

Introductory contribution for the event "Internationalism Live" on the topic
**“Fight against the threatening conflagration in the Middle East.
What is the perspective of the Palestinian liberation struggle?”**

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on December 10, 2023, in Gelsenkirchen

Dear comrades,
Dear friends,

Welcome to the Internationalism Live event of the MLPD.

Following the outbreak of the inter-imperialist war in Ukraine, in the Middle East there is a further war which has the potential to become a conflagration and provoke a *third world war*.

You can only understand what is currently happening in the world if you know that the imperialist world system has undergone major changes in recent decades. The starting point was the *reorganization of international capitalist production* since the 1990s. A whole series of countries that used to be neocolonially dependent and oppressed, or semi-feudal and colonial, have today become imperialist themselves.¹ For example, Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia or Iran.

These *new imperialists are very aggressive* and strive for new positions of power. This brings them into fierce competition with the old imperialist countries, such as the USA, which is still the *main warmonger worldwide*, or Germany. If you do not recognize these countries as new-imperialist, you get on the wrong track of accepting their extended arm, in instruments such as Hamas, as a leading force in the struggle.

Our *main thrust* in this concrete conflict is directed against *imperialist Israel*. *Israel's imperialist aggression* is developing more and more into genocide against the Palestinian people. It is part of the plans of the proto-fascist Netanyahu government, which also includes fascists. The aim is to draw a *new map of the Middle East* in alliance with other imperialists such as the USA and Germany. In September, at the United Nations Netanyahu presented a map which showed no Palestinian territories anymore. Instead, agreements with other reactionary regimes, such as that of the new-imperialist Saudi Arabia. As early as 2011, the ideological-political line of the MLPD stated:

It is an internationalist, anti-imperialist obligation of the revolutionary working-class movement to oppose the aggression of the Israeli state and the Zionist terror.²

The MLPD stands on the side of the Palestinian liberation struggle and *exactly for this reason not on the side of Hamas* and other Islamist-fascist organizations such as Islamic Jihad. Because these do not stand for liberation struggle. Cooperation with them, unfortunately also by progressive Palestinian forces, will cause great damage to the movement. It is the mark of a “cross-front” policy, which we fundamentally reject.

Millions of people around the world are taking to the streets. This harbors the potential for an *upswing in the struggle for national and social liberation in the Middle East and for general societal crises* in various countries. Protest and solidarity actions by workers and trade unions are significant in this context: solidarity strike by French dockworkers, boycott of arms deliveries to

1 See Stefan Engel, *On the Emergence of the New-Imperialist Countries*

2 Stefan Engel, *Dawn of the International Socialist Revolution*, p. 235

Israel by Greek and Italian workers, strike in arms factory in the UK, anti-war declarations by trade union associations from Italy to Poland to South Africa.

In Germany, too, the *federal government* with its *unconditional loyalty to Israeli imperialism* and its attempt to demonize any criticism of the Israeli government as anti-Semitism is coming under increasing pressure. This is a major reason for the current sharp drop in popularity of the German government. And this in a situation in which there is a deep crisis of confidence in the government. Even within the imperialist EU alliance there are massive contradictions when, for example, France, Ireland, Belgium or Spain criticize Israel's actions. For all those with revolutionary aspirations, the situation underlines the urgency to adopt a clear *proletarian class viewpoint*.

It is necessary to approach this complicated conflict with the *dialectical method* and *mode of thinking* and do everything possible to help the prospect of genuine socialism gain new esteem. The *differentiated position of the MLPD* is meeting with great respect among the masses of the population, especially among workers. But there are also *profound differences* within the international Marxist-Leninist and working-class movement as well as in the Palestinian movement *about the path and perspectives of the Palestinian liberation struggle*.

With our event we want to contribute to clarification and unification. We would like to present *six points for discussion*:

1. We support the Palestinian liberation struggle and criticize Israel's inhuman imperialist and Zionist aggression in Gaza

7 October 2023 cannot serve as justification for this. The oppression of the Palestinian people has been going on for decades – since the moment the State of Israel, under Zionist leadership, began the oppression and expulsion of the Palestinian people with the Nakba in 1948. The blockade since 2007 has turned the Gaza Strip into a densely populated open-air prison under brutal Israeli occupation. With the war, the number of Palestinian prisoners has risen to over 10,000. Over 2,000 of them in administrative detention³ without indictment, without trial, and without any evidence.

With the further fascistization, murderous attacks by racist settlers, and the ongoing land grab in the West Bank, Zionist-imperialist Israel is exercising permanent *state terror*. The current war against Gaza is nothing but a *war crime* against people and nature. Over 20,000 dead,⁴ around 70 percent women and children, and at least 50,000 injured. Thousands of destroyed apartments and houses, scorched earth, destruction of elementary infrastructure for the supply of water, food, fuel and medical aid. There is virtually no functioning hospital left in the Gaza Strip.

This war even violates *bourgeois international humanitarian law* and fulfills its criteria for war crimes. The claim that the war is primarily directed against Hamas is a lie. That fact that Hamas is apparently hiding in and under mosques, schools and hospitals does not give Israel the right to raze them to the ground.

The Israeli military is engaged in a veritable manhunt: First, the masses were ordered to move from the north to the south. Now they are congregating in the south – and the south is being bombed and occupied with tanks. This state terror has the support of the imperialist powers of NATO, limited only by tactical differences. First and foremost, and unconditionally, the support of US and German imperialism.

