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Against ideological and practical preparations for war between States

The new year is opening with further, serious tremors in the capitalist mode of production: an unstoppable fall in oil prices and the prices of raw materials, giddy swings in the rates of international currencies, endless instability in Greece, the difficulties of the Russian economy, slowdowns on those of China and Germany, the plunge on the world stock markets, deflation advancing everywhere, unemployment spreading in peaks and dips. The trade war is becoming increasingly frenzied, the clashes between imperialist powers more decided and, from the United States to France, from Italy to Germany, social disintegration is extending. Military wars, fought by the most powerful capitalisms either directly or by proxy in their desperate search for oxygen are raging in a half moon that now embraces a fair slice of the world, from Central Africa to Southern Asia, whilst geo-strategic tensions are starting or continuing to re-chart key areas of the planet, from the coasts of the Mediterranean to those of the Asian Pacific. Faced with all this, comes the endless decay of bourgeois and petit-bourgeois ideology, whatever its colour or origins, whether lay or religious, right-wing or “left”-wing, laissez-faire or state, reformist or fundamentalist: it ranges from renewed clamouring for a “clash of civilizations” to the

bleating appeals for a “fair international government”. In the meantime, the contradictions are piling up and becoming keener, igniting here and there in explosions that are simply temporary outlets for the destructive energy that is accumulating beneath the surface.

Then came the attacks in Paris. The word that was echoed everywhere in this case was, not by chance, “unity”. “All citizens united against the common enemy”: this is the concept central to the public speeches by politicians and commentators, intellectuals and the other troubadours of mainstream ideology in all its variations. And it is on this “appeal to unity” that it is worth concentrating our attention. We have never been interested in the masturbatory practice of “conspiracy theories”. Speculation on whether it’s Caliph Tom or Dick, or one bourgeois faction or the other, or rather the obscure staging of a massacre with state ramifications, behind the Paris attacks is of no interest to us at all. It is a fact that the more or less local or territorial wars for the control of energy sources, a prelude and integral part of the present and future clash between imperialisms, cannot fail to have repercussions everywhere in the world, from the countries directly involved to those that play a more marginal role: and here there is

no doubt that the French Capital (*like all other national Capitals*), has many a finger in the pie in numerous critical areas, and that these fingers are *dripping with blood*.

The ideological and political reaction marked by the appeal to

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continuation from page 1 "Against ideological"... "unity" does, however, interest us, because here we find a loud and clear echo of the "*union sacrée*" invoked and practised at the dawn of the last century's two world wars and necessary for dispatching millions of proletarians throughout the world to massacre and be massacred in order to relieve the capitalist economy in its endemic crisis. Just as the objective conditions for a new world war are basically prepared in the capitalist mode of production, in the heart of its economy based on out and out competition, in production for production's sake, in the mad extraction of plusvalue and the desperate attempt to shore up the falling rate of profit, so, in the reactions of politics and the press, there emerges the urgency for ideological preparations to be made for this clash: interclass unity, the identification of the enemy, the appeal to national citizenship, the imposition of social peace to promote the future, collective war effort.

Against this ideological preparation for the clash, which is a slow, poisonous and devastating practice, concealed as it is by ambiguous pacifism, patriotic rhetoric and moral

indignation, capable of exploiting any clamorous event (if not creating it!), we communists must start fighting right away, showing proletarians that are suffering – and will suffer even more in future – the material consequences of the economic crisis the urgent need *to prepare, through the revolutionary defeatism of today, in times of peace, the defeatism of tomorrow, in times of war*. This means NO to the "*union sacrée*" in all its lay or religious variations; NO to the division of proletarians along religious, cultural or national lines; NO to the respect for the higher interests of the State, the Nation, the Homeland; NO to relegating the defence of one's own living and working conditions to second place after the primary needs of the "battle against a common enemy", whichever it might be: fundamentalist Islam today, scoundrel-Nations tomorrow.

Our unity is class unity. It is the unity of the *proletarian struggle*, against all the ethnic, religious, national divisions and barriers which brand, imprison and mutilate our class. It is unity against the capitalist economy and the State that manages and defends it politically and militarily. We are well aware that today

this unity struggles to emerge, crushed by the weight of a decaying society, whilst Capital still finds it easy game to divide and command, separate and oppress. But this is the *class unity* we must work on and only we communists, organized in the revolutionary party with its centuries-long experience of defending theory and practice at the heart of the proletarian struggles, can and must do this. It is a hard task, totally against the current, the work of a minority and with little visibility, giving little immediate satisfaction. But it is *necessary, indispensable work*. Without it, without this *work of preparing class unity*, the disintegration of the bourgeois world will proceed at breakneck speed and brutality will burst from its every pore – right up to the supreme violence of the war between States with its accompaniment of infinite suffering and obscene bloodbaths.

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USA: social (and not only financial) bubbles on the horizon

Whilst the media, increasingly incapable of seeing beyond the “breaking news”, rejoice at “America’s firm recovery” (“America surprises the world,” was the headline in the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* on 24/12/14 - but then there was a Christmas atmosphere afoot...) huge, threatening bubbles – for Capital – are swelling on the horizon. We are not speaking merely of the economic-financial ones, to which we have been devoting a good deal of attention in the series of articles on “The Course of World Capitalism and its Crises”. We are speaking of those “social bubbles”, perhaps less immediately visible (except for the dramatic aspects that media sensationalism inevitably insists on), but pregnant with implications for the future.

If we wish to understand the conditions under which the US proletariat lives and works, or survives and does not work (and thus come to realize, in the contradictions constantly generated by Capital, the prospects for a “firm recovery of class consciousness”!), we should look at the sectors that are most oppressed from a social and economic point of view, and the most numerous: the Afro-American proletariat and the immigrants. Just a few months after “the Ferguson facts” [1], military control of the territory (i.e. the trigger-happy policy of the police) has continued to run up victims: a young black man from Brooklyn (New York) killed while he was on the stairway of his girlfriend’s home, a black twelve-

year-old in Cleveland hit and killed because he was waving a toy pistol, another young black man killed because he didn’t obey the orders of a police office... The shocking sequence of cold-blooded killings by the “forces of law and order” all around the United States and the consequent “no grounds to proceed” against the uniformed killers resulted in whole days and nights of anger and indignation, demonstrations and clashes with the police and the National Guard – actually very slight reactions when compared to what happened in the 1960s (but in the ‘70s and ‘80s, too) when a series of riots took place in the country’s ghettos from coast to coast, but which nonetheless demonstrate clearly and tragically that the “issue” is still open.

A “race issue”? No, *a class issue*. Capital has always aimed its attacks at specific sectors of the proletariat, resorting to the *divide et impera* strategy. In the eighteen hundreds, the Irish were the “white blacks” of British Capital, as exploited as the Indians (or, later, the Burmese or the Pakistanis) were; and US Capital has always managed, with considerable and merciless ability, to set one different sector against the other in the huge pool of labour at its disposal: Anglo-Americans against Germans, Irish or Chinese, Italians against blacks, American against immigrant proletarians and so on (indeed, we know how the “lovely Italians” – including, unfortunately, no few proletarians – behave today towards

immigrants).

This is a signal that should not be under-estimated and has various implications. If we succeed in interpreting it without limiting ourselves to a specific event or the “breaking news”, it tells us that profound ill-being is growing in the belly of America and that the ruling class is reacting to it in the only way it knows and can: *by using state repression*. We are not interested in going into the dynamics of these killings, or the specific situations they took place in: what is certain is, that if in some cases harmless young people act tough or are even despicable in the face of police threats (or if, after these killings, they decide to “take justice into their own hands” in classical American style, killing two policemen and then pointing the gun at their own heads), this means that the sense of oppression and frustration, exasperation and anger in the Afro-American proletariat, sub-proletarian and immigrant communities is reaching considerable levels. *And not surprisingly*. “America’s firm recovery” (one of the many that have followed one upon the other over the centuries, accompanied by just as many catastrophic crashes) can only affect and delude small sections of the population: certainly not that vast majority consisting of proletarians, Afro-American and Latin-American, on the lower rungs of the so-called “social ladder” – a social ladder whose lower steps are becoming more and more crowded due to the uncontrollable downward

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flow of members of the middle classes, increasingly harassed and impoverished, and destined to slip even lower, into the social chasm. The highly praised drop in the unemployment rate (which *official figures* now give as 5.8%) conceals the bitter fact that a growing number of people, now discouraged and resigned, simply fail to sign onto the lists of the unemployed in search of work and most of the "new jobs" that affect these figures are actually ultra-precarious, part-time, seasonal etc. (as well as underpaid). In addition, it must not be forgotten, as we have already been able to show [2], that the non-labour market in the USA also includes "7 million people in jail or with some restriction on their movements, who are therefore unable to work." [3].

There is no doubt that US Capital continues to be amongst the top places worldwide. But its decline is inevitable; this can be seen very clearly from the economic data, graphs and tables and from the analyses we have been conducting for decades now. It therefore comes as no surprise that, beyond the superficial optimism, tailor-made for electoral politics, and the trendy articles celebrating the splendid bourgeois neighbourhoods of one city or the other, these "social bubbles" continue to swell day by day amongst the ruined ghettos of the big cities as well as in the disrupted countryside. Sooner or later they will go up with a bang. It is this that the ruling class, with the far-sightedness that comes from several centuries of experience, is now preparing for by means of its State, with its weapons as well as its

economic and financial power. The militarization of society is something that is becoming increasingly evident: police control of the territory under the widest range of pretexts (especially those with particular emotional impact: the fight against drugs, criminality, illegality), more and more pressure on marginal or immigrant communities, criminalization of vast sectors of young people, squatters, the homeless and beggars thrown out of whole neighbourhoods, "chosen" by real-estate speculators and therefore scheduled for "development" – and *shoot to kill*. Faced with all this, the polemics between the police force and the mayor of New York (the former complaining that there is too much... criticism... of them, the latter obliged to turn cartwheels to be on the side of... everyone) amount to pure demagoguery. The executive orders are: exert maximum control and as much pressure as possible.

In fact, an increasingly military nature has been conferred on the US "forces of law and order", according to a pattern that is becoming clearly global [4]. The exchanges between the army and the "forces of law and order" are getting closer and closer: soldiers trained to control the territory on the various war fronts, with specific anti-guerrilla competences, are taken on by the various national police forces for these very competences, for this "experience" and "training in the field". Physically, psychologically and ideologically shaped to eliminate the "enemy" in distant lands, they bring this "identity" of theirs into the home environment: the ruling class is well

aware that the war is not only being fought on battlefronts thousands of miles away – war is here, too, and preparations are being made for it here at home on the streets and in the squares. It is a class war that is spreading ceaselessly, day after day, as an inevitable consequence of the conflict between Capital and Labour, before exploding with the inevitable violence. Proletarians beware! *The ruling class is getting ready and organized*. And by doing so, it is pointing out our own path.

There is another executive order to take into consideration: or rather, another swindle, especially for immigrant proletarians. Hailed by all the world's gurus as further proof of Barak Obama's "democratic progressivism", the Executive Order on immigration issued on the 20 November last (2014) is none other than one of those periodic legislative tweaks that the dynamics of Capital render necessary on the labour market – and one of the most cynical of them, to use a moral definition which is not typically the language we speak. We have already devoted a long article [5] to "Immigration Reform", on which a bi-partisan group has been working on for some time now, re-examining the various measures taken during the course of a century or more: from the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to the more recent reforms of 1986, 1990 and 1996, drawn up, as we wrote in that article, "to contain the migratory flow according to the peaks and dips of the crisis of overproduction of goods and capitals that has submerged us for three decades now." Whilst analysing the

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tendencies that were already emerging at the time (spring 2013) in the field of US immigration policy, we stressed that it “obeys two main imperatives: at a material level, that of ensuring, compatibly with the economic cycle, a reserve of cheap labour and a constant ‘industrial reserve army’, which depresses salaries and exercises blackmailing pressure on the rest of the employed proletariat; at an ideological level, that of fuelling the ‘war of the poor against the poor’, setting the different sectors of the proletariat one against the other – the classical ‘*divide et impera*’. This Executive Order merely proceeds in exactly the same direction.

