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The Marxist left, the national conflict and the Palestinian struggle

- 1.1. The continuing escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict intensifies the national polarisation in this period, and destructive trends of nationalist reaction in Israeli society raise their head. The horrors of the Gaza war in 2014, the image of victory for the Likud party in the 2015 elections, the continued brutal and murderous attacks by the Israeli regime on the Palestinians, which are nothing but state terrorism; the attacks on democratic freedoms and the increased political persecution of Palestinian MKs [members of the Knesset, the Israeli parliament] and of anti-occupation activists amongst the Jewish public – all of these contributed to the strengthening of pessimistic moods first and foremost among the Palestinian masses, including among the Arab-Palestinian public in Israel, among more left-leaning layers in the Jewish public and among the left from both national groups. In fact, the left in Israel is in crisis these days, as can be seen openly, among other places, in the leadership of the Communist Party (CP) and Hadash [Democratic Front for Peace and Equality – established and controlled by the CP].
- 1.2. These processes do not occur in a vacuum. The trends of counter-revolution in the region in recent years have been expressed, among other ways, in a certain strengthening of the Netanyahu regime, while despair and security fears among the Jewish public, fuelled at present also by the desperate, wholly counter-productive individual terrorism against Israelis, serve as a basis for Zionist-nationalist reaction.
- 1.3. A Pew Research poll conducted back in the first half of 2015 pointed to the figure of about 48% of the Jewish public treating positively the idea of a transfer/expulsion of Arab residents from Israeli territory. This figure is in addition to other prominent characteristics of national chauvinism of a broad layer in the Israeli public. Nevertheless, the reaction is not unlimited and it should be taken into account, for example, also that 46% of the Jewish public or 58% of secular Jews, expressed opposition to that idea. In parallel, the Peace Index poll of January pointed to polarisation in the Jewish public between 45% who support and 45% who oppose the idea of annexing to Israel the occupied territories seized in 1967.
- 1.4. Among the Palestinian masses, especially in the '67 territories, there is once again a significant withdrawal of support for a 'two states' position, to an extent not seen for several years. Opinion polls conducted by Palestinian organisations for some period consistently teach about the lack of trust in the possibility of a solution to the conflict and of liberation from national oppression. These moods express revulsion from the fraudulent promises for the "coming state", which lead thus far to the worsening of oppression and to mass killing; and to galloping settlement building in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Moreover, the Netanyahu regime makes it clear openly that it continues to sharply oppose the establishment of a Palestinian state.

1.5. However, the idea of one bi-national, Israeli-Palestinian state, is still rejected by an even larger majority of Palestinians, as in fact it amounts to giving up the demand for an independent Palestinian nation state (as reflected consistently in opinion polls, e.g. the JMCC poll conducted in early March). Although there's a sentiment of sympathy for the old programme of the PLO [Palestinian Liberation Organisation] to achieve an Arab-Palestinian nation state on the entire territory west of the Jordan river, that is not perceived as a practical programme and it is mainly a sentiment of revulsion from the history of oppression accompanying the years of existence of the State of Israel since the Nakba [the "disaster" of the 1948 Palestinian exodus]. Such a programme is indeed a bourgeois national utopia. Neither the PLO nor Palestinian political parties Fatah and Hamas have any road they can propose in order to "occupy" Israel, which is today the strongest military power in the region. Thus, the pro-capitalist leaderships of both those parties seek at the bottom line to lean on alliances with imperialist powers so that those will pressurise Israel for some concessions.

National polarisation

1.6. As a response to attacks from the state and to nationalist reaction in the Jewish public, a trend of national seclusion of Palestinians in Israel has been strengthened. There is a layer of young people who become radicalised and tend now to refer with deep suspicion and cynicism not only to the idea of 'two states' but also to slogans about 'peace', 'co-existence' of both nationalities and 'joint struggle', as well as to social movements developing among workers and youth in the Israeli-Jewish public. That layer has no trust in the potential for a joint struggle of workers and youth of both national groups on living conditions and against discrimination, exploitation and oppression – what is perceived many times to amount to giving up the road of a serious struggle for national liberation and as banging heads against a wall when dealing with prejudice and national chauvinism in the Jewish public.

