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What distinguishes our Party is the political continuity which goes from Marx to Lenin, to the foundation of the Communist Party of Italy (Livorno, 1921); the struggle of the Communist Left against the degeneration of the Third International, against the theory of “socialism in one country”, against the Stalinist counterrevolution; the rejection of the Popular Fronts and the Resistance Blocs; the difficult task of restoring the revolutionary doctrine and organization in close interrelationship with the proletarian class, against all personal and electoral politics.

New Year, Old Mechanisms of Capitalism in Crisis

For decades the massacre of Palestinian proletarians by the State of Israel has been causing bloodshed in Gaza and around with at least 70 thousand recorded deaths, in a Middle East that is increasingly tormented and being shaken to its core day by day. For over two years now, amidst almost total indifference, a bloody „internal“ conflict has been dragging on in Sudan with hundreds and thousands of deaths and refugees, in an Africa that has long been the stage for ever greater penetration by the most powerful imperialisms or those aspiring to be so, always ready to fuel or extend „civil wars“ in one country or another, selling arms to win „advantage positions“, bombing local populations to „bring them democracy“ (the US bombings in Nigeria were advertised as the „defence of innocent Christians“!). In the East, the western and eastern borders of India are just as many hotbeds of unresolved contrasts and in the so-called Indo-Pacific and between the North and South China Seas, wars and local squabbles alternate with growing tension between the old and new imperialisms (USA and China over Taiwan, but not only). The crucial Red Sea artery, along which, between its two extremities at the Suez Canal and the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, gigantic container vessels, oil tankers and military convoys navigate, is still a bone of contention (not by chance at the end of 2025 Israel was the first State in the world to recognise the independence of the separatist Somaliland already proclaimed in 1991, whilst the clash between Saudi Arabia, Yemen and the United Arab Emirates reignites). Central and South America live in a state of constant instability, as the „backyards“ of US imperialism (another old story, reinvented with the attack on Venezuela), which has no scruples about dropping bombs here and there, under the pretext of the...„war on the drugs trade.“

Briefly, to the north and south, east and west, the transit routes of raw materials and more or less strategical corridors are a mass of exposed nerves of the capitalist world (the „best, and always improvable, of all possible worlds“ for fine souls!), a prey to the pressure of the economic structural crisis of overproduction of goods, capitals and human beings, which has dragged on for decades getting worse and worse, with no consistency if not the preparation for a third world bloodbath –military warfare being the explosive manifestation of trade war that has been going on for decades with the USA, Germany, Russia and China, followed by all the other national capitalisms, competing savagely against one another...

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And the pathetic appeals to international law, to the „Peaceful Coexistence amongst Peoples“ and other such rubbish typical of bourgeois ideology, are revealed to be what they really are when faced with the law of the strongest: mere scrap paper.

And what about „Europe“? Whilst no great prospects of a truce are to be seen in the other bloody war between NATO-Ukraine and Russia, the bewilderment of a „Europe“ which, after having been an obedient vassal of the USA for seventy years, now finds itself caught with its trousers down, is both pathetic and at the same time revealing. Busy as it is in the vain and chaotic endeavour to put its own house in order (!), where things are not going at all as well as the official rhetoric would like us to believe, its one-time father figure has turned its back on it, slapped it around the face and is making it pay a hefty bill for decades of „aid“. In fact, as „a united political entity“ (we have demonstrated this several times) „Europe“ doesn't exist and never has: it has merely been a desperate attempt to create an economic market able to face up (with a number of internal contradictions) to a world market at first in full post-war expansion and then in a profound crisis from the mid-1970s onwards. Faced with this crisis, „Europe“, deprived of the USA's support-control, reveals itself to be what it always has been and will be: a *jungle of nationalisms*, the expression of competing national capitals. And, if there really is common ground amongst them, it is at one and the same time (closely interwoven) the preparation for a new, future world war and the repression of any form of dissent: the two things proceed together emblematically.

So we are witnessing a race to re-arm and this tells us openly how things stand. There is no more talk (except in some feeble twitch of „Europeism“) of a „joint European army“: but each State, in its function as the armed branch of national capital, is increasing its military spending and drawing up plans and prospects for rearmament – from Germany, planning to reintroduce „voluntary military service“ and posing the question of how to update its logistic network to the need for military transport, to France, which is starting to prepare hospital departments for receiving the wounded with corresponding reserves of plasma, and so on from State to State (even Switzerland,

the historical champion of neutrality, is now discovering with concern that it does not have sufficient defences!). At the same time, security policies are spreading and intensifying with the introduction of new crimes and new regulations, strategies and repressive practices to be tried out immediately in the field, with special divisions and tools of control, identification procedures and black lists. In the ruling class, the approach of actual war scenarios evokes the simmering fear (ever present and an integral part of the *democratic dictatorship* exercised everywhere in the second postwar period) of a widespread and organised return to the stage of a proletariat that up to now has suffered more or less passively the crude exploitation it has been subjected to daily by capital in its search for profit; but which, under pressure from a growing deterioration of its living and working conditions, will be induced to return to *the path of open defensive battle*, and, with this, *rebellion and the refusal to go off and slaughter and be slaughtered* – the path of *revolutionary defeatism*, against all States, against all preparation for war or war fronts, against all nationalisms and patriotisms, against all the bourgeoisies – first and foremost *our own*.

And it is here that, as always, the question of the revolutionary party arises, the only class force able to organise and direct the inevitable rebellion against a capitalist *status quo* that at this point means mere suffering and tragedy, destruction and massacres. We work to strengthen and establish this force internationally: against all more or less ingenuous pacifism and hypocritical reformism, against open enemies and false friends, against „sincere democrats“ who defend any measures dictated by capital's State, against the last-minute patriots, against sovereignists and nationalists and against populists of all shades who neglect all class perspectives – *so that the daily battle of resistance may be transformed into attack, when the objective conditions return to make this possible, against a mode of production that can finally be thrown into the trash can of history*.

3/1/2026

In Minneapolis and its environs, death comes from the State

The two recent, cold-blooded homicides committed by the agents of the Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the United States Border Patrol (USBP) in Minneapolis (Minnesota) have rightly caused great anger and generated protests more or less all over the United States spontaneous protests following the numerous, just as spontaneous, initiatives that had taken place in previous weeks with the aim of hindering the repressive action taken by the ICE and USBP. It is naturally a good thing that an increasing number of people feel the urge to react against what is happening. However (under the added pressure of violent material contradictions), this should be accompanied by a clearer awareness of some fundamental issues.

ICE and USBP are *federal agencies*: this means the *armed wing of the central State*. That is to say, *structures designed for repression*, independently of existing governments, which are in turn extensions of the ruling class's business committees. This is their function, in a society divided into classes such as the society of capital, profit and savage competition. The State is not a disinterested organism: it is a complex structure that answers

directly to the need for survival of bourgeois power and thus acts to repress all those phenomena that may threaten the correct operation of capitalism's main activity – the extraction of plusvalue.

Repression of migrant proletarians and those who support them is an integral part of this State activity and obeys the alternating phases of the capitalist economy: it is no coincidence that it has become manifest to a greater or less intensity according to individual cases, throughout all the various governments that have succeeded one another – a constant feature that has become acute as capitalism enters its imperialist phase. The United States is certainly no exception: on the contrary, as the leading imperialist country, it is the model inspiring all States in the enactment of their anti-proletarian repression. If certain governors or mayors or administrators and local, *bi-partisan* politicians sometimes act critically towards the central power (only to step back into line when it becomes necessary!), this in no way changes the *nature and function* of these *State organs*. It is a game of sides that obeys the previously outlined imperatives.

Demonstrations against ferocious

repression are *important* and welcome! But they must pose themselves the problem of going beyond a spontaneous, instinctive and immediate reaction. This means they must equip themselves *not only* with a stable organisation capable of surviving over time when faced with the inevitable harshening of conditions produced by the economic and social crisis, but *also and above all* with a political perspective which, based on a precise analysis of what's going on and connecting to a tradition of militant struggle that comes from a long way back (yes, *indeed: from 1848!*), can direct and guide spontaneous indignation and anger towards the supreme objective of overthrowing the capitalist mode of production and its armed wing: the State and its institutional and political-trade union appendages. Otherwise it means entering the dead end of more slaughter and more vain bloodshed.

Minneapolis's environs are everywhere, and we are working so that these objective may finally be reached.

2/2/2026

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Gaza: The Many Faces of Genocide

The genocide committed by the State of Israel against the proletarians in and around the Gaza Strip (leaving aside for the moment the „deeds“ of Israeli settlers supported by their army in the West Bank) has not „only“ been responsible for 60 thousand or, according to some independent sources, 100 thousand deaths. How many future deaths are to come due to the consequences of crippling injuries, the impossibility of surviving after the loss of limbs, of being unable to access the necessary treatment for pre-existing health conditions or those that may have developed over whole months of unceasing slaughter or that will occur in the near future because of devastated hospital facilities? Or

else, far more cruelly, due purely to hunger and malnutrition.

There are many faces to genocide. The physical and material devastation from air, land and sea attacks on towns, villages and countryside is increasingly rendering more or less the whole of the region uninhabitable: how is survival possible amongst the tottering skeletons of the few houses still standing, along streets wiped out by bombing, amidst dry and unusable cisterns and water pipes, wrecked drainage and blown-up electricity networks, on a territory made uninhabitable by land-mines, radioactive munitions and poisoned soil and sub-soil?

And what is more... An article published in the French daily *Le*

Monde on 25/6 informed us that „over 95% of agricultural land has been damaged or destroyed: there are no more cucumbers, tomatoes, watermelons, potatoes, strawberries“ – that is to say the 10% of the economy (mostly subsistence economy) still permitted by relentless Israeli persecution. „Over 500 thousand Palestinians,“ (the article informs us) “lived solely from agricultural production, cattle or fishing. In April [2025], only 4.6% of the total farmland (688 hectares) was still accessible and fit for farming, according to an analysis by the United Nations Organization for Food and Agriculture and the UN’s satellite station (Unostat), published on 26 May”. The study points out

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What is now happening to Marx’s theory has, in the course of history, happened repeatedly to the theories of revolutionary thinkers and leaders of oppressed classes fighting for emancipation. During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes constantly hounded them, received their theories with the most savage malice, the most furious hatred and the most unscrupulous campaigns of lies and slander. After their death, attempts are made to convert them into harmless icons, to canonize them, so to say, and to hallow their names to a certain extent for the “consolation” of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping the latter, while at the same time robbing the revolutionary theory of its substance, blunting its revolutionary edge and vulgarizing it. Today, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists within the labor movement concur in this doctoring of Marxism. They omit, obscure, or distort the revolutionary side of this theory, its revolutionary soul. They push to the foreground and extol what is or seems acceptable to the bourgeoisie. All the social-chauvinists are now “Marxists” (don’t laugh!). And more and more frequently German bourgeois scholars, only yesterday specialists in the annihilation of Marxism, are speaking of the “national-German” Marx, who, they claim, educated the labor unions which are so splendidly organized for the purpose of waging a predatory war!

(Lenin, The State and Revolution, 1917)

that this level of destruction „not only implies a loss of infrastructure: it is the end of the food and agricultural network and the possibility of life in Gaza. The farmland, greenhouses and wells have been destroyed and as a consequence local food production has been halted.“In addition, almost 95% of cattle and over half the flocks of sheep and goats have been wiped out and only a small minority of fishermen still manage to put out to sea, using small rowing boats and keeping as close as possible to the shoreline for fear of being intercepted and shot down by drones or gunned down by the Israeli Navy (as has happened to at least 210 of them over the past few months): indeed, the coast of Gaza is considered by the Israeli army to be „a battle zone.“ Already at the start of 2002, we are again reminded by *Le Monde*, fishing grounds had been restricted from

20 sea miles to 6: „Along the Gaza coast, fishermen were concentrated

in five points. The southernmost of these, at Rafah, was razed to the ground together with the town. In the extreme north of the Strip, there are no more boats or infrastructure.“ In Gaza City where a good fifty per cent of the fishermen worked and at least two thirds of the fishing fleet was to be found, a witness account published by the newspaper reports that already „on the fourth day of war, the occupying forces bombarded the port with their F-16, splitting it in two and leaving a crater of around 20 metres“.

Boats, fish-processing plants and the fish market were all destroyed and fish farms have for some time proved to be unusable: it was a question of preventing the fishermen from guaranteeing food for the inhabitants of the Strip.

Even admitting that a truce may be reached sooner or later (a truce which, and this must be kept clearly in mind, can only be *temporary*), what sort of reconstruction can possibly take

place in and around Gaza, subjected as it is to the bloodthirsty appetites of all imperialisms, both near and far? How many decades will it take to return some semblance of life to this blood-soaked place?

Meanwhile, more thousands of Palestinian proletarians will have died and those who manage to hang on will have searched in their thousands for shelter elsewhere (but where?).

In this uncertain elsewhere they will nonetheless encounter their class brothers, the international proletariat and, standing alongside them, remember and avenge their dead, resuming the path of class war (*class against class and not State against State nor Fatherland against Fatherland!*), fighting the original, monstrous enemy, which is *capitalism*, rendered even more savage and bloodthirsty by its imperialist phase.

July 2025

Breaking News

By mid September 2025, the genocide has taken the path of the „final solution“. Gaza City is razed to the ground and hundreds of Palestinian proletarians are massacred by all sorts of sophisticated instruments of annihilation. Meanwhile we witness the revolting pantomime of complicity between *all* States, the tools of *all* bourgeoisies, from the local Arab variety to the western ones (led by the United States), which have always seen the State of Israel as a privileged business partner and a necessary armed gendarme defending an area that is precious for world capitalist intere-

sts; together with the hypocritical mutterings of *all* the international bodies that came into being in the post-war period to ensure the „radiant future“ of the capitalist régime – bodies which today demonstrate not only their uselessness, but their eternal deference to the law of the most powerful, and above all to business.

This must be the moment not only for anger and mobilisation (it always has been this!), but also for a real and profound understanding of what has been represented by this last chapter in savage imperialism, in this case embodied by the State

of Israel – the moment for an unforgiving appraisal of all the dynamics that have developed since that wretched 1948, dramatically locked in a roundabout of competing nationalisms, bloody religious feuds and crass interests, local or not.

Above all, it must be the moment for a theoretical and practical return to a class analysis of events, which are already pre-announcing and outlining the scenarios of a new world war: the return to a true proletarian internationalism and, consequently, to revolutionary defeatism, openly fighting against the cancers of nationalism or patriotism.

Against imperialist wars, revolutionary defeatism always and in all circumstances

Under the pressure of the world crisis of the capitalist mode of production, the situation in the Middle East is getting more critical, day by day. However it may develop in the near future, the war between Israel and Iran is, at one and the same time, a symptom and an accelerator, adding to its gravity.

The State of Israel, already committed to ethnic cleansing in and around Gaza, is performing to perfection the role it was assigned right after the Second World War by the victorious imperialist powers, first and foremost the USA and USSR closely followed by France and England: the role and function of armed *gendarme*, paid and supported by the interests of world capitalism, at the heart of a region bursting with crude oil, gas and other precious raw materials, as well as being a crossroads of international trade. On their part, all the local bourgeoisies (Arab or not) have done, whether laymen or bigots, corrupt and reactionary, fearful of the more powerful imperialisms, has been to hang on as hard as they can to the deposits of black gold, following the scent of money, no matter whether dollars, rubles, euros or yen.

Clearly, in the context of the world crisis, all these factors merely establish the basis for a widespread inter-imperialist conflict, destined to end up in a third world war.

Proletarians are already (and always have been) the victims of these present and future bloodthirsty scenarios. The over-production of commodities and capital, typical of this imperialist phase, also means over-production of human beings: i.e. victims to be sacrificed on the altar of the conservation of capitalism *at all costs*. This is a well-known fact experienced at first hand by the proletarians and proletarianising masses of Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria and Iran, abandoned by everyone, refused by everyone, betrayed by everyone, martyred by everyone and, on top of all this, caught in the infamous trap of anti-historical nationalisms.

And the proletarians of the more powerful Euro-Asian-American imperialisms? What sort of help can they give their slaughtered brothers today, after almost a century of democratic or fascist counter-revolution, which has paralysed them in the illusion that, in the end, this is „the best of all possible worlds“?

In imperialist wars, Lenin teaches us, there are no

„attackers“ or „attacked“: they are all attackers and there is only one „attacked“ - the world proletariat.

A long, hard slope has to be climbed: but there is no other way. Material facts alone (the growing difficulty of just surviving, the now explicit and openly declared betrayal of parties and trade unions in collusion with State power, the repressive turn taken by all governments, right, centre or centre-left...), will take it upon themselves to break down what was up to now a solid wall separating the proletarians of the imperialist powers from the other, growing contingents of proletarians everywhere. But this is not enough: in their rank and file, in their fights, in their great defeats and small, precarious immediate victories, what must once again make headway is the awareness of the need to move to a superior mode of production, and therefore the hard, far from short and linear path to attain it. This is and will be the prime task of the militant avant-gardes, the revolutionaries who have not been distracted by a thousand and one illusions sown over many decades of reformist and democratic, antiproletarian and counter-revolutionary practices.

