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

Facing Capital’s Wars, Chickens Come Home to Roost

Russia’s unleashing of its “special military operation” against Ukraine in February 2022 has seen the return of *imperialist war* to the sub-continental European stage.

The crisis born of the overproduction of capital, goods and (alas!) proletarians magnifies the irreconcilable contradiction between the forces of production and the forms in which the capitalist mode of production organizes them.

The chickens have come home to roost. Our class has been stifled and drugged up to the eyeballs by over 50 years of reformism, nationalism and religious or scientific idealism – under the artfully concocted guise of representative democracy and Fascism. While it is still striving to react and take back control of the modes, methods and objectives of the class struggle, our historical enemy – the *impersonal* bourgeois class – reacts as best and as knowingly as it can. Organized within the confines of its Nation States, it seeks to obstruct the interrupted process of capital valorisation by means of economic measures. Leaving aside the technical-scientific glorification of productivity, such measures ultimately amount to nothing more than *greater exploitation* and – during this phase of imperialistic putrescence – an exaltation of anything that seems to increase mass profits and the circulation of money. Outside its Nation State confines, meanwhile, the bourgeois class intensifies its search for new markets and the apportionment of the old. In the by now concluded phase of economic expansion, the conflict (which, in those areas most recently subject to capitalist development, had always consisted of violent rule, as the tragic epic of decolonization has borne out) could be played out according to the balanced commercial, diplomatic and cultural forms established by the powers-that-be in the aftermath of “World War II”. But the beginning of the cycle of crises has led to a rethink.

The alliances and contrapositions imposed by the victors have helped maintain all the sections of our class under military threat. They have also sought to disguise and contain the *inexorable law of capitalism’s disordered and unequal development* with paradoxical results. The alliances imposed by the United States of America (NATO and SEATO) emerged as instruments of control and servitude, while the end of the so called Cold War between the two most important military powers exposed the imperialist fragility of Stalinist and post-Stalinist Russia (rendered all the more evident by the pulverization of the Warsaw Pact and the collapse of COMECON, whose states slowly yet surely turned out to be an expansion of western

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states precisely during the “cold war” period), just as our party had seen when analysing its socio-economic nature in relation to the development of capitalism in the age of imperialism. All this while the People’s Republic of China became completely modernized and can no longer be contained in its albeit huge domestic market...

The conflict still bears all the *marks of imperialist war* (direct or indirect conflict, more or less internationalized in nature, between States wishing to maintain or expand a controlling area of raw materials – and proletarian/proletarianised masses –, and exportation of goods and capitals), yet could potentially be transformed into an *out-and-out inter-imperialist war* (a conflict among opposing imperialist fronts seeking to secure their slice of the entire world market pie).

However, power is one thing, action another.

As events hasten along, chickens also come home to roost among the ranks of political groups wishing to represent the interests of the proletariat.

Bobbing and weaving between openly declared warmongering and increasingly *active and operative* pacifism, the illusion of unity and national interest is given fresh lifeblood with every new guise adopted by classic bourgeois reformism. Meanwhile, to reawaken internationalism and proletarian opposition to capitalist wars, (in)voluntary and immediatist opportunism stokes the fires of the activist illusion that the moment is ripe for invitations to meetings and conferences where appeals to clear-as-dishwater “internationalist forces in the world” may be made.

As of today, our party has received three such invitations. All were declined with pithy political motivations that summarise just how much we learned from the experience of participating in the life of our class – in its *being a class in itself* – during the restoration of the revolutionary class organ.

As we have stated, our class is still dominated by bourgeois rule in the unity of the nation. And, precisely, as Marx expertly declared (“*the working class is revolutionary or it is nothing*”), it is nothing as yet. The task now awaiting the most combative working men and women is to unite in that organization which, in and by means of the struggles, will *reveal the class unto itself* and *prepare it for that revolutionary process* that will take it from the *nothing* of today and force it to become *everything*.

The communist Party is not some impromptu movement ad libbing tactics off the cuff. Among its established objectives is that of snatching the proletariat from the jaws of national unity.

The escalation of conflicts hardly comes as a surprise. And it obliges us to continue, with ever greater determination and on all occasions, the political praxis which has as its main aim that of breaking the curse of the national interest, of the Fatherland’s unity, of the State.

Against the wars of Capital, the wars between States and State fronts, and the war waged by the bourgeoisie against

the proletariat and nature, we must be prepared. We must fight long before the conflicts erupt. All the declarations and highfalutin appeals stemming from what can only be *shady backroom deals*, amount to nothing more than *counterproductive scholarly rhetoric* if the nuts and bolts of *revolutionary class preparation* are missing.

The way to oppose *the war of Capital* begins with the fight *against the peace of Capital*. Each stage of the class struggle is well mapped, as indeed is the final destination: *the development of proletarian defeatism enables the war between States to be transformed into a civil and social war inside States, thereby setting off the process of the communist revolution and the establishment of the proletariat as ruling class*.

So the Party has no appeals to make to other organizations.

The Party calls on those in the vanguard of the proletarian struggles to continue, intensify and scale up those defensive economic and social battles already under way. It is always on the lookout to organize these struggles better, both inside and outside existing organizations, while always *opposing* their present leadership and their predisposition towards unity and common interests with the State.

The Party addresses itself to proletarians and those who can no longer abide the disastrous and devastating rule of the bourgeoisie; and to those who are convinced, in heart and mind, they must fight – steadily and methodically – the democratic dictatorship of Capital, against all the institutions, parties and trade unions of all the States, each more imperialist than the other.

The Party operates among the ranks of its (our) class to advance every possible opportunity of:

1. Organization of the battle to defend living and working conditions, so as to hit the bourgeoisie’s economic and political interests hard
2. Refusal to accept economic and social sacrifices in the name of the “national economy”
3. Open break with the social pact and an unwavering return to the methods and objectives of the class struggle, the only real and practicable internationalist solidarity of the proletariat, both in the metropolises of imperialism and in its peripheries.
4. Refusal to take sides (nationalist, religious, patriotic, mercenary, humanitarian, socialistic, pacifist...) in favour of any of the States, or State fronts, involved in wars.
5. Economic and social strike actions that lead to outright *general strikes* to paralyse national life and pave the way for political strikes against any type of pro-war mobilisation or propaganda.

Only by adhering to these *mainstay practises* can preparations be undertaken to turn back the poverty, pain and sorrow that afflicts most of our class. A class which has been sacrificed on the front and back lines of battle in the name of “fatherlands” that are nothing more than crime

rings bent on perpetuating capitalistic profiteering – an exploitation that for over two hundred years has undermined the living conditions of our species and the natural world we are part of.

Only by repossessing these mainstays (and during the course of battles that it is and will be obliged to wage) will our class – that huge mass of people whose very existence depends on their being able to sell their labour power – acquire once again an autonomy of struggle against the bourgeoisie – its old enemy – and all the half classes of eggheads and parasites that support it, their State and their institutions.

But only if those in the vanguard of our class battle and any eventual “traitors of the ruling classes” succeed in organizing themselves around these issues, (without forgetting the more limited – albeit required – social, economic, environmental issues...), reaching out and strengthening the revolutionary communist party, only

then will it be possible to lay the ground for openly anti-patriotic defeatism and anti-militarism. That means *letting one’s own State and its allies be defeated, disobeying military hierarchies, deserting and fraternizing with our class brothers (trapped inside their own respective “fatherlands”)* and *holding tight to our weapons and weapon systems, in self defence first of all, and then to free ourselves from the grasping tentacles of the bourgeoisie and its institutions.*

The Party is always and forever ready to fight; just as it always and forever keeps at arm’s length the empty tittle-tattle of last minute analysts, the acolytes of the latest sociological trends, those allergic to the discipline required for the anonymous and collective work behind revolutionary preparation and those hell bent on the pursuit of easy success. Not to mention the gifted authors of “invitations” and “appeals”.

January 2023



UKRAINE: CORE ISSUES UNDERLYING THE WORLD CRISIS

■ **1949.** Only four years had passed since the last act of worldwide butchery, and the furious winds of war were blowing again across Europe. The famous walls had yet to be built, but there were already discussions as to whether the security of New York and San Francisco should be shored up by risking the lives of the German proletariat on the banks of the Rhine or the Elba. Almost eighty years on, the location has changed: will democracy, peace and stars-and-stripes liberty be defended on the banks of the Dnieper or, more modestly, along the European-Atlantic axis from Gdansk to Konstanz? The world eagerly awaits the outcome of the war unleashed in Ukraine: will the endless Russian armoured columns stop in Donets, or will they plough on through to Odessa or Transnistria? Will the Baltic States be attacked? And what of Scandinavia? Much has been said about the suffering of the Ukrainian population during heated televised debates, but very little has been forthcoming about the real causes of a war proclaimed to be “at the heart of Europe”. A war which, in terms of crimes committed against the population, is in no way inferior to those where Capital – eastern or western, it matters not – has lain waste to populations in every corner of the globe over the last twenty years. Let us take a closer look at a question our press has been dealing with over recent years¹.

Geography

Ukraine has a surface area slightly superior to that of France. In 2002 it counted almost 50 million inhabit-

ants: that number has shrunk to 44 million today. The country is almost entirely made up of flatlands, bordered by two modest uplands: to the west, the Podolian Upland, flanked by the Dnieper; and to the east, the Donets Plateau. The north is primarily made up of pine trees and birches; wooded steppes prevail in the centre; and the south is a steppe of highly fertile, black subsoil whose cereal crops are a major economic resource for the country. Eighty per cent of the population is Ukrainian; the rest is mostly Russian, concentrated in eastern cities and the Crimea. The population has gone down by approximately 6 million over the last 20 years. Migration to central Europe – illegal at first, then authorized – and Russians returning to Russia following Ukrainian independence in 1991, are the main reasons for this reduction. The urban population makes up about 70% of the overall total. Agriculture is very important for the economy: about 16% of the total labour force works in agriculture (especially cereal crops, as mentioned before). The minerals industry is of great importance too: extensive deposits of coal and iron can be found in the Donets basin, or Donbas; to the west, in the Lviv Oblast (or province), there is oil and natural gas. Ukraine is the sixth largest producer of iron in the world. Coal would be of great importance were it not for the mining costs and obsolete facilities. The supply of energy for industrial activities would normally depend on coal but, as the sector is in crisis, Russian oil and gas have become vital. Industry occupies 19% of the labour force: first and foremost, iron and steel, then

the automobile industry and farm machinery. The tertiary sector provides about 65% of the population with work, including tourism in the Black Sea area and, in particular, the Crimea.

From 1600 to the Crimean War

Ukraine’s “open” morphology, its geographical location (the continental north and the maritime south), and the richness of its subsoil have always made it an object of interest to its neighbours. Before all others, Poland (with changing fortunes Poland and the Cossacks would battle things out for decades between the 17th and 18th centuries) and Tsarist Russia. An agreement between the two countries in 1667 saw the country divided into two: territories on the right of the Dnieper went to Poland, those on the left to Russia. In its efforts to become an independent state, this would be the leit-motif of Ukrainian history over recent centuries: the fight to free itself of both, perhaps resorting to assistance from the Ottoman Turks. Following the second partition of Poland in 1793, the whole of Ukraine came under the control of the Tsar. Gradually, from that moment on, a kind of independent-spirited anti-Russian nationalism began to grow in Ukraine, especially in the second half of the 19th century. The Tsar’s decision to impose restrictions on the use of the Ukrainian language (mostly spoken in the western provinces, on the borders with Poland, Moldova and Romania) was a major factor in this development. Letters sent by Marx and Engels to Russian correspondents reveal that they thought the process of Russian – and, in part, Ukrainian – industrialisation was a result of the Tsarist de-

1. Among others, “Ucraina: i destini della rivoluzione arancione”, *il programma comunista*, n.6/2004; “In Ucraina, neutrali e ingaggiati”, *il programma comunista*, n. 3/2015.

feat in the Crimean War (1853-56). This military fact meant that the empire – too backward economically to be able to resist the might of western powers – was compelled on the one hand to support industrial development centrally, while eliminating serfdom (1861) on the other, thereby setting off the process of modernisation which would be followed by the freeing up of a salaried labour force to work in the first great factories.

