

the internationalist n.7

A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTY

Winter 2020/2021

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£.4.50, \$.6.00, Euros 5.00

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.

The Social Use of the Epidemic

In a series of articles in our press during the 1950s, parallel to the long study on the "Course of Capitalism", we demonstrated, with the classical texts of communism to hand, how the "murderous and sinister dramas of modern social decadence" (floods and hydro-geological upheavals, overbuilding, collapsing dams, sinking liners and so on) must all be attributed to the capitalist mode of production. Those were the years of post-war reconstruction and an unbridled economic boom: after the unspeakable destruction of the second inter-imperialist world massacre (and precisely thanks to it!), the capitalist production machinery had started to function again full speed ahead – indeed, at a previously unheard of pace. And we could already see, before our very eyes, just as we see even more clearly today, the results of that unbridled hyper-production that has lasted at least three decades and, from the mid-seventies onwards, has foundered on the systemic crisis we are still immersed in. A few examples? An acceleration in environmental devastation, over-crowding in megalopolises and depopulation in the countryside, food adulteration and air and water pollution, galloping deforestation and desertification, increasingly difficult living and working conditions, an exponential increase in poverty, "professional" illnesses from exposure to asbestos and other toxic substances, factory farming and the threat of its consequences, huge economic and social imbalances between countries (*that unequal development so well known to communists*), as well as dreadful and destructive conflicts in whole areas of the planet... And we can add, because the example is clearly to be seen by one and all (as we write in mid-March 2020), the increasingly evident obsequience of scientific research to the law of profit, the enormous power of pharmaceutical companies, widespread dependence on pharmaceuticals, the progressive dismantling of healthcare structures, etc. etc.

Quite apart from any medical explanation, which is not our field of competence, this is precisely the breeding ground for the umpteenth epidemic now gripping the world (but how many have there been over the past decades? Mad cow, Chicken 'flu, Ebola, Sars, Mers, Zika, Chikungunya, Dengue...). In brief, coronavirus or Covid-19 is a *child of capitalism, the child of a society divided into classes and totally, globally subjected to the law of profit*. The "pure souls" drugged by mainstream ideology, for whom this is despite everything "the best of all possible worlds", should keep their silence. The society of capital is the society of catastrophes, emergencies, fear and, above all, is incapable of dealing with the crises that it itself fuels and spreads – on the plane of economics as on that of health or of daily life.

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We do not want to dwell on this here, however: there are other aspects we should like to examine. We want to insist on the social (*political, ideological, military*) use of the epidemic. Albeit in different ways and with different timing, the ruling class in all countries has grabbed this opportunity to elaborate and put into practice siege measures projected way beyond the current situation of the virus epidemic and contemplating scenarios well known to it, of both class war and the war between imperialisms – i.e. measures of *State terrorism and territorial control*, both at an ideological and at a military level. As well as the distorted use, bordering on manipulation, of data, statistics and judgements – often contradictory ones – on the rate of infection and mortality and the constant arguments between “experts”, politicians, technicians, intellectuals, there comes a non-stop appeal from all the mass media to all citizens, regarding “collective responsibility”, “national unity” and “becoming the State”, the exercise of power over “others”, flinging open the door to grassing on your neighbour, today on those who don’t fully respect the decisions from above, tomorrow on those who do not fully identify with the State and indeed intend fighting it; and this call to arms – helped along by the skilfully induced separation and isolation of individuals – is accompanied by suspicion and mass psychosis. The poor individual, the poor “community”, celebrated as the high point and guarantee of democracy and then invariably trampled on, shaken up and derided! Here, democratic dictatorship assumes increasingly clearer outlines and – with them – evident practical preparation, though as yet in its early stages, for the management of future conflicts requiring the utmost patriotic cohesion. *Proletarians beware!* This is how the preparation

for the future war is effected, when the State exhorts “all its citizens”, “united and embracing the flag” to “close ranks with its own troops”, committed to “defending the Fatherland against the enemy.”

There is more. Firstly, as mentioned above, more or less everywhere (Italy, Germany, Great Britain, the USA), the healthcare system is at tipping point and the measures for “containing the virus” seem to be aiming primarily at avoiding its total collapse: but this is happening precisely because of the continuous *cuts to welfare* (the welfare that was the carnation in the buttonhole of all the countries emerging from the massacres of the Second World War) over at least the past two decades, not because of one evil government or governor or another but out of capital’s need, when faced with a crisis that, with peaks and dips, has been dragging on since the mid-‘seventies, to *eliminate as far as possible any spending on unproductive expenses*. Secondly, it should be remembered that the so-called “recession” was already ongoing, both in Italy and in Germany and other countries, WELL AHEAD of the outbreak of the epidemic, as has been documented over and over again in our press: capital is already taking advantage of this opportunity to make the epidemic shoulder the blame for the *inevitable* present and future measures “to save the national economy”, with all the accompanying unemployment measures, layoffs, step-ups in the pace of work, suspensions and repression of conflicts – thus without having to take the trouble to cast around for excuses to deny that *this is an out-dated and murderous mode of production!* Proletarians will be in the front line once again in this emergency, the first to pay the price of the serious consequences of the epidemic on living and working

conditions (and it will be interesting to observe if and when the statistics on deaths at work and due to work will start circulating again!).

An encouraging and revealing symptom for us, after the rebellions in overcrowded prisons with sanitary conditions that are miserable to say the least of it, is the spontaneous outbreak of labour struggles all around Italy, France and possibly elsewhere, with *improvised strikes (unforeseen by the mastiffs of the State unions)* by workers from factories and warehouses, as well as by delivery staff and riders, protesting against the lack of even minimum safety measures at their places of work. A further demonstration, on the one hand that proletarians do not become visible until they take action and, on the other, that precisely when they take action without the control of the union hierarchy, the State is obliged to make concessions, whatever the entity of them. On these occasions the workers experienced and proved *their potential power* and it will be the task of us communists to ensure that this experience was not in vain or that it might be destroyed or forgotten in the rank and file of the proletariat. As to the real consistency and above all the respect of the measures taken, we reserve our doubts: we shall see, we shall see... In short, from the prison of prisons to the prison of wage earning, there have been some feeble but telling responses, and the “cannon fodder” has made its voice heard.

This epidemic, like those that have preceded it and those that will follow, will pass. But it is important that a few cracks have appeared in the steel wall concealing the real, destructive and murderous nature of this mode of production that has become so out-dated and disastrous for the human species.

16/3/2020

And When the Emergency is Over?

The measures adopted (or not adopted) *by all governments* in the face of the spreading Covid-19 pandemic have unmasked for the umpteenth time the true reality of the capitalist mode of production. This pandemic, just like those that have preceded it over time, has its origins in a *class structure*, with all the imbalances, devastation and tragedies that this involves and continues to produce and reproduce – in the economy, the environment, in relations between individuals and in social and everyday life. Faced with such events, produced by the society of capital and profit itself, this same society then proves incapable of managing them, of guaranteeing health and security to populations who pay the price, first and foremost the proletarian population, already exploited and massacred in so many ways: in all countries, obvious and eloquent is the case of national health services at tipping point because of violent cuts to what are *unproductive expenses* for capital, already in deep trouble. Lastly, it is evident that the way “emergency” measures are, and will continue to be, applied responds to precise class interests: production and profit above all!

We have already written about all this, in the previous article. Here, we are more interested in stressing and attacking the *violent anti-proletarian measures* that are (and above all will be) introduced, under the guise of “emergency measures in the interests of everyone”. But “*the interests of everyone*” in a *society divided into classes, based on the laws of profit and competition, DO NOT EXIST!* Suffice it to think of the miserable resistance and criminal manoeuvres by which bosses and governments have wriggled away and continue to do so when faced by the determined claims of workers who have spontaneously come out on strike *more or less everywhere in the world* demanding that factories and workplaces be closed, in order

to safeguard the health of the people who work in them. *Class interests*, then: the capitalist economy first and foremost, profit first and foremost! This is *the true, repulsive class violence – everyday, hypocritical, pitiless* –, which the struggling proletariat will have to sweep away once and for all, seizing power, wrenching it from a fierce and murderous ruling class, which is by now parasitical and historically superfluous.

This is not all. It must be clear that the “emergency measures” introduced over the past few weeks will leave their mark even *after* the “end of the emergency”. In a class-divided society, the ruling class learns from its experiences and *will never turn back*. Precisely as it shifts from a liberal régime to a fascist one when it becomes necessary to stop the proletarian “assault on heaven” and then again, when convenient, shifts to a *formally* democratic one, which has actually inherited *the substance* of the fascist experience, so will it move from pre-emergency, to post-emergency, bringing with it all the *ideology and practice of emergency*: surveillance, suspicion, the stinking petty patriotism and revolting nationalistic appeal, the appeal to unity and the mobilization of “all good citizens”, military control of the territory and the repression of dissent... And it will do so with the active, propositional and enthusiastic contribution of both the right- and “left-wing” parties, and those anti-proletarian guard dogs that are the régime’s trade unions, scared that “anger may spread”.

The cycle of structural economic crises that began in the mid 1970s, closing the expansive post-war cycle, has continued to affect the international proletariat for all of the subsequent decades, above and beyond the illusory, momentary and laughable little “recoveries”. The “formulae” adopted by capitalism over these past decades

(financialization of the economy to by-pass a production which, from the point of view of the average profit rate, proved to be increasingly feeble; the increasingly bulimic public debt) have merely served to swell speculative bubbles destined to burst in their turn and cause further social slaughter. The most recent economic crisis, which opened in 2008-9, never really ended: well before the pandemic spread, in many countries recession was *not a threat but a reality* and it was not only us communists who were saying so but the bourgeois economists themselves, and they were saying it with open and tell-tale concern¹.

The capitalist mode of production is not holding together. It can only survive by exasperating its own contradictions and preparing a new bloodbath, a new world war: the only *final solution* it knows for exiting (if it exits!) such a crisis and resuming a new, infernal cycle of accumulation at an even higher level and with *an even greater incidence of destruction*. The pandemic has come as the recession was already ongoing in countries like Italy, France and Germany, and dealt a terrible blow to a world economy that was already staggering and fragile and whose extension and interconnections mean that a slowdown, a halt, is reverberating more or less immediately, all over the globe. When the pandemic is over, all that will be left are ruins, as after a war: never has military language become the daily bread of politicians, economists, scientists and journalists to the extent it has on this occasion! And so we must rebuild! And *anti-proletarian politics* will echo (but, of course, with even more ferocious intensity)

follow →

1. See the articles “Note sugli effetti pratici e visibili della crisi economica in atto” and “Il virus della crisi”, on our website www.internationalcommunistparty.org.

that “rebuilding the nation” of the European 1950s and 1960s. With the precise difference that at that time the economy was recovering after the destruction of the war years: here, instead, there is an economy that has been gasping for breath for years now.

Many firms will thus have to close and/or “restructure” drastically: consequently unemployment will soar and with it work will become more and more precarious in all sectors of production – quite far from the *gig economy*, that so much has been embroidered by press and politics in recent times! Everywhere the pace of work will be increased, because “we have to catch up, in everyone’s interests”, and, with this, control too will increase, because “efficiency and productivity must come first” in post-emergency times. The “factory régime” (in a broad sense: i.e. the rate of exploitation) cannot help but grow in what has already been defined as a “war economy”: sacrifices “for everyone”, in the sights of the “forces of law and order” and the unforgiving eye of the drones. Repression, extended control, bans on assemblies, marches, strikes, pickets and dissent will spread and become everyday reality for millions and millions of workers. With them, manipulation and nationalistic rallying will grow: the “We are at war!” that resounds daily now will take on new connotations – ultra-patriotic, ultra-chauvinistic, ultra-populist. Moreover the competition of “all against all” will thus be fuelled, right up to the “war amongst the poor”, for the crust of dry bread capital will be gracious enough to leave the starving masses. And thus, in the daily routine of induced reactions, of individual and social relations, *preparations for the new world conflict* will intensify. The unraveling of “historical alliances”, the inane nonentity of structures like the phantasmic, ectoplasmic Europe, the re-drafting of borders that bourgeois and petit-bourgeois rhetoric has presented as stable or else as now outdated, will merely

accompany this relentless process.

All this will hit anyone who fails to give in to the new emergency of recovery: proletarians increasingly in chains, the avant-garde of struggles, communists. The bulletproofing of democracy (its substantially *dictatorial nature*, beneath the deceptive mask of democracy) will proceed by giant steps after the decisive ones taken in these few days and weeks, these months and years and decades: steps that, according to the logic and practice of capital, cannot acknowledge any slowdowns or turnarounds².

Faced with all this what becomes increasingly urgent is *the real need for the revival of territorial grass-roots organizations of proletarian struggle and defense*, that take responsibility for *all aspects of life and work in the society of capital*: living and working conditions in the broadest sense of the terms, from the pace of work and health hazards in factories and in building yards, on the streets, in the fields, to the burning, and ever-open “housing issue”, from rises in wages to the claim for a full wage paid by the State and/or entrepreneurs for anyone who is already out of work or has lost a job, from opposition to the increase in bills to that to increases in the cost of public transport... These should be organisms that take responsibility for everything, without discriminations or hierarchies based on age, gender, origin, religion, social or political belonging and which, because of their extension and rootedness in the class (not only in one sector or another), are truly able to contrast the work of dividing

the proletariat and sustaining the national economy carried out over all these decades by the régime’s trade unions. And this is to be done by assuming all the practical and organizational responsibilities of *true fighting organisms*, without wasting precious proletarian energy in useless, theoretical-political pseudo-debates or – worse still – in the destructive delusion of a “union-which-is-also-a-political-party” or of a “true class union” drawn up at a desk – umpteenth revival of the foul in-between-groups typical of the ‘70s. The progress of the economic crisis itself, the contradictions it opens up, the consequent social drifts, could inexorably push workers in all imperialist states back onto this battlefield, forcing them to equip themselves once again with stable defense structures, which in turn will constitute one of the grounds on which the battle is fought between communists and the variegated front of the reformist and bourgeois enemy³.

But this is obviously not enough. Over the span of a couple of centuries now, experiences of economic-social struggle have in fact demonstrated the limits of their action where they are managed in the solitude of the workers’ spontaneity: alone, without the intervention of the communist party, not only will proletarians never manage to attain to political action (i.e. acting as a *class for itself*, with their own historical and political objectives), but even remaining in this context (i.e. as a *class in itself*, or as a mere labour force for the capitalist system), they will easily fall prey to reformism, which sacrifices them one after the other on the altar of capital, to the general detriment of their overall condition.

The need for the revival of these grassroots organisms is thus accompanied by the other urgent and dramatic need: the need for the *reinforcement and establishment of international roots for the revolutionary party*. It is in the very facts of capitalism’s development, so

follow →

2. In this regard we refer to just one of our texts, amongst many: “Force, violence, dictatorship in class struggle” (1946), <https://www.internationalcommunistparty.org/index.php/en/>.

3. See our pamphlets *Partito di classe e questione sindacale* e *Per la difesa intransigente delle condizioni di vita e di lavoro dei proletari. Forme di organizzazione, metodi e obiettivi di lotta*, both of which can be consulted on our website.

tragically revealed in these moments of emergency, that this need makes itself felt: the need for a pole, or an organizational point of reference, able to pull it out of the quicksand both of rotten bourgeois “politics” and the social system it represents, as well as petit-bourgeois reformism imbued with utopia, illusion, smokescreens and hypocrisy.

But to “feel” the urgency of this need is not enough. Too many believe that the (relative) absence of a revolutionary party on the present political scene can be obviated by “building it”, as if from a box of Lego: periodically gathering around a table with other groups and formations, elaborating “platforms” and “congress papers” on which to “converge”, coordinating with one mini-party or the other in a new version of the political-unionist “inter-groups” of time ago, creating phantom (popular?) fronts or *bureaux* or liaison offices or “tendencies”, reanimating old names or inventing new ones, believing and having it believed that the party can arise from and within the struggles, directly from grassroots organisms on which a... political-educational function is conferred. Briefly, a do-it-yourself party, to which everyone contributes what they can: all of this, with a complete disdain for homogeneity in theory, principles and program and above all totally indifferent to the merciless balance sheet of the past century’s history of the working-class and communist movement – the one true basis from which to depart for even starting to pose the problem of the party, as our comrades of the Communist Left did in 1926, at the

dawn of the most ferocious wave of counter-revolution, handing down to future generations the balance sheet of past struggles, triumphs and defeats in its “Lyon Theses” – the necessary bridge towards the future⁴. The party is not “built”, just as socialism is not “built”: all that can be done is to enter a tradition that is fully present in the history of the communist movement, and carry on its battle, obstinately and inconveniently against the current – and that tradition is *our* tradition. But, we all know: “These are mere trifles! The crisis is pressing, we must hurry: let’s build the party without bothering about what has already been! ‘*Scurdammoce ‘o passato*’”, “Let’s forget the past”, as the Neapolitan folk song says.

And if the party cannot “be built”, neither can it be improvised, nor can its (dialectic) connection to the class and its struggles be improvised. It cannot be improvised because *party* means first and foremost *the theoretical and practical continuity of an organization*, and if work on this continuity ceases, if it is not defended tooth and claw, if it is not secured for future generations (and not as a “study group”, a “handful of windbag intellectuals”, or of self-styled “free-thinkers”), that continuity is broken, wanes and is no

4. The “Lyon theses” were presented by the Left at the III Congress of the Communist Party of Italy – Section of the Third International, in opposition to the Gramsci-Togliatti ones. They can be read on our website: <https://www.internationalcommunistparty.org/images/pdf/ip/IP-14-2009.pdf>.

longer of any use – there remains just the dictatorship of the ruling ideology and bourgeois state repression. The party cannot be improvised, because the only guarantee of its being able to guide the class towards seizing power and managing the dictatorship of the proletariat as the necessary bridge towards a classless society lies precisely in the *formation of militant cadres*, in its participation in proletarian struggles with a function that aims to be *critical, directive and organizational* and in the constant and profound *analysis* of economic and social factors (not out of an intellectual whim or for personal show or gain). The party cannot be improvised, because the class will be able to recognize it and recognize its guidance (and thus recognize itself as a *historical element* and no longer just as an oppressed class), *only if* the party has been alongside the class in its fights, in its burning defeats or partial victories, *only if* it has been able to draw lessons from those fights, those defeats and those victories – *only if* the class has been able to identify in its militants those best suited to act as guides, in the situation of the moment and in a future perspective. Tomorrow it will be too late: and historical experience, with its tragedies linked to the absence or delayed presence of a revolutionary party has taught us this all too keenly and dramatically. To work, then, faced as we are with a post-emergency that promises to become a constant emergency – right up to its peak: the new world conflict that is being prepared!

6/4/2020

Proletarians of all countries, unite!