We fight for the following demands:

- This war must end immediately and all Israeli troops must be withdrawn!**
- The imperialist perpetrators must pay compensation to the Palestinian people and fully accept their rights!**

³ www.addameer.org, 6 Nov. 2023

⁴ Note: according to [statista.com](https://www.statista.com) on 2 Jan. 2024 the number has already risen to 21,672 deaths

2. The deeper background to the war lies in the bitter struggle among old and new-imperialist powers for supremacy in the Middle East, over oil and gas, and geostrategic position

This is not a war in which Jews fight against Arabs or which is even determined by religious motives. What on the Israeli side appears to be a war against Hamas is actually pursuing the goal of a “*new Middle East*” (Netanyahu's words).⁵ The aim is for the Gulf states, among others, to “*join an American-Israeli camp*.”⁶ Israel is an *imperialist country* that has significantly expanded its *independent role* in recent years and decades. Israel's government pursues the Zionist-imperialist goal of creating a “*Greater Israel*.”

US imperialism, in alliance with Zionist circles, views Israel as its reactionary bulwark in the Middle East. Relying on its highly developed military, its sophisticated intelligence service and its distinctive state-monopoly structures, Israel is striving for an *imperialist leadership role in the Middle East*. This stands especially in conflict with the new-imperialist Iran. The fact that Israel is increasingly pursuing its *own imperialist interests*, also vis-à-vis the USA, becomes clear from the fact that Netanyahu coldly ignores appeals from leading imperialist representatives such as Biden, Scholz and Macron to respect international law. In our brochure on the Ukraine war we wrote:

The rivalry between the USA and China meanwhile is generally dominant among the inter-imperialist contradictions, the development of which at the same time is multipolar in character.⁷

Israel's war against the Gaza Strip is precisely one of these multipolar contradictions. In recent years, most of the *new-imperialist countries* in the region, such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey and even more so Iran, have developed *ever closer relations with social-imperialist China* and, to some extent, with new-imperialist Russia.

The dominant *influence of the USA had declined considerably*. Due to their fierce rivalry, there are changing alliances among these new-imperialist countries. With the “Abraham Accords” of autumn 2020, the USA attempted to draw the new-imperialist Arab countries more firmly onto its side again, against the advancing influence of China in particular. This resulted in *agreements between Israel* and Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, later with Saudi Arabia, and in September 2023 with India.

Prior to this, there was always one principle for the Arab countries as a prerequisite for normalizing relations with Israel: a two-state solution with Israel's withdrawal from the occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. The “Abraham Accords” now stand for reactionary “*relations with its [Israel's] neighboring states without requiring the establishment of a Palestinian state and Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories*.”⁸

Western-imperialist-oriented forces of the bourgeois PLO leadership and the corrupt National Authority of the West Bank under Mahmoud Abbas were also supposed to be involved. This is directed straight at the legitimate Palestinian liberation struggle.

With its attacks, Hamas wanted to *thwart the Abraham plans* and make open collaboration between various Arab countries with Israel and the USA impossible. In fact, these plans have since been put on ice or terminated.

⁵ Netanyahu, quoted in: timesofisrael.com, 22 Sep. 2023

⁶ FAZ (German newspaper), 31 Oct. 2023.

⁷ Stefan Engel, Gabi Fechtner, Monika Gärtner-Engel, *The Ukraine War and the Open Crisis of the Imperialist World System*, pp. 7 f.

⁸ Kerstin Müller, “The Abraham Accords: A Turning Point in the Middle East – A New Chance for the EU,” elnet-deutschland.de, 9 May 2022

What role do organizations like *Hamas* play in this constellation? Stefan Engel, the long-time former chairman of the MLPD and head of the theoretical organ *Revolutionärer Weg*, explained the background at a Monday demonstration in Gelsenkirchen on November 13, 2023:

The new-imperialist countries are very aggressive. They want to conquer their place in the world and are causing major problems for the old imperialist countries such as the USA, France, Germany and Britain. ... It is important to know that these new-imperialist countries also have certain methods that play a major role in the current war in Palestine. They have set up foreign organizations to infiltrate other countries and exert influence there. This is how, for example, the Taliban came into being, which are now in power in Afghanistan. They were originally built up by the CIA, but are now mainly supported by Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

We have Hamas, an organization that was built up by the Muslim Brotherhood and is now supported by Qatar, Turkey and Iran. ... We have Hezbollah, an organization with a real army. Today it controls Lebanon and was built up by Iran. Iran and Saudi Arabia also have troops in Yemen, where they are waging a proxy war for supremacy in Yemen.

As a rule, these organizations have a fascist character, in Islamist guise. They are reactionary and have nothing to do with the struggle for liberation from imperialism, but are direct *instruments of imperialist policy*.⁹

It is also significant that Hamas has not allowed elections in Gaza since 2006 and does not have a majority among the population in Gaza in current opinion polls.¹⁰ Analyses assume that Hamas has an annual budget of around one billion dollars. “Around \$200 million of that comes from Iran. Another \$100 to \$200 million comes from Qatar.”¹¹

In June 2023, a high-level meeting took place in Tehran between Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and the recently appointed head of the Iranian National Security Council, Ali Akbar Ahmadian.¹² It is becoming more and more common tactics of new-imperialist countries to rely on *fascist and armed mercenary groups or terrorist organizations* for their *expansionist ambitions*. It is very important to develop great vigilance here in order to avoid being harnessed to the *cart of one imperialist predator against another*.

