

In this issue

This edition of *Revolutionary Marxism* has been delayed by a host of factors, but the last phase of the preparation was directly hampered by the reactionary attack, entirely outside legal boundaries and trampling all democratic precepts, by Erdogan's despotic government against his major rival, the CHP-affiliated Istanbul mayor, for the next presidential election (still some way off) in order to bar him from running. We are confident that our readers are aware of the details of this episode. We would only like to emphasise the fact that this led to a revival of street politics, in the course of which especially university students, later joined by their high school kindred, became very active despite the repression of the regime's police forces. It was as a result of his support for this student movement, slowly but surely moving outside the hegemony of the CHP, during a march organised by the Union of Education and Science (Eğitim-Sen) that our comrade Levent Dölek, Deputy Chairman of DIP, the Revolutionary Workers Party, was first detained by the police in a dawn raid to his home and then arrested pending trial by a court. He remained in prison for a fortnight, bravely and astutely spread the word of his party, and was finally released along with some of his students. (You can read his assessment of the overall political situation of the country in the light of the local elections of 2024 in this edition of the journal.) This is why our editorial piece "In This Issue" is somewhat dated. We decided that rather than extending even further the delay in the publication of the journal we would leave the editorial piece as it was.

Revolutionary Marxism's 2025 issue appears at a juncture where a reshuffling of global politics is afoot on several planes. The new and bolstered Donald Trump administration in the US comes with a new tactical orientation for the foremost imperialist power. Negotiations with Russia already started in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to conclude the NATO-Russia war fought on Ukrainian soil. The fact that the US intends to sit on the other side of the table with Russia – and not Ukraine – betrays the real belligerents of the war, notwithstanding the spurious refrains about Ukraine's war of independence. A war of aggression against Russia conducted by Western imperialism fittingly reaches a new phase with the reorientation of the former.

The new set of tactics of US imperialism also has been causing a whole lot of inter-imperial tension. In addition to sidelining the EU in the Ukrainian question –in vain, they waited for an invitation to Riyadh – the US has been raising claims on Greenland, an autonomous region of Denmark and hence part of the EU, possibly to leverage it to haggle with the EU and secure more concessions, on security and commerce alike. The threat of tariffs that Trump has been waving around targets not only China and Mexico but also Canada (even if the initial 25 percent tariffs are postponed for now) and the EU, causing further problems. While it is too early to reach a verdict, the inter-imperial fissures, particularly that between the US and the EU, might prove to be a crucial dynamic in the years to come.

The reorientation of US imperialism hardly resembles that of ardent peace lovers. On the contrary, it is clear that US imperialism seeks to recalibrate its forces according to a new tactic but with the same old strategy. Negotiations with Russia go hand in hand with further support towards Israel in its genocidal war – shifted towards the West Bank after the so-called ceasefire – and Trump’s despicable calls for the total ethnic cleansing of Gaza. The ceasefire, already on shaky ground with constant Zionist provocations, might soon come to an end, and Zionist colonialism might launch the second and even more brutal phase of its genocide.

Palestinian resistance and resilience remain steadfast, but the broader conjuncture has worked against the forces known as the Axis of Resistance in the last year or so. Hassan Nasrallah’s murder in a targeted Zionist bombardment was the peak point of what might be a 1967 moment for the Axis of Resistance, comparable to that of Nasserism in the six-day war – meaning an utterly devastating military defeat at the hands of the Zionists and the beginning of the Axis’ decline as the hitherto hegemonic force in Middle Eastern politics. Further developments only corroborated this analysis. Hezbollah had to swallow a ceasefire agreement with Israel that was highly disadvantageous for the Lebanese side – and this is putting it mildly. The new Lebanese president, Joseph Aoun and the new government under Nawaf Salam hardly seem propitious to Hezbollah. The fact that Hezbollah and its ally Amal, in contrast to the past when they were able to control all the ministries allotted to the Shiites, could this time only obtain four out of five Shiite ministers – meaning that the government would not fall even if their ministers were to resign, given that the remaining Shiite minister would let the government preserve its so-called “sectarian legitimacy” –is a further symptom of Hezbollah’s diminishing clout. The fall of Bashar Asad’s power in Syria only bolsters this trend.

