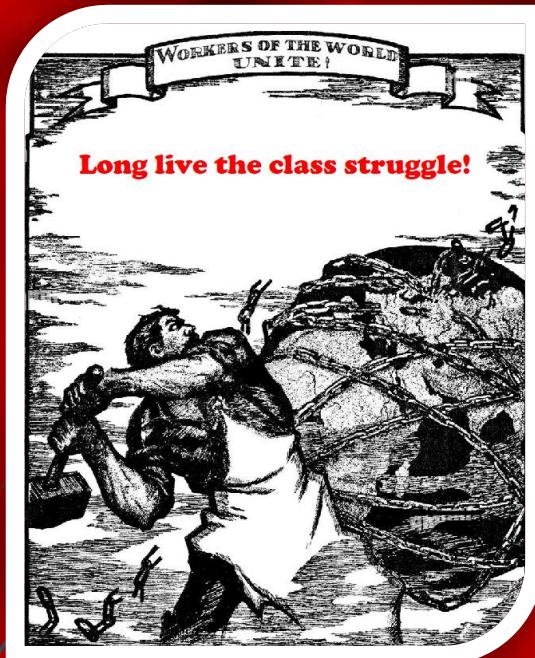


Internationalist Voice Responds!

Protests in Iran: Are Socialist Ideas

Truly Practical and Influential Today?



Internationalist Voice

Explanation:

The policy of *the Internationalist Voice* is not to publish correspondence, letters received, or responses to them. However, due to the importance of the topic and in the interest of clarifying the political landscape, a question regarding the recent street protests and *the Internationalist Voice*'s position on them is being published in a question-and-answer format.

Question:

Hello,

First, let me say that I respect you. I have no intention of sarcasm or criticism—just one question. I am not particularly political myself, but I follow your writings to some extent. As a follower without any negative bias, I find it difficult to understand your political positions and to see their practical outcomes.

Take your most recent piece, for example: unity, clarity, and so on. With all due respect to you and your sincerity, I have a few points:

On your channel, there are fewer than 900 members. I doubt even one in ten thousand people have heard your name. Yet you put forward ideas that suggest you should be a major centre of influence in society. Unity with whom? And on the other side, who is actually seeking this unity?

Given the severe blows the Left has suffered, both theoretically and practically, we witness intense political attacks on the very foundations of socialist thought. Yet in your writings, the issues are presented as if the Left still possesses, at least internationally, its former position and real theoretical and practical strength.

Karl Liebknecht wrote in circumstances where the Left was a serious force in Germany. Does the Left in Iran today even hold a tenth of that position?

Or consider how you repeatedly write about the global revolution. We live in a context where, at a single signal from Trump, the (so-called) Left in Venezuela is abducted, and even minimal verbal protest is barely possible.

Is presenting this subject repeatedly not somewhat fanciful and, from a Marxist perspective, detached from practical reality?

At present, the likelihood of a return to pre-bourgeois conditions seems higher, while the Left faces severe weakness in public support. Perhaps it would be better to let the bourgeoisie come, before pre-bourgeois forces. My reference to a return to pre-bourgeois conditions concerns the strengthening of royalist forces, who, unfortunately, exclude anyone non-royalist and cannot tolerate the Republic. I hope they do not gain momentum from their calls tonight and tomorrow night. Those who once spoke of freedom for Marxists—what have they done? And now, those who have yet to make any real progress are calling for death for all and glorifying SAVAK?

I am not claiming that the Left could certainly have prevented their rise to power, but since the 1979 revolution, perhaps some form of cohesion could have been built among themselves (I do not mean unity or a front, to avoid reopening that debate).

These theoretical subtleties, understood by only a very limited few (and sometimes with no practical horizon even for the coming decades, such as global issues), are not genuinely helpful. Everyone has been caught in the storm of events, without anyone really knowing which theoretical point they were emphasising and whom they were accusing of failing to understand which paragraph.

My note has become long, so I will leave it at that. As I said, I hold no position. I have respect and only wanted to raise a single intellectual question, which is why I wrote this. I hope that if there is any error in my thinking, you will guide me.