3. The treatment of the struggle by the German government and the German bourgeois media and the suppression of solidarity is inhumane, two-faced, manipulative and hypocritical

At the end of October, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on camera with a smile:

Israel is a democratic state with very humanitarian principles guiding it. And therefore you can be sure that the Israeli army ... will also observe the rules that follow from international law. I have no doubt about that.¹³

In view of the genocide that has begun in the Gaza Strip by the Israeli army, this statement cannot be surpassed in terms of callous cynicism. According to the 1973 International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, “[...the term] *‘the crime of apartheid’* [...] shall apply to the following] *inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them...*”¹⁴ Below this text, *apartheid* is defined as follows:

9 www.icor.info/en/2023/stefan-engel-good-luck-and-genuine-freedom-for-palestine

10 *Tagesspiegel* (German newspaper) 14 Dec. 2023

11 euronews.com, 2 Nov. 2023

12 DiePresse.com, 7 Oct. 2023

13 Olaf Scholz, ARD TV magazine *Monitor*, 23 Nov. 2023. English from: politico.eu, 27. Oct. 2023

14 “International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid,” UN General Assembly resolution 3068, undocs.org

1. The intent to maintain the domination of one racial group over another.
2. The context of systematic oppression of a marginalized group by a dominant group.
3. Inhumane acts.

All three points were systematically advanced in the past decades *by the Israeli state against the Arab population*. Millions of Palestinians have been and continue to be displaced by the Israeli army. Only 18 percent of the West Bank is still under the full control of the Palestinian National Authority. In cooperation between the Israeli army and reactionary or fascist settlers, year after year new illegal settlements are built and land occupied. These areas are separated from Israeli territory by Israeli barriers with a total length of 759 km.

The systematic destruction of infrastructure and resources, the frequent shutdown of electricity, telephone, water and the Internet as a collective punishment, the restriction of transportation and freedom of movement through a dense network of roadblocks, checkpoints and military bases, the control of Palestinian tax revenues:

According to Felix Klein, the German government's anti-Semitism commissioner, these are all unjustified anti-Semitic accusations. For Olaf Scholz, they do not call Israel's democratic character into question!

Here you can see what understanding of democracy our government representatives have. Accordingly, the images of 7 October 2023 and other fascist atrocities committed by Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Israel – which we of course also condemn – are constantly running in the German media. There is comparatively little coverage of the immeasurable suffering of the people in Gaza and the injustice committed against them, or this is presented one-sidedly as the fault of Hamas. According to the aid organization Save the Children,¹⁵ in the first three weeks of the war alone, more children died in Gaza than in all other conflicts in the world within one year. More civilians have died in the war in Gaza in this short period of time than in Russia's war against Ukraine. There, 9,800 civilians have been killed since the war began almost two years ago.

In this case, the German government never tires of portraying Putin as a barbaric warmonger who should be brought before an international criminal court. However, different standards apparently apply to the Gaza Strip and Netanyahu. It is a sick joke to cite the genocide of the Jews by Hitler's Germany as a reason for unconditional support of Israel. Because German fascism murdered six million Jews, the Palestinian population has to be punished? What inhumane logics!

Marxism-Leninism and its leading representatives have always fundamentally *opposed anti-Semitism*, beginning with Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, and August Bebel's fundamental speech at the Third Party Congress of the then still revolutionary Social Democracy.

We resolutely attack the *anti-communist demagogy* of bourgeois anti-fascism, which defames justified criticism of the reactionary policies of the Israeli government as “*left-wing anti-Semitism*.” We are resolute fighters against anti-Semitism and every other form of racism. *Don't give fascism, racism, anti-communism and anti-Semitism a chance!* That is why we also fight the racist ideology of *Zionism*.

The ruling reactionary circles in Israel use Zionism as an ideological basis to justify their imperialist policies and the inhumane treatment of the Palestinians. Zionism was rightly condemned by the UN in 1975 in Resolution 3379 as a form of racism and racial discrimination. In reality, the German government is only interested in justifying its imperialist policies in the Middle East with the support of Israel and defaming and suppressing any opposition to them.

15 <https://www.nzz.ch/international/israel-die-hohen-opferzahlen-in-gaza-sorgen-fuer-kritik-ld.1767928>

4. In contrast to many revisionist, Trotskyist and petty-bourgeois nationalist forces in the Palestine solidarity movement, we uphold Israel's right of existence

After the Holocaust by German Hitlerite fascism, the Soviet Union under Stalin was the only country to implement an exemplary socialist foreign policy in the spirit of friendship among peoples. The then Foreign Minister Gromyko said before the UN:

It would be unjustifiable to deny this right [of establishing their own state] to the Jewish people, particularly in view of all it has undergone during the Second World War. ... Neither the historic past nor the conditions prevailing in Palestine at present can justify any unilateral solution of the Palestine problem, either in favour of establishing an independent Arab State, without consideration for the legitimate rights of the Jewish people, or in favour of the establishment of an independent Jewish State, while ignoring the legitimate rights of the Arab population.¹⁶

In 1947, Palestine was under the mandate administration of British imperialism. The socialist Soviet Union had initially supported the proposal to establish an Arab-Jewish state with equal rights and obligations for Arabs and Jews.

This solution could not be realized due to the sabotage of British imperialism and irreconcilable differences between Arabs and Jews. Only then did the Soviet Union support the plan for the partition of Palestine as a compromise.