The civil war in Syria, which emerged out of what was briefly an episode with the Arab revolutions but rapidly turned to a reactionary conflict, came to a tentative conclusion with the victory of the takfiri forces coalesced around the HTS. While the forces led by Assad surrendered to the takfiri army, forces such as Russia, Iran and Hezbollah, which were in conflict with imperialism, suffered a serious blow. With the victory of the takfiris in Syria, Hezbollah’s supply lines in Syria have been cut. It is clear that Israel has been greatly relieved. Moreover, fighting Israel while the genocide against the Palestinian people continues is not on the agenda of HTS and other takfiri organizations.

This does not mean that the imperialists and Zionists have won a decisive and final

victory in the region. The “victory” was won by forces that are still on the list of “terrorist organizations” in the imperialist countries and their rivals fed and equipped by Turkey. The fate of the Kurdish groups, which have unfortunately turned to a strategic alliance with the US, or that of the remnants of Assad’s forces is uncertain, and Turkey has gained an edge in the region. More importantly, the reason why the imperialists have been able to achieve such victories, is, first of all, that their opponents are not workers’ states, but states that are fighting against imperialism with serious weaknesses. Russia and Iran, on the one hand, repress their own societies and pursue policies in the interests of a handful of oligarchs and mullahs, while on the other hand, instead of showing real solidarity between themselves, they still pursue their own subtle and “realistic” foreign policies against imperialism, the enemy of humanity.

For the Kurds, the situation in Syria does not present a rosy picture. There is a possibility that US imperialism will let the Kurds down and give space to NATO member Turkey. In the meantime, Arab tribes benefitting from the new balance in Syria are launching attacks against the YPG east of the Euphrates. Well aware of its conundrum, the SDF has recently hinted at its openness to accept the main terms of the new power in Damascus, and integrate its forces into the Syrian army.

The reflection of this situation in Rojava in Turkey was the introduction of a “new opening” by the fascist Nationalist Action Party (MHP), the main – if uneasy - ally of Erdoğan. It would be naive to think that this is independent of the developments in Syria. What is happening is not the AKP’s return to its “democratic days”, much vaunted by imperialist public opinion in its early years, but the colonialist plans of the Turkish bourgeoisie taking a new form and the search for it. If Abdullah Öcalan, the imprisoned leader of the PKK, convinces the YPG to fight for the same Sunni cause under the command structure of the Syrian army and join the Turkish armed forces when required by prospective alliances, this will increase the strength of the Sunni Arab, Turkmen and Kurdish (KDP) alliance that appears to be on Turkey’s side in the region. The PKK will be liquidated, and the remaining forces will try to get incorporated into this alliance.

As per above, 2024 will pass into history as the year of the first genocide of the twenty-first century. The insolent killing spree that Zionist Israel engaged in against the civilian population of Gaza, targeting the elderly, unarmed women and men, children and babies indiscriminately, can go by no other name than genocide. Despite the respite provided by the fragile cease-fire of recent weeks, this brutal practice will, in all probability, continue into 2025 and perhaps beyond.

2025 also happens to be the 110th anniversary of an early twentieth-century genocide. In that fateful year of 1915, in the midst of World War One, the Armenians of Anatolia (or Asia Minor) were massacred in their hundreds of thousands, the highest estimates even surpassing the million-mark. The instigator of the crime was the political leadership of the fledgling Turkish wing of the bourgeoisie of the country that was still then the Ottoman Empire. Turk and Kurd united in killing and raping and forcefully converting a people that had long been declared to be the “loyal nation” for centuries by tradition.

This question was anathema in public discourse up until the late twentieth century, but has been the topic of acrimonious controversy within Turkish society since the

mid-1990s. The moral driving force operational in bringing the topic on the agenda was the Armenian community of Istanbul, with Hrant Dink at its head and his weekly paper *Agos*, which was launched as the first Armenian- (and Turkish-) language periodical in the republican period and which acted as the organ of historical truth on this matter. (Our readers are probably aware that this Armenian socialist intellectual was assassinated by a goon in a plot prepared meticulously by the Turkish state.) It is an unfortunate fact, hardly palatable, that a majority of the socialist and communist left forces of the country have simply disregarded, if not actively denied together with all establishment political forces, the question of the Armenian genocide. As proletarian internationalists, we revolutionary Marxists feel duty-bound to unearth the truth about that tragic moment in the life of the region.