1.7. The periodic strengthening of these approaches, which at times reflect rationalisation of political despair, is not surprising, considering the hypocritical rhetoric of the Israeli regime, the weakness of the left in the Israeli public, the experience of the recent decades, and particularly the experience of the Oslo agreements that were promoted under false slogans about peace but secured the continuation of national oppression in other brutal forms. To that should be added the dangerous national chauvinism, expressed also by outrageous support for severe attacks against the Palestinians, characteristic of the Histadrut [the main trade union organisation] leaders, and the Labour and Meretz parties – as Israeli establishment parties identified at the current stage with the left wing of Israeli politics. In addition are the camouflaged chauvinistic approaches of liberal movements, such as 'Peace Now', which spread slogans about peace but do not reject consistently and sweepingly the oppression of the Palestinians.

- 1.8. To that layer of young Palestinians being pushed into struggle there is no visible clear left, socialist, alternative in front of their eyes to the fraudulent imperialist programmes. Left political movements, and first and foremost the CP and Hadash, which have helped spread illusions in the Oslo agreements and similar programmes – and which have not corrected their position to this day – bear some responsibility for it.
- 1.9. The phenomenon of Jews and Arabs photographing themselves, particularly in workplaces, with the message “Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies”, or joint demonstrations of residents under this message, as a protest against the escalation in nationalist violence, is indeed narrow in scope but it would be a mistake to belittle it. Such is an honest and courageous response which helps undermine the nationalist reaction in society and advance class solidarity. Nevertheless, amorphous slogans about “co-existence” and “Jewish-Arab partnership” in a reality of deep national separation and sharp national oppression of the Arab-Palestinian public indeed cannot suffice and at times might even serve as hypocritical lip-service. A genuine joint political struggle of workers and youth of both national groups demands at the bottom line a programme for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and national oppression of Arab-Palestinians and generally.
- 1.10. Advancing such a broad struggle is one of the important tasks of the socialist left among both national groups. Socialist Struggle Movement opposes completely the political repression and the violent witch-hunt conducted against the Arab-Palestinian public in Israel, regardless of the political controversies with other movements, including from the Palestinian right-wing. We have explicitly, and in an explanatory way, opposed the outlawing of the Northern Islamic Movement – a hypocritical and dangerous move intended to assist the Israeli regime with tagging the Arab-Palestinian and Muslim public in Israel as scapegoats, intended to criminalise and ease steps to repress political struggles among this public and send a threatening message to further political movements that are in conflict with the regime, firstly Palestinian movements but not only. The proposed legislation for the suspension of MKs continues the same logic.

‘Divide and rule’ Palestinians

- 1.11. The lack of general social movements of workers and young in Israel since the 2011 protest movement, allows isolationist perceptions of ‘identity politics’ to strengthen among oppressed groups in society. Against this background, many activists conclude that the political struggle against national oppression of the Palestinians requires a strategy based on ‘national unity’ which cuts across social classes and political approaches. That is also as a response to measures of repression and the ‘divide and rule’ policy used by the Israeli regime. It tries to tear apart the Palestinian masses on a geographic, religious and ethnic basis – including through the nurturing of Israeli militarism by encouraging the military draft of Arab citizens in

Israel – thus harming, in fact, the potential for a wide and effective struggle against national oppression. Rejection of the instigation of ethnic-religious conflict is definitely just, and so is the understanding that a broad and strong movement is needed.