It has been estimated that around 5 million illegal immigrants will “benefit” from this presidential measure – out of a total that, *officially*, amounts to around 11-12 million: so fewer than half of them. Of these 5 million, 4 of them should be “undocumented parents of U.S. Citizens and permanent residents who've resided in the country for at least five years” [6], who will thus be able to halt expulsion proceedings and apply for a job permit (however, the Executive Order emphasizes that this “new status” is *temporary*: never leave your hands tied!); the remaining one million will be dealt with according to the 2012 Dreamers programme, which stops the deportation of those who arrived in the country illegally as children, but not of their parents (and, again, the term used is “*deportation deferral*”). Both groups will have to renew their applications every three years: the Sword of Damocles continues to



hang over their heads... There will, on the other hand, be no extension of visas for farm workers and this is “because of concerns that it was difficult to justify legally treating them differently from undocumented workers in other jobs, like hotel clerks, day laborers and construction workers”! Instead, it will become easier for students born abroad to obtain work permits and they will be able to remain in the country whilst awaiting regular documents, a change desired by big business. In addition, there will also be a programme facilitating entry visas “for people who invest in the United States and those who pursue science,

technology, engineering and math degrees”! Finally, the icing on the cake: as well as openly containing restrictive clauses (for example, strict limits on healthcare and more severe repression at borders), the measure foresees the White House approving “better security procedures: checks on the illegal immigrants’ past, so that they will have to pay any fines and taxes previously due”, something that only a very small proportion of them will be able to afford – the others will be plunged back into the hordes of unprotected clandestine immigrants.

In practice, therefore, this highly

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exalted Executive Order merely recognizes and puts into practice some of the measures already suggested by the bi-partisan group and which aim to reassure and consolidate a particular sector of immigrants, mostly belonging to the petit-bourgeoisie or working-class aristocracy (in a broad sense), leaving the other 6-7 million (*at least!*) aliens with no legal status (and therefore entirely subject to state and federal powers): those that "count" for capital in fact, because they are open to blackmail in any place and at any time, those from whom cheap labour can be squeezed as long as it is useful and necessary and who can be got rid of without any problems, when they no longer serve the purpose, especially in agriculture and in all those sectors where exploitation is highest and living and working conditions at their worst (the food industry, tourism, building, restaurants, etc.). The 6-7 million includes an unknown number of young people and children without parents – a group recently acquired – who, after overcoming a thousand and one dangers, have managed to cross the border (along which merciless

control measures alternate with huge gaps that are as patently obvious as they are necessary to the US economy). This 6-7 million (inevitably on the increase) will continue to remain "invisible", the hidden engine that has to keep working full speed ahead to ensure maximum output at minimum cost for a capital that is unable to catch its breath and knows only one solution to its own structural limits: "productivity for productivity's sake". As the "Guide" published by the *Washington Post* (quoted earlier) concludes: "in any case, this executive order likely isn't the final word on immigration policy. Undocumented immigrants will have to keep waiting to learn if any protection they receive is permanent". Once again the Sword of Damocles... So there we are; the same all over the world [7]. As we pointed out in our 2013 article, an ever-widening trench is being dug between A-series immigrants and B-series (or C- or D-series!), fuelling more "wars of the poor against the poor", making the labour market even more "flexible" and – last but not least, and here the cynicism mentioned above is to be seen – ensuring a considerable pool of votes for the

2016 elections.

This is how the social bubbles are swelling on the far side of the Atlantic. When they burst with a resounding bang, US proletarians – whatever the colour of their skin – will find themselves facing the bourgeois State alone, without any program or direction. There is no more to be said. Urgent reinforcement of the revolutionary party and the firm establishment of its international roots can no longer be postponed and this should prove obvious to any communist worthy of the name.

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NOTES

[1] See our article "Ferguson (USA)-Napoli (Italia). La 'questione' non è di razza, ma di classe", *il programma comunista*, n.5/2014. <http://www.partitocomunistainternazionale.org/archivio/PC-05-2014.pdf>.

[2] See our article "Carcere, immigrazione e lavoro salariato", *il programma comunista*, n.4/2007.

<http://www.partitocomunistainternazionale.org/archivio/PC-04-2007.pdf>.

[3] Quoted from Vincenzo Comito, "Un futuro meno brillante di quel che luccica", *Il Manifesto*, 28/12/2014.

[4] See Gilles Paris, "'La police américaine a des tactiques quasi militaires'", *Le Monde*, 6 décembre 2014; Domenico Lusi, "La militarizzazione che cambia il volto dei nostri poliziotti", *Pagina99*, 15-21 dicembre 2014.

[5] See our article "USA: Immigration Reform, New Bait for the Geese": http://www.partitocomunistainternazionale.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1549:usa-immigration-reform-new-bait-for-the-geese&catid=124:web&Itemid=161.

[6] See Max Ehrenfreund, "Your Complete Guide to Obama's Immigration Executive Action", *The Washington Post*, Nov. 24, 2014: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2014/11/19/your-complete-guide-to-obamas-immigration-order/>. Following data and quotations are from this article.

[7] See our article "Clandestini", *il programma comunista*, n.6/2013. <http://www.partitocomunistainternazionale.org/archivio/PC-06-2013.pdf>.

Gaza: the umpteenth bloodbath floods the Middle East

The victims are the proletarian and proletarianized Palestinian masses of the Gaza Strip, massacred by Israeli bombings, trapped in a territory they cannot escape from, strangled in the grip of savagely warring bourgeoisies. Their enemy is not only Israeli imperialism, supported and fed by all the imperialisms present in the area (first and foremost the USA). The Palestinian proletarians in the Gaza Strip - similarly, but even more so, to those with Israeli passports or living on the East Bank - are also the hostages and victims of their own bourgeoisie – *of the whole of the Palestinian bourgeoisie*. They are the hostages and victims of bourgeois factions representing interests that, *under the pressure of the world economic crisis*, are coagulating around the major imperialist States: inevitably subordinate bourgeoisies that express “fake” States, fragile but strong and well-structured in the exercise of their *anti-proletarian dictatorship*.

And so another hotbed of war is re-kindled in the general “middle-eastern” conflict and the broader repositioning of imperialist interests: the “dissolution” of Iraq, Syria, Libya, the mess in Afghanistan, total instability in Africa, chaos in the Ukraine... Everywhere, tens and hundreds of thousands, proletarians, semi-proletarians, proletarianized masses or those on the way to proletarianization, are massacred in the crossfire of bourgeois factions, bands and armies of mercenaries and conflicting interests, or flee from their homes, which are transformed

into areas of merciless armed conflict. Increasingly, the world of capital is showing its real face: *capitalism is war*, even when it proclaims it comes “in peace” – this is demonstrated by two world wars and hundreds of “minor” conflicts over the span of a century, with millions upon millions of deaths, wounded, refugees. The proliferation of these hotbeds of war today tells us that new world slaughter is being prepared, just as the bourgeoisie celebrate with hypocritical tears the hundredth anniversary of *their* first inter-imperialist conflict.

The proletarian and proletarianized masses of the Gaza Strip, the East Bank, Libya, Syria, Iraq, Ukraine have *only one friend*: not one bourgeois faction or the other, whether lay or religious, not one State or the other, ready to massacre them tomorrow when their interests demand it, but *the proletariat of the imperialist centres*, also hit by the tremendous effects of the economic crisis. Only by taking up again an uncompromising class struggle, open confrontation with the ruling classes, their State and their agents within the proletarian class – only by the creation of an international proletarian and internationalist front, which will fight any form of open or concealed racism, any form of nationalism and more or less populist chauvinism – only in this way can practical help be given to those tormented and fleeing masses. But this means resuming the fight to strike down this society that has become merely destructive,

bloodthirsty and merciless. It means resuming the fight for the prospect of a classless society, a mode of production that is superior to the one that has been oppressing us for far too long in its unending death throes. It means resuming the fight for the real and more than ever necessary prospect of *communism* – which has nothing in common with the macabre scam perpetrated for almost a century by “really existing socialism”, whether Russian, Chinese, Cuban or Albanian, or whatever else!

In all this, the central role must again become that of the *revolutionary party*, the science, the organization and the direction of the proletariat – a world party, founded on solid theory, on a firm and disciplined structure, on a tradition over a century-old now of struggle against the bourgeois régime in its many guises (democratic, fascist, reformist, social-democratic and stalinist) and against all forms of opportunism and revisionism. We work on establishing the roots of this party, in the awareness that *this* is the real help we can give the victims of the massacres that are happening in the Gaza Strip and elsewhere and that will inevitably follow them, unless the rule of capital is overthrown.

July 15, 2014

The Anti-Proletarian Alliance of the Arab and Israeli Bourgeoisies

After more than 50 days of bombing and over 2000 deaths, including women and children, the Israeli attack unleashed on Gaza's proletariat over the past few months has *temporarily* ceased. The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has reassumed its role as controller, according to the security agreements stipulated in Oslo in 1993 with the Israeli attacker-occupiers. Villages, enclaves, shelters, refugee camps, West Bank towns in area A (18% of the territory, the administrative area governed by the Palestinian National Authority), area B (21%, the area where civil administration is the responsibility of the Palestinians and security that of the Israelis) and area C (controlled exclusively by Israel)

thus return to so-called normality. In this territory, euphemistically called "Palestinian", where poverty, misery and unemployment run rife in houses piled one against the other, with walls as high as 8 metres surrounding towns and cities, lookout towers keeping an eye on the territory and urban density beyond its utmost limit, the two States and their police forces rein in the proletariat, taking over control of the streets and the hunt for young demonstrators (arrests are a normal, everyday occurrence). "Securing" the territory is a task shared by the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli army and has become a slogan. But there are still a few "naïve souls" who, unable to lie about the real

conditions of the Palestinian proletariat, continue to quibble about the claimed "lack of an acknowledged State" and at the same time lament the "pressure from the Palestinian police" ... One and the same thing: either the Palestinian police force is a fifth column, a reserve of the Israeli State, or else it is the expression of the Palestinian bourgeoisie and its own State.

The media report that at the end of the umpteenth massacre perpetrated in Gaza a "showdown" occurred between the various factions of Hamas, with so-called "collaborators" being shot: this demonstrates that the social division between the classes is advancing and penetrating deep into militant files. We dare to

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hope and believe that proletarian elements, too, are slowly gaining "consciousness" of their social conditions and preparing to fight back – unfortunately without any hope of victory today, unless they are supported by the proletariat in western countries.