The article in this issue by Sungur Savran does this in a three-dimensional manner. It does not engage in the numbers game, simply noting that even the figures of casualties provided by the negationist historians, oscillating in the range of 300 to 600 thousand, amply sustain the idea of genocide for a total population of at most one and a half million souls (the count being much higher in other sources of course). His article proceeds from the assumption of the existence of a genocide. By clearly explaining the *raison d'être* of the genocide in historical, economic and political terms, Savran renders this seemingly opaque act of collective cruelty transparent for the public. However, he does this by using a scientific methodology that is entirely off the beaten track in the conventional account provided by liberal historians of Turkey, nationalist historians of the Armenian diaspora and imperialistically bent commentators elsewhere. The ordinary discourse on the Armenian genocide within Turkey is philosophically utterly idealistic, attributing the crime to the political and ideological “mentality” of the leadership of the Committee of Union and Progress, the bourgeois party that ruled Turkey between the 1908 revolution and the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the war in 1918. The discussion on the Armenian side and in imperialist countries, on the other hand, relies almost entirely on “national” or at times even “ethnic” interests, sometimes even going so far, in personal exchange, as to place the blame on the “evil” that resides in the “Turk”. As the title of his article makes clear, Savran proceeds to explain this tragic event through the lens of the struggles between the different classes actively fighting at the international, regional, and national levels, the latter level focussing not only on the Turkish side, but also on the Armenian and Kurdish sides.

And thirdly, the author does not make do with an analysis of the causes and consequences of this tragic event, but focusses on the mistakes of “our side”, this side not defined of course in national but in class terms. He goes into the strategic and tactical mistakes of socialist parties, including weaknesses in the position of the Bolshevik Party on the Armenian question, and reflects on the methods of the harnessing of the burning national conflicts in the region to the overall interests of the proletariat of the region in its multinational composition.

Alp Yücel Kaya, in his article entitled “Political Marxism: A Refutation”, discusses and criticizes the historical approach that Political Marxists put forward to analyze the origins of capitalism and/or capitalist development. Kaya observes that their theoretical starting point as well as their critical perspective towards the

Marxist literature examining capitalist development and bourgeois revolutions is that Marx's early work (the *German Ideology* and the *Communist Manifesto*) followed the narrative of historical development promoted by liberal historians and political economists and Marx broke with the liberal paradigm only with the *Grundrisse* and *Capital*. Kaya focuses in his article on this starting point, which serves as a theoretical basis in Political Marxists' exposition of the origins of capitalism, that is, periodization and differentiation of Marx's works and their immediate corollary, repudiation of the concept of bourgeois revolution by Political Marxism. Kaya argues that the perspective of historical materialism that the "young" Marx developed did not follow Adam Smith ("commercialization model" or four-stage theory of history) as Political Marxists argued but rather the German Historical School of Law; Marx's critical perspective led him, however, to supersede and conserve the formulations of the historical school of law as his critique of political economy superseded and conserved the formulations of the classical economists. The author does not concur with the view that Marx accepted the narrative of historical development promoted by bourgeois historians, as Marx's relationship with bourgeois historians is analogous to his relationship with bourgeois economists; Marx's approach to historical materialism is founded on the critique of bourgeois historians. Furthermore, according to Kaya, to reduce the concept of the bourgeois revolution, which gained prominence with Marx, to a simple struggle between the two classes (bourgeoisie-aristocracy) as bourgeois historians did (as well as some post-Marx Marxists did following Plekhanov) is to adopt a limited perspective when examining Marx's work. Kaya argues that Marx considered the struggles of the working people, the *sans culottes*, the *brasnus*, and the *Enragés* in his analysis of the French Revolution. By emphasizing maturation in the form of continuity and not rupture in Marx's works, Kaya asserts that thinking about the French Revolution led him to formulate the basic premises of the theory of permanent revolution and the theory of uneven and combined development.

Ana Bazac's article engages in a thorough discussion on Immanuel Kant's philosophy. The year 2024 was the tercentennial of Immanuel Kant's birth (1724-1804). On the occasion of this significant anniversary, Bazac has written a wide-ranging study on the relevance of Kant's world-renowned ethical principle, the categorical imperative, for revolutionary politics. This study does not only leave no stone unturned with respect to Kant's maxim, but also delves practically into contemporary world politics, raising questions and providing answers on concrete events of our epoch such as the wars in Ukraine and Gaza. In its last part, it also compares the approach adopted by Kant and by Marx to these questions.