There were to be two free, independent and democratic states, one Arab and one Jewish, within borders clearly defined by the UN. The Soviet Union was the first country to recognize the State of Israel. However, it was then very quickly decisively shaped by Zionism under the imperialist shield of Britain and the USA. For this reason, the Soviet Union broke off diplomatic relations with Israel in 1953 in protest.

Recognizing *Israel's right of existence in no way means recognizing Zionism as a reason of state, the proto-fascist and fascist policies of imperialist Israel, let alone the Israeli occupation.*

We therefore also fundamentally criticize the *open betrayal* of the interests of the Palestinians by *the PLO leadership* in the Oslo Accords and at the so-called Camp David Summit in July 2000, where the Palestinian delegation accepted Israel's occupation.

The delegation declared its willingness to relinquish 78 percent of the territory earmarked in the UN partition plan of 1947, as well as the right of return of expelled Palestinians.

5. We are guided by proletarian internationalism

“Workers of all countries, unite!” and “Workers of all countries and all oppressed, unite!” — this is our basic guideline also for the solution of the Palestine question.

“Workers of all countries, unite!” also applies to the Jewish and Arab working class and to the masses in Israel! *In Israel there are also class division, class struggle, trade union strike movements, and Palestinian-Arab parties with justified demands.*

There are initiatives and movements that stand up for a just peace, for the right of the Palestinians, against the confiscation of homes, the building of settlements, or the racist nationality law. In Israel, a largely anti-fascist and democratic grassroots movement, albeit abused by the bourgeois reactionary opposition, fought for months against the transition to fascism by the Netanyahu government. Now *martial law* has been imposed in Israel.

16 UN, document A/PV.77

But even this cannot stop the protests, and a majority of respondents reject the current ground offensive. 49 percent of the Israeli population are against it and only 29 percent in favor. Despite martial law, thousands took to the streets and demanded an end to the ground offensive, also to protect the hostages. Of course, decades of systematic Zionist influence and incitement have clearly left their mark on the Israeli workers and masses. Here, in patient persuasion and alliance work the guideline of the working-class movement since Marx and Engels must be implanted: “*A people that oppresses another cannot itself be free.*”

Protests against Israel's imperialist aggression are growing worldwide. There have been mass demonstrations all over the world, sometimes with several hundred thousand participants. We know from the mass demonstrations against the Netanyahu regime that Palestinian flags were also waved in Israel – albeit by a small group – without there being any hostility from the rest of the demonstration.

In this situation, it is very important that parties with revolutionary aspirations pursue a clear course. Only then will they be able to win over the masses for the liberation struggle and a new attempt to fight for *genuine socialism* and establish it as the *only perspective against the imperialist world system threatening humanity*.

This includes anchoring the knowledge gained about the betrayal of socialism and the conclusions drawn from it. There is also a great need for this in Palestine. We met a Palestinian representative of a progressive organization from Palestine in Germany who said: “*Nobody talks about socialism in Palestine. We must revive this and spread it among the people.*”

The ICOR as a revolutionary world organization and the United Front as an alliance of progressive forces in the struggle against fascism, war, environmental destruction and imperialism have to be made better known and need to further grow. We are firmly convinced that the masses, both in Gaza and in Israel, will sooner or later free themselves from imperialism and fight for the social prospect of genuine socialism.

The MLPD has launched a *movement* in Germany to *help genuine socialism gain new prestige*. With our youth organization *Rebell* we also promote a *socialist youth movement*. In this way we want to help people make the leap from the mere search for social alternatives, from the “good idea” of socialism, to overcoming anti-communism and actually taking part in the organized practical struggle for socialism.

6. Solidarity also includes the discussion and debate about the correct strategy and tactics of the Palestinian liberation struggle on the basis of revolutionary and Marxist-Leninist principles

Yes, every movement decides itself how it is led! But no, this in no way excludes a critical and self-critical, factual discussion of this, starting from a class standpoint.

In this context, we fundamentally criticize Hamas and Islamic Jihad and the cooperation with them in a kind of *Palestinian cross-front*. We strongly criticize the demand not to publicly criticize these forces because they allegedly are an essential part of the Palestinian resistance.

Because of this position the MLPD sometimes meets with severe hostility and downright absurd accusations. In some cases, Lenin or Mao Zedong is falsely invoked. As we are dealing with a whole range of “arguments” against our position, we must go into them in more detail.

This in no way means that we put this issue above the fundamental rejection of Zionist policy.

First of all, it is to be noted that Hamas and Islamic Jihad are not representatives of the *national bourgeoisie*, the *liberal bourgeoisie*, the *reformist bourgeoisie* or *conservative forces in the national liberation struggle*, as discussed by Lenin or Mao.

Why do we call Hamas and Islamic Jihad fascist? The *definition of fascism* most often used in the revolutionary movement is that of Georgi Dimitrov, the then General Secretary of the Communist International: fascism is the dictatorship of the “*most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital. ... It is mediaeval barbarity and bestiality, it is unbridled aggression in relation to other nations and countries.*”¹⁷

The socioeconomic foundation of fascism is the *combination of the monopolistic rule of finance capital*¹⁸ *with feudal elements*. That this applies to Hamas is proven by Hamas’ ideological-political orientation and politics and by whose interests Hamas works for: these organizations are *fascist instruments under the control of new-imperialist countries which operate in a particularly aggressive manner*.

This qualification as fascist is most frequently objected to in the international movement. Some say: *Tactically, we can work together, even if the strategic goal differs*.