The origins of the national question

After the Russian Revolution of February 1917, Ukraine obtained independence in March. However, with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (March 1918), which brought about the end of the war between revolutionary Russia and Germany, the Central Powers gained complete control of the entire region. The newly formed national government was overthrown by a Berlin-backed coup d'état, but the new government only remained in power until November the same year. In his writings of February-October 1917, Lenin persistently asks Kerenski's provisional Russian government to recognize "its elementary democratic duty" (note, en passant, the precise language: the content of the bourgeois revolution in Russia was democratic, not communist) to grant autonomy and complete freedom of secession to Ukraine. Clearly, the nationalist and communist movements converged, although the former supported a bourgeois revolution, and the latter an antibourgeois revolution. Both could temporarily form an alliance against the remnants of a precapitalist economy and society, provided the communist movement maintained itself *completely independent* from the nationalists in terms of its programme, its ultimate aims, its organization and its mode of operation, a necessary, long-recognized and well known position that had been reiterated time and again. It should be mentioned that the Ukraine nationalist movement enjoyed little

popularity among the vast majority of the population, whether they were they industrial workers (for the most part of Russian origin) or members of the mostly illiterate peasant class, largely uninterested in nationalistic celebrations of the native language. Right or wrong, most of them felt "pro-Russian". The national Ukraine movement enjoyed more success among members of certain elements of the bourgeoisie and *petit bourgeoisie* (priests, teachers, artisans and writers), especially abroad, in Austria. The movement was closer to populism and anarchism than Marxism as a result of these characteristics and, ultimately, it was partly because of these characteristics of social and economic backwardness that an anarchist-led anti-Bolshevik struggle would evolve in Ukraine for a couple of years. The national Ukraine movement was certainly spurred by a series of Tsarist laws, introduced as long ago as 1870, imposing restrictions on the distribution of Ukraine newspapers and literature. These laws were relaxed in the advent of the 1905 revolution, but were reintroduced with a vengeance in 1914. But such restrictions held no sway over the illiterate peasantry or those workers of Greater Russia origins. So it wasn't long before the bourgeois national autonomist movement set off in search of foreign backing (first Austria, then Germany and finally Poland), thus completely discrediting itself in the eyes of the masses. Furthermore, the laws of the market imposed very strict ties between Ukraine and Russia.

From the Revolution to Stalinism

The revolution of February 1917 saw, in Ukraine, the formation of the "Rada", a kind of parliamentary body that grouped together nationalists, social democrats and social-revolutionaries. Despite its lack of political clout, it put feelers out to the provisional Government in Petersburg, asking for autonomy

but without separating from Russia. Following the October Revolution the Rada proclaimed the Ukrainian People's Republic, albeit within the Federation. The Rada was an expression of the bourgeois national movement. In the summer of 1917 strong Soviets were set up all over the country and, after the October Revolution, the Workers' Soviet and the Soldiers' Soviet were merged, to all effects creating a political centre in opposition to the Rada. The Rada fostered the reorganization of the White Army along the banks of the Don and gave the go-ahead to military operations against the Red Guard. After Brest-Litovsk, the Soviet Government decided to recognize the Ukrainian People's Republic in accordance with the staunchly defended principles of self-determination, but it issued an ultimatum requiring that the Rada cease all hostilities. Failure to agree would signify they were at war. The next day the Rada asked for help from France and then England. Russia responded by occupying Kiev and removing the Rada, an move that provoked the immediate intervention of the German army, which re-took Kiev. A German puppet government was established and promptly set about filling the empty Berlin warehouses with grain. Germany was forced to abandon any pretensions to Ukraine following its defeat in 1918. The nationalists sought to regain some sort of influence and asked the French for support, although this was limited more to words than deeds. This power vacuum led to the Bolsheviks (with Pyatakov) organizing a provisional Ukraine government of workers and peasants in the east of the country, widely supported by the people. Kiev was soon re-conquered too. It was in this context, between 1918 and 1921, that the military operations of the "anarcho-communists" under Makhno took effect. Makhno's forces were successively – and sometimes simultaneously – engaged in

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conflict against the Rada, Deniken's White Army and the Bolsheviks. In turning to Poland for military help against the Bolshevik government, the Ukrainian nationalists played their last card. On one side this meant the country being newly invaded for a period lasting a little less than two months, up until the Poles were definitively defeated; on the other it signified the end of bourgeois and *petit bourgeois* nationalism, totally discredited in the eyes of the peasant masses who always had bones to pick with the Polish landowners who had mercilessly exploited them for so long. From this moment the Bolshevik party would be the guarantor of Ukrainian independence and self-determination. The Ukrainian Bolshevik government was in a cleft stick. It could immediately begin a process of integration with Russia or – and this was Lenin's line – it could marry the principles of self-determination and set in motion the process towards national independence. In December 1918 a party conference was organized in Moscow to discuss a motion put forth by Lenin regarding the social, economic and administrative situation of Ukraine: office workers and officials would have to know Ukraine language; the large estates would have to be shared among the peasants, and grain commandeering would only take place in exceptional circumstances; and the *sovhoz*, or state-owned farms, would be kept to a minimum. The paradoxical nature of the Ukraine question lies also in the fact that this motion was approved by the majority of Russians, but rustled the feathers of Ukrainian Bolsheviks, who favoured a kind of "Russianisation" of the country, and believed the policy adopted towards the peasants conceded too much to the local social-revolutionaries. Following Lenin's death, disagreements between the peasant masses and the urban proletariat became more acute and, years later, under Stalinism, would lead to economic catastrophe. Indeed, the "collectivisation" of agriculture (a fallacy because the

means of production and the produce of single families remained, at least in part, private property) coincided with a dramatic fall in cereal crop production and the slaughter of livestock ("Stalin's Famine" or the *Holodomor*, 1932-33). Intimidated by rumours that herds of livestock would be confiscated by the state, the peasants preferred to do the butchering themselves. The Famine is thought to have killed tens of millions of people, most of them Ukrainians.

Ukraine today

For historical and geographical reasons, Ukraine has never managed to be a completely autonomous nation, not even after the collapse of the USSR in 1991. It's easy prey for any type of imperialism and for financial capital bound up with raw materials and, especially, armaments: strategically and politically speaking, the Baltic area, the Black Sea and the Caucasus are of great interest. *De facto* and from the perspective of governments, it is an area that acts as an interface for the supply of Russian gas to Europe by means of innumerable gas pipelines: hence its current strategic importance. Privatisation has favoured the rise of "oligarchies" powerful enough to control the market ganglions. On one side Ukraine is dependent on the energy that arrives from Russia; on the other it is attracted to the USA militarily, and to Europe economically. There are three trends within Ukraine's bourgeoisie: pro-Russia, pro-western and nationalist. The last two were in some way confused in the so called "Orange Revolution", which was more or less designed with a view to renegotiating raw material costs with Russia before developing and offering itself up (along the lines of the Baltic nations supported by the USA) to the Europeans, and Germany in particular. Rising internal tensions among bourgeois power groups only served to confirm how vitally important the southern coast of the country was to Russia. As was true during the two

World Wars, the Crimea plays a crucial role in the control of the Caucasus to the east and, to the south, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean – an area that has become one of the centres of imperialist conflict since 2014. Now that this has become dramatically clear during the current conflict, there can be no doubt that the Balkanization process in Ukraine – the act of its being divided up and torn apart into at least two or three spheres of influence – will presently become reality. The Ukrainian economy was already tottering prior to the collapse of Russia, and went into meltdown over the next two decades, save a slight two-year recovery between 2004 and 2006. Financial help in the shape of the IMF was used to cover military expenditure. Government estimates (2014) claim that coal production decreased by 50%, and 64 mines out of 104 had to be closed down, resulting in 100,000 unemployed. Oil production went down by 15%; the chemicals industry lost 25%, and inflation soared to 20%. The war for the Crimea was a godsend for the most powerful families of local oligarchs like Poroshenko, "the king of chocolate", who took advantage of the situation to finance the formation of volunteer battalions, active in the east of the country against pro-Russian separatists and, at the same time, suspected of destroying mines and workshops belonging to Akhmetov, "the king of mines and steel". It isn't easy to follow the manoeuvres of these industrial-financial-political power groups within the country and, indeed, these machinations would be of little interest were it not for the fact that we can see the fingerprints of certain foreign financial-political-military empires all over them. The fact that Europe suffers from a lack of raw materials and energy resources should have made some kind of collaboration with Russia a *natural* choice. The USA wasn't keen and sought to make life difficult, with the

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European Union taking a dim view of the American sanctions applied against Russia in the wake of the attack on the Crimea. Even before annexing the Crimea, the Russian government (in the interests of skilled merchants, and all ears when it came to any kind of collaboration with the bourgeoisie and capital, no matter its colour...) put forward a proposal to transform the current customs union between Russia and some countries of the ex-USSR into a Eurasian Economic Union: a free trading zone from the Atlantic to the Pacific, of which the European Union would have been an integral part. In those circumstances Italian politician, Romano Prodi (only one of many European voices to speak out against the USA) wrote: “Without commenting on the usefulness or necessity of sanctions, it is nonetheless fitting to emphasize the asymmetry of their consequences, seeing as American exports to Russia are still increasing – in complete contrast to those of Europe – notwithstanding the 50% devaluation of the rouble against the dollar”². In that period Russia had kick-started official and semi-official talks to convince the EU to reject the free trade agreement with the United States and enter the newly formed Eurasian Economic Union that had been brought into force on 1st January 2014, and included Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Kyrgyzstan. Despite the failure of the talks, Germany (through Chancellor Angela Merkel in a TV interview in August of that year) declared: “A solution must be found that will not damage Russia... If Ukraine were to enter the Eurasian Union, the European Union wouldn’t see this as a *casus belli*”. Lest it be forgotten, less than three years earlier work had begun on the huge gas pipeline Nord Stream 2 (NS2) which, paired up with NS1, would guarantee Europe (*in primis* Germany) most of the energy required for the continental economy. The chancellor’s words are not dissimilar to those of a horse trader...

The current war

Bearing in mind the far from recent and growing economic difficulties afflicting the *entire international productive sphere* – recurring trade crises, the ever greater challenge of investing masses of surplus value extorted on a planetary level in bogus financial capitals, the necessity of finding productive sectors that be still able to guarantee decent profit margins (and where, if not, in the military industry?) – it can come as no surprise to learn that wars break out wherever the vicelike grip of the crisis is most acute. Russia’s productive apparatus is weak, and for some time now it has been seeking to clap its hands on Ukraine’s most industrially advanced region, the Donbas, inventing “cultural” reasons for its annexation (“culture” never fails to come to the aid of lords and masters...). And Ukraine, preferring to put itself in the hands of western capitals, fares no better: inflation rose from 8.4% in April 2021 to 13.7% in March 2022, interest rates remain above 10%; entire mining and productive sectors are paralysed and, together with extensive areas of territory, are likely to be lost. In the light of the difficulties facing the two countries, no wonder the USA and its trusted allies (including, of course, the UK) have been licking their lips and, on one side, strengthening economic and financial relations with Ukraine, and on the other, exerting greater military pressure on Russia. Since 1990, OTAN borders have shifted east to the tune of more than 1000km, especially after 1997 when a number of “sovereign” states made their territories available to Atlantic Alliance military bases. Seeing the whole western coast of the Black Sea, the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles occupied by hostile installations must have been a bitter

pill for the Russians to swallow in particular. Not to mention the goods, wheeler-dealers, money and “stars and stripes” culture attempting to filter their way through from the other side of the Black Sea (Georgia). The European Commission’s reply to Russia’s efforts to create a Eurasian union was to establish a pact with certain individual states (first and foremost Ukraine, but also Moldova and Georgia) whose economies would be progressively integrated into the internal market of the EU. For Russia all of this meant: less control of space which had fallen under western military control; and less control over the market following the increasingly conspicuous arrival of industrial and commercial capitals in countries which Moscow had considered its own. Far from being caused by the action of a “madman” (the same old song repeated *ad infinitum* by western democracies), the current war is the logical conclusion to the prolonged tensions created by *two opposing blocks of capitalist interests*.

The gas pipelines question

In this context the numerous gas pipelines coming from the Baltic, in eastern Europe, to the Mediterranean, via any number of different channels, have become the determining factor in present and future balances (or imbalances) of economic power worldwide. The grandiose Nord Stream² project (NS1’s twin) was much wanted by both Russia and Germany, although it left many shaking their heads in France and the USA. Its aim was to transport gas directly from Russia via the Baltic Sea, reducing considerably the need to cross the Ukraine (annual capacity of 100 billion cubic metres), which earns roughly 3.5 billion dollars a

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2. In the Italian daily *Il Messaggero*, 4 January 2015.

