

# **Against austerity, fascism, war, environmental catastrophe, and barbarism, fight for international socialism!**

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The world has entered 2016 full of concern and horror. World capitalism, eight years after the Lehman Brothers collapse, is sinking further in its still unresolved, rapidly deepening crisis dragging humanity into ever greater austerity, unemployment, inequality, homelessness and misery. It has created a socio-economic environment in which the fascist plague has once again reared its head. Its contradictions have created conflagration and war in the Middle East, in Africa, in the former Soviet republics and elsewhere, wars that even threaten a Third World War. And it has unleashed a process of environmental degradation that threatens not only our future as humans but all living species.

It is not sufficient to bemoan the scourges of austerity and unemployment, of war and fascism, of authoritarianism and climate change. We need to understand the dynamics behind these and fight those scourges according to the logic of the

objective situation. The left-wing movements around the world, so-called social democracy and what were once, before the deluge, official communist parties or their present-day avatars, have been sinking to ever lower levels since the collapse of the bureaucratically degenerated states (the Soviet Union, China, Eastern and Central Europe etc.). They have no compass to comprehend the course history has taken and no will to overturn this ugly socio-economic order. But only through a radical critique of the existing situation and a daring attitude of confrontation with the powers that can be the left really help to lead humanity out of the plight it is being carried into by imperialist capitalism.

### **In the throes of the Third Great Depression**

The period we are going through is marked deeply by the sweeping economic crisis of capitalism, certainly triggered by the financial collapse of 2007-2008, but produced by the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production as a whole and bearing the character of a thorough economic depression by no means confined to the financial sphere. Already eight years into this crisis, capital and its political-ideological personnel can see no way out and are trying their best to weather the storm without the least idea where salvation lies. The crisis has gone through different phases: the bailout of the private financial system through the so-called policies of “quantitative easing” and a zero-interest rate policy simply ended up transferring the burden to the public sector, begetting the public debt crisis, expressed most violently in the southern rim of the European Union from 2010 on. The expansionary monetary policy of all the major central banks of the capitalist world nonetheless kept the world economy afloat, assisted in this, as a result of uneven development, by the relatively high rates of growth of the so-called “emerging markets”, first and foremost China, but also countries such as India, Brazil, Russia, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey and others. These two factors were indeed what buoyed the more mature economies of the capitalist world, thus preventing a deeper stagnation of the world economy.

At present, both these factors are reaching their end. The quantitative easing program in the US has ended and the raising of the US interest rate in December 2015 by the Federal Reserve after a decade of nearly zero interest rates reverses the flow of capital to the emerging markets, which also face the impact of the slowing of the Chinese economy and the collapse of the prices of commodities, first and foremost that of oil. These dramatic changes have vast implications not only to the so-called emerging and underdeveloped countries but also in Europe, Japan, and the US themselves, all over the world. From the dawn of the year 2016, with the tsunami in the Chinese and world stock markets, rises the prospect of a much deeper stagnation of the global economy with much higher levels of unemployment.

Although in the first phase of the post 2007-08 world crisis, the “emerging markets” appeared to keep their steam, it is now their turn to fall into deep recession, as is already the case in Brazil and Russia. Even the main engine of growth reviving

the world economy, China, has now become a powerful factor of instability, having seen first its real estate market, then its stock exchange, and now the real economy declining further and further into trouble.

The move by the central bank of the US, the Fed, to decrease gradually and in circumspect manner the wholly artificial support given to the economy for years, first reducing and finally eliminating so-called “quantitative easing” and now raising interest rates, is by no means a show of confidence in the robust development of the American economy, but a preventive step to avert a new bursting of the bubble and a repeat of 2007-2008 on a much higher scale. However, coinciding with deep trouble in China, a third recession in Japan despite the much-vaunted Abenomics, and continuing morass in the Eurozone economy, it will in all probability contribute to the onset of a new phase of stagnation in the world economy.

Just how serious the situation is can only be gauged by the increasing panic sowed in some of the market actors themselves. The economists of the Royal Bank of Scotland, one of the largest in the world, have warned their clients in the following manner: “Sell everything except high quality bonds. This is about return of capital, not return on capital. In a crowded hall, exit doors are small.” The report also likened the current situation to 2008, when the collapse of the Lehman Brothers investment bank led to the global financial crisis. This time, it was said, China could be the crisis point.