USA: Racism, Class Struggle and the Need for the Revolutionary Party

■ We do not know if, when this article appears, the big, U.S. election circus will still be on, and whether the puppet of Capital will still be the same or whether another will be pulled out of the demo-electoral magician's hat. It matters little. The *real questions* remain on the table in a country in deep crisis, like the whole universe of Capital but with an intensity and visibility in proportion to its specific (economic, social, political, military) weight as the strongest imperialism. Once the umpteenth electoral intoxication is over, it is useful to return to some of these *real questions*, since they actually regard the world proletariat and not only that of the USA.

Does a “black issue” really exist?

In the limelight over the past few months, well before, and far more emblematically than the endless squalor of the election campaign, have been the repeated, widespread flare-ups of protest following the series of cold-blooded murders of Afro-Americans (*but not only*) by uniformed cops. Let us just say that this constant, bloody repression of the most exploited sectors of the U.S. proletariat has accompanied the history of the United States throughout the whole of the 19th and 20th centuries and has become even harsher in the first twenty years of the 21st: independently of who is occupying the White House – yet another demonstration that it is not a matter of “goodies” and “baddies” alternating at the Presidency or in the Government, but of dynamics within the management of bourgeois power and, in particular, of the developments of the structural economic crisis in which we have been immersed since the mid-1970s. The really significant aspect has been the entity of the, at least initially, spontaneous response: not local, not pacific, not obsequious to suffocating and paralyzing democratic rituals and not limited to the Afro-American community only.

Demonstrators of all colours have met on the streets and in the squares giving practical proof – above and beyond any socio-statistical evaluation – of the entity of the country's ripening social crisis, which is affecting different elements transversally along lines that, to those who have eyes to see, prove to be *class divides*. The unending economic-social inequality characterizing U.S. society (inequality we have demonstrated more than once over the years) is pursuing a growing sector of the “half classes”, the free-falling petit-bourgeoisie, and in particular young people. The conditions of the so-called “poor whites” – whether they live in the depressed areas of the Appalachian mountains or in the “problem” neighbourhoods of what were once the pillars of industry (automobile, steel, etc.), in other, equally “difficult” suburban areas or adrift on the road with the

hoboes or the transients with no end in sight, or with the seasonal workers or the homeless – are approaching the conditions in which the Afro-American, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican and Asian proletarians have been living and (not) working for some time; and ethnic background (which all too often has played a central role in the *divide et impera* practised by bourgeois power) is *tending* to disappear under the blows of daily oppression and of a crisis that the politicians may, as everywhere, deny in words (or attribute to the enemy-candidate of the moment) but which savages and corrodes, tears apart and disorients day after day.

It is undeniable that the Afro-American proletariat suffers the worst living and (non) working conditions: statistics once again prove this¹. But it is sufficient to re-read the history of the class conflict on American soil to realize that these conditions have gradually come to characterize all the immigrant proletarian communities (and what can the American proletariat be if not, largely, immigrant or forcefully “imported” from outside?!), something that has been going on since the beginnings of the rapid and tumultuous development of the capitalist mode of production in the country. Over the span of two centuries now, economic, political, social, ideological and military oppression has affected German, Irish, Scottish, East-European, Asian, Italian, Spanish, Puerto Rican, Latin-American and Afro-American proletarians... all of them flung into the hell cauldron of ruthless exploitation that allowed the United States to emerge at the dawn of the 1900s as the strongest and most powerful imperialism and to maintain this position for the whole of the century and beyond. In these widespread anti-proletarian politics, racism, as the crassest expression of the mainstream ideology, certainly did play a central role, fuelled also by the century-long history of slavery and post-slavery

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1. Let us limit ourselves to a few (official) figures. In the second quarter of 2020, the average weekly wage of a full-time employee was \$805 for blacks and \$786 for Hispanics, as against the \$1,017 for whites (for a black worker, 74.3% of the wage of a white worker; for a Hispanic worker, 75.4%; for a black woman worker, 83.9% of the wage of a white woman worker; for a female Hispanic worker, 77.2%) (figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S.A. Department of Labor, press release of 17 July 2020). As to the unemployment figures, again in the second quarter of 2020, the rate was 17.4% for Afro-American workers, 16.9% for Hispanics, 13.3% for Asians and 10.8% for whites (from: Economic Policy Institute, August 2020, <https://www.epi.org/indicators/state-unemployment-race-ethnicity/>). Added to this, living conditions and health assistance etc. should also be taken into account. But these figures already speak quite clearly.

– just as the same racism that permeated English society did for the whole of the 1800s and beyond, working so effectively to separate the British and Irish proletariat or those immigrating from the colonies.

At the same time, the struggles that emerged from this condition over the same period often reached peaks approaching civil war, with strikes lasting month upon month, clashes, often armed, with uniformed and un-uniformed police, and the direct involvement of very young proletarians, men and women, with episodes of great importance taking place even in the midst of the second world war: such as the 1943 Harlem uprising, in the black ghetto *par excellence* of New York.

Moreover, during the 1960s, the aggravation of social contradictions (which had been growing ever since the end of the second inter-imperialist bloodbath) was more than once at the origin of violent outbreaks – what the media define *ghetto riots*. And they added to the (also social) backlash caused by decades of war in south-east Asia: it should not be forgotten that in order to pursue this war, the U.S. military machine could count on an obligatory military service that mainly affected the weakest and most “disadvantaged” sectors of the population (Afro-American and Puerto Rican *in primis*); neither should we forget the numerous examples of insubordination, resistance and authentic boycotting of the war effort that took place at the time, both in the theatres of war themselves and on U.S. soil. We must not forget that these were the years when so-called *Black Power* emerged and the *Black Panther Party* established itself on the scene in many U.S. cities, a first generous but politically fragile and highly contradictory attempt to give organized form to the discontent in the ghettos. But the ferment went well beyond the black ghettos and this, too, is important to state: the *latino* proletarians – particularly the Mexican-Americans or *chicanos* – were in the front line of the powerful strike action, in which clear class instances mixed with persistent nationalist tendencies².

In an article of ours dating from 1965 (which we reissue below), we applauded one of the most significant rebellions by the black proletarian population of the United States: in mid-August that year, in the ghetto of Watts in Los Angeles, there was an outbreak of riots against police brutality and arrogance and intolerable living conditions, which lasted almost a week with the intervention of the National Guard and a final count of 34 deaths, over a thousand wounded and 3400 arrests. The anger that had accumulated over decades of exploitation

and repression, marginalization and open racism, and the elimination of leaders with big differences but nonetheless emblematic, such as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, as well as disappointment for prospects of peace, reform and democracy, could *materially* not fail to explode and violently shake the pillars of U.S. capitalist society. And so, two years after the Watts riots, in Detroit and Newark (amongst the most important lymph nodes of industry) and elsewhere, more riots broke out, which we greeted with the same enthusiasm, particularly because they were accompanied by repeated episodes of open solidarity (reported with serious concern by the bourgeois press) from non-black proletarians (see the other two articles which we reissue below).

It is quite clear to those who take a revolutionary perspective, that there is no “*black issue*” in the United States (or anywhere else!): instead there is a *social and class issue*. Not an ethnic issue or one of nationality, then, even though it *appears* to take that form, thanks mainly to a fundamental contribution from mainstream ideology in all its forms and manifestations, which acts skilfully by means of politics and the media, as well as the most sophisticated tools of military repression. Like all the “ethnic” or “national” communities that make up bourgeois society in the United States, in old Europe and the rest of the American continent, Asia or Africa, *class fault lines* run through the Afro-American community: within it there exist a high bourgeoisie, a middle- and petite-bourgeoisie, a proletariat and a sub-proletariat; and we have no news of any black person being shot in the back seven times while getting into his/her limousine or entering TV studios or dining out with political buddies...

Since those events and our articles, fifty years have gone by punctuated by constant uprisings during the course of which pacifist, reformist, “progressive” illusions have been wrecked against the *reality of class rule*: yet only to be reborn again, time after time, increasingly empty of content and overflowing, instead, with embarrassing rhetoric, thanks to the work of political opportunism in all its forms, the unfailing slave of a bourgeois power that knows no boundaries, either geographical or of colour, but which acts indifferently against *all the world's proletarians*. It is in this light that the events of these last few months must be evaluated and, above all, the positions that have emerged from them.

In some ways and with due distinctions, the path taken by the spontaneous wave of rebellion set off by the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis on 25 May 2020 by a handful of uniformed cops may recall the one that followed the so-called “Arab springs” in the years after 2010: a powerful movement of rebellion against living and working conditions, stemming from the Tunisian proletariat, rapidly inflamed the southern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, only to be intercepted, channelled and castrated by the more or less organized intervention and

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2. See: “The ‘Black Panther’ Movement”, *The Internationalist*, n.4, Summer 2017 (originally published in *il programma comunista*, n.5/1971); “Il proletariato chicano: Un potenziale rivoluzionario da difendere”, *il programma comunista*, nos.1, 2, 3/1978.

3. See, if nothing else, “Democrazia e Stato borghese sono due nemici perenni del proletariato”, *il programma comunista* n.4/2011, and “A proposito dei recenti avvenimenti nel mondo arabo”, *il programma comunista*, n.6/2012.

blurred objectives of “half classes” that had also been in difficulty for some time and intended to make their voice heard – but still in the safe haven of “society as it is”, i.e. without posing in the least the problem of seizing power and changing to a superior mode of production³. Like the authentic parasites they are, historically and politically, the “half classes” exploited the original drive of a popular uprising to advance their own ultra-democratic and ultra-reformist claims, gradually extinguishing the flame of class struggle: and here the lack, *worldwide*, of organized revolutionary guidance (the class party, the communist party) meant that petit-bourgeois ideology and practice had a free hand, suffocating that movement (momentarily, it is to be hoped!).

In the recent U.S. rebellions, the petit-bourgeois and demo-reformist role of downsizing a *potential* class movement has been played by organizations like the much-applauded Black Lives Matter (BLM). We are well aware that we sail against the current and risk unpopularity in saying this: but things must be clearly stated. When an overall battle is suggested for “Freedom, Liberation, and Justice”, when there is clamour for “defunding the police” or even “abolishing the police” (!), when “our contribution to this society” (!) is acclaimed, all that is being done is to advance the umpteenth, demagogic, reformist programme and avoid tackling the *real issues* full on: where do racism, social inequality, growing poverty and constant oppression originate? what is the capitalist mode of production and how does it work? what is the State, what functions does it perform and how is it organized politically and militarily? and so on...⁴. And so the proletariat (black or any other “colour”) is merely offered a prettily-wrapped packet of illusions from the century-old baggage of petit-bourgeois ideologies: “rights”, “justice”, “freedom”, “happiness”, “well-being”, “independence of your own community” – all, obviously, to be claimed within the limits of this society, this mode of production. Which is a bit like asking a python not to swallow its prey.

The same is true for the Movement for Black Lives (MBL), a coalition of different groups (including BLM itself), whose platform is based on the following “basic” points:

1. End the war on black people.
2. Reparations for past and continuing harms. (Reparations)
3. Divestment from the institutions that criminalize, cage and harm black people; and investment in the education, health and safety of black people. (Invest-Divest)

4. See: www.blacklivesmatter.com.

5. See “A Vision for Black Lives: Policy Demands for Black Power, Freedom and Justice,” (Aug. 2016), in “Movement for Black Lives”, Wikipedia. Really, what else can be expected from organizations well supported by the ... Ford Foundation?!

6. “Not Fucking Around Coalition”, Wikipedia.

4. Economic justice for all and a reconstruction of the economy to ensure our communities have collective ownership, not merely access. (Economic justice)
5. Community control of the laws, institutions and policies that most impact us. (Community control)
6. Independent black political power and black self-determination in all areas of society. (Political power)⁵.

Here again, what clearly strikes the eye is its ultra-reformist nature (a profoundly demagogic reformism: what *power* is supposed to grant all this? what puts an end to the “war against black people”? what brings about “economic justice”, defunds and invests and offers compensation for damage suffered, etc. etc.?!), together with a “separatist” vision (independent black political power and self-determination), in the end creating ghettos. A real dead-end, merely ensuring new massacres for the militant avant-garde that allows itself to be drawn into it.

Of course, BLM and MBL are not the only groups to have emerged on the scene during the marches and demonstrations that have spread and continue to spread through the country, from Minneapolis to Portland, from New York to Lafayette and Louisville, together with dozens and dozens of other cities. But it is not easy to get a sense of orientation in this galaxy, about which we do not always have precise and reliable information. Nonetheless, we do know that, alongside organizations that are blandly reformist and in response to action by armed white supremacist militia, minority groups of black militants have emerged in favour of the open possession of arms, as regulated by the U.S. Constitution (Second Amendment). This is the case of the Not Fucking Around Coalition (NFAC), which *seems* to have links to the New Black Panther Party (that for some time now has been excommunicated by the “old” militants of the original Black Panther Party) and from which both BLM and MBL *seem* to have distanced themselves. At present we do not possess any more reliable information than that available online⁶. But what we are interested in stressing here, as confirmation of the profound contradictions in the variegated movement that has developed since George Floyd’s death, is that in the NFAC’s programme a claim appears that is worth going into briefly, before taking it up again in the future. It is not so much a claim to “return to Africa” (or any other country willing to... concede a piece of territory on which to allow “black exiles” to set up their own nation!), the old fixation of the black nationalist movement created by Marcus Gavey in the early decades of the 1900s, but rather a claim to create a “separate black nation” within the United States, in this case located in Texas!...

Initially this may be disconcerting. The fact remains that this claim has its own, eloquent history. Preceded by several proposals of the same nature between the 1800s and 1900s, it was adopted and advanced, after the VIth Congress (1928) of a Communist International that was

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by then an expression of Stalinist triumph, by the U.S. Communist Party, fully aligned with Moscow: the right to “self determination” was thus applied in an utterly extemporary fashion, typical of Stalinism, by means of a distorted appeal to the classical “Theses on the national and colonial question” of the Communist International’s IInd Congress (1920), identifying in the so-called “Black Belt” of the southern States, the “colony” where a “Separate and Independent Black Nation” was to be created!⁷

It should be added that, whilst the original claim of 1928 was at least made in a militant perspective, however deviant its objectives may have been, in the case of the NFAC it is reduced to a... request. Beyond all the tragically folkloristic aspects of this revived claim, the “national issue” thus continues to exert its negative influence on the struggles of proletarians of all colours and continues to re-emerge even in its most banal and confused forms. It should also be remembered that even militants like Malcolm X (who nonetheless in the last months of his life before his assassination in 1965 was gradually distancing himself from it) fell victim to this nationalist, separatist ideology; and in the late ‘60s important attempts to give voice and bring organization to the avant-garde workers’ movements in the industrial fortresses of the North (Detroit *in primis*) with the constitution of organisms like the League of Revolutionary Black Workers or the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement, suffered from the same attitude: one of separation and opposition, *in the workplace*, between black proletarians and white proletarians. They thus became trapped in a dual mistake, tragic because it constituted a division, by arguing and putting into practice the idea that the union body (which must be open, without discriminants or discrimination), should be composed a) of black-only elements and b) of elements who had already gained a revolutionary political awareness.

Taking as his starting point a correct analysis of the black proletariat as the most exploited and persecuted sector of U.S. proletarians, the militant worker James Boggs

himself, certainly one of the most advanced points of reference for the black movement in the ‘60s and ‘70s, concluded by upholding the need for a “separate” black revolutionary organization to which the direction of a future “black American revolution” would be entrusted, refusing the support of white proletarians, because expecting the “fight for black power” to include white workers, would mean expecting “the revolution to welcome the enemy into its own camp”⁸...

There is no doubt about it. Racist ideology has penetrated into the depths of U.S. society and continues to poison whole strata of the working-class aristocracy and the “poor whites”. It must be fought. But how? It is partly the same, *objective*, dynamics of the class war that offer a suitable terrain for this dismantling work of open criticism. But it is right here, on this terrain, that the active presence of the revolutionary party, the only one able to lead this battle, is needed. We shall return once more to these vital issues, which – we repeat – are not specific to the United States, but regard the proletarian movement in all countries. For the moment, what must be stressed is that our perspective is opposed to any separatist view: on the contrary, we work for the rebirth of grassroots organisms open to all proletarians, *independently of their nationality, language, ethnic background, age, gender or (non) working status*, who take on the fight for the defence of the living and working conditions of proletarians, men and women alike; and the establishment internationally of the revolutionary party, characterized by unity of principles, theory, programme, tactics and organization and composed of militants who have succeeded in “forgetting, disowning, ridding their minds and their hearts of the classification to which the registry office of this decaying society has assigned them”⁹, thus united by joint political work and a common will to fight for communism.

Dealing with the struggles of the Mexican-Americans (chicanos), in 1978 we wrote: “This is why one of the USA’s fundamental tasks today is to tear the workers of the various groups away from the temptations of reciprocal blacklegging, which are favoured by the various ‘nationalistic’ policies. And it is just as essential to fight the latter, saving the workers from a feeble democratic policy disguised as revolution and perhaps socialism; save them from the petit-bourgeois attempt to separate the chicano proletariat (as the black one) from the rest of the working class, with the result of depriving the American working class of contributions by new and vital energies and isolating them from the rest of their class”¹⁰. This, indeed, is the work of the revolutionary party, which is “anti-racist” because it is anti-capitalist.

So is there a “black issue” in the United States? NO. There is a social, class condition, distorted and deviated by widespread racism, institutional and not, but also by democratic-reformist anti-racism, and this is the tragic condition that cries out for revolutionary theory and the establishment of the class party. In the second part

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7. Obligatory reading is the classical text by Theodore Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (Cap. 15: “The Negro Question”), Vintage Books, 1960, 1986, which contains ample references to sources of the U.S. Communist Party and the International.

8. This concept of Boggs’ is expressed in several of his writings. Also see his *Pages from a Black Radical’s Notebook. A James Boggs Reader*, Wayne State University Press 2011.

9. From “Considerazioni sull’organica attività del Partito quando la situazione generale è storicamente sfavorevole”, *il programma comunista*, n.2/1965 (ora in *In difesa della continuità del programma comunista*, Edizioni il programma comunista, Milano 1989, p.167). A recent English translation (not by our Party) of this text can be found in *The Science and Passion of Communism. Selected Writings of Amadeo Bordiga (1912-1965)*, ed. by Pietro Basso, Brill Edition, Leiden-Boston 2020, pp.482-488.

10. “Il proletariato chicano: Un potenziale rivoluzionario da difendere (III)”, *cit.*, n.3/1978.

of the 1967 article, we wrote: “Bitter though it is, this observation must be made: not in practical action but in the political direction and its translation into doctrine and a programme, *not even* at the heart of the heroic black proletariat have we heard – but it is *our* fault, the fault of us militants from the proud countries of advanced capitalism – the only slogan that can fling open the gates of the future: *proletarians of the world, of all ‘races’, of all countries, unite to overthrow the capitalist régime and establish your dictatorship! Not ‘black power’ but ‘proletarian power’!* And so, once again, the need for Marxist revolutionary theory and the class party, its bearer and vehicle of battle, in America – and to say America is to say world – is posed with dramatic urgency

by the great light and terrible shadows of the events in Newark and Detroit”¹¹.