3. K. Westphal, M. Pastukhova, J.M. Pepe, “Nord Stream 2: Leverage Against Russia? Point of View”, 14.09.2020, in Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, German-Institute for International and Security Affairs, <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/>.

year³. The American Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act (no less!) has had the construction of the gas pipeline blocked since the end of 2019, and anyone daring to go back to work on it will be threatened with sanctions: a *modus operandi* worthy of Dick Turpin as far as Russian and German capitals are concerned, and a clear sign of support to Ukrainian administrators. The NS2 question has thus laid bare where the real balance of power lies, as far as each single state involved in the affair is concerned, and their capacity for reaction. It has also revealed some profound differences among the European states, and between some of these and the United States. The war has served to confirm the tensions and increased nervousness within a German government very firmly in the dock. It has had to swallow an extremely bitter pill over the blocking of its initiatives in the strategic and crucially important energy sector; not to mention its having to send unwanted "military aid" to Ukraine (as little as possible: no point upsetting its Muscovite commercial ally!). Its only consolation is to have approved an increase in military spending (which the whole world judged to be huge), a real boost for certain sectors of the industry in crisis. But is the enemy in the east or the west?

Provisional conclusion

The war in Ukraine contains important lessons for all. The first regards the way in which "aggressors" and the "aggrieved" brandish their weapons to assemble their "own" populations beneath flags such as "defence of the homeland", "human rights", "the sacred values of freedom and autonomy" and, for those who have it, "the sacred flame of democracy".

They do so, on the one hand, by putting to fire and the sword the lands they cherish and those whom they have come to "liberate"; the others plead with their own proletariat to take up arms and defend "the violated soil of the homeland" in the name of the most dishonest form of nationalism. Then there are the self-interested onlookers who don't want the war in their own back yard but prefer organizing it in somebody else's; or, even better, have it waged on behalf of the "sacred values of democracy." All this while business is booming, with weapons and money wherever you look: all this while the blood of innocent peoples is being shed. The second lesson regards the predictable outcome of the war. Years ago we had published some detailed articles demonstrating how the Balkanisation of Ukraine would necessarily be the result of economic conflict between the different actors⁴. The current war will only confirm this, creating *scenarios of an even graver nature in the near future*. The third is the result of the changing balances of power on the world stage: the role that will probably be taken on by China. In this context we may consider the recent (September 2021) undersigning of the Aukus military pact by the USA, the UK and Australia, after months of secret negotiations. The aim of the agreement is to "defend" (there we go again: *si vis pacem, para bellum*, or, *if you want peace, prepare the war*) against Chinese economic (but not only) activism in the Indo-Pacific area. Over recent decades, the usual "security reasons" have convinced Chinese governments to create a

4. "Ucraina: i predatori imperialisti e il proletariato", *il programma comunista* n. 3 e 4/2014; "Ucraina: guerra e nazionalismi", *ibid.* n. 2/2015.

chain of commercial cum-military ports along routes to the west (from Sittwe in Myanmar to Chittagong in Bangladesh, Hambantota in Sri Lanka and Gwadar in Pakistani Baluchistan, just down the road from the border with Iran, and others of lesser note). Readers may note some similarity between the stipulation of the Aukus pact mentioned beforehand, whose purpose is to form a *cordon sanitaire* around Chinese initiatives undertaken on the seas and the Indo-Pacific coasts; and the pincer movement patiently put in place by OTAN (the *longa manus*, or long hand, of America) around the southern and western borders with Russia! The likelihood of a more binding strategic-military-economic alliance between Russia and China will depend on how the world economic crisis evolves. But the feeling is we won't have to wait long to find out. The fourth and most painful cause for reflection is the lack of an organized class response to the excessive ideological, economic and military power of the global bourgeoisie when confronted with the unheard of sufferings it causes the proletariat worldwide with every economic and military crisis. We know the reasons very well, and for over fifty years we've been expounding them on the pages of our press: the spiked iron heel of democracy, Fascism and Stalinism, allies in their suppression of any attempted rebellion, barring the way to what might constitute even the slightest hint of a class movement. The only way forward (arduous it's true, but *the only way* nonetheless) consists of *destroying social peace in every country, denying any kind of credit to the war waged by Capital and finding once again the flag of class defeatism in the name of proletarian internationalism*.

May-June 2022

WHO IS ATTACKING “EUROPE”?

This is a watershed moment. The economic, social and political crisis has converged with war to make for a situation steeped in uncertainty. Any attempt to decipher the complex web of factors leading to the new scenarios and pinpoint – albeit approximately – the trajectory of events in terms of their inevitably catastrophic outcomes, is fraught with difficulty. After the Second World War, the “Italian” Communist Left made a valuable contribution to the restoration of the staples of revolutionary Marxism and, to help us find our way, we may turn to some of their keys of understanding. One of these touches upon the historical trajectory of the “aggression against Europe”, which was elaborated upon in a 1949 article of the same name, and published in what was then our theoretical organ, *Prometeo*. The article contained an assessment of the differing relative importance of Russian and American imperialisms.

Russia and America: different “concentrations of power”

This was one of the topics behind the internal controversy at the beginning of the 1950s that led to the scission of the Internationalist Communist Party and the establishment of the International Communist Party – *Il Programma Comunista*. We believe that that discussion provides us with elements that can help us to assess the meaning and importance of the present conflict between imperialisms. Hence our decision to publish here two excerpts on the subject, both taken from correspondence between Onorio (Onorato Damen) and Alfa (Amadeo Bordiga) [our italics – Editor’s note]:

“It’s impossible for the revolutionary party not to pursue a policy of equidistance – especially if war is being waged – between a country like the USA, whose capitalistic development has run to the extreme, and Russia

which, you claim, inclines towards capitalism; not being aware of this could become the theoretical precondition for new step-by-step experiences and would, in any case, shake up considerably the objectives of the revolutionary party’s strategic vision during the next imperialist war.” (Onorio to Alfa, 6th October 1951).

“First, let me address your observation regarding page 3. You ask: is it only America that inclines towards subjugating, etc? But you yourself quoted my aside: i.e., according to the nature and necessity of every major metropolitan concentration of capital, productive force and power. Not only America then, but all concentrations. Which ones, you may ask? And where will they be in subsequent historical moments? Here is the point. To do so, we must consider the following elements: land and its resources, population, industrial development, size of modern proletariat, colonial possessions like raw materials, human reserves, markets, historical continuity of State power, outcome of recent wars and development in worldwide concentration of productive forces and those relating to armaments. Thus we can conclude that in 1900 there were five or six important powers on the same front (or nearly); while in 1914 we can suppose that Germany and Great Britain squared up to one another; and today? An examination of all these factors allows us to state that America is the number one concentration, insofar as (and besides everything else, and the likelihood she would triumph in further conflicts) she can certainly intervene anywhere an anti-capitalist revolution succeeds. It’s in this historical sense that I say that the revolution today – which must perforce be international – is wasting time if it fails to take out Washington. Does that mean we are still a long way off? Okay.” (Alfa to Onorio, 9th July 1951).

Our party’s work in the 1950s identified the historical forces presiding over the long-lasting conservation of the capitalist mode of production with the victorious Anglo-Saxon State formations (first and foremost the USA), empowered still further by the reduction of the defeated capitalistisms to vassals. As for the social and economic nature of what were then “Soviet” Russia and its vassals, their capitalist traits and counter-revolutionary, international role had clearly been affirmed. A pure illusion was thus the notion that such powers might compete – pacifically or otherwise – with the spirited development of western capitalisms, starting off from what was alleged to be an alternative or superior socioeconomic model, “socialist” in nature, and a friend to those “coloured” peoples in the throes of casting off their imperialist yoke. History ran its course and when the bell rang, at the end of an anything but pacific match, all that remained of the State that had betrayed and usurped Red October buckled pacifically under the pressure of the dynamic western democracies. These were far better equipped in capitalistic terms, with superior production and income figures, while the Russian State had long accepted to conduct what proved to be an unequal battle, with the arms of the enemy, and on totally capitalistic enemy territory.

Real historical developments provided an answer as to whose Marxist perspective was correct on the issue discussed by Onorio and Alfa in their correspondence. A similar answer should be able to help us today as we try to figure out the current war, without running the risk of limiting ourselves to a generic opposition to imperialist war that would have very little to do with the teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin. This does not imply we intend to under-

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estimate the danger (flagged up at the time by those who supported the idea of “equidistance” of the communist party from any imperialism, regardless of its connoted power) that the recognition of the main enemy to beat might lead to a disastrous fall in political frontism and partisan positions. It is a principle set in stone that communists do not side with or count themselves among agglomerations of spurious powers.

When outlining the prospects for the post-war period in *Prometeo* in 1946, our movement asked the question clearly:

“We undoubtedly affirm that to the different outcomes not only of the great wars involving the entire world, but of any war, even the most limited, have corresponded and will correspond very different effects on the relations of social forces in limited fields and in the whole world, and on the possibility of developing class action...” (“Prospects for the Post-war Period in Relation to the Party Platform”, *Prometeo*, n.3, 1946).

Thus, if the outcomes of conflicts – and all the more so when worldwide blocks are involved – determine how class struggles evolve, communists cannot be indifferent to the victory of one contender rather than the other and place their trust solely in the fact that both are class enemies of the proletariat.

To prevent any misunderstanding, “three arbitrary positions” that could have been derived from the premise were specified in the same text. In brief: firstly, that the proletariat be taken in by the progressive, very noble and even “revolutionary” objectives that serve as an ideal fuel for the bourgeois wars; secondly, that it dismisses the idea that a military victory corresponds to a political defeat, and vice versa (Waterloo could not prevent the triumph of the bourgeois forces in Europe, and the fascism defeated on the battlefield succeeded in spreading totalitarian forms of class domination in peacetime); and

thirdly, that “*when the two solutions to the conflict are also bearers of diverse possibilities – undeniably predictable and calculable for the movement – the very exploitation of these possibilities can only be guaranteed if the main class energies and the possibilities for Party action remain uncompromised in the politics of opportunistic feoffment*” [idem].

The independence of the Party and the safeguarding of its entire unchanging programme therefore remain a fundamental cornerstone. The risk of sliding into opportunism is averted as long as the Party retains complete autonomy, refuses to pursue “step-by-step” objectives in the company of other political forces and, when war breaks out, complies with indications not to deviate from *radical defeatism in its own house*, be it the house of a dominant imperialist bourgeoisie or that of a vassal. The concept is perfectly expressed in the “Aggression Against Europe” article:

“Wars can only become revolutions – no matter what the assessment of the war is, an assessment which Marxists will not give up – as long as the nucleus of an international class movement survives in each country. This movement must be wholly detached from the politics of governments and the modus operandi of the main military States, and it must never lodge any kind of theoretical or tactical reservation between itself and the possibilities of defeatism and sabotage of the dominant class at war; that is, of its national and military political organizations. (*Prometeo*, no. 13, August 1949).

During the discussion that took place prior to the 1952 split, the Party groups headed by Onorato Damen viewed the two imperialisms carving up the post-war world as being equal, actually attributing to the USSR the historically most advanced form of capitalism in terms of centralisation and totalitarianism. This consideration led them to see the need for an unbiased approach, or perhaps one could call it *indifferentism*, in rela-

tion to the outcome of the clash between the two blocks. Here is the agenda item approving the scission during the Internationalist Communist Party’s second congress:

“In the face of Russia’s concentration of capital, strength, production and power, we declare that among capitalist forces clashing on the world stage, Russia is a hegemonic power on a par with America.” (<https://www.leftcom.org/files/2019-quaderni-st07.pdf>, p.33.)

By contrast, those comrades who would later establish *Il Programma Comunista*, and who had recognized that American imperialism’s limitless concentration of counter-revolutionary power was the mainstay of worldwide capitalistic domination, drew the inevitable conclusion that only by means of its destruction could the entire system collapse. Each successive victory for the system would, on the other hand, be a harbinger of even harder times to come – “measurable in decades or generations” – for the proletariat across the world. The diriment factor was the assessment of the economic and social nature of the USSR – totally capitalistic for Onorio, leaning towards capitalism for Alfa:

“Walking towards capitalism, where the foundations have already been laid (as in America) means walking in the opposite direction to socialism. But walking towards capitalism where these foundations are historically absent or incomplete, means the opposite, or rather: walking in the direction that leads to socialism. The latter case is clearly that of Russia and – even more so – its backward satellite States and allies. So they mustn’t be reviled for the economic policy of power but for the anti-classist policy of the party, which passes off the walking towards socialism for being in socialism, with incalculable anti-revolutionary effects for the entire international system.” (“Cervello marxista, deretano di piombo [Marxist Brain, Leaden

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Rear End]”, *Il Programma Comunista*, no. 19/1955, available in our website).

The diverse assessment of the USSR’s concentration of power at that time and in a historical perspective, thus brought about the following tactical position:

“Repudiation of any support for imperial Russian militarism. Open defeatism against its American counterpart” (in “Per la riorganizzazione internazionale del movimento rivoluzionario marxista [For the International Re-organization of the Marxist Revolutionary Movement]”, *Il Programma Comunista*, no. 18/1957, available in our website)¹.