At the heart of this enormous task stands the defence of *revolutionary defeatism*. Not just a slogan but a *militant practice* that must start out from the recognition that, in fact, the only element under attack is the proletariat: there are no „fronts“ to side with, there are no „main enemies“ or „privileged friends“. It is necessary to fight against all bourgeoisies and their States and in first place against *our own* bourgeoisie and *its* State.

Our Party, a minority and counter-current (especially in this situation), works amongst the rank and file of our class – the international and non national class – to develop every practical possibility of bringing these objectives onto the field:

- **Organization everywhere for a radical class struggle against the State of Capital, its institutions and all its parties!**
- **Organization of the struggle to defend living and working conditions, to strike a hard blow at the bourgeoisie's economic and political interests!**
- **Refusal to accept economic and social sacrifices in the name of the national economy!**
- **An open break with social peace and a determined return to the methods and objectives of the class struggle, the only real and practicable**

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internationalist solidarity for us proletarians, both in the metropolises and in the imperialist outskirts!

- **Refusal of any partisan complicity (nationalist, religious, patriotic, mercenary, humanitarian, socialist-like, pacifist...) in favour of any one State or front of States involved in the wars!**
- **Economic and social strike action leading to real general strikes, in order to paralyze the life of the nation and open the way for political strikes, for slowing down and preventing any mobilisation and war propaganda!**

With these firm principles (and in the course of battles that *it will be forced to fight*) our class, the immense body of those who have no alternative for maintaining themselves but to sell their labour, will be able to reclaim independence in the fight against its historical enemy, the bourgeoisie and the intellectualoid and parasitic half classes that support it, against their State and their institutions.

But not unless the militant avant-gardes of our class get organized along the lines of these contents (and not

only on the necessary but limited terrain of trade-union, environmental and social etc. issues), and attain and strengthen the party of the communist revolution, will it be possible to prepare for new actions of anti-militarism and anti-patriotic defeatism. That is:

- **Letting your own State and its allies be defeated, disobeying the military hierarchy in an organized manner, fraternizing with our class brothers (also trapped in their own “fatherlands”), holding on tightly to arms and armed systems to defend ourselves in the first place and then free ourselves from the tentacles of the bourgeois institutions: transforming the war between States into a war within States, civil war, revolutionary war.**

The very facts of present capitalist reality scream the urgent and tragic necessity for this work and the need for this perspective.

January 2026

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More and more, capitalism is war

Over the past few decades, the crisis in accumulation of capital followed by the phase of expansion deriving from the second deadly inter-imperial conflict has continued with its ups and downs, pseudo-recoveries and far more evident crashes. This is how the deep causes of imperialist conflicts have been reinforced, as they prepare to generate a new showdown between imperialisms, necessary for the capitalist mode of production to survive.

Other works of ours have followed and analysed the evolution of these clashes and the reinforcement or weakening of the main players but the backbone of the critical analysis of this march towards conflict remains unchanged. Just as the only strategy for contrasting or halting the wars between imperial States necessarily remains unchanged; just as remains necessarily unchanged the demanding path of organising a proletarian opposition that is antagonistic, revolutionary, worldwide, clear and determined, coalescing around the theory, principles, programme and tactics of the communist party - and in open contrast to the reformist, demagogic and pseudo-revolutionary politics, embodied by intellectuals of all colours, orders and degrees who, like so many useless parasites, draw energy from the majority of us, the sellers of labour-power, in order to build their own careers as the ruling class's supervisors. The conclusion is: to spend no money and no soldiers at all for capital's wars; defeatism and no agreements with bourgeois countries; to transform the imperialist war between bourgeois States into a revolutionary war within the bourgeois States.

Klausewitz's definition of war as "the continuation of politics on a different plane and with different means..." expresses and reflects bourgeois society so well that it can easily be turned upside down: politics is the projection, on a different plane and with different means, of that state of permanent conflict, often subterranean and not necessarily armed, which is **the real way of being and becoming of the capitalist mode of production**. That is to say: economic competition between „young and emerging“ capitals; trade wars between monopolies in order to possess markets and supremacy in vital sectors of production or sourcing of raw materials; to start with diplomatic warfare, then armed warfare, when the antagonism between States (which, in the lingering era of imperialism are none other than the expression of a

„national, capitalist collective“) reach a point of extreme tension and seek the „solution“ in an organised, armed conflict, in war *tout court*...

Obviously many factors need to concur for the link between the successive phases of a single process to appear evident and demolish the theories constructed and promoted to support the boast that the balance found in any one of these may consolidate into a sort of „perpetual peace“, uneasy as it may be.

So it happened that before the outbreak of the Gulf crisis, war seemed by then to „belong to another era“: an illusion that gained some credit from the end of USA-USSR bipolarism (1). Yet it sufficed for an area of vital importance for capitalism, both for the provision of energy and for the control and sharing of income from crude oil and the gigantic network of interests that sprang up out of it, to become a tangle of contrasts irresolvable on a purely economic or diplomatic plane, for the spectre of military clashes, whose lasting demise had just been celebrated, to return to the stage, and a conflict that had at first seemed peripheral to grow into a more or less planetary one. That conflict, together with those following the break-up of the Republic of Yugoslavia, independently of contingent dynamics, opened up the prospect, however remote, of a third world bloodbath - featuring on the one hand the old economic powers and on the other those that had emerged and were emerging, with new potential alliances and the awareness that the balances of power arising from the ashes of the „postwar“ period had been upset.

From that moment onwards, two illusory answers to the prospect of war made themselves heard once again. One is that of a generalised and equally inconclusive pacifism, consisting of petitions, protests, demonstrations (peaceful of course) calling on and involving the widest variety of social forces: a sort of pacifism incapable of understanding and therefore facing up, even to a minimum degree, to the substance of the matter and in the end ready to turn into its very opposite as soon as not only, or not so much, the „values“ (interests!!) of the „nation“ are harmed or even just threatened, but also the idealistic, more or less

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1. It should be noted that this same bipolarism had for years been put forward as a guarantee of „overall peace“ (apart from marginal conflicts sometimes breaking out), a sort of „balance of terror“!

humanitarian abstractions of freedom, democracy, civil rights... Ever more convinced, even after the last two inter-imperialist slaughters, of the idea that the defence of these abstractions can translate into one or more *just wars*, this pacifism can, in fact, transform itself into the grimmest sort of interventionism in the space of a single „amen“.

The other illusory answer consists in appealing to institutions that proclaim to hold „supra-national“ powers thus able to impose acknowledgement of an international order and resolve eventual disputes by diplomatic means. Apart from the absurdity of a vision of history in general and of capitalism in particular calibrated or able to be calibrated according to rights, laws or conventions, what is forgotten is that more than one of these so-called supra-national organs exist, each responding to the interests of one power or power group or another: the seven most industrialised countries, the famous G7, act as a sort of world economic committee, more or less in agreement internally but generally speaking united towards the rest of the world; the UN Security Council acts as the right arm of the five permanent members of the association, whose opinion, unanimous or otherwise, in turn determines *what passes for decisions* that are independent ones taken by members of the Assembly; an indeterminate number of regional and inter-regional organisms defend, within the limits of possibility, the interests, not exactly „ideals“, of *power groups* belonging to specific areas, etc.. The whole mechanism operates not on the basis of international codes of good conduct but of economic, political and military power relations and its ability not so much to guarantee, as to sanction a sort of „order“ or, as they put it, a system of „international law“, depends on how far one or more powers manage to impose their law, or the law of the strongest: the fruit of previous theft and sharing of booty, which they aim to ensure conservation of. *And right when these balances of power change or are about to change, these organisms reveal their hypocrisy and uselessness.*

Communist criticism has shown that wars are a necessary product of the capitalist mode of production, impossible to eliminate, and that only proletarian revolution may stop them from breaking out or violently halt their continuation. It is also true that at times of crisis in the mechanism of capital accumulation, war is the extreme cure which the bourgeoisie *cannot fail to turn to* in order to perpetuate its own rule, with the mass destruction of capitals, commodities and labour, in short, of human beings and the products of their work. This does not mean, however, that the bourgeoisie initiates war on the basis of pondered calculations or more arbitrary rather than free decisions by its legislative or executive organs: it is the dynamics inherent in the capitalist mode of production, its vital needs, that set off the mechanism of the conflict, starting

with the economic, ideological, diplomatic preliminaries and concluding with actual mobilisation for real war. War does not break out either „by chance“ or because it is „willed“ by individuals or groups: it is the outcome of an *objective situation* that has matured throughout a variety of sectors and exploded at a breaking point that has come about in the power relations between the economies of the countries that are candidates for the role of belligerents. The prime aim of capital, once invested, is to reproduce with profit. Therefore, accumulation drives the entire cycle in the operation of capitalism, making it necessary to spread production beyond all limits. It is the competition, at every phase of accumulation, that selects and brings onto the field first individual capitals (or, to put it briefly, individual capitalists) and, later, as the demands of accumulation become more pressing, collective bodies of production, joint-stock companies, trusts, multinationals, in short, tendentially or effectively monopolistic enterprises whose interests generally reach beyond national borders and find their political expression in their national imperialist State, which guarantees their interests - and, above all, the huge power machine organised to defend them.

Now, whilst – from a technical point of view – the production process grows constantly and without limits, gaining its impetus from the volcanic nature of the production of commodities itself, it tends to diminish the possibility of placing the commodities under „profitable“ conditions that are indispensable, in the *given conditions*, for the process of accumulation not to be interrupted (2): the „volcano of production“ tends to be contrasted by the „swamp“ of a market that stagnates instead of widening. This is when the most violent of contradictions explodes: and the crisis of the system makes it necessary to turn to extreme and forceful solutions.

In the more industrially advanced countries, the entrepreneurial class encounters serious limits to the investment of the accumulated capital or a lack (or

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2. “On the other hand, too many means of labour and necessities of life are produced at times to permit of their serving as means for the exploitation of labourers at a certain rate of profit. Too many commodities are produced to permit of a realisation and conversion into new capital of the value and surplus-value contained in them under the conditions of distribution and consumption peculiar to capitalist production, i.e., too many to permit of the consummation of this process without constantly recurring explosions. Not too much wealth is produced. But at times too much wealth is produced in its capitalistic, self-contradictory forms” (Marx, *Capital*, Vol.III, Part III, Chapter XV: Exposition of the Internal Contradictions of the Law”).

insufficiency) of local raw materials or domestic labour or markets where the commodities produced can be sold. Today, the provision of non-local raw materials, the hiring of foreign labour and the acquisition of foreign markets are processes that are far from being carried out satisfactorily by purely economic means or just by playing the competition and they require a constant effort to regulate and control buying and selling prices and the privileges gradually obtained through State provisions or „conventions“ between States. Since the end of the XIXth century, economic expansionism has turned from competitive into monopolistic, finding its expression in the form of finance, supported by powerful military back-up.

It is a matter of controlling huge mineral resources or masses to be proletarianised or markets or areas where capital can be exported and it is *power* that decides the outcome of the race to grab, control or directly rule over ever increasing sectors of the world economy. The global manifestation of the ensuing clashes and crises is *imperialism*, which becomes manifest on an economic level in the process of concentration and whose point of arrival is the monopolistic control of production and exchanges, rule over finance and the exportation of capitals. Through financial capital, the old and new powers fight on the stage of the world economy, ready to fling themselves into one adventure or the other, establish one form of alliance or another or threaten and attack one another, in the desperate attempt to react to the *trend* (which in times of crisis becomes *manifest*) towards the fall of the average profit rate. But this can only be achieved by insuring oneself and making the effort to maintain a position of power over competitors on an national and international scale. When they collide, this is when that mechanism typical of capitalism kicks in, a mechanism that is inevitable for it, which is *armed conflict* with its prologue of old alliances being dissolved and new ones coming into being. And the objective of this is not only to overcome the crisis at least temporarily to the detriment of an adversary and thanks to winning more advantageous positions in the exploitation of the resources and labour of the country or countries defeated, but also to launch again the cycle of capital accumulation through the wide-scale destruction of commodities and labour and the consequent orgy of reconstruction - an objective common to friends and enemies alike, belligerent and non-belligerent, winners and losers.

Over the past few years, the dynamics launched in the mid-1970s have matured, when, with the entire planet conquered by the capitalist mode of production, the phase of expansion of economic reconstruction following the second world war came to an end. The prognosis formulated by communist criticism proved to be correct: Capital cannot survive its own crises except by re-proposing a new and far deeper one.

Since 1975 up to the present, in a brief round of events, whilst the process of centralization of capitals was taking giant steps forward and the big industries restructured and made layoffs (a clear sign of the trend towards a drop in the average profit rate) and whilst the financialization of the economy proceeded at a gallop, the power relations commonly known as the „Yalta Agreements“ experienced their own crisis.

In the space of fifty years, in leaps and bounds, with new technologies and bubbles of speculation, new industrial establishments and radical restructuring, the international political-diplomatic expression of the economic „drama“ called into question the weight and thus the power of the old powers of earlier capitalist development. What is more, the process of decolonization of the old imperial set-ups, always within the framework of the imperialist phase, brought into being and nurtured new industrial powers that claim a new imperial political power, such as the People's Republic of China. The conclusion of the so-called „Cold War“ between the USA and Russia reveals the economic fragility of the latter: despite the huge process of industrialization under Stalin, with all the atomic bombs and space adventures and the invention of so-called „real socialism“ opposed to, and presumed better than, „western capitalism“, Russia proves itself to be a power that survives mainly thanks to the exportation of raw materials, less so of commodities and virtually not at all of capitals. The USSR even breaks up due to penetration by promises and western capitals and the Russians are left with nostalgia and the chauvinism of the Holy Great Mother Russia: in its ferocity, the Special Military Operation in Ukraine is just a desperate attempt to consolidate western borders. The old European caryatids, divided between those who relaunched themselves during the post-war boom and those who, despite winning, found it more difficult to recover, have attempted to build a common market of capitals, commodities and labour, tendentially protected and looking outwards: however, chained to a NATO that is increasingly proving to be a *tool of feudal vassalage to the USA*, in any case reflecting the *conflicting interests* of twenty or so Collective Capitalists, they have neither the strength, nor the opportunity to provide an independent aggregation of power. As to the USA, they experience the agony of the decadent great power: protectionism and customs tariffs, military bases, attacks to „export freedom and democracy“ and sudden abandonments /Afghanistan!), not forgetting the wars imposed on their allies.

In this necessarily concise summary, we will certainly have forgotten something – perhaps even something important. We therefore refer our readers, old and new, to what we have published over the past fifty years of alternating crises in the world of capitalist production in its imperialist phase. *The dynamics and groundlines remain the same.* As do the areas of the planet where

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the forces of conflict are unleashed, with more or less intense seisms, the energy of clashes between the continental faultlines: the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, the Europe of the Balkans and the Caucasus. Bloody wars that drag on from truce to truce, amongst indirect clashes and direct hits, amongst changes of régime and the definition of fragile alliances, millions of human beings suffer the most ferocious aspects of imperialist dominion. But beware! This is not a matter of an abstract dominion, nor that of a malicious imperialist power, but of the particular dominion by the conflictual system of more or less fictitious States that constitute and deconstitute the so-called nationality of the younger bourgeois States, inherited from colonial rule exporting and establishing the capitalist mode of production.

From one imperialist war to the next, a third, inter-imperial war is thus being prepared. It will not be the accumulation of all these conflicts, which still retain local features and specific interests, and anyone who believes, like Pope Francis, that we are already experiencing „fragments of a third war war“ is making a big mistake! We have yet to see ourselves (even if we cannot predict how soon and how intensely) enter the spiral of *war economy* (characterised not only by military spending and rearmament alone) or the diplomatic contrasts and meetings to consolidate new power centres, disrupting the old ones.

But our *science of social becoming*, based on a criticism of political economy and the materialistic analysis of the history of our species is not limited to giving a more precise description of the facts. It is above all a militant and combative expression that transforms the immense mass of proletarians from victims and tools of the capitalist mode of production into a class that is the protagonist of the *movement to change the existing state of affairs*.

The route towards combatting the wars of capital starts out from fighting against the peace of Capital, and on the path of class struggle its waystages are clearly marked, just as the point of arrival is well known: through the development of proletarian defeatism (*willing the defeat of ones own State and its allies, disobeying the military and political hierarchies in an organised manner and fraternising with our class brothers, keeping a close hold on arms first to defend ourselves and then to free ourselves from the tentacles of bourgeois institutions*), transforming the war between States into social and civil warfare within States and opening up the process of communist revolution, the establishment of the proletariat as the ruling class.

September 2025

All the preceding classes that got the upper hand sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property.

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air.