On the basis of the Oslo agreements, the Palestinian National Authority (so Italian edition of *Le Monde Diplomatique* explained to us in October 2014) "has no right to use force in the case of attack by Israeli settlers, [...] must submit to the Israeli authorities, cooperating to identify and interrogate Palestinian militants who may constitute a 'potential' risk for Israel". The Palestinian police are recognized by the population as collaborators because of the numerous arrests of opponents over the last few years, explains the head of the Aida refugee camp (Bethlehem), "at times ordered by Israel [...]. How can one trust an organism that obeys the will of the occupiers and that is actually a threat to us?" At the beginning of 2013, the refugees wrecked the police station in the camp, chasing away the policemen. "In the end we have the impression that the only thing that distinguishes them from Israeli soldiers is the (Palestinian) flag they work under." Both the PLO and Fatah are quite aware of this situation, since the declarations by Abu Mazen in a meeting in front of journalists and militants on 28 May this year in Ramallah have not given rise to any scandal: "The coordination [with Israel, ed.] of security is sacred, sacred. And will continue, whether we agree with the Israelis or

The agreement signed in Cairo in 1994 reads as follows: "work systematically against any incitement to terrorism and violence against Israel", "prevent any act of hostility" against the settlers and "coordinate [their] activity" with the Israeli army, mostly through exchange of information and joint operations. On 9 January 2005, after the elections of Abu Mazen, this policy gained new impetus with the reform of the security services. From the Report of the International Crisis Group (*Squaring the circle: Palestinian security reform under occupation*, 7 Sept. 2010, www.crisisgroup.org), we gather some facts: the Palestinian police forces and gendarmeries amount to around thirty thousand members (1 to every 80 inhabitants of the West Bank – a ratio amongst the highest in the world: in France it is 1 to 356). These forces were organized by the USA, which formed special units equipped with modern vehicles and sophisticated arms. The security forces financed by Washington and by the Europeans absorb 30% of the Authority's annual budget, equal to 3.2 billion euros in 2014, a sum greater than the total allocated to education, health and agriculture. The ex-Minister for Home Affairs in Palestine, Said Abu Ali, who held office from 2009 to 2014, explains this as follows: "Coordination policy is a success for both sides... the efforts we have made to re-establish law and order have succeeded in ensuring some stability in the West Bank and conquering terrorism and extremism. There are those who condemn the cooperation of our services with

Israel and accuse us of being 'collaborators', but it has nothing to do with this. Our aim is to build a State and security is one of its pillars."

And this is what this security policy leads to (again from Italian edition of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, cit.): "In 2013 the Israeli army arrested over 4600 Palestinian civilians in the West Bank with around 4000 interventions... around thirty were killed... as to the Authority's police force, it is regularly accused of abuse, as well as of the arbitrary detention of several political opponents (just like the Hamas police force in Gaza)." This data is followed by the considerations of the sociologist Abaher al Sakka, who teaches at the University of Bir Zeit (Ramallah): "This security policy that our leaders justify in the name of the future State, really serves as a guarantee to the 'international community' the Authority depends on financially and to prevent hotbeds of rebellion in the Territories."

The situation of widespread crisis, which of course affects this area, too, has witnessed a protest by the population against government policy. Like everywhere else, the laissez-faire policies that Capital has resorted to in the attempt to deal with its own crisis "have seen support from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and donations from other countries, since 2007". As in many countries, much of state and social spending has been cut and placed under the control of private companies: "the elimination of 150 thousand jobs as civil servants, containment of salaries, readjusting



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of social security, increase in social inequality, doing away with jobs and increase in the cost of living, a drop in GNP from 7% (2008) to 1.5% (2013)". The "economic boom" by the "Palestinian tiger" of the pre-crisis years, so highly praised by the experts and actually due to international aid which "covers half the Authority's budget", upturned into "an unprecedented financial crisis, as soon as the aid from donations was exhausted in 2010". The trend of the unemployment rate at present hovers between 20% and 30% in the West Bank and 40% in Gaza, poverty affects a quarter of the population, whilst the income of the rich has grown 10% during the course of the crisis.

Abaher al Sakka again: "Most of the country's economy is concentrated in the hands of important families and of the new rich, mostly linked to the centre of power and taking advantage of its networks. They are the heads of companies that control sectors such as telecommunications, building, energy, food, etc. Some of them invest on the Israeli market and in industrial colonies. In exchange they enjoy privileges conceded by Israel, such as the possibility of being first past the checkpoints. In Ramallah it is quite common to see these VIPs shooting through the city centre in brand new cars; they live in areas that are light years away from the universe of the refugee camps." Once more *Le Monde Diplomatique* offers some figures on trade (Palestinians import 70% of their products from Israel and export 85%) and on customs duties (cashed by

Tel Aviv whilst they are due to the Palestinian Authority).

So what is to be done?

The anger expressed by a young man who saw a friend killed by Israeli soldiers is most interesting: "The élite and the capitalists of Ramallah with their big Mercedes and their jeeps do not represent us. They treat us as 'terrorists' and 'extremists', when all we are trying to do is resist the occupation! We must dismantle the Authority. It is of no use, merely to carry on vague negotiations which, in the end, are its only reason for existing, its business interest!"

These radical political affirmations contain a mixture of the needs and illusions of the new generations of proletarians. These proletarians are the ones we turn to: they should realize that there is a confederation of two bourgeoisies allied against them and it is these that must be fought; *there are two States and both have to be attacked*. Nothing can stop the advance of colonization, the régime of military occupation, the growing misery and exploitation, the close link (between the two bourgeoisies) hidden behind the apparent contrast, *except for the organization of revolutionary defeatism* at various different levels (economic, social, political and military) of *the proletarian united front*. It cannot be done either by a "third Intifada", or a general uprising involving the whole Arab-Israeli territory, unless the national straitjackets in which the two States have confined their proletarians, and which weigh like millstones on their class objectives, are ripped off. The limited horizon

of Intifada was outstripped half a century ago by the wars brought by the Israeli army to the various territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip: a general proletarian uprising confined inside the Palestinian State would be destined to succumb. The international dimension that the Middle East has acquired no longer allows for refuge in national issues or alibis. For some time the great imperialist metropolises, of which Israel is merely a keen pupil, have been imposing their terrible diktats on civilian populations by means of devastation and massacre. Given the present state of affairs, all variations of the Palestinian bourgeoisie must be attacked, both *lay and religious*; its governments for national unity and the alternate reconciliations between Fatah, Hamas and the various liberation fronts are merely advance notice of weighty defeats for the proletariat.

The anger and contempt expressed by the young Palestinian in the name of them all must be directed at *all the nationalist sirens*: the "right to return" of the Palestinians just as the fabled "promised land" of the Jews. *The proletarian and class perspective has to resound in all social fractures, in every economic clash, in all the strikes: the historical-social and economic conditions for a revolutionary comeback are all in place.*

Ukraine: the imperialist predators and the proletariat

As the war massacres in Syria continue and millions of refugees flock to all corners of the Middle East, adding to the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian, African and Asian proletarians fleeing by land and sea in an attempt to survive, the situation in Ukraine has blown up under pressure from the imperialist powers, with all the contradictions it has been dragging along with it since the explosion of Russia (1989-91), but which are mainly due to material factors linked to its history and geographical, economic and strategic position. Born old and decrepit, with the illusion of being able to gain stable independence at a political as well as an economic level, the Ukrainian bourgeoisie has “settled down” in a territory that reaches across the area of Eastern Europe bordering on Belarus, Poland, Hungary Slovakia, Romania, Moldavia and Russia.

In fact, with its 45 million inhabitants, a surface area inferior only to that of European Russia, a very low average population (77 inhabitants per square kilometre) but densely populated in the east, this country, which has been characterised ever since its foundation by a weak economy (briefly recovering between 2004-6 and then experiencing a crash as a consequence of the world economic crisis), continues to be a clay pot between the two main iron vessels, Germany and the United States (firmly aligned in East Europe ever since the ‘Nineties). Because of the number and diversity of the countries sharing its borders, Ukraine has always, in times of both war

and peace, been a sort of “middle ground”, crushed between Poland in the north-west and Russia in the south-east. As such, it has never risen to the levels of a modern nation. Here the imperialism of the great powers is wide awake; so are the potential business opportunities and the financial capital bound up with raw materials but, above all, the growth in armaments is wide awake, since the Baltic area of the Black Sea and the Caucasus, not so far away, are political-strategic areas that are highly likely to explode.

In the twenty-three years that have gone by since its so-called political independence, Ukraine has tried to build a state along the same lines as Russia and the oligarchies have reproduced themselves rapidly and massively, supported by financial dealings linked to the privatization of the entire industrial economy. Coaxed along economically by Russia by means of economic-political agreements on the prices of raw materials for energy, of which it is in extreme need (gas, oil) and for which it is an important crossroads between the Russian areas of production and the western areas of consumption, attracted to the USA from a military point of view (and thus to the NATO, which it aims to join), Ukraine tries to negotiate its own existence in that part of East Europe so pregnant with nationalisms and destined to explode once again as soon as the war alliances of the main players have been defined *by the iron law of determinism*.

Those fragments of borders, the scattered jigsaw produced by the

upheaval in Russia, do in fact become an impossible burden for that indefinable edifice known as the European Union – which risks disastrous consequences if, in response to Yankee ‘recommendations’, it opens its arms to the fragments that risk breaking up into even tinier parts. And so, when Russia, on recovering from the economic and political crash of the ‘Nineties, insisted on the payment of a large sum for electrical power, no longer covered by tollage, the decisive element of the price of raw materials (always present when there is a world crisis of over-production) immediately rose to the surface. This is a factor that leads us back to *far more profound economic contradictions*, which have nothing to do with a “clash of civilizations between forms of oligarchy and democracy”. Apart from agricultural production (wheat and timber) in its central areas, Ukraine’s economic situation is complemented in the east by an authentic industrial network concentrated in the area of Donetsk (south-east Ukraine), Lugansk and Karchiv, including the area of Donbass, rich in coal, iron and sulphur. Here, on the border with Russia, the greatest concentration of proletarians is to be found: in the coalmines, in the steelworks, in particular, and in the chemical works. On the coast, from Odessa (the city where the Russian revolution started in 1905) right up to the Crimean peninsula stretches a large area which constitutes the industrial lungs of the Ukraine (80% of total industrial production), linked to



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Russia both traditionally and by economic and political bonds: at the end of the 1800s and up to the first few decades of the 1900s it was here that the bases of the Russian economy were laid and later modernized, producing most of the steel which, at the end of the 1920s, allowed Stalin's first five-year plan to be completed (and, incidentally, this is where the enthusiasm for stakhanovism began). Here then, just over the recent border between Ukraine and Russia, the interests of the oligarchies linked to coal, steel, oil and gas are entangled. The big fat bourgeoisie "looking towards Russia" fears a break in the economic fabric that has been woven for over half a century and more. In other words, it fears that with Ukraine entering the western economic sphere there will be an irreparable split with the market it has always done business with. This is why it has mobilized the middle classes, which are proclaiming at the top of their voices that, by returning to Russia, the workers will "double their wages, double their pensions, and have better facilities and, above all, jobs". The central part of the country, with small and medium-sized businesses centring around Kiev, and the westernmost part which was once Polish and Austrian (Lviv and Galicia) are irresistibly drawn to the west. Here the strong attraction of German and US imperialism is to be felt, capturing the illusions of the Ukrainian bourgeoisie and corrupting the new middle classes with the scent of dollars and euros and with the mirage of Polish and Czech profits, currently boasted of

as the height of the European Union's economic development. Central Ukraine thus hopes to draw very concrete benefits from a treaty of association with the whole of the European Union, whose total exchange of imports now comes to a sum of 50% of the total, with Russia acting as the counterbalance and alone, as an economic partner, exporting 27 billion dollars' worth and importing 18 billion's worth. The three-headed Ukrainian bourgeoisie whose wallets are so divided, and thus also the consequences of their actions and their expectations, nonetheless finds its reason for being in the dense network of gas- and oil-lines coming from Russia, which mark Ukraine's total dependency on demand from the West and supply from Russia. The independent management of this network by the State company Naftohaz Ukrayny, with its attempt to impose a rise in the price of Russia's tollage by cutting off the supply of energy, set off the irreparable conflict with Gazprom, to the east of these crossroads, which manages production and distribution and no longer has any intention of offering a discount as it did in the past, but of applying market rates. It is no coincidence that after the North Stream gas pipeline in the Baltic Sea and the Jamal towards Belarus, Gazprom is planning to avoid the whole of the Balkans by building other pipelines directly to the North Sea, avoiding Norway, or further south along the Black Sea where, alongside the Blue Stream leading to Turkey, the South Stream leading to Bulgaria would be laid.