### **Barbarism on the rise**

The Third Great Depression is not simply a road accident. Nor is it a market correction episode. It is one of the most profound economic crises in the history of capitalism that attest to the decline of the possibilities within the capitalist mode of production due to the contradiction that arises between the highly socialised productive forces and the private appropriation of the products generated by those advanced forces. The destruction of the environment is a sign of the throttling of productive forces by present-day capitalism. High unemployment, appalling misery and declining health and education for the labouring masses are indications of the fact that capitalism has become a barrier for the further advance of humanity. The tendency to create conflict and war, bordering more and more on a Third World War, is clear testimony that capitalism in its imperialist stage is now more than a barrier to progress, but, given the weapons of mass destruction it has developed, a full-scale threat to the sheer survival of humanity, indeed of all living species.

It is within this historical maelstrom that the seeds of barbarism are laid. Fascism is rearing its head in Europe. For the first time since the Second World War, fascist movements harking back to the Nazi period shared power, albeit temporarily, in Ukraine after the Maidan events. The European Parliament elections of May 2014 showed that no country on the old continent was immune to the spread of the fascist virus. In three countries (France, the UK, and Denmark) the so-called “extreme right” came out of the elections as the first political force. This concept “extreme

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right” is a kind of euphemism that hides the existence of explicitly fascist parties claiming Nazi symbols, such as the Golden Dawn in Greece or Jobbik in Hungary or of parties that threaten to swiftly transform themselves into such, for instance the Vlaamsblok in the Netherlands or the Front National in France. It is only because capitalism has once again carried humanity into a historic impasse that fascism has come on the agenda once again.

On the other hand, the black banner of ISIS is but the most extreme expression of the growth of extremely barbaric tendencies within the predominantly or partially Muslim countries of the Middle East and North Africa, reaching further into sub-Saharan Africa in such cases as Somalia, Mali and, above all, Nigeria. The rise of the takfiri movements, i.e. movements that stigmatise as “infidel” all save those who prostrate before them, irrespective of whether they are Christians or Jews or of the Shia or Alevi denominations of Islam or even Sunni Muslims, with their retrograde ideology that imposes an austere lifestyle on the entire population with a multitude of prohibitions, especially on women, is a scourge that threatens tens of millions in the regions where they are becoming stronger. Even more alarming is the fact that these movements recruit their militants internationally, not only from the predominantly Muslim countries of the Middle East, Africa, the Caucasus, or Central Asia (in particular Eastern Turkistan in China), but from among the destitute younger generation of Muslim communities of the imperialist countries of the West as well, facing social exclusion, racism, State repression and mass unemployment. This means of course that the barbarism of the takfiri kind and that of the classical Nazi genre are bound to clash in the heart of an imploding Europe.

The rise of the threat of Sunni-Shia sectarian belligerence in the Middle East both feeds into takfiri radicalism, but also transcends it to threaten the whole region with a barbaric internecine war that will surely ravage the entire Islamic world.

No mistake should be made, however, as to where the ultimate responsibility for this rise in barbaric tendencies lies. It is not against the backdrop of a supposedly immaculate “Western civilisation” that the hordes of fascists in Ukraine or the barbarians of the Islamic world rise up. “Western civilisation” in its capitalist form, what Marx in his day called “*the leper within civilization*” is the very source that breeds the dynamics of these barbarisms. Not only in the more immediate sense of supporting these retrograde tendencies, be it openly or in underhanded fashion. This undeniable aspect, clearly observable whether in the open encouragement given to the events of Maidan by the European Union, the United States and NATO, with the thinly disguised support extended to fascist groups such as the Right Sector there or in the support given to the Sunni sectarian groups in Syria that converted what started out as a popular uprising in the footsteps of Tunisia and Egypt into a wholesale civil war, is only part of the story. What is more fundamental is that capitalism creates the dynamics for these movements by creating unemployment and misery and by fanning the flames of war in order to reach its own despicable ends.

Were it not for the support extended by the Reagan administration to the so-called Mujahideen in Afghanistan in the 1980s, Al Qaeda would probably not have seen the light of day. Were it not for the fact that Bush junior through his war and occupation created havoc in Iraq and totally alienated the Sunni minority, the ISIS could certainly not have gained the support of that community to establish its first base to then spread its influence to other elements. And were it not for the rampant unemployment, misery and daily humiliation suffered by the teenagers of the *cités* in France and the vast interior of Tunisia and elsewhere, ISIS would certainly not have been able to reach out to so many tens of thousands of youth that would fight for its barbaric cause.