I have never intended to undermine human motivation in the slightest. I hope human thought may continue to expand.

With respect and best wishes

Response:

It is an undeniable reality that, compared with a century ago, revolutionaries today occupy a far more isolated position and no longer possess the status and influence that existed in Liebknecht's time. Nevertheless, revolutionary activity never takes place in a vacuum. Society is still structured around class antagonisms, and the fundamental conflict between labour and capital exists objectively, regardless of the strength or weakness of revolutionary forces. For this reason, even in times of stagnation and isolation in the class struggle, the material basis of the struggle remains intact.

Moreover, the weakening of revolutionaries does not diminish their historical duties; on the contrary, it highlights the necessity of adhering to these duties with greater awareness and determination—duties rooted in the real needs of the working class and the vision of communist liberation.

You have rightly pointed to the severe blows suffered, both theoretically and practically, and highlighted the extensive attacks on the foundations of socialist thought. The fact is that, following the historical defeat of the working class in the early twentieth century, the counter-revolution succeeded in presenting distorted and falsified interpretations of socialist and communist ideas. We call these distortions “Leftism.” More precisely, from our perspective, Leftism is nothing other than the Left wing of the bourgeoisie, which, in the literature of the Internationalists, is known as the “Left of capital.”

Following this historical defeat, socialist and communist ideas were pushed to the margins. Rather than representing the dominant current of the class struggle, they were compelled to assume the role of the “counter-current”—a role that stemmed not from any theoretical weakness, but from the victory of the counter-revolution and the ideological hegemony of capital.

This state of isolation does not diminish the importance of communists defending the positions of the working class and communism; on the contrary, it makes such defence all the more necessary and urgent. Historical experience shows that this defence, especially in critical moments, carries

historical significance. For example, the support of Leftists for the so-called “anti-imperialist” clergy was not due to ignorance, error, or mistake, but was the logical outcome of their class position and political activity. At that time, communist left made it clear that Khomeini was no more progressive than the Queen of England or Emperor Bokassa.¹

In fact, in 1978–79, Leftists formed a sort of front—under the banner of “anti-imperialism”—which, in practice, helped consolidate the capitalist system with an Islamic ideological superstructure. Once this order was established, the same bourgeoisie unleashed a historic bloodbath, the first victims of which were the Leftists themselves. Undoubtedly, had greater importance been given to independent proletarian struggle during the protests of 1978–1980, not only would it have been more difficult to carry out such widespread repression, but its consequences would not have been so catastrophic.

In those circumstances, how “logical” or “acceptable” was it for people in the millions-strong February 1979 uprising to shout: “Khomeini is no more progressive than the Queen of England”? This statement was not a common-sense observation, it did not appear moralistic, it resonated little within society, and it went against the prevailing current—but it was **class-based and communist**. It is precisely this quality that makes it a lesson we continue to hold up as a model today.

Even now, in conditions where the propaganda of the right- and left-wing currents of capital poisons the political space, the cry of communists finds little resonance. Nevertheless, under all circumstances, the necessity of independent proletarian struggle must be emphasised, for it is only such struggle that can open a real horizon for the future and keep the possibility of class liberation alive.²

¹ February 1979: when internationalists announced that Khomeini was no more progressive than the Queen of England or Emperor Bokassa I.

²For further information, refer to the Internationalist Voice statement on this subject: [From the Bazaar to the Streets: The Crisis of Capitalism and the Necessity of Independent Working-Class Struggle](#).

The fact that we are in a situation where the United States, like a band of pirates, abducts the self-proclaimed “Left” president of Venezuela, and yet no serious or even verbal protest emerges on a global scale, while we continue to speak of the world revolution, undoubtedly requires explanation.

We have previously examined the kidnapping of Maduro, as well as the United States’ plan to seize Greenland, in a separate article, showing that these actions are aimed at weakening China’s allies and ultimately containing the influence of this rival power. Even the “top-down” developments in Iran—which all Western imperialists, particularly the US–Israel axis, are currently pursuing, and around which a media uproar has recently emerged—form part of this broader project: weakening China’s sphere of influence, and, to some extent, Russia’s, through destabilisation or political engineering in the countries within their respective spheres of influence.