(Max-Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848)

At the heart of the ‘incomprehensible’ political shift towards tariffs and blackmail lies the tendential fall in the average rate of profit

1. Towards complete collapse

What can the world’s leading power do when it finds itself dragged down into the worst economic and political crisis in the history of capitalism? We are, of course, referring to the United States.

To answer the question we need look no further than Rosa Luxemburg’s astute writings on the bourgeoisie’s use of tariffs as part of its global politics. She said there are two aspects to the accumulation of capital: on the one hand, production and circulation – a purely economic relationship, where the crux of the issue lies in the relationship between capital and labour (the critique of bourgeois political economy scientifically thrashed out by our comrade is clear on this matter here); on the other, the ‘world stage’. By this she means the immense, tragic theatre made up of war, bullying, violence, shouting and lies. Politics, in other words. And “*Force, fraud, oppression, looting are openly displayed without any attempt at concealment, and it requires an effort to discover within this tangle of political violence and contests of power the stern laws of the economic process*”. (1)

Indeed, it would seem there is only emptiness behind the ostensibly schizophrenic policies of Trump – no rational foundation, no underlying logic. Behavioural incoherence would appear to be the determining factor. The production and circulation of capital is a first prerequisite of accumulation: but, under the latest ‘hothead’ required to guarantee this operation, it would seem to be totally absent. Indeed, as Luxemburg continues: “*Bourgeois liberal theory takes into account only one of the two aspects: the realm of ‘peaceful competition’, the marvels of technology and pure commodity exchange. It separates strictly the other aspect: the realm of capital’s blustering violence, regarded as more or less incidental to ‘foreign policy’ and quite independent of the economic sphere of capital. In*

actual fact, political power is nothing but a vehicle for the economic process. These two aspects of the accumulation of capital are organically linked by the conditions for the reproduction of capital, and only by taking them together can the historical cycle of capitalism be accomplished. Not only does capital ‘sweat blood and mud from every pore’ at its birth, but also at every inch of the way, during its gradual march across the world. In this way, under ever more violent contortions and convulsions, it prepares its own downfall’ (2)

Today, the propaganda of the bourgeoisie – be it on the left or the right – enacts the same falsification as yesterday to protect itself. In other words, it separates the two aspects to muddy the waters and make it difficult to see that the underlying force behind capitalist development is the violence exercised by the dominant class to maintain, empower and optimize the relations between capital and labour to its own advantage. Indeed, it does more than simply separate: today it spectacularizes the political aspect to create even wider confusion. Going back to our question then: if the accumulation of global capitalism is in crisis due to growing difficulties in achieving valorization, and if this crisis also hits the world’s greatest power, how will this power react? It will do everything it can to remedy the weak element in crisis inside the accumulation. And it will do this precisely on the world stage. Trump’s fulfilment of his historical role is timely and appropriate: no longer is he the President of the single, unrivalled world superpower, but the President of a leading world power that is unsteady on its feet and at odds with political-economic blocs (China and Russia) ready to devour it.

For this reason, Trump’s tariffs policies satisfy a very precise need. Luxemburg continues: “*The inherent contradiction of an international policy of protective tariffs, exactly like the dual character of the international loan system, is just a reflection of the historical antagonism which has developed between the dual and conflicting interests of accumulation: expansion, the realisation and capitalisation of surplus value on the one hand, and, on the other, an outlook which conceives of everything purely in terms of commodity exchange.*” (3)

And so, by dominating the skies and seas, the USA blackmails satellite countries, vassal states and partners, threatening them with tariffs – or indeed, actually imposing them – so as to improve its own domestic and

1. R. Luxemburg, *L’accumulazione del capitale*, Ch. XXXI (*Protezionismo e accumulazione*), Einaudi, Torino 1968. Rosa Luxemburg *The Accumulation of Capital*. Section Three. The Historical Conditions of Accumulation. Chapter 31: Protective Tariffs and Accumulation
2. *Ibidem*
3. *Ibid*

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foreign market conditions and get some kind of grip precisely on that capital-labour relation currently in crisis. And the self-regulating free market? A fairy tale. The Americans never believed in it either.

'This fact is evidenced particularly in that the modern system of high protective tariffs, required by colonial expansion and the increasing inner tension of the capitalist medium, was also instituted with a view to increasing armaments. [...] European Free Trade, with its attendant continental system of infantry, had been superseded by protective tariffs as the foundation and completion of the imperialist military system with a strong bias towards naval power.' (4)

Clearly, about 100 years on from the words of Luxemburg, the American fleet has already paved the way worldwide for protectionism in its own country. Unlike in the past, however, its centre of gravity is increasingly shifting towards the conclusion of an entire historical process, because the fleet (sweating mud and blood in the shape of capital) has gradually exported the end of capitalism across the world and, under ever more violent contortions and convulsions, it prepares its own downfall.' (5)

But the collapse of the system will never be a definitive solution. Theoretically, capital, as such, will be able to reproduce itself *ad infinitum*, until such time as its rules of operation are destroyed: when, that is, the capital-labour nexus will be extirped only by the dictatorship of our class. *Ad infinitum*, in theory. But in practice, no. Because one thing is certain: capital will result in the extinction or complete destruction of our species. So a hypothetical end point *does* exist. Too many scientific and neo-positivist positions within Marxism are in the process of restoring bourgeois thought among our class, complete with their ideological distortions and fanatical admiration of progressive evolution.

Contrary to widespread opinion, developing the forces of production is more than a question of technology. Everything – including the political programme – revolves around the proletariat, which is the primary force of production for Marx. The human and social foundations of our class are being torn to shreds by technological progress: it is being expropriated of everything that had survived up until the second industrial revolution. Placing at risk its own survival, capital is warring against its opposite pole – its negation, its undertaker – alienating it from its selfsame existence to render it harmless, non-existent even. When

4. Ibid

5 See 'L'imperialismo delle portaerei', *il programma comunista*, n.2/1957. Questa citazione è sbagliata, direi di togliere proprio il riferimento e non mettere la frase tra virgolette

6. See 'Liberismo e protezionismo, armi nello scontro economico globale tra imperialismi vecchi e nuovi (II)', *il programma comunista*, n.5/2010.

scientific theories suggest that technological progress will lead us to communism, there isn't a great deal to celebrate! Rearmament policies – of which tariffs are a sign, and Trump (their tool of the moment) – are policies that accelerate technological warfare, weighing heavily upon the collective physical and psychological well-being of our class in its civilian context. The collapse may take on many different forms – and that doesn't exclude the possibility that capital crushes its opposite definitively, thereby destroying itself too, obviously.

The military sphere has always played an important role in accelerating the use of technology in civilian life. Such developments are worrying to say the least. It is of little benefit for us to know that in the human-less world of the future – a place where 'leading global powers' and crises are completely absent – self-replicating robots will operate within a system where social classes and the market are unknown. For Marxists, a world of this kind would be a disaster, a total failure, even if technological progress will have removed all the other bugbears in the meantime too. So, the answer to our question is: to escape the crisis, the leading global power will fight against the worldwide proletariat! Combating pre-emptively its organization and political unity, it will exploit it to the full, bending it to its will as never before with all the means technology currently puts at its disposal!

But let's get back to basics.

2. Economy and Politics. Structure and Superstructure.

Economic analysts and geopolitical experts already had a hard time understanding the evolution of capitalism. Faced with Trump's supposedly unpredictable decision-making, they now scratch their heads in total dismay. Impotent and forlorn, every day they anxiously await the latest pronouncement to determine the world's fate to issue from the lips of the energumen at the head of the dominant imperialist power. So was the theory of historical materialism a failure? This theory posited that the economy was the structure of society underlying historical development, and ideological superstructures like politics took their origins from that. But now it seems as if the destiny of the world depends on the mercurial temperament of a whacky man in the White House – the political head honcho of the dominant imperialism! As was suggested above, however, recent protectionist policies are actually a response to economic or structural necessities; and the roots of these policies go back to a period of time well before Trump the puppet took the stage. Indeed, they are a continuation of tendencies that had already emerged during Obama's administration (see the 2009 'Buy American' clause as a response to the economic crisis of 2007/2008). (6)

Recent developments have proved impenetrable for the great intellectual minds of the bourgeois pseudoscience but serve

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to demonstrate and confirm the validity of the revolutionary Marxist standpoint. In order to understand how post-Second World War monopolistic ‘liberalism’ turned into the neo-protectionism of the 1970s, then morphed back into the ‘liberalism’ of globalization halfway through the eighties, before ending up as the protectionism of Trump, is in fact possible only through the use of Marxist scientific analysis. *‘According to the Materialist Conception of History, the factor which is in the last instance decisive in history is the production and reproduction of actual life. More than this neither Marx nor myself ever claimed. If now someone has distorted the meaning in such a way that the economic factor is the only decisive one, this man has changed the above proposition into an abstract, absurd phrase which says nothing. The economic situation is the base, but the different parts of the structure—the political forms of the class struggle and its results, the constitutions established by the victorious class after the battle is won, forms of law and even the reflections of all these real struggles in the brains of the participants, political theories, juridical, philosophical, religious opinions, and their further development into dogmatic systems—all this exercises also its influence on the development of the historical struggles and in cases determines their form.’* (7) *‘Men make their history themselves, but not as yet with a collective will or according to a collective plan or even in a definitely defined, given society. Their efforts clash, and for that very reason all such societies are governed by necessity, which is supplemented by and appears under the forms of accident. The necessity which here asserts itself amidst all accidents is again ultimately economic necessity [...] So with all the other accidents, and apparent accidents, of history. The further the particular sphere which we are investigating is removed from the economic sphere and approaches that of pure abstract ideology, the more shall we find it exhibiting accidents in its development, the more will its curve run in a zig-zag. So also you will find that the axis of this curve will approach more and more nearly parallel to the axis of the curve of economic development the longer the period considered and the wider the field dealt with.’* (8)

3. The average rate of profit

We will now demonstrate how the apparently contradictory and random development of capital can be explained and contextualized in terms of objective deterministic laws on the basis of economic parameters and, especially, the average rate of profit.

The method involves moving from the complexities of the real and concrete to the ultimate abstractions and determining elements, and back to the complexities of

7. Engels to J. Bloch, 21 September 1890

8. Friedrich Engels, ‘Letter to W. Borgius’ (25/1/1894’), reproduced in *il programma comunista*, n.3/2021.

the real and concrete – only this time not as the chaotic representation of an accidental whole but, rather, as a totality steeped in many determinations and cause and effect relations.” (9)

We live in a historical era called *capitalism* because it is determined by capitalist production. The aim of capital is to grow, increase in value, otherwise it wouldn’t be capital. This growth occurs through the extortion of unpaid labour, surplus labour or surplus value: the bourgeois economy calls this ‘profit’. No limits are imposed upon this growth, which must occur continually *if failure is to be avoided*. Forms of capital are always competing among themselves in the ineluctable drive for valorization. The imperatives of competition are the reason for and also the stimulus behind the introduction of mechanized systems in every act of production, as well as the continual renewal of the selfsame technical production system with increasingly efficient machines. Exceptions made for the occasional momentary deviation, the general tendency of capitalism – as Marx himself demonstrated – is towards increased productivity. As a consequence, living labour (wage earners) is increasingly forced to make way for dead labour (machines). In this way, however, capital eliminates the source of profit. This tendency is measured precisely by the *tendential fall in the average rate of profit*. The amount of capital invested must be ever greater to compensate for its decreasing capacity for valorization, but the greater the capital invested, the more difficult it becomes to grow still further. Profit is made if the surplus value extorted from the labourer during production is realized on the market. Yet no matter how hard capital works, the market can never keep pace with the massive expansion in production. The need to valorize and the difficulties involved in the process of valorization are the major factor behind determining the history of capitalism, and that’s why the tendential fall in the average rate of profit is so important. Here we will limit ourselves to using this powerful instrument to analyse the tendencies towards protectionism and, therefore, the war economy. At the same time, the growing difficulty of valorization is, in the final analysis, the reason underlying the movement towards the revolutionary overthrowing of the capitalist system, with all that implies in terms of the class struggle.

4. The false antithesis between neo-liberalism and protectionism

For centuries capitalism has veered between protectionism and free trade. Far from being contradictory, these policies are dialectically functional to the economic necessities of

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9. See Karl Marx, ‘Introduction’ to Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* 1859. Chapter 3: The method of political economy.

different evolutionary phases in the mode of production in different geo-historical areas, while also reflecting power relations in the world market. The clear cut, metaphysical ‘antithesis’ between liberalism and statism is false. *“The risk for those who attempt to analyse the differences between neoliberalism and statism is a state of confusion. The world’s most powerful microscopes are unable to detect systematic divergencies: even the most typical neoliberal state carries the strain of statism while the dogma of the ‘statist’ state, so to speak, posits an ‘unfettered’ development of capital [...] The neoliberal State tends to prioritize the integrity of the financial system and the solvency of financial institutions over environmental quality and the well-being of the population. Mountains of data would seem to confirm that the ‘economic agent’, the State, has behaved in like fashion.”* (10)

The tendency of the modern world to replace and integrate classic liberalism with totalitarian cum-fascist political superstructures has been evident ever since the economic phase of monopolistic capitalism began more than a century ago. Monopolistic capitalism (imperialism) does, in fact, require a state apparatus in harmony with its needs, while the ‘minimum’ state with maximum individual liberties (cornerstones of liberal thought) has had to yield ground to policies that are able to respond to the growing need to regulate economic and financial phenomena. *‘Protectionism has been intrinsic to capitalism from the very beginning. Protectionism and liberalism can always co-exist, and even the current phase shows this to be true: liberal attitudes generally express a position of strength on world markets on the part of powers that are able to impose their goods and investments on their partners by means of economic and military blackmail.’* (11)

Let’s take a closer look at the economic cycles from the end of the Second World War on. The USA was in a dominant position on the world markets up until the 1960s, supporting the opening of markets to goods and capital (creation of GATT and IMF). From the end of the sixties, and especially from midway through the next decade (1975-75 crisis, and new oil crisis in 1979), protectionism returned in vogue as a reaction against the fall in American industrial production and, consequently the average rate of profit. This was particularly the case in the strategic automobile and steel sectors. This marked the beginning of the so called neo-protectionist phase, a knee-jerk reaction to the panic surrounding stagflation (high unemployment and inflation). Confusing monetary policies with alternating high and low tax rates (‘Stop-Go’) were introduced, but inflation wasn’t brought under control

and industrial production remained in a rut. Capital fled to finance... and the cure turned out to be worse than the disease, with inflation running at 13-14% at the beginning of the eighties! A sea change was necessary: cue Volker’s monetarist shock policy (with a massive hike in interest rates) and the pro-market reforms of Ronald Regan. This spelt the end of stagflation but led to a steep recession: industrial production collapsed and unemployment was running at 10.8% in December 1982, the highest level since the Great Depression. The automobile and building sectors were on their knees, and the Midwest ‘Rust Belt’ never fully recovered from a crisis without precedents. It was the worst recession in the States since the end of the Second World War.

Solutions of an opposing nature were formulated after the failure of protectionist policies. The protectionism of the seventies was thought to have fathered the economic collapse that the neo-liberalism of the next decade sought to address in its guise as child and fixer: instead of shielding itself against the global economy, the US would remodel its own economy to dominate that of the entire world. This new approach paved the way for globalization and the integration of world markets: the recession of the early eighties was the high price to be paid for such a transition. Naturally, the abandonment of blanket protectionism didn’t imply a return to an illusory form of *laissez-faire* or a dewy-eyed trust in the ‘invisible hand’ of the market. What it *did* involve was a pragmatic kind of free exchange (albeit with a measure of protectionism in strategic sectors thrown in: no surprises there), where liberalist and protectionist policies slept side by side: the label “neoliberalism” was artificially attached to all of this. The anguished search for the causes of the crisis and its possible solutions was a more or less empirical groping in the dark process that never got to grips with the underlying reasons for its occurrence: *the fall in the average rate of profit*. The economic liberalism vs protectionism merry go round is simply an expression or reflection of a vicious circle that cannot be resolved except through the antithesis: either war or revolution.

5. The end of globalization

The tide of liberalization that engulfed the world from approximately the mid-eighties on with its free movement of capital, outsourcing and the explosion of Chinese exports also came to a close with its own crisis in 2008. (12)

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10. Neo-liberismo e neo-statalismo: nulla di nuovo!’, *Il programma comunista*, n.5/2009.

11. ‘Liberismo e protezionismo, armi nello scontro economico globale tra imperialismi vecchi e nuovi’, *il programma comunista*, n. 4, 5, 6/2010.

12. Assessing global trends in protectionism, the ECB Bulletin in February 2009 concluded that there was no proof that measures – including tariffs – had been taken to reduce imports; however, in certain regions (USA and Europe) there was clear evidence of a drive towards greater protectionism.