There were no missiles, invasions or “revolutions” behind the collapse of the USSR, thus confirming our movement’s view of “Soviet”-style imperialism, summed up in the almost oxymoronic definition of “weak imperialism” in 1977:

“The USSR’s commercial structure and level of debt allow us to state that while its designs are imperialist in nature, and it detains a corresponding area of political and economic influence (obtained during the last great carve up among imperialist thieves), its imperialism is nonetheless ‘weak’ to the extent that, for the USSR, the export of capital and the weaving of the corresponding network of economic and, particularly, financial interests all over the world

have a secondary character, while it is precisely on those elements of imperialist politics that the US bases its dominion, very much more firmly than simple military strength. Even at the more basic level of simply exporting goods, Russia still struggles to stay ahead of many second string political and economic rivals in absolute production terms. In actual fact, she searches for capital on the world’s financial markets and looks to the commercial markets for industrial products.” (“La Russia s’apre alla crisi mondiale” [Russia Opens up to the World Crisis]”, 1977, reproduced in *Perché la Russia non era socialista* [Why Russia Wasn’t Socialist], Quaderni del Partito comunista internazionale, no. 10, 2019).

Notwithstanding all its limitations, for over 40 years the “Soviet” giant served to stem the advancing global tide of Atlantic capitalism, physically subtracting from its grasp a vast number of lands, and exercising a political, ideological and economic influence on countries embarking on modern development, and offering them an alternative to the “neo-colonial” subjugation of the West. Following the “Soviet” collapse at the beginning of the 1990s, the entire world became an open hunting ground for western capitals eager for valorisation while, by fair means or foul, the gargantuan political-military apparatus of the United States proliferated, extending its tentacles into every nook and cranny of the increasingly vast and interconnected

world of trade and capital.

In this context of frenzied conquest and plunder, the imperialist trajectory of ex-“Soviet” Russia seemed definitively compromised. It had lost its sphere of influence in Eastern Europe; it had sold off its immense resources to western agencies by means of a bourgeoisie that had risen from the ranks of the upper echelons of “Soviet” bureaucracy; its society was in meltdown and there was the very real prospect that the Federation would dissolve into a mosaic of new independent States. And the Russian proletariat paid a very heavy price².

After the 1990 collapse, the liquidation process of what remained of the State born of the October Revolution was not a consequence of any military confrontation but, rather, a result of the huge concentration of power represented by US capitalism. In the “Aggression Against Europe” article (1949!), it was thus argued that Russia’s “vassalage” to the US might not be a consequence of the effects of military defeat, but a result of its “corrupt leadership organization”:

“Even in the absence of a real war between the USA and Russia, this process could come about if the vassalage of the latter could be secured under the immense economic pressures wielded by the world’s most powerful capitalistic organization

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1. For the epigones of the Damen group, “The political translation of the axiom ‘inclines towards capitalism’ was supposed to reappear in an extremely vague and hypocritical form once the drastic terms distinguishing between ‘capitalism no. 1 and no. 2’ had been cast aside”, and that’s what we’ve reported here. The strongly negative judgement, which we obviously reject, is precisely the diversely assessed *political translation* of the evolution of the USSR, which was moving towards capitalism and was miles off reaching America’s level of capitalistic development. Russia’s leaning towards capitalism did not constitute an *axiom* – like any thesis yet to undergo scientific verification – and this was demonstrated with wide-ranging historical vision and economic documentation by the study contained in *Struttura economica e sociale della Russia d’oggi* [Economic and Social Structure of Today’s Russia], the long series of articles published during the 1950s and reissued in one volume by *Il programma comunista* editions, in 1976).

2. “Those years of far-reaching redevelopment were also char-

acterized by violent, end-of-the-line backlashes in Russia. Under the auspices of Jeffrey Sachs, the country was subjected to a strong dose of radically neo-liberal shock treatment. This shock therapy included measures that would account for GDP losses of 17%, 19% and 11% in the years 1991-93 respectively. Following the fall of Gorbaciov (which US intelligence may have helped engineer), Yeltsin swiftly set about re-converting the economy, bowing to the pressures of western “advice” and practically handing it over to the private sector (read: oligarchs). The dollarization of the national economy did the rest in what amounted to a genuine spoliation (following the crisis of the rouble, the dollar accounted for 84% of trade exchanges in Russia in 1998). This is the context of the Brzezinski Plan [...], a shrewd series of pressures and incentives to surround Russia completely, help NATO to expand eastwards, and integrate Ukraine, while encouraging Chechen nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism” (A. Visalli, *Krisis*, available in *Sinistrairete*).

– perhaps, in the future, the Anglo-American State which is already being talked about – and by means of a compromise which would see Russia's leadership organization allowing itself to be bought out at a high price. There would be no need for an out and out campaign of destruction and occupation [...]”.

This is precisely what occurred in the terrible final decade of the last century. With Yeltsin at the helm, Russia was well and truly ransacked by the capitalist West, and a new ruling class made money hand over fist at the expense of a population exposed to the delights of a market freed from the ties and constraints of public control. At long last the newly impoverished Russian proletariat discovered what real democracy was all about.

At the end of the 1990s Russia looked to be on the verge of throwing in the towel, a victim of the sucker punch inflicted by the world's supreme – and only – dominant imperialism. The implosion unequivocally confirmed what our movement had been saying with regard to the socio-economic nature of the USSR: in its advance towards capitalism, it had collapsed due to the action of factors typical of a completely mercantile society. Had this not occurred, neither the defeat in Afghanistan nor the manoeuvrings of enemy imperialisms (which nonetheless played their part) would have sufficed. Behind the disintegration was the formidable pressure of world markets on the still budding capitalistic structure of the USSR and its satellites and the gradual penetration of western goods and capitals within the confines of its vast protectionist territory, along with lifestyles and ways of thinking typical of “western civilization” (as a hegemonic result).

Both the propensity of American imperialism for global domination and the relative weakness of Russian

imperialism were confirmed by historical events, but they were already clear to our movement in times of total “bipolarism”:

“Those who are dazzled by Russian imperialism to the extent that they forget the appalling force of domination and oppression implicit in American power; risk becoming victims of the democratic and fair-weather liberal deviations which are the worst enemy of Marxism. Unsurprisingly, the liberal-democratic message has its pulpit in the home of the world's most powerful imperialism. These admirers fail to see how Russia, whose expansionism remains colonial in nature (occupying territories of minor States), is still in the inferior phase of imperialism: the imperialism of armies, i.e., the kind of imperialism that was defeated twice over in the world war [...] All existing States are enemies of the proletariat and the communist revolution, but they are not on an equal footing. What matters more than anything for the proletariat (which will witness all the world's States uniting against it as soon as it moves to take power) is that it becomes aware of the strength of its most mighty enemy, better armed than all the rest, and capable of reacting to offence anywhere in the world” (“Imperialismo delle portaerei” [Aircraft-Carriers Imperialism], *Il programma comunista*, no. 2/1957).

The democratic and fair-weather liberal deviations – with their pompous “end of history” formula once the USSR had collapsed – are still the worst enemy of Marxism. Their ideological onslaught remains constant and their immense propaganda machine is able to pass off the most brazen acts of subjugation – culminating, if needs be, in warlike devastation – as commendable acts of “liberation and progress”, perfectly in keeping with the traditional colonialism that

brought “civilization” to a “world of backwardness and ignorance”.

Still today the West expects to be able to impose a flagrantly decadent and threadbare ideology on the world. An ideology that associates economic liberalism with an idea of “freedom” centred upon the individual and their insatiable “needs” to be satisfied in the market; a freedom only apparently at odds with the introduction of totalitarian forms of social control (poorly camouflaged by media hypocrisy) in “liberal and democratic” societies marred by growing violence and currents of divisiveness. One effect of the systematic overturning of historical truth and the equally systematic misrepresentation of facts that would otherwise cut the ground from under the official versions, is the unsurprising transformation of today's followers of the ultra-Nationalist and pro-Nazi Ukrainian, Stepan Bandera (1909-1959), imitators of the traitorous butchers of Jews and Russian and Polish proletarians during the German occupation: in defence of Ukraine, they are being peddled as patriotic heroes and freedom defenders³.

And neither will it come as a surprise to learn that today, in Germany, the keenest supporters of the war against “autocratic” Russia are to be found in the radical and pacifist “left-than-left” Green party, that can also boast the Minister of Foreign Affairs among its members in the coalition government. The green lady minister seems convinced that Russia's defeat will herald the end of fossil fuels (which Russia is guilty of exporting), and that the high road to the flowery world of renewables will be opened up with bombs. In the variegated world of the European “Left”, similar kinds of idiocy can be found everywhere. The only difficulty lies in distinguishing between these real, useful idiots and the mercenaries who have been hired to turn the spit-roast (in times of genetic engineering means there's nothing to prevent hybridization between the

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3. A historical reconstruction of how “Banderism” survived and was stoked up by American intelligence services with an eye on destabilisation, can be found in the following article, available in *sinistrainrete*: Annie Lacroix-Riz, “C'è un contesto storico che spiega perché la Russia è stata messa all'angolo”.

two!). We have always maintained that beneath the veneer of the pacifist lies a warmonger, and that if you scratch a democrat you'll find a fascist. The notion that false opposites are destined to join as one in an anti-proletarian stance is a historical necessity our Communist Left has always flagged up, and today the facts would increasingly seem to bear us out. A healthy sign for those who can see the final judgement of History in what appear to be paradoxes.

The Limits of Current Russian Imperialism

To conclude on the "concentration of power" represented by the current imperialisms, it cannot be denied that the United States remains by far the dominant player. So much so that in its role as a global *rentier* State it can allow itself a never-ending and constantly growing foreign deficit to guarantee a continual flow of goods and capitals across continents and oceans.

How can we define the nature of the Russian State today? Straddling the end of the last century and the new, the Russian bourgeoisie regained control of State power under the auspices of Putin's governments, thus exorcising the danger that Russia might disappear as an autonomous "concentration of power". These governments enacted an authoritarian sea change among institutions and reaffirmed the ties between the State and large monopolistic groups on new grounds, thus providing the Russian concentration of power with a strategic perspective.

The "Bonapartist" breakthrough sought by the social and economic powers that Putin stood for met with little resistance from a proletariat whose "blood and tears" experience

during the decade of western democratic wonders was still fresh in the memory. Moreover, the new regime had also imposed powerful limits on blood feuds within the oligarchies and on the independent actions of those oligarchical sectors most closely tied to the centres of western finance, and the protagonists behind a huge outflow of capital to foreign tax havens during the 1990s. Within the context of a general increase in capital movements to and from abroad, the stabilisation was conducive to a considerable return flow in the form of direct investments. It should be stressed that the return flow "*was largely centred around energy and raw materials, the retail trade and other services, while the industrial sectors (excepting the food industry) lagged behind, in stark contrast to China.*"⁴

This data is extremely useful when seeking to define the nature of Russian capitalism and its limits. If we consider the export of capital – a characteristic trait of imperialism – it transpires that the direct foreign investments of Russia amounted to just 4% of those of America in 2021 (UNCTAD data), even if they had grown notably since the 1990s. And they were directed for the most part towards an area that coincided with ex-"Soviet" territories. The income that helped feed investment inflows was concentrated primarily in the energy and raw material sectors but not the industrial sector, where the dependence on foreign production persists.

All these elements serve to confirm that the definition of *weak imperialism* attributed to the USSR by our movement is still largely relevant when it comes to measures carried out by the Russian power. Today Russia is less exposed to foreign

debt and is more dynamic in the export of capital, but it remains heavily dependent on industrial products imported from abroad and returns from energy. Russian ambitions to turn the clock back and resume its past imperialist role (in truth greatly restricted, as the country's failure to live up to expectations and its eventual collapse demonstrate) embrace a substantial military potential that cannot be supported by an adequate economic base because it depends on the export of energy and raw materials and their oscillating prices.

With these assumptions, Russian imperialism – the projection of interests of huge domestic monopolistic groups – is able to flex its muscles within an area adjacent to the still vast borders of the Federation, yet well short of the hegemonic ambitions beyond what is considered to be an albeit extensive area of "security". As at the time of the USSR, "*capital exports and the possession of a corresponding network of economic – and particularly financial – interests all over the world*" are of secondary importance compared with the dominating traits of *army imperialism*. The intervention in Ukraine – like those in the past in Caucasia or Central Asia – is confirmation of this. And while it is true that the military initiatives in Syria and North Africa project Russian interests well beyond the borders of regional power, their undertaking is motivated principally by military and strategic considerations as a response and effort to contain the pressure of American imperialism. As the eastward expansion of NATO demonstrates, the threat from the West in Ukraine is undoubtedly military in character and comes complete with a formidable system of *intelligence*⁵. It is instrumental to paving the way for financial penetration, the plundering of Ukrainian agricultural, mineral and energy resources and the brutal exploitation of Ukraine's proletariat. In this sense it is *totally imperialist* in character⁶. Taking into consideration the limits of Russian imperialism, the "military

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4. https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/la-transizione-nell-economia-russa_%28XXI-Secolo%29/

5. To give a recent example of such manoeuvrings, see *I piani americani che hanno indotto Mosca alla guerra* by Davide Gagliano, available in Sinistrainrete 25th July 2022.