However: *There must be no cooperation with fascists, the mortal enemies of the working-class movement, neither tactically nor strategically*.

All fascist organizations, including those in Islamist guise, should be banned. Since their founding, Hamas and Islamic Jihad have been part of a cross-border reactionary, fascist tendency based on *Sharia law*. Hamas operates as its extended arm, is financed by new-imperialist countries like Iran, Qatar, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, and only in this way was able to gain global relevance.

Starting out as Palestinian branch of the ultra-reactionary Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas first was financed by Israel and the USA as a reactionary counterweight to the PLO. The Muslim Brotherhood has many progressives and revolutionaries on its conscience also in Egypt and Tunisia. Ideologically, Hamas represents *fascist positions*.

It has two programmatic foundations: the Charter of 1987/88 and the strategy document of 2017.

It declares in the Charter: “*The Islamic Resistance Movement is a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood chapter in Palestine.*” It demands unreserved homage and threatens: “*Whoever cheats it of its right, turns away from aiding it, or is blinded to hide its role, is a person who argues with fate.*” The strategic goal is clearly anti-Semitic and racist, directed against “the Jews,” and the Charter writes with reference to the Prophet: “*The Last Hour would not come until the Muslims fight against the Jews and the Muslims would kill them, and until the Jews would hide themselves behind a stone or a tree....*”

And it continues: “*There is no solution to the Palestinian Problem except by Jihad. ... Palestine is an Islamic land....*” The “important” role assigned to women is also feudal: “*taking care of the home ... and training her children ... to prepare them for the Jihadic role that awaits them.*”

Solidarity and support is promised to the Palestinian national movement, as long as it is anti-communist and does not join “*the Communist East*”: “*They [the enemies] are behind the French Revolution, the Communist Revolution, and most of the revolutions here and there and there which we have heard of and are hearing of.*” That corresponds almost word for word to the *fascist propaganda of the “Jewish-Bolshevik world conspiracy.”*

17 G. Dimitrov, *For the Unity of the Working Class Against Fascism*, “Report to the 7th Congress Communist International,” Red Star Press, p. 40

18 “Lenin had described finance capital as the result of the ‘merging or coalescence of the banks with industry’” (“Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism,” Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 226, quoted in Stefan Engel, *Götterdämmerung over the “New World Order”*, p. 64). The MLPD qualifies finance capital today as composed of “the roughly 500 largest international supermonopolies in banks, industry, commerce and the agricultural industry.” (Stefan Engel, *Dawn of the International Socialist Revolution*, p. 148)

And another dividing line is clearly drawn: “*Secularist ideology is in total contradiction to religious ideologies.*”¹⁹

The 2017 strategy paper²⁰ provides more detailed explanations on tolerance, human rights and cooperation with other religions. However, it expressly does not serve as a replacement for the Charter, but rather adapts to the changing spirit of the times. It is part of the special demagogic deception practiced today by various imperialist and fascist forces *to call themselves anti-imperialist because they are rivals of other imperialists.*

Iran makes use of this to style itself as anti-imperialist in opposition to the USA. German imperialism, too, uses this against Russia, Putin in turn against NATO.

Anyone who really reads Lenin and Mao Zedong will find that they both advocated *clear proletarian principles for the national liberation struggle.* For the working class, Lenin developed unequivocal *criteria for a temporary alliance with the national bourgeoisie in the national liberation struggle.*

He set three fundamental conditions for it:

Firstly, it must be ensured that the bourgeois liberation movements “*are genuinely revolutionary, and when their exponents do not hinder our work of educating and organising in a revolutionary spirit the peasantry and the masses of the exploited. If these conditions do not exist, the Communists in these countries must combat the reformist bourgeoisie...*”²¹

Secondly, only the struggle of the bourgeoisie of an oppressed nation against the oppressing nation is progressive and benefits the proletariat. But every struggle of the bourgeoisie (including one’s own) for national prerogatives and privileges over other nations is reactionary and must be opposed by the proletariat on principle.

And thirdly, the communists must not merge with the bourgeois-national forces, but have to “*under all circumstances uphold the independence of the proletarian movement even if it is in its most embryonic form...*”²²

These guidelines of Lenin are universally valid.

Not the critical discussion about Hamas or Islamic Jihad, but the *abandonment of revolutionary principles is a stab in the back for the struggle of the Palestinian people for national and social liberation* and violates proletarian internationalism.

In view of today’s multipolar world we cannot approach things metaphysically and depict them in black-and-white terms. We must approach things dialectically, from the Marxist-Leninist analysis of the multipolar contradictions in the world and the proletarian class standpoint.

In the 2017 brochure *On the Emergence of the New-Imperialist Countries* Stefan Engel wrote:

It is social-chauvinist to fly the flag of revolution and side with one imperialist or the other in the event of inter-imperialist contradictions or even wars. *The working class, the oppressed masses and the revolutionaries of the world must fight any kind of imperialists without exception!*²³

Following the 1979 revolution the *Iranian communists* paid for misjudging their allies with the blood of thousands of revolutionaries. For a time they supported Khomeini, the fascist in Islamist guise, in his thrust against the Shah and the USA, and even cooperated with him as “anti-imperialist.”