- 1.12. Nevertheless, in the '67 territories, in the Palestinian diaspora and within the Green Line, the watering down of the differences between right-wing and left-wing forces in the Palestinian public and between local elites and the workers, farmers and youth will significantly restrain the potential for a successful struggle that could realise the aspirations of the masses to solve their plight.
- 1.13. The embryonic form of the capitalist police state represented by the Palestinian Authority of Fatah and the PLO, and its parallel in its Islamist version headed by Hamas in the Gaza Strip, are a warning sign of the direction in which right-wing pro-capitalist leaderships may lead to. Within the Green Line in particular, the dimming of political differences among the Arab-Palestinian minority in the name of 'national unity' eventually plays into the hands of Israeli right-wing rule, which is interested in isolating this public in order to ease the policy of repression.
- 1.14. In the run up to the 2015 elections, unfortunately, Hadash did not insist on putting forward a prominent left alternative on the countrywide level. Instead it capitulated to pressures and teamed up, in an unprincipled manner, to the founding of the "Joint List", as a coalition of left-wing and right-wing forces in the Palestinian public, including pro-capitalist and conservative forces. The left is the wing required to give the significant concessions in this alliance. The countrywide profile of Hadash, as the most prominent left force at that level, has been dimmed – the bloc wasn't only "technical" and there was another practical option, on which some within Hadash tried to convince others, of standing in a separate leftist list. As we warned in advance, despite the talks about an "historic" development, the Joint List has not, so far, led any significant struggle and has not managed to present any essential achievement. It remains 'neutralised' in the parliamentary field, and consequently has also disappointed layers of supporters who pinned hopes on it.
- 1.15. The broader layers in the Arab public, a majority of who are under the poverty line and under a daily offensive because of their national background, are interested, in the long run, in practical solutions to the burning problems of poverty and national discrimination (which in fact intensifies poverty and the rest of their plight). But the political forces on the List do not manage to sketch a horizon for an effective struggle for change – they don't manage to advance a genuine potential threat to the Israeli right wing, the Netanyahu rule, the national oppression and Israeli capitalism.
- 1.16. Weaknesses in the political programme, including regarding socialist change of society, and the lack of reliance on the struggles of the working class and the masses, are root causes of the narrow approach of Hadash of working in the parliamentary field and orientating to election campaigns. This is done in a manner almost

detached from the building of an extra-parliamentary struggle, and that approach is also reflected in unprincipled political alliances.

- 1.17. Some of the CP leadership may claim that theirs is a “practical” approach to change reality in complex circumstances. Of course serious political organisations need to examine when it is necessary to change demands and tactics. But for the Marxist left, such changes should be done on the basis of a principled and class approach. Unfortunately, that was not the approach of the CP leadership, which has tended to adopt a reformist approach which weakens the left, as it nurtures illusions in solutions in the framework of capitalist society, keeps broad layers in a relatively passive role and destructively gives up the building of a political struggle based on the working class in society. The same logic leads the CP and Hadash to side with Russian imperialism, the Assad regime and Hezbollah in the civil war in Syria, as forces allegedly playing a “progressive” role, in accordance with the Stalinist tradition of tending to side with forces that are in conflict with the western imperialist powers.
- 1.18. On the other hand, if the leftist forces in Hadash would have adopted a class approach and a socialist programme in a central and prominent manner, they could have used their relative weight on the countrywide level much more effectively in order to challenge the right-wing forces in both national groups.

Linking to a struggle for socialist change

- 1.19. Our organisation on the national and international level is fully committed to promoting internationalist solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian masses for liberation from national oppression, and is committed also to contribute to the discussion in relation to the way in which this struggle could win.
- 1.20. Generally, and particularly given the moods today and the brutal intensification of repressive measures used against the Palestinians, would it be not right to promote at present a programme of ‘two states’ to solve the conflict? In the context of the capitalist Middle East today the meaning of this demand is indeed the founding of a neo-colonial puppet state for the Palestinians, and not genuine national independence. The fundamental problems of the Palestinian masses would not be solved and the bloody conflict would continue.
- 1.21. Moreover, the idea of a bi-national state is completely utopian in a capitalist context – the decisive majority of both nationalities are not interested in giving up national independence and sharing a single state, and even if such a state would be coerced somehow, it would be based on inequality and a deep national schism.
- 1.22. This fact underlines that at this stage, even while the slogan of ‘two states’ in itself comes into increased suspicion, the idea of a solution based on two national states – although in a socialist context – is still necessary. At this stage, advancing a programme which proposes a solution in the form of one joint state for both nationalities, even a socialist state, is not capable of supplying a basic answer to the fears, suspicions and the intense yearning for national independence on the part of

both national groups. Nevertheless, the role of the Marxist left is also to explain that working class layers and the masses of all national groups have an interest, at root, in a united struggle around a programme for socialist change.

- 1.23. Although significant struggles could definitely gain important achievements before, only on a socialist basis will it be possible to equate the living conditions of the Palestinians to those of the Israelis – and to raise, in fact, the general living standards far beyond the best conditions that could possibly be achieved under capitalism – and to guarantee a complete equality of rights in all spheres. Only that way would it be possible to make sure that all resources in society serve rationally and democratically the welfare of the masses, and also allow the necessary investment of resources for the Palestinian refugees – a just solution of their plight requires a struggle to guarantee conditions of welfare and equality in the region, and advancing of direct dialogue and consent, which would include recognition of the historic injustice and the right to return. In these circumstances, the diminishing of mutual loathing and national schism may prepare the ground also for a joint socialist state.