And when the crisis came, liberalization only succeeded in accelerating it and determining its global contagion. Protectionism had already raised its head as the nineties drew to a close, but only came fully into the picture in 2008 as banks went bankrupt and a deep, long-lasting widespread crisis took hold. Globalization as a counteracting tendency to the fall in the average rate of profit temporarily gave a temporary vent to overproduction but, in doing so, it generated a whole series of contradictions that (as Marxism predicted) dictated the conditions for a cycle of deeper, more wide-ranging and back-to-back crises from which the world has yet to emerge.

On a superficial level, the repeated cycle of long lasting crises was characterised by reduced global trade, negative trade balances and an enormous – and unsustainable – growth in public debt. In addition, the shackles were removed from creative finance, and the economy was financialised; the clash of imperialisms became more pronounced and capital and strategic sectors were repatriated. Global production chains encountered difficulties, today not only in terms of raw materials but especially semi-finished goods. Yet all these factors are, once again, the expression and reflection of the collapse in industrial production and, therefore, the tendential collapse of the average rate of profit. We had already understood this trend as early as 2010. (13)

As a mostly political-economic outlook, protectionism belongs to early industrial capitalism. During the final throes of today's mode of production, a return to generalised protectionism hardly seems practicable unless (as Rosa Luxemburg, quoted above, observed) it immediately precedes open political-military conflict. And look around: is not the current imposition of tariffs accompanied by the militarisation of the economy? Among fashionable terms today we have 'dual use' – for example, technological development for military and civilian purposes (IA, satellite systems, infrastructures) – and 'decoupling', where the production of American companies in sectors held to be strategic in the event of open conflict (for example, steel, aluminium, shipbuilding and microchips) are relocated back to the USA. Yet

13. *'It is also true that, tendentially, a serious crisis over trading relations between two powers could arise (there are signs of this happening between the USA and China). Under such a scenario, politics would exert a feedback effect on the economy, triggering a further contraction in world trade proportionate to the size of the economies involved; and, at that point, the prospects of international capital could only be entrusted to the war economy and initiatives of a political-military nature. The re-emergence of protectionist impulses is a sign that this is indeed the direction now being taken by capitalism.'* In *'Liberismo e protezionismo, armi nello scontro economico globale tra imperialismi vecchi e nuovi'*, cit.

contemporary protectionism is even more contradictory than that of the past because of the strong correlation, integration and mutual dependency that exists among differing economies and production systems (the USA and China come to mind at once ...). It is, therefore, less a solution to the crisis today than it was in the past. When a crisis breaks out and production is halted, the effects are felt immediately. Trade wars loom larger and real wars take their marks as countries get onto a war economy footing and social tensions mount. It comes as no surprise to learn that the US Department of Defense has recently changed its name to the US Department of War!

6. A recap. Tariffs and blackmail as a prelude to the 'war or revolution' antithesis

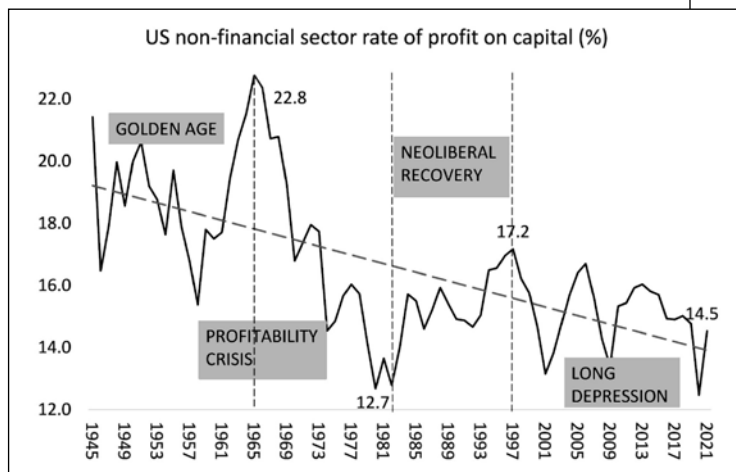
The more the capitalist mode of production tends to reveal its transitory nature, the more intellectuals and academics in its service have to distance themselves from science as a 'search for the truth' in order to carry out bourgeois class science that is forced to spread trust in future profits and create the illusion of a system of eternal production whose prospects for growth are unlimited. Only lunatics and economists can believe in eternal, unlimited growth in a world that is limited. Bourgeois science has therefore become vulgarized. For over a century it has repudiated Smith and Ricardo's classic theory of value derived from labour, replacing it with superficial and subjective theories based on the interests of consumers and the workings of the market (Pareto, marginal utility). What is more, since the great depression of 1929 and the advent of Keynesianism, it has even replaced studies of the rate of profit with that of GDP. In short: GDP answers the question: 'How much is the economy producing in absolute terms?' while the rate of profit responds to more specific and important questions like: 'On average, how profitable is the capital used?'; 'How much is the workforce exploited?'; 'How close is the crisis?' GDP includes sectors like services and finance which, to a certain degree, operate freely from industrial production, temporarily giving the false impression that profits can grow independently of real production: an economy can clock positive GDP figures while having a falling rate of profit. GDP includes components that have no direct relationship to the profitability of capital – like public expenditure, for example. The longest and most thoroughly pored-over series of data is provided by the United States, and this clearly points towards two opposing trends: GDP has a strong tendency to grow over time, while the average rate of profit shows a clear tendency to decline.

The average rate of profit is studied by very few bourgeois economists nowadays and goes under a different name: Return on Capital (ROC). These economists work for international financial and governance institutions like the IMF and the World Bank which need to be able to understand dynamics over the long term: for example,

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knowing how productivity and investments are likely to perform in a given country, forecasting financial crises ... In short, they too need to understand the risks involved when crises and stagnation take place – but without making too much noise. However, the bourgeois economists are prone to error: when calculating the average rate of profit, they only take into account the capital used by companies during the production cycle under consideration. In other words, they fail to consider all constant capital and, therefore, the degree of utilization of production capacity, as well as debt. Hence the average profit rates calculated using the method of bourgeois economists are superior to the real rates, *yet they can't escape the law of the tendential fall*. The bourgeois economists know that companies cease to invest in the real economy if the return on capital (read: rate of profit) collapses, and the capital ends up in speculative finance where bubbles are created that, sooner or later, will burst and burn enormous masses of capital. The result? A more fragile, unstable and unequal economy. What happens in practice is that the more intelligent bourgeois economists rediscover Marx through their own models – especially in period of crisis – but always looking for solutions within the capitalist system.

The following graph (14) shows the historical trend of the average rate of profit in the USA from the end of the Second World War until 2021, summarizing what has been said here in graphic and quantitative terms.



As for recent years, reliable sources (Kliman, Roberts, Piketty) that have calculated the rate considering total constant capital are in agreement: the real rate in the USA has been under 5% since 2010. The same sources have

14. <https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2022/12/18/the-us-rate-of-profit-in-2021/> Andrew Kliman, The Failure of Capitalist Production. Dati da US Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). Vedi anche The next recession <https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2015/12/20/the-us-rate-of-profit-revisited/>

confirmed that the 2023-24 figure for the USA rate of profit calculated using Marx's method has fallen to under 4%. Sure enough: Trump's blackmail and tariffs hardly come as a surprise! "War is the continuation of politics"... and politics is the continuation of the economy!

The latest capitalist wheeze for shaking off the crisis in industrial production is called 'Artificial Intelligence'. AI is supposed to bring about a new increase in production ... lowering still further the average rate of profit. Some soothsayers go so far as to suggest that AI will eliminate labour completely from production, without realizing that this would nullify surplus labour, surplus value and, hence, profit!

Big finance capital has high hopes for the profits to be culled from AI in the future: the American stock market has invested a large amount of capital in a small number of tech giants, and almost half its value is tied up in companies directly or indirectly linked to the world of High Tech. But AI is as yet unable to generate profits, and the selfsame experts in Artificial Intelligence are already drawing comparisons with the *Dot Com* crisis of 2001. Even the OpenAI head honcho, Sam Altman, says AI is a bubble ... So much for production and profit without labour! In reality, this holing up of capital in finance is a reflection of the continuing decline in real, manufacturing production. The tragedy afoot is a splendid confirmation of Marxism: it's time to put an end to a parasitic, wasteful and destructive mode of production that has long outlived

its historical function. Everything points towards its transformation into a worldwide conflict between global behemoths or, alternatively, *in the presence of the communist Party*, its evolution into the proletarian revolution. To say exactly *when* this will occur is immaterial. What is needed, instead – and not for the first time – is a reaffirmation of an investigative method that confirms its capacity to see through the capitalist mode of production: the only way to understand social and political phenomena and intervene in the class struggle.

To conclude: *the capitalist system is mired in a deep crisis and no pacific solutions can be sighted on the horizon*. There are no new territories left for the capitalist mode of production to conquer: the entire world has long been *saturated with capitalism*. Under

these conditions, the patient is writhing in agony. The so called 'new industrial revolution' is waiting in the wings (AI), but its proletarianization of the *petit bourgeoisie* and its swelling of the ranks of the unemployed can only exacerbate social tensions. (Capitalism will not do us the favor of dropping dead on its own). It is the proletariat's task to deliver the coup de grace: failure to do so will only mean another world war, even more bloody and destructive than the two that preceded it. All the signs are there.

The communist fight will, therefore, also be a fight for the freedom of all humanity and the realization of true human nature!

The „new world order“ is the disorder of capitalism in crisis

For days, months, years, the war in Ukraine, the massacres in the Middle East, Trump's electoral victory and its immediate consequences, the crisis in Germany and the outcome of its elections, the „advance of the right“ more or less everywhere, the realisation of Europe's political inexistence, the increasingly urgent „debate“ over European rearmament and much more have stirred up a bedlam of reflections and interpretations from the most dissimilar to the most inventive: an ideological desert that reduces everything to a clash between „the free world“ and „autocracy“, between „progressives“ and „oligarchics“, to sum up between Good and Evil – further evidence of the inability to produce a materialist analysis of what is going on.

As should be clear by now to those who follow us, we keep well away from the „puppet shows of political illusion and disillusion“, the „whys and wherefores“, the „dynamics of electoral swings“, all the „and now what's going to happen?“

The „new world order“ imagined by some and feared by others is merely the disorder of an obese and broken-winded capitalism in a critical condition, which has for fifty years been struggling between highs and lows, peaks and troughs without any *apparent* exit route, apart from preparation for a third world war.

The giddy acceleration immediately imposed by the new US government on domestic and international policies is not the fruit of the President's and his acolytes' power mania. Alongside developments in the structural crisis of overproduction of goods, capital and human beings, US imperialism has seen its world dominion progressively eroded in favour of other imperialisms (also in a critical condition), either those rebuilt over time (Germany, Japan...) or those emerging and then fully emerged (China, the BRICS). The clash that we have witnessed between the Russian and Ukrainian armies for three years now, backed up, with varying degrees of economic and military involvement, by the NATO states, is proof of this „resistible rise“ of the US imperialist giant. (1) In the midst of it, as always from 1945 onwards, the clay pot of *Europe*, a mere economic market gasping for breath, marked by centrifugal currents corresponding to the demands of competing national capitalisms – anything but a unified political entity! The „attack on Europe“

1. In this regard, we refer readers to our article “The resistible rise of the ignoble ‘free world’“, *The Internationalist*, n.11/2024-2025.

which we had already identified back in 1949 (see the article of the same name published in our Italian paper at the time, *Prometeo*, no.13) and which we have written about several times, has never ceased, through all the various phases of the accumulation of capital developing after the destruction of the Second World War; and today it is gathering new strength and new reasons for being, driven as it is by the overall crisis of the capitalist mode of production. It is on this very scenario that a new, worldwide bloodbath is being prepared. (2)

We have always relegated the fanciful trend towards seeing History as a product of the „monster“ of the moment to its rightful place. The measures announced and enforced by the new US administration which so scandalize and scare the „sensitive souls“ of the world's whining democrats are on the one hand the expression of real national claims by an imperialism that is now ever strong, despite being downsized compared to the scenarios of fifty years previously, and, on the other hand, the effect of demo-reformist policies that prove to be inconclusive and inadequate faced with the persistence of the world crisis, unless in terms that are openly repressive and anti-proletarian. At the same time, these measures demonstrate the unsolvable contradictions in bourgeois recipes for „exiting the crisis“: liberism/protectionism, globalization/nationalism, the eternal *cul de sac* of inflation-deflation-stagflation etc.. In one way or another, sooner or later, these are the laws of capital (the profit-seeking, the need to restore accumulation, the „golden rule“ of competition between national capitals, the law of unequal development...) which assert themselves and present the final reckoning. (3) Credits have to be called in, debts have to be settled: perhaps

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2. European subordination to the USA is also to be seen, quite simply, in the imitation of Trump's slogan “Make America Great Again” (MAGA), which becomes, thanks to a magnificent idea from our own ideologists!, “Make Europe Great Again” (MEGA)! There really isn't a lot to choose between MAGA and MEGA!
 3. At Trump's inauguration ceremony, the fine line-up of industrial magnates (particularly from hi-tech) was interpreted by the press as the coming together of the great names in the US economy to pay homage to the... new Ruler. Or might it not have been rather to remind him who the real bosses are and what script he should be acting out in the years to come?...

in the form of precious metals for industry and rare-earth elements... And Europe, with its multiple States and debts contracted over a period of decades, has many debts with the USA, having been, decade after decade, its faithful, if grumpy, subject. Just as States like China, Germany and Japan have credits with the USA...

Meanwhile, and for this very reason, all of them are re-arming because, if these recipes (import duties! the trials of strength both real or imaginary!) fail to work (and we state quite openly that *they will not work*), well then, it really will be necessary to take up arms and enter the field with unconcealed power, the iron fist. Over all these years the arms industry has never ceased to grow, the international arms trade, in the light of day or clandestinely, has never ceased to operate full speed ahead and all the more or less recent conflicts have seen the giants of the arms industry in the front line on both sides of the battlefronts. The automobile industry is plummeting and the arms industry soaring: there must be a reason for that! There is already talk of converting unsold people-carriers into ...tanks.

And so, in poor old, multi-State Europe, squeezed between the USA, Russia and China, talk turns for the umpteenth time to a unified, supra-national armed force: should we expect it to be pulled out of the Mad Hatter's top hat? We have our doubts: perhaps it will be just a patched-up re-edition of the NATO and will be wrecked on the cliffs of national capitals' demands; or else it will be the iron heel of the strongest capital, the one that manages to emerge above the chaos and disorder – and then we will, indeed, witness the authentic retransformation of national economies into war economies and can expect the first shots to be fired from one day to the next. Not by chance the new German Chancellor Mertz declares that he wishes to be free of any subordination to the United States and more than one government is starting to worry about...the state of its railways – no secondary consideration in a perspective of preparation for war, as happened at the beginnings of the First and Second World Wars.

What do we need to do, then? What must be done? What can be done?

For now, the chains that imprison our class, binding it to the forms in which the capitalist mode of production is organised, seem to be indestructable. The institutions through which the bourgeoisie, first and foremost the State, exercises its dictatorship still manage to make out that its particular, class interests also guarantee general interests. With the illusion of a possible social redistribution of the „wealth“ produced by the exploitation of the workforce, with the trick of democratic defence of the conditions by which the workforce is exploited and with all the other ideological artifacts that blur the antagonism between Capital and Labour, the practice of reformism has marked the decades – almost a

century! – of counter-revolutionary victory, followed by the defeat of the International Communist Revolution, which could have been unleashed after the triumph of Red October in Russia. In its many, various guises, democratic reform *seems* to have annihilated to such an extent the strength and antagonism of the international proletariat, wiping out even the desire for a different sort of social organisation and the willingness to fight for it, that the modern class struggle has been led to a point of no return. The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* warned in 1848 that: „*The history of any society that has existed up to now is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slaves, patricians and plebeians, barons and serfs, members of guilds and apprentices, in a word oppressors and oppressed, have always been in contrast, carrying on an uninterrupted fight, at times hidden, at times clearly evident: a fight that always ended either with the revolutionary transformation of the whole of society, or with the ruin of all the classes involved in the fight.*“

Despite this, or perhaps just because of this historical awareness, we know that the explosion of the tragic contradictions born out of and in the progression of the capitalist crisis will undermine the economic bases on which reformism has been able to weave its web of lies and oppression. And, first to defend once again its economic conditions in the short term (wages, salaries, pensions...) and its social conditions (housing, health, living conditions in the neighbourhoods, environmental decay...) and later to survive war (as in the Middle East: slaughter at the battlefront, mass killings in the backlines...), our class will be *obliged* to resume the fight. In the end it is this fight that will train it, perhaps unwittingly, and in any case *thanks always to the intervention and under the guidance of the revolutionary party*, to question and finally to overthrow bourgeois domination.

We communists work, as we always have done (even in the darkest years of the counter revolution), to allow the modern class war to break down the barriers of bourgeois social relations and push forward to the end: up to the seizing and exclusive exercise of power by the proletariat.