6. An instructive article on plans to plunder the Ukrainian nation can be found on M. Roberts's blog. See "Ukraine, the Invasion of Capital" <https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2022/08/13/ukraine-the-invasion-of-capital/>

operation” in Ukraine would have been suicidal if the overall context hadn’t already changed, if the earlier equilibrium between opposing concentrations of power hadn’t already fallen through and if the State hadn’t embraced a broader strategic perspective, Eurasian in outlook. A year after the foundation of the Eurasian Economic Union in 2014 (the year of the Maidan *coup d’état*), Putin himself announced the setting up of the project for Eurasian integration, which is currently going full steam ahead, courtesy numerous infrastructure projects promoted and financed mainly by China⁷.

In its perennial see-sawing between East and West, Russia has today been cast aside by Europe and thrown into the arms of the up and coming powerhouse on the block, China. If Russian imperialism does indeed have the “military” limitations we spoke of, “China possesses all the classic characteristics of imperialism delineated by Lenin: state-monopolistic capitalism, exportation of capital, an expansionist drive to conquer foreign markets and spheres of influence, an expansionist foreign policy geared to establishing control of trade routes, etc. Russian imperialism is different in nature. Its objectives are more circumscribed and are dictated in large part by strategic and military considerations.”⁸

Thus, the strengthening of Sino-Russian ties is the chief factor behind the shift towards new scenarios.

War Against Europe with Eurasia in Mind

We should like to return to our 1949 *Prometeo* article, a surprisingly lucid

piece that is almost prophetic in its tracing out of the historical directions events would eventually take during the clash between imperialisms. There was nothing particularly intuitive or ingenious underpinning the predictions, but there was a historical vision *along Marxist lines* that went beyond any immediatist vision and projected a long-term perspective. The Ukraine crisis of today corroborates the validity of the predictions, including those pertinent to the characteristics of the coming war. So we had to wait seventy years? *Okay!*

To the question: “*What will America’s next possible war – for which immense military credits are being voted) – look like? ...*”, the answer is that it would be “*the most earth-shaking act of aggression, invasion, oppression and enslavement in the history of the world*”. And, in addition, we are told, “*the war is already under way because the undertaking is strictly bound up with American interventions in the European wars of 1917 and 1942. All considered, it is the crowning moment of a process that sees the concentration of an immense, destructive military force in a supreme centre of domination and defence of the current – capitalistic – class regime, and the fashioning of ideal conditions to suffocate the revolution of workers in any country across the world.*” (“*Aggressione all’Europe*”, cit.)

The war in Ukraine has provided the Atlantic powerhouse with the *much sought after* opportunity to re-assert itself as the undisputed master of the western assembly to the detriment of its European rivals-allies, while dictating policy on all the main fronts (information, domestic politics, ener-

gy, war and the economy). What we have here is, therefore, the latest step along the road towards that “aggression against Europe” which began in far away 1917, and which our movement recognized as the fundamental trajectory of inter-imperialist relations. Castrating Europe yesteryear may have signified annihilating the only potential imperialist adversary on the way to world conquest. But today – after helping to reduce Europe to a politico-military nonentity by caging it up in a *non-State* (the EU!) – the aggression continues unabated: hence the attempts to demolish its productive force, annul the conditions underlying the German surplus and, after severing any structural ties with the vast Eurasian markets, to reduce it to a sub-branch status – economically *as well* – of the Atlantic imperialist centre.⁹

With the war in Ukraine, Europe’s complete subservience revealed itself in ways that would have been surprising if the historical premises had not been quite so self-evident. The deplorable and unconditional support of the European bourgeoisie – flaunted so convincingly in certain sectors, in others with gritted teeth – for America’s decision to pursue a prolonged war against Russia only serves to ratify the decline and complete subjugation of Europe’s time worn capitalisms, which even go so far as to deny themselves an autonomous defence policy for their own vital economic interests. By breaking the natural link between Western Europe’s economy and Russia’s energy resources, Germany’s industrial system is the first to go to the wall, with wide-ranging consequences for the rest of the continent. It is a direct

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7. https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/la-russia-e-i-progetti-di-integrazione-eurasiatici_%28Atlante-Geopolitico%29/

8. <https://www.marxist.com/l-imperialismo-oggi-e-il-carattere-di-russia-e-cina.htm>

9. “*Is Russia alone the target of America’s war policy? Within a western context it appears glaringly obvious to us that America is inclined to weaken and, where possible, even get rid of the ‘Rhine-based’ European project which, very generally speaking, we can take to be founded on a low cost energy supply and a deflation-*

ary industrial model. This would necessarily imply crushing any lasting possibility of integration between European manufacturing and finance, and energy, raw materials, technology and the huge Russian and Chinese markets, as well as frustrating Italian and German efforts to expand into the markets of Russia, China and ‘the others’ and lay down some kind of manufacturing base.” Raffaele Picarelli, “*Guerra in Ucraina e Nuovo Ordine Mondiale*”, <https://www.sinistrainrete.info/geopolitica/23364-raffaele-picarelli-guerra-in-ucraina-e-nuovo-ordine-mondiale.html>.

attack on the very foundations of the European capitalism that revolves around the German magnet, with political-military subjugation performing the same function as the carpet-bombing that wiped out the productive capacity of the Axis powers.

It is also the continuation of the attack on the Euro, which dared to challenge the hegemony of the dollar. In fact when the Euro was introduced, the reaction of the United States “*was all too familiar. They started poking around looking for pockets of destabilization: in the Middle East the Iraqi question stands out, while in Europe there was Yugoslavia. The bombing of the European country led in particular to an immediate 30% devaluation in the value of the Euro (which had started off very positively); the invasion of Iraq in 2003 sparked off a dizzying increase in oil prices, while that of Libya brought an end to the pan-Arab currency project pegged to gold.*” (A. Visalli, *Krisis*, cit. in note 2).

There is no shortage of examples of what the author (with a sensational formula) calls “the geopolitics of chaos”.

The “sanction mongers” predicted that one of the first effects of the sanctions imposed on Russia would have been the collapse of the rouble. Instead, its value went up in concomitance with steep rises in the cost of energy, while the Euro quickly fell off a cliff, below parity with the dollar.

The war in Ukraine is, then, to all intents and purposes, a proxy war between the United States and Russia,

but it is being fought on *European* soil, with *European* cannon fodder, with devastating consequences for *European* economic structures and the living conditions of *European* proletarians. And so, once again, and above all, a war against *Europe*. Despite the ruinous historical precedents – from Napoleon to Hitler – Europe persists in viewing Russia as an Eastern threat, and instead of seeing it as a part of Europe, and a bridge towards the Asian Orient, it views it as something to subjugate and ransack. And so, as in preceding wars, “*Europe’s flock of bourgeois imbeciles*” (see “*Ancora America*” [America Again], in *Prometeo*, no. 8, 1947), which Stalin’s USSR joined during the Second World War, shoots itself in the foot by entrusting its destiny to a cumbersome Atlantic ally generously disposed to supplying European suckers with credit, bombs and also, today, highly expensive (and really poor quality) gas.

One of the reasons for the United States tightening its grip on the West is that it can then speed up its efforts to encircle Eurasia. First it has to enlist a Germany-dominated Europe as a subordinate before proceeding to crush Russia and, later, China. The new phase is simply the latest in “*a single invasion that passed through Versailles in 1917-18 before setting off for Berlin. Only Berlin? No, you still applauding fools, Moscow too...*” (“*Aggressione all’Europa*”, cit.).

Today the *still applauding fools* include a truly vast and unprecedented array of corrupt, lowlife politicians still pulling the strings of governments on behalf of the Atlantic mas-

ter, albeit with less confidence now after descending many steps while “*selling off the honour of their State*” (“*America*”, *Prometeo*, no. 7, 1947) – a fact unlikely to arouse feelings of indignation among communists, since everything boils down to a question of *price*, under capitalism¹⁰.

More than seventy years after the publication of “*Aggressione all’Europa*”, the predictive power of Marxism proves its worth, and Moscow – no matter if it is no longer “*Soviet*” since it is still there standing up to the new imperialist drive to conquer the world – remains the objective of a new surging ambition to complete the project of Eurasian submission.

Today Russia is Europe’s last bulwark against the expansion of American imperialism from the Atlantic to the Urals. Beyond these mountains lie the immense spaces of Eurasia whose inestimable wealth is a mouth-watering prospect, and a point of contention with the great new enemy: China. China’s present strength is a product of the self-same expansion of American and western imperialism from the moment that – with the advent of the “unipolar” world – the excess capitals of western imperialist centres began pouring into the huge Asiatic basins of a low-cost labour force, stoking up the impetuous development of Chinese capitalism. Gradually this capitalism developed under the guiding hand of the centralised State until it reached the stage where it could statistically compete with and surpass the records of the old Atlantic master; and as it continued to supply the American market with goods and capitals in exchange for dollars, so the reality of an interchange – which supplied one pole with workers, goods and capitals that were the fruit of productive processes, while the other was paid in international fiduciary currency underwritten by a growing public debt financed by the self-same suppliers of capitals and goods – became more evident and unsustainable. As

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10. The palpable absence of a political class which is anything but *national* helps feed the fires of sovereigntist sentiment. Any wishful thinking on their part evaporates within the context of worldwide imperialism, where autonomous homelands can find no elbow room, being squeezed out by large power groupings which individual nations of varying importance must bow down to, be it for love or out of necessity. An understanding of this lesson may have played a role in the far from agonized conversion of the Italian anti-euro sovereigntist Luigi Di Maio: the one-time soft drinks salesman turned Big Minister explained away his conversion with newly found awareness, claiming “*there are things you can do and others you can’t do*”!!!. The things you can’t do – we would add – are those that displease the bosses. Now a fully-fledged man, our Luigi has shown he understands the difference between *value* and *price*, opting in no uncertain manner for the latter.

the process developed, the economic power ratios necessarily changed: on one side there was an excessive rise in financial values – more and more artificial– while on the other there was an enormous building up of productive forces, i.e., of the fundamental prerequisite at the very basis of that power.

The self-same economic processes of capital expansion that had worn down the protectionist set up in the “Soviet” sphere of influence until it broke apart, had irreversibly undermined the foundations of American economic power. In the America-centric “unipolar” set up, an interdependence had been established whereby all the main actors could benefit. The capitals, **albeit with growing difficulty due to the general fall in the rate of increase in production**, found ways to valorise themselves in the productive hotbed of Eastern Asia, before then flowing back into the financial centres of the dominant imperialism. This was all very well until the crisis of so-called globalization triggered by the 2008-2009 collapse. The sole guarantor of interdependence that was functional to the worldwide capitalist order was – and still is – American military power, beyond compare when it comes to financing, technologies, deployment of forces in every area of the world and interventionist strategies, be they direct or via partisanships recruited directly in the field.

NATO’s expansion into Eastern Europe is one of America’s main strategic gambits in a pincer movement aimed at encircling Eurasia, where the greatest threats to the continuation of her global imperialist influence are concentrated. By now the line-ups of the future (or present?) war seem more or less definitive: Anglo-Saxon world, Japan and the European Union versus China, Russia and Iran. The rest of the world sits on the fence, waiting to see how the forces play out. Old, belligerent capitalisms in decline versus new, emerging capitalisms. Advocating a “pacific” expansion of its own sphere

of influence, China saw Ukraine as an essential hub in its attempts to create infrastructures of interchange on land and sea (Silk Roads) in the direction of Old Europe.

China’s penetration of Ukraine took the form of huge investments, in perfect keeping with the standard mode of an imperialism in expansion. Call it “pacific”, but the Chinese approach falls within the clash dynamics of imperialisms and, as such, could easily turn into a war if her efforts were unceremoniously hampered by the dominant imperialism which, in turn, could interpret events as an “act of aggression” against the old order.

If Ukraine is an essential hub for the three main concentrations of power (United States, Russia and China), her being invaded is a challenge to the centuries-old western hegemony in the world. As such, the situation is unacceptable for the old rulers. The very fact that Russia has dared to challenge the Atlantic colossus in war is a sign that questions are being asked about that hegemony. Either it reasserts itself according to the new forces in play, or it disappears.