Donald Trump and Marine Le Pen are the living proof of the barbaric tendencies that are present in the so-called advanced societies of “Western civilisation”. Capitalism in its period of historic decline acts as the breeding ground for the barbaric tendencies that we see around us daily.

### **The source of hope: the recrudescence of class struggles**

But the tendency towards barbarism that capitalism creates is not the only product of the present world situation. There is also a very clear counter-current that creates hope for the future. Not to see this is to succumb to the pervasive pessimism that has gripped the left since the collapse of the Soviet Union and of the Stalinist regimes of the so-called “actually existing socialism”.

Great depressions create opposing tendencies. The crisis of the 1930s, created fascism and Japanese expansionism, on the one hand, and the Spanish revolution, the revolutionary events in France before and during the period of the “Popular Front”, the massive radicalisation of the Chinese peasants, and the rise of the American workers’ movement, on the other. With capital desperately trying to extricate itself from the contradictions of its own making, with no compromise between the contending classes any longer possible, society turns ever more towards radical political and ideological currents. Thus the simultaneous rise, on the one hand, of fascism and barbarism, and, on the other, class struggle tendencies bordering on or leading to revolution when conditions are ripe.

The years 2011-2013 were the scene of social upheaval internationally, in which masses fought for a different world. From Tunisia and Egypt, the truly mass-based revolutions in the Arab world that gave an impetus to less ambitious uprisings in many other countries including Bahrain, Yemen and Syria in the first six months of the events in that country to the United States, where the Occupy Wall Street movement provided the model for similar movements in dozens of American cities, from Spain where the Indignados movement occupied the central squares of the major cities of the country for weeks on end, and Greece, where another square occupation on Syntagma accompanied the dozens of general strikes that shook the country for years, to Tel Aviv, where a camp was established on Rothschild Boulevard to protest the economic problems of poor Israelis, peoples around

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the planet rose in tandem to fight for a better world. In the summer of 2013, it was the turn of the Turkish and Brazilian masses to rise. At the end of June that year, mass struggles in three countries synchronically shook the world, when 30 million Egyptians came out against the usurpation of power by the elected Muslim Brotherhood administration.

The specific demands may have been different, but the general perception was one of fraternity and camaraderie between the diverse movements. Egyptian revolutionaries ordered pizzas to go to the municipal workers of Wisconsin while Occupy Wall Street activists evoked the Egyptian revolution in all their actions. The Brazilian masses sent greetings across the ocean when they started out on their action only ten days after the Gezi uprising in Turkey by putting forth the slogan, "Love is over, henceforth this is Turkey". The most remarkable case was seen in Tel Aviv, where, after decades of hostility between Israel and the Arab countries, the campers saluted the revolutionaries of Tahrir square!

That revolutionary moment has faded. The first phase of the new revolutionary current has come to an end. It is important to be clear on the reason why. Egypt was the paradigmatic case of that revolutionary phase. And it was there more than anywhere else crystal clear that the masses lacked revolutionary leadership. The Egyptian working class was extremely combative both in the years that preceded the revolution and during the two years of revolution itself. The strike movement was decisive in bringing down Mubarak. Close to a million and a half workers joined independent unions in those years. A dynamics of permanent revolution was in the air. But there were no attempts on the part of the revolutionary political groupings to establish class independence and bring the revolution under the political hegemony of the working class. Hence the crisis of political leadership is the lesson to be drawn from that first phase of the revolution.

However, the retreat of the revolutionary wave does not imply that the masses are not fighting back. Even under the military dictatorship of al Sisi, the Egyptian textile workers in October 2015 succeeded to launch a combative and victorious strike.

It is true that since 2013, austerity, war, fascism and creeping authoritarianism have taken front stage. But the struggle of the masses has taken a different route in this second phase. The Arab revolution having fallen into what we believe to be a momentary setback, the European working class has taken over the banner of struggle. Given the overall historical conditions and the state of consciousness that is but a product of those conditions, the European proletariat, and in particular its sections in the southern rim of the continent, have turned to an electoral strategy to try to push back the devastating policy of immiseration imposed on them by the so-called Troika of the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the IMF. (In the case of Greece at least, this has become the Quartet, as the European Stability Mechanism-ESM has joined the group of bandits.)

In country after country, the working masses are turning to parties to the left of

traditional social democracy, like Syriza in Greece or Podemos in Spain thereby giving a heavy blow to the discredited dominantly two-party systems of the previous period. 2015 was emblematic in this sense.