More than a century has gone by since those events and those words of ours. And while the world of capitalist production flails around more and more wildly, caught up in its crisis, slaughtering proletarian men and women, destroying land and water and air and bringing the day of a new world massacre closer, this need is becoming more and more urgent.

October 2020

11. “Necessità della teoria rivoluzionaria e del partito marxista in America”, *il programma comunista*, n.16, settembre-ottobre 1967.

AFTER MINNEAPOLIS.

Let the revolt of the american proletarians be an example to proletarians in all metropolises

The brutality of the Minneapolis cop is not an isolated example of a fanatical, psychopathic *pig* running amok... It is a “spontaneous” expression of the main “institutional” function of the contemporary bourgeois and imperialist State: surveillance, punishment, repression, control of any “suspicious” behavior, at first individual (the violation or even mere intention to violate private property in its mean form of possessing goods to be sold), but potentially and in perspective, *collective and social* (the overthrowing of forms of production that will abolish the private appropriation of wealth produced by the collective work of wage workers all over the world). This is a well-known fact to the workers who struggle every day for their wage, for their living and working conditions, against and outside the rules established by bourgeois “law”, just as it is well-known to the proletarian and proletarianized masses in areas where war breaks out and rages, where imperialist exploitation steals and destroys mercilessly.

We communists fully support the proletarians, sub-proletarians and all those who can no longer stand the violence of the bourgeois State and are now demonstrating their anger and indignation towards the symbols of police oppression in working-class neighbourhoods; and we are certainly not surprised or indignant if, in the general confusion, shops, stores and pawnshops are taken by storm as very material symbols of the dictatorship of money and commodities over human life.

We know quite well that these revolts are only *a symptom of the revolutionary potential of our class* and, at the same time, that, despite their duration and intensity, they are destined to be suffocated and reabsorbed through our blood sacrifices.

But these revolts (which the mass media, the organs and expression of the bourgeoisie, insist on downsizing as “protests against racism and inequality”, thus condemning any form that goes beyond the complaining and whining of

the poor devils) must be a lesson and remind proletarians all over the world that the knot to be untied is that of power: rebelling or burning police stations is not sufficient and it is not enough to seize goods from the stores or money from the banks and the pawnshops.

Today American proletarians are obliged to respond with force to police abuse and do well to retaliate blow by blow to the attacks, just as they do well to respond blow by blow to the “white supremacist” scoundrels, demonstrating by the practice of mutual defence that *the proletariat is a single class: whoever touches one of us touches us all*.

Nevertheless, a further step is needed: it is essential to realize that cops and fascists are merely the tools of the real enemy, the bourgeois and imperialist State – also and in particular the enemy when it sets itself up as a “democratic” mediator, the peaceful and generous supplier of aid.

Rebellion is sacrosanct, self-defence is necessary: *but they are not enough*. From the working-class neighbourhoods there has to be a return of the awareness and certainty that it is necessary not only to fight against power but *to seize power*: to demolish bourgeois power and replace it with the power of wage workers alone. It is not enough to seize by force the commodities produced by the expropriation of our work: we must destroy the system that steals our work and existence and re-organize every aspect of social life by means of the communist revolution. The rebellion is a forced explosion. But the revolution is a *necessity* that requires organization, a programme, clear ideas and the practice of collective work: in simple terms, the revolution needs a party to direct it.

The struggling proletariat, the rebellious proletariat, must organize with and in the communist party.

30/5/2020

(a leaflet distributed on various occasions)

Three Texts from the Sixties

Black anger makes the crumbling pillars of bourgeois and democratic “civilization” tremble (1965)

Before international conformity buried the “regrettable” incident under a thick blanket of silence, once the racket of the “black rebellion” in California was over, when the “enlightened” bourgeoisie was anxiously trying to uncover the “mysterious” causes of the hitch in the “peaceful and regular” operation of the democratic mechanism *down there*, some observers on either side of the Atlantic consoled themselves by recalling that, after all, violent collective outbreaks by “coloureds” are nothing new in America and that, for example, one just as serious – but without consequences – had happened in Detroit in 1943.

But for those who have followed the facts not with cold objectivity but with passion and hope, there has been something profoundly new in this red-hot episode of anger, which comes not only vaguely from the people but from the proletariat. It is something that makes us cry out: *The black rebellion has been suppressed: long live the black rebellion!* The new element – in the history of the fights for emancipation of salaried and underpaid black workers, not of course in the history of the class struggle in general – is the almost inevitable coincidence of the pompous and rhetorical presidential declaration of political and civil rights, and the outbreak of an anonymous, collective, subversive, “uncivil” fury by the beneficiaries of the “magnanimous” gesture; of the umpteenth attempt to win over the martyred slave with a miserable carrot costing nothing, and the instinctive, immediate refusal of the slave to have himself blindfolded and bend his back again.

Rough and uneducated – not by their leaders, the great majority of whom are more Gandhian than Gandhi; not by US-style “communism” which,

as *l’Unità* hastened to point out, refuses and condemns the violence – but informed by the harsh practical lesson of social life, the black people of California, without any theoretical knowledge and without needing to express it at length in language but declaring it with their arms and their action, have shouted the pure and simple truth for the whole world to hear, and that is that civil and political equality is nothing as long as economic inequality rules and that this cannot be escaped through laws, decrees, sermons and preaching, but by using force to overturn the bases of a class society. And this is the brutal rip in the fabric of legal fiction and democratic hypocrisy, which has disconcerted and could not fail to disconcert the bourgeoisie; and this is what has filled us Marxists with enthusiasm and could not fail to do so; this is what must give the weary proletarians food for thought, falsely coddled as they are in the metropolises of a capitalism historically born with a white skin.

When North America, having already set out along the tracks of full capitalism, launched a crusade for the emancipation of the slaves in the South, it did not do so for humanitarian reasons or out of respect for the eternal principles of ’89, but because it was necessary to split up the lineages of a pre-capitalist patriarchal economy and “free” its labour force so that it could offer itself as a huge resource for the greedy monster of Capital. Already before the war of secession, the North was encouraging the escape of slaves from the southern plantations, all too attracted by the dream of a labour force that would place itself on the market at the lowest of prices and which, as well as this direct advantage, would ensure that of containing the already salaried

workforce, or at least keep it from increasing. During and after that war, the process accelerated rapidly and became generalized.

This was a step that was historically necessary to overcome the limits of a highly backward economy; and Marxism acclaimed it, though not because unaware that, when freed from the South, black labour would find a mechanism of exploitation ready and waiting in the North, some aspects of which were even more ferocious. Free the “good nigger” would be, in the words of the *Capital*, to take his hide to market and have it tanned: free from the *chains* of southern slavery but also from the *protective* shield of an economy and a society founded on personal and human relations, rather than impersonal and inhuman ones; free – i.e. alone, i.e. *naked*, i.e. *helpless*.

And in fact, the slave who escaped to the North realized he was no less *inferior* than before; because he was paid less; because he had no professional qualifications; because he was isolated in new ghettos as a soldier in the industrial reserve army and as a potential threat to the connective tissue of the régime of private property and appropriation; because he was segregated and discriminated against as the one who must feel not a person but a beast of labour and as such sell himself to the first offer, asking no more and no better.

Today, a century after this presumed “emancipation”, he finds himself granted “full” civil rights at the same time as his average income proves alarmingly lower than that of his white fellow citizen, his salary is half that of his lighter-skinned brother, his companion’s pay is one third of the salary of a “non-coloured” companion; at the same time as the

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golden business metropolises shut him into ghettos full of horrifying poverty, disease and vice, hiding him there behind invisible walls of prejudice, customs and police regulations; at the same time as the unemployment that bourgeois hypocrisy calls “technology” (meaning this is “inevitable”, the price that must be paid for progress, of which present society is not guilty) culls most of its victims from amongst the ranks of his brothers of the same race, because these are the ranks of the simple labourer and of the sub-proletarians assigned to the foulest and most exhausting jobs; at the same time as, whilst equal to his white fellow soldier in the eyes of death, he is rendered profoundly unequal before the policeman, the judge, the taxman, the factory owner, the Union man and the owner of the hovel he lives in. It is also true – and absurd to the bigots – that the blaze of this rebellion has spread in California where the average black salary is higher than in the East; but it is right there in the territory of the capitalist boom and of false proletarian “well-being”, that the inequality of treatment between people with different-coloured skins is strongest; it is right there that the ghetto, already closed along the Atlantic coast, is hastily being secured before the arrogant ostentation of luxury, lavishness and the *dolce vita* of the ruling class – which is *white*! It is against the hypocrisy of an egalitarianism put down on paper in Jesuit fashion but denied in practice by a society riddled by deep class rifts, that black anger has exploded so potently, not unlike the explosion of anger by the white proletarians attracted to the new industrial centres of advanced capitalism and piled up there, crowded into the slums, confined in the cardboard shacks of this most Christian bourgeois society, and “free” within them to sell its labour, so as...so as not to die of hunger; as the sacred fury of the exploited and – and as though this were not enough, derided - underclasses will always explode!

“Premeditated rebellion and disrespect for the law, the rights of fellow citizens and the maintenance of law and order!” exclaimed the cardinal of Holy Mother Church McIntyre, as though the new slave-without-shackles had any reason to respect a law that keeps his back and his knee bent, or had ever known – himself the “fellow citizen” of the whites – that he possessed any “rights” or had ever been able to see anything but *disorder* elevated to the status of a principle, in this society based on the three-point slogan of freedom, equality and brotherly love.

“Rights are not won by violence,” shouted Johnson. A lie. Black people remember, even if only because they have heard about it, that a long war was the price white people paid for the rights they had been denied by the English metropolis; they know that a longer war brought both white and black people, temporarily united, a flimsy “emancipation” that still today remains inconsistent and remote; they see and hear every day how chauvinist rhetoric celebrates the extermination of the red-skinned people contrasting the march of the founding fathers towards new lands and “rights”, and the crude brutality of the pioneers of the West “redeemed” by the cult of the Bible and Alcohol; what was this, if not *violence*? Obscurely, they have realized that there is no deadlock in American history, as in all countries, that has not been broken by *force*; that there is no *right* that is not the result of a clash, often a bloody one and always violent, between the forces of the past and those of the future. What have a hundred years of waiting for the magnanimous concessions of the white people brought, apart from the little that an occasional outbreak of anger has been able to *wrench*, even using fear alone, from the mean and cowardly hand of the boss? And what was the reply of Governor Brown, defender of the rights the white people felt were threatened by the “revolt”, if not the democratic violence of the

machine guns, truncheons, tanks and siege?

And what is this, if not the experience of the oppressed classes under any sky, whatever the colour of their skin and of whatever “racial” origin? The black rebel, whether pure proletarian or sub-proletarian, who shouted in Los Angeles, “Our war is here, not in Vietnam,” was formulating a concept no different to that of those who “stormed the heavens” in the Paris Commune and Petrograd, the destroyers of the myths of order, the national interest, the wars of civilization and the proclaimers of a civilization that was finally supposed to be human.

The bourgeoisie should not console itself by thinking: “a far-off episode that doesn’t affect us – here the matter of race is not an issue.” The issue of race is a *social* matter, in an increasingly clearer form today. The unemployed or under-employed in our lacerated South should no longer have to resort to the outlet of emigration; they should no longer have to rush to let themselves be flayed alive across the sacred borders (or let themselves be killed in tragedies that are not caused by fatalities, the sudden whims of the atmosphere or perhaps by the evil eye, but by Capital’s thirst for profit and anxiety to save on the cost of materials, accommodation, means of transport, safety equipment, in order to ensure a higher margin of unpaid labour and perhaps profit from the reconstruction that follows the inevitable, anything but unpredictable and always hypocritically lamented disasters); allow the slums of our manufacturing cities and moral capitals (!!) to overflow, more than they already are, with unemployed outcasts without food or reserves, and you will have an “Italic” racism, already visible now in the lamentations of the North over the “barbarians” and “uncivil” southern *terroni* (*mud-eaters*).

It is the social structure in which we are condemned to live today that brings to life these infamies; it

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will disappear under the ruins of it. This is what the forgetful, dozing in the illusory sleep of well-being and drugged by the opium of democracy

and reform, are warned of and reminded of by the “black rebellion” of California – not remote, not exotic, but present amongst us; immature

and defeated but the messenger of victory!

(*il programma comunista*,
n.10, 1965)

Glory to the black proletarian rebellion (1967)

However the heroic rebellion of America’s black proletarians is destined to unfold [...], it marks a watershed in the history of exploited “coloured” people, which, whilst filling revolutionaries with enthusiasm, must act as a vigorous wake-up call, a healthy lash of the whip, to all those slaves of capital, first and foremost white ones, in countries all over the world.

Amidst the cries of indignation from right-thinking people – not least the “progressive” members of the bourgeoisie, who were happy to applaud the innocuous and pacific “marches” for peace or for “civil rights” and who are now screaming about the “unlawfulness” and “horrors” of an open rebellion that tends to overstep every boundary – , it speaks a language that, despite themselves, the same dismayed organs of the exploited class are obliged to take note of and pass on,

This is no longer the silent and more or less imploring request for *formal* “rights”, for *juridic* “equality”: this is an explosion of anger from those who have learned from long experience, that laws and rights are the *tools of the class that rules and exploits*, not the weapons of the exploited class; that “equality” is a mockery faced with the *reality* of economic and social inequality, unemployment, starvation wages, the frantic pace of work that all workers are subject to but *first and foremost* black workers; that faced with all this, prayers and petitions count for nothing, just as they failed to count when faced with the whips of the slave-drivers in the times when people with dark skins were not “free” to sell their labour to *any* boss.

This is no longer the occasional student outburst in a “patriarchal” and “backward” university town in

the American south: it is a blaze of anger from *proletarians* crowded into the biggest, modern *industrial* city in the north (Detroit in fact – *ed.*), the pride of the American automobile industry.

It is no longer an isolated episode: this is a wildfire spreading not only from one city to another but, far more importantly, *from black proletarians to white proletarians who stand alongside them*. It is a page in the class war, proud as it is violent, bold as it is implacable. It is the warning sign of what is to come on the day when proletarians, independently of the colour of their skin, rise up not with prayer but with force, to break their chains in the golden citadels of “capitalist progress”.

The bourgeoisie immediately cried scandal, against the horror of the looting, the fires, the shooting. But is *this* the scandal or is it not, instead, the martyrdom to which black wage earners taking refuge in the civilized north have been subjected for a century now, condemning them to wages that are lower by half than those of white workers and leaving them to the mercy of recurrent unemployment? Is *this* the horror, or is it the ghetto in which holy, white, Christian society imprisons its “freed” slaves in the great industrial metropolises? And is the rebellion of the black proletarians “irresponsible” violence, whilst the violence of the white bosses who have them in a stranglehold is supposed to be “legitimate”? For us, this anonymous violence is as sacred as that of the Roman slaves, the French Sansculottes, or the Russian workers and mugiks.

Let the Luther-King- or Bob-Kennedy-style “progressive” thinkers cry that this is how the fruits of the patient work of reform are destroyed.

The black proletarians CAN NO LONGER *have patience*, even if they wanted to: a hundred years of reform have failed to give them an iota of what – and it was already very little – a real war, the civil war between North and South managed to secure precisely one century previously, not by means of speeches or petitions but by speaking the language of weapons. Those victories, so important at the time, have demonstrated over a long period of suffering how inadequate they were, at the same time proving that democracy is a mere chimera for the exploited: they cannot be carried any further – cancelled out by greater victories – unless a new and different turn is taken, of *class (and the proletarian class’s)*, civil war.

This is the language the black proletarians are speaking to their rulers. But they are also speaking it to their proletarian “non-coloured” brothers, so that they remember there is only *one* enemy and that freedom from it can only come by breaking the yoke that weighs on the shoulders of *all* the exploited; so that they recover the awareness that black proletarians will not be truly free until, joining with them, the proletarians of every other race gain their freedom, too, tearing the tools of his dictatorial power from the greedy hands of a boss who is the same for them all and is protected today by the paratroopers unleashed to arrest, wound and kill, in the name of *property* and *Capital*, those who bear the terrible guilt of not wanting to die of hunger!

Today all the lay and ecclesiastical defenders of law and order are ranked against the rebellious black proletarians. It’s only natural: the former have something – a lot – to lose; the latter have only their chains

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to lose. It is therefore to them that the support of revolutionary communists in all countries goes, proud to fight

against the mutual enemy of all the exploited, to the undying battle cry of: “Proletarians of the world (from

every country and every race), unite!”
(il programma comunista,
n.14, 1967)

The need for revolutionary theory and the class party in America (1967) (excerpt)

[...]

The social character of the “black revolt”

The great theoretical significance of the glorious days of Newark and Detroit consists first and foremost in the fact that they are a splendid confirmation of Marxist forecasts regarding the inevitability of the catastrophe against which bourgeois ideologists and a whole range of opportunists claim that capitalism can protect itself, thanks to “special” resources. At one fell swoop, the “black rebellion” (let us use this term for the moment) swept away – in a blaze of fire and steel – the fables endorsed by petit-bourgeois intellectuals, as to the invincible march towards well-being and the peaceful elimination of political and social contrasts. Instead, it brought back into the limelight the Marxist argument, that the loudly acclaimed capitalist prosperity has feet of clay, and – far more importantly – giving further confirmation to the old Marxist axiom just right there where the suggestions of reformist and pacific propaganda are most widespread, and the possibility of material and moral corruption greater; right there where there is most “prosperity”. Right there, proletarians have reminded their brothers throughout the world that “they have nothing to lose but their chains”.