Against the wars of Capital, against the imperialist order of today and tomorrow, against political and economic, ethnic and religious opportunism, against any manifestation of so-called „national socialism“, for the internationalist and anti-national identity and unity of our class, we prepare and practise revolutionary defeatism and armed and militant fraternization – *for our own cause and not for that of the Fatherland and the Nation* – between proletarians who speak all the languages of the world.

March 2025

Great Britain

Capitalism's Magnificent and Unlimited Progress

A report published at the start of July by the Children's Commissioner for England (1), printed in the Guardian of 8/7 and taken up again by the Italian daily newspaper „Il Fatto Quotidiano“ of 11/7, declares quite explicitly that: “the findings in this work highlight real hardship; an almost-Dickensian level of poverty facing some children in England today. [...] Children do not talk about poverty as an abstract concept. They talk in simple but powerful terms about how it feels to not have enough money to do the same things as their friends, or to feel a sense of shame at being seen as ‚lesser‘. [...] they spoke with candour about things that most people would consider basic, but which for them are out of their reach: a safe home that isn't mouldy – or full of rats, a bed big enough to stretch out in, basic food like bacon, a place to do their homework, having the heating on, privacy in the bathroom and being able to wash, having their friends over, not having to travel hours to school, or having a local park to play safely in where the grass isn't overgrown and unusable”.

And in fact, the data regarding their condition is harrowing. As well as the return of illnesses linked to malnutrition, typical of Victorian times, such as rickets and scurvy (in 2022, 700 pediatric admissions for rickets were recorded and cases of scurvy have increased to hundreds of diagnoses every year, especially amongst the children of economically fragile families), the „Fatto

Quotidiano“ of 11/7 reminds us that - again quoting the Report - „around 4.5 million British children, or 31% of all minors, live in conditions of poverty and without significant intervention, this figure may rise to 4.8 million by 2029.“ In 2023, an analysis by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation reported a 22.4% risk of childhood poverty in the United Kingdom, a percentage superior to that in many northern countries, such as Denmark and Finland (9.7%). In addition, the 2023 UNICEF report, “Child Poverty in the Midst of Wealth”, “places the United Kingdom amongst the wealthy countries with the worst performances in the fight against child poverty, just above Colombia and Turkey. Between 2014 and 2021, child poverty increased by 20%, whilst countries like Poland and Slovenia recorded reductions of respectively 38% and 31%. The children most affected come from single-parent households with a risk of poverty that is triple that of two-parent families, as well as from ethnic minorities or those with disabilities present.“ „Ethnic inequality“ is especially marked: „whilst 24% of white British children live in poverty, 65% of children of Bangladeshi origin and 59% of those from a Pakistani background find themselves in conditions of poverty due to systematic discrimination, difficulty in accessing a steady job and high housing costs. Poverty is also geographically differentiated: areas such as the North of England, the West Midlands and Tower Hamlets in London record up to 40% child poverty, with Birmingham Ladywood and Bradford West amongst the worst affected areas, with 47% of children living in poverty. What is more, a measure introduced in 2017 (the “two-child cap”) “limits tax benefits

and Universal Credit for families with more than two children, excluding economic support for the third child and any following that, save for exceptions (multiple births, non-consensual conception, adoptions). In 2025 around 1.66 million children in 469,780 families were affected by this measure: one out of nine minors nationwide and up to one in three in some areas. Families lose an average of around £3,514 a year for every child after the second, aggravating poverty and daily hardships.“

The widespread condition of poverty is certainly not a new development that has arisen over the past few years. Already in 2017, so almost ten years previously, in a chapter devoted to the failure of the English National Health system (once the post-war carnation in Britain's buttonhole) in an in-depth study on the consequences of the so-called „new poverty“, we read: “This is particularly unfair on children – if you're born into a low-income household, the chances are you'll be sicker and weaker and die sooner than most of the population. Childhood mortality (deaths between birth and the age of fourteen) in the UK is significantly higher than similar countries in Europe – only Poland, Hungary, Malta, Slovakia and Latvia have higher child mortality rates. In children under five, the UK mortality rate is the highest in Western Europe, double that of Sweden”. (2) And again, regarding how children live: “According to the housing charity Shelter, in October 2016 over 40 per cent of rental homes

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1. <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/growing-up-in-a-low-income-family-childrens-experiences/>

2. Stephen Armstrong, *The New Poverty*, Verso, London 2017, p.74.

3. *Ibidem*, p.115.

in the UK fail to live up to minimum standards of acceptable conditions, with reports of persistent pests, damp and safety hazards. More than 400,000 working households live in private rented homes with category 1 hazards as defined by the English Housing Survey. These include severe health threats from damp and mould, pests, electrical installations, excess cold and dangerous levels of carbonmonoxide, lead and other chemicals, including asbestos”. (3)

Thus “an almost-Dickensian level of poverty”, this is the anguished definition of the 2025 Report of the Children’s Commissioner for England. But there was no need to disturb Charles Dickens and his novels: it would have sufficed to open Friedrich Engels’ book, *Condition of the Working Class in England*, published in Germany in 1845 and only later in England, to find food for thought. After reminding us of the spread of illnesses such as typhoid, consumption, scarlet fever, directly related to unhealthy living conditions, Engels reports that: “Another category of diseases arises directly from the food rather than the dwellings of the workers. The food of the labourer, indigestible enough in itself, is utterly unfit for young children, and he has neither means nor time to get his children more suitable food. [...] But a new disease arises during childhood

from impaired digestion. Scrofula is almost universal among the working-class, and scrofulous parents have scrofulous children, especially when the original influences continue in full force to operate upon the inherited tendency of the children.

A second consequence of this insufficient bodily nourishment, during the years of growth and development, is rachitis, which is extremely common among the children of the working-class. The hardening of the bones is delayed, the development of the skeleton in general is restricted, and deformities of the legs and spinal column are frequent, in addition to the usual rachitic affections. How greatly all these evils are increased by the changes to which the workers are subject in consequence of fluctuations in trade, want of work, and the scanty wages in time of crisis, it is not necessary to dwell upon.

Temporary want of sufficient food, to which almost every working-man is exposed at least once in the course of his life, only contributes to intensify the effects of his usually sufficient but bad diet. Children who are half-starved, just when they most need ample and nutritious food – and how many such there are during every crisis and even when trade is at its best – must inevitably become weak, scrofulous and rachitic in a high degree. And that they do become so, their appearance amply shows. The neglect to which the great mass of working-men’s

children are condemned leaves ineradicable traces and brings the enfeeblement of the whole race of workers with it. Add to this the unsuitable clothing of this class, the impossibility of precautions against colds, the necessity of toiling so long as health permits, want made more dire when sickness appears, and the only too common lack of all medical assistance; and we have a rough idea of the sanitary condition of the English working-class. The injurious effects peculiar to single employments as now conducted, I shall not deal with here” (Friedrich Engels, *Condition of the Working Class in England*, Chapter “Results”).

Is it surprising then, that in England today scurvy and rickets are on the rise, the main illnesses linked to poverty? When Engels published his book, it was in the thick of the industrial revolution, the cradle of capitalist development. Today, almost two hundred years later, the society of capital and profit at all costs, of merciless competition, of conflicts and wars, has come full circle: it has returned to its original vices.

The circle must be broken, before - after new and monstrous slaughter and destruction worldwide - another starts, commencing its umpteenth infernal death march, to the detriment of the human species



From Los Angeles to the whole of America: the answer to the obtuse use of state power should be a return to real class war

Months ago, when commenting the outcome of America's presidential elections, we concluded that for some time now in the United States there has been "an often dramatic social situation affecting almost all sectors of the workforce across every region of this vast country. Struggles have multiplied over the years, sometimes conducted by official trade unions with a shameful history behind them and facing strong pressure from workers; and sometimes as an expression of grassroots organizations, which are something of a novelty in the complicated post-World War II era. It's very simple: workers in the land that symbolizes imperialist domination are in dire straits and can't take it any more". And we recalled the series of struggles and unrest that had broken out in diverse sectors in the world of work, from the dockers to the Boeing workers, from workers in the food industry to the coal miners of Alabama, from the joiners, to the installers, to the maintenance staff of telephone companies, from the Amazon workforce to that of the service sector and the so-called *gig economy* and so on (see: "A Few Words about the US Elections", *the internationalist*, no. 11/2025).

Right on the dot, in an attempt to conceal and distort the profound social crisis, populist and reactionary demagoguery (the secret card of bourgeois power in all its disguises) appeared on the scene, pointing to the "immigrants" as the cause of all ills and wielding the axe over their heads. And so followed the events we are only too familiar with: arrests and the mass deportation of so-called "illegal aliens" by state power and, in reply, demonstrations that have spread from Los Angeles, at the heart of an area that has always experienced considerable Latin-American and Asian immigration, to other places in the west, gradually affecting cities like Detroit, Chicago, New York. At this point comes the immediate (we might say Pavlovian!) response by the

State, deploying massive contingents of the National Guard and the Marines.

We won't list the news of all the events that have taken place, because the media are full of it, often in the usual sensationalist terms. Just a reminder that this is merely the umpteenth chapter in the long story of the social uprisings that have always marked the situation in the United States ever since the Civil War, which completed the formation of the national market and immersed the country once and for all in the hellish round of capitalism and lastly of imperialism: the fierce workers' struggles at the turn of the nineteenth/twentieth century with repeated episodes of near civil war, the recurring flare-ups in the Afro-American ghettos crushed by the dual weight of emargination and racism, the widespread proletarian unrest of the 1930s, the huge mobilisations (by the young and not so young) of the 1960s, right up to the more recent rebellions against continuing police violence.

In the burning magma of these rebellions, whether large or small, present or future, repressed with blind brutality or dying out gradually because of the collaboration of the usual ultra-democratic and institutional parties, a dramatic and urgent necessity always emerges, not only to overcome all ethnic, national, religious, cultural or linguistic barriers and side with an authentic *class front*, getting organised inside and outside the workplace to defend living conditions, but above all for the rebirth of an *organ of political direction* capable of gathering, unifying and directing the energy generated towards the one and only possible objective (*the theoretical and practical struggle for communism*), if we wish to avoid relapsing into a pale, bloodless and harmless democratic reformism, the inevitable accomplice to further slaughter, repression, destruction and daily suffering. *To sum up, the need for a revolutionary party.*



May Day 2025: Proletarians Have No Fatherland

We are totally unsurprised by the recent events upsetting the world and bringing discussions over the „third world war“ into bars and TV talk shows. We are not interested here in attacking the more or less fascist bourgeois right wing: it is a *declared enemy*. The problem instead consists in the reformist false friends, pacifists and democrats: all of whom have deceived and *continue to deceive* our class, maintaining that it is still possible to improve capitalism, eliminating its contradictions. At times they even pretend they're communists: but communism is the active and organised negation of bourgeois rule, *both in its democratic and in its fascist guises*. Being communists means opposing all imperialist wars, declaring open war on capital and first and foremost on our own bourgeoisie. When wars break out, the game is up, above all with false revolutionaries and pacifists! Pacifism has never stopped a war: on the eve of battle, the pacifists have always sided with their own country, always managing to find high moral justification to cover up their about-turn. The reformist and democratic Second International fell to pieces when every socialist party voted for war to *defend* its own nation. Then Stalinism dragged the proletariat into the slaughter of the Second World War in the name of defending a so-called „socialist fatherland“ and a miserable democratic and inter-class anti-fascism.

Only proletarian revolutions have stopped wars, as in the *practical and historical* examples of the Paris Commune and the October Revolution. Faced with the betrayal of the Second International, the slogan of the Bolsheviks and the Communist Left was unanimous: „Transform the imperialist war into civil war“! Only the communist revolution can put an end to the infernal cycle of world wars, through which this mode of production moves – by now, nothing else than an assassin.

But democrats, pacifists, reformers and fake communists refuse the slogan. They are afraid of it! And this is why we shout it even louder: „*transform the imperialist war into a war against our own bourgeoisies, working for defeatism against all States and for armed fraternisation between all proletariats*“. In an authentic perspective of struggle, this slogan explains to proletarians and young people who feel the need for radical change, who their allies are and who their enemies. *Being revolutionary and internationalist communists means supporting and driving forward the battle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie right to the end: right up to the need for the violent conquest of political power, with the dismembering and destruction*

of the bourgeois State and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the indispensable tool for the definitive shift to a society with no social division of work, no private property, no borders and no classes.

We must unmask those who say they are against this „war-mongering Europe“ and make believe there is a possible „Europe of democratic peace and work for everyone“, driving their proletariat to side with „European imperialism“; worse still when they blather about being against war, whilst experiencing Italy, Germany, France, Spain or Palestine etc. as the „Fatherland“ to sacrifice their lives to. *Proletarians have no Fatherland!* Being communist means fighting for the destruction of all nations and moving beyond nationhood, starting out from the Fatherland-prison we are born and exploited in.

If today we are at the lowest point in the history of the proletariat, disorganised as it is and almost totally incapable of defending itself, this is precisely because it has been dragged in the direction of *conservative* democratic and pacifist objectives, for the „defence of the Constitution“ and democratic nationalism. Faced with the disaster taking place before our very eyes (growing poverty, desperate masses of people obliged to migrate, genocide in Gaza, wars in Ukraine, in Africa, epidemics, environmental destruction, acute inequality), these false hopes are a desperate attempt to keep the old world on its feet! We are accused of repeating obsolete analyses, of standing outside history, but communism represents the future, the necessary euthanasia of a system that is now damaging and in decay. It is not an ideology amongst many others: *it is the movement that changes the present state of things, carried forward by the masses who are obliged to fight against capitalism by conditions that are increasingly less sustainable, guided by their revolutionary avant-garde, internationally organised in the communist party!* This is what we work towards.

It is time to be clear about what we are fighting for, without falling into reformist traps!

Class struggle exclusively for the defence of our class interests, independently of compatibility with the national or company economy! Revolutionary defeatism against our own national States!

Only a movement with these objectives and a class war guided right to the end by the revolutionary party can oppose war: a whole different thing from whining speeches and pacific processions of well-meaning blabbermouths!

“Territorial organisms for the proletarian struggle” what they are and what they must become

Foreword

■ We have insisted more than once that, if the evolution of trade unions in the modern, imperialist phase has transformed traditional union structure into an authentic organ for the economic and social control of the proletariat, this certainly does not mean that the need for *economic defence* has disappeared, or, indeed, the radical, potential antagonism of the proletariat towards capital. The advance of the economic crisis itself, the contradictions it opens up and the consequent social issues inevitably drive workers in all imperialist States onto this battleground and will oblige them to equip themselves once more with new *stable defence structures*, an authentic class organisation. And it will also be one of the battlegrounds for the clash between communists and the variegated front of the bourgeois reformist enemy (see: our publication *For the Uncompromising Defence of the Living and Working Conditions of Proletarians – Forms of organization and methods and objectives of struggles*). This, to put it very briefly, is the path that will involve the whole of our class once again taking up the battle on a purely trade-union and social basis: a path that not only is not linear, and never will be, but one which feeds, and will increasingly feed, on *transitory organizational experiences* – a little like an accumulation of potential energy before an explosion.

One of these organizational experiences (and this is confirmed by the history of the workers’ movement) is the formation of “organisms” or “committees” of workers grouping outside the boundaries of the “company” or “factory” or – as in the case of elements from the highly fragmented area of civil servants – “category”, which also attempt to bring together those proletarians who experience isolation in microscopic companies or find themselves isolated under the “VAT régime”. They are important experiences, which often point the way to possible reorganization: but they are not (and cannot be) the embryo of a class trade union. They often stand alongside other experiences of struggle, important but differently organized, which for us communists are also of a transitory nature.

What is important for us is that these organisms should be *open to all workers*, even to those who are subject to and the expression of positions belonging to the variegated world of maximalist reformism. Nonetheless, in order to avoid them turning into barren and useless centres for debate amongst militants, or for groups of well-meaning

activists serving the most diverse of causes, it is the duty of us communists to establish contents and precise limits for encouraging the vitality, the duration and the pursuit of objectives leading to a split with the betrayal and inertia of all national union corporations, both large and small.

It is therefore a question of setting out the *guidelines* according to which the fighting spirit of these organisms can be directed, and establishing the objectives for organizing spontaneous rebellion and rejecting the “corrupt practices of the trade unions”.

The terrain on which these organisms battle is that of the defence of our class’s immediate interests: salary, health and, in general, living and working conditions, starting from the specific situation in companies but capable of being generalized and referring to all salaried workers.

We must be aware that in the present context of current laws and balances of power, these organisms would hardly be able to negotiate contracts and have the authority to “close a labour dispute”. Yet for this very reason they can organize the *fighting spirit* representing the interests of all workers, *beyond the limits* of the *negotiations themselves*: to promote and organize the struggle (and defend it), to coordinate and sustain it by raising resistance funds, always identifying a nucleus of reliable and militant workers to control the professional union leaders, sticking close to them throughout the whole dispute.