Capitalism at stake

On a superficial level, what we have here are two alternatives: a strengthening of Atlantic global supremacy, or the affirmation of a new ‘multipolar’ order that stretches out along the different silk roads emerging from Chinese production hubs, huge integrated Eurasian land infrastructures that extend seawards in the directions of Africa and Latin America.

Faced with alternatives of such powerful concentrations, the prospect of direct confrontation – and possibly an all-out war – is not hard to imagine. In the northern hemisphere, tension is mounting: in Europe, the position of Germany – running with the hare and hunting with the hounds up until recently, siding with the east economically and very firmly with the west politically – is once again crucial. The situation demands that a choice be made. America requires

Germany’s allegiance, and the price she seems willing to pay is that of allowing its ally-enemy to rearm in an anti-Russian context. But with the imposition of sanctions on Russia, it is Germany that is currently paying the highest price in socio-economic terms. On a wider scale, and in a much more advanced phase of the “aggression against Europe”, we have a scenario similar to that of the Kosovo war, when NATO attacked Serbia on the pretext of discrimination against the Kosovo Albanians, and Russia was impotent to act. Unsurprisingly, the border between Kosovo and Serbia is once again becoming a dangerous hotbed of tensions, and Russia would be hard pressed to keep its distance if war were to break out. NATO’s war against Serbia was first and foremost an attempt to delimit Germany’s presence in the Balkans after the civil war in Yugoslavia had opened the floodgates to German capital in the area. Up until now the growing sphere of German influence in the East has been of a mainly economic nature, with politics taking a back seat. But current developments may well confirm the re-launching of Germany as an active imperialism, militarily speaking too, albeit still in a subordinate role.

In the Pacific area, too, nerves are taut as America continues to fan the flames of discord (Pelosi’s recent visit to Taiwan proving the latest example). The front line runs between the eastern coast of China and Japan to the north, Formosa and, to the south, along the entire coastal and insular arc that denotes the maritime transit routes between the Pacific and Indian oceans. Japan is also rearming at pace, and could be given the green light by the USA to develop the atomic bomb (if it hasn’t already been given).

The world would seem to be on the verge of an all-out war, but we have to remember that the confrontation in progress is the result of the terminal crisis afflicting the capitalist mode of production. While the recurring eco-

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conomic crises, with their devaluation of fixed capital, sackings, etc., create the preconditions for recovery on more advanced foundations in terms of organic composition and capitalistic concentration, war sets about its radical task of physical destruction of fixed capital and surplus labour. Yet today's economic crises are always longer and more potent, as the capitalistic world's enduring failure to overcome the effects of the Great Crisis of 2008-2009 proves. Capitalism is facing a long-lasting stagnation.

War instead expresses the level of development reached by the forces of production in arms systems, which translates into a correspondingly destructive force. Today an all-out war would be too risky a solution for all involved, especially if the two sides possess symmetrical military potential. Yet even if the odds against one side winning and enjoying the fruits of victory are low, war still cannot be excluded: the governing classes of a decadent system cannot be entrusted with making sensible decisions, and once the sabre-rattling begins there's every chance boots will soon be on the ground. If, as we hope, this does not happen, it is likely there will be an intensification of the **permanent** war underway since the fall of the USSR. Alongside all the military ex-

ploits and ever more powerful and sophisticated weaponry, an increasingly important role will be played by economic sanctions, currency conflict, cyber-attacks, the information war and totalitarian State control of the people. This might not be an all-out war as we generally understand it, but rather a war that will extend to all walks of life, oppressively affecting civilian populations: a *total* war, then, *political* at heart, extremely *ideological*¹¹, and destined to last. The emergency policies put in place during the Covid-19 pandemic can be seen as a scaled down experimental model of what a similar war could mean for civilian populations in terms of social control, conditioning, repression, restrictions and rationings. The home front will take on a decisive role, becoming the fertile terrain for a reinvigorated class struggle:

"If war finds its starting point in the defeat of the working class, and if the enterprises of imperialism find the path marked by the downward spiral of the international revolution, the reasons for the revolutionary revival of the proletariat are contained within its very dynamics. The atomic bomb may or may not be used by imperialism as a technical tool of war. But no matter how over-archingly powerful

it is today, or may appear to be, the one thing imperialism will be unable to swish aside is the international and internationalist A-bomb revolution of the working class." ("Corea è il mondo" [Korea is the World], *Prometeo*, no. 1, 1950).

Nothing new under the sun. War is in the very nature of capitalism, and although it may lie dormant for long periods characterised by transitory conditions of illusory social peace, it is as irremovable as the class struggle itself. If Capital firmly prepares for war and pursues the accumulation of violence of its arsenals, it is because it knows that, sooner or later, it is going to have to face up to its historical enemy. Once again, from "Corea è il mondo":

"The world's greatest force of expansion and aggression – little does it matter if we're talking about arms, dollars or cans of meat – is brooding in the depths of America's gigantic production facilities".

Is this still true today? The United States is making moves to reaffirm its position as the world's policeman, but the show of strength and swagger emerging from its current international, military and diplomatic actions lacks the efficacy of yesteryear. The downsizing of its worldwide role, its relinquishing of its position as lynchpin of global capitalistic integration and the "exorbitant privilege" of the dollar, may all lead to an unprecedented domestic crisis which would already appear to be in the making. Unable to put paid to the process of Eurasian integration, the USA is taking cover by enlisting the support of key NATO members and its closest allies in the Pacific (Japan, Australia and New Zealand). However, its aggressive and provocative behaviour conceals an inability to bend opponents to its will solely by virtue of its continued superpower status.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine was by no means condemned unanimously across the globe, and many countries

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11. Examples of ongoing ideological wars abound. There is no need to linger on the ideological western war that clumsily pits democracy against a Russian autocracy intent on "subjugating" Europe. From a Russian perspective, we return to an article whose title says it all: "*This is Our October Revolution*", by Vitalij Tret'jakov, in *Limes*, *La fine della pace*, no. 5/2022. This is the conclusion: "*I conclude my article with an affirmation that I shall not prove, but which I invite people with an open mind to consider. In terms of their historical importance and their worldwide repercussions [sic!], the events of February and March 2022 are comparable to what happened in Russia in October 1917 [sic!], or what I still call the Great Socialist October Revolution. It's not socialism we're talking about here, but rather the fact that in February 2022 – just like in 1917 – Russia freed herself of the West's political, economic, ideological and, most importantly, psychological control. In this historical moment, it's all about the 'last, decisive battle' (words taken from the Russian national anthem) for Russia. Her victory is eagerly awaited not only by millions of her citizens but also by dozens of countries (and by many European, though they won't admit it). America's global hegemony has received an enormous body blow. The colossus on legs made of dollars knows it, and that is why she's furious. But she will collapse. She will lose. Mark my words, even if you don't believe me now. In a few years' time you will see that what I said was true."* Now, if it is true (and it is true) that socialism has nothing to do with things here, the reference to October is just nationalist rhetoric. As for everything else, while we may share the author's wishes, we'll be wary of pinning our hopes on the glorious destinies of Holy Mother Russia!

refused to go along with the application of sanctions. Rather than Russia being isolated internationally, it is the United States and its western vassals, with all their holier-than-thou sanctions and their warmonger posturing. The “South” of the world is largely against sanctions, pursuing a policy of pacification and unwilling to doff its cap to the old lord of the manor. We observe with great interest the difficulties currently afflicting the United States. Generously stocked in arms and dollars it may be, but its *gigantic production facilities* have been largely dismantled in the race to secure greater profits abroad and it is no longer in a position to support those arms and dollars in the long run. This is the objective basis of America’s spasmodic activism: it built up during the global development of capitalism from the 1970s crisis on, and is at the origin of today’s serious difficulties. Russia’s survival may well be under discussion, but even more so perhaps is that of the United States.

The world of mutually respectful sovereign states devoted to common growth – envisioned by the ideologues of the new multipolarism, by the Eurasian ambitions of Putin and by “pacific” Chinese projects – is, in our objective analysis, far from being a possible and desirable alternative¹². It’s not only the United States that is in crisis, but the entire set up that has, up until now, guaranteed the stability of world capitalism. To believe that a pacific cooperation between States can come after this is, for as long as capitalism continues to survive, pie in the sky.

The crisis in American leadership has led to a stalling of the world’s capitalistic order. A new financial shake-up – the harbinger of another massive worldwide recession – looms on the horizon, while mass protests

against the already visible effects of the economic crisis are spreading like wildfire. As the historical crisis of over-ripe capitalism takes shape and the basic conditions underlying American supremacy crumble, these are signs of a long-awaited change of scene.

The contest between newly emerging imperialist blocs is all to play for and no outcome can be taken for granted. But the most desirable solution is that which our movement indicated back in 1950:

“During the second imperialist war, 1939-1945, this party [of the revolutionary proletariat – editor’s note] should have likewise supported the breaking up of politics and acts of war within all states. A Marxist could, however, have preserved the right – without fearing that the usual libertarians accuse him of sympathizing with a tyrant – to calculate and investigate what might have happened if Hitler had triumphed in London, and England had collapsed. This self-same Marxist may well demonstrate that, for at least the last twenty years, Stalin’s regime has not been a proletarian regime [that of Putin requires no demonstration! – editor’s note], but will preserve the right to weigh up the positive revolutionary consequences that a – sadly, unlikely – collapse of American power would have in the event of a third war between states and armies”. (“Romanzo della guerra santa”, [Romance of the Holy War], *Battaglia Comunista*”, no.13, 1950, reproduced in *Il proletariato e la guerra*, Quaderni del programma comunista, no.3, 1978).

The scenario described in the above article taken from the “Sul filo del tempo” [On the thread of time] series has changed in one important respect today: the greatly wished for collapse of American power (unrivalled for so

long) is no longer “sadly, unlikely”. The Atlantic superpower’s current activism arguably betrays symptoms of a crisis that has never been dealt with before, neither at home nor abroad: a crisis that may help to bring about the long-awaited collapse. This is not ideological anti-Americanism, and we’re not making concessions to “third worldism”. No sympathy here with any country’s bourgeois classes, always ready to pounce on the proletariat whenever it sticks up for itself against oppression and exploitation. And no “trust” in the ability of the bourgeoisie to be the bearer of “national” interests, unless they be their own highly limited class interests, which are forever contrary to those of the proletariat. However that may be, we cannot help but be overjoyed at the prospect of the old beast being overthrown, forced to finally plod offstage with the tail between its legs and compelled to face up to a proletariat that has been robbed of even the most meagre crumbs of income resulting from worldwide exploitation. In this case, new and highly promising scenarios would present themselves. Seventy years down the line, and Alfa’s lapidary reply to Onorio still sounds relevant: *“the revolution is wasting time if Washington State isn’t taken out”*.

With the war in Ukraine, the historical trajectory indicated by the “Aggression Against Europe” article in *Prometeo* (1949) re-emerges forcefully into the light. The United States is cashing in: either with us or against us, the only guarantors in the West of military security and the basic principles of a free world – but, more than anything else, the eternal creditors of the Europe that was reborn from the ashes of the last World War. Europe is paying an exorbitant price, but what’s at stake is the survival of capitalism. Clearly, the unipolar set up has fallen through, and the Russian “aggression” against Europe – if we can call it that – is the final nail in its coffin.

12. https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/la-russia-e-i-progetti-di-integrazione-eurasiatici_%28Atlante-Geopolitico%29/

The difficult path of a renewed class struggle faced with war

■ If and when the Russians' so-called "special military operation" in Ukraine concludes, it will become evident to those who are not content to view reality through the deforming lens of mainstream ideology, that whatever "peace" (armistice? ceasefire? what else?) may come, will merely represent a longer or shorter pause before another chapter opens up in the headlong rush towards a third, inter-imperialist bloodbath.

There's no going back.

This is certainly not written in the stars or in the psychology of one individual or another, called onto the stage of history to play the part of the ruler of the moment, but in the material reality of the dynamics of the capitalist mode of production.

The warning signs can be read in the build-up of tension in the Indo-Pacific area, in the increasingly close relations between Russia and China, in the political and military aggression of US capitalism, in the ridiculous "European unity" which reveals its insubstantial nature, as the tortuous and still fluid formation of opposing blocks starts to take shape.

In reality, once the same data of the so-called "science of economics" has been submitted to the lucid minds of our *criticism of political economics*, it is clear that the capitalist mode of production has never freed itself of its most recent crisis (the one that exploded in 2008-9). That crisis, in turn, was the final outcome, in chronological terms, of the sequence of crises that began in the mid nineteen-seventies, when the cycle of accumulation following the Second World War finally came to an end. The structural crisis of over-production of goods and capital in which we have been immersed since then is at the root of the *need* for an intensification of the normal conflictual relations between bourgeois States.