Because this is the other important aspect of the “events” of Newark and Detroit (not the only ones, as could, and can still, be seen, but for now the most striking), it is a question of *proletarians*, wage-earners rebelling on the scene of one of the biggest industrial hubs,

not only in the United States but in the world, and both the drive and direction of their uprising are the same as the blaze of rage from the Mexican or *chicano* daily-workers in the fertile valleys of California in recent years (and periodically every year) or the manual workers from a variety of backgrounds – white ones, too – in the corporative prisons of the east, by which the bloody history of American capitalism has been punctuated both in far-off and recent times. In other articles we speak of the scarce but undeniable messages of solidarity from the white workers to their black-skinned brothers: these alone demonstrate the *class* roots (and only for the label, race roots) of the great earthquake that has struck the golden citadels of His Majesty the Yankee Capital. Black labour is certainly the worst paid but this is true to a similar degree for the Puerto Rican labourers absorbed by industries in the East, the wage-earning Mexican or *chicano* farmworkers hired on a seasonal basis in the agricultural industries of the West or for the old-time Americans who struggle to get by, for example in the depressed areas of the Appalachian mountains. Black proletarians, mostly with no qualifications, are most exposed to unemployment (in Harlem 9% of black people are unemployed as against the 4% of the national average; amongst young people under the age of twenty the percentage rises to around 25% - [1967 data – ed.]. But so are the Puerto Ricans and, to a certain extent all the young “whites” excluded by mechanization from the many chances of employment in industry. The blacks certainly live in dreadful

neighbourhoods but in these same areas immigrants of diverse origins and very different races crowd together, obliged to sell their labour to the insatiable capitalist monster. Capitalism originates from a territorial base that is more or less homogeneous in terms of language and customs – the “national” labour market – but in its overriding expansion, it cannot do without a source of low-cost labour and if the “pockets” of *internal* depression are insufficient, *outsidenational borders*: anywhere in the international reserve army desperately offering it (the world power) its labour. Here they are, the super-exploited, who suffer, *as such*, independently of their “nationality” or their skin (even though their collocation as “foreigners” or “coloureds” acts as a convenient excuse for sacrificing them or exploiting them even more) and who, for this very reason, are destined by reason of an apparent paradox, to become the avant-garde in the class struggles of their adopted country. Engels saw in the Irish – crowded into what today’s hypocrisy would call “racial ghettos” and were instead simply monstrous working class neighbourhoods – the spearhead, the element of greatest unrest in the instinctive movement of proletarian rebellion in England: the most resplendent episodes of violent uprising in the United States have foreign names and surnames; in both cases the actors in the social drama embodied the pure proletariat, those without reserves who in fact “have nothing to lose except their chains”, the authentic wage-earner who feels on his skin the lies of the

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“new frontiers”, the frontiers that capitalism crosses to source labour where it costs the least. It would be the same to talk of “racial conflict” with respect to... the martyrs of Chicago in the far-off, yet so nearby 1886, or the formidable wobblies (I.W.W.) of more recent years, mostly German, Irish, Italian and Spanish immigrants!

Lastly, even wishing to consider only black people – as “citizens” and not as “proletarians” – and shut their wave of rebellion up in a bottle, with a cork bearing the words “racial issue”, what would that wave of rebellion demonstrate (third point), if not that *even* on the general terrain of the famous “rights” and famous “integration”, the dynamics of social forces have physically placed the victims of the worst “injustices” up against problems that invest general relations, neither local nor particular, between society – the *whole* of society – and the state – the *entire* edifice of oppression and defence of the ruling class – showing them that the issue is *political* and to do with *brute force*, admitting nothing but the alternative between violence suffered and violence exercised? Does this mean that the Detroit “negroes” were explicitly aware of it? No. And so? Conscience follows and does not precede action and this is the *real and material* effect of forces, of a rip going on in the apparently strong material of an intrinsically precarious society. The government can appoint all the “commissions of enquiry” that it likes): history has placed the issue on a quite different terrain.

The historical limits of the uprising

Our enthusiasm on the one side, our solidarity on the other, would nonetheless remain inferior to our task as a party, if we closed our eyes to the historical limits – as well as to the deficiencies, errors and risks of involution occurring under the dual attack of bourgeois state repression and opportunist poison – of an uprising emerging powerfully from the bowels of the bourgeois

production mechanism.

This is no “academic” problem, but one of those real needs for *battle* that drove our great Masters to draw lessons from the most shining examples of proletarian struggle – lessons that they passed on to successive generations, not only in terms of their light but also and foremost of their shadows. Shortcomings and mistakes are inevitable in a battle in which one of the basic ingredients is its spontaneous nature; and the spontaneous nature of the American uprising can only be mistaken by those who give credit to the lies of the Central Intelligence Agency about the decisive part played in it by the usual “agitators” or, worse, by common criminals, pillagers and... pyromaniacs; thus only by those who have chosen to play the part of lackeys to the establishment. As to the historical limits, in order to understand them, they must be seen against the background of the whole of the workers’ movement, American and worldwide.

The light and shadow of events in Newark and Detroit cannot be judged by considering them as random episodes in any country at random. On the contrary, they must be seen in the global significance they have, occurring at the very heart of the world’s pillar of imperialism, the USA, at the centre of its bloodthirsty system, the automobile industry, and in the immense value they could assume, indeed may already have assumed, for this very reason, for the *worldwide* revival of the proletariat. This is where their *present* limits come into the limelight.

We have already mentioned the declarations of solidarity – not merely formal – for the “coloured” proletarians from the “non-coloured” ones. They are undeniable, all the more so since they come from bourgeois quarters. There is no news, however, as to *how*, *where*, *when* this solidarity was expressed: we do not know, for instance, if it was only manifest in the gesture of the “snipers” taking up rifles and shooting from the rooftops, or

in other, wider-ranging forms of support, especially when the local armed forces received massive reinforcements from the paratroopers urgently called into action by the White House or when lines of tanks machine-gunned the streets; whether the “partial” paralysis of General Motors, Ford and Chrysler was due to “forced” absences or to the *voluntary* absence of the whole of the labour force; whether unified strike action and unified action committees arose and, in this case, how long they survived and what their slogans were. This silence (since it really is silence and not due to our own lack of information) is no accident: all opportunism in every country took care to relegate the American rebellion to the category of “particular” problems and situations and shut it into a political ghetto of isolation from the outside world, first and foremost the “outside” world of other countries and the different ‘coloured’ proletariat. This silence (all the more significant since the same bourgeois sources blame the halt in production for three quarters of the monetary damage caused by the struggle and speak of one billion dollars going up in smoke in just a few days, the same sum the Italian government was loaned by the USA for “national reconstruction”) is the other face of what we might call “active” silence by the United States’ white “workers” associations and those outside the States: the silence of an organized *political* force that should pose the matter, on a general scale and as a principled cornerstone, as a *unique* battle, not divided by lines of colour, and, on a higher plane, recognizing the value of the instinctive solidarity of ordinary proletarians. Not one voice was raised in the camp of the ‘non coloureds’ (and it could only have been the voice of a class party) to cry: This battle belongs to *all of us*, our enemy is *the same*, there is a *single* will to attack it with the same violence that you, our black-skinned brothers, have exercised with bared faces, just as our fathers did so many

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times over a century of history! If, then, there has been instinctive solidarity from the white proletariat, whatever form it assumed, what has been lacking is a corresponding political force. But such a political force could not be there, where –

not from today – the class party, the Marxist doctrine and program are missing: their active vehicle at the heart of world imperialism, where they are destined to act as the hinge in *world communist strategy*. This is the tragic dilemma. This is why we

have entitled our article: “The need for revolutionary theory and the class party in America”. Which is the same as saying throughout the world. [...]

(*il programma comunista*,
nn.15 e 16, 1967)

He/she is a comrade, communist and revolutionary militant, who has been able to forget, to renegade, to tear away from mind and heart the classification in which he/she was enrolled by the Register of this putrescent society; who sees and mingles himself/herself in the whole of the millenary space that binds the ancestral, tribal man, fighter against wild beasts, to the member of the future community, fraternal in the joyous harmony of social mankind.



Virus and class struggle

As we have emphasized more than once, the virus spread through an organism already sick and in serious trouble. There were many warning signs of the production and financial system collapsing and it was just a matter of time before the dramatic social consequences of the latest global crack made themselves felt. If the big 2008/09 crisis was stemmed with difficulty without re-launching the mechanism of accumulation, the latest one on the horizon could have been lethal. Debts too high, average profit rate too low, underlying social inequalities too great to imagine much leeway for any pacific management of the new scenario within the limits of the system's more or less democratic order.

It would be interesting to have access to the answers *big data* provided to the questions posed by study centres serving big capital in order to discover the system's chances of survival. Given the preconditions, we imagine they have caused a slight tremor at the very least. The system needs to act in advance. Whether what came afterwards was pure chance or somehow provoked is of little importance. By embracing the latter theory there is the risk of over-estimating capital's ability to manage and control its own contradictions, though it is true that today the Moloch has acquired such concentrated power and such technological tools and scientific and military apparatus, that reality may extend well beyond our imagination. Not knowing, we can say nothing but neither shall we fall into the trap of excluding "science fiction" hypotheses *a priori* simply for fear of being labelled... conspiracy theorists. Today anything that deviates from the voice of the mainstream is attacked, isolated, discredited and counted as fake news or censored, yet by browsing the web interesting things can also be spotted¹.

Without confirming any of the many ideas (some weird, others far less so) circulating about this virus, we shall assume, simply as a hypothesis, the reading given by the Nobel Prize-winner Luc Montagnier, which earned him a deluge of attacks in the media, demoting him from luminary to a bumbling old idiot². Not even Nobels are accorded respect when the sensitive nerves of capital are touched! Be that as it may, the great virologist maintained he had proof that the virus had escaped – he says by chance, others see the hand of America behind it – from a secret laboratory in Wuhan, not far from the famous wet market of infectious bats. But what is even

more interesting, continues the Nobel Prize-winner, is that the virus was apparently produced in the laboratory as an HIV *vaccine*... Thus the vaccine invoked by the mainstream as the only final solution to the epidemic was supposed to act against a virus/vaccine. This is pure science fiction and we have no elements of support for this thesis, authoritative though it is, nor for refusing it, either. Nonetheless we can take it as a *metaphor* to try and make sense of what happened afterwards and is still going on.

As far as we know, the function of a vaccine is to activate an organism's immune system and encourage the production of specific antibodies against a determined disease. This, it appears, is the principle. Well, if we consider the effects of the coronavirus on capital's social and production organism, on the *capital-organism*, we can see its effectiveness in artificially sparking off a series of antibodies at the political, social and economic level. Capital's immune system incorporated certain potential resources that needed to be activated to contrast the effects of the serious pathogens that were circulating. If the predicted disease had come about spontaneously, this potential would perhaps have been activated too late to effectively contrast the pathogenic factors in the system and thus save it.

Now unprepared to face up to the chronic diseases and more and more frequent emergencies by means of democratic rituals, politics has for some time been developing authoritarian deviations, lying in wait everywhere and already manifest in some Eastern European régimes. The coronavirus goes beyond this: without overthrowing the democratic institutional balance, it puts it in a position to act according to an emergency régime, suspending "sacred bourgeois freedoms" from one day to the next, by a series of decrees. The effect is paralyzing. Fear pervades the deepest nooks and crannies of society, managing to penetrate into the most intimate dimensions by flaunting the threat of "the triumph of death". The scenario shown daily at all hours confirmed and amplified the sense of tragedy: dying patients, military trucks laden with coffins, mass graves. The screenplay regarded a local situation but presented it as potentially generalized. The message had its effect: "Death will triumph if you, the citizen, do not collaborate by supporting the common cause – to defeat the invisible enemy – by your silence and immobility." In this reading, the responsibility for the possible catastrophe is not to be attributed to an anti-human social system, which places the needs of the species in bottom place and business at the top (and is thus incapable of

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1. Michael Roberts' website dealt with the matter of Covid-19 from April onwards. It offers useful analyses and data (<https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/>).

2. The following is a link to an interview with Montagnier of 20 April 2020 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZPYEBo3_Qk.

responding to the emergency without improvising, but highly successful at exploiting new opportunities for earning money). Oh no, the responsibility is made to fall on the shoulders of the individual, bound to obey, so as not to seem a plague-spreader – antisocial. The mask covering the face symbolically represents the imposition of silence, *the silence of criticism*, when totalitarian communication admits only those who repeat or amplify the message of the mainstream: “Danger threatens. Stay at home!”³ The fate of those who dare to practise critical thinking is an overall media attack filled with indignation and reproof, if not worse⁴. Servility is rife and, what is worse, nurtured by sincere faith in the truth of the mainstream message.

Faced with a common enemy that cancels out any other emergency and monopolizes attention, all differences seem to disappear, above all those of class. Any embryo of antagonism, of organized struggle is annulled, any form of physical closeness is an illegal gathering. Before an audience of silent and isolated individuals it is the State that speaks through its experts/scientists. There is not just the fear of the virus but also that of advancing poverty and the verses of the old Venetian patriots’ ode of 1849 are again topical: “*Il morbo infuria, il pan ci manca, sul ponte sventola bandiera bianca*” (“The disease rages, bread is lacking, on the bridge the white flag flies”). There is the overall surrender of society to the State: but *the State is a class State* and those who bend their heads to its authority in the emergency are the proletarians and the half classes destined to bleed. The others – the few – are busy reaping the benefits of the general impoverishment even before the virus disappears and there is a return to profitable capitalist normality. *Fear of the virus prepares the fear of hunger*. Cultivated within the four walls of home, it becomes an individual feeling that cannot be shared except within the close circle of private relations. Fear weakens, compromises the immune system, exposes us to contagion, demoralizes and creates an environment unsuited to solidarity and battle. The only solidarity allowed is that of the nation’s health. The prime effect of the virus/vaccine is to

produce antibodies to contrast the onset of capital’s main pathology: *class struggle*.

But the virus/vaccine has also been highly effective in activating a crucial shift in the social organization of work. In the long months of the emergency, home-working has become widespread, which, in the softened and optimistic view of capitalist sociologists, becomes *smart working*, quick and intelligent work.

And it is, if considered from the point of view of capital, since – unlike teleworking – it takes place amidst a complete absence of rules⁵. This allows capital to save on production costs, which are transferred to the employee’s home, in terms of both equipment and service costs. And even if these costs were computed in the final pay packet, they would certainly be lower than the costs of managing work on company premises, whilst from the “salary”, the employer can save on meal tickets and the cost of transport to get to work. The reduction of production costs and layout on salaries is not the only advantage for capital. In establishing work tasks, capital has the opportunity to increase the workload, confident of the physical isolation in which the salaried work terminal finds itself. In his/her new condition the proletarian might even consider him/herself to be at an advantage but in reality, anguish accumulates inside him/her: to get to work, there is no need to go outside; work is right there in the four walls of home, amidst family and everyday household objects. Work penetrates deeply into his/her inner life, invading it. The communist objective to combine work and life, making work a free, vital and creative aspect of existence, is obtained by capital by reducing the whole of existence to salaried or pseudo-freelance work, whichever it is. This is how, with the decisive contribution of the virus/vaccine, the shift of office work in its various forms moves to a harsher level of subordination, of dependence on the machine, of control and tracing of the operations delegated to the salaried worker. The shift is analogous to that analysed by Marx with the reduction of the worker to an appendix of the machine which, from the point of view of producing value is equivalent to the move from absolute to relative plusvalue. As in mechanised factories the worker’s labour completely loses its autonomy in the production process, in the same way the *smart* employee is reduced to becoming a mere terminal of the IT machine and the constant updating of software increases individual productivity. To some extent this also takes place on company premises but there the physical presence and relations of the worker with his/her peers guarantees a certain degree of humanity and constitutes an obstacle to the full realization of capitalist dominion, which finds its preferred referent in the individual. Applied to the working condition, solitude and isolation lead to the fragmentation of work, which is the perfect sub-soil for affirming an ideal model of the human being reduced

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3. In the following link there is an example of one of the many interviews by Italian “philosopher” Diego Fusaro, with a conspiracy-theory slant to them – not too much can be expected of a modern National-Bolshevik! – but sometimes successful, as in this case (<https://www.radioradio.it/2020/04/la-dittatura-delle-mascherine-ennesima-prova-diego-fusaro/>).

4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSUOwF8ATSI>. The link is to the video of the last long interview with Italian journalist Giulietto Chiesa, decidedly not a “Marxist” journalist but just as decidedly non-aligned, and on top form. Two days after the interview he died in his sleep, and there are those who have wondered if it was a “natural” death...

5. On the difference between teleworking and smart working, <https://umanitanova.org/?p=12104>. In the following link, the testimony of a *smart* worker at the time of the coronavirus: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0kp_BqlCzrA.

by capital to a producer-consumer. Capital can freely unleash itself against the individual: if in the secret of the polling booth he/she is politically reduced to a dupe, as a consumer the only defence of a limited availability of income can easily be overcome by running up debts. Having exhausted his/her dual function as producer-consumer, the preferred outcome would be for him/her to kick the bucket (indeed, Covid-10 proved particularly aggressive in rest-homes).

The second effect of the virus/vaccine is therefore to push forward subordination at work and confine it to a private space. Having activated the antibody that attacks the possibility of cultivating human relations, the only relation that must survive is that of commerce, whilst all the rest tends to become reduced to mere virtual connection.

There remains the third, and perhaps most powerful, specific antibody that the virus is to activate: control over the biological existence of the human being. Here there is a massive attack underway. During the emergency period, the representatives of health “science” assumed a leading role. They were the ones to dictate the emergency guidelines to governments, to establish what was allowed and what was not. Once again, politics handed the task of government over to the “experts”. We were used to being subjected to the dictates of professors of economy, called upon in the recent past to solve the State’s debt crises with indiscriminate cuts to welfare. A significant percentage of the deaths due – directly or indirectly – to Covid-19 are due to policies proposed by the “technicians” authorized to put into practice what politics did not have the courage to. Just as the economic experts dealt mortal blows to the welfare system, in the new crisis health experts decreed the need to do away with individual (and social) freedom and are dictating the guidelines of future policy, which through health measures is tending to upturn the present relations between the State and the citizen. The facts clearly demonstrate once more the complete subordination of politics to capital. If the economic experts were chosen from the highest *échelons* of international finance, the health experts are mostly projections of the WHO, a bureaucratic set-up in the hands of the big pharmaceutical companies.

In support of this power block, all the servility of the information system entered into action, filling the TV

studios with the obsessively repeated mantra of social distancing as the only way to contain the disease. Apart from this crude imposition, all of this exalted science made a high-powered measure available to the population: wash your hands. Some time later – after profound research and reflection to overcome initial doubts – the obligation to wear masks was added. The people offer thanks and bow down before this great science. Not a word about ways of reinforcing the immune system, which certainly do not include staying at home. So much so that at one point the experts launched an alarm about the spread of the virus... inside the four walls of home! Just as damaging to the immune system is the climate of terror and emergency and the forced immobility. The contradictions and inadequacies of this measly approach became dramatically obvious in the hospitals and rest-homes, where the virus had a feast. We cannot dwell here on these aspects, which we shall be better able to judge if and when the wave of emergency is over. What is of interest is where the whole grotesque show is heading for. Amongst the highest institutional figures, the self-proclaimed “people’s lawyer” (Italian Prime Minister Conte) declared that the health crisis would not be solved until “the vaccine” was present and the President of the Italian region Lazio - who is also secretary of the Democratic Party - echoed him, envisaging an obligatory anti-flu vaccine in the region. These people bowed their heads to the polite request from Big Pharma to entrust the fate of public health to their business vocation and decreed that any solutions (such as the use of immune plasma, successfully experimented with by Dr. De Donno, or introducing ozone into patients’ blood), no matter how very effective they had proved in the field, as well as being far cheaper than experimentation on drugs, should be relegated to old wives’ remedies.

