

Hi comrades,

Please circulate this letter in the International Bulletin (Nof, 20/2/25)

- 8.1. After thinking over this for the last few days, I have decided to withdraw from the 'discussion on Palestine liberation' working group, as I believe the approach taken to the question of 'review' is not the type of review that I believe we need. Any review would need patient and structured discussions, starting with analysis, and including a serious balance sheet and a scientific assessment of different formulations and programmatic points, on what premises they are built, how they evolved over time and around what circumstances, what discussions took place, the conditions and experience on the ground. Rather than a patient approach, there is a focus on difficulties in building and interventions and a rush to drop our programme and approach for that reason. This shouldn't be the first conclusion that we draw when dealing with difficulties.
- 8.2. In reality, the 'review' already includes quite advanced revisions and a conscious turn away from our approach in different entities before the discussion has even begun internationally. Not to mention that some comrades in the Project originally from Israel-Palestine, who have consistently raised concerns and questions about the approach taken, have been completely sidelined from these discussions and reading about these revisions after they have already taken place.
- 8.3. A similar approach has been taken not just towards the 'review'. Throughout the last 16 months there has been growing tensions around a variety of questions in regards to public material on Gaza. Rather than these being discussed out, members originally from Israel-Palestine and comrades who were raising concerns and questions about the approach taken, were sidelined from any consultation on material produced by the Project which could have clarified at least some of the issues. There is a growing sentiment that comrades who have raised concerns are seen more as a burden if not outright reactionary rather than comrades who could potentially contribute useful insights to these discussions.
- 8.4. For all these reasons I am not going to sign my name to this approach. To clarify, I'm not in principle against the idea of a review but against the approach taken.

What should have been the approach taken?

- 8.5. In the couple of meetings I've taken part in, I highlighted the need to take as a starting point for this discussion a serious engagement with one of the most important world events, a historic shift that has evolved over the last 16 months (but has much deeper roots). The urgency of this discussion is being demonstrated every day with the recent announcement by Trump of his ethnic

cleansing plan, the constant violation of the ceasefire deal by the Israeli regime and the continuation of the genocidal conditions on the ground. We have also seen the elements of 'Gazafication' of the occupied West Bank, where the Israeli military has launched its biggest crackdown 'operation' since the crushing of the Second Intifada. This should be the basis for any discussion on our programme to avoid an abstract and over-generalising approach that discusses the 'conclusions' before assessing whether we have a similar collective understanding of the issue itself.

- 8.6. Comrades have raised many other questions that of course should also be discussed but we need to be prepared to have a series of structured discussions including a more historic review of the programme, how it evolved and other questions I raised at the start of the letter. I believe this should be done in the context of a balance sheet.
- 8.7. One problem is that the discussion has developed in such an uneven way, where different entities have had their discussions whilst there was almost no discussion taking place on the international level. The discussion was sidelined throughout the debate in ISA but the substantial differences that are raised now could have been brought up more openly at least in the Belgium school in July 2024 and could have been discussed more seriously throughout the Project since.
- 8.8. Considering the historic genocidal onslaught on Gaza has been such a pivotal development in global capitalism, presenting the revolutionary party with challenging questions in analysis as well as in intervention on the ground, including new debates, it is detrimental that since the Project was founded there hasn't been a single discussion which focused on this question. In the last Project meeting, Gaza was mentioned for five minutes in the introduction on the Middle East and in the discussion itself I cannot remember contributions that focused on this question beside my own. Different entities however have had quite advanced discussions in the meantime that were concluded with revision of our programme, from my understanding due to apparent difficulties in interventions and building.
- 8.9. The Project was founded with the promise to hold patient and nuanced discussions that we didn't have the chance to have in ISA. It was presented not as an organisation but a process of discussion with the aim to reach political clarity and agreement around forming a new international organisation. In practice, the Project is rushing to commit to writing public positions on different questions from Gaza to the split in ISA, before members across the Project had the chance to take part in any of these 'review' discussions. The Project is in fact shaping into an organisation where comrades rather than having the opportunity to shape and formulate views, are in fact having to choose between 'accepting' the new positions that are

presented publicly, or it's their responsibility to retrospectively challenge them.