From this perspective, the notion—promoted by Leftists—that Maduro, through left-wing rhetoric and anti-American slogans, has been pursuing policies in the interests of the working class is nothing more than ideological illusion and nonsense. In reality, the Venezuelan working class lives under far more catastrophic conditions and is in an even worse material situation than the working class in Iran, effectively existing below the poverty line.

The imposition of crippling sanctions by Western gangsters, within the framework of their imperialist objectives—similar to those imposed on Iran—undoubtedly makes the living conditions of workers even more horrific. However, this does not bring about the slightest change in the bourgeois and anti-working-class character of the Venezuelan regime. In this country too, as in all capitalist countries, the working class is exploited, and the process of capital accumulation continues unabated, regardless of the rulers’ so-called “anti-imperialist” rhetoric.

However, the question is why, under such conditions, we continue to insist on the necessity of world revolution. The answer is clear: only the working

class can, through a world revolution, overthrow the capitalist system on an international scale and bring an end to its inherent barbarism globally. Although today a world revolution does not present itself as an immediate prospect on the agenda of the proletariat, this fact in no way diminishes the necessity of advancing it.

You have rightly expressed your concern about the project that is today being advanced under the banner of monarchism. You refer to bourgeois and pre-bourgeois forces and put forward the view that perhaps the advent of a “bad” bourgeois alternative is preferable to the establishment of an even worse alternative, which you describe as “pre-bourgeois”. Undoubtedly, it is a historical reality that the executioners of the Islamic bourgeoisie have committed such crimes and unleashed such bloodbaths that, by comparison, the criminals of the Pahlavi monarchy and SAVAK appear almost “whitewashed”. Nevertheless, from our perspective, both the shameful Islamic Republic and the barbaric monarchical system are, and have been, merely different forms of bourgeois rule.

The monarchist project is not a spontaneous initiative arising from social discontent or from the real needs of Iranian society. Rather, it is a plan that Western imperialists, Israel, and their allies have been pursuing for years in line with their strategic interests, and it must be understood within the framework of the new world order. The short-term objective of this project has been to exert pressure on the Islamic Republic, weaken it, and force it to “fall into line”; should this objective fail, the aim is to present a ready-made governmental alternative. The ultimate objective, however, extends beyond Iran itself: the weakening of China through the weakening or reconfiguration of its allies in the region.

Western imperialists, Israel, and their regional allies spend millions of dollars each year, in various forms, to advance such projects. Dozens of television and radio networks—including *Iran International*, *Manoto*, *Voice of Israel*, *Voice of America*, the *BBC*, and other media outlets—together with extensive, targeted, and organised propaganda on social media, have been

placed at the service of engineering public opinion. It must be acknowledged that, to a certain extent, they have been successful in this regard.

Nevertheless, the material basis that makes the acceptance of these reactionary positions possible within society is not merely naked political dictatorship; rather, it is above all the result of the defeat of the working class following the magnificent struggles of 1978–80, as well as the unimaginable collapse in this class’s standard of living over recent decades. Under such conditions, the class that controls the means of material production also comes to control the means of intellectual production and, in this way, reproduces its class domination as the dominant producer of ideas and consciousness. Marx clearly explained and illustrated this dialectical relationship between material power and intellectual domination:

“The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas.”³

For this reason, the audiences of communists and revolutionaries are small today, while reactionary and bourgeois networks—such as certain television channels and media outlets—command audiences of millions or attract hundreds of thousands. This equation—that is, the media dominance and far-reaching influence of capital in shaping public opinion—can only be overturned under revolutionary conditions and in moments of class crisis. The more the working class and communist forces insist on independent

³ The German Ideology - Karl Marx.

proletarian struggle and on political action grounded in their real class position, the faster and more effectively this equation will be disrupted.