It is not our intention here to dwell on the effectiveness of vaccines and their riskiness, which is also the object of a scientific debate completely obscured by the mass media. Wildly over-generalizing, in the television chat shows scientific theories that put forward any sort of doubt about vaccines are systematically labelled *no-vax* and lumped together with crazy and irresponsible new-age superstitions. On this subject, let us leave the debate to those doctors and researchers who have not yielded to the logic of the health emergency as an occasion to profit from the health of human beings and demote them to the status of prisoners. There are some, and some have the courage to reveal the crimes of the health industry (better call it “the *sickness* industry”), which in this situation have demonstrated what enormous lobbying pressure they exert on politics and institutions worldwide⁶. The fact is that this concentration of economic power with its strong links to the centres of political and institutional power seems to be expressing its own strategies to guarantee itself more generalized and pervasive

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6. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_YgEd-Kq24U is the link to a video defined “conspiracy theory” but rather convincing, by an American scientist, Judy Micovits, who ended up in jail for having revealed the findings of her research in military laboratories. Also worth viewing is the interview with Dr. Shiva on the *deep state* and the role of figures like Fauci, the virologist head of the anti-Covid staff of the Trump administration (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RsoG7pZifTw>).

powers of intervention in society. The intention to make vaccination obligatory and even to guarantee that the individual/patient can be traced, so that complete health control can constantly be maintained over him/her, establishing pharmaceutical needs, monitoring body temperature and, through this monitoring of his/her physical reactions, even his or her emotional state, marks the shift from the *right* to be healthy to the *obligation* to be healthy⁷. Health is transformed into a social duty of the individual and whoever steps out of line is transformed into a public enemy to be isolated and censored. Permanent health assistance and the permanent provision of health commodities is imposed upon everyone by the health police. In this new context the individual must no longer be considered healthy until he/she can give proof of the contrary: he/she must be ill, in need of care in any case.

In the same way we lose the principle upheld in the distant past by the revolutionary bourgeoisie, that the human being is free at birth: today human beings are born caged in a powerful system of conditioning and control that directs their existence in the forms and ways functional to capital. Here, too, we observe the same process of fragmentation seen in the smart organization of production and “remote” interpersonal relations. From being a social issue, to be dealt with in terms of welfare, the management of health policy is becoming a commercial relationship between the producer company and the end consumer, mediated by the overall control system. In this relationship, the company creates the need for health, just as any sort of production tends to create imagined needs that go well beyond those that are necessary and essential for the species. Creating illness is the precondition for perpetuating care. Managing and controlling sick individuals is easier than managing and controlling healthy ones.

Immunization of the species by means of vaccines is the precondition for creating a wide range of illnesses – some terrible, others banal but often chronic – statistically evident in those vaccinated and which are listed in microscopic print in the leaflets of the pharmaceutical companies. Is it a coincidence that the lowest percentage of vaccinations is recorded amongst health carers, who are most exposed to infection and best informed on the components of the vaccines? Is it a coincidence that almost all the members of the WHO in

the highest positions – those who encourage the absolute need to vaccinate – are not themselves vaccinated? Are we certain that the “philanthropist” Bill Gates, champion of vaccines, has himself and his children vaccinated and, like him, all the world’s *supermen*, who claim to control the existence of billions of human beings? Vaccines are not something for their lordships: they are commodities destined for the multitude, for the huge market where the health-commodity is dealt in, stuff for the proletarians.

The third antibody activated by the virus/vaccine is thus to create the dependence of individuals on the system of provision of the health commodity, accompanied by tracing and permanent control. One more step in the direction of strengthening the totalitarian system of managing society.

Lastly, the virus has induced further acceleration in the process of concentrating capital and polarizing society. Large-scale distribution by means of e-commerce has obtained gigantic advantages from the closure of other businesses, many of which are destined for bankruptcy. Great benefits have also been reaped by forms of distribution using sophisticated apps and a highly exploited and under-paid staff of riders. More in general, the shock of the pandemic is destroying small and medium-sized enterprises unable to survive prolonged closure. Those who can save themselves, in all sectors, will be the bigger enterprises with more capital and easier access to credit, which will be able to buy up the market share freed by the destruction of a host of small competitors. The class structure of society will emerge profoundly changed: wide sectors of the middle-class and petty bourgeoisie are destined to plunge into the condition of the proletariat, whilst at the opposite end there will be a further increase in the weight of big companies operating online, e-commerce and the big groups integrated in the financial system.

We come to the conclusion that the virus didn’t bring the disease: it just aggravated it; *and this disease is called capitalism*. On its century-long historical path, the bourgeoisie advanced causes that are progressively turning into their exact opposite: it affirmed the right to private property, and is destroying this by concentration and monopolies; it upheld the freedom to work, and is denying this by imposing conditions that are coming increasingly closer to slavery; it exalted sacred individual freedom, and is denying this by confining freedom of movement to the home; it celebrated the prerogatives of the individual as the driving force of society, and is confining it in a cage of ever-harsher and objective conditioning; it exalted the rights of a free society against the authority of the State, and has built the most powerful, oppressive and all-pervasive State history has ever experienced; it proclaimed itself a factor of historical progress in all fields, and now the world is threatened by an environmental and climate crisis that

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7. On these issues raised by the anti-Covid measures the philosopher Giorgio Agamben has intervened on several occasions. He, too, has not been spared by the conformist uproar. There follow some examples:

<https://www.quodlibet.it/giorgio-agamben-una-domanda> (14 April)

<https://www.quodlibet.it/giorgio-agamben-nuove-riflessioni> (22 April)

<https://www.quodlibet.it/giorgio-agamben-biosicurezza> (15 May)

risks driving humanity back into direct barbarity. All this with the support of a science conforming to the interests of capital, which has given open proof of its servility in this health crisis.

Just to avoid any misunderstanding, we shall certainly not be the ones to set ourselves up as the defenders of individual prerogative, private property and democracy, even less so of the “right to work”, which to us is a synonym for *right to exploitation*. But we do observe that in its historical evolution, whilst it destroys the preconditions for its own existence by reducing the quantity of human labour needed for production to a minimum, capital makes rubbish of the principles it arose out of and which are its very basis. By proceeding in this way it has fully matured the conditions for its own overthrow and has opened the way to a future society that will restore fullness to the human being, returning to it its social dimension and freeing it from the need to possess and the institutions that legitimate this, freeing it from work that is necessity and suffering. But at the same time, whilst the traits of the new society become clearer and clearer inside the decrepit shell of the old one, capital is equipping itself for the extreme effort to survive by activating all the resources and energy it can exert control over. *The potency of counter-revolution indicates the potency of the revolution.*

The metaphor of the virus/vaccine provides us with elements for considering the hypothesis that today capital cannot limit itself to facing emergencies when they crop up, but must force these processes, creating emergencies so as to deal with them under the most favourable conditions and extracting from them opportunities for its survival. Its strength lies not only in the control of financial capital flows, but also in the domination of technology: information technology and data management (also essential in the management of financial flow), able to collect the data, make use of it and distribute it according to its own needs, and biotechnology, which intervenes in

the management of life-essential production (agriculture and livestock) and directly on the biological existence of the human being. The Moloch tends to mold men and women, nurturing them and looking after them in ways that adapt them to its needs.

All this reveals itself as a show of omnipotence: yet these are still only the trials of a sorcerer’s apprentice that expose the system to strong reactions of rejection. This is too complex and inter-connected a society to be manipulated as desired by the will of power groups, however strong, organized and equipped with super-technology. The reality of capital is anything but perfect – it is chaotic: the information network is filled with cracks that cannot always be plastered over with the label of fake news, the social crisis drives people towards mass gatherings and the violation of the security State. Even more than complexity, it is opposed by the very life needs of the human species in its relationship with nature. This coronavirus episode with its accompanying features is certainly revealing one aspect of the evolution of capitalism in its terminal phase. The economic issue is always central but capital has already lost the battle on this terrain. As it is incompatible with human needs, the system tends to adapt human needs to the necessities of the system itself. The task it has set itself now is to manage the permanent crisis by using the formidable tools it has available, with no regard for anything or anyone. But it has a formidable enemy before it – a proletariat emerging from the economic disaster with hugely swollen ranks. The task of proletarians, which presents itself urgently and dramatically, is to get organized in order to defend the minimum conditions for a dignified and non-servile existence. On this battleground they can resume the path, interrupted a century ago, towards the society of the future, a human species society, finally. Perhaps the last stretch of road began at the end of May: in Minneapolis.

15/6/2020

“It is not a question of what this or that proletarian, or even the whole proletariat, at the moment regards as its aim. It is a question of what the proletariat is, and what, in accordance with this being, it will historically be compelled to do.”

(Marx, *The Holy Family*)

The Long, Long Night of the Living Dead

■ Thirty years ago, the fall of the “Berlin Wall” – the symbol for those who have never understood a single thing about capitalism and communism – once again launched, in the crudest and most vulgar of manners, the anti-communist polemics that had never ceased to bray (and we use the verb with the utmost respect for the noble and friendly animal): “This is the practical demonstration of what communism is!” The same polemics re-emerge today with idiotic obstinacy, not so much because of the thirtieth anniversary of that event, but because everything in the world of Capital is desperately screaming the need to put an end to a mode of production that at this stage has become purely destructive. The series of uprisings that marked the last few months of 2019 (Chile, Lebanon, Iraq, Bolivia, etc.), the massacres, persecutions, infinite violence, awful migration and authentic pogroms of entire populations, the exponential rise in the collective and individual pain of living, the crude, cynical arrogance of power in all countries, and again, underneath all this joy, driving it and making it all inevitable, the crisis of Capital, the series of recessions, the reeling national economies openly fighting one another, the impossibility for Capital to resist the trend for the average profit rate to fall (which is in fact, dear, obtuse minstrels of the “best of all possible worlds”, *unavoidable and undeniable in practice*) – all this shows that endless, destructive and pitiless death throes are taking place. The ruling classes can *feel* this in their bones –

bones forged (and made expert) over at least three centuries of dominion. Everywhere, politicians at all levels (and of all donkey dialects) are striving, thrashing around, in search of recipes “for exiting the crisis” and deep, deep down, they can feel that there are none: theirs is a long, long night of the living dead.

The anniversary of the fall of the “Berlin Wall” is a juicy occasion for those politicians and their well-paid hangers-on (philosophers, historians, economists, journalists, *maîtres à penser* of all descriptions and all shades of filth) to show off their total, arrogant ignorance, attributing to communism what has, instead, been a characteristic of capitalism: *not for three decades but for centuries*.

We didn’t have to wait for 1989 to demonstrate, loud and clear, that there, in the so-called “East Block countries” and elsewhere, there was not even a shadow of socialism – let alone communism! We have been doing this ever since that far-off 1926, when we clashed with those who maintained – against all evidence but with weapons to hand – that they wished to “create socialism in a single country” and, with this argument (and using *any means* to silence their opponents), threw out Marx, Engels, Lenin (not to name names): that is, dialectical materialism. We have no skeletons in the cupboard: since then – since that far-off 1926 – we have fought and continue to, using theory and practice, against the obscene mystification (which today everyone places on the bloody altar of capitalism’s human sacrifices)

of “real socialism”, of “soviet communism” (whether it be Russian, Chinese, Albanian, Cuban!). We have demonstrated, by using the *facts of economic reality*, of *economic and social structure*, that capitalism and not socialism was being created there, because where there are money, salaries, goods, *there is capitalism and entrepreneurial organization*; that state management of the means of production (more or less extended, with large and significant imbalances between the various sectors) was no demonstration either of the *dictatorship of the proletariat* (obtuse minstrels! it is something quite different), or – even less so – of the *attainment of socialism* or even *communism* (obtuse minstrels! it isn’t the same thing!); and that *that* collapse, the dissolving of the “East Block régimes” was entirely contained in the structural crisis of world capitalism, which re-opened from the mid 1970s onwards [1]. Go on taking comfort in your ignorance and your arrogance. Screech on from every microphone, every page of every newspaper, every internet site, every parliamentary bench. Display it at every worldly or sporting or social occasion. You are, in any case, condemned to the scrapheap of History!

The living dead stink: and it’s a terrible stench that rises from capitalism’s slaughter. It is up to the world proletariat (which is continuing to grow and suffer increasingly) to launch the attack on this world immersed in mud, blood and the disgusting mess of three centuries of bourgeois dominion. It is up to us communists to organize and direct them in that attack. So that the winter of our discontent may become the glorious summer of our victory!

November 2019

1. Just one reference, amongst the dozens and dozens of analyses we have carried out, data in hand, over the decades: “La Russia s’apre alla crisi mondiale”, *Quaderni del Programma Comunista*, n.2, 1977 (republished today in *Perché la Russia non era socialista*, Edizioni Il programma comunista, 2019). Yes, you hoarse and tuneless minstrels, you are not mistaken: 1977!

The winds of war blowing across the entire middle east proclaim the need to prepare for revolution

From Libya to Iran, through Syria and Iraq, the winds of war are blowing with increasing violence. While the slaughter of civilians continues in Syria and Yemen (though the latter, it appears, is less newsworthy at the moment) and in Libya increasing chaos reigns due to a war at least partly fought by proxy with the military and diplomatic involvement of the main imperialist players, the recent episodes on Iraqi and Iranian soil (the tactical killing of General Soleimani by the USA, the military reaction from Teheran, the “incident” of the Ukrainian aircraft shot down “by mistake”) are all signals of aggravation in the clashes between imperialisms, independently of *foreseeable* future turns of events or those already going on, or of any *temporary* relaxation of tension, or the *constant* work of diplomacy going on behind the scenes.

As is – or should be – well known, Capital does not like the state of war but is *forced* into it, and for the following main reasons: war acts as a *counter trend* to the fall of the average profit rate and is one of the means that national Capital resorts to, in order to stem it or at least slow it down (Marx, *Capital*, Book Three); war can act as a powerful element of *patriotic mobilization*, rallying classes around the “higher interests of the Nation” and, above all, chasing the proletariat into the blind alley of nationalism.

The latter point should be carefully borne in mind. The continuing tendency to turn the war and its effects into a show strongly affected the huge wave of commiseration that followed the killing of the general in Iran: yet few remembered the equally widespread public demonstrations, with their dead and wounded, that had been filling the streets of Iraq and Iran for months and at the heart of which were and continue to be the constant worsening in living and working conditions of vast masses of proletarians, proletarianized half classes and those on the way to proletarianization. We have always welcomed these demonstrations, pointing to them as a further signal of the way that *irreparable contradictions* are maturing in the capitalist mode of production; but at the same time, just as clearly, we have pointed out their limits: the way they are progressively subordinated to democratic and petit-bourgeois objectives, the dramatic dispersion of *potentially* classist energy in the smoke of ideological, reformist and anti-proletarian constructs. We have repeated that, far from aligning with them or seeing in them something that they are not and cannot be (a wholly imaginary revolutionary recovery), the more and more frequent explosions of these contradictions have demonstrated the urgent need for a serious preparation of the proletarian revolution, not to be

left up to the whim of the whisks of one – however generous – “intifada” or the other.

Faced with these episodes and the certainty that they will multiply over time to come, at the centre of this preparation for revolution must stand the only position that allows the international proletariat to avoid being dragged once again into an imperialist war, as unfortunately happened in the past, with the tremendous slaughter of the Second World War and the bloody post-war period, in which we are still immersed today. This position can ONLY be the following:

- The world proletariat HAS NO friends amongst the imperialist brigands and HAS NO national or patriotic duties to perform
- Its objective is to take sides NOT on one side rather than the other, in a conflict between imperialisms, but AGAINST its own bourgeoisie and ALONGSIDE the proletariat of other countries
- This implies resuming with determination the path of struggle and class organization, responding blow for blow to any aggression, and subjecting bourgeois militarism and petit-bourgeois pacifism to firm criticism, as an essential precondition for activating determined revolutionary defeatism, sabotaging all war efforts by the ruling class in question.

All this will only be possible on one condition (we repeat this firmly, aware of the dramatic consequences of a historical delay which occurs for many reasons and which we have returned to on several occasions)¹ and that is, that its OWN party, the international communist party, strengthen and put down strong roots worldwide, as the only NECESSARY point of reference for the militant avant-gardes that the crimes and disasters of capitalism cannot help producing, driving them onto the battlefield of open class warfare. Only in this way will it be possible, in a necessarily violent clash with the old and rotten world of capitalist production, represented and defended by the State with the parties and movements that embody and support it, to set out towards the necessary SEIZING OF POWER and the establishment of the DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT directed by its party, as a bridge towards a classless society, COMMUNISM. If we fail to acknowledge this condition and do not work towards it, continuing instead to believe in the “movement” as an end in itself, in the automaticity of economic crisis-social crisis-revolutionary crisis, in the mechanical and metaphysical appearance of a revolutionary party emerging from union battles, in the expectations for a Messiah-like party which, like a *deus-ex-macchina*, appears out of nothing “when time is ripe for the revolution”, then the umpteenth, bloody disaster will strike the whole world. And it will be the HUMAN SPECIES that will once again pay the price.

January 2020

1. For example, “Profondità della crisi generale e ritardo storico della rivoluzione proletaria”, *Il programma comunista*, n.3/2019. The article will be soon translated into English as well.

The Bourgeois State is a Tool of Oppression and Repression

■ The operation of falsifying and dismantling communist theory, an operation that is part and parcel of the bourgeois counter-revolution in all its guises (democratic, Nazi-fascist, Stalinist) and with all its means (ideological, political, military), over the span of almost a century has resulted in the very sense of the *foundations of Marxism* being lost, especially amongst the younger generations. The same concept of *class*, for instance, has suffered, being in turn denied or replaced with squalid inventions such as – the latest but certainly not the last – “multitudes”; or the concept of *party*, which particularly in the last few decades, has been watered down into vague fantasies, such as “movement”, “platform”, “fluid organism”, “tendency”, “pact” and so on, with increasing triviality; or even the very concept of communism which, apart from the ignorant and ridiculous delirium about its “end”, has in turn become, in mainstream jargon, a bloodless “redistribution of wealth”, a mystique of “social justice”, vain “degrowth”... and so on.

But the greatest of these falsifications and dismantlings certainly regards the concept of *State*, from which any historical cognition has been erased: i.e. of an organism born out of development itself, both economic and social, from human groups succeeding one another over time and closely correlated with the appearance of a *society divided into classes*. Thus an organism to which, at some point in historical and social

development, is allocated the task of controlling and containing the antagonisms that *inevitably* issue from this same division, in favour of the class in power and against the classes subjugated to that power.

In what is one of our key texts, Friedrich Engels writes:

“The state is therefore by no means a power imposed on society from without; just as little is it ‘the reality of the moral idea’, ‘the image and the reality of reason’, as Hegel maintains. Rather, it is a product of society at a particular stage of development; it is the admission that this society has involved itself in insoluble self-contradiction and is cleft into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to exorcise. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, shall not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, a power, *apparently* standing above society, has become necessary to moderate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of “order”; and this power, arisen out of society, but placing itself above it and increasingly alienating itself from it, is the state” (italics ours)¹.