Disagreements over a variety of questions

- 8.10. I waited for us, first as a faction and now in the project, to have a serious discussion about disagreements that have developed throughout the course of the last 16 months. Initially these disagreements were more apparent around the approach to 7th October, difference in understanding of the use of the term genocide, the approach taken towards ICJ and ICC, the adoption of uncritical approach towards blanket boycotts and our role as Marxists in the broader movement. However as time has passed, there are much more apparent disagreements in regards to a variety of issues around analysis and programme, including shifting away from what I see as fundamentals of our approach (for example some poor formulations over the question of military confrontation and the ambiguous and contradictory way the right for self determination is explained in Project material).
- 8.11. The document written by the Belgian comrades and agreed at their recent congress shows there is a conscious turn away from positions in regards to fundamental questions. Just to mention a few, the abandoning of the right for self-determination for both national groups; uncritical support of any form of resistance 'even if its violent' (which in the context of the region would mean support of indiscriminate attacks on civilians within the Green Line); This is followed by a demand on Israeli-Jewish workers to 'assist it'. In addition, the resolution decides to oppose protests by ordinary Israelis unless they have drawn far reaching conclusions on the question of Palestinian liberation. Isn't it the task of Marxists to engage in the movement to accelerate the process of drawing such conclusions rather than abstain from it?
- 8.12. In the last Project meeting, in response to questions around the review on this issue, comrades talked about the need to update our programme in response to such dramatic events. I absolutely agree with the need to constantly update, refine, and think of how we can make formulations more accessible and that comrades have attempted to do so. It would be useful if comrades can point out any concrete points that they think would require more substantial changes and updates. However, as explained earlier, I think there are enough indications that it's the entirety of the programme and approach that are under revision and therefore I would urge taking a more serious approach to how we structure this discussion.

Misrepresentation of comrades' position

- 8.13. Finally, I would like to highlight a feature I've seen in many different discussions which is the misrepresentation of our original approach. This included references to abstract slogans such as 'unity' and 'two socialist

states'. Something that was also referred to as 'the two socialist states solution', a formulation that was never used. Even before an organisation in Israel-Palestine was founded, the CWI's position was very clearly to object to the Oslo Accords and any so-called capitalist 'peace' agreements including the 'two state solution'. The experience of Oslo really demonstrated how in fact it was used to reorganise the occupation and continue the 'status quo' by other means. This also confirmed the position our forerunners took, in contrast with large sections of the left who failed to warn of the predictable implications of the Oslo Accords.

- 8.14. When challenging these types of formulations, comrades say that 'socialist Palestine' and 'Socialist Israel' were used in the past. Whilst there are differences in the way demands are posed now, the discussion in my opinion is not about how to make our position towards the question of the right for self-determination more accessible but about a conscious turn away from this approach (at least amongst a layer of comrades as demonstrated in the Belgian document). The approach to this programmatic point, similarly to the question of terminology, is approached in an abstract way and detached from the political context to which it is explained. Our programme is not a demand at the end of an article or a leaflet, but ideas that should be explained and elaborated in the material/content itself. I am yet to see how the explanation of the socialist transformation of the region that is being put forward by our former comrades in I-P can be understood as supporting the continuation of the current power dynamics of occupation, dispossession, subjugation of Palestinian lives and dominance by the Israeli ruling class. Unfortunately, in arguing these points in discussions comrades did not engage with the actual written material and approach of the former comrades in I-P.
- 8.15. We also shouldn't illusion ourselves that any solution can be in the context of Palestine- Israel only. The question of liberation has to be rooted in the revolutionary process across the Middle East and North Africa, which as we know is not an abstract question but a living process of revolution and counter-revolution, that at different points (such as the revolutionary wave in 2011) inspired the masses in Palestine- Israel from all national groups.
- 8.16. I urge members to read historical material written by our forerunner organisations (such as the material written about the Oslo Accords); to read historical articles that were written by Trotskyists in Palestine-Israel at different stages and material that was produced by our former members in Israel-Palestine, to get a real assessment of what approach did Marxists put forward at different times and how it has evolved. When I raised that in the working group meeting about the idea of including some articles by comrades from I-P, I was told by a Project fulltimer there should be only one article because their material is 'too long'. This approach would have meant that comrades are

hearing serious criticisms of our position, without even being able to read the material so they can judge for themselves.

8.17. I have written this letter with the purpose for comrades to put a brake on the rush to revise our approach before seriously engaging with it. I am happy to discuss with any individual to elaborate on any of the points I raised here and hope we will have productive discussions on this question.

In solidarity,

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