You had hoped that the call issued by the son of the Pahlavi executioner for 8–9 January 2026 would fail. Unfortunately, it gained traction, and he has now even announced that he is ready to return to Iran. As you rightly expressed your concern, this call has effectively created conditions for reactionary, adventurist, and violent forces to assert themselves—forces that are not concerned with the liberation of the people, but are solely focused on advancing their own reactionary and anti-working-class objectives.

Reactionary forces and adventurists created the conditions for the intensification of the Islamic bourgeoisie’s unrestrained repression, turning protesters into cannon fodder for their reckless and reactionary projects. Unfortunately, the heaviest repression and killings occurred precisely over these two days. It is still not possible to assess the full extent of the repression. The filthy Islamic bourgeoisie has announced that, at the time of writing, at least 103 members of the security forces have been killed. The question rightly arises: during the events of 1978–79—even if we set aside state repression—was there ever such a number of security personnel killed over the entire period? By whom are these operations carried out, with the assistance and cooperation of which forces, and towards what objectives?⁴

In other words, the responsibility for the killings and repression does not rest solely with the shameful Islamic bourgeoisie; adventurists, ultra-reactionary forces, monarchists, and their foreign masters are also complicit in these crimes. Those who today pose as the “kind-hearted nurse” and shed crocodile tears have, in practice, played a role in creating the conditions for this slaughter.

⁴ This matter is so clear that even one of the more foresighted tendencies of the Left of Capital—the Hekmatist Party (official line)—issued a statement entitled “*Warning! To Communists and Freedom-Loving Activists*”, declaring that the aim of these colourful reactionary gangs is to create chaos and bring about the disintegration of society’s cohesion.

The son of the Pahlavi executioner has now turned to the United States and Israel to install him on the throne. He is well aware of his family tradition and hopes to see it continue: his grandfather came to power with the support of Britain and in line with that country's imperialist objectives; his father was restored to the throne through a British-American coup; and now he hopes that this time the United States and Israel will crown him king. It is within this framework that he so openly and brazenly flatters Trump:

“You have already established your legacy as a man committed to peace and fighting evil forces. There is a reason why people in Iran are renaming streets after your name. They know that you are totally opposite to Barack Obama or Joe Biden. They know you're not going to throw them under the bus as they have had before.

Let's hope that we can permanently seal this legacy by liberating Iran so that we and you can make Iran great again. Let's partner on this and have a better future for our countries and for our people.

This is an opportunity that has presented itself. I'm prepared to return to Iran at the first possible opportunity. I'm already planning on that and the transition team.”⁵

Western imperialists, particularly the United States and Israel, are fully aware that restoring the monarchy in Iran is not something that can be achieved easily or without complications. In Spain, the bourgeoisie was able to use the monarchy as a tool of national unity, but in Iran, the Shah can no longer play such a unifying role for the bourgeoisie. The Pahlavi monarchy was consolidated not through the genuine participation of the classical bourgeoisie, but through police repression and the direct support of the Western bloc in opposition to the Eastern bloc, within the context of the Cold War. Therefore, restoring the son of the Pahlavi executioner is by no means as straightforward as the coups of the past; such an action could instead lead

⁵ [FoxNews](#).

to increased chaos, widespread instability, and even the potential for imperialist wars within Iran's borders.

The duty of communists is neither to follow the working class nor, worse still, to follow popular social movements, but to defend and insist upon the communist programme, even if this leads to their temporary isolation. Communists have the responsibility to alert the working class to potential dangers and, more importantly, **to the traps that the bourgeoisie has designed to advance its own objectives**, even if their warnings go unheard in the moment.

This responsibility goes beyond offering temporary solutions or short-term tactics within the workers' movement; for it is only by emphasising the preservation of class independence and clearly articulating the communist strategic path that the working class can protect itself from the traps, deceptions, and distortions of reactionary forces. To make the point clearer, we can illustrate it with a specific historical example, thereby making the role of communists in warning and guiding the working class more tangible.