A class approach to Israeli society

- 1.24. The approaches of sections of the international left who adopt a narrow national approach to the problem and propose to ignore the fears of millions of Israeli Jews and their will for national self-determination, do not represent any serious road for a solution. The catastrophic process of occupation, expropriation and oppression of the Palestinians by the Zionist movement and the State of Israel does not negate the fact that masses of Jewish refugees from European countries and from Arab and Muslim countries were cynically exploited by the world powers and by the nationalist Zionist elite. The simplistic nationalist reference to all Israeli Jews as 'settlers' ignores among other things the fact that the majority of them are country-born, without any affinity to another country.
- 1.25. Considering the history of the Holocaust, the persecution of Jews and the anti-Semitic threats of reactionary Arab and Islamist forces in the Middle East, a programme that would propose that millions of Israelis simply give up national independence will be perceived as an 'annihilation' plan. It will push the Israeli working class more strongly into the hands of the Israeli right-wing and for a 'survival war' by any means, including nuclear weapons. More than this, even in a hypothetical bloody scenario in which an external force subdues Israel militarily, then millions of Israeli Jews would become an oppressed national minority and the national conflict would continue in a terrible new form.
- 1.26. True, the Zionist movement and the State of Israel have implemented and implement until this day a colonialist policy striving for the pushing aside and expropriation of the Arab-Palestinian population in favour of the Israeli-Jewish population. This policy includes not only the history of uprooting the Palestinian

population and the settlements enterprise today in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, but also organised plans of the state for the 'Judaization' of territories within the Green Line, particularly in the Negev and Galilee.

- 1.27. The Israeli ruling class sees the expropriated Palestinian masses as an existential threat for the future of its rule. The Israeli capitalist regime, which is still in a conflict with the Palestinian population and with the Arab and Muslim populations in the region, strives to base its existence on mobilising support from the Jewish population in Israel and through collaborations with the imperialist policy of the capitalist powers, especially the US, as well as with autocratic regimes which are willing to do business with it. Not by accident it supported and even was mobilized for imperialist wars in the region; assisted the Jordanian monarchy to crush the 1970 Black September uprising; was one of the last partners the Apartheid regime in South Africa maintained; has assisted for decades the armament and military training of dictatorships around the world, including the former military dictatorship in Chile and the militias which committed the genocide in Rwanda; and symbolically it offered the Egyptian autocrat Mubarak political asylum.
- 1.28. Against this background, there are currents in the left opposing the 'right of existence' of Israel. Of course the Marxist left opposes all regimes of oppression in the region and globally. But on this basis one could allegedly oppose also the 'right of existence' of the United States, Germany, Britain or France, which as major imperialist powers have caused the greatest horrors in history.
- 1.29. There are those who claim that specifically the right of existence of Israel should be opposed because it is a nation state 'made up' and established under the sponsorship of the capitalist powers in order to serve their imperialist policy in the Middle East, and because it's been established through the expropriation of the Palestinian masses. However, generally, the national borders in the Middle East, which the civil wars in Iraq and Syria undermine now, were dictated to a large extent by the imperialist powers, through the Sykes-Picot agreement signed secretly a hundred years ago and a series of following imperialist agreements.
- 1.30. The claim in regards to national states which the imperialist powers created de facto or nurtured for their benefit can serve also against the right of existence of a series of other states in the world, including in the former USSR territories, the Balkans, the Baltic area, Pakistan or Taiwan, for example. Aside from that, although the process of establishment of the State of Israel had unique features and although the Marxist left had warned about the expected destructive repercussions of the Partition Plan and opposed it, it should be taken into account that a long list of national states were created in a tragic manner as a result of occupations, mass uprooting of populations, colonial expropriation and nationalist policy striving to change the demographic composition in favour of the ruling national-ethnic group.
- 1.31. However, the important question, also in relation to the US for example, is how it's possible to advance from a reality of oppression and robbery to a solution to the

fundamental problems and for the establishment of a new, democratic and equal society. The Marxist left cannot suffice in pointing to the reactionary character of regimes and their bloody history – it needs to show how capitalist and imperialist nations are based on contradictions, how they could split on a class basis and how it would be possible to get over the calamities of the capitalist and imperialist era in that way. Thus the State of Israel as well is not only a settler/colonial state, ruled by one nationality and expropriating another – it is also a capitalist state of class exploitation and oppression in a crisis-ridden class society.