This new turn in Southern Europe finds its basis, of course, in the powerful mass movement that had emerged in the first phase of the struggle, when, especially in that decisive year of 2011, the masses in Greece and Spain had come out massively and resolutely to protest the wave of austerity, unemployment and poverty that had gripped their societies in the wake of the financial collapse of 2007-2008. It is important to be clear on the fact that the parliamentary victory of parties like Syriza and Podemos is but a specific (and we believe transient) form of the real content, which is the combative mood of the masses.

As the case of Egypt was paradigmatic in the earlier phase, so is the case of Greece paradigmatic in this second phase of the struggle. In this period of crisis that opened in 2007-2008, Greece has been the weakest link of the weak link of world capitalism, the European Union. It has been subjected to the discipline of austerity imposed by Brussels aided by the IMF with the collusion of the major political forces of the Greek bourgeoisie. The response of the masses has been exemplary. Prepared by the fire of the December 2008 revolt against the criminal murder of a 15-year youth by the police, the Greek masses staged countless general strikes throughout this whole period as well as a standing occupation in the early summer of 2011 in tandem with the indignados movement of Spain.

Greece is also the country that has most clearly revealed the contradictions of the new path chosen by the masses in their fight against the onslaught of capital. After having made a first turnaround at the end of February, in the mere interval of a month, to the demands of the Troika, the government of Tsipras consulted the masses in a referendum in early July, probably in the hope that the majority would vote “yes”, leaving its hands free for a full capitulation. The working masses of Greece said “no” with a resounding 62 per cent of the vote! The fact that Tsipras then went on to yield to the pressure of the EU despite this robust backing the Greek people had given him proved, in action, what we had said all along, that this strategy of backing reformist left-wing parties at a time when reform is the least possible, when taking power from the hands of the capitalist class is the only alternative to misery and reaction, is a blind alley. Syriza’s strategic line for a class “historical compromise” at home, and above all, abroad was condemned to fail ingloriously: **it asked for class peace in conditions of open class war.** Tsipras and his team went to Brussels and Berlin, marching in a minefield under a declared warfare, to confront ferocious, unyielding enemies, by raising the flag of class peace, that is, the white flag of surrender.

But the masses will have to overcome this setback, the political limitations posed by reformism and the confusion spread by its betrayal through their own experience. The task of revolutionaries is to demarcate themselves clearly from the misleaders of the movement, without any trace of sectarian posturing towards the

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masses themselves, joining them in all their struggles against the common enemy, but all the while exposing the treacherous leaders for what they are and building a political and organisational alternative that will be capable of serving the masses as an instrument when they are ready to take the revolutionary path. This is true for Greece and for Spain and all the other countries where the working masses rise in a struggle for survival in the face of the onslaught of capital.

The year 2016 will be crucial for a Europe with millions of unemployed and impoverished people, a stagnating economy, an insoluble banking and debt crisis, extremely vulnerable to the new shocks coming from East and West, from China and America, fragmenting among national state lines, imperialist antagonisms and rising nationalisms, between its Northern, more “privileged” part and the European South, between Western and Eastern Europe.

The entire EU project is shaken and now its crisis is exacerbated immensely by the **political** crisis produced by the huge, unstoppable tides of refugees coming from all the countries fallen victims to European and US imperialist wars, devastation, and humanitarian crises all the way from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan to Africa.

The social and political changes are already obvious: the Balkans are destabilized; Poland and Central/Eastern Europe under far right ultra-nationalist regimes start to turn against even their previous masters, Germany and the EU; Ukraine has become, economically, politically, military a “black hole” at the eastern borders of the EU. Only a few months ago, Merkel appeared as the most powerful political leader in the EU; now even a sizeable section of her own party demands her dismissal because of the refugee crisis.

From Greece to Portugal, from Catalonia to Scotland, from the prospect of a Grexit to the possibility of a Brexit, Europe has entered a period of historic social and national confrontations, of great transformations. The European ruling classes have failed miserably to unify the Continent. This is the task of the working class, at the head of the impoverished masses.

What is needed is a new leadership for the working classes of Europe, a leadership that is organised at the international level, together with the revolutionary parties of other continents, to fight for a new Europe, one that has done away with the power of capital and its complex apparatus of rule embodied both in the structures of the EU and in nation-states and replace all this with the Socialist United States of Europe.