Savvas Michael-Matsas' article, on the basis of his presentation at the Third International Trotsky Gathering held in Buenos Aires, provides an insightful picture into the multi-faceted global dynamics at work as well as the tasks lying ahead for revolutionaries. His analysis spans all across the world to show the imminent peril of a worldwide and catastrophic war. From this analysis emerges a crystal-clear conclusion: the need for a fight waged by the parties of a revolutionary International and tactical flexibility towards the peace movement and other anti-imperialist forces.

Burak Gürel's article, originally published in Turkish in 2022, examines in detail the class struggles in China in the recent period, the deepening contradictions

between China and imperialism, and the factional conflicts within Chinese capital and the Chinese Communist Party. Gürel shows that Xi Jinping initially extended a helping hand to Chinese capital—whose profits were being eroded by the rising labor movement and the impact of the third great depression—and that he employed state violence intensively to suppress that movement. Moreover, Gürel emphasizes that the factional struggle within the Chinese capitalist class intensified, revealing that Xi supported high-tech companies over industrialists reliant on low technology and financial speculators, a stance that led to widespread purges within both the party and the state.

Gürel's analysis demonstrates that by supporting high-tech companies, the Chinese state is attempting to shift China from the semi-periphery of the world economy to the imperialist core. At the same time, imperialist states are mobilizing to thwart this shift, thereby laying the groundwork for a third world war. The article also shows that these problems and contradictions have become explosive due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although China initially distinguished itself from the rest of the world with its "zero-COVID" policy during the first year of the pandemic, the failure of its domestic mRNA vaccine projects eventually forced the country into large-scale lockdowns, crippling the economy and social life. The article further highlights that, despite Xi's victorious emergence from the CCP 20th Congress, he has been cornered by contradictions related to the pandemic. In the final section, Gürel demonstrates that the successful struggle of workers at the Foxconn factory in Zhengzhou—one of the world's largest factories—sparked a series of events that culminated in mass protests spilling over onto campuses and streets in the final days of November 2022. These events deeply undermined Xi's supposedly unassailable power and forced him into a complete U-turn from the "zero-COVID" policy. Gürel concludes his article by pointing to revolutionary possibilities in China in light of the lessons from the third great depression, class struggles, and the November 2022 wave of protests.

Levent Dölek focuses on the 2024 local elections in Turkey in his article titled "March 2024 Municipal Elections from a Class Politics Perspective." He examines the results of the local elections in terms of establishment politics and draws lessons in line with class politics by focusing especially on the impact of the economic conditions. Dölek also criticizes the support of the socialist organizations in Turkey to the CHP, a bourgeois party and points to the need for working-class politics. According to Dölek, the uptick in the working-class movement will continue in 2025. He points out that experience has shown that the bourgeois opposition, due to its class interests, will compromise with despotism in Turkey once again, while the working-class movement remains capable of mobilizing even those toiling masses still under the ideological hegemony of autocratic parties such as the AKP and MHP in the struggle for bread and freedom.

Kutlu Dâne answers some frequently asked questions about the Al-Aqsa Flood Operation and the developments that followed in his article. The author, who is one of the spokespeople of the Friends of Palestine Against Imperialism and Zionism, first offers a brief account of the Zionist genocide, which is now in its second year, and then summarizes the atrocities that the Palestinian people face in different dimensions in order to understand why the Palestinian resistance organizations carried out this

operation, which at first glance might seem like a suicide mission. Then, he addresses the issue of supporting Hamas from a revolutionary Marxist perspective, especially against the confusion that the Islamic organization Hamas which held the leadership of the Palestinian side during and after the Al-Aqsa Flood, created within the socialist movement. The issues that Dâne draws attention to in the last section of the article remind us once again that the struggle of the Palestinian people against the Zionist genocide is of burning importance not only for the Palestinians but for all the workers and laborers of the region.

We are also proud to publish the English translation of an important historical document of the Palestinian left, its first appearance in English. This text, titled *Revolution and Workers*, comes from a speech given by the founder of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), George Habash, to the people gathered for the May Day celebrations in the Jabal al-Hussein neighborhood in Amman in 1970 – just before the Black September that would unfold later that year. In his speech, Habash emphasizes the central role of the working class in the struggle for the liberation of the Palestinian people and opposes it to the reactionary bourgeoisie whose interests are linked to colonialism.