- 1.32. Parts of the international left tend to adopt a nationalist attitude to the millions of Israeli Jews, as one block of reaction, a society of settlers, in which the fundamental contradiction is allegedly not a class one but a national one, and in which the masses have no real interest in ending the oppression of the Palestinians, in social liberation or in socialist change. This is a crude abstraction, to say the least, of the concrete reality. As such it is actually blurring, and not sharpening, the picture of the forces of reaction in society, as does every nationalist approach which abstractly blames the masses for the crimes of “their” ruling classes and regimes.
- 1.33. Such an approach reduces, in fact, the responsibility of generals, tycoons and nationalist parties for the horrors they help create. It also befogs the difference between ideological settlers, including nationalists who take an active part in the barbaric expropriation of Palestinian families within the Green Line, and millions of exploited and relatively impoverished workers who suffer from Israeli capitalism and from the ongoing national conflict. It is an approach which depicts Israeli society in a non-dialectical fashion and almost as one without internal contradiction.
- 1.34. Although the national antagonism is usually the most prominent one and restraining the development of the class struggle on the side of the workers, the class antagonism is nevertheless the fundamental internal contradiction which undermines ‘national unity’ and represents the potential for getting beyond Israeli capitalist society and building a new society. Objectively, and regardless of the moods and reactionary perceptions which are widespread at the current stage, the Israeli working class has a key role to fulfil in the struggle against Israeli capitalism and for the socialist change of society.

Who profits from the occupation?

- 1.35. The claim that the Israeli-Jewish working class specifically profits from the occupation and the national oppression of the Palestinians is similar to the claim that in any state responsible for imperialist exploitation and imperialist wars and occupations the working class ‘profits’.
- 1.36. The working class in the developed capitalist countries has succeeded, at root, through struggle, to gain achievements against the ruling classes, with improved living conditions in comparison to those of the masses in the neo-colonial world. However it is a mistake to interpret the national gaps in living conditions or the

spread of right-wing political perceptions across layers of workers as an expression of cross-class joint interests. On the contrary, the brutal austerity decrees carried out repeatedly against workers generally in those countries, whether in Europe, the US or Israel, and which worsen existing social-economic distresses, emphasise that within the framework of the capitalist system even those relative achievements are pretty limited and are not guaranteed – the global economic crisis in recent years has exposed again, more forcefully, the contradiction of class interests, with the ruling classes attempting to burden the cost onto the backs of the masses.

- 1.37. Surely, certain layers in the Israeli working class, for example in the large settlements, are 'bribed' in order to politically support the settlements enterprise, including with some direct and indirect economic benefits. But a wider analysis of the interests of the working class does not point to any essential economic interests, neither to a genuine 'political profit'. Israeli capitalists profit from the settlements' industrial zones and generally from the super-exploitation of Palestinians as cheap labour (although this is a narrow share of the entirety of profits of the Israeli capitalist class, while the main policy of Zionism and Israeli capitalism in relation to the Palestinians is uprooting and expropriation, with the purpose of strengthening the social base of the regime). Also, it's worth noting that the capitalists are less exposed than workers to nationalist-based confrontations in the streets and the workplaces and to personal security risks as a result of the conflict.
- 1.38. The Israeli-Jewish working class – workers discriminated against from Mizrahi and Ethiopian backgrounds and former USSR workers, but also Ashkenazi descended workers – indeed does not suffer the same level of oppression and poverty as the Palestinian masses. But it suffers collectively from 'divide and rule' on a national basis, competing in a race to the bottom against cheap labour, and above all suffers the political and security consequences of the perpetuated conflict. Generally not insignificant layers in it even tend to a certain extent to have a reserved attitude towards, and be alienated from, the settlement enterprise. The nationalist-racist reaction within it does not rely, at root, on an economic interest but mostly on security-existential fears (more than any other problem, including the historic ethnic discrimination of Mizrahis, which the Likud and Shas parties manage to cynically exploit). This means that section is being politically shackled to the ruling class on the basis of a false identification of the policy capable of answering its security interests. As mentioned, to the benefit of the Israeli ruling class, other reactionary forces in the Middle East mobilize to contribute their share to that result.
- 1.39. There are powerful ideological mechanisms allowing Zionist nationalism to mobilize support even from among parts of the Arab-Palestinian public in Israel, and particularly Druze and Bedouin workers and poor, but it does not mean that these mechanisms are based on the fundamental and broad interests of those groups. The Marxist left should help shed light on the fact that eventually, the fundamental

interest of the working class on both sides of the national schism is a joint struggle against the crimes of the Israeli ruling class.