19 Charter of Hamas, www.palestine-studies.org/sites/default/files/attachments/jps-articles/2538093.pdf

20 1 May 2017, web.archive.org/web/20170510123932/http://hamas.ps/en/post/678/

21 Lenin, “The Second Congress of the Communist International”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 242

22 Lenin, “Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions”, *CW*, Vol. 31, p. 150

23 p. 55

After the “victory” over the Shah, a bloody massacre began against communists and any democratic stirrings. Today, this “united front” is unanimously judged by Iranian revolutionaries to have been a fatal mistake. This is a serious and bloody warning to all those who think: *The revolutionary movement is weak; whether we like it or not, Hamas exercises the leadership. Or: In Gaza it is not possible to choose the organization with which you fight.*

Fascists work against the interests of the working class and know no mercy in dealing with their opponents. *Collaboration with fascists can never be a catalyst to accelerate the liberation struggle.* Rather, that can only be the sometimes arduous and protracted, but ultimately sole fruitful process of building a revolutionary party and winning the working class and the broad masses for the struggle for national and social liberation.

Simply taking the criterion of a “position in favor of Palestine,” without applying any class standpoint, today would lead straight to social-chauvinist fraternization with Erdoğan or the mullah regime in Iran.

What a representative of an ICOR party from Africa wrote to the MLPD is entirely correct:

If we analyze the plans and goals of these countries (Iran, Turkey and Qatar), which are under the control of princes and bourgeoisies that exploit and oppress their own proletariat, control multinational corporations, export huge amounts of capital and establish military bases in Africa and elsewhere, we quickly come to the conclusion that the argument that these countries are anti-imperialist completely lacks any concept of class, which is the essence of a genuine anti-imperialist struggle.

The Turkish bourgeoisie, for example, is aggressively present on the African continent and is heavily involved in the civil war being waged in Sudan for control of the country’s natural resources. It should be remembered that Turkey maintains a naval base in Somalia. ... The Qatari princes are one of the three bourgeoisies that invest the most in Sudan after Chinese social imperialism. ...

It is one of the greatest lessons of history that – when it comes to support and alliances – the democratic and anti-imperialist organizations of the Palestinian people must take into account the class character of all their allies in the given circumstances. There is no doubt that in this regional and international context, in which Israeli imperialism is going on the offensive, the brave Palestinian people and their leaders must absolutely count on their own forces, of course with the support and help of the WORLD proletariat! ...

In this part of the world, Iran and Turkey do not care about the true interests of the Palestinian people. Both states, led by reactionary bourgeoisies, defend only their own interests and try to use the struggle of the Palestinians to thwart the plans of the Zionist state of Israel, which – since the last 50 years – remains the guarantor of the economic interests of US imperialism and of the West in general in the Middle East.²⁴

Again and again, the alliance with Hamas also is compared with the Chinese Communist Party’s alliance with the Kuomintang. We refer here in particular to Mao Zedong, as our critics in this debate also come from organizations in the “Maoist camp” of the world revolutionary movement.

Though the Kuomintang was reactionary, it was “*not a homogeneous political party,*” as Mao Zedong said.²⁵ It had a right and left wing, and it united forces of the national bourgeoisie, but even representatives of the big landlords, bankers and compradors. However, parts of the Kuomintang embraced the national-democratic thoughts of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, while Hamas from the beginning has been the extended arm or tool of reactionary foreign imperialist powers. To treat tools of other imperialists as allies destroys the liberation struggle and makes progressive forces a pawn of inter-imperialist rivalry.

24 Letter to MLPD in November 2023

25 *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. III, p. 271

Different from cooperating with fascists is that there can also be bourgeois allies and that inter-imperialist contradictions are treated as an indirect reserve. Mao Zedong also advocated the absolute need for *independence and initiative in the united front* and wrote: “Our policy is one of *independence and initiative within the united front, a policy both of unity and of independence.*”²⁶

He strongly criticized “Rightist views”: “those who held such views ... blurred the difference in principle between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party, rejected the policy of independence and initiative within the united front, *appeased ... the Kuomintang, and tied their own hands instead of boldly expanding the anti-Japanese revolutionary forces and conducting resolute struggle against the Kuomintang’s policy of opposing and restricting the Communist Party.*”²⁷

Mao Zedong thus vigorously warned against the subordination of communists or revolutionaries to bourgeois or petty-bourgeois forces, which would lead to defeat.

Where do the progressive, secular democratic forces with a clearly revolutionary claim become visible at present in Palestine? Where are the revolutionary or Marxist-Leninist strategy and tactics? How do they mobilize the masses in their self-organization and their struggle against Israeli occupation? How do they propagate socialism as prospect? How do they win the masses for it, contrary to the reactionary prospect embodied by Hamas, for which the masses in Gaza at present hardly wage an active struggle? Why is there a demand to refrain from public criticism of Hamas or Islamic Jihad? Where is the ideological and political debate with them?

Of course, the democratic forces themselves decide on their own path, their strategy and tactics – that is their right. But it is our duty to use the classics of Marxism-Leninism and our ideological-political line, the experience of the working-class movement, and the concrete analysis of the concrete conditions today to form an opinion on this and discuss it on an equal footing.

Some progressive forces of the Palestinian resistance originated from the left wing of the Arab nationalist movement. For a long time they maintained close ties to Mao Zedong’s China, but also to the revisionists²⁸ in the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic. If they fail to fundamentally reappraise revisionism and Arab national chauvinism, they become an appendage of the strategy and tactics of the new imperialists.

Nationalism and chauvinism are a fundamental contradiction to proletarian internationalism, which is guided by the proletarian class standpoint. On principle, we reject cooperation with forces fascist in ideology and in practice as a “*cross-front*” policy.