The dire economic crisis, bringing

with it a veritable monetary and financial bankruptcy of the Ukrainian State (debt crisis, inflation, high gas bills, interest rates rising from 5 to 36%, bank reserves reduced to a minimum, agriculture and the steel industry paralyzed), then provided the spark that inflamed the thousands of demonstrators who filled Maidan Square in Kiev protesting against Yanucovich's pro-Russian government. It also re-activated the various economic and political interests, pro-Russian and pro-Europe, of a divided bourgeoisie, anticipating, absorbing and deviating potential class conflict. In the capital, the half-classes have been at centre-stage, with their corporative interests, their vile democratic nationalism and the impulse to get rich, the immediate signs of internal contrast in the bourgeois front. The proletariat have passively followed the miserable patriotic current but now events risk involving them in a possible military confrontation, unless they once again take up their independent path as a class, declaring aloud their defeatism towards any sort of economic or social problem. The clash between imperialisms has become decisive where the barycentre of power has always been: in Crimea, where the lines of force of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea meet those of the NATO's southern front in Turkey, converging towards the Mediterranean. Having trumped up a non-existent appeal by the Russian-speaking population to Holy Mother Russia, the referendum for independence and clashes between armies in Sebastopol have done the rest.

The drives westwards and the

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counter-drives towards the east have followed the same dynamics that occurred during the dissolution of Russia, and in the period from 2004 to 2008, when, exiting the previous economic crisis (1997-8) for the first time, the bombastic name of "orange revolution" was given to the internal political and economic contrasts. The objective of this "movement" was not only to negotiate the price of raw materials but also to obtain the strategic economic and financial shift of the Ukraine towards Germany (and thus the European Union), the side that was more economically appetizing to the bourgeoisie (at least the majority of it).

Not least important is the support of the USA, which for years has been holding out the carrot of military support, so badly needed by the bourgeoisie, so it says, since it is unable to maintain an army, a navy and arms capable of contrasting a possible "Russian invasion". The same dynamics brought the Baltic provinces, economically supported by the USA (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) into Europe and into NATO, just as the US supported Georgia in the Caucasus during the Russian war for control of Ossetia.

Imperialism, which in the West is known as "support for freedom and democracy", never rests and will not cease to go on pushing right up to the extreme consequences. The opposing front, also consisting of "lovers of peace and democracy", has, up to now, continued to proclaim its own "support for the oppressed Russian population" (oppressed obviously in terms of their careers, academics and busi-


ness dealings). But it is not just two players who will be deciding in the future: Obama's abandonment of Bush's plans to place missiles and radar in Poland and Czechoslovakia as deterrents to Russia was also due to the German bourgeoisie, which does not look kindly on US-protected Polish and Czech armaments at its borders. It is no coincidence that Germany preferred in this case to place the Luftwaffe's bombers in the Baltic area, traditionally much nearer to its own area of expansion towards Russia. The massive and determined demonstrations in Kiev, opposed by direct attack from the police, snipers on the roofs and the mass of mercenaries, nationalists belonging to one gang or the other, had no other aim than to advance the business dealings of the Ukrainian bourgeoisie: those who keep the proletariat on a leash in their "brotherly" fashion. The demonstrations in the streets merely exposed imperial appetites, which *craftily exploit* the historical, territorial, economic and social differences, inevitably raising the *winds of war*.

Over the border, the harsh and extensive demonstrations by partisans and pro-Russian agents in Karkiv, Donetsk and Lugansk, the occupation of public buildings, the clashes and barricades merely encourage the role play.

The incursions of Ukrainian helicopters against the civilian population and the endless stream of deaths serve to fuel the rancour and anger, setting proletarians one against the other. And the objective of the Russian tanks ranged along the Ukrainian border is exactly the same. If, during the course of events

along the Polish border, the peaceful demonstrations in Lviv claimed the right to a sort of political independence and if the action of Russia and of residents in the area allowed Crimea to return to Russia by means of a referendum, this all demonstrates that the times do not yet seem to be ripe for a large-scale conflict: *but they are tracing its future outlines and development*. For now, things are limited to raising the political price of the contrast. Russia's response, moving tanks into Sebastopol to protect the fleet, has demonstrated once again that the peninsula continues to be dynamite, just as it was during the two world wars. From here the whole of the Caucasus is under control, from here ships set out to bomb Georgia. Moreover, the Black Sea is the gateway to the Mediterranean. The stalemate and low-level war power of the pawns on the board at present depends on the gravity of the crisis, which crushes any dreams of intervention for the moment. The ranging of tanks and the troops positioned on the Ukrainian border, just like the American warships in international waters off the Black Sea and the Awacs planes surveilling Ukrainian territory remain war games.

The events that have followed one another at an increasing rate since the second Gulf War up to the present world crisis of over-production leave no way of escape and drive us inexorably towards a new world conflict. The political dynamics in the Ukraine could not fail to be affected by the present acceleration which in the long term could lead to territorial division, as happened in the Balkans. The latent interests of

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varying natures, revived from time to time, between populations that had co-habited for a long time, remained in this condition until the States involved started to fan the flames of economic interests. The Russian intervention "in defence of our countrymen", for "the self-determination of peoples", is the same old mise-en-scene as for all imperialist wars: *the mise-en-scene of the world wars*.

Historically, the facts have shown that the economic interests of bourgeois States *cannot be reconciled*. As a general rule. On the other hand, even internally it is impossible for a compromise to last long between the various contrasting factions in the bourgeois camp: any compromise whets imperialist appetites and creates an irresistible drive towards conflict.

The bourgeois State must be *one only* and its Chief of Staff *unified*. Internal conflicts and political divisions do not modify the dynamics: on the contrary, they force it into a situation *with no way out*. The power war between Moscow and Kiev would result in the suspension of energy supplies to the European Union, that 25-30% necessary to European consumption of which 80% passes through the Ukraine. The management and ownership of the pipelines enables Ukraine to respond to Russian pressure by blocking or reducing the flow of gas destined for Europe.

In this situation, the major powers (Russia, Germany, USA) will not leave Ukraine an iota of freedom: you can only serve one master at a time. Nonetheless, since the proleta-

riat is the real prey, when it takes to the streets all the bourgeois factions (including the already wavering middle classes) will join under a single leadership, dragging it into the catastrophe of war.

Patriotic propaganda (cultural, historical, democratic, imperial) is the bait and the deadly net used to cover the slaughter. The future will offer no escape from capital's drive to balkanize the Ukraine: Europe, a *jungle of nationalisms to the east, as to the west*, will continue to suffer landslides, dragging the Ukraine with it. The dynamics of Capital will destroy those nations that are powerless to withstand the clash with the great imperialist forces and at the same time will continue along the path of its centralization on an increasingly wider scale: divisions will thus follow and, at the same time, centralization and accumulation, the accumulation of capital and consequent over-production with increasingly devastating crises. To save itself from these destructive dynamics, the small offshore traffic of national reform will be unable to afford any acceleration in the development of its own, feeble "peripheral" capital. Advancing balkanization accelerates the development of big international capital, subjugating local capital and trampling over the corpses of ephemeral nations.

The proletariat must give all these patriotic sirens a wide berth, because the bourgeoisie will want to bring back the "national factor", "economic stability", "defence and honour of the fatherland". Imperialist war, disguised as the "freedom of peoples", "democracy" and "free trade",

serves to stop the proletariat from recognizing the true detonator of wars and revolutions: *Capital*. Thus, what must be placed firmly on the agenda is *economic, social and political defeatism*, which – under the guidance of the international communist party, today a minority but with a firmly established and recognizable tradition – must finally result in the communist revolution, the seizing of power and the dictatorship of the proletariat. These are *the only and inevitable paths* to throwing an outdated and now merely destructive mode of production onto history's scrapheap. As the facts tragically continue to demonstrate.

STOP PRESS

This article was written at the end of April 2014. It does not, therefore, take into account the events that developed later: the killings in Odessa, the referendum for the "independence" of the south-east of the country, with the attendant dispatch of tanks and soldiers to prevent it, the election of the new president of the Ukraine, the constant clashes and tension – all events (which we shall nonetheless be obliged to return to) that do not change our analyses or evaluation.

(June 2014)

In Ukraine, as in the entire world, in the face of imperialist war the proletarian slogan must be once again: revolutionary defeatism against all bourgeoisies!

Between partisans and loyalists, nationalists and mercenaries, all supplied by arms from imperialist instigators, the programmed assassination of proletarians is being planned, according to the same old script

As communists and internationalists, we know from memory and from the science of history that in the age of imperialism class rule and oppression become more widespread and more intense. The economic crisis strews growing poverty and a trail of death amongst proletarians all over the world. War is the natural habitat of capitalism: indeed imperialism means more intense international competition, harsh trade wars and exportation of capitals which inevitably come into conflict with one another, control of the sources of raw materials and their transport routes and thus the attempt to exclude competitors, right up to the uncontrolled explosion of conflicts that are at first local and later, in perspective and in the presence of the necessary, favourable material conditions, *worldwide*.

This is what has been happening for decades from the Balkan strip, through the Middle East (Iraq, the Palestinian territories, Syria) as far as Afghanistan, the crossroads of commerce, vital trade corridors, pipelines for oil and gas, oilfields and sources of water. Now comes the turn of the Russian-Ukrainian territory, where the appetites of the huge imperialist giants (the USA, Germany, Russia, China) collide, thus intensifying the preconditions for a coming world conflict. The international mandates, the peace assemblies, the meetings of the UN Security Council are the useless fig leaves of pacifism and thus of mystification: they are the bourgeois diktats which over all these years have led to the death of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian, Slav, Iraqi, Afghani, Libyan, Syrian, and soon Russian and Ukrainian proletarians. Faced with the jungle of nationalisms, invented, reborn or only temporarily placated, the proletariat's slogan everywhere can be none other than *revolutionary defeatism*: the distinct and total refusal to side with one front or another, to support one bourgeoisie or another and, first and foremost, *its "own"*. There is no "homeland in danger", no "violation of democracy", no "invading enemy", no "liberating army": the proletariat must no longer fall into these mortal traps!

But what is the meaning of *revolutionary defeatism against the bourgeoisies of all nations, large and small, already organized in a state or still subordinate, attacked or attackers*? What should the action of the proletariat be, faced with these wars, as with future ones, far more widespread and devastating – a third world bloodbath?

- 1. The refusal to accept economic and social sacrifices in the name of the "national economy"**
- 2. The organization of battles in defence of the living and working conditions of all proletarians, even when a war effort is invoked and there is a call to "national unity"**
- 3. An open break with any negotiation and social peace, a decided return to the methods and objectives of class war – methods and objectives that for now represent the only real internationalist solidarity of the proletariat in the imperialist strongholds towards the masses of oppressed proletarians**
- 4. Refusal of any partisanship (nationalist, patriotic, mercenary, humanitarian, pacifist) in favour of one "front" or another.**

Only on the basis of these fundamental premises, which imply *independent action by the proletariat*, will it be possible to organize open *revolutionary defeatism*, placing it at the centre of the class strategy and allowing the war front to be broken, causing it to crumble. In this commitment to the struggle our allies are *exclusively* proletarians all over the world and in particular those in countries massacred by imperialist wars. They are not and *never* will be one bourgeois faction or another, however armed or "resistant", in whatever guise, lay or religious, reformist or – worse still – pseudo-socialist. The profound economic crisis and the armed interventions that have followed one upon the other in the last few decades demonstrate that *the capitalist mode of production is now on its deathbed*: its long agony is pure destruction and it is therefore necessary to *deal the final blow*, in order to achieve at last the violent seizing of power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat directed by the communist party, a classless society, communism.

In this perspective the *rebirth, extension and establishment of roots of the world communist party* becomes increasingly urgent.