In the other key text on the subject, Lenin, also following Engels and Marx, confirms:

“This expresses with perfect clarity the basic idea of Marxism with regard to the historical role and the meaning of the State. The State is a product and a manifestation of the *irreconcilability* of class antagonisms. The State arises where, when and insofar as class antagonism objectively *cannot*

be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the State proves that the class antagonisms are irreconcilable. [...] On the one hand, the bourgeois, and particularly the petty-bourgeois, ideologists, compelled under the weight of indisputable historical facts to admit that the State only exists where there are class antagonisms and a class struggle, ‘correct’ Marx in such a way as to make it appear that the State is an organ for the *reconciliation* of classes. According to Marx, the State could neither have arisen nor maintained itself had it been possible to reconcile classes. From what the petty-bourgeois and philistine professors and publicists say - with quite frequent and benevolent references to Marx - it appears that the State does reconcile classes. According to Marx, the State is an organ of class *dominion*, an organ for the *oppression* of one class by another; it is the creation of ‘order’, which legalizes and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between classes. In the opinion of the petty-bourgeois politicians, however, order means the reconciliation of classes, and not the oppression of one class by another; to alleviate the conflict means reconciling classes and not depriving the oppressed classes of definite means and methods of struggle to overthrow the oppressors” (in italics in the text)².

And for the moment, let us stop here. The two passages are sufficient to *humiliate* all the petit-bourgeois and philistine “professors and publicists” of today and yesterday (a today that is even more crowded with them than yesterday was!).

And so, *the organ of oppression of one class by the other*. This is what the State is, independently of the *form* this domination, this oppression, may gradually assume over time in history³. Not by chance,

follow →

1. F. Engels, *Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, Chapter IX. Barbarism and Civilization.

2. V. Lenin, *The State and Revolution* - Chapter 1. Class Society and the State.

3. Independently of the *form*: the most evident and tragic example comes from the Italian Republic, with the mystification of “The finest Constitution in the world”, which, claiming to have outdone both the Statuto Albertino and the fascist régime (and being on the contrary, the perfect continuity of the bourgeois order), proclaims it wishes to ensure a sort of ... “earthly paradise”.

in re-establishing, against *all deformation*, the Marxist concept of State, Lenin would further explain that: "Imperialism - the era of bank capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, of the development of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism - has clearly shown an unprecedented growth in its bureaucratic and military apparatus in connection with the intensification of repressive measures against the proletariat both in the monarchical and in the freest, republican countries."⁴ Not only. He would also emphasize that: "Another reason why the omnipotence of 'wealth' is more *certain* in a democratic republic is that it does not depend on defects in the political machinery or on the faulty political shell of capitalism. A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and, therefore, once capital has gained possession of this very best shell [...] it establishes its power so securely, so firmly, that *no* change of persons, institutions or parties in the bourgeois democratic republic can shake it"⁵ (Lenin's italics).

Once again, as quoted by Lenin, Engels then went on to recall: "The institution of a public power" and showing that: "This public force exists in every State and does not consist simply in armed men [for the sake of clarity, the army, the 'forces of law and order' - ed.], but also real appendices, prisons and penal institutions of all kinds"⁶. This, to sum up, is the function of the State-policeman, which joins that of the State-entrepreneur, the capitalist State collective – the two faces of the *class State*.

Instead, the overriding vision – perception – today is that of a "State-arbiter", of a State that is "*super*

partes", that administers collective justice honestly and to which every "citizen" knows s/he can turn with the certainty of being listened to and helped: a "kind-father State", strict but fair (or, according to the scenario, a "kind-mother State" that dispenses warm nourishment!). Briefly, an enormous Moral Body. Thus the State really has become, in the blurred vision of the philistines, "the reality of the moral idea", "the image and the reality of reason", just as Hegel depicted it!

But there is more to be said. Precisely as a consequence of bourgeois society's evolution in an imperialist direction – an evolution that has been established for over a century now and gradually "perfected" with all its implications and economic, political and social consequences – and of the progressive decay at all levels of that bourgeois society whose policeman and official it is, the State has thrown off many of its masks, basically maintaining and reinforcing its role as economic-financial entrepreneur (the collective capitalist that defends the national interests of national capitals) and its role as a tool of class oppression (the super-cop who deals with the proletariat).

It has discarded useless and cumbersome drapes: just to give two examples, it has abandoned education (the much celebrated "transmission of knowledge"!) and health ("care of the citizen", from the child to the senior citizen, from the cradle to the tomb) to their own devices – sectors that are *highly unproductive*. This has become as clear as daylight over the past few months dominated by the pandemic: everywhere in the world the State has delegated to "technicians" (who in turn have done no more than express the impotence, the arrogance

and the quarrelsome mystifications of bourgeois science at all levels, contributing to create a widespread feeling of uncertainty and fear) the ideological-practical management of "scientific information" and health measures, reserving for itself solely those aspects regarding control, the defence of "law and order", open or latent repression: the best example is the infamous Decree on Security (or "Decreto Salvini", issued by Italian government), which has been modified – *but only slightly* – precisely in the last few weeks in the part dealing with immigration, so as to offer a little sweetener to the dreamers, whilst leaving intact and subject to further restrictions the parts half-hidden by demagogic rhetoric, which regard the crimes of blocking roads, occupying houses, pickets, etc. and which, for the more militant foreign workers, mean loss of their residency permits and thus forced repatriation – i.e. the most directly anti-proletarian measures for the *explicit defence of private property*.

Before proletarians can shake off these mystifications, carried forward moreover by those false pseudo-revolutionary friends who launch demagogic slogans such as, "make the bosses pay for the crisis by establishing capital tax on the wealthy" (and so with a State that turns from being the enemy into being a "defender of the oppressed"!), they will have to walk a difficult and rocky path, consisting of advances and retreats, clashes and revolts, blood and repression. But the objective remains the one pointed out by Lenin, who takes up the clear words spoken from Marx and Engels: "This course of events compels the revolution 'to concentrate all its forces of destruction' against the state power, and to set itself the aim, not of improving the state machine, but of *smashing and destroying it*"⁷.

They will be able to do so on condition they have the communist party at their head.

4. Lenin, *The State and Revolution* - Chapter 2. The Experience of 1848-51.

5. Idem. Again Lenin comments: "A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power. But how can it be otherwise?" *The State and Revolution* - Chapter 1. Class Society and the State. This "can it be otherwise?" should be firmly engraved in our minds, now that mainstream Philistinism goes so far as to demand, as in the United States, the... "abolition of the police"!

6. Lenin, *The State and Revolution* - Chapter 1. Class Society and the State.

7. Lenin, *The State and Revolution* - Chapter 2. The Experience of 1848-51

November 2020

Don't let us forget what May Day is!

■ For us May Day has never been a mere memory, a yearly ritual or a “holiday”. On the contrary, it has always been a *battle call* that sums up the history and experience of the world proletariat, projecting it towards the future: a future that has to be won by fighting tooth and nail, because it is not going to fall into our hands like a ripe pear.

Today, 2020, May Day is even less of a “holiday”. Events connected to the Covid-10 pandemic have revealed yet again *the savagery of a class society, the society of Capital*. In hundreds and hundreds of thousands of workplaces all over the world, which have remained open despite lacking even the most elementary means of protection, whilst all the rest closed down “in everyone’s interests”, workers have been treated like butcher’s meat. The facts show that this mode of production, upheld by the laws of profit, competition and exploitation, is not merely incapable of solving the contradictions that it, itself, produces: the use that has been made everywhere of the pandemic and the emergency, of illness and medicine, over the past few weeks clearly proclaims it isn’t true that “we are all in the same boat”.

Let’s repeat it once again: the virus isn’t the cause of the crisis. The executives of Capital are using the virus to accelerate the introduction of anti-proletarian measures that the economic crisis, already widespread well before the outbreak of the pandemic, makes necessary *in order to defend clear capitalist interests*. Let us take advantage, then, of this umpteenth *proletarian mourning* (because this is what is involved: *widespread class murder*) to try and open up “a year” of battle not *only over wages*. Let us prepare to boycott all measures for “social” and national solidarity that are being and will be introduced: precisely because we are in an “emergency situation”, wherever possible let us respond to the re-opening of workplaces with complete disregard for the health of proletarians, by “staying at home”, taking sick leave, staying away from work using the tactic of absenteeism, going on strike in order to *force* closure. *Not in the form of individual or sectorial choices and initiatives but as an organized response to the blackmail by entrepreneurs and the state!* They will want to force us back to work to “rebuild the

national economy”. They will stop us holding gatherings, meetings, marches, demos, accusing us if we do so of “spreading disease”, if not of “seditious assembly” or “rioting”. They will accuse us of boycotting the “national effort” and they will set police in riot gear on us, with tanks, helicopters and drones, magistrates and judges, all the legal and illegal power of the State. We reply that the “national economy”, the “economy of Capital” is *not our business* – in fact we fight against it because it is at the root of all the tragedies that are killing us, from the present pandemic to the continuous devastation of the environment, from the unceasing slaughter of migrants to the periodical, huge destruction of precious human collective energy and to the bloody conflicts that prelude a new, monstrous world war... This is their dictatorial democracy or democratic dictatorship, inherited directly from previous anti-proletarian régimes!

And so we shall have to organize ourselves better and better to face all this. *Grass-roots territorial organizations for struggle and defence of the proletariat* must reappear, taking responsibility for *all* aspects of the proletariat’s life and work (or lack of work), without distinction of age, gender, origins, socio-economic status, not getting lost in devastating corporative jealousy or harmful ideological bickering: their widespread and active presence, their ability to respond to the attacks of Capital from outside and against the dispersive action of the mainstream trade unions will provide necessary and useful training for the shift from defence to attack. But in order to do this, and to avoid this shift becoming a new and painful defeat, it will be necessary to strengthen and put down worldwide roots for the revolutionary party – the necessary organ of the proletarian class to put an end to this infamous mode of production, now merely destructive and murderous, and take the path of revolution, the seizing of power, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat – towards a society that is finally classless, towards communism.

This is what May Day is.

(a leaflet distributed in various languages)

Either the proletariat is revolutionary or it is nothing!

(K. Marx)

What distinguishes our Party

Each issue of our periodicals carries the following words on the cover:

«What distinguishes our Party is the political continuity which goes from Marx to Lenin, to the foundation of the Communist International and the Communist Party of Italy (Livorno, 1921); the struggle of the Communist Left against the degeneration of the International, the struggle against the theora of «socialism in one country» and the Stalinist counter-revolution; the rejection of the Popular Fronts and the Resistance blocs; the difficult task of restoring the revolutionary doctrine and organisation in close interrelationship with the working class, against personal and electoral politics.»

The purpose of these few words is to give a brief and general indication of what characterises our Party. Although it was not intended to be a detailed explanation, a distinctive feature of our movement is immediately made clear to the reader: for us, contrary to the whole myriad of «modernisers» of Marxism, there exists a continuous, unchanged, unalterable line which defines the Communist Party. This is so precisely because the line of the Communist Party rises above the ups and downs, the setbacks and advances, the rare but glorious victories and the numerous and catastrophic defeats of the working class on the difficult path of its struggle for emancipation. It is in fact only thanks to the uninterrupted permanence of this line that the proletariat exists as a class; indeed this line does not reflect the temporary and often contradictory position of the proletariat at this or that stage of its path, in space and time, but the direction that it must necessarily take, starting from its situation of exploited class, to become the ruling class and then achieve, throughout the world, the abolition of all classes and communism. While the material

conditions for this path were created by the capitalist mode of production itself, this path does not fall from the sky and it can be travelled to the end only by struggling. It is only the Marxist doctrine which knows its necessary phases, its indispensable means, as well as its ultimate aims. This is why Lenin, paraphrasing a famous text of Marx, said that he is not a Marxist who does not extend the recognition of the class struggle up to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a necessary product of that struggle and as an obligatory stage on the path «towards the abolition of all classes and a classless society».

To recognise the class struggle and the conflict of interests between capital and labour is merely to acknowledge a bare fact - the situation of the proletariat in bourgeois society. To limit oneself to this however is to exclude what historical determinism itself compels the proletariat to become in order to free itself from capitalist exploitation: the weapon for violently destroying the bourgeois state power which protects and defends the capitalist relations of production, and the weapon for establishing its own dictatorship, the «political phase of transition» (according to Marx) in the process of the «revolutionary transformation of capitalist society into communist society». It would mean to accept the state of subjection which is the condition of the proletariat in bourgeois society even when it struggles for the defence of its immediate interests against the yoke of capital. And in so doing, it would mean denying the proletariat the historical task of emancipating humanity while emancipating itself - which only indeed makes it *into a class*, the class which will «give birth to a new society».

This line which unites the past and the present of the working class with its future is nothing other than the theory, the program, and the princi-

ples of revolutionary communism and it is kept unchanged above the vicissitudes of the class struggle in as much as it is embodied in a party which unreservedly makes it its own, in an organisation which defends it, fights for it, and translates it into action. This is why Marx wrote in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* that «Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement».

Since the proletariat «has no country» and as a class pursues aims which go beyond all the limitations of trade, locality, factory, shop, etc., that which distinguishes Communists, Marx adds, is:

«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.»

These are the fundamental characteristics which distinguish Communists. These prohibit the name Communist from being applied to those who deny the *international* character of the aim towards which the proletarian movement is directed and the international character of the struggle for attaining this aim; who deny that this aim and this struggle coincide with the interests of the movement in its totality and of its future; who deny the necessity of the violent revolution and of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the obligatory path towards socialism; and who deny that the party, armed with the science of Marxism, is indispensable as an organ of this gigantic struggle. No

follow →

link in this chain can be broken without the whole chain breaking and without the proletariat falling into a resigned acceptance of its position as an exploited class for eternity.

This is the doctrine which was born as one whole more than a century and a half ago and which was codified by Marx and Engels in writings to which there is nothing to add or to «update». This is the doctrine which was restored in its entirety by Lenin against social-democratic treason, against all capitulation before the present of the proletarian movement and all renunciation of its future, against all subordination of its aims and the totality of its interests to allegedly immediate and national aims and interests, and finally against all abandonment of the principles of the revolutionary conquest of power and its exercise by means of dictatorship in favour of allegedly surer and less difficult ways of legalist, democratic, and parliamentary gradualism.

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Communists struggled not only to keep this line intact against all the material, political, and ideological pressures of bourgeois society, but also to carve always more clearly its essential features through the terrible but nevertheless instructive confirmations of history, with the aim of organising the combative vanguard of the working-class around this red line, retying it where it had broken, and marching against the fortresses of the capitalist states. This battle was led simultaneously on the level of doctrine, program, politics, tactics, and organisation: Communists are not the apostles of a new “Credo” or ascetics awaiting a Messiah but the militants of a gigantic social war.

This was the battle waged by Marx and Engels in the First International to destroy Proudhonism, which refused the immediate struggle, strikes, and the economic organisation of the proletariat; to destroy Bakuninism, which refused the party and the dictatorship that the party centrally exercises in the name of

the working class and in its interests; and to destroy «parliamentary cretinism» which had infiltrated into the ranks of the proletariat from the surrounding social strata. This was Lenin’s battle within Russia against populism, economism, legalism and Menshevism. On the international level this was his battle first against Bernstein’s social-democratic revisionism and later against the capitulation before the imperialist war, a struggle not only for the refusal of war credits, and for the refusal of the social truce during the war, but also for revolutionary defeatism and the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war. This was the battle that was waged to destroy all hesitations, all the «wait and see» and legalist inertia’s, and all procrastination caused by the respect of the rules of democratic play; it was the battle that was waged to conquer power in a dictatorial way in the brilliant blaze of October 1917, thus laying at the same time the foundations of the finally reconstructed Communist International.

«It is the aim of the Communist International to fight by all available means, including armed struggle, for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie and for the creation of an international Soviet Republic as a transitional stage to the complete abolition of the state».

This was solemnly proclaimed by the Communists of all countries who had assembled in Moscow in July 1920, thus taking up again and reasserting the line of «political continuity which goes from Marx to Lenin».

«The Communist International considers the dictatorship of the proletariat as the only means for the liberation of humanity from the horrors of capitalism. [...] The imperialist war linked the fate of the workers of each country with the fate of the workers of every other country. The imperialist war emphasises once more what is pointed out in the statute of the First International: that the emancipation of labour is neither a local, nor a national task, but one of an international character. [...] The

Communist International is aware that for the purpose of the speedy achievement of victory, the international association of the workers which is struggling for the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of Communism must possess a firm and centralised organization. The Communist International must, in fact and in deed, be a single communist party of the entire world. The parties working in the various countries are but its separate sections. The organisational machinery of the Communist International must guarantee the workers of each country the opportunity of getting the utmost help from the organised proletariat of other countries at any given moment».

This is the line of political continuity which goes from Marx to Lenin and the foundation of the Communist International. There can be no place in its ranks for those who reject the dictatorship of the proletariat as the only path to socialism, and for those who advocate national ways for the emancipation of the working class.

It is on this line that the Communist Party of Italy was founded in January 1921, with the following program embodying the theoretical, programmatic, and tactical heritage of communism:

1. An ever growing contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production is developing in present capitalist society, bringing along with it the conflict of interests and class struggle between the proletariat and the ruling bourgeoisie.
2. The present relations of production are protected and defended by the bourgeois state power founded on the representative system of democracy, which constitutes the organ for the defence of the interests of the capitalist class.
3. The proletariat can neither break nor change the system of capitalist production relations from which its exploitation stems without overthrowing bourgeois power by violence.

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4. The indispensable organ of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat is the political class party.
5. The Communist Party, by uniting in its ranks the most advanced and the most conscious part of the proletariat, unites the efforts of the labouring masses, leading them from the struggle for group interests and temporary results to the struggle for the revolutionary emancipation of the proletariat.
6. The party has the task of propagating the revolutionary theory among the masses, of organising the material means of action, and of leading the proletariat through the development of the struggle.
7. The World War was caused by the incurable internal contradictions in the capitalist regime which gave birth to modern imperialism. It opened a crisis in the throes of which capitalist society is falling to pieces, and where the class struggle can only lead to an armed conflict between the labouring masses and the power of the various bourgeois states.
8. After the overthrow of bourgeois power, the proletariat can organise itself as a ruling class only by destroying the old bourgeois state apparatus and instituting its own dictatorship, that is to say by basing the representative state organs only on the class of producers and depriving the bourgeoisie of all political rights.
9. The form of political representation in the proletarian state is the system of councils of labourers (workers and peasants) already prevailing in the Russian revolution, which marks the beginning of the world revolution and the first stable realisation of the dictatorship of the proletariat.
10. The necessary defence of the proletarian State against all counter-revolutionary attempts can only be ensured by depriving the bourgeoisie and the parties which are enemies of the proletarian dictatorship of all means of agitation and political propaganda, and by

equipping the proletariat with an armed organisation for repelling all internal or external attacks.

