent over declining living standards is thus directed toward the most vulnerable segments of our class, diverting anger away from capitalist social relations. Israel is portrayed in these odious racist narratives as a bulwark of “Western civilization” against “Islamic barbarism”. This appears paradoxical given that the far-right rhetoric attributing “population replacement” plans to the “global elite” is structurally antisemitic. Conversely, solidarity with the Palestinians, which has also grown within the most progressive social groups, often lacks class content and is articulated on the basis of a reactionary mythology about the revolutionary character of Hamas and its allied organizations, which in reality represent nationalist and capitalist policies of oppression, often closely linked to a statist religious ideology. We have seen this position develop even further with the open support of states such as Iran and Russia, i.e., the support of one of the imperialist camps. As for Hamas, there is no doubt that it is the political and military personnel of a section of the Palestinian ruling class that exercised power in Gaza. As such, it participated in the exploitation of the Palestinian proletariat both as labour power—through the imposition of taxes and duties on trade carried out through the tunnels—and through the extraction of revenues from managing the “humanitarian aid” for the needs of the population and the financial support from Iran and Qatar. Hamas and its affiliated organizations have a monopoly on violence and weapons, in contrast to any kind of class-based revolutionary violence. On the other hand, the vast majority of Gaza’s population remains a disposable surplus proletariat—cannon fodder.

## **Hamas and the trap of “anti-imperialist” campism**

On this basis, the October 7 attack by Hamas and its collaborators in Israel was an act of war by what had until then been the de facto state authority in Gaza. It was not an act of resistance by a movement, nor did it have a proletarian or revolutionary character. It cannot serve as a model or compass for proletarian struggles. Its primary aim was to overturn the situation that was taking shape with the Abraham Accords and to alter the geopolitical balance in the Middle East. Secondly, it served *temporarily* to address Hamas’ internal legitimacy crisis in Gaza—as demonstrated by the recent mass demonstrations against Hamas. Considering the outcome, i.e. the utterly heinous response of the Israeli state the attack did not serve – nor could it have served – the interests and needs of the Palestinian population, which was already living in conditions of apartheid and displacement by the Israeli state. It targeted military and non-military targets alike and attempted to terrorize the enemy population, like any *state* military action, albeit on a much smaller scale. However, counting corpses and comparing massacres is alien to any proletarian perspective. The overwhelming majority of those killed in capitalist war are our own dead.

## **Greece on the side of Israel: Economic Interests and Geopolitical Rivalries**

As mentioned, the war in Gaza is part of a broader imperialist conflict. The Greek state is already dragging us deep into this conflict, increasing military spending, providing facilities, and actively participating in the battle plans of the “Western” bloc. On the one hand, there are immediate economic reasons why the Greek government supports Israel: the cooperation between Greek and Israeli capital from armaments (INTRACOM Defense) to real estate and from the Greece-Cyprus-Israel electricity interconnection project to many other sectoral collaborations. Even more important is the alliance between Greece and Israel against the growing geopolitical power of Turkey. In this context, an informal Greece-Cyprus-Israel front has been formed with joint military exercises, (aborted) plans to build a natural gas pipeline (EastMed) that would bypass Russian distribution networks, exchange of information, diplomatic coordination on the definition of Exclusive Economic Zones, etc. On the other hand, there is the broader context of competition between the “Western” and the so-called “Eurasian” imperialist blocs. This includes the plan to connect India, Middle East and Europe (IMEC), which will bypass sea routes such as the Suez Canal, the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb and potentially even the Strait of Hormuz, removing geopolitical power from the states that currently control them. This plan is supported by the US, the EU, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and India. Even if this plan does not succeed, as is often the case with such plans, it is a method of exerting geopolitical influence on the parties involved.

## **From the crisis of “globalization” to state capitalism and war economy**

Greece’s support for Israel is not solely related to the direct economic interests of Greek capital or the immediate geopolitical interests of the Greek state. Rather, it reflects broader shifts in both the global system of capitalist nation-states and the regimes of accumulation within economically advanced national social formations. The capitalist crisis since 2008 has also been a crisis of the

“globalization” model, evidenced by the resurgence of protectionism, with tariffs imposed and increased on international trade. This new era of protectionism coincides with increased state intervention, signaling the emergence of a new form of “state capitalism,” characterized by war economies and significant investments from the so-called “sovereign wealth funds” that have expanded enormously in recent years. Major powers are developing planning systems aimed at enhancing their economic and military power, replacing market-regulated global economic linkages and inaugurating a new phase of capitalist reproduction.