The cross-front was devised by sections of the Hitlerite fascists. The aim at the time, in Germany in the 1930s, was to form an anti-revolutionary united front. The term suggests that there is a common front across the irreconcilable ideological and political opposites of fascism and Marxism-Leninism. The result, however, is a *fascist tactic*. Especially in view of the prevailing widespread confusion, we must clearly dissociate ourselves from fascists, expose and fight them – otherwise this confusion will only grow!

The “cross-front” strategy and tactics has been propagated in recent years especially by Russian President Putin, by fascists, and by sections of the revisionists. In the last few years, the revisionists have been rapidly moving towards cooperating with new-imperialist countries and presenting them as a progressive antithesis to the USA. The aforementioned brochure by Stefan Engel continues:

At a conference of modern revisionists in Münster in April 2017 the DKP even made an anti-imperialist force out of Russia: “Russia is forced to pursue a policy in opposition to NATO and, consequently, objectively is acting in an anti-imperialist way.” This absurd logic characterizes the *transition of revisionism to open social-chauvinism.*²⁹

26 *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. II, p. 216

27 *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. II, pp. 444 f. (emphasis ours)

28 Ideology and policy which pretends to adhere to Marxism-Leninism, but in reality distorts it and betrays the working class and liberation movements.

29 Stefan Engel, *On the Emergence of the New-Imperialist Countries*, pp. 54 f.

This goes so far that the DKP (German Communist Party) not only defends Putin's Russia in its newspaper *UZ*, but also China and the Iranian regime. In order to win over the masses, the revisionists and new imperialists operate with new *demagogic narratives*:

For example, with the supposedly classless "global South" – with the argument "against US imperialism is the main thing," as if a multipolar world were per se progressive – even if imperialist-dominated. Ultimately, this leads to becoming a *carrier of the fascist "cross-front" policy*.

Since the *new imperialists have increasingly opted for openly fascist forms of rule*, the revisionists have also begun to defend this. On an international level, revisionists have even become key supporters of "cross-front" politics. Their worldview is a bourgeois one, which dresses up their bureaucratic-capitalist or social-imperialist rule with socialist phrases to make it palatable to the masses. *Through the revisionists the "cross-front" strategy also influences the revolutionary movement*, which is a great danger. *A clear dividing line must be drawn here. We do not demonstrate together with the AfD in Germany just because it is against the government.*

Other revisionists, such as parts of the Belgian Communist Party, are even calling for a third world war by China, Russia, Iran and other countries, the alleged "global South," against US imperialism.

Mao Zedong, especially in his cooperation with the Kuomintang, never renounced the ideological debate or ever accepted putting communist ideas aside. He wrote:

It is undoubtedly very wrong to ... see only the aspect of unity and not of contradiction. Once all this is understood, it is easy to see what the bourgeois die-hards have in mind when they demand that communism be "folded up". If it does not mean bourgeois despotism, then there is no sense to it at all.³⁰

The fact that the Palestinian people are also taking the right to *fight with arms against the occupation* if necessary is covered by bourgeois international law concerning occupation and wars of aggression. Article 51 of the UN Charter states in regard to the *right of self-defense*:

Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the *inherent right of individual or collective self-defence* if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations....³¹

In reference to Ukraine, for the past two years it has been incessantly stated that armed struggle against a war of aggression and occupation is legitimate – but only when the interests of NATO and the German arms industry are at stake?

But even without this article, historical experience teaches us that the *imperialist powers are never voluntarily willing to give up their power*.

A progressive, revolutionary perspective is needed. In the past, the revolutionary world movement supported the revolutionary popular uprisings such as the *Intifada* in Palestine or the so-called "Arab Spring" in the Arab countries. All successful revolutions and popular liberation and guerrilla struggles in China, Vietnam, or Cuba, too, were aimed at protecting the people and avoiding unnecessary defeats and casualties.

They drew a clear *dividing line to individual terror against the masses*. In contrast, the Hamas Charter explicitly glorifies attacks with no regard for casualties among the masses: "*I love to be killed in the way of Allah then to be revived to life again, then to be killed and then to be revived to life and then to be killed.*"³²

These are fascist strategy and tactics that strike the masses and also senselessly sacrifice courageous and selfless young fighters. In a progressive secular world view, attacks without a sober assessment of sustainable success and without regard for the victims are *anarchistic and adventurous*.

30 *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol II, p. 363

31 legal.un.org/repertory/art51.shtml (emphasis ours)

32 Hamas Charter of 1988

Even though there were attacks on military targets on 7 October 2023, including battles with armed “civilians,” it cannot be denied that there were *fascist massacres on 7 October 2023*. If these are now denied and claimed to have been “staged by Israel,” this is neither proven nor plausible. How does it fit together that *Israel is said to have been completely surprised and humiliated* by the attack, but then carried out in disguise many massacres on hundreds of people within a very short time? How does it fit with the fact that Hamas or Islamic Jihad themselves proudly posted footage of it online? How can the *convincing image of a democratic, even socialist Palestine* be depicted, especially from a strategic point of view, if such methods are used?

Mao Zedong unequivocally stated that there could be no consent to massacres or ultra-reactionary anticommunism. He wrote about such incidents occurring in the Kuomintang:

Those ... who had the audacity ... to perpetrate the massacres ..., to disrupt the Border Region and to attack progressive armies and organizations and progressive individuals ... must be dealt counterblows; any concession to them is out of the question.³³

The worst brutalities of Zionist Israel do not justify responding with attacks on the civilian population. One cannot declare all people in Israel to be Zionists who, in equal measure, must be fought or, if possible, even killed.