11. It is only the proletarian State which will be able to systematically intervene in the relations of the social economy, carrying out the whole series of measures which will assure the replacement of the capitalist system by the collective management of production and distribution.
12. This transformation of the economy and consequently of all the activities of social life will have the effect, once the division of society into classes is eliminated, of also eliminating little by little the necessity for the political State, whose apparatus will progressively be reduced to that of a rational administration of human activities.

...

Bolshevik power in Russia was the bulwark and advanced detachment of the world proletarian revolution. It rested however on a terribly backward and in an overwhelming proportion, pre-capitalist economic base. Communist strategy consisted therefore in working to forge in the different countries the indispensable instrument of the proletarian revolution, the class party, and to gather around it the crucial vanguard of a proletariat which, in the entire world but especially in Western Europe and the advanced capitalist areas in general, came out of the war carnage and post-war chaos driven by a magnificent will to struggle and an indomitable spirit of self-sacrifice. Communists knew that only the victory of the revolution in the developed countries, and in the first place in Germany, would allow Bolshevik Russia to economically advance towards socialism, keeping political power firmly in its hands, without sharing it, and progressing rapidly in the arduous passage from a pre-bourgeois economy, especially in the countryside, up to the extreme limit of state capitalism.

These parties had to be armed with

the Marxist doctrine, re-established on its foundations by the party of Lenin, and firmly rooted in international discipline and in its rigorous centralisation. Their strategy just as the very reason for their existence was drawn from the recognition of the fact that the reformist parties (those which Lenin called the «bourgeois worker's parties») and social democracy in all its varieties were from now on bound to play an *irreversibly counterrevolutionary role* in the social dynamic – as was shown by the aims they had set for themselves in breaking with the basic principles of Marxism, and by their more or less direct integration in the bourgeois state.

The tragedy of the world proletariat in the first post-war period was that the gigantic effort of the Bolsheviks to control and dominate the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces springing from the Russian economic and social substratum and to extend the revolutionary flame to the whole world, was not met in the crucial areas of fully capitalist Europe by the process of an organic and rigorous formation of Communist parties. The democratic, parliamentary and legalist traditions had been weighing too heavily on the Western workers' movements, and the leadership of the Communist International (whom our current, however, would have been the last to hold responsible for a historical course which had its origin in the rotten bourgeois world of the West) did not always clearly understand that the harshness with which Lenin and his party had struggled against opportunism for twenty years and the determination with which they had conquered power (excluding from it not only the openly bourgeois parties but also the workers' parties of a conciliatory type) must become even more strict and unrelenting in the West where the bourgeois revolution had already been an accomplished fact for hail a century and more. Whereas the situation was such that it was urgent to proceed with a rigorous selection of membership from the old socialist parties, the prevailing attitude in-

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stead was by far too lax: it was considered - a generous idea, but one which proved to be mistaken - that the debris from the past would be burned up in the blaze ignited in St. Petersburg and Moscow. In order for the working class to defend itself efficiently against bourgeois counterrevolution, which now appeared also under the fascist banner, and if possible to pass on to the counterattack, it would have been an urgent necessity to develop a well defined tactic, uniting the proletarians around the revolutionary Marxist party in the defence of their conditions of life and work within bourgeois society, which would have been able to tear them away not only from the influence of reformism, but also from the illusion that those who had abandoned the line «which goes from Marx to Lenin and to the Communist International» could be won back to the cause of the proletarian revolution. On the contrary, poorly defined slogans were launched which, *against the intentions of the Bolsheviks and in spite of them*, left the door open to this illusion, and so much the more so when these slogans were adopted by the old repeated offenders of reformism or even of social-chauvinism who were flocking around the flag of the International. Such was the case with the slogan of the «united front» which, because it was insufficiently defined, left the door open for varying and even contradictory interpretations. It was the same with the «workers' government», which was sometimes presented as a «synonym of the dictatorship of the proletariat» and sometimes as a different way, indeed as a parliamentary way, to power. And thus it went up to the «Bolshevization» which adulterated the nature of the Communist parties and ran the risk of turning them into some kind of Labour Parties, erasing little by little the boundary line - so clear in the beginning - between the Communist parties on the one hand and on the other the peasant parties and movements in the capitalist countries and the national

revolutionary parties and movements in the colonies, a phenomenon which paved the way for the catastrophic re-edition in China of the Menshevik story of the «revolution by stages».

It was also because of this gradual slackening of the fabric of organisation and tactics that the International, instead of controlling and directing the process of purifying the Communist parties born of traditional socialism, was in the end *conditioned* by the Western parties which were Communist in name only. The results were disastrous from two points of view: the world revolution, which had been expected shortly, was delayed, and at the same time the bourgeois social forces which were putting pressure on the Bolshevik dictatorship both from within Russia and above all from without, strengthened themselves to the point of sweeping away the party which had been the magnificent instrument of the leadership of the October Revolution and of the Civil War. Stalinism was the expression of this reversal of the relations of forces between the classes on a world scale. It **had to** massacre the Old Guard in order to advance without hindrance on the path of capitalist accumulation. Even before that, it *had to* camouflage its counter-revolutionary role behind the flag of «socialism in one country», that theory which is the origin of the «national, peaceful and democratic» ways to socialism. A candidate to succeed social democracy in its task, Stalinism eventually called on the proletarians of all countries to massacre each other on the fronts of the second imperialist war.

This is why for us the line that goes from Marx to Lenin, to the foundation of the Third International and its first brilliant years, finds its continuation in the struggle of the Italian Left against the first manifestations of an opportunist danger within the Comintern (only a danger at first, later a cruel reality determined by objective factors) and in the struggle, led in 1926 parallel with that of the Russian Opposition, against Sta-

linism which was on its way to make itself master of the Soviet state and Lenin's International.

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Brazenly camouflaged between 1928 and 1932 under a veneer of «leftism», Stalinism meant the political and organisational disarmament of the proletariat faced with the Nazi and fascist offensive. It meant the disarmament of proletariat - faced with democracy and under the pretext of the struggle against fascism - at the time of the Popular Fronts in France and especially in Spain, where Stalinism extinguished the rekindled flames of the class struggle in the name of the defence of the Republican regime and by means of a governmental coalition with the bourgeois and opportunist parties. It meant the proletariat's support of the second world massacre under the flag of liberty and country, and for the entry of the «communist» parties into fronts which were no longer «popular fronts» but national unity fronts of the Resistance. It meant the participation of these parties in the governments of reconstruction after the war, and eventually for their quite logical renunciation - even formally - of the dictatorship of the proletariat and internationalism, and for their open candidacy as saviours of the crisis-ridden national economy and of the dying democratic institutions.

This is why the line which links Marx and Engels to Lenin, to the foundation of the Communist International, and to the struggle of the Left against the degeneration of the International and then against Stalinist counter-revolution, is inseparable for us from the historical struggle against the popular fronts, war fronts, national fronts, and all their offshoots up to and including the most recent manifestations of an opportunism whose virulence has no equal, not even in the bloody days of the old German social democracy. It is inseparable from the denunciation of the essentially fascist course, be it under the cloak of democracy, of capitalist imperialism with Wash-

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ington as its centre, as well as of the false socialism reigning in Moscow or Peking, a socialism based on commodity production, wage labour, and all the other bourgeois economic characteristics.

...

To take up again the red line of the doctrine, the program, the principles, the tactics, and the methods of organisation of revolutionary communism requires that we return to the world outlook of the Communist International in its founding years, completed on the level of organisation and tactics by the balance sheet which the history of the last century has given us and which confirms the obstinate struggle of the Left. This balance sheet has been drawn by our Party, especially after 1952, in a series of theses included in our text *Defence of the Continuity of the Communist Program*.

There is no possible meeting-point between democracy and communism. There is no way for the emancipation of the proletariat other than that which, outside the official democratic or fascist bourgeois institutions and against them, already prepares in the present for the proletarian revolution. This preparation excludes, even as a means of agitation, resorting to elections and, worse yet, parliamentary politics. It is accomplished on the one hand by constantly taking part in the immediate struggles of the working class to defend its conditions of life and work; and by enlarging, reinforcing, and developing these struggles on class bases and through class

means. It is accomplished on the other hand through the incessant propaganda of the final aim of the proletarian movement, in relation to which the struggle for immediate demands is a *school of war* – but only a school – provided this struggle is led in a consistent way, never forgetting or hiding its limitations; through organising around the party strata of proletarians who instinctively commit themselves to the open class struggle, and organising into the party the proletarian minority which has become aware of the indispensable ways and means of final victory; through the strengthening of the immediate organisations born of economic and union struggles which react against the betrayal of the union leadership and which are potentially capable of developing in a political direction; and finally through the struggle in the heart of the existing unions with the perspective (which can neither be excluded nor be held for certain) of winning them back not only to a class tradition, but also to a Communist orientation, in situations – which are today far away – of intense social tension.

There is no place on this path for the spontaneist illusion, always unfortunately reappearing, of a revolution and of a dictatorship of the proletariat not prepared for and led by the Party. Neither is there a place for the Trotskyist illusion of a fatal crisis of capitalism which would only need the clash provoked by an organised vanguard to be brought down, after having passed through the intermediary stage of «workers'

governments» composed of parties which supposedly, even if they have passed lock, stock and barrel to the counter-revolution, could be regenerated thanks to the push of the ebullient masses and to the skilfulness of communist manoeuvring, just as the «degenerated workers' states» like the USSR, China, Cuba and others could be won back to the cause of revolutionary proletariat. If, in workerist spontaneism, one sees an age-old adversary of marxism, in the Trotskyist illusion (an adjective which Trotsky, in spite of his errors, would today be the first to be ashamed of) the tactical errors of the decadent International reappear, terribly exaggerated and, on such bases, those deviations of *principle* in regard to the sound doctrine which alone can explain why some people take nationalisation's in industry and economic planning *in themselves* for socialism.

The proletariat today more than ever needs clarity on the aims, the path, and the means of its emancipation. It is to this work of clarification that we dedicate ourselves, without arrogance but without hesitation, conscious that we are marching «in a compact group along a precipitous and difficult path» but faithful to the lesson of Lenin and determined to fight «not only against the marsh, but also against those who are turning towards the marsh».

This is the difficult task of «restoring the revolutionary doctrine and organisation in close interrelationship with the working class, against personal and electoral politics».

READ OUR INTERNATIONAL PRESS:

il programma comunista
kommunistisches programm
cahiers internationalistes

What Is Communism?

“Certainly after the experience of the countries in the East, today it’s difficult to talk about communism,” notes our somewhat disconsolate skeptic.

We understand that. To speak of “communism” today is like turning inside out something that had been the object of intense Stalinist propaganda, of abuse by opportunistic social-democratic misrepresentation and bourgeois misconception, all three the work of decades. It means lifting the mask off “socialism in one country,” the total lie of “really existing socialism.” We must restate basic concepts.

Communism did not die with the USSR or elsewhere, if only for the simple reason that economically it was never born. Communism stands for the abolition of wage labor, commodities, money, profit, economic competition, social classes, and finally of the state itself. In the USSR and its derivatives, there existed: wage labor-workers received wages; money-as a means of exchange; profit-industries and cooperatives tried to close with a positive balance sheet; economic competition-there was an internal market and a gradual opening to the world market; distinct social classes; and a well-established state.

If before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the ensuing dramatic consequences our skeptic had looked with Marxist eyes at the two “opposite worlds” of capitalism and non-capitalism, she/he would have noted a fundamental similarity between the workings and outcomes of two systems depicted in propaganda as opposites. In both, the urban concentration continued unabated (there comes to mind in particular the megalopolis of the so-called “Third World,” economically and politically connected to the advanced capitalist West) and the misuse of the surrounding countryside, the wasteful overproduction of missiles and armaments at the expense of the social needs of the majority, the competition for work amongst workers and the alienation and despotism of the factory regime, the periodic domestic crises, the gargantuan needs of the state and the wars of plunder and imperialist control abroad, the galloping trend to the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few as opposed to the misery of the majority, the immeasurable growth of the power of the state and the concentration of decision making in the hands of a political, corporate, and military elite exclusively responsive to the needs and voices of the ruling class. Any communism there? Let us not be fools! What was then the USSR? For us Internationalist Communists, the answer was always very clear. Under Stalin and his successors what passed for communism was in large measure a centrally controlled state capitalism, although in some sectors, largely agricultural, there remained forms of small production, even of a pre-capitalist kind. Thus in the USSR there occurred what happens in every budding bourgeois regime: under

state aegis, a state-coerced primitive accumulation lay the basis for the subsequent formation of a large-scale capitalist development. To Lenin and us communists, all this was very clear: after the revolution of 1917, the politically victorious proletariat had to undertake the gigantic historical task of raising the country out of economic backwardness to set the basis for communism. This necessarily entailed a fully developed capitalist economy: growth of large industry, a sufficient network of railroads, large-scale cooperative agriculture, electrification, and so on, while awaiting the outburst of the victorious revolution in the economically developed West (Germany in primis). Those were the conditions for a victorious communism on an international basis.

But revolution never came in the West because the parties there - and from a certain point in time, the very Third International itself - proved unable to align themselves on a verily revolutionary front, and the October Revolution crushed between the absence of Western support and the necessary re-emergence of economic capitalism in Russia turned in on itself. The Stalinist counterrevolution, appropriate expression of the young Russian capitalism, destroyed the compelling initial strategic vision, liquidated Lenin’s party both physically and theoretically, proclaimed as “socialism” what was no more than the “capitalist accumulation” referred to above, and theorized the possibility of “socialism in one country.” Such was the enormous and tragic deception which cost the blood of millions of victims, and up to their necks in this deception one could find (still finds!) convinced Stalinists, democrats, and fascists who extended Stalinism their benediction by calling it communism.

“Then, what happened from 1989 to today?” It happened that the form of capitalism that reigned in the USSR and its satellites reached the point in its development when it could not continue in its old form. State ownership had become an obstacle, particularly under the impetus of the crisis that developed in the ‘70s and reached into the USSR by the end of that decade. It was necessary to give vent to the new forces and energies developed in the “hot house” atmosphere of state protection and free it up to autonomous development outside centralized restraints and shackles. Hence the break with the earlier phases-a “break” common to all bourgeois nations at some point in their history: from centralized state controls to the so-called free market, only to return again to state “dirigisme” or reliance when the socio-economic situation deteriorates. To recall this process in action one need only think of the Keynesian policies of the New Deal and the state controls behind European fascism.

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Well, then, what do we really intend by communism? Marx did not discover the characteristics of a communist society. Even before his time communism stood for the “the communion of goods,” the placing of all social riches in common and the rational administration in a society that did not know the market, wage labor, capital and social classes. In addition, a whole era of the human experience had unfolded under a form of “primitive communism,” a stage conditioned and circumscribed by a very low level of development of productive means: work in common on land held in common and the consumption in common of the products of this work such as happened at the beginning of human prehistory before the appearance of classes, the division of labor, and private property.

Marxism freed communism from the limitations of utopianism and presented it as an outcome unrelated to the realm of wishes or dreams—the schemes of a Fourier, Saint Simon or Robert Owen—but as a necessary stage, a conquest leading to the actual achievement of real society. Capitalism drives the division of labor to the nth degree and separates the worker from any ownership of the means of production (machines and equipment) and from the means of subsistence (food, housing). Having entered this productive process without reserves—think of the enormous numbers of pauperized Africans, Asians and Latin Americans in the areas which are being drawn into the capitalist vortex—the worker must pass into the market to buy his means of subsistence. He must now sell his labor power to the capitalist who has amassed the means of production, and who may appear in the form of an individual, an anonymous society, or the state. With the finished products of labor in his possession, the owner is entitled to keep the lion’s share of the wealth created by those workers, riches that are legally dispossessed from the workers’ ownership. Moreover, the workers can feed their families only to the degree that their labor is useful to capital, and here one might recall the authentic social sores that accompany the process: under-age labor, exploited immigrant labor, and prostitution.

This social rapport can sink the masses into an ever greater misery. But by greatly increasing the productivity of labor and tying all the sectors of production into a vast concentration raised to a worldwide scale, the means were created—but only the means—to satisfy human needs through the central and international administration of the riches produced. One does not have to “construct” socialism as if it were a Lego toy, but to correspond the (today private) mode of appropriation of wealth to the social (collective, communal) character of its production. Most important above all, while utopians sought to introduce communism by preaching its goodness in tales of wonderment and appealing to the better side of governments or enlightened entrepreneurs, Marxism demonstrated that capitalism itself produces its own gravediggers. It creates the modern proletariat, a class that capital tends to concentrate, unify, and compel to struggle, if it is to survive. It is the only class that in the

history of class formations has no underling class that it might exploit in turn. Liberating itself, this class, the step-creature of capital, liberates all of humanity. It is endowed with the power to assure the birth, painful and traumatic as it may be, of the new society.

To arrive there, the struggle of the modern working class conducted under the guide of the communist party in possession of a doctrine and a worldwide strategy must push itself to the total conquest of political power. The proletariat must impose its own class dictatorship for as long as is necessary to crush with terror any opposition by the dispossessed classes, while concentrating in its own hands control of production and exchange and thereby breaking the old productive relations and abolishing the inertia and attitudes of centuries.

Naturally, the communist transformation of society will occur only after the international power of the working class will have consolidated itself through a decisive victory in the great imperialist fortresses, the actual centers of the world economy and the true gendarmes of the planet. And equally true, time will be needed for a new human generation to arise from the wreckage of the old society now born in the conditions of communism.

This is the goal of the movement that calls itself communism, and it does not base itself on notions of “one of many opinions,” or a “cultural project,” or an “ethical intent.” What is involved is not some philistine banality having to do with “more social justice,” or a “better quality of life, or a “more equitable distribution of wealth”—all rhetorical expressions that leave matters where they are since they do not touch the fundamental nature of capitalism. What is involved is the historical transition from one productive system to another, as happened in the step from slavery to feudalism and from feudalism to capitalism. With this additive: with the abolition of class division, communism will allow humanity to escape at last from the pre-history of exploitation, oppression, and destruction.

In the society that will emerge from this transformation—a transformation that, we repeat, is radical, total, and not a yellowing photocopy of what came before—any form of dictatorship, any form of state power, will be of no value, since the economic basis underlying differentiation of social classes will be gone. But while the revolutionary crisis, the seizure of power, and the proletarian dictatorship are clear-cut, dramatic events, the socio-economic changes will of necessity take more time, if one is to deal with the a whole number of particular situations, e.g., the disparity in the stages of economic developments. Hence in lower communism, largely referred to as socialism, social constraints will remain in place and are best illustrated by the rule: “To each according to his/her work.” The false “really existing socialism” of the past pretended to have achieved this goal by relying on...wage labor that was in actuality an exchange of goods (commodities) for

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goods (commodities). Lower communism (socialism) foresees the introduction of a work chit, a script that entitles one to articles of consumption in proportion to one's contribution, with a deduction to provide for the general social needs of society. The script is not money and, unlike money, cannot circulate and cannot be saved or accumulated.