There is obviously going to be a clash with institutional trade unionism and its representatives and this is why a clear distinction must always be made between the “territorial organisms of proletarian struggle”, the genesis of which we encourage, and the RSU (“Unified Union Representation”) and company trade union sections: this means that, whilst, for practical purposes, trade union cards amongst the workers belonging to the “organism” can be tolerated, it will necessarily have to encourage and practice class-based unionism in every possible way.

In what follows we shall see the points around which these experiences of proletarian struggle must be organized.

Four areas of action

In the present historical situation, the result of a profound transformation in the mechanisms of proletarian defence in the age of imperialism, the organization of workers expresses itself in two ways: in trade union structures

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that are fully integrated into State political and economic apparatus (“nationalized” so to speak, though formally “free”), animated by a workers’ aristocracy that is still widespread over the whole territory, definitively and rigidly positioned on the enemy front, and in a collection of minute union structures.

Before sketching out an organizational draft, let us define the areas in which the more general aspect of the struggles for economic defence converge, the battle inside the big corporations, as in the smaller ones, and finally, the context in which, within them, class-oriented and revolutionary political forces must operate.

The area of economic battle is where immediate class interests are defended, with the objective of safeguarding salary and health (working hours, pace of work, overtime, productivity, intensity) and in general *the living and working conditions of all proletarians*. Since it does not act in the context of a contractual relationship, as happens with a trade union (though not because of an ideological refusal), the *militant territorial organism* gives practical expression to all class needs and interests in all areas of work, using any means of struggle in relation to the given balances of power and events that capitalism encounters. To do this, the state of organization and activity is that of “near-legality”: it thus promotes and supports activities of defence, coordination and struggle (delegating to the more combative proletarians and the resistance funds).

The area of *institutional trade unionism* is excluded from this territorial organism for proletarian struggle, since for a long time now it has become impossible to acquire any space for battle or positions that make for class activity within the present trade unions: the current situation would mean being hounded out and reported to the authorities, unless an external balance of power were created that was strong enough to counter this. The agenda must therefore include the work of *reporting betrayal and open black-legging, coercion and pacification agreements, fake strikes, cross-class objectives and regulation of strike action*, continuously re-introduced in the macabre mantra of the institutional trade unions. In particular, what should be stressed is a condemnation of the “trade union ‘delega’ system”, by means of which our class is delivered into the hands of the bourgeoisie (“delega” or “proxy” is the mechanism whereby legally recognized union organizations, in agreement with the State and the bosses, automatically deduct their union fees from workers’ pay cheques). Instead of the present institutionalized organization, an independent and class-based form of trade unionism should be promoted.

The area of union “grassroots committees” can be used in such a way, and to an extent, where they anticipate the work of class unionism amongst the workers. Considering that in most cases these “committees” differ very little

from the institutional trade unions, apart from the fact that they are far smaller and pulverized into individual sectors and categories, their work must be criticized when it proves to be supporting the big corporations. Interests that often escape the big corporations converge in them and thus the level of corporative conservation (the niche that has come into being to protect specific interests) is highly resistant, whilst being accompanied by a certain conflictual vitality. These “committees” must be encouraged to leave the area of individual, professional categories and forge wider relations with other, identical associations, with the objective of creating a *unified, cross-category union* at the very least.

The more general *political area* has the task of fuelling the proletariat’s battle of defence with methods and content, objectives and organizational capacity. Always lurking in these “committees” is an economic trend that is often accompanied by a “politicalist” one (the fanciful ambition to transform them into “cells” of future political parties or a “workers’ parliament”). What must be cultivated, then, is the *memory and experience of the international proletarian battles*, as a training ground for overcoming the present capitalist mode of production.

Possible organizational draft

- A militant territorial organism for the defence of the living and working conditions of the proletariat must be open to *all workers* but closed to the interests of the bourgeoisie and thus also to the agents of institutional union corporations.
- It must be a place for *exchanging views on decisions for all workers* (employed in any sector but also unemployed, pensioners, the widest varieties of the precariously employed and, in any case, of any gender, age, background etc.) who, by means of their active participation, found a *single possible and necessary proletarian unit*, the sort that starts out by identifying the basic interests of our class.
- It must be an instrument which, by organizing the forces emerging from the workplaces (*and transferring them outside the prison of the workplace*), tends to overcome the strictures of trade interests, with the help of the force expressed by all other workers.
- It must be a means of agitation, i.e. an *active tool of support and a link between the various struggles* that open up over the territory, particularly when the quality of them expresses a tendency to go beyond the compatibility imposed and expressed by the institutional trade union apparatus.

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- It must act as an expression and reinforcement of the practice of workers' struggles and thus put forward and bring into use all those methods which, whilst distorted and monopolized by institutional organizations, are an expression of their strength, so that they once again become *authentic class guidelines for intervention*.
- It must give proof of functional organization, with a structure that tends to guarantee *stability and continuity*.
- The decision-making mechanism cannot be that of some abstract proletarian democracy or, worse still, that of an equally idealistic, unanimous decision-taking by an assembly but must be an *expression of the operational quality of a militant majority*.
- An organism like this cannot shut itself away from the experiences of social struggle that spring up over the territory, struggles that other sectors of the population also take part in (housing, services, environment etc.) but must firmly and unyieldingly introduce into them not only the point of view but also, and above all, the *interests of the proletariat*.
- Precisely because it is not of a political, but of an *economic and social* nature, an organism like this is not closed to an exchange between the different political positions of the workers who animate it: indeed, it encourages them to mature towards revolutionary, internationalist and radically anti-capitalist positions; but it refuses to become the terrain for a "debate between political groups", which is a terrain that is by its very nature barren and harmful.

March 2016

Internally, the communist party develops an intense work of study and political critique intimately linked to the exigencies of action and to historical experience, and it strives to organize this work on an international basis. Externally, in all circumstances and with the means at its disposal, it works to diffuse the lessons of its own critical experience and to refute enemy schools and parties. Above all, the party conducts its activity and propaganda among the proletarian masses and works to polarize them around it, particularly at those times when they are set in motion in reaction against the conditions capitalism imposes upon them and especially within the organizations formed by proletarians to defend their immediate interests.

(from "Theses of the Abstentionist Communist Faction of the Italian Socialist Party", 1920)

To join our party

Joining our Party is an **individual** matter. This means that you must first cut off any ties you have with other political organizations and make yourself fully available to the Party, actively participating in its collective work and gradually internalizing its positions, methods and ways of working. Should an entire group decide to come over to our Party, it must first disband, and each single member must contact the Party **individually**, so they can become activists and leave behind any personal ties they may have established with the group previously. Applications by whole groups **will not be considered**.

Joining our Party is not a formal matter (there are no membership cards, entrance exams or initiation rites!), but something **substantial**. Affiliates engage in the Party's collective work which consists of regular meetings and correspondence, taking on board our theoretical positions through individual study and collective

elaboration, as well as participation – if and where possible – in our class' struggles, in order to spread our views, make converts and, as far as our means and the objective state of things allow, endow those struggles with a class-based direction.

Our **anonimity** responds to the need to eliminate all individualistic and personalistic temptations. Our positions and our programme must be **completely** understood, accepted and put into practise in their **entirety**. Internally there is a **centralisation** of work (territorial sections and the Party centre are bound together by common, collective work). There is a **hierarchy** that is the result of a natural selection deriving from collective work rather than by means of in-house elections or other democratic mechanisms. **Discipline** has nothing to do with obedience to individuals but total adherence to the Party programme. Any potential **division of labour** within the Party occurs exclusively in accordance

with **practical** requirements.

Our **periodic meetings**, be they general or inter-regional, are given over to: a) making available our experiences to the entire Party; b) organizing the overall work of the Party (contributions to our press, future meetings, publications, travels and connections, etc.); c) examining aspects of our theory and programme in greater depth so as to apply them better in practice.

The **same dynamics** are at work inside the sections: centralisation of the work, close contact among comrades (who are not friends but Party militants) and those in charge of the sections (whose job is to maintain continual contact with the centre of the Party), rejection of all forms of localism and federalism (local autonomies are non-existent in our Party). As both single militants and sections, whatever the activity involved, internal or external, **responsibility towards the whole Party remains paramount**.

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Back to Basics

Party and Class (1921)

The “Theses on the Role of the Communist Party in the Proletarian Revolution” approved by the Second Congress of the Communist International are genuinely and deeply rooted in the Marxist doctrine. These theses take the definition of the relations between party and class as a starting point and establish that the class party can include in its ranks only a part of the class itself, never the whole nor even perhaps the majority of it.

This obvious truth would have been better emphasised if it had been pointed out that one cannot even speak of a class unless a minority of this class tending to organise itself into a political party has come into existence.

What in fact is a social class according to our critical method? Can we possibly recognise it by the means of a purely objective external acknowledgement of the common economic and social conditions of a great number of individuals, and of their analogous positions in relationship to the productive process? That would not be enough. Our method does not amount to a mere description of the social structure as it exists at a given moment, nor does it merely draw an abstract line dividing all the individuals composing society into two groups, as is done in the scholastic classifications of the naturalists. The Marxist critique sees human society in its movement, in its development in time; it utilises a fundamentally historical and dialectical criterion, that is to say, it studies the connection of events in their reciprocal interaction.

Instead of taking a snapshot of society at a given moment (like the old metaphysical method) and then studying it in order to distinguish the different categories into which

the individuals composing it must be classified, the dialectical method sees history as a film unrolling its successive scenes; the class must be looked for and distinguished in the striking features of this movement.

In using the first method we would be the target of a thousand objections from pure statisticians and demographers (short-sighted people if there ever were) who would re-examine our divisions and remark that there are not two classes, nor even three or four, but that there can be ten, a hundred or even a thousand classes separated by successive gradations and indefinable transition zones. With the second method, though, we make use of quite different criteria in order to distinguish that protagonist of historical tragedy, the class, and in order to define its characteristics, its actions and its objectives, which become concretised into obviously uniform features among a multitude of changing facts; meanwhile the poor photographer of statistics only records these as a cold series of lifeless data.

Therefore, in order to state that a class exists and acts at a given moment in history, it will not be enough to know, for instance, how many merchants there were in Paris under Louis XIV, or the number of English landlords in the Eighteenth Century, or the number of workers in the Belgian manufacturing industry at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century. Instead, we will have to submit an entire historical period to our logical investigations; we will have to make out a social, and therefore political, movement which searches for its way through the ups and downs, the errors and successes, all the while obviously adhering to the set of interests of a strata of people who have been placed in a particular situation by the mode of

production and by its developments. It is this method of analysis that Frederick Engels used in one of his first classical essays, where he drew the explanation of a series of political movements from the history of the English working class, and thus demonstrated the existence of a class struggle.

This dialectical concept of the class allows us to overcome the statistician’s pale objections. He does not have the right any longer to view the opposed classes as being clearly divided on the scene of history as are the different choral groups on a theatre scene. He cannot refute our conclusions by arguing that in the contact zone there are undefinable strata through which an osmosis of individuals takes place, because this fact does not alter the historical physiognomy of the classes facing one another.

* * *

Therefore the concept of class must not suggest to us a static image, but instead a dynamic one. When we detect a social tendency, or a movement oriented towards a given end, then we can recognise the existence of a class in the true sense of the word. But then the class party exists in a material if not yet in a formal way.

A party lives when there is the existence of a doctrine and a method of action. A party is a school of political thought and consequently an organisation of struggle. The first characteristic is a fact of consciousness, the second is a fact of will, or more precisely of a striving towards a final end.

Without those two characteristics, we do not yet have the definition of a class. As we have already said, he who coldly records facts may find

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affinities in the living conditions of more or less large strata, but no mark is engraved in history's development. It is only within the class party that we can find these two characteristics condensed and concretised. The class forms itself as certain conditions and relationships brought about by the consolidation of new systems of production are developed - for instance the establishment of big factories hiring and training a large labour force; in the same way, the interests of such a collectivity gradually begin to materialise into a more precise consciousness, which begins to take shape in small groups of this collectivity. When the mass is thrust into action, only these first groups can foresee a final end, and it is they who support and lead the rest. When referring to the modern proletarian class, we must conceive of this process not in relationship to a trade category but to the classes as a whole. It can then be realised how a more precise consciousness of the identity of interests gradually makes its appearance; this consciousness, however, results from such a complexity of experiences and ideas, that it can be found only in limited groups composed of elements selected from every category. Indeed only an advanced minority can have the clear vision of a collective action which is directed towards general ends that concern the whole class and which has at its core the project of changing the whole social regime. Those groups, those minorities, are nothing other than the party. When its formation (which of course never proceeds without arrests, crises and internal conflicts) has reached a certain stage, then we may say that we have a class in action. Although the party includes only a part of the class, only it can give the class its unity of action and movement, for it amalgamates those elements, beyond the limits of categories and localities, which are sensitive to the class and represent it. This casts a light on the meaning of this basic fact : the party is only a

part of the class. He who considers a static and abstract image of society, and sees the class as a zone with a small nucleus, the party, within it, might easily be led to the following conclusion: since the whole section of the class remaining outside the party is almost always the majority, it might have a greater weight and a greater right. However if it is only remembered that the individuals in that great remaining mass have neither class consciousness nor class will yet and live for their own selfish ends, or for their trade, their village, their nation, then it will be realised that in order to secure the action of the class as a whole in the historical movement, it is necessary to have an organ which inspires, unites and heads it - in short which officers it; it will then be realised that the party actually is the nucleus without which there would be no reason to consider the whole remaining mass as a mobilisation of forces. The class presupposes the party, because to exist and to act in history it must possess a critical doctrine of history and an aim to attain in it.

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In the only true revolutionary conception, the direction of class action is delegated to the party. Doctrinal analysis, together with a number of historical experiences, allow us to easily reduce to petty bourgeois and anti-revolutionary ideologies, any tendency to deny the necessity and the predominance of the party's function. If this denial is based on a democratic point of view, it must be subjected to the same criticism that Marxism uses to disprove the favourite theorems of bourgeois liberalism. It is sufficient to recall that, if the consciousness of human beings is the result, not the cause of the characteristics of the surroundings in which they are compelled to live and act, then never as a rule will the exploited, the starved and the underfed be able to convince themselves of the

necessity of overthrowing the well-fed satiated exploiter laden with every resource and capacity. This can only be the exception. Bourgeois electoral democracy seeks the consultation of the masses, for it knows that the response of the majority will always be favourable to the privileged class and will readily delegate to that class the right to govern and to perpetuate exploitation.

It is not the addition or subtraction of the small minority of bourgeois voters that will alter the relationship. The bourgeoisie governs with the majority, not only of all the citizens, but also of the workers taken alone. Therefore if the party called on the whole proletarian mass to judge the actions and initiatives of which the party alone has the responsibility, it would tie itself to a verdict that would almost certainly be favourable to the bourgeoisie. That verdict would always be less enlightened, less advanced, less revolutionary, and above all less dictated by a consciousness of the really collective interest of the workers and of the final result of the revolutionary struggle, than the advice coming from the ranks of the organised party alone. The concept of the proletariat's right to command its own class action is only an abstraction devoid of any Marxist sense. It conceals a desire to lead the revolutionary party to enlarge itself by including less mature strata, since as this progressively occurs, the resulting decisions get nearer and nearer to the bourgeois and conservative conceptions. If we looked for evidence not only through theoretical enquiry, but also in the experiences history has given us, our harvest would be abundant. Let us remember that it is a typical bourgeois cliché to oppose the good « common sense » of the masses to the « evil » of a « minority of agitators », and to pretend to be most favourably disposed towards the exploiters' interests. The right-wing currents of the workers' movement, the social-democratic school, whose reactionary tenets have been clearly shown by

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history, constantly oppose the masses to the party and pretend to be able to find the will of the class by consulting on a scale wider than the limited bounds of the party. When they cannot extend the party beyond all limits of doctrine and discipline in action, they try to establish that its main organs must not be those appointed by a limited number of militant members, but must be those which have been appointed for parliamentary duties by a larger body - actually, parliamentary groups always belong to the extreme right wing' of the parties from which they come.

The degeneracy of the social-democratic parties of the Second International and the fact that they apparently became less revolutionary than the unorganised masses, are due to the fact that they gradually lost their specific party character precisely through workerist and «labourist» practices. That is, they no longer acted as the vanguard preceding the class but as its mechanical expression in an electoral and corporative system, where equal importance and influence is given to the strata that are the least conscious and the most dependent on egotistical claims of the proletarian class itself. As a reaction to this epidemic, even before the war, there developed a tendency, particularly in Italy, advocating internal party discipline, rejecting new recruits who were not yet welded to our revolutionary doctrine, opposing the autonomy of parliamentary groups and local organs, and recommending that the party should be purged of its false elements. This method has proved to be the real antidote for reformism, and forms the basis of the doctrine and practice of the Third International, which puts primary importance on the role of the party - that is a centralised, disciplined party with a clear orientation on the problems of principles and tactics. The same Third International judged that the «collapse of the socialdemocratic parties of the Second International was by no means the collapse of proletarian

parties in general» but, if we may say so, the failure of organisms that had forgotten they were parties because they had stopped being parties.