### **The other Troika: the plight of the Middle East and North Africa**

The Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) has become the neuralgic centre of the cataclysm the world is going through. Syria, a country with a surface area of around 200 thousand square kilometres (70 thousand square miles) and a population, before the onset of the war, of 23 million, has become the scene of a war in which more than 65 foreign countries are involved! (62 countries are part of the anti-ISIS coalition formed by the US, mostly Arab and European countries,



in addition to which Russia, Iran and Lebanon via Hezbollah are present on the field, not counting the warlord political unit called the Islamic State under the self-appointed caliph al Baghdadi.)

Three major trends have to be clearly enunciated in order to clarify what at first sight looks like a chaotic situation. First, the catastrophe that has descended on the Middle East is closely intertwined with the results of past instances of imperialist and Zionist intervention and aggression in the region. To confine ourselves to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, without the war and occupation of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), without the 2006 Israeli aggression against Lebanon and the 2008 and 2014 bombing of Gaza by Israel, without the imperialist bombing of Libya in 2011, without the arming and financing of the Sunni sectarian and takfiri groups in Syria after September 2011, nothing would have been the same in the MENA region today. To grasp this provides sufficient grounds to understand why no support should be extended to the imperialist coalition in its fight against ISIS or any other forces in the region. The conflict between the US and its allies, on the one hand, and the takfiri sectarian forces, on the other, is a struggle between two maledictions for the peoples of the Middle East and the forces of the working class and the oppressed should refrain from opting for one or the other and develop their own line of struggle against both. Imperialism, US imperialism in particular, has never been this weak and ineffective in its action regarding the region, lacking any consistent and convincing strategy to cope with the risks involved.

Secondly, benefiting from the void created by this weakness of imperialism, three regional powers, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey under the strongman Tayyip Erdoğan, are clearly instigating a Sunni-Shia conflict that threatens to turn into a full-scale war. This kind of sectarian war, a veritable civil war of the entire Islamic world, cannot but cause massive death and destruction in the whole region. The proxy wars that the world has been witnessing successively in Iraq especially around the years 2006-2007, in Bahrain in 2011, in Syria since late 2011, and in Yemen for approximately a year now, have now receded to the background in importance once the main forces behind this sectarian conflict, Saudi Arabia and Iran, openly started to confront each other since the beginning of the new year after the execution by the Saudi regime of Sheikh Nimr Bakr al-Nimr, the most prominent Shia clergyman in Saudi Arabia, for having come out to clearly condemn the Kingdom's policies, especially its invasion of Bahrain in order to quell revolution there in 2011-2012.

The Sunni-Shia divide, based on an ideological-theological schism that is almost as old as Islam itself, is at present only the ideological expression of a material clash of interests between the two rentier states and their ruling classes that live off the ground rent provided by the oil and natural gas reserves under their soil. The scope of the problem is easily grasped when one remembers that the Eastern province of Qatif of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are major sources of ground rent that also happen to be Shia-dominated, but Sunni-ruled. When in 2011 Bahrain and the Shia population of Saudi Arabia joined the Arab masses in ebullition, this caused

a nightmare for the Saudi regime, already the principal centre of counterrevolution in the whole Arab world. The new self-styled “Islamic Alliance against Terrorism”, announced recently in Riyadh by the new strongman of Saudi Arabia, Muhammad bin Selman, son of the king and deputy crown prince, brings together 34 Muslim countries, but studiously excludes all countries with some degree of Shia or Alevi influence. It is no small irony that this very country that poses as the leader of the Sunni Islamic world, this country whose hallmark is, apart from being host to the holy places of Islam, being one of richest countries in the world thanks to its oil reserves, now finds itself, at this very critical juncture, in deep trouble economically as a result of the fall in the price of oil in the context of the world economic crisis.

All the more reason why a sectarian war in the Middle East will be one where the partition of the immense wealth produced on the basis of oil and natural gas between the ruling cliques of these countries will be the main bone of contention, the theological divide only serving to mask these interests. However, because the masses, unless convinced of this nature of the war, will come out on the side of their respective denominations, this will be one of the bloodiest settling of accounts in the annals of war.