The year 2024 was the twentieth anniversary of the death of one of the foremost Marxist economists of the twentieth century, Paul M. Sweezy. He was a very influential figure both in his own country and around the world, not only for his books and articles, which reached a wide audience, but also due to the very wide impact made by *Monthly Review*, the theoretical journal that he co-founded with Leo Huberman and Paul Baran in 1949 and, after their death, led together with Harry Magdoff. Sweezy's 1942 book *The Theory of Capitalist Development* was a primer for young Marxists for decades. But the work that influenced generations of theoreticians was penned together with Paul Baran and titled *Monopoly Capital*. The underconsumptionism that marks the entire oeuvre of the Monthly Review school was the result of the fact that the Great Depression of the 1930s was a major formative factor in the development of all four major thinkers of the school, as well as of their intellectual debt not only to Keynes, but also to Michał Kalecki. Our comrades Sungur Savran and E. Ahmet Tonak conducted an interview with Paul Sweezy back in 1986 for the Turkish Marxist journal *11. Tez* (Thesis Eleven). Later *Monthly Review* itself decided to publish the interview in its English original. We are publishing that interview in this issue in memory of Sweezy, as a homage to his long-standing defence of Marxism and his intransigent anti-imperialism.

Six months ago, two of our authors, editorial board member Sungur Savran and frequent contributor E. Ahmet Tonak, jointly published a book titled *In the Tracks of Marx's Capital* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2024). The book brings together their articles, written singly, jointly, or with other co-authors at different times, on Marx's political economy or using Marx's method and theory to inquire into different economic aspects of contemporary capitalism. In a dossier devoted to this book, we bring together three pieces here in order to give our readers a well-rounded idea of the book's various facets.

The first piece is by Korkut Boratav, indisputably the *doyen* of Marxist economists in Turkey. He is professor emeritus of Ankara University and has been active publishing

many books, chapters and articles, as well as, more recently, weekly columns in left-wing newspapers and internet sites about economic and political developments in Turkey and internationally, adopting a very oecumenical posture with respect to the different political currents within the left. He is the public intellectual *par excellence*. Boratav wrote the preface to the Tonak-Savran volume, in which he introduces the various parts and chapters for the benefit of the reader and gives his own brief assessment of the various controversial issues discussed in some chapters.

The second piece is by Michael Roberts, whose blog has over the years become a kind of Mecca for Marxists around the world when it comes to the burning economic questions of our time. In a very favourable review published on his blog, Roberts both introduces the reader to the overall contents of the book and provides his assessment of Tonak and Savran's treatment of the issues taken up. While in general agreement with the overall orientation of the authors, he takes issue with some of the opinions that are expressed in certain chapters and deepens the discussion on those questions.

As the last piece of both the dossier and the 2025 edition of *Revolutionary Marxism*, we are publishing a review of the book written by a young Italian Marxist, Sergio Crescenzi. Crescenzi is a member of the *Collective Le Gauche*, which can best be described as a research group of independent Marxist authors that seeks to influence the Italian public debate and to raise the quality of that debate through analyses and proposals based on scientific socialism. It aims to become an intellectual point of reference for militants in trade unions, parties and social movements in Italy. The group is very young, everyone being under thirty years of age and is mostly made up of university students at different levels of their studies. Having been formed about ten years ago, the *Collective* has always been characterised by what they regard as a "productive heterogeneity", with *operaistas*, Hegelian-Marxists and others coming together and with members focused on a diversity of areas of study. They consider this to be their strength, since this "internal negativity" continually stimulates the refining of positions. Finally, they are trying to find a "common grammar" and to articulate better their lines of research.

Crescenzi undertakes a very comprehensive and analytically detailed treatment of Savran and Tonak's book and usually expresses agreement with the authors' assessment of various issues, occasionally comparing these with the work of some Italian Marxists. However, there are a few secondary aspects on which he points out his differences with some arguments. This is a very informative review of the Savran-Tonak volume.

We hope that 2025 will not be the exclusive hunting ground for those of the ilk of Trump, Netanyahu, Milei, Modi, Erdoğan or Le Pen. We wish our readers in different parts of the world, as well as in Turkey itself, a successful year of class and political struggles that strengthens the position of and brings gains to the international proletariat and the oppressed of the world.