In July 1917, the Russian bourgeoisie attempted to provoke an early uprising in Petrograd, seeking to create conditions under which they could use the pretext of an “armed insurrection” to carry out a bloody repression of the proletariat and the Bolsheviks. In response to these provocations, the armed proletariat of Petrograd took to the streets under the slogan “All power to the Soviets.” When the Bolsheviks faced an armed demonstration of around five hundred thousand workers in Petrograd, they sought to ensure that the working class would not fall into the trap set by the bourgeoisie. Earlier, the Bolsheviks had warned the working class of the consequences of such a hasty action. That night, under the guidance and political skill of the Bolsheviks, the proletariat gradually recognised the recklessness of their actions, and the Bolsheviks, with remarkable ability, succeeded in preventing a bloodbath.

Unlike in Russia, in Germany the bourgeoisie was able, through its provocations, to impose an early uprising on the proletariat in 1919. During

the First World War, Liebknecht had acted as the political compass and moral conscience of the German—and even international—proletariat. Yet this very moral conscience also revealed a certain immaturity: at the critical moment of the revolution, he lost his leadership and guiding role, fell into the trap set by the bourgeoisie, and the order for an armed uprising was issued. Rosa Luxemburg was horrified on hearing the news, but unfortunately, it was already too late.

The result of this premature uprising was the bloody repression of the proletariat and the massacre of communist leaders. The early uprising of 1919 dealt one of the most devastating blows to the course of the global revolution. The German communists were unable to grasp that **sheer determination of the mind alone is not a sufficient condition for the victory of the working class.**

According to the Marxist understanding of the “art of uprising,” an armed insurrection is the final stage of a revolution, breaking only the last lines of bourgeois resistance; yet any premature action, undertaken without preparation and proper leadership, can result in catastrophic failure, as the German example demonstrates.

The criminal Trump once again speaks of “restoring greatness to Iran,” just as the United States previously “restored greatness” to Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and other countries—and now claims to have prepared the same prescription for Iran. However, it is clear that this “restoration of greatness” will not be as simple as the coup of 19 August 1953. He even brazenly declares that “assistance is on the way”—assistance whose true meaning is nothing other than destruction, instability, and slaughter.

What is most absurd of all is that another war criminal, Netanyahu—whom even the International Criminal Court of the same Western powers has sought to arrest—assumes the guise of *“liberating Iran from the yoke of tyranny.”* A criminal whose hands are no less stained with blood than those of the executioners of the Islamic bourgeoisie now presents himself as the

saviour of the Iranian people. This hypocritical display is nothing other than the continuation of the same imperialist policy which, under the guise of “freedom” and “democracy,” has imposed destruction and death upon the peoples of the region.

The shameful Islamic bourgeoisie has plunged into one of the deepest crises in its disgraceful history, and consolidating itself is not so easy. To demonstrate its power and to pretend it has a social base, the Islamic bourgeoisie issued a call for marches in all cities on 11 January. This call was an overt attempt to stir public sentiment and to draw people into a government-organised demonstration.

On 11 January 2026, the state broadcaster aired a report from the Kahrizak forensic centre showing scenes of corpses in a large warehouse. The Islamic bourgeoisie claimed that these bodies belonged to individuals who had been harmed by “rioters” during the protests, but the main purpose was to stir public sentiment and garner support for the government. The report displayed photographs of the corpses and the names of the deceased on a screen, while grieving families were mourning and identifying their loved ones. Interestingly, these same images are circulated by Western media as victims of the Islamic bourgeoisie’s crimes. The state broadcaster also aired footage of government-supporting demonstrations, particularly in the cities of Ilam and Hamedan—areas where protests against the regime had been more widespread than elsewhere.

The full extent of the crimes and brutality of the Islamic bourgeoisie is still not entirely clear, as only landline telephones within the country are operational, and the internet shutdown has disrupted not only people’s daily lives but also vital services such as hospitals and other essential institutions.