International Communist Party
(il programma comunista – cahiers internationalistes
- internationalist papers – the internationalist)

Capitalism: a war-oriented economy

For the growth of capital, military expenditure is an absolute necessity. It is how the State finances the security its capitalists need to ensure themselves of sources of foreign wealth, the subordination of workers both at home and abroad, the direct and immediate use of natural resources, the management of factories and the power of national capitalism. To guarantee profits, the State “commandeers” nature and labour, not only at home but also worldwide. This is how military expenditure and the destructive power of an army truly become the real production force of capitalism, the real guarantee of continuity in the production process. Nagasaki, Hiroshima, Dresden, Berlin, Warsaw are *exemplary sites of capital’s destructive power*: nothing else! The museums of horror that have been built in the bombed cities, such as the Holocaust museums and the monuments to the Unknown Soldier, serve as deterrents against *proletarian revolution* and not against bourgeois wars, whose patriotic virtues they instead sing the praises of. A direct relationship exists between military spending and national production forces: the expenditure on the armed forces and armaments is all the greater, the more capital has been accumulated in a nation and consequently the more widespread is its range of business interests and, to an even greater extent, the more capital is already employed abroad. Military spending is productive for capitalism as a source of immense profits, equal to the spending on infrastructures and

building work. The profit is gained by using the workforce to produce sophisticated arms, like any other capitalist goods. The fact that arms have a destructive use value changes nothing at all: on the contrary, it merely shows the socialized nature of wealth, its exchange value, which lies at the centre of any economic activity in a capitalist society. Tanks and bombers serve to increase this wealth, just as road-building machinery, bullets and toys, land mines and lollipops do. In one sense, perhaps armaments are worth even more than the offer of “civilian” goods to be sold to anyone: the State, with its inexhaustible buying power and its enormous needs, its long-term planning and its available resources, can bring together generals and engineers, industrialists and physicists to invent the future needs of warfare.

Military spending also makes a considerable contribution to growth in general. The creation of plusvalue permits capitalism to increase the wealth of society through the production of pure, destructive power, so that *a flourishing military budget is not a drawback for capital and its State but a true blessing*. The powerful capitalist nations certainly consider themselves justified in contracting more credit for their projects in the field of armaments: through close cooperation between industry and the armed forces, governments promote the interests of industrial technology in all sectors, from materials science to the pharmaceutical and electronics industries, ensuring the best techni-

cal resources for national enterprises, all in the interests of their competitive potential. Moreover, the machinery of warfare is subject to considerable “moral wear and tear” (as Marx calls it), far more so than in industry in general: i.e. armaments are rapidly overtaken by new technologies and nonetheless do not abandon the market, because crowds of buyers of all descriptions prove ready to add to their own arsenals. In addition, the vocation of modern industry is large-scale production, mass production, increase in the overall value of production and the reduction of value-per-unit. The production of war follows the whole itinerary, moving from scientific discovery to its wider technical applications and from here to the realization of plusvalue through the huge circulation of goods. Any price is paid for new arms and their production is an essential condition for the generalized development of “civilian” side industries. The market easily finds purchasers, and through the latter ensures large-scale reproduction for profits that are well above average. Financial means in this sector are the most powerful vehicles for magnifying and speeding up the circulation of war products. The sale of armaments allows for rapid valorization of the capital invested: but the war industry must consume these goods and foreign buyers (States), having planted the seeds for hotbeds of tension, know how to make use of them. This is demonstrated by the hundreds of more or less extended wars that have been



Warmongering Pacifism

In the communist tradition there is deep-rooted *opposition to nationalism and militarism*, to any form of “warmongering” based on working-class support for the bourgeois State, either in the name of “defence against aggressors” or of “saving liberal and democratic civilization”. But a no less deep-rooted tradition is that of out-and-out *opposition to pacifism* – a concept and a programme in itself vague and undefined, but a lethal weapon against the proletariat when it falls into the hands of the various gangs of opportunists, whether of the older or newer variety, who make use of it to spread confusion and illusion in the proletarian ranks with fixed ideas of interclass relations and anti-imperialism based on peace marches, *sit-ins* and *flash mobs* of all these “sincere democrats”.

Communism has always argued that *wars are inevitable in a capitalist régime*, both in the historical phase when the bourgeoisie is establishing its rule and setting up centralized national states, and also (even more so) in the modern imperialist phase, when it is aiming at the conquest and control of entire geographical areas and the various historical states are competing to rule over them. Thus, whoever wishes to eliminate war must *abolish capitalism*, i.e. *destroy the bourgeois State*, the essence and tool of capital’s class rule. This is why the proletarian revolution represents the only effective historical solution (the one that opens up the gates to a better social organization than the sort we have at present) to the antagonisms

and the conflagrations necessarily caused by them, within capitalist society.

Those who appeal for peace, hoping or arguing for “new eras”, yet still respecting the current mode of production, are adversaries or betrayers of the proletariat, because they set before it the illusory and misleading objective of “capitalism without war”. However, it is useful to agree on the fact that an analysis of wars between States should not be reduced to a naive denial of the considerable repercussions of wars, their trends and outcomes, on the potentialities of the communist movement. Marxist analysis does not even lead us to exclude the possibility, *in certain phases*, of an inter-imperialist “league” capable of maintaining peace everywhere or almost everywhere *for a certain period of time*. However, this “peace” would be the expression of *open counter-revolution*: an anti-proletarian Holy Alliance that would ever more concentrate, at the service of capitalist oppression, the means for strangling the rebellion of the oppressed, in a centrally commanded and worldwide iron-fisted police, using a monopoly of all means of destruction and attack. Not only this: this “peace”, *worse than imperialist warfare*, would certainly not be eternal, since it would resuscitate on a broader and more generalized basis the growing antagonisms between classes and imperialist states.

The fight against capitalism can therefore not be separated from the fight against pacifism.

In fact, Marxism has always denied the possibility of capitalism developing in a harmonious and balanced fashion, therefore without antagonisms or catastrophes. “To set forth this need, that production should be expanded *simultaneously and at once in the same proportion*, really means to set external demands upon capital, which in no way arise from its nature,” explained Marx in the *Grundrisse* (1857-58). The outbreak of antagonisms between classes and States is thus linked to the very nature of capitalism. But what is its nature? Again Marx, again in the *Grundrisse*: “*competition* is nothing other than the inner *nature of capital*, its essential character, appearing in and realized as the reciprocal interaction of many capitals with one another [...]. Capital exists and can only exist as *many capitals* [...] Capital is just as much the constant creation as the constant suppression of a *proportionate production*. The existing proportion always has to be suppressed by the creation of surplus values and the increase of productive forces.” It follows that, in order to survive, capital must develop and cannot do so harmoniously, but, in its multiplicity, only *disproportionately*: there is no single capital, nor many capitals with an equal degree of development.

Thus world trade is none other than the port of arrival for the irreversible and inevitable trend of capitals to break through national borders, after breaking through the limits imposed by social relations. *Sunt nomina rerum*, said the ancients: names belong to their objects. Well then,

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so-called international trade is simply the misleading term used by bourgeois economists to indicate the creation of a world market, i.e. the inevitable planetary spread of the disproportions between capitals, or between companies, sectors and countries. But ... "the truth will out". Indeed, it is on the international market that the struggle between capitals manifests itself – in other words, where the financial and industrial giants draw their raw materials and labour and attempt to get rid of their overproduction of both goods and capitals. This competition, however, is not merely "economic", but transforms itself into *competition and struggle between States*. First and foremost because the concentration of capital has for some time been leading to *industrial and banking capital merging into financial capital and, at the same time, to the interpenetration between financial capital and the State*. The latter is the weapon of defence of financial capital, mainly because in hyper-capitalist countries it is the most powerful financier and intervenes directly in the economy by means of customs duties, quotas, taxes and dumping, attempting to limit internal competition and direct it onto the world market. The inevitable disproportions between capitals thus lead to a struggle between States to conserve or extend their areas of influence, i.e. their sources of raw materials and trade outlets for goods and capitals. The concept of the modern bourgeoisie is and *has to be* immense power based on a gigantic fleet and a gigantic army.

Militarism is thus inextricably linked with capital and above all financial capital, because military force is a powerful weapon of competition and the ultimately decisive element in "peaceful" and diplomatic negotiations and agreements. Militarism is the *non optional* mode of existence of financial capital on reaching a certain degree of development and concentration: it is the supreme means for guaranteeing and reinforcing areas of influence by means of direct or indirect political rule. Right after the Second World War we wrote in what was then our theoretical journal, *Prometeo*: "This time the world's counter-revolutionary coalition will take great care not to abandon control of the territory in the countries that have been conquered but to set up international class control; only controlled and strictly managed organizations will be allowed; for many years, as has already been declared, it will keep a close lookout, to block not just right-wing dictatorial claims but any form of social agitation. Thus, not only the countries that lost the war but the allies themselves, freed from enemy occupation, will be kept under control. In addition, a dictatorship of big state agglomerates will be set up. The smaller states will come under a colonial régime, devoid of an economy with any life of its own or any administrative and internal political independence, not to mention being deprived of any appreciable military force that might be freely used by them [...]. It will thus be more appropriate to speak of state oppression, or of the subjection of small, bourgeois, vassal states to a few, huge imperial monsters" [1].

This is what we wrote in 1947! And what has the last half century and more been like?! The misery and tragedies of the imperialist wars have indeed been followed by a hateful imperialist "peace". To all practical purposes international governments have been established and the ruling powers organize and "pacify" their respective regions. On this general panorama, the understandings and alliances between imperialist States arise out of competition (in its widest sense) and are concluded because of competition; they rest on the economic, financial and military balances of power of the moment. To use Lenin's words (in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*): "'Inter-imperialist' or 'ultra-imperialist' alliances, no matter what form they may assume, whether of one imperialist coalition against another, or of a general alliance embracing all the imperialist powers, are *inevitably nothing more* than a 'truce' in periods between wars. Peaceful alliances prepare the ground for wars, and in their turn grow out of wars; the one conditions the other, producing alternating forms of peaceful and non-peaceful struggle on *one and the same* basis of imperialist connections and relations within world economics and world politics."

Since Lenin mapped out this aspect of capitalism's highest stage, not only has the latter not changed, but it has done none other than develop these trends. Imperialism, which reflects the worsening antagonism *within* the State and *between* States, has never been as powerful as it is today; never has the arms race been



continuation from page 19 "Warmongering..." as headlong as it is today [2]. For us, there is thus no possibility of lasting peace between a few or all imperialist States. Does this make us fatalists and pessimists? On the contrary. But we argue that imperialist war can be avoided solely on condition that the working-class movement resumes a class-oriented perspective, with independent action by the proletariat identifying itself as a class in its worldwide party, whose keenest enemies will be found amongst the reformers, opportunists and pacifists of today, the most subtle defenders of the international rule of Capital behind a semblance of democratic peace, against the revolutionary preparation and arms of the proletarian class: in a word, against the communist party.

And so the fight against pacifism cannot be separated from the fight against capitalism, because it is a fight against Stalinist and post-Stalinist, democratic and reformist opportunism, for the survival and development of the party, the indispensable organ for preventing an economic crisis like that of 1929-32 from flowing back, thus adding to the spiral of counter-revolution.

Without expecting anything from "global understandings" and "historical encounters", more or less blessed by Pope Francesco or called for by the Nobel Peace Prize winner Obama, or by whoever succeeds him, we continue on our way, guiding today's proletarians towards the luminous path to follow tomorrow: "Out and out war can be avoided historically but only on condition that it is opposed by a class of pure wage-earners who await it, not to

replace it with peace but to use it, in its early days, to overthrow aged and infamous capitalism." (from our text *Dialogato coi morti*, 1956) [3].

And so down with the warmongering pacifism of petit-bourgeois opportunism! Long live the class war under the guidance of the international communist party!

NOTES

[1] "Guerre e crisi opportunistiche (Wars and Opportunist Crises)", *Prometeo*, Serie I, n.6, March-April 1947.

[2] See, in this regard, the article "Armamenti: la crisi e le prospettive di guerra", ("Armaments: the crisis and the prospects of war"), in our Italian bi-monthly *Il programma comunista*, n.3- 4/2014.

[3] All our texts quoted here are to be found on our website www.partitocomunistainternazionale.org.