Only with the achievement of production in abundance will social constraints disappear and society enter into a full communism, illustrated by the precept: "From each according to his/her capacity, to each according to need." No longer subject to the blind economic laws attendant on the anarchy of the market humanity will have done not only with economic crises, genocidal wars, ethnic and national wars; emancipated from the oppression of producing for profit, competing for resources and markets, and producing for the sake of production, humanity will be able to organize production worldwide in a conscious manner following a rational plan that will regulate the rapports now turned harmonious amongst production, consumption and population, where today there is rampant disequilibrium due to the distended growth of capitalism.

Mankind will have time to dedicate itself effectively to solving the problem of agriculture and food production, and again look to areas that have been scanted by capitalism for the simple reason that the margins of profit are limited. To succeed, the "advanced countries" whose industries and know-how were constructed out of the blood and sweat of generations on all continents will undoubtedly lend themselves to a gratuitous modernization of the agriculture of the "less developed," something unthinkable under capitalism. This will help mightily in closing the abyss opened by imperialism between races and nationalities and will favor the free formation of an international union, the crucible from which there will emerge a united humanity.

No longer menaced by the external and unfriendly power of capital, now master of its own destiny, the communist society will be able on the one hand to master and apply to human use the formidable new forces found in nature (not turn them into a menace to human survival, as has capitalism with the splitting and fusion of the atom), and on the other put to rest fear, obscurantism, and religiosity.

Rationalizing production will put to an end the contemporary ravaging of nature and the division between city and country through a gradual and more equitable distribution of economic activity across the entire terrestrial surface, that will also begin to end, thanks to these two changes, the menace of pollution. An end will be put to the waste and rape of natural resources: humanity will no longer be in harness to labor for profit, but for the satisfaction of human need. With the end of capital and the wage system, and therefore the end of man's exploitation of man, not only the dramatic alternative of submitting to brutish labor or of growing

unemployed will be crushed. Under communism, all will participate in social labor to the degree of the ability of each, which presupposes a different labor force indexed by age, with the exclusion of children and the disabled. Thanks to the application of the most modern techniques lifted and liberated from the control of monopoly and private property, society will be in a position to eliminate all perilous and useless activities from the manufacture of armaments to the training of police and the use of double accounting, thus radically shortening the hours of work to the baseline of need. Given the state of technology, perhaps a two-hour day would suffice on a worldwide scale.

To the degree that the proletarian dictatorship emphasizes these measures at the center of its program, there will be the elimination of an antithesis between school and production, and an end will be put to the chatter that passes today for the non plus ultra of culture. Domestic work from cleaning to infant training and raising will be socialized, thus freeing women forever from a millenarian slavery and a social inferiority of which they have been victims.

These revolutionary changes of the conditions of work and life will do much to remove the antagonism between the sexes and between the generations, so contentious a point under capitalism. At the same time, they will completely transform the rapport between collective life and "privacy," (the latter existing today only to be ever abused or to degenerate into a solitudinous and miserable loneliness). Even the relationship between play and work and the very conditions of the environment would undergo massive change. Generations born free from the yoke of capitalism would be able to devote themselves to other important matters having at hand the means to deal with them. The drastic reduction of work time especially would not only free mankind from the labor and the maladies resulting from the frenetic quest for profits, for all the producers would be free now to plunge into intellectual areas; the natural sciences, the complex aspects of social life, literature and the arts—all would reacquire that collective dimension characteristic of those activities at the beginning of the prehistory of man. At last, the material conditions will have been set to overcome finally the divarication between physical and intellectual labor, earlier so essential to the formation of social classes. No longer will men and women be condemned to brutish and repetitive labor: on the contrary, they would be freed from reliance on an exclusive "specialization," "craft," "career," or vocation so highly lauded in bourgeois thought. Each of society's members will face the need for some undertaking in the most diverse areas of social activity, obligatory but necessary.

With the disappearance of the division of labor, the administration of things, already reduced and simplified

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by the disappearance of capitalism's market and exchange values, can be divided amongst all members of society. Administrative machinery, the foundation of the modern state, will have lost significance. In such a society, in the absence of the struggle of all against all, individualism will have vanished. Gone will be the basis for the opposition of the individual to society or society against the individual. In a society of the human species, participation in the collective effort will emerge as the underlying basis of vital need, and the free development of each "the condition for the free development of all."

Whole generations have fought for this future, with millions of anonymous proletarians having given their blood in a struggle that has spread already to all continents. This is communism!

"No, it is utopia!" exclaims our irritated disbeliever. Stop! Utopia is an ideal society imagined without taking into account the material conditions from which it might arise, and without tracing the path of development that these very conditions suggest. It's trying for the moon with a pedaled airship. Historically speaking, every problem may be raised in a real manner only when the possibilities and conditions for a solution exist. The possibility and the objective conditions for communism already exist within capitalist societies themselves: the high level-even too high!-of production, the globalization of the economic system, and the presence on a world level of a class without reserves. One must work to create the subjective condition for the change: the party that will guide the revolutionary process. But be the conditions objective or subjective, they are already obvious to communists, and we do not mean something inexplicable or an article of faith!

On the other hand, are our views utopian when we indicate the objective and the means to reach them: formation of the revolutionary party, its implantation amongst the masses on a worldwide scale, the continued growth of economic and social contradictions, the reawakening of the class struggle, the outbreak of the revolution led by the party, the seizure of power, the installment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the forcible intervention in the economy to introduce a radically different economic order? Or aren't truly utopian those who leave unchanged the present system of capital, the market, profits, merchandise, competition, and bewitch themselves with talk of "sustainable economic development" or "equitable and responsible business"; who appeal to the conscience of "men of good will" to end the ever more frequent and bloody wars, donate balm to ease the suffering created by the incessant dramas of want and illness in the far reaches of the planet, and propose the incremental development of underdeveloped countries to eliminate the tragic sore of emigration, when it is precisely the sweeping introduction of capitalism to those countries-the demands it makes on an international

level and the recurrent crises that accompany it-that is responsible for this tragic phenomena? That truly is utopian, and of the most painful sort, because it is not innocuous: it deceives millions and in so doing contributes to the strengthening of the system that gave rise to the ills listed above.

"Very well, but this 'communism' of which you speak exists nowhere, as you yourself note!" Sad is the mode of thinking that believes possible only that which exists and refuses to fight for what is not yet, though it is possible and even necessary. It's a bit as if the Wright brothers had not set themselves to create a flying machine given that... no such machine had ever existed earlier. What is to be born does not exist yet; that's elementary. Even bourgeois society did not exist when the first revolutionary burghers set out to oppose the feudal system. So what? As with the one above, such an observation is tantamount to implying total passivity, the deadening of one's mental faculties: it is the result from a way of thinking that at all times insists "this is the best of all possible worlds."

And then, as we have said, it is a false observation. There existed a "primitive communism" that given its low productive forces had to give way to a society based on class-based production. There was the experience of the Paris Commune of 1871, that showed how it was possible to reorganize social life and what errors to avoid in so doing. There was the experience of the first years after the October Revolution that indicated the long road to be taken and, again, the errors to avoid in terms of international strategy.

"Yes, OK, still you have behind you one hundred and fifty years of failure!" And so? To establish itself as a world order and defeat feudalism, the bourgeoisie took five hundred years: from the first stirring of the Italian communes in the late Middle Ages to the French Revolution of 1789, and even longer in some regions of the planet. Five hundred years of glorious battles and bloody defeats, long periods of uncertainty and proud advances, and finally total victory. Anyone finding this view objectionable would do best to abandon the notion that all affairs must be concluded in the fretful haste so typical of bourgeois conduct associated with the closing of a deal, remembering that communists work for the future of human kind. There is written in one of our texts from 1965: "S/He is a militant revolutionary and communist who has been able to forget, denounce and tear out of his/her mind and heart the status assigned by this putrefying society, and sees and confounds him/herself with the entire millanarian span that ties the ancestral tribal predecessor in the struggle against the wilderness to the member of the future fraternal community, glorious in its social harmony." (From: "Considerations on the Organic Activity of the Party in a Period when the General Situation is Historically Unfavorable", 1965)

Day by day the need for communism grows dramatically

The events of the past six months have once again laid bare the destructive and self-destructive nature of the capitalist mode of production, with its ruthless, unadaptable laws. Series upon series of crises, different in form but substantially identical, demonstrate that its long death throes cannot help producing increasing poverty, bloody wars, environmental devastation, health crises, desperation, anguish, existential pain and basic difficulty in merely surviving, *all over the planet*.

More than once we have shown that the economic crisis of 2008-9 was never solved, dragging on for a decade between peaks and troughs and preparing us for even more tremendous crashes. This is the very crisis (*pre-pandemic*, so to say), whose evolution, already a cause of concern to all bourgeois observers because of its evident social and political implications, was the ground on which the *pandemic crisis* took root – daughter of a mode of production incapable of solving its own « side effects », even scientifically and in terms of health care.

By means of its ruling tools (parliaments, governments, the forces of law and order, mass media), Capital has immediately grasped the opportunity to introduce a series of measures which, under the pretence of « containing the virus », are directed towards « containing and repressing » the *social anger* that the economic crisis could bring with it. In doing this, the ruling classes in all countries can count on centuries of experience in wielding power over the proletariat : i.e. of using any « anomalous » situation to make their repressive apparatus more efficient and all-pervasive on

all planes – cultural, ideological, political and, above all, military. *And so this isn't a matter of conspiracy but of practice in the use of force and anti-proletarian violence.*

At this point, the *post-pandemic crisis* comes along. With the effects it has had at all levels, the emergency has merely exasperated and pushed forward the crisis that was already underway before it broke out : using the labour force as beasts to the slaughter, increasingly acute precarity, wave after wave of layoffs, legal and illegal violence by bosses and by the State against struggling workers, the cunning use of the « war amongst paupers »... The cherry on the cake could have been none other than the *emergency legislation with all its repressive measures*, maintained and indeed made increasingly pervasive thanks precisely to the experience of the pandemic. But we have already written and spoken sufficiently about this in the immediate past, as in recent and far-off times.

In the months to come, it is possible that a situation this critical may result in sudden, more or less circumscribed outbreaks that may finally mutate into a true social crisis with dimensions that are not merely domestic. It will then be necessary for the militant proletarians filling the streets and the squares to keep well away from the dead-end of exasperation in itself, rebellion without prospects, disorganized anger incapable of withstanding State violence. They must therefore equip themselves with stable and solid militant grassroots organizations for defending their living and working conditions. They must prepare for a higher level of political battle.

This, of course, is not enough.

Defence is only possible if it is orientated towards attack and the attack will not succeed unless it has an objective that is non-contingent, not limited or circumscribed by the current reality.

And so, with a self-evidence that can only prove mysterious or obscure to the blind and stubborn, last-ditch defenders of the current mode of production as the « best of all possible worlds », day by day, in daily events themselves, the *dramatic need* will grow to change to a different and superior mode of production: a classless society, to *communism*.

We are well aware that in saying this we encounter the rubber and steel wall of the ruling ideology, which fills people's heads with the litany of the « death of communism ». This litany just makes us communists smile, because it is a demonstration of the impotence and ignorance of mainstream ideology. Communism isn't dead for the simple reason that, *as an established mode of production*, it has never existed : this, too, we have proved over decades of struggle, in thousands and thousands of pages, in countless factual and material examples.

In the face of what is already being prepared, all over the world, for the proletarian class (blood and tears), faced with the increasingly catastrophic course of the capitalist economic crisis, which can only lead to a new world war and more inter-imperialist slaughter, it is necessary to insist on the *need for communism and the political and revolutionary process for achieving it*, for a classless society that snatches all aspects of community life from the

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rule of the law of profit, money, competition and production for production's sake.

This is why we must *fight*, and this is what we must *work* on, urgently but clear-sightedly and above all without the haste of those who want at all costs to see « the results of their work » to satisfy their urge to be the centre of attention ;

without the arrogance of those who think they're inventing shortcuts on a path that is materialistically determined. The principles, the theory, the programme, the tactics, the organization have all existed *as a single whole* for almost two centuries : through the organization of our party and its participation in the struggles of the proletariat, we have defended them tooth and claw,

through all the waves of counter-revolution (and the latest, in which we are still immersed, has been and continues to be the longest and most devastating), in order to hand them on – a keen weapon and not the occasion for useless intellectual debate – to the future generations of militant communists.

13/09/2020

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)

The following article already appeared on these pages, but we thought it appropriate to reissue it because of its topicality!

Why we are not “bordigists”

“I am not a Marxist!”- Karl Marx

■ As materialists, we know that language is a superstructure, standing in a dialectic relationship to the mode of production that determines and expresses it. We also know that, in a class-based society, the dominant ideology is the ideology of the ruling class and language is immersed in it, giving voice to its basic characteristics, divisions and balances of power, and thus contributing in its turn to influencing society as a whole. In our present times (with a capitalism that has reached its supreme, imperialist phase), individualism, which has always been an aspect of bourgeois ideology directly linked to the mode of production and consumption, increasingly pervades language and through it the whole universe of social relations.

And so we use the term “Marxist” regularly, whilst knowing that it is really an improper use (as Marx’s famous declaration, quoted above, firmly states) and that the term “dialectic materialism” or “communism” would be better. So much for that: usage, conventions and practicality have the upper hand and there is nothing wrong with this, on condition that... *On condition* that the sense of the exclamation is well understood: as it lies entirely in the *refusal* (by Marx and all consistent communists) to consider the great work done by him (and by Engels and many other, more or less anonymous militants who, then and later, worked for the communist revolution) as the fruit of genial thought by an individual mind, as an “interpretation of the world” by the umpteenth philosopher. “Philosophers have hitherto only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change it*” (XI Thesis on Feuerbach) is not just a slogan: it means that with materialist science’s appearance on the scene of history we are no longer witnessing “philosophical systems” which may quite rightly assume the name of one thinker or founder of a school of thought or another (Platonism, Aristotelism, Tomism, Kantism, Hegelism, etc.), just because they are “personal interpretations of the world”; we are actually witnessing *a science*, discovered and elaborated thanks to a combination of far broader and more complex historical and social factors than just the single noddle (doubtless of impressive proportions) of the person who materially takes it up, unravels it, explains it and publishes it.

We are not denying the exceptional contribution made at specific moments in history by individuals: Marx, Engels, Lenin, Bordiga... However, we refuse to characterize this contribution as a personal one, almost as if materialism were a construction made of Lego to which everyone can add his or her own “original” piece. This is why we refuse the expression “Marxism-Leninism” (precisely because of its awful revisionist implications): Lenin himself might well have exclaimed like Marx, “I am not a Marxist-Leninist!”, because the expression reeks of bourgeois individualism, trampling underfoot the very heart of the materialist concept of history, overturning and misrecognizing the function of personality in history, attributing to individual *x* the role of elaborator of concepts that “integrate” what was “conceived” originally by individual *y* – precisely, more pieces of Lego for a construction in progress, to which individuals can make their own, eclectic contribution. It is no coincidence that “Marxism-Leninism” (not to speak of “Marxism-Leninism-Maotsetungthought”!) would become a political-linguistic expression of the advancing and subsequently victorious counter-revolution, a phenomenon *materialistically* rooted in the history of the class war and not the fruit of individual actions: that counter-revolution that would overthrow the international communist movement from the mid-Nineteen-Twenties onwards and which, precisely because of the linguistic conditioning mentioned above, we are obliged to call “Stalinism” for the sake of brevity and in the absence of any other, brief definition (to define it, our comrades in the ‘Thirties and ‘Forties used the expression “Centrism”; but today that would be incomprehensible).

Even more so do we refuse the label “Bordigists”, for a series of valid reasons. Far from failing to acknowledge the enormous contribution made by Amadeo Bordiga *for his whole life*, we know (and confirm this against all his bourgeois “biographers”) that this was *Party work* and not the individual mental product of an “isolated thinker”: it was the transmission, founded on a rock-solid theoretical basis, of a whole body of historical experience, from *militant to militant* – and by a militant who had always declared the *impersonal nature of the doctrine*

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and practice, obeying it even when flattery might have led him in a different direction – an anonymous militant, who had been trained in an *impersonal* doctrine, for a cause that reaches far further than individuals and generations. Bordiga and the collective work for the revolutionary Party are inseparable. Moreover, the huge job of theoretical restoration was made possible not only thanks to its being the expression of collective work by the Party, which, if we want to take this viewpoint, saw Bordiga as its spearhead, but also thanks to the political and organizational continuity achieved by comrades who, during the '30s, were active abroad, as well as clandestine in Italy - which, over the next few decades, ensured the combination of forces (not all theoretically homogeneous) from which our Party emerged, by selection, in 1952. Thus, once again, a collective, anonymous, impersonal experience: that of shared work by militants united for a historical objective, oriented towards the re-birth of the revolutionary Party.

But this is not all. We are not “Bordigists” because Bordiga’s work (of restoring and re-proposing “Marxist” theory in its entirety, after the monstrous devastations suffered in the counter-revolution, and of working for the reaffirmation of the revolutionary Party) can in no sense be considered an extra, a “new contribution”, a “new interpretation”, a “special variety” of Marxism (or, as the well-paid intellectuals addicted to their own egos say, of “Marxisms”: precisely!). Bordiga was a most efficient tool, “...the splendid ‘machine’,” we wrote in our press in the article commemorating him at the time of his death in 1970, “through which ran [...] the current of Marxism’s high potential.” And we continued, “...and we say ‘Marxism’ as we, of the Left, have always understood it,

not as an abstract theory to whose budding gems we bow down in a pretence of daily veneration, but as a sharp and shining weapon, whose grip, or aim, we must never let go of - a weapon that must be saved, so that it is not lost in a whirlpool of defeat, by sacrificing everything, first and foremost the ignoble *self*, just as, in order to use it when the battle is raging, weakness, misery, vanity, stupid pride, the mean little ‘accounts book’ of the individual must be destroyed, to save its healthy or even precious potential in the interests of the ‘class-Party’.” (“On the death of Amadeo Bordiga. An exemplary militancy at the service of the revolution”, *Il programma comunista*, no. 14/1970).

Bordiga did not add or modify a single comma in the body of doctrine that emerged in the mid-1800s when conditions were mature for it because the bourgeois mode of production had given and said of itself all it had to, experimentally verified (*both theoretically and in practice*) in the following one and a half centuries through a few, shining victories and many bloody defeats: in the very midst of the counter-revolution he managed to remain in place and gather around himself new generations of militants – the *Party*.

And so we leave to others the petty idolatry of the “individual” and pay no attention to the pretentious irony (or at times the arrogant ignorance, the vindictive contempt, the disgusting slander) towards “Amadeo Bordiga” and the “Bordigists”. Aware of belonging to a generation of militants that has faced and will continue to face different problems and duties, we pursue the same work in different conditions: amidst errors, inadequacy and uncertainty, but always anonymously, impersonally and collectively. *Communist militants* – that is all.

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