The Islamic Republic is now in an extremely weak position. Internationally, its proxy forces have been severely undermined: Hamas has been weakened, Hezbollah in Lebanon seriously damaged, the Assad regime in Syria toppled, the Popular Mobilisation Forces in Iraq diminished, and influence in

Venezuela lost. Domestically, the peripheral capitalist economy is in crisis, and with the intervention of Western actors, its collapse has accelerated. In these conditions, it is not only the working class but also ordinary people who are grappling with widespread poverty and runaway inflation; in other words, many effectively have nothing left to lose. In such a context, various capitalist factions are attempting to exploit slogans such as “revolution” and “struggle against dictatorship” to turn the people into cannon fodder. Communists, even if their voice is drowned out amid the clamour of right- and left-wing capitalist currents, various black gangs, and reactionary forces, and even if it goes unheard, are obliged to fulfil their duty and defend the historical interests of the working class.

Emphasising independent proletarian struggle and class struggle presents the working class with a clear and tangible horizon—one that, on the one hand, can help improve living conditions within the framework of capitalist rule, strengthen the everyday struggles of the working class, marginalise the actions of adventurers, black gangs, monarchists, and other destructive forces, and prevent social chaos; and on the other hand, keep alive the prospect of ultimate liberation from capitalist relations. In other words, independent proletarian struggle itself carries the seeds of a global revolution.

The activities of black gangs, adventurers, and imperialist agents—including monarchists, who act as instruments of pressure in imperialist policies—effectively serve to police society and to marginalise or suppress class struggle. From our perspective, all bourgeois tendencies, regardless of their colour or appearance, are equally reactionary. Our interests lie not in the alignments within capital, but solely in strengthening and advancing the class struggle.

As previously mentioned, the right- and left-wing factions of capital are attempting to recreate the events of 1978–79, aiming to involve the working class as mere cannon fodder in popular street protests, so that the “masses” become the material force of the “ongoing revolution in Iran” and play the

same role they did in 1978–79. The objective is to subordinate the class struggle of the workers to the anti-dictatorship (pro-democracy) struggle, once again consigning the working class to the slaughterhouse of the bourgeoisie.

Only the rhetoric has changed, and the terminology has been rearranged; apparently, this time concepts such as freedom, democracy, anti-dictatorship, and social justice—even if adorned with a socialist veneer—are intended to replace the anti-imperialist clergy and the anti-imperialist struggle, so that only the ruling apparatus changes. In 1978–79, the left of capital, not out of ignorance but as the logical outcome of its class position and nature, played a role in consolidating the Islamic bourgeoisie with its class instincts. At the same time, left communists made it clear that Khomeini was no more progressive than the Queen of England or Emperor Bokassa, and explicitly stated that the proletariat must maintain its class independence and must not dissolve into popular or cross-class movements.

Meanwhile, those currents that call themselves the vanguard of the proletariat bear particularly heavy responsibilities. If, in the darkest moments of history, these currents are unable to defend proletarian positions actively and unwaveringly, and cannot serve as a compass for the working class through clear analysis and transparent political guidance, then they have effectively failed in fulfilling their historical duties.

Undoubtedly, today is neither Petrograd of 1917 nor Berlin of 1919; yet this reality does not diminish the weight or significance of the tasks facing internationalists—it renders them even sharper and more vital. Precisely in periods when the revolutionary horizon appears dark, scattered, and uncertain, “going against the current” becomes a decisive duty.

In such circumstances, internationalists are obliged to expose, without respite, the traps set by the bourgeoisie: from nationalism and pro-democracy rhetoric to various forms of left opportunism, as well as blind adventurism and black gangs that, through violence and disorder, seek to derail the class

struggle and stifle the possibility of an independent and conscious proletarian movement.

Defending the communist programme is not contingent on the rise or temporary decline of the class struggle; on the contrary, its necessity becomes most apparent in turbulent periods and under ambiguous, confusing conditions. In such situations, active and unwavering defence of proletarian positions acquires even greater significance. This defence is an unconditional duty.

Internationalists must defend the historical interests of the working class with clarity, determination, and uncompromising resolve, even if this requires standing in temporary isolation. History has repeatedly shown that it is precisely this theoretical and political steadfastness that, in moments of rupture, guides the working class from dispersion and confusion towards conscious and organised power. Today is a time of choice: either internationalism as a living, revolutionary practice, or a descent into the role of “radical” spectators of the existing order.

Internationalist Voice

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