*Pages in
English,
French,
Spanish,
Italian and
Greek
in our website*

www.internationalcommunistparty.org

Four years ago, due to the high costs of printing and mailing, after fifteen issues we interrupted the publication of our yearly English-language magazine Internationalist Papers. Since then, articles in English have appeared on our website

www.internationalcommunistparty.org

The deepening of the economic crisis and the worsening of the living and working conditions of proletarians all over the world have pushed us to make another effort, with a smaller and handier journal, whose birth we salute with this second issue, wishing it a long life. Internationalist Papers will be resumed as an on-line magazine, coming out from time to time and carrying longer and more substantial articles. We call upon our readers to support our press and get in touch with us.

Revolutionary defeatism – a necessary perspective

The endless massacre of proletarian and proletarianized Palestinian masses, the dead-end chaos in Libya, Syria, Iraq and Ukraine, the total instability of Afghanistan and Pakistan and crucial areas of Central Africa, tens of thousands of deaths everywhere, hundreds of thousands of refugees travelling towards nothing, destruction and devastation: the hotbeds of war are multiplying, extending and deepening under the pressure of a world economic crisis that dictates the re-charting of the political and social geographies arising out of two twentieth-century world wars. It is no longer a question of sporadic local conflicts breaking out here and there: what we are now witnessing are points of no return in a new escalation whose necessary outlet, from the point of view of capital, is a new world bloodbath.

In Versailles in 1919 and Yalta and Potsdam in 1945, with arrogant strokes of the pen and secretly scribbled sketches exchanged under the table, the world was “arranged” according to the convenience of the victorious imperialisms. From the dissolving of the Ottoman Empire, from the carving up of Europe between capitalist blocks with an openly anti-proletarian function, from the need to control key areas such as the Middle East, were born “fake States”, supported by bourgeoisies which, arising out of the establishment of capitalism in these areas – the fruit first of colonial and then imperialist penetration – nonetheless had nothing in common with the bourgeoisies of

the 1700s and 1800s that led to the birth of national States, nor with those which, up to the mid 1970s, supported the anti-colonial movements (Algeria, Vietnam, Angola...). These are bourgeoisies born parasitical, emerging from the putrefaction typical of imperialism and by imperialism (in its pseudo-national ramifications) financed and supported. These are States and mini-States founded on the oil rent and thus ready to sell themselves to the highest bidder; lay or religious, according to their necessities and the interests of the moment; fragile and fleeting in their structures and alliances, but always solid and united in the extraction of plusvalue from proletarians from anywhere in the world and merciless in controlling any sign of class autonomy and repressing any attempt at rebellion.

Now these “sketches”, which lasted more or less effectively for decades and decades, have come to pieces, disrupted by the opening of deep faults and by the succession of political and social earthquakes, resulting from the world economic crisis, the overproduction of goods and capitals, the hitches in the mechanism of accumulation. The appearance of these ravines has been accompanied by great proletarian uprisings (Tunisia, Egypt), soon forcefully channelled into the dead ends of democratic and national claims by half classes that have been emerging for some time now but which have already been hit by an unstoppable process of proletarianization. And the worn and now anti-historical accompaniment of demo-

cratic-nationalist claims has been joined by that most-powerful means of control and outlet for frustration: religious ideology, *in all its forms*, from the more subtle and moderate to the most fanatical and “extremist”.

The price for all this, even though the great majority is unaware of it, has been paid by the proletariat – both the local proletariat which is the immediate victim of the explosion of all these “balances” (unstable, like everything else in the world of capital: “all that is solid melts into air”, *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848), and that of the old imperialist cities still paralyzed by the material drugs of a post-war period experienced under the influence of expansion and boom, by the illusions of progress and democracy and the practice of openly traitorous parties and unions. And as the seismic waves roused by these profound earthquakes spread like ripples, this proletariat appears to be incapable of reacting – intimidated, hypnotized and paralyzed like a rodent faced with the snake that threatens it. Or, if it does react, it does so allowing itself to be enmeshed by nationalist or local demagogies with racist and chauvinist tendencies or by religious sham of every type and origin.

We communists have always worked against the current – ever since theory and praxis have taught us that “the ideas of the ruling class are, in every age, the ruling ideas”. But theory and praxis have also taught us that reality changes constantly due to the joint action of material events and our own





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intervention in them, however minor and unimportant it may appear for very long periods. Through theory and praxis, we are aware that once a crucial moment and a point of no return have been reached, capital knows no other drastic solution for its crises than war, the "regeneration through destruction" (as the bourgeois ideologists call it) of the excess created by decades of extracting plusvalue. And that the proletarian masses, as they are gradually deprived of any "guarantee", of any "reserve", of any hope of placid survival, will be forced to look reality in the eye and shake themselves out of their hypnosis and paralysis. At this stage, however, they will have to encounter *their own* party, capable of contrasting, both in theory and in practice, not only the ruling ideology (democratic and fascist, lay and religious, pacifi-

st and war-mongering, progressive and nationalist), but all those material forces that have always oppressed the proletariat, the social, political and trade-union forces that have restrained it, the State and its legal and illegal armed wings, thanks to which capital has kept itself in power and has been able to continue undisturbed to extract plusvalue from the daily labour of enormous masses of proletarians, both women and men, for so many decades.

In the perfect awareness that today only a few people listen to us but also that we are doing our revolutionary duty to the full, we tell these proletarian masses that, in order to prevent a new world massacre of dimensions even more alarming than the two previous ones, the only prospect to start working on immediately in its various articulations

and applications lies in moving towards *revolutionary defeatism*, the total and cast-iron refusal to take the side of one imperialist front or the other, inevitably destined to clash; in staying totally independent of the State, of the parties and the trade-unions, while organizing for the defence of living and working conditions; in recovering the theoretical and practical arms that have always distinguished the exploited class in its daily guerrilla warfare against capital. But above all, this prospect depends on recovering an understanding of the enormously urgent need to restore and put down worldwide roots for the revolutionary party, our party, the international communist party.

Outside of this prospect, all there can be is merely endless slaughter and unheard-of suffering.

PROLETARIANS, BEWARE! "INNOVATION" RHYMES WITH "REPRESSION"!

In hobnail boots the crisis pursues its onward march, crushing millions of proletarian lives everywhere in the world. It is a crisis of *overproduction of goods and capitals, a structural crisis*, i.e. implicit in the very nature of capitalist production. It is not an anomaly or some sort of pathology due to "bad management", "obscure plotting", the "egoism" of individuals or institutions, as many give us to understand: it is *the norm, the very physiology of capitalism*, whose iron rule is to go on producing *more and more* with the objective of ceaselessly accumulating profits, income, interest.

To this structural crisis, the ruling class in all countries reacts the only way it knows: squeezing more and more out of the proletariat and creating (not out of free will or spitefulness but precisely *because of the laws of capitalist production*) the premises for new world slaughter, to destroy what has been produced to excess, as well as proletarian overpopulation (let us not forget: First World War, at least 17 million deaths; Second World War, at least 71 million deaths). From this "regenerating bloodbath", the capitalist mode of production will emerge to impose on the new generations a further, immense effort in production, as already happened in the first and second post-war periods. Until...the cycle begins again.

The proletariat has not passively submitted to exploitation in the course of the crises that have followed on one another's heels over the past forty years – since the cycle of expansion of the world economy

started to falter. Particularly in the so-called "emergent countries", which have recently reached capitalist maturity, proletarians have fought against the attack on their living and working conditions (Egypt, Tunisia, the Far East, China), even though their struggles were promptly blocked and channelled towards miserly democratic and petit-bourgeois, nationalist and religious claims. In the so-called "advanced western world", proletarians have instead found it hard (and still do) to shake off the straitjacket of illusions and promises spread copiously by all the range of constitutional parties, in war as in peace, over these eighty years of *the longest reign of violence that the working-class and communist movement has ever known*; illusions and promises accompanied by very material crumbs – always wrested by means of battles and never generously given, and destined to disappear as the crises start to follow on one another's heels.

But despite themselves, the hobnail boots are even starting to shake these walls, put up around the proletarians to keep them in their cage and oblige them to bend their heads without complaining too much. Over the last few months, carried along by the wave of struggles generously fought, unfortunately in isolation, by immigrant workers from various countries (*pure proletarians* who have nothing to lose except their chains), we have seen – and followed with interest and attention, making our voices heard wherever possible – *small signs* of an awake-

ning, in Italy as in France, Great Britain, Spain, even in the United States and Germany. Small signs, we repeat: but practical, material proof that it is impossible to suffer and accept forever – that the pressure, when it reaches a critical level, can only produce an explosion.

The ruling class has been preparing for this explosion for some time. It does so by using the arms (ideological, political, religious) of rhetoric, referring to "innovation": the crisis (economic and social) is said to be caused by backwardness that must be overcome by means of a "new qualitative leap forward", "new structural reforms", "new investments", "new policies" – *the same old hot air*, as we communists have always pointed out and demonstrated. But, *proletarians, beware!* The word "innovation" rhymes with another word that is destined to take on an increasingly aggressive resonance in the workplaces, the streets and the squares, in the mass media, in the hoarse braying of the politicians and the pen-pushers, the priests and above all the police: the word *repression*.

The bourgeois ruling class knows its enemy well, even when it *seems* to be sleeping. It ranges its armies in the field, the "forces of law and order", its own institutions: parliamentary political parties, unions that have for some time now become the supporting structure of the capitalist world order, intellectuals ready to hire themselves out to the highest bidder, the magistrates' courts that are part of this structure ... and the State, in fact, with its legal and ille-

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gal gangs of repression. We have already seen the first signs, in Italy and elsewhere: proletarians beaten, imprisoned, persecuted, because they react against the massacre of their lives and those of their families – proletarians born in the country and proletarian immigrants, unhappily still divided under the police truncheons and not yet united in a *battlefront*.

Proletarians, beware!

This repression must be met with courage and without hesitation. Anger and awareness, the keywords of the workers' movement, must once again start to resound with renewed vigour: the relentless defence of living and working conditions, refusal of any kind of blackmailing that may attempt to subordinate these conditions to the higher needs of the national economy (and, above

all, in a maybe not-so-distant future, a war effort), complete and active solidarity with the most exploited outcasts (immigrants, women, the temporarily employed, the unemployed, retired pensioners), the extension of the battlefronts to provide defence against the legal and illegal gangs of the State (which is *the armed wing of the ruling class*)...

In order to be successful, however, this defensive response must not be circumscribed or an end in itself. It must be *the necessary training for attack*. It is not merely a matter of "two phases": defence today and attack tomorrow. If carried out and organized according to the right perspective (that of *preparing the conditions for a renewal of the class struggle with revolutionary aims*), this defensive struggle is already a first step towards attack, because it

starts to question the balance of power between the exploited and the exploiters.

We shall never tire of repeating (and working to make it possible) that in all this the militant presence of the revolutionary party is fundamental and essential, just as is it is fundamental and essential to reinforce it and put down international roots for it. The proletarian avant-gardes, which in the course of their struggles (to which our militants contribute and will continue to contribute), have seen their enemies distinctly ranged, will not be late in recognizing this urgent need and in turning towards our party, the *international communist party*, which for over eighty years has managed to resist all the convergent forces of the bourgeois counter-revolution and keep the thread of the communist tradition safe and strong.

The Communist Party, the political party of the proletarian class, acts collectively on the operational basis of a unitary orientation. The initial motives that cause elements and groups from within this collectivity to organize for unitary action are the immediate interests that the economic situation produces among the different groups of the working class. The role of the Communist Party is characterized essentially by the utilization of the energies thus contained to attain objectives that, in order for them to be common to the entire working class and the result of all of its successive struggles, are integrated beyond the interests of particular groups and the immediate or contingent demands raised by the working class.