The two years of pandemic, with the

desperate madness brought into play everywhere by a ruling class ready to transform the umpteenth tragedy, of which it itself was the cause, into a further source of profit, social (as well as health) experiments and *patrician-style rhetoric*, have made it possible to turn away peoples' eyes for a while from the spectre that is now revealing the whole of its macabre face.

As demonstrated by the same laws that govern the way Capital works, at this point the bourgeoisie is a class merely of use for monopolizing the wealth that is produced, through the dictatorship it exercises by means of national States.

And, like all the ruling classes that express now terminal forms of production, it defends and will continue to defend its rule as ferociously as it can: more "special military operations", more "peace missions", more wars and warlike skirmishes with the related massacre of proletarian and proletarianised populations, more mass destruction, more obscene ideological crusades, more repression of any dissent, right up to the unleashing of all against all.

And right now, a further "emergency" is already being prepared: a food crisis!

As communists, we have learned that only mobilisation of the proletariat can stop an imperialist war or transform it into a real class war.

This is true: but it cannot limit itself to remaining a rhetorical slogan or the expectation of instinctive action.

This mobilisation, *this revolutionary defeatism* we work towards, on a stage that instead echoes with empty rhetoric, with arrogant boasting, with self-referential impracticability, is a path that is anything but easy and simple: above all it is a practical objective that must be prepared well in advance, in the ranks of our class, the international proletariat.

And this is the point.

In these past three blood-soaked months, once again *the main absentee* seems to be this: the proletariat.

Of course many will flinch at this statement and cry scandal. But this is not a statement that intends to cast guilt on our class, nor do we mean to fuel disillusion and resignation: what we say instead is that *we cannot and must not create illusions*.

Our class is still crushed beneath the immense weight of decades of deadly counter-revolution which, under democracy, Stalinism and post-Stalinism, and Nazi-fascism, has meant the theoretical, practical and organizational dismantling of the enormous work carried out since 1848.

There is no quick recovery from a similar disaster, which trapped our class in the miserable condition of a "class in itself", confining its battles to the narrow limits of economic claims tolerated by, and compatible with, the interests of all national capitalisms.

This has clearly been seen also, and above all, over the past three months.

Apart from a few, scattered and unfortunately un-influential episodes of "anti-militarism" (summed up in the isolated and quickly forgotten refusals to load arms onto ships, or in the picketlines that managed to block goods at the keypoints of logistics for some hours), there has not been, either in Italy or elsewhere, any real *class* opposition to the war capable of extending beyond a bleating and priestly pacifism – a pacifism which, as we well know, can quickly change hats and, on a wave of moral indignation, open up the way to the most firmly convinced military intervention, "in defence of our Country under attack". This condition of passivity and consternation, of purely rhetorical and humanitarian anti-militarism has proved not to produce any encouraging outcome in the recent demos

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“against the war” in Italy and elsewhere: late in coming, marked by the usual, pointless squabbles between groups, with little participation and above all a lack of the militant spirit that should be expected of *demos against imperialist warfare*.

Colourful marches, overflowing with fine sentiments, and then everyone back to their own homes.

An even sadder – and significant – fact; neither from Russia nor from Ukraine has there been any sign of even the feeblest defeatist action against the war adventure of their “own” States, against this bourgeois, imperialist war (the only voice of dissent to be heard came from a small, battlesome “workers’ group” in Siberia).

We know: we are once again going to attract the hostility and the snubs of those who, in order to placate their conscience, believe that there is nothing more to be done and above all that nothing more should be done or risked. Yet, if (and *because*) we must fight against the war brought about by the imperialist States, we have to prepare for the *class war*, starting out from the condition in which our class

finds itself today all over the world.

This is work that can only be done by organized proletarian militants gathered around the communist party: difficult, tiring, never-ending, in contact with the rank and file of our class, amongst those who don’t even realize they are *a class*.

The powder kegs are there, all around the world: from Africa to Asia or to Latin America, they have often exploded, only to be quickly channelled into the nest of democratic, petit-bourgeois claims, after a huge sacrifice of proletarian blood, but without the causes being eliminated. And they can blow up again from one moment to the next. For this reason it cannot be expected that a revolutionary direction will descend from heaven, as so many would like it to. Despite proletarian defeats, the communist party is the only possible political expression of our class. And the task of its militants is to reawaken the physical sense of social antagonism, rekindle class hatred, encourage total opposition to the bourgeois State (to *all* bourgeois States), reawaken diffidence towards all its institutions, deny national interests

and the national economy, unmask the lies of the reformist parties and their utopian and conservative programmes.

To be effective (i.e. to allow our class to take class warfare to its extreme consequences: to become the ruling class), a direction needs action by those who have managed, in time and for some time, to fight, forming into a party, to prepare not the revolution (*revolutions are not made*), but the class *for* the revolution (*revolutions are directed*).

Our party will continue its battles for the defence of the communist programme, for the preparation of the proletariat for the revolutionary process, so that it can take this process right to the end and finally constitute the ruling class: with the *difficult practice of revolutionary politics* (operational unit of organization, tactics, programme, principles, theory) in contact with and in the ranks of the class of which we are the expression, for better or for worse. Despite the trumpeting of self-proclaimed “antagonist”, “internationalist”, “anticapitalist” groups or factions.

May 2022

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

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

PREPARE REVOLUTIONARY DEFEATISM AGAINST THE IMPERIALIST WAR!

Since the end of the Second World War (the second imperialist massacre to be more precise), Capital has never ceased to bathe the planet in blood, as well as disrupting it with its poisons and its need for self-valorization. The list of the greater or lesser wars that have followed suit since then is striking and demonstrates, even just in the black words written and printed alone, that for a long time now its rule has become one long and destructive agony, a bloodbath that grows and spreads year after year. What is happening in Ukraine is the last “episode” in time: but an “episode” which, because of its dimensions and implications, can only serve as the antecamera to others, up until the outbreak of a *third inter-imperialist massacre of world-wide dimensions*.

Only the strength of the proletariat, the same class that is sacrificed on the front and rear, can stop this bloody outrage. To recover this strength, there are two indispensable conditions: that, on the battlefields of the many struggles it is forced to engage for survival, the proletariat should finally recover its independence in the fight against its historical enemy, the bourgeoisie and its State with the institutions representing it, which hold it locked in their grasp to the point of strangulation, like an octopus; and that its avantgarde should get organized, joining and reinforcing the revolutionary party, which does not descend from heaven (as too many imagine) but has worked and still works stubbornly to defend it and prepare it for the revolution, for the seizing of power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the indispensable and transitory tool for overthrowing and getting rid of Capital into the trashcan of history, preparing for the classless society,

for communism. The path is long and fraught with difficulty: but it is the only one possible. An inevitable and necessary stage is that of *revolutionary defeatism*: inevitable because the inter-imperialist war that is being prepared is inevitable, even, and above all, in times of “peace” (that illusory silence between one explosion and another, which in reality is not “peace” at all). This means the collective and organized refusal to obey the military, political and economic demands of our “own” national capital and transform the conflict, whether looming or ongoing, into a *class war*, a *civil war*, a *war for power*. The catchword must again become the battle cry of the proletariat.

We know, however, that if it is not to become an empty slogan for placating the conscience of amateur-theatrical revolutionaries, that battle cry must be prepared starting from when it seems a long way off and almost beyond reach – as it appears today to those who do not believe in the bragging of those who get the wrong end of the stick and announce to the world that “the objective conditions have already matured and only the revolutionary lead is missing”. No, that is not how things stand: this is demonstrated by the fact that in almost eight months of war in Ukraine, acts of *authentic revolutionary defeatism* have been substantially non-existent – the sort that were not missing, for example, amongst any of the belligerent parties in the First World War: resistance to conscription and mass desertion, the refusal to obey orders, dialogue and fraternization between opposing trenches and, most of all, strikes in the cities destroyed by bombardment...in short, what happened in the First World War, opening the way to Red October. Unless we want to claim that they are the

same as those scarce, scattered, bleating and priestly marches throughout the world that have followed banners proclaiming a generic “No to war”..!

The obscene vampire going under the name of Capital does not die of its own accord. Its death throes are savage, destructive and self-destructive. A stake must therefore be driven through its heart: a certainty that comes to us from afar but in flaming red, 1848. And this outcome must be prepared, just as *the class war against imperialist war* must be, starting out from reality, i.e. that of a proletariat still crushed and paralyzed beneath decades of fatal defeats and poisoned by all the ideological outpourings of the ruling culture. Of course, the same old mole is working in our favour: the crises (for now only economic and financial but soon bound to become social as well) follow one after the other, “guarantees” and “rights” go up in a puff of smoke, like the meagre savings of the proletariat, in a matter of just a few mornings, poverty and anguish grow visibly, the army of proletarians and the proletarianized fleeing death by famine, war and repression swell exponentially, here and there rebellions break out... There is no lack of work for communists to do: but it must be done with our feet firmly on the ground!

And so, if the catchword of *revolutionary defeatism* is not to remain just a fine story, then the outcome must be prepared today. Let’s start from the ABC and work around this, so that, in terms of actual facts, there is a return of that class antagonism that is still struggling to emerge today. Let’s launch again the operational keypoints for recovering and organizing revolutionary defeatism:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Refusal to accept economic and social sacrifices in the name of the “national economy”.2. Organization of the battle to defend the living and working conditions of proletarians, to strike a blow at the bourgeois war effort.3. Open break with the social pact and a determined return to the methods and objectives of the | <ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Refusal to take sides (nationalist, religious, patriotic, mercenary, humanitarian, pacifist) in favour of any of the imperialist fronts.5. Strike action leading to a general | <ol style="list-style-type: none">6. Organized disobedience to the orders of the military hierarchy, allowing our “own” State to be defeated and holding on firmly to the weapons for defending and freeing ourselves from the tentacles of the bourgeois institutions. |
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September 2022

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

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

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

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

We greet with enthusiasm the rebellion of the young women and the proletarians in Iran

On 13 October last in Teheran, Masha Amini, a twenty-two-year-old girl from Iranian Kurdistan was arrested by the religious police for “improper use” of the veil. Three days later the girl died of the blows she had received at the police station. As is well known, Masha’s death was the spark that ignited the explosion of the contradictions which had been brewing in Iranian society for some time, giving rise to a wave of harsh protests that is still far from being placated. The State replied with a viciously violent campaign of repression: attacks on demonstrations, arrests and imprisonment, shots fired into the crowds and cold-blooded murders (even of a child). The demonstrators are mainly young girls who were soon supported by their peers and by adults of both genders. They were also joined, with determined strikes, by the Iranian proletariat who had been in a state of unrest for some time, such as the workers from the Damavand petrochemical complex in Assalouyeh, the Abadan and Kangan refineries, the Kian Tire tyre factory in Teheran and tractor factories (it is estimated that there have been around 2000-3000 strikes yearly in the country over the past few years), as well as other plants and workplaces around the country... The anger that had long been seething over the daily oppression of young proletarian women (or those destined to join their ranks), obliged by unemployment to turn to domestic and care work due to the long economic-social world crisis – oppression totally functional to the need for control and suppression by the State, the armed wing of capitalism – this anger finally exploded, becoming the spark that lit a fire spreading to other sectors of society.

We greet with enthusiasm the rebellion which is spreading like wildfire through brushwood, for it demonstrates that class war can and must be re-ignited when the sum total of suffering due to the dominion of Capital oversteps a certain limit: as they offer the international proletariat a demonstration of courage that must not be wasted or forgotten, the young people of Iran are showing, unawares, that class warfare cannot be “abolished” or “wiped out”! Our enthusiasm must be accompanied by renewed efforts to offer the rebellion brewing in Iran, as elsewhere, the necessary theoretical, political and organizational guidance. Without this, even the most generous of rebellions are destined to die out or be choked in bloodshed. And too much blood has already been shed by the international proletariat in its long history of struggle and battles, dramatic defeats and few, but splendid victories.