The Red Army under Stalin forbade rape and attacks on the German civilian population by the liberating army, even after the worst imaginable crimes of the Hitlerite fascists.

Lenin described situations in which “*red mass terror*” has to be organized against bourgeois terror and war. However, these were expressly *temporary* measures, tied to an *extraordinary situation*:

The terror was forced on us by ... the terror of mighty world capitalism which has been throttling the workers and peasants, and is condemning them to death by starvation because they are fighting for their country’s freedom.³⁴

Lenin pointed out that terror may be applied solely “*in the interests of the workers, soldiers and peasants.*”³⁵ And: The communists, “*organising and controlling it..., subordinating it to the interests and conditions of the working-class movement and the general revolutionary struggle,*” must eliminate “*the ‘hooligan’ perversion of this guerrilla warfare....*”³⁶

Proletarian internationalism requires that the working class of the whole world, and especially the Palestinian and Arab working class, unites with the working class in Israel. In contrast, it is argued that there is no working class in Israel, that *there is a colonial consensus with the proletarian settlers*, and that it is only an *artificial fabricated made up economy*. This is contrary to reality.

According to the OECD, out of around 3.5 million employees in Israel, over 500,000 work in industry, 2.9 million in the service sector, and only 20,000 in agriculture.³⁷ However, a large proportion of the “service sector” also belongs to the working class, as this includes the transportation sector, waste collection and public services, restaurants, hotels and domestic workers.

The working class includes Jewish, secular and Arab-Muslim Israelis as well as Palestinians. On this question of the necessary cross-border, international working-class unity, the unity of the oppressed and the oppressed nations, Lenin emphasized:

The socialists of the oppressed nations must, in particular, defend and implement the full and unconditional unity, including organisational unity, of the workers of the oppressed nation and those of the oppressor nation. Without this it is impossible to defend the independent policy of

33 *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol II, p. 390

34 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 223

35 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 49

36 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 177

37 OECD Labour Force Statistics 2022

the proletariat and their class solidarity with the proletariat of other countries in face of all manner of intrigues, treachery and trickery on the part of the bourgeoisie.³⁸

Dear friends and comrades,

What would enjoy worldwide solidarity today is a new revolutionary Intifada. By this we mean a progressive popular uprising based on the broad masses under the leadership of the working class, which works to achieve working-class unity between Jewish and Arab workers and seeks the international unification of the working class and all the oppressed.

This goes hand in hand with building a revolutionary party, and draws a clear dividing line to fascist forces. This is also a lesson from the “Arab Spring” in Syria, Egypt or Tunisia. There, the Islamist reactionary and fascist forces stabbed the liberation struggle in the back, led it into a dead end and destroyed it.

Having now discussed the strategy and tactics of the Palestinian liberation struggle in quite some detail under Marxist-Leninist criteria, this critical discussion is not for one minute in opposition to the *practical solidarity* at all times *with the Palestinian liberation struggle*. On the contrary, this debate serves it.

Since 7 October alone, we have initiated as MLPD at least 45 rallies and demonstrations in Germany, registered them and always organized them together with Palestinian friends. We have also taken part in 28 further big demonstrations. Representatives of Hamas and Islamic Jihad or other fascist forces marched in some demonstrations, in which cases we did not participate.

In Essen there was even a demonstration of alleged solidarity with Palestine in which the chief forces advocated the strategic goal of an international Islamic caliphate. The men marched in front, the women behind. We condemn something like this. In connection with these demonstrations, however, we are of course also active on the streets and address the masses of the population and especially the workers in the factories. We meet with great support there for our position.

During the demonstrations, several times leaflets and statements of the Central Committee of the MLPD were confiscated with the anticommunist accusation of incitement of the people because of the slogan “Solidarity with the Palestinian liberation struggle.” Arrests and criminal charges were brought against our comrades; rallies and demonstrations were initially banned, but we successfully fought to carry them out. The campaigns of reactionary German political forces, of the *BILD* tabloid or also anti-German forces are explicitly and particularly directed at Marxist-Leninist forces in the Palestinian (solidarity) movement.

In Germany, we were instrumental in proposing and promoting the “*Gaza shall live*” *donation campaign*, which has already raised and handed over more than 20,000 euros for hospitals, ambulances, and support for a democratic press service.

One of the statements of the Central Committee of the MLPD just mentioned, which have been subjected to the severest attacks, states:

The prospect for the Palestinian people, but also for the working population and the working class of Israel, lies in genuine socialism. In genuine socialism based on the proletarian mode of thinking, national reservations and disagreements will also be overcome. The spirit of friendship among peoples and international solidarity will overcome nationalist influences. A socialist Palestine in which Israelis and Palestinians live together as equals is the strategic goal of the liberation struggle there.

A democratic two-state solution based on the UN partition plan of 1947, with the evacuation of the occupied territories by Israel and the withdrawal of the settler-occupiers, can be an intermediate stage if it is fought for with a socialist perspective. The forging of working-class unity

38 Lenin, “The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 148

between Israeli and Palestinian workers has a key role to play here. It is necessary to make this struggle a part of the preparation of the international socialist revolution against imperialism.³⁹

We invite everyone to take part in this.

Long live international solidarity!

Forward to the united socialist states of the world!