- 1.40. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is of course not symmetrical and it wears a national-colonial character, between an oppressive and expropriating nationality and an oppressed and expropriated nationality. But the Marxist left cannot take a simplistic nationalist approach to Israeli society. As opposed to ideas promoting 'normalisation' of the occupation and oppression of the Palestinians – including the economic and military relations between the Palestinian Authority and the Netanyahu government – the Marxist left should advance a struggle against national oppression, as well as dialogue and joint struggles, especially of workers, on both sides of the national divide, which will help clarify the joint broad interests in a struggle against Israeli capitalism and for a new society, without any national discrimination.
- 1.41. While approaches which seek to put a 'collective guilt' and take, for example, the action of a blanket boycott against Israeli society, might create an impression that the struggle is generally against Israelis, and thus play into the hands of the Israeli right-wing, a class approach to Israeli society, as well as more selective and focused protest boycott initiatives, could pose a much more serious threat against the Israeli right.
- 1.42. At the height of the struggle against the Apartheid regime in South Africa, the Marxist left there called for the building of independent formations of the working class in South Africa itself (a stance which the leadership of the ANC in exile did not put forward, at that time) and explained the importance of those formations also appealing to white workers and involving them in the struggle – despite the white population being a small minority that held widespread prejudices and racist views. This was done with the purpose of helping to split and undermine the social base of reaction, through winning over white workers to the side of the struggle and neutralizing opposition to the struggle by further layers, in a manner which, in fact, undermined the basis for an ethnic civil war. Aspects of this approach were eventually adopted by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the ANC.
- 1.43. As opposed to the Stalinist traditions, the Marxist left never abandons a class analysis or class-based political programme in favour of advancing a national or a 'patriotic' approach to the progressive struggles it supports, even when it comes to national liberation struggles.
- 1.44. Our basic political programme is for a struggle to eradicate all forms of discrimination and oppression in society and for a socialist society on the regional and world level, which will overcome all the national and ethnic schisms. However, it is not enough to speak only about the future socialist society, especially considering the centrality of the national struggle of the Palestinians and the national conflict. In the current circumstances, a programme which will include recognition of an equal

right for existence and self-determination, which will be expressed in two socialist states with equal rights, with full equal rights for minorities, and aspiring that the two states would work voluntarily in a joint confederative framework and as part of a confederation of socialist states in the region, could potentially convince broad layers on both sides of the national divide and serve as a basis for a joint struggle against Israeli capitalism and for social justice and peace. We do not presumptuously put forward a ready-made map with new borders – this question and others will eventually be decided as a result of democratic processes led by broad movements.

1.45. Taking into account the present deep gaps in the political perceptions on both sides of the national divide and in the region, in general (and, in fact, on the international level, influenced at this time by the lack of strong socialist parties of the working class), and considering the suspicion towards the ‘two states’ position, it is clear that the starting point for explaining and promoting this programme, including via political slogans, cannot be identical in every situation and in relation to every audience. But the programme itself is in our opinion the objectively necessary programme today. At the same time, we are definitely open to the development of a fruitful discussion on this question with left and socialist movements on both sides of the Green Line and internationally.

Putting forward an alternative

1.46. The tendency of parts of the left to identify the dangerous trends of reaction in Israeli society arbitrarily as ‘fascism’ is dangerous politically, as it may lead to wrong conclusions about the opportunities on the agenda and about the strategy and tactics required for the struggle at the current stage. For that matter, the harsh attacks on democratic freedoms in Turkey, Russia or Egypt, brutal as they are, do not represent fascist regimes.

1.47. The Kahanist-fascist terrorism against Palestinians, and even against asylum seekers and against the left, is indeed a real danger; but that which is reported by the Israeli capitalist press tend to awaken revulsion among the broad Israeli public (as was evident, for example, after the murderous arson attack in Duma). In fact, even the government and the ruling class are forced to disassociate from it, as it is perceived in their eyes as a destabilizing factor. The Kahanists are not about to take state power in the near future and are weaker than their counterparts in Greece, for example. There is definitely more time before armed Kahanist gangs could win mass support, create frenzy on the streets of the cities, murder daily and physically crush all aspects of democracy and of working class organisation.