The place of Tayyip Erdoğan in this equation is crucial to understand. Turkey is more advanced in terms of its capitalist economic structures and the formation of a capitalist class than all the Arab countries. The Turkish bourgeoisie has been exhibiting expansionist tendencies ever since the 1990s, when the collapse of the Soviet Union and the other bureaucratically degenerated workers’ states promised to open up new geographic spaces for the increasingly ambitious capital of the country. Riding on the crest of this wave, Tayyip Erdoğan has set his eyes on becoming the “Rais” (or leader) of the whole MENA region. This is what explains his and his party’s criminal policy of instigating civil war in Syria, pitting Sunni forces against the Alevi minority. However, Turkey has its own conflict with Saudi Arabia over Egypt, the former supporting the Muslim Brotherhood and the latter the hangman of the Brotherhood, the Bonaparte al Sisi.

The US should not be assumed to be automatically behind Saudi Arabia, long-time major ally in the region, and Turkey, member of NATO. In effect, the execution of al Nimr by the Saudi regime may be regarded partially as a forcing of the hand of the US to choose sides, since the nuclear deal with Iran signed in July last year was met by the Saudi regime with utter hostility. As for Erdoğan, he has his own frictions with the US over the Kurds of Syria, whom the US regards as one of the most useful allies on the ground while the AKP government regards them as a threat since the leading force within the Syrian Kurdish community is pro-PKK.

So the great current threat to the MENA region comes from what could be called the other Troika composed of the Saudi Kingdom, Qatar and Turkey.

Thirdly, several factors are now working, for the first time since the civil war started, in favour of a political solution to the Syrian impasse. Russia has realised that the longer the quagmire continues, the higher the threat of a contagion of takfiri

tendencies to its own Muslim populations both at home and in the so-called “near abroad” and may very well be willing to sacrifice Beshar al Assad in return for what is termed a “civil state” in Syria, roughly the counterpart of a “secular regime” in Arab political terminology. The European Union has confronted a million-strong flow of asylum-seekers, likely to cause an even bigger friction given the rise of racism all over the continent and is ready to find a political solution so as to stop definitively this migratory flow. The US is now, to take Obama for his word, even more worried about ISIS than Assad and may end up agreeing to a revamped Baath regime if Assad is personally removed. The position of Iran will depend on who prevails in domestic politics, the more pro-Western moderates, including a wing of the conservatives represented by the current president Rouhani, or the true conservatives, who are already quite hostile to the nuclear deal. If the former wing, receiving the support of all who stand to gain from an overture to Western capitalism, wins, then Iran will finally drop its adamant refusal to the ouster of Assad.

It is in fact the Sunni Troika that will try to prevent a political solution in Syria. They have invested so much in the fall of the Syrian regime that it will be utter defeat for all three of them if something akin to the Baath regime minus Assad remains in power. So a relentless struggle against the Saudi regime and the power system established by Tayyip Erdoğan in Turkey is vital for the future of the peoples of the region. A Sunni-Shia war in the Middle East will mean devastation for the region and the breeding ground of the Third World War.

The salvation of the peoples of the MENA region lies in the revival of the spirit of the Arab revolution, of the Gezi uprising in Turkey, of the Rothschild Boulevard protests in Israel, the serhildans of the Kurds, the intifada of the Palestinians, and a renewed revolutionary movement in Iran. It requires the joining together of the forces of the working class and the poor peasantry, of the oppressed nations and creeds, of the downtrodden women and the destitute youth in order to create an alternative to the bloodthirsty belligerence of the ruling classes. Only the formation of a Socialist Federation of the Middle East and North Africa will really bring peace and prosperity to the age-long problems that afflict the peoples of the region.

### **Build revolutionary parties and an International!**

One can invest no confidence at all in the traditional leaderships to weather all the storms that rock the old continent and the Mediterranean world and to stop the headlong rise of barbaric tendencies. Neither the old Stalinist parties, nor the new supposedly pluralist parties devised as a refuge from the bankruptcy of Stalinism without any clear perspectives for the future, nor yet social democracy in Europe, on the one hand, nor the petty bourgeois nationalism of the Nasserite kind in the Arab world, on the other, can provide answers to the burning questions of our time. Postmodern identity politics or post-Marxist “radical democracy”, popular across a spectrum of parties of very diverse character, ranging from Podemos in Spain all

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the way to the predominantly Kurdish HDP in Turkey, are totally off the mark in a world where class struggle and outright war more and more say the final word.

What is needed is a revolutionary party of the working class in each country and an international organisation that brings them together to act as a leading light in regional, continental and worldwide struggles. What is needed more than ever is to provide leadership to the masses through internationalist parties reared in the traditions of revolutionary Marxism. The success of such a quest is the final condition of putting an end to barbarism through the creation of international socialism, in country after country, region after region, and continent after continent.

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