This is also the basis for the intensification of imperialist rivalry and military conflicts to secure land, resources, and labor. This is also the reason for a cross-party consensus (except for the Greek Communist Party) on increasing military spending under the ReArm Europe program. The main blocs in the new escalation of the conflict over raw materials, markets, technological leadership, spheres of influence, and cultural hegemony are, on the one hand, the US as the existing hegemonic power and, on the other hand, China as an emerging imperialist power with ambitions for global hegemony. The US is supported by the major powers of the EU, Japan, the United Kingdom, and Australia, along with Israel and Saudi Arabia; opposing them, aligned with China, are Russia, Belarus, Iran, and North Korea. Other powerful countries of the “Global South”—India, Brazil, Indonesia, and South Africa—have not yet definitively aligned with either bloc. In this conflict, Greece aligns with the “Western” imperialist bloc and supports it. Furthermore, through its participation in this conflict, it seeks to improve its regional position and power, e.g. through the possible establishment of a larger EEZ, as evidenced by the presence of warships in the Libyan Sea. Of course, these formations are not monolithic and do not preclude cooperation between countries belonging to different blocs. After all, these are “enemy brothers”: competition does not preclude cooperation, which may be followed by armed conflict.

## **Against “campism”: an internationalist class response to capitalist war**

If we do not resist now by every possible means this escalating war situation, we will soon find ourselves with our backs against the wall. From the perspective of proletarian interests, there are no “just” or “defensive” wars. Such distinctions are a mystification that conceals the conflict between national capitals and imperialist blocs for control over capital and commodity markets, spheres of influence, and cheap labor. Each side involved in a war portrays its own role as “defensive” and “just.” A victory for the weaker state makes it stronger, restarting the vicious cycle anew, as historical experience has demonstrated. The defeat of a stronger state power necessarily means strengthening the opposing nation-state and rallying the population around it. Any class-based resistance must be crushed to enforce social peace and national unity.

In the past, support for “weak” nationalisms and their respective states was disguised behind the strengthening of the so-called socialist camp. Today, with even this pretense absent, criticism of capitalism is abandoned in favor of cultural distinctions between West and East or North and South, as proclaimed by contemporary “anti-colonial” ideology and identity politics. This distinction is clearly irrational, mythical, and reactionary since capitalism is a universal and global system: “[it] has turned the whole planet into its field of operation” even though religious, ethnic, and national oppression obviously still exist and are not the “privilege” of specific states. The old spectacular pseudo-dichotomy of capitalism versus “socialism” has been replaced by a new one,

devoid of any pretense of social emancipation, as exemplified by “anti-imperialist” support for Iran, Russia, or China, except for an invocation of a hollow “theory of stages”. Supporting an imperialist camp, or campism, is inherent to anti-imperialist ideology because it provides a top-down analysis focused on conflicts between states rather than a proletarian perspective rooted in the global conflict between capital and proletariat. Support for the forces of the “other side” and the national liberation movements associated with them cannot even bring about the overthrow of imperialism, which is inherent in capitalism. Objectively, the political position of supporting one imperialist camp paves the way for the broader militarization of society and capitalist war. Anti-imperialists even go so far as to support the nuclear programs of supposedly “weak states,” which can lead to the culmination of capitalist war and total destruction.

The only way out of the spiraling warfare is proletarian internationalist action with a clear anti-capitalist character. We refuse to be accomplices of any army or any state. We will not bolster any of the warring camps. The only solution in the face of war is the autonomous class organization of the struggle against capital and the state in our own country and practical support for those who refuse military service. It is also the support of deserters and conscientious objectors on the “other side” as well as practical solidarity with political and social collectives fighting against capitalist war in Russia, Ukraine, Israel, Palestine, Iran, and everywhere else. Instead of such a practice, which is the minimum necessary condition for not becoming cannon fodder for capital, we witness unacceptable calumny about “collaborationism” and “national treason” against anarchist and communist comrades and, more broadly, working class collectives (e.g. in Iran).

Precisely in this context, we must express our solidarity with the—admittedly few—conscientious objectors in Israel, as well as with those forces within Israel that are resisting the genocide being carried out in Gaza. The identification of the entire population with its state is false, as demonstrated by the fact that 100,000 reservists did not report for duty after the ceasefire was broken by the Israeli state. Incidents of Israeli nationalist hatred should be confronted when they occur. The logic of indiscriminate attacks on Israeli tourists is racist, as it attributes collective responsibility to the entire population, while undermining the already weak current of opposition to the war within Israel.

We are against capitalist war and any involvement of the Greek state in it, against the militarization of society and the increase in military spending that comes at the expense of the social wage. We are fighting for the creation of an internationalist proletarian movement that does not submit to national interests, the state and capital, expressing practical solidarity with the proletarian, political—communist and anarchist—collectives fighting in the war-torn countries. Our goal is to build ties and communication with internationalist proletarians. Only through the global unity of the proletariat may we overthrow this barbarism imposed by states and capital. We must not allow ourselves to be herded into a corner, but rather end capitalist war by fighting those who cause it. **Our war is neither national nor religious. It is a social, anti-state class war.**

**Anti-War Internationalist Assembly**

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