(from "Theses on Tactics of the Communist Party of Italy", also known as "Rome Theses", 1922)

Need for the revolutionary party

Over the coming months there will be no lack of new episodes in the crisis of over-production of goods and capital that has for some time been shaking the capitalist mode of production. More bubbles are swelling and the amazing course of the “emerging countries” is already experiencing a slowdown. We’re in for some surprises and *action by communists* will be of even greater and more fundamental importance in order to *analyze* the facts and *intervene*, organizing and directing the struggles that will inevitably and increasingly spring out of the social substrata.

The extent to which this action is so urgently necessary must be clear: despite its irremediable contradictions, the capitalist mode of production will not do us the favour of disappearing of its own accord in the explosion of a “definitive” or “final” economic crisis, as many fondly imagine will happen. Let us make it clear: economic crises offer the possibility of rendering more evident the *contrast* between the forces of production set in motion more than two centuries previously by Capital itself and the forms in which the bourgeoisie tends to organize them in order to maintain its undisputed dominion, democratic or fascist as it may be, activated by means of illusory reforms or aggressive “liberalization”. *This contrast is irreparable*: it is the ineradicable root of a ceaseless struggle between our class, the proletariat that provides the driving force of live labour employed in the general organization of capitalism to

produce social wealth monopolized as plusvalue, and our historical enemy, the bourgeois class. The trend of this century-old fight is neither continuous, nor linear: it finds expression, and still does, in moments of great pressure and advance, of sudden and slow withdrawal due to defeat and degeneration, and long periods of waiting before resuming the battle.

In other words, the struggle between counter-revolution (the imperious dictatorship of the bourgeoisie) and the revolutionary assaults of the proletariat proceeds according to an almost rhythmical movement. These assaults which have pointed out the direction to take and the forces necessary to strike the final blow when the right conditions occur again: they have done so through the great, though transitory, victories of the Paris Commune in 1871 and the Red October in 1917 Russia. And recovery after defeat is long and difficult, all the longer and more difficult, the nearer victory has come to striking that final blow.

Today the winds roused by one of the most important economic crises of overproduction of goods and capitals are starting to blow more strongly; the crisis involves *all capitalist states*: those with the longest history of industrialization and the heaviest load of imperial carats and the younger ones born with all the genetic defects of this overbearing and parasitic phase (imperialist, just as Lenin taught on the basis of Marx’s and Engel’s ana-

lyses and doctrine) without being able to fully enjoy the impulse that only a century before nurtured the national revolutions.

On the one hand these winds are preparing the storm of widespread warfare amongst the as yet embryo imperialist coalitions – that destructive cyclone which, by eliminating the excess of capitals, goods and *human beings* that cannot be used in the process of valorising capital, will accelerate the conditions for a *fake recovery* of this valorisation, laying the bases for new, and increasingly more destructive crises. On the other hand, by consuming one by one the so-called reserves by means of which the multiform party of the bourgeoisie has been able, up to the present, to delude our class as to the eternity and inevitability of its subordinate condition, it will oblige it to take up the battle again, even if only to avoid dying out.

On the basis of these *material facts* and the *experience* of two centuries of modern class war, even in times of the worst dictatorships of counter-revolution, when it has been necessary to struggle “against the current and the tides”, when it seems that the proletarian class is no more than a crude economic fact, incapable of expressing its own antagonistic potential, it nonetheless lives on and, albeit in a concealed manner, almost invisible to most, expresses its *own party*, in opposition to all the parties in which bourgeois dominion takes form: the



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Communist Party.

The Communist Party is its organ, the tool that sums up, collects, conserves its century-long experience of life and battle, expansion and withdrawal. It is the weapon that the proletarian class historically expresses, conserves and perfects in order to be able, *at the right moment*, to strike the final blow; it is its *organization and guide*. It does not substitute for the class (as many fear, incapable of comprehending this dialectic relationship), but is the tool that allows it never to lose sight of the direction and objective towards which, unknown to it, the energies generated by the clash between the forces and forms of production are pointing, driving towards action.

Thus, it is not just any ordinary party, which like Plasticine adapts itself to represent the working class like a plasticine model at the conference table of an illusory mediation between interests, "in the name of the common good"; neither is it a sect of conspirators creating conditions and bending events to their own will. Communism is an objective to be achieved in terms of real movement, not the project or design for a utopia. The Party thus expresses, guides, accompanies the class, directly experiencing its battles, because ever since 1848 it has *sustained and promoted* its historical objectives.

What, then, are its tasks in the hard, long-lasting contact with the class and its battles? Nothing new and nothing different: the path is already

mapped out by the political work carried out by our comrades who, in times of violent counter-revolution (first military, then political, with the latter all the more ferocious precisely because of its duration and the devastating effects that still weigh on our class) have been able to show us, *both in theory and in practice*, that there are no short-cuts or tricks in the work of restoring the party organ-weapon but only (*and this is no small matter!*) continuity and revolutionary determination.

Despite the limited number of our members, despite the isolation in which we continue to operate, we proceed in our work of *preparing for revolution*, as already indicated in the "Project of Theses for the III Congress of the Communist Party", presented by the Left of the Partito Comunista d'Italia in 1926 – our "Tesi di Lione" (Lyons Theses):

a - *defence and clarification, with regard to new groups of facts which arise, of the fundamental, programmatic postulates, i.e. of the theoretical conscience of the working-class movement*: today this means insisting on the study of the course of capitalism in its imperialist phase and pointing out to the class the revolutionary process by which all the obstacles shackling communism are to be overthrown;

b - *ensuring the continuity of the organizational unity of the party and its efficiency and defence against contamination by outside influences contrary to the revolutionary interests of the proletariat*: today this means persisting in the constant

political work that allows us to restore, strengthen and put down the roots of the World Communist Party;

c - *active participation in all the battles of the working class, even when they arise out of partial and limited interests, encouraging their development, whilst constantly contributing the link to ultimate revolutionary objectives and presenting the victories of the class struggle as bridges to the essential battles to come, pointing out the danger of resting on the laurels of partial results or even in the position of arrival and thus bartering these results for the conditions for the proletariat's action and class belligerence, or the independence of its ideology and organizations, first and foremost those of the party*: today this means working in the rank and file of our class, alongside it in its struggles, to help it organize with increasing efficiency into a permanent, unifying structure in defence of living and working conditions.

Immediatists, spontaneists, propagators of movements of all sorts will consider these tasks of little importance. And yet they are gigantic, because they imply shaking off the deadly weight of ninety years of open, bourgeois counter-revolution, carried out with the prime contribution of the political and union organizations that have shamelessly continued in words to set themselves up as reference points, whilst in actual fact they are the accomplices of the ruling class and have never ceased to betray the proletariat and thus to oppress it.

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Today our voice would seem to be feeble, our *real* possibility of making a difference limited and our contact with the class occasional. This does not intimidate us, even less so does it lead us to despair: the *material* reasons for this minority condition are well known to us and on many occasions we have already discussed and analysed them, and there is no need to do so once again here. With all our limits and inadequacies and the errors we may have made and will still make (which – whatever our many, vociferous critics may say – we always have and always will make an *operational* reckoning of, because only through such a reckoning can errors be *positively* overcome), despite all this, we are proud to confirm that only by binding ourselves once again to the red thread of the tradition of the Communist Left (from the '20s onwards), to its theoretical and practical battles, through ninety years now of multiform bourgeois counter-revolution (reformism, nazifascism, Stalinism, democracy), and *thus only by approaching our party*, contributing to strengthening it and putting down its international roots, is it possible to take the path leading to communist revolution.

The party's activity cannot and must not be limited to maintaining the purity of theoretical and organizational principles, nor to obtaining immediate success or a great popularity at any price. Always and in all situations it must develop simultaneously in these three directions:

- Defend the basic elements of the program, and refine them in relation to new events, i.e. develop the theoretical consciousness of the working class movement;*
- Ensure the continuity and effectiveness of the party organization and protect it against outside influences opposed to the revolutionary interest of the proletariat;*
- Participate actively in all the working class struggles, even those for partial and limited interests to encourage their growth, but always relating them to their revolutionary final goals by showing that the conquests of the class struggle are paths leading to indispensable future battles and denouncing the danger of stopping at partial successes as if they were ends in themselves and of sacrificing to these the conditions of the proletarian class activity and combativeness, i.e. the autonomy and independence of its ideology and organizations, first and foremost, the party.*

The supreme goal of the party's complex activities is to achieve the subjective conditions of the proletariat's preparation: to enable it to take advantage of the objective revolutionary possibilities provided by history when they appear, in order to be victorious instead of being defeated. All this is the point of departure for resolving the problems posed by relations between the party and the proletarian masses, between the party and other political parties, between the proletariat and other social classes.

(From Part Three of the "Draft Theses Presented by the Left at the 3rd Congress of the Communist Party of Italy", Lyon 1926 – also known as "The Lyon Theses")

Where We Come From

Our readers might ask if per chance we are not one of the grouplets or groupies born in '68 or so, and somehow survived the internal squabbling and the years of terrorism characteristic of the era of student movements. We have to disabuse them. The fact is the International Communist Party comes down from afar and has nothing to do with '68, the youth movements, the infantile reaction to Stalinism that calls itself "extremist," "spontaneist," "movement-oriented," "worker-centered," etc. Let us add that this is a matter of radical, even genetic, difference. No matter how small today, with little influence and of limited membership, our party represented and represents, through the highs and lows of a tremendously counterrevolutionary period, the uninterrupted continuation of the grand tradition of the international communist movement dating from the beginning of the century. It's comparable - if our skeptics will allow us a bit of proud rhetoric - to an underground stream that had (or was able) to course below the rocks and sand and through the mire and landslides. Let us retrace this long march by means of a simplified outline.

1892 - The Italian Socialist Party (PSI) was born. Arising from the conjoining of various currents, not all revolutionary and internationalist, the party was led by reformists (although, in

contrast to those who followed in the so-called "Left" particularly after the Second World War, the former were, so to speak, at the very least...possessed of dignity!). Those turn-of-the-century years witnessed huge working-class struggles in Italy, Central Europe, and in the U. S., and the reformist leaderships of the PSI and of the large labor confederations often found themselves in conflict with the more militant masses.

1910 - A clearly left current, the Sinistra, emerged at the PSI's Congress of Milan in opposition to the reformist leadership of the party and the trade unions, and soon took a leading position in labor struggles. This Left, the Sinistra, made clear its internationalism by strongly opposing the Libyan War (1911), and organized itself nationally as the Intransigent Revolutionary Faction at the Reggio Emilia Congress of 1912. A similar conflict broke out in the Socialist Youth Federation against those who wanted the body to become largely a culture-dispensing organization. By the Sinistra, both party and Young Federation were seen as organs of struggle. The militant youth were to receive their revolutionary inspiration and stamina from the whole life and experience of the party as it guided the working class on the road to revolution, and not from some banal "party school" education. Amadeo Bordiga (1889-

1970) and the "Revolutionary Socialist Club Carlo Marx" of Naples were decisive influences amongst the Intransigent Revolutionaries, and have remained fundamental references points in the history of the Sinistra.

1914 - With World War I the Sinistra proclaimed the need for revolutionary defeatism, which was in full agreement with Lenin's theses, hardly known at the time in Italy. With a background tragically highlighted by the failure to oppose the war when most Socialist parties voted war credits and solidified with their respective national bourgeoisie, the PSI, notwithstanding the efforts by the Sinistra, approved an ambiguous slogan, "neither support nor sabotage," which meant no support for the war, but no fight against it either. With Mussolini at their head, the interventionists had earlier abandoned the party.