1.48. Nevertheless, there is an important need for community defence formations – democratic and if required armed – against attacks by the settlers, the military and the police in Palestinian towns in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and some of the towns within the Green Line, as well as for the organising of self-defence formations on left demonstrations which take place under higher security risk. But, at the same

time, there is a need for left and socialist political forces that would propose a way for political struggle for change.

- 1.49. It is clear that organising for a political struggle is more complex in the '67 territories under intense and lethal repression conditions – every protester risks imprisonment and death – first under the military dictatorship of the Israeli regime, but also under the governments of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. The popular mass strike organised by the teachers in the West Bank in February-March was the largest workers' struggle in recent years in the Authority territories. It succeeded in rocking a bureaucratic trade union, shook the Palestinian Authority itself, which serves as a subcontractor of the occupation, and brought back on the agenda the perspective for a movement of broader layers into struggle.
- 1.50. Developments of this kind may create the basis also for the growth of left and socialist forces that will propose an alternative to the dead end of the right-wing leaderships of Fatah and Hamas. Advancing the idea of popular assemblies in towns and neighbourhoods in this period could help with developing a discussion on strategy, tactics and demands, to involve broader layers, and to elect democratic action committees which would help organise and lead the struggle, in the spirit of the revolutionary struggle traditions of the first Intifada. The history of the Palestinian liberation struggle has seen mass uprisings, and a new generation of activists will discover again these vital events and the rich lessons they left behind.
- 1.51. The Netanyahu regime is far from leaning on sweeping support among the Israeli public. It is clearly weaker than was the Sharon regime at the height of the second Intifada. It was presented with – in 2011 – the largest social protest movement in the history of Israel and with a series of social struggles. Both in the 2013 election and the 2015 election it faced revulsion from relatively wide layers. Despite the clear use of nationalist-racist demagoguery in order to mobilize voters, Netanyahu has only been able to compose government coalitions of hard-pressed majorities in the Knesset, which were enabled only by the assistance of new capitalist parties which promised “change”, like those of Lapid and Kahlon.
- 1.52. The eruption of the ICL (chemical) workers around the 2015 elections and the later struggle of those from an Ethiopian background, which included Likud voters, have emphasized how much the base of support for the Likud rule is undermined. The ICL workers have entered into direct conflict with Likud, and in the Ethiopian-descent struggle a layer of activists who were radicalized through the conflict with the establishment have come to some leftist conclusions. In addition, the gas protest movement has brought onto the streets a series of demonstrations reflecting revulsion from the Netanyahu regime despite the hindering role played by the pro-capitalist leadership in that struggle.
- 1.53. The Netanyahu regime receives not a little political aid from reactionary forces in the region, from ‘opposition’ parties in the Knesset and from an enlisted nationalist press. These enable it to exploit to a certain extent, and in some conjunctures even

widely, the security and existential fears among the Jewish public. But the ongoing escalation in the conflict also raises some doubts and questions among parts of the public.

- 1.54. On the one hand, the idea that the oppression of the Palestinians and the problems of the conflict would be solved as a result of pressure inflicted on Israel by other capitalist governments is an illusion. The solution will not come from the 'outside'. But nonetheless, developments which show potential and achievements for mass movements and for the left regionally and internationally have influenced – as happened during the Arab revolutions in 2011 – and will influence the openness to leftist, class and socialist ideas among layers of the working class and middle class in both national groups. The political earthquake represented by the Sanders campaign in the US is already a certain point of reference.
- 1.55. The advancement of principled collaborations between left political forces could help to begin to get over the lack of a political force based on the working class in both national groups, and to help begin to put a socialist alternative on the agenda at the countrywide level.
- 1.56. On both sides of the Green Line there is a need for political organising on an independent class basis, the organising of broad parties which will express the plight and vital interests of the working class, and will advance a struggle around a socialist programme in order to propose a way out of the bloody conflict, of the national oppression of the Palestinians and of Israeli capitalism.
- 1.57. The Socialist Struggle Movement is fully committed to a struggle on the basis of a class and internationalist approach for a socialist change, and we have full confidence in the potential of socialist and Marxist ideas to convince and win support on both sides of the national divide.