* * *

There is also a different category of objection to the communist concept of the party's role. These objections are linked to another form of critical and tactical reaction to the reformist degeneracy: they belong to the syndicalist school, which sees the class in the economic trade unions and pretends that these are the organs capable of leading the class in revolution.

Following the classical period of the French, Italian and American syndicalism, these apparently left-wing objections found new formulations in tendencies which are on the margins of the Third International. These too can be easily reduced to semi-bourgeois ideologies by a critique of their principles as well as by acknowledging the historical results they led to.

These tendencies would like to recognise the class within an organisation of its own - certainly a characteristic and a most important one - that is, the craft or trade unions which arise before the political party, gather much larger masses and therefore better correspond to the whole of the working class. From an abstract point of view, however, the choice of such a criterion reveals an unconscious respect for that self-same democratic lie which the bourgeoisie relies on to secure its power by the means of inviting the majority of the people to choose their government. In other theoretical viewpoints, such a method meets with bourgeois conceptions when it entrusts the trade unions with the organisation of the new society and demands the autonomy and decentralisation of the productive functions, just as reactionary economists do. But our present purpose is not to draw out a complete critical analysis of the syndicalist doctrines. It is sufficient

to remark, considering the result of historical experience, that the extreme right wing members of the proletarian movement have always advocated the same point of view, that is, the representation of the working class by trade unions; indeed they know that by doing so, they soften and diminish the movement's character, for the simple reasons that we have already mentioned. Today the bourgeoisie itself shows a sympathy and an inclination, which are by no means illogical, towards the unionisation of the working class; indeed the more intelligent sections of the bourgeoisie would readily accept a reform of the state and representative apparatus in order to give a larger place to the «apolitical» unions and even to their claims to exercise control over the system of production. The bourgeoisie feels that, as long as the proletariat's action can be limited to the immediate economic demands that are raised trade by trade, it helps to safeguard the status-quo and to avoid the formation of the perilous « political » consciousness - that is, the only consciousness which is revolutionary for it aims at the enemy's vulnerable point, the possession of power.

Past and present syndicalists, however, have always been conscious of the fact that most trade unions are controlled by right wing elements and that the dictatorship of the petty bourgeois leaders over the masses is based on the union bureaucracy even more than on the electoral mechanism of the social-democratic pseudo-parties. Therefore the syndicalists, along with very numerous elements who were merely acting by reaction to the reformist practice, devoted themselves to the study of new forms of union organisation and created new unions independent from the traditional ones. Such an expedient was theoretically wrong for it did not go beyond the fundamental criterion of the economic organisation : that is, the automatic admission of all those who are placed in given conditions by the part they play in production, without demanding special political

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convictions or special pledges of actions which may require even the sacrifice of their lives. Moreover, in looking for the «producer» it could not go beyond the limits of the «trade», whereas the class party, by considering the «proletarian» in the vast range of his conditions and activities, is alone able to awaken the revolutionary spirit of the class. Therefore, that remedy which was wrong theoretically also proved inefficient in actuality.

In spite of everything, such recipes are constantly being sought for even today. A totally wrong interpretation of Marxist determinism and a limited conception of the part played by facts of consciousness and will in the formation, under the original influence of economic factors, of the revolutionary forces, lead a great number of people to look for a «mechanical» system of organisation that would almost automatically organise the masses according to each individual's part in production;

according to these illusions, such a device by itself would be enough to make the mass ready to move towards revolution with the maximum revolutionary efficiency.

Thus the illusory solution reappears, which consists of thinking that the everyday satisfaction of economical needs can be reconciled with the final result of the overthrow of the social system by relying on an organisational form to solve the old antithesis between limited and gradual conquests and the maximum revolutionary program. But - as was rightly said in one of the resolutions of the majority of the German Communist Party at a time when these questions (which later provoked the secession of the KAPD) were particularly acute in Germany - revolution is not a question of the form of organisation.

Revolution requires an organisation of active and positive forces united by a doctrine and a final aim. Important strata and innumerable individuals

will remain outside this organisation even though they materially belong to the class in whose interest the revolution will triumph. But the class lives, struggles, progresses and wins thanks to the action of the forces it has engendered from its womb in the pains of history. The class originates from an immediate homogeneity of economic conditions which appear to us as the primary motive force of the tendency to destroy and go beyond the present mode of production. But in order to assume this great task, the class must have its own thought, its own critical method, its own will bent on the precise ends defined by research and criticism, and its own organisation of struggle channelling and utilising with the utmost efficiency its collective efforts and sacrifices. All this constitutes the Party.

*(from "Rassegna Comunista",
nr. 2, April 15, 1921)*

Men make their own history, but until now not on the basis of a general will or a general plan, even in a limited society. Their aspirations contradict one another; that is precisely why in every society necessity prevails whose contingency forms both its manifold and its complement. It is thus that appear what are termed "great men". That a given great man, and only this great man, is born at a given time and place is naturally only pure coincidence. But if he were to be eliminated, there would be an immediate demand for a replacement, and he would appear, for better or worse, eventually. That Napoleon was Corsican or the military dictator that the French Republic, exhausted from war, required is pure fortuitousness; but that, in the absence of Napoleon, another would have taken his place is proven by the fact that each time there has been need of a great man one appeared, be it Caesar, Augustus, Cromwell and so on.

(from Friedrich Engels, "Letter to Walther Borgius, January 25, 1894")

Back to Basics

Party and Class Action (1921)

In a previous article where we elaborated certain fundamental theoretical concepts, we have shown not only that there is no contradiction in the fact that the political party of the working class, the indispensable instrument in the struggles for the emancipation of this class, includes in its ranks only a part, a minority, of the class, but we also have shown that we cannot speak of a class in historical movement without the existence of a party which has a precise consciousness of this movement and its aims, and which places itself at the vanguard of this movement in the struggle.

A more detailed examination of the historical tasks of the working class on its revolutionary course, both before and after the overthrow of the power of the exploiters, will only confirm the imperative necessity of a political party which must direct the whole struggle of the working class. In order to have a precise, tangible idea of the technical necessity of the party, we should first consider – even if it may seem illogical – the tasks that the proletariat must accomplish after having come to power and after having wrenched the control of the social machine from the bourgeoisie. After having conquered control of the state the proletariat must undertake complex functions. In addition to replacing the bourgeoisie in the direction and administration of public matters, it must construct an entirely new and different administrative and governmental machinery, with immensely more complex aims than those comprising the «governmental art» of today. These functions require a regimentation of individuals capable of performing diverse functions, of studying various problems, and of applying certain criteria to the different sectors of collective life:

these criteria are derived from the general revolutionary principles and correspond to the necessity which compels the proletarian class to break the bonds of the old regime in order to set up new social relationships.

It would be a fundamental mistake to believe that such a degree of preparation and specialisation could be achieved merely by organising the workers on a trade basis according to their traditional functions in the old regime. Our task will not be to eliminate the contribution of technical competence previously furnished by the capitalist or by elements closely linked to him in order to replace them, factory by factory, by the training and experience of the best workers. We will instead have to confront tasks of a much more complex nature which require a synthesis of political, administrative and military preparation. Such a preparation, which must exactly correspond to the precise historical tasks of the proletarian revolution, can be guaranteed only by the political party; in effect the political party is the only organism which possesses on one hand a general historical vision of the revolutionary process and of its necessities and on the other hand a strict organisational discipline ensuring the complete subordination of all its particular functions to the final general aim of the class.

A party is that collection of people who have the same general view of the development of history, who have a precise conception of the final aim of the class they represent, and who have prepared in advance a system of solutions to the various problems which the proletariat will have to confront when it becomes the ruling class. It is for this reason that the rule of the class can only be the rule of the party. After these brief considerations,

which can very evidently be seen in even a superficial study of the Russian Revolution, we shall now consider the phase preceding the proletariat's rise to power in order to demonstrate that the revolutionary action of the class against bourgeois power can only be a party action.

It is first of all evident that the proletariat would not be mature enough to confront the extremely difficult problems of the period of its dictatorship, if the organ that is indispensable in solving these problems, the party, had not begun long before to constitute the body of its doctrine and experiences.

The party is the indispensable organ of all class action even if we consider the immediate necessities of the struggles which must culminate in the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie. In fact we cannot speak of a genuine class action (that is an action that goes beyond the trade interests and immediate concerns) unless there is a party action.

* * *

Basically, the task of the proletarian party in the historical process is set forth as follows.

At all times the economic and social relationships in capitalist society are unbearable for the proletarians, who consequently are driven to try to overcome them. Through complex developments the victims of these relationships are brought to realise that, in their instinctive struggle against sufferings and hardships which are common to a multitude of people, individual resources are not enough. Hence they are led to experiment with collective forms of action in order to increase, through their association, the extent of their influence on the social conditions imposed upon them. But

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the succession of these experiences all along the path of the development of the present capitalist social form leads to the inevitable conclusion that the workers will achieve no real influence on their own destinies until they have united their efforts beyond the limits of local, national and trade interests and until they have concentrated these efforts on a far-reaching and integral objective which is realised in the overthrow of bourgeois political power. This is so because as long as the present political apparatus remains in force, its function will be to annihilate all the efforts of the proletarian class to escape from capitalist exploitation.

The first groups of proletarians to attain this consciousness are those who take part in the movements of their class comrades and who, through a critical analysis of their efforts, of the results which follow, and of their mistakes and disillusionings, bring an ever-growing number of proletarians onto the field of the common and final struggle which is a struggle for power, a political struggle, a revolutionary struggle.

Thus at first an ever-increasing number of workers become convinced that only the final revolutionary struggle can solve the problem of their living conditions. At the same time there are increasing numbers who are ready to accept the inevitable hardships and sacrifices of the struggle and who are ready to put themselves at the head of the masses incited to revolt by their suffering, all in order to rationally utilise their efforts and to assure their full effectiveness.

The indispensable task of the party therefore is presented in two ways, that is first as a factor of consciousness and then as a factor of will. The first results in the theoretical conception of the revolutionary process that must be shared by all its adherents; the second brings a precise discipline which secures the co-ordination and thus the success of the action.

Obviously this strengthening of the class energies has never been and can never be a securely progressive,

continuous process. There are standstills, setbacks and disbanding. Proletarian parties often lose the essential characteristics which they were in the process of forming and their aptitude for fulfilling their historical tasks. In general, under the very influence of particular phenomena of the capitalist world, parties often abandon their principal function which is to concentrate and channel the impulses originating from the movement of the various groups, and to direct them towards the single final aim of the revolution. Such parties are satisfied with immediate and transitory solutions and satisfactions. They degenerate in their theory and practice to the point of admitting that the proletariat can find conditions of advantageous equilibrium within the capitalist regime, and they adopt as their political aim objectives which are merely partial and immediate, thereby beginning on their way towards class collaboration.

These phenomena of degeneration reached their peak with the great World War. After this a period of healthy reaction has followed: the class parties inspired by revolutionary directives – which are the only parties that are truly class parties – have been reconstructed throughout the world and are organising themselves into the Third International, whose doctrine and action are explicitly revolutionary and «maximalist».

Thus in this period, which everything indicates will be decisive, we can see again a movement of revolutionary unification of the masses, of organisation of their forces for the final revolutionary action. But once again, far from having the immediate simplicity of a rule, this situation poses difficult tactical problems; it does not exclude partial or even serious failure, and it raises questions which so greatly impassion the militants of the world revolutionary organization.

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Now that the new International has

systematized the framework of its doctrine it must still draw up a general plan of its tactical methods. In various countries a series of questions has arisen from the communist movement and tactical problems are on the order of the day. Once it has been established that the political party is an indispensable organ of the revolution; once it no longer can be a point of debate that the party can only be a part of the class (and this point has been settled in the theoretical resolutions of the Second World Congress, which formed the point of departure of the previous article) then the following problem remains to be solved: we must know more precisely how large the party organisation must be and what relationship it must have with the masses which it organises and leads.

There exists – or there is said to exist – a trend which wishes to have perfectly pure «small parties» and which would almost take pleasure in moving away from contact with the great masses, accusing them of having little revolutionary consciousness and capabilities. This tendency is severely criticised and is defined as *deft opportunism*. This label however seems to us to be more demagogic than justified; it should rather be reserved for those tendencies that deny the function of the political party and pretend that the masses can be organised on a vast scale for revolution by means of purely economic and syndicalist forms of organisation.

What we must deal with therefore is a more thorough examination of the relationship between the masses and the party. We have seen that the party is only a part of the working class, but how are we to determine the numerical size of this «proportion»? For us if there is a proof of «voluntarism» and therefore of typical anti-Marxist opportunism (and today opportunism can only mean heresy) it is the pretension of establishing such a numerical relationship as an a priori rule of organisation; that is to say of establishing that the communist

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party must have in its ranks, or as sympathisers, a certain number of workers which is either greater or less than a particular given percentage of the proletarian mass.

It would be a ridiculous mistake to judge the process of formation of communist parties, which proceeds through splits and mergers, according to a numerical criterion, that is to say to cut down the size of the parties which are too large and to forcibly add to the numbers of the parties which are too small. This would be in effect not to understand that this formation must be guided instead by qualitative and political norms and that it develops in a very large part through the dialectical repercussions of history. It cannot be defined by organisational rules which would pretend that the parties should be moulded into what is considered to be desirable and appropriate dimensions. What can be stated as an unquestionable basis for such a discussion on tactics is that it is preferable that the parties should be numerically as large as possible and that they should succeed in attracting around them the largest possible strata of the masses. No one among the communists ever laid down as a principle that the communist party should be composed of a small number of people shut up in an ivory tower of political purity. It is indisputable that the numerical force of the party and the enthusiasm of the proletariat to gather around the party are favourable revolutionary conditions; they are unmistakable signs of the maturity of the development of proletarian energies and nobody would ever wish that the communist parties should not progress in that way.

Therefore there is no definite or definable numerical relationship between the party membership and the great mass of the workers. Once it is established that the party assumes its function as a minority of the class, the inquiry as to whether this should be a large minority or a small minority is the ultimate in pedantry. It is certain that as long as the contradictions

and internal conflicts of capitalist society, from which the revolutionary tendencies originate, are only in their first stage of development, as long as the revolution appears to be far away, then we must expect this situation: the class party, the communist party, will necessarily be composed of small vanguard groups who have a special capacity to understand the historical perspective, and that section of the masses who will understand and follow it cannot be very large. However, when the revolutionary crisis becomes imminent, when the bourgeois relations of production become more and more intolerable, the party will see an increase in its ranks and in the extent of its following within the proletariat.

If the present period is a revolutionary one, as all communists are firmly convinced, then it follows that we must have large parties which exercise a strong influence over broad sections of the proletariat in every country. But wherever this aim has not yet been realised in spite of undeniable proofs of the acuteness of the crisis and the imminence of its outburst, the causes of this deficiency are very complex; therefore it would be extremely frivolous to conclude that the party, when it is too small and with little influence, must be artificially extended by fusing with other parties or fractions of parties which have members that are supposedly linked to the masses. The decision as to whether members of other organisations should be admitted into the ranks of the party, or on the contrary whether a party which is too large should eliminate part of its membership, cannot stem from arithmetical considerations or from a childish statistical disappointment.

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The formation of the communist parties, with the exception of the Russian Bolshevik Party, has grown at a very accelerated pace in Europe as well as outside of Europe because the war has opened the

door, at a very accelerated rate, to a crisis of the system. The proletarian masses cannot attain a firm political consciousness in a gradual way; on the contrary they are driven here and there by the necessities of the revolutionary struggle, as if they were tossed by the waves of a stormy sea. There has continued to survive, on the other hand, the traditional influence of social-democratic methods, and the social-democratic parties themselves are still on the scene in order to sabotage the process of clarification, to the greatest advantage of the bourgeoisie.

When the problem of how to solve the crisis reaches the critical point and when the question of power is posed to the masses, the role of the social-democrats becomes extremely evident, for when the dilemma proletarian dictatorship or bourgeois dictatorship is posed and when choice can no longer be avoided, they choose complicity with the bourgeoisie. However when the situation is maturing but not yet fully developed, a considerable section of the masses remain under the influence of these social-traitors. And in those cases when the probability of revolution has the appearance, but only the appearance, of diminishing, or when the bourgeoisie unexpectedly begins to unfurl its forces of resistance, it is inevitable that the communist parties will temporarily lose ground in the field of organisation and in their leadership of the masses.