1917 - At the outbreak of the October Revolution, the Sinistra aligned itself unhesitatingly with Lenin and Trotsky, greeting the event as the opening phase of an international revolution. "Bolshevism, A Plant for Every Clime" was the piece written by Bordiga which warmly greeted the revolution. Antonio Gramsci and Palmiro Togliatti, who would form the group publishing "L'Ordine Nuovo" in 1919, were initially under the influence of a non-Marxist idealism and displayed a somewhat confused



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and ambiguous understanding of the event. In the article "The Revolution Against 'Capital'," Gramsci erroneously asserted that the October Revolution negated Marxist materialism. In Italy, the Sinistra, the only faction in the PSI with a national network, was able to convoke the party to a meeting in Florence in 1917 that led to the reaffirmation of intransigent opposition to the war. Beginning in 1918, with the nation seized by mounting social tensions resulting from the war and indicated by the increasing strikes and malcontent, the Sinistra, in possession of its own organ, "Il Soviet", from December of that year, took the lead in getting the PSI to support revolutionary Russia and openly recognize the international significance of Lenin's strategy.

1919 - This was the crucial year for all of Europe: the year of the great strikes in Italy and revolutionary attempts in Germany and Hungary, the year Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were massacred, and the year of the birth of the Third International as the party of the world revolution. In Italy, a polemic broke out between the Sinistra-pressing for the creation of an authentic communist party able to apply the experience of the Russian Revolution to the West and stressing the social and political novelty of the soviet as an organ of sovereign power in the revolutionary process-and Gramsci's "L'Ordine Nuovo", that insisted in

identifying the factory council as the equivalent of the soviet, portraying the council-normatively a subsidiary organ operating within the social and political functions of capitalism-as "the embryo of the future society." Still in 1919, thanks to the theoretical and practical actions of the Sinistra, a Communist Abstentionist Faction was founded in the PSI, the nucleus of the future Communist Party of Italy (Partito Comunista d'Italia). One of the views characterizing the faction was the belief that in the nations of established democratic rule-Western/Central Europe and the US-the parliament was no longer the site where important political and economic decisions were taken, an axiom drawn from the classical texts of Marxism. It had ceased to be a usable tribune from which to make known communist views, and for the longest period served to lead astray and dissipate revolutionary forces. Hence the parliament was to be opposed: with a democratic government, opposition to the bourgeois system was rendered most dramatically by boycotting political elections. A second tactic advanced by the Sinistra was the concept of "united front from below": this meant avoiding the confusing political convergence of parties and organizations having disparate if not conflicting programs, while drawing all workers of whatever political, ideological or religious conviction into a common struggle for clear economic and social objectives and in defense

of their conditions of life and work.

1920 - At the Second Congress of the Third international, the Sinistra played a determinant role in stiffening the conditions of admission. In so doing, at a time of continued and considerable social ferment, it hoped to bar admission to groups and parties whose acceptance of a revolutionary program and discipline would prove rhetorical and their actions detrimental, particularly if the postwar verve and revolutionary conditions receded, as was soon the case. In seeing the International as a true, authentic world party rather than a formal arithmetic summation of national parties, which later would be free to go on and "make politics" as each saw fit, of all the European communist groups the Sinistra was the clearest on the question of internationalism. Even as it was involved in founding a communist party in Italy, the Sinistra in the International stood for the reaffirmation of Marxism's integrity and for an internationalism strategically and tactically binding the working classes of the West with the rebellious people of the East. It believed that a revolutionary communist party must seek the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie leading to the establishment of the class dictatorship as a bridge to a classless society. Strongly favoring internal discipline, it maintained that, within both the national parties and the International, obedience must rest on the vo-

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luntary acceptance and understanding of the revolutionary program by each and every adherent, and not on bossy compulsion.

1921 - At the PSI's 1921 Congress of Leighorn (Livorno), the Communist Sinistra broke away from the old reformist party and founded the Communist Party of Italy (CPI), a Section of the Communist International. Regardless of the subsequent assertions of a Stalinist historiography, the leading offices of the party were staffed entirely by Sinistra representatives and by Bordiga. At this time, Gramsci and Togliatti were in total agreement with this leadership. For two years, in a Western Europe where revolutionary elements were seeking a road to revolution to provide decisive aid to the USSR, the Sinistra-led CPI was the foremost edge of the politics of "Bolshevism, A Plant for Every Clime." Amongst the trade unions, it carried out a strenuous campaign to construct a real united front-not of parties-of the working masses whatever their political loyalties; it fought no less strenuously against social-democratic reformism that misled the workers with its illusory pacifism and legalism; it openly confronted fascism, which it described as the reaction of industrial and agrarian capital to a worldwide economic crisis and the militancy of the proletariat, and not a feudal phenomenon as would be averred later by Stali-

nists; it built a defensive military apparatus against reaction and did not have to rely on such organizations as the "Arditi del Popolo," a formation of spurious and uncertain nature; and during all those years marked by the reflux of the postwar revolutionary wave, the party maintained an international and internationalist stance, criticizing from the outset the rise of localism or autonomous actions and, above all else, the moves subordinating the International itself to Russian national needs.

1923-24 - After the arrest of Bordiga and a good many of the party's leaders in early 1923-although they would be released by year's end following a successful defense leading to acquittal-leadership passed to a secondary group more open to manipulation by the International. Despite a national conference of the party held in Como in May, 1924, at which the delegates voted overwhelmingly for the Sinistra, the party leadership was given by Moscow to a new Centrist grouping formed under Gramsci and Togliatti. The Sinistra was thus barred from leadership. Employing means, methods and language correctly identified with Stalinism, in the course of the next two years the Sinistra was crushed and its influence eradicated: Prometeo, a journal speaking for the Sinistra, was suppressed after a few issues, party sections with Sinistra majorities were dissolved, Sinistra spokesmen were remo-

ved, their articles and views censured or not published, and the party put under a regimen of intimidation, suspicion, and discipline that was ever bossier and bureaucratic.

1926 - Archival evidence has shown that the III Party Congress held outside Italy at Lyons, France, met before an assembly stacked by the Centrist leadership; two examples of the methods used will suffice here: 1) in the pre-congressional congresses, the votes of absentee Sinistra followers were automatically given to the Gramscian Center; 2) at a final meeting in Milan, delegates to Lyons were winnowed to eliminate Sinistra representation. At that congress, the Sinistra was completely marginalized and no longer able to act or have its views known. At the VII meeting of the Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International held in Moscow between February-March of that year, Bordiga opposed "Bolshevization," that is, the reorganization of the party on the basis of the factory cell that, under the pretense of increasing the workers' influence, had the effect of enclosing the base within the narrowness of the factory or shop, to which the person of the functionary-bureaucrat became an indispensable source of "the line to be followed" and the embodiment of leadership. At that incandescently dramatic session of the VII Enlarged Executive Committee, Bordiga, who

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openly confronted and questioned Stalin, was the only delegate amongst all present to ask that the grave internal crisis extant within the Bolshevik Party-the prelude to the emergence of the faux and lying theory of "socialism in one country"- be posted as the order of the day for the next world congress. To quote his words: "the Russian Revolution is our revolution also, its problems our problems, and [therefore] every member of the revolutionary International has not only the right but also the duty to labor in its resolution." Meanwhile, the Fascist authorities saw to it that Bordiga and the entire Italian Communist leadership were arrested long before the next world congress. In the USSR, Stalin isolated the United Opposition. Between 1926 and 1930, the Sinistra followers were expelled from the party, and thus given over to Fascist repression or forced to emigrate. The campaign against the Sinistra was undertaken in parallel with the persecution of Trotsky and his supporters, although between the two currents there were dissimilarities of views-which did not prevent the Sinistra from defending Trotsky in the crucial years of 1927-1928. Bordiga himself was expelled in 1930 on the charge of "Trotskyism." Meanwhile, first with the betrayal of the English General Strike in 1926 and then with the subordination of the Chinese Communist Party to the Kwomintang during the Chinese revolutionary year of

1927 resulting in the massacre of the Canton and Shanghai Communards by the Nationalists, Stalinism, a degenerative manifestation indicative of the rise of a bourgeois force within a USSR isolated by the absence of supportive workingclass revolution in the West, undertook the complete reversal of the principles of the communist program.

1930-1940 - With Bordiga under continuous police surveillance and isolated in Naples, the Sinistra suppressed and hounded by Fascism and Stalinism, its members dispersed through emigration to the West where they had also to fight and oppose the growing illusions cast by bourgeois democracy, there began a phase of our history best described as heroic. The Sinistra reorganized in France and Belgium under the name of the Faction Abroad (Frazione all'Estero) and published the periodicals *Prometeo* and *Bilan*, thus returning to the political battle. The situation was very difficult for this handful of scattered comrades. Theirs was a battle waged on three fronts: against Fascism, Stalinism, and bourgeois democracy. They continued the criticism of Moscow's policies-the "united fronts," the illusion about the efficacy of democracy, the continuous political somersaults that bewildered the working class, the Nazi-Soviet Pact, and Togliatti's appeal to "the brothers in black shirts." They worked vainly during the Spanish War to get the

uncertain left groups to orient themselves on a class basis. They carried on the struggle against Fascists and Nazis in occupied France, even spreading defeatism amongst German troops. With the myths of democracy penetrating ever deeper in the international workers movement, the Sinistra responded with critical analyses. At the onset of war in 1939, they pointed out its imperialistic character. It was already clear to them that Stalinism represented the worst of counterrevolutionary waves. With insufficient forces due to their isolation, they began the analysis of what happened in the USSR. It was this tenacious resistance, this determination to not allow a break in the "red thread" that led to the rebirth of the party in 1943.

1943-1952 - Thanks to the repatriation to Italy of a number of comrades, the work to reweave a real and viable organization was begun. At the end of 1943, the first issue of *Prometeo* appeared clandestinely. Contacts were made with Bordiga; the first political work was undertaken among proletarian elements deluded by the resistance movement. The effort was made to give a class basis to the strike wave in the last years of the war. By working in contact with the proletarians, significant gains were made in the North, and often internationalists were elected shop stewards in the factories. At last, the Internationalist Communist Party was born

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having as its journal "Battaglia Comunista". The clash with the Stalinists emerged into the open. While Togliatti as Minister of Justice decreed a general amnesty of fascist leaders and rank-and-file members amidst paeans to "the new man" and "the reborn democracy," his party denounced the Internationalists as "fascists," inciting a policy calling for their physical elimination. The culmination of this defamatory campaign was the assassination of two comrades, Mario Acquaviva and Fausto Atti, and others massacred by Stalinists but

whose fate has remained shrouded in anonymity. In this initial period, party life was still characterized by theoretical uncertainties and doubts brought home by repatriates from the Faction Abroad. Matters came to a head in 1952 with the need to reestablish the party solidly on the corpus of a Marxism cleansed of all Stalinist distortions and freed from the imperative of an immediate activism. This led to a first split. The periodical "Il programma comunista" began publication in 1952. Until his death in 1970, Bordiga devoted himself to the enormous

task of reconstructing the theoretical and political basis of the party, which became truly international in fact as well as name in the 1960s. The "Fundamental Theses of the Party" (1951), "Considerations on the Organic Activity of the Party in a Situation which is Generally and Historically Unfavorable" (1965), "Theses on the Historic Duty, the Action and Structure of the World Communist Party" (1965), and "Supplementary Theses" (1966) gave the party its theoretical, political, and organizational structure.

The Marxist thesis states in particular that it is not possible for an individual brain to encompass a consciousness of the entire course of history in advance, for two reasons. First of all, because consciousness does not precede, but follows being, i.e. the material conditions that surround the subject of this consciousness; and secondly because all forms of social consciousness emerge - with a certain lag that enables a general determination of this consciousness - from the analogous, parallel circumstances, i.e. economic relations, in which the individuals who (thereby) constitute a social class are placed. These individuals are forced to "act together" historically long before they can "think together". The theory that defines this relationship between class conditions and class action and its ultimate goal has nothing in common with a revealed doctrine proclaimed by individuals, i.e. by a specific author or leader, or by the "whole class" conceived of as the gross, momentary sum of a number of individuals in a given country or at a given moment: and it most definitely cannot be deduced from a very bourgeois "consultation" within the class.

(from "The False Resource of Activism",
General Meeting of the Internationalist Communist Party, 1952)