Given the present unstable situation, it is possible that we will see such fluctuations in the generally secure process of development of the revolutionary International. It is unquestionable that communist tactics must try to face these unfavourable circumstances, but it is no less certain that it would be absurd to hope to eliminate them by mere tactical formulas, just as it would be excessive to draw pessimistic conclusions from these circumstances. In the abstract hypothesis of the continuous development of the revolutionary energies of the masses, the party sees its

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numerical and political forces increase in a continuous way, quantitatively growing but remaining qualitatively the same, inasmuch as the number of communists rises, in relation to the total number of proletarians. However in the actual situation the diverse and continually changing factors of the social environment act upon the mood of the masses in a complex way; the communist party, which is made up of those who more clearly perceive and understand the characteristics of the historical development, nevertheless does not cease to be an effect of this development and thus it cannot escape fluctuations in the social atmosphere. Therefore, although it acts constantly as a factor of revolutionary acceleration, there is no method it can use, however refined it may be, which can force or reverse the situation in regards to its fundamental essence.

The worst remedy which could be used against unfavourable consequences of situations, however, would be to periodically put on trial the theoretical and organisational principles that are the very basis of the party, with the objective of enlarging its zone of contact with the masses. In situations where the revolutionary inclinations of the masses are weakening, this movement to «bring the party towards the masses», as some call it, is very often equivalent to changing the very nature of the party, thus depriving it of the very qualities that would enable it to be a catalyst capable of influencing the masses to resume their forward movement.

The conclusions in regard to the precise character of the revolutionary process, which are derived from the doctrine and historical experience, can only be international and thus result in international standards. Once the communist parties are solidly founded on these conclusions, then their organisational physiognomy must be considered to be established and it must be understood that their ability to attract the masses and to give them their full class power depends on their adherence to a strict discipline regarding the program and

the internal organisation.

The communist party possesses a theoretical consciousness confirmed by the movement's international experiences, which enables it to be prepared to confront the demands of revolutionary struggle. And because of this, even though the masses partially abandon it during certain phases of its life, it has a guarantee that their support will return when they are confronted with revolutionary problems for which there can be no other solution than that inscribed in the party's program. When the necessities of revolutionary action reveal the need for a centralised and disciplined organ of leadership, then the communist party, whose constitution will have obeyed these principles, will put itself at the head of the masses in movement.

The conclusion that we wish to draw is that the criteria which we must use as a basis to judge the efficiency of the communist parties must be quite different from an a posteriori estimate of their numerical forces as compared with those of the other parties which claim to represent the proletariat. The only criteria by which to judge this efficiency are the precisely defined theoretical bases of the party's program and the rigid internal discipline of all its organisational sections and of all its members; only such a discipline can guarantee the utilisation of everyone's work for the greatest success of the revolutionary cause. Any other form of intervention in the composition of the party which is not logically derived from the precise application of these principles can only lead to illusory results and would deprive the class party of its greatest revolutionary strength: this strength lies precisely in the doctrinal and organisational continuity of all its propaganda and all its action, in its ability to state in advance, how the process of the final struggle between classes will develop and in its ability to give itself the type of organisation which responds to the needs of this decisive phase.

During the war, this continuity was

irretrievably lost throughout the world and the only thing to do was to start again from the beginning. The birth of the Communist International as a historical force has materialised, on the basis of a perfectly clear and decisive revolutionary experience, the lines on which the proletarian movement could reorganise itself. The first condition for a revolutionary victory for the world proletariat is consequently the attainment of the organisational stabilisation of the International, which could give the masses throughout the world a feeling of determination and certitude, and which could win the support of the masses while making it possible to wait for them whenever it is indispensable that the development of the crisis still should act upon them, that is when it is unavoidable that they still experiment with the insidious advice of the social-democrats. There do not exist any better recipes for escaping this necessity.

The Second Congress of the Third International understood these necessities. At the beginning of a new epoch which must lead to revolution, it had to establish the points of departure of an international work of organisation and revolutionary preparation. It would have perhaps been preferable for the Congress, instead of dealing with the different themes in the order that they were treated in the theses – all of which dealt with theory and tactics at the same time – to have established first the fundamental basis of the theoretical and programmatic conception of communism, since the organisation of all adhering parties must be primarily based on the acceptance of these theses. The Congress then would have formulated the fundamental rules of action which all members must strictly observe on the trade-union, the agrarian, and the colonial questions and so on. However, all this is dealt with in the body of resolutions adopted by the Second Congress and is excellently summarised in the theses on the conditions of admission of the parties. It is essential to consider

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the application of these conditions of admission as an initial constitutive and organisational act of the International, that is as an operation which must be accomplished once and for all in order to draw all organised or organisable forces out of the chaos into which the political proletarian movement had fallen, and to organise these forces into the new International.

All steps should be taken without further delay in order to organise the international movement on the basis of these obligatory international standards. For, as we have said before, the great strength which must guide the International in its task of propelling the revolutionary energies is the demonstration of the continuity of its thought and action towards a precise aim that will one day appear clearly in the eyes of the masses, polarising them around the vanguard party, and providing the best chances for the victory of the revolution.

If, as a result of this initial – though organisationally decisive – systematisation of the movement, parties in certain countries have an apparently small membership, then it can be very useful to study the causes of such a phenomenon. However it would be absurd to modify the established organisational standards and to redefine their application with the aim of obtaining a better numerical relationship of the Communist Party to the masses or to other parties. This would only annihilate all the work accomplished in the period of organisation and would make it useless; it would necessitate beginning the work of preparation all over again, with the supplementary risk of several other starts. Thus this method would only result in losing time instead of saving it.

This is all the more true if the international consequences of this method are considered. The result of making the international organisational rules revocable and of creating precedents for accepting the «remoulding» of parties – as if a party was like a statue which could be recast after not turning out well the first time

– would be to obliterate all the prestige and authority of the «conditions» that the International laid down for the parties and individuals that wished to join. This would also indefinitely delay the stabilisation of the staff of the revolutionary army, since new officers could constantly aspire to enter while «retaining the privileges of their rank».

Therefore it is not necessary to be in favour of large – or small- parties; it is not necessary to advocate that the orientation of certain parties should be reversed, under the pretext that they are not «mass parties». On the contrary, we must demand that all communist parties be founded on sound organisational, programmatic, and tactical directives which crystallise the results of the best experiences of the revolutionary struggle on the international scale.

These conclusions, although it is difficult to make it evident without very long considerations and quotations of facts taken from the life of the proletarian movement, do not spring from an abstract and sterile desire to have pure, perfect and orthodox parties. Instead they originate from a desire to fulfil the revolutionary tasks of the class party in the most efficient and secure way.

The party will never find such a secure support from the masses, the masses will never find a more secure defender of their class consciousness and of their power, than when the past actions of the party have shown the continuity of its movement towards revolutionary aims, even without the masses or against them at certain unfavourable moments. The support of the masses can be securely won only by a struggle against their opportunist leaders. This means that where non-communist parties still exert an influence among the masses, the masses must be won over by dismantling the organisational network of these parties and by absorbing their proletarian elements into the solid and well-defined organisation of the Communist Party. This is the only method which can

give useful solutions and can assure practical success. It corresponds exactly to Marx's and Engels' positions towards the dissident movement of the Lassalians.

That is why the Communist International must look with extreme mistrust at all groups and individuals who come to it with theoretical and tactical reservations. We may recognise that this mistrust cannot be absolutely uniform on the international level and that certain special conditions must be taken into account in countries where only limited forces actually place themselves on the true terrain of communism. It remains true, however, that no importance should be given to the numerical size of the party when it is a question of whether the conditions of admission should be made more lenient or more severe for individuals and, with still more reason, for groups who are more or less incompletely won over to the theses and methods of the International.

The acquisition of these elements would not be the acquisition of positive forces; instead of bringing new masses to us, this would result in the risk of jeopardising the clear process of winning them over to the cause of the party. Of course we must want this process to be as rapid as possible, but this wish must not urge us on to incautious actions which might, on the contrary, delay the final solid and definitive success.

It is necessary to incorporate certain norms which have constantly proved to be very efficient into the tactics of the International, into the fundamental criteria which dictate the application of these tactics, and into the solution of the complex problems which arise in practice. These are: an absolutely uncompromising attitude towards other parties, even the closest ones, keeping in mind the future repercussions beyond immediate desires to hasten the development of certain situations; the discipline that is required of members, taking into consideration not only their present observance of this discipline but also

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their past actions, with the maximum mistrust in regard to political conversions; a consideration of the past accountability of individuals and groups, in place of recognising their right to join or to leave the communist army whenever they please. All this, even if it may seem to enclose the party in too narrow a circle for the moment, is not a theoretical luxury but instead it is a tactical method which very securely ensures the future.

Countless examples would show that last-minute revolutionaries are out of place and useless in our ranks. Only yesterday they had reformist attitudes that were dictated by the special conditions of the period and today they have been led to follow the fundamental communist directive because they are influenced by their often too optimistic considerations about the imminence of the revolution. Any new wavering in the situation – and in a war who can say how many advances and retreats would occur before the final victory – will be sufficient to cause them to return to their old opportunism, thus jeopardising at the same time the contents of our organisation.

The international communist movement must be composed of those who not only are firmly convinced of the necessity of revolution and are ready to struggle for it at the cost of any sacrifice, but who also are committed to act on the revolutionary terrain even when the difficulties of the struggle reveal that their aim is harder to reach and further away than they had believed.

At the moment of the intense revolutionary crisis we shall act on the sound base of our international organisation, polarising around us the elements who today are still hesitating, and defeating the social-democratic parties of various shades. If the revolutionary possibilities are less immediate we will not run the risk, even for a single moment, of letting ourselves be distracted from our patient work of preparation in order to retreat to the mere solving

of immediate problems, which would only benefit the bourgeoisie.

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Another aspect of the tactical problem which the communist parties must solve is that of choosing the moment at which the calls for action must be launched, whether it is a secondary action or the final one.

This is why the tactics of the offensive of communist parties are passionately discussed today; these consist of organising and arming the party militants and the close sympathisers, and of manoeuvring them at the opportune moment in offensive actions aiming at rousing the masses in a general movement, or even at accomplishing spectacular actions in response to the reactionary offensive of the bourgeoisie.

On this question too there are generally two opposing positions neither of which a communist would probably support.

No communist can harbour prejudices towards the use of armed actions, retaliations and even terror or deny that these actions, which require discipline and organisation, must be directed by the communist party. Just as infantile is the conception that the use of violence and armed actions are reserved for the «Great Day» when the supreme struggle for the conquest of power will be launched. In the reality of the revolutionary development, bloody confrontations between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are inevitable before the final struggle; they may originate not only from unsuccessful insurrectional attempts on the part of the proletariat, but also from inevitable, partial and transitory clashes between the forces of bourgeois defence and groups of proletarians who have been impelled to rise in arms, or between bands of bourgeois «white guards» and workers who have been attacked and provoked by them. It is not correct either to say that communist parties must disavow all such actions and reserve all their force for the final moment, because

all struggles necessitate a preparation and a period of training and it is in these preliminary actions that the revolutionary capacity of the party to lead and organise the masses must begin to be forged and tested.

It would be a mistake, however, to deduce from all these preceding considerations that the action of the political class party is merely that of a general staff which could by its mere will, determine the movement of the armed forces and their utilisation. And it would be an imaginary tactical perspective to believe that the party, after having created a military organisation, could launch an attack at a given moment when it would judge its strength to be sufficient to defeat the forces of bourgeois defence.

The offensive action of the party is conceivable only when the reality of the economic and social situation throws the masses into a movement aimed at solving the problems directly related, on the widest scale, to their conditions in life; this movement creates an unrest which can only develop in a truly revolutionary direction on the condition that the party intervenes by clearly establishing its general aims, and rationally and efficiently organising its action, including the military technique. It is certain that the party's revolutionary preparation can begin to translate itself into planned actions even in the partial movements of the masses: thus retaliation against white terror – whose aims are to give the proletariat the feeling that it is definitively weaker than its adversaries and to make it abandon the revolutionary preparation – is an indispensable tactical means.

However it would be another voluntarist error – for which there cannot and must not be any room in the methods of the Marxist International – to believe that by utilising such military forces, even though they may be extremely well organised on a broad scale, it is possible to change the situations and to provoke the starting of the general revolutionary struggle in the midst of

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a stagnating situation.

One can create neither parties nor revolutions; one leads the parties and the revolutions, by unifying all the useful international revolutionary experiences in order to secure the greatest chances of victory of the proletariat in the battle which is the inevitable outcome of the historical epoch in which we live. This is what seems to us to be the necessary conclusion.

The fundamental criteria which direct the action of the masses are expressed in the organisational and tactical rules which the International must fix for all member-parties. But these criteria cannot go as far as to directly reshape the parties with the illusion of giving them all the dimensions and characteristics that would guarantee the success of the revolution.

They must, instead, be inspired by Marxist dialectics and based above all on the programmatic clarity and homogeneity on one hand, and on the centralising tactical discipline on the other.

There are in our opinion two «opportunistic» deviations from the correct path. The first one consists of deducing the nature and characteristics of the party on the basis of whether or not it is possible, in a given situation, to regroup numerous forces: this amounts to having the party's organisational rules dictated by situations and to giving it, from the outside, a constitution different from that which it has attained in a particular situation. The second deviation consists of believing that a party, provided it is numerically large and has achieved a military preparation, can provoke revolutionary situations by giving an order to attack: this amounts to asserting that historical situations can be created by the will of the party. Regardless of which deviation should be called «right wing» or left wing it is certain that both are far removed from the correct Marxist doctrine. The first deviation renounces what can and must be the legitimate intervention of the international movement with a

systematic body of organisational and tactical rules; it renounces that degree of influence – which derives from a precise consciousness and historical experience – that our will can and must exercise on the development of the revolutionary process. The second deviation attributes an excessive and unreal importance to the will of the minorities, which results in the risk of leading to disastrous defeats.

Communist revolutionaries must be those who on the contrary have been collectively tempered by the experiences of the struggle against the degenerations of the proletarian movement, who firmly believe in the revolution, and who strongly desire it, but not like someone who would expect a payment and would sink into despair and discouragement if the due date was to be delayed for only one day.

*(From "Rassegna Comunista",
nr.4, May 31, 1921)*

The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only:

1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality.
2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.

The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.

(Max-Engels, The Communist Manifesto, 1848)

Lenin on Internationalism

■ If a German under Wilhelm or a Frenchman under Clemenceau says, “It is my right and duty as a socialist to defend my country if it is invaded by an enemy”, he argues not like a socialist, not like an internationalist, not like a revolutionary proletarian, but like a petty-bourgeois nationalist. Because this argument ignores the revolutionary class struggle of the workers against capital, it ignores the appraisal of the war as a whole from the point of view of the world bourgeoisie and the world proletariat, that is, it ignores internationalism, and all that remains is miserable and narrow-minded nationalism. My country is being wronged, that is all I care about—that is what this argument amounts to, and that is where its petty-bourgeois, nationalist narrow-mindedness lies. [...] The Frenchman, German or Italian who says: “Socialism is opposed to violence against nations, therefore I defend myself when my country is invaded”, betrays socialism and internationalism, because such a man sees only his own “country”, he puts “his own” ... bourgeoisie above everything else and does not give a thought to the international connections which make the war an imperialist war and his bourgeoisie a link in the chain of imperialist plunder. [...] The socialist, the revolutionary proletarian, the internationalist, argues differently. He says: “The character of the war (whether it is reactionary or revolutionary) does not

depend on who the attacker was, or in whose country the ‘enemy’ is stationed; it depends on what class is waging the war, and on what politics this war is a continuation of. If the war is a reactionary, imperialist war, that is, if it is being waged by two world groups of the imperialist, rapacious, predatory, reactionary bourgeoisie, then every bourgeoisie (even of the smallest country) becomes a participant in the plunder, and my duty as a representative of the revolutionary proletariat is to prepare for the world proletarian revolution as the only escape from the horrors of a world slaughter. I must argue, not from the point of view of ‘my’ country (for that is the argument of a wretched, stupid, petty-bourgeois nationalist who does not realise that he is only a plaything in the hands of the imperialist bourgeoisie), but from the point of view of my share in the preparation, in the propaganda, and in the acceleration of the world proletarian revolution.”

That is what internationalism means, and that is the duty of the internationalist, the revolutionary worker, the genuine socialist.

*Lenin, The Proletarian Revolution
and the Renegade Kautsky (1918)*

Socialists have always condemned wars between nations as barbarous and brutal. Our attitude towards war, however, is fundamentally different from that of the bourgeois pacifists (supporters and advocates of peace) and of the anarchists. We differ from the former in that we understand the inevitable connection between wars and the class struggle within a country; we understand that wars cannot be abolished unless classes are abolished and socialism created; we also differ in that we regard civil wars, i.e. wars waged by an oppressed class against the oppressor class, by slaves against slave-holders, by serfs against landowners, and by wage-workers against the bourgeoisie, as fully legitimate, progressive and necessary. We Marxists differ from both pacifists and anarchists in that we deem it necessary to study each war historically (from the standpoint of Marx’s dialectical materialism) and separately.

(from Lenin, Socialism and War, 1915)

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