November 2022

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

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

WAR, DISASTER, ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION, HIGH COST OF LIVING AND THE OTHER TREATS BESTOWED BY BOURGEOIS RULE

*Marches are not enough! We need widespread organization
for a long and radical class struggle against the capitalist state,
its institutions and all its parties!*

1. **Organization** of struggles to defend living and working conditions, to strike a hard blow at the economic and political interests of the bourgeoisie
2. **Refusal** to accept economic and social sacrifices on behalf of the “national economy”
3. **An open break** with the social pact and a determined return to the methods and objectives of the class war, the only real and feasible internationalist solidarity for us proletarians, in imperialist metropolises as well as in their periphery
4. **Refusal** of all partisan complicity (nationalist, religious, patriotic, mercenary, humanitarian, pseudo-socialist, pacifist...) on behalf of any State or fronts of States involved in the wars
5. **Economic and social strike action** leading to real *general strikes* in order to paralyse the life of the nation and open up paths for *political strikes*, able to slow down and prevent any war mobilisation and propaganda

Only on the basis of these *practical principles* will it be possible to prepare for refuting the poverty, pain and grieving that strike the majority of our class. A class that is sacrificed on the frontlines of war as in the rearguard, in the name of “fatherlands” which are mere criminal associations whose aim is to perpetrate capitalist exploitation – an exploitation that over the span of more than two centuries is undermining the conditions for our species and nature – of which we are part – to continue surviving.

With these principles (and in the course of the battles that it is and will be obliged to fight), our class, the immense crowd of people who in order to live can do no more than sell their labour, will be able to recover independence in the struggle against their historical enemy, the bourgeoisie and the multitudes of intellectualoid half classes and parasites that support it, against the State and their institutions.

But not unless the avantgardes of our class struggle organise on the basis of this content (and not only of the necessary but limited terrain of union work, environment, social issues, etc...), meeting and reinforcing the party of communist revolution, will it be possible to prepare for *open anti-militarist, defeatist and anti-patriotic action*. Which means:

Allowing one's own State and its allies to be defeated, with organised disobedience towards military hierarchies, fraternising with our class brothers (also trapped in their own “fatherlands”), holding on to the arms in order to first defend ourselves and then free ourselves from the tentacles of the bourgeois institutions.

We must not concede to pacifism, ecologism or any other “-ism” offered by those who propose apparently easy and practicable solutions to the drama and disasters caused by the capitalist mode of production, or all those who shout and bang their fists on the table, in their effort to make us believe they can be remedied, on condition that... the manouverers are changed! All attempts to reform bourgeois society (from democratic social reformism reminiscent of the eighteen-hundreds, to that of Christian or Islamic inspiration, including “national-socialist” and populist) have only served to show *the way the more intelligent and educated part of the ruling bourgeoisie wishes to and succeeds in perpetrating its own devastating dictatorship.*

Faced with the great potential represented by the *forces* of production, the limits and horrors of the *forms* of capitalist production (bourgeois property, exploitation of the workforce and nature, monopoly of products and production capacity: guaranteed forms, justified and sustained by the State institutions) demonstrate the need for a movement to change *the existing state of affairs.*

But we must not come defenceless and unprepared to the day when that movement will take concrete shape. Its preparation and direction, which the immense class of salaried workers is obliged and summoned to undertake, needs a weapon: the Communist Party, in its operational unity in terms of organization, tactics, programme, principles, theory. And to undertake the great work of making this weapon effective and operational, the comrades of our party call on you.

December 2022

Other chickens come home to roost

The umpteenth brutal murder, in early January, of the young African-American Tire Nichols at the hands of the US police, this time in Memphis (Tennessee), tragically demonstrates what we have never ceased to reiterate, year after year, decade after decade. Racism is not a “color” issue, but a class issue: as is known, the five uniformed murderers are African-Americans like their victim. Other chickens come home to roost: the police, the “forces of order”, are the armed wing of the State, and the State is the armed wing of Capital – this is the true chain of command!

When George Floyd and, shortly after, Breonna Taylor and other African-Americans were killed in very similar circumstances three years ago, protests and riots broke out across the country, and the attention of the media and public opinion focused on the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, which had been present on the US scene for about ten years. Back then, as we see from reading articles already published by our press in the mid-60s, we devoted quite a lot of space to racism in the USA and to the so-called “black question”, precisely demonstrating its class matrix.

We also denounced the approach of organizations such as BLM, which, with a substantially reformist approach, entirely internal to the system and the institutions, have the role of allowing the revolt of the African-American proletarians and sub-proletarians to simmer down by channeling their just anger into a democratic perspective, fully functional to maintaining the status quo. It is no coincidence that, after the assassination of Nichols in Memphis, the protests around the country have been mild, almost half-hearted, pervaded by a tearful and resigned sense of impotence.

Other chickens are coming home to roost: the society of Capital is in a state of permanent war, not only between imperialist factions and interests on an inevitable collision course, but also and above all against the proletariat and its potential global threat: a daily war, conducted in the workplace, in the social sphere, in defensive struggles, as well as on the battlefields. It is time to realize this and to make a clean sweep of any illusion of a peaceful coexistence between classes, based on the rhetoric of the “best of all possible worlds”. Only then will the proletarian threat become real rather than just potential. We shall never cease to work for it.

January 2023

P.S.: The slaughter continues. A few days after the murder of Nichols, on February 1, on the outskirts of Los Angeles, the cops shot and killed Anthony Lowe, a 36-year-old African-American man with no legs and in a wheelchair. Apparently the cops felt threatened, because he had a knife...

EIGHTH OF MARCH TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY THREE

Comrades and proletarian sisters!

One year on from the return to normal of the health emergency grafted onto the economic crisis which is so far from being solved (and impossible to solve!), the fanfares of bourgeois ideology and practice no longer have the courage to blather that *nothing will ever be the same as before!* At home, at work, in local neighbourhoods, your (our) living conditions are merely getting worse. Although in the world of work you are made use of *mostly in the lower paid and socially less acknowledged jobs*, you continue to suffer *mass lay-offs*, only to be imprisoned in the underpaid or even unpaid work of domestic care and health assistance, suffering further reductions in income with the excuse of *part-time* (none other than a cut in salary for the same work concentrated into fewer hours) or *smart work* (an updated and technically modernised form of *self exploitation in home working*) as well as reductions in hours. And you continue to be the last to be employed.

Whoever stays on in a company with increasingly precarious contracts that actually create precarity knows very well that there is no reduction in murder or attempted murder in the workplace (what the bosses call “accidents”) and all those “professional illnesses”, or the pressure, even blackmail, and sexual abuse in the name of insistence on increased productivity. Meanwhile, with the continuous drop in financing destined for that *scam of the welfare state*, what multiply a thousand times over are the burden and exhaustion of everything concerning reproduction, health care and assistance and home management, which you are already forced to deal with by the social division of work *characteristic of the capitalist mode of production. This is a social division which, together with private property of the means of production has inherited and aggravated forms of patriarchal rule, as clearly shown in the theocratic régimes of Iran and Afghanistan and, more subtly, in secular régimes in the rest of the world.*

The tempests of war continue to rage in a world that is ecologically devastated and the unsustainability of our living and working conditions becomes more evident every day. All the institutions in which the Capital State is organised merely amount to deceit and imprisonment: this has been and continues to be experienced, in the pain and grief of their abused, starved, bombed and executed bodies, by the women of the “Fatherlands” (the name by which the State, the capitalist collective whose government is always and only *the business committee of the impersonal bourgeois class*, calls itself, when it prepares to send us out to die), who are already suffering or have suffered – from neighbouring

Russia and Ukraine to ravaged Palestine, from Syria to Iraq and Africa...

This world and this way of life cannot be improved: *female emancipation without class war driven to the ultimate conclusion*, i.e. without social and political revolution, is a *reformist illusion* which masks the reality of a society divided into classes: there are bourgeois women who are accomplices, sharing the command and exploitation of your work in reproduction and production, and their “emancipation” is none other than *the sharing of bourgeois power*; there are women intellectuals and professional figures belonging to the modern “half classes”, and their “emancipation” is none other than *the aspiration towards greater social prestige and a bigger share when handing out the wealth produced by your work of reproduction and production.*

Comrades, proletarian sisters!

Do not let yourselves be deceived by “feminist” movements that astutely proclaim the class war over: they are merely afraid to be swept away by your proletarian strength and exploit your practical needs and oppression.

Your destiny lies in your own hands, in your hearts and minds - and above all in your battles to defend yourselves from the world of Capital, to fight it and overthrow it, together with the patriarchal society that fathered it and has made it a tool of dominion.

Economic and social battles against unemployment and for pay rises, satisfactory working conditions respectful of personal health and safety and against all forms of male and phallographic sexism (including the sort that claims to be the “union avantgardes”) in the workplace.

Economic and social struggle to improve conditions and opportunities for the work of reproduction, caring and health assistance and make it collective, removing it from the private, domestic and family sphere, where it is so convenient for men and ensures that they remain despot and male-chauvinist.

Battles to secure and defend the duty to control and decide on maternity and health issues. Battles against all reformist and bourgeois temptations, and instead preparations for the political and social revolution we shall be obliged to undertake by the stupid cruelty of Capital and its State, men and women in the “immense army of the exploited who have no more reserves left.”

This is what was, is and will be the Eighth of March!

March 2023

The wave of strikes in Great Britain continues and is a forerunner of battles resuming in the rest of Europe

In these pages we have already dealt with the wave of strikes going on in Great Britain in 2022¹. On that occasion we wrote: “We expect other, similar signs to occur in the coming months, because the social situation in Great Britain is getting worse day by day: contracts that have long been up for renewal, salaries that fail to meet the cost of living and rate of inflation, or the work schedules and pace of work which, obedient to the dictates of the national economy, exhaust workers who have too long been trapped in the tight network of official unionism and the labourism that is its political inspiration”.

This is, indeed, exactly what happened and the prospects are that the struggles will continue in 2023. It is even becoming difficult to keep track of the ripples of strikes that have succeeded one another almost daily and persist even as we write (mid-January 2023). The struggles in Great Britain have reached their highest point for the last few decades: in the five months from June to October last year they accounted for more than one million working days. Strikes of this entity hadn't been seen for 40 years: official figures aren't yet available but the research company Capital Economics and the official Trade Unions estimate that over a million working days were “lost” in December 2022 alone, the highest monthly figure since July 1989. And now the prospect of a general strike looms. The bourgeois press itself is making comparisons with the general strike of 1926 and the miners' strike of 1978/79, the so-

called “Winter of Discontent”.

Not a day passes without one category or another coming out on strike and this is a weak aspect, a sign of fragmentation - a limit that we shall go into in more depth later in this article. The nurses have gone on strike for the first time in the history of their union (the Royal College of Nursing, founded 106 years ago!). The whole of the transport sector is mobilized: trains, the underground, buses, airports. There are protests amongst ambulance workers, post-office workers, airport control staff, janitors, teachers in schools and universities, security staff, firefighters, employees in the public sector. All the disputes revolve around salary, this “old” fight from the last century that the great minds proclaimed out of date now.

The government has assumed a hard line, with offers of increases that fail to even cover the rise in prices due to recent inflation, and challenge the workers with anti-strike laws and an emergency plan, the emergency committee Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (the acronym COBRA is eloquent!), which immediately took steps to substitute striking ambulance workers and airport staff with a thousand soldiers.

The strikes will continue both because of the government's attitude in not conceding pay rises, and because of the economic conditions of recession and high inflation, which will continue in 2023, with the institutional trade unions having trouble bridling the workers' fighting spirit. These are all elements that may - we hope! - be anticipating the near future of the rest of Europe: the United Kingdom's bourgeoisie has attempted to separate itself from the continent but the contradictions of Capital

do not, of course, recognize frontiers and customs barriers!

Economic recession and inflation

And so the claims of the workers centre around a pay rise that will at least cover inflation, now up to two figures (around 11% in 2022, the maximum over the last 41 years). But in reality English workers have been driven to battle mostly by an attack on their working conditions, one that has lasted over 10 years now. After defeating the 2011 strike, centring on pension reform, the ruling bourgeois class was under the illusion they had quashed the fighting spirit of the workers: since it seemed that they were not reacting, it was possible to go on attacking them... A few examples: between 2011 and 2020, medical staff saw their average pay fall by almost 25% in real terms; since 2009, failure to adjust salaries to inflation has determined a 25% reduction in buying power by university employees. But those who suffer most seriously are low-salary workers in the public sector, the lowest paid in the United Kingdom, particularly those who live in the capital and other areas where the cost of living is high and are thus exposed to strong pressure: so nurses' pay dropped by 7.76% in real terms between 2011 and 2020, even before the latest shock caused by the cost of living, whilst secondary school teachers' pay fell by 5.1% in real terms in the same period, thus before the present crisis of inflation and rise in bills over the past year. More in general the drop in salaries is not a trend limited to the past year but dates back to the 2008 crisis.

1. “Dalla Gran Bretagna, un forte segnale di lotta (From Great Britain, a clear sign of battle)”, *il programma comunista*, no. 4, September-October 2022.

continued →

An analysis by the Trade Unions showed that workers are suffering the longest salary squeeze in modern history. The study shows that since 2008 workers have lost on average 20,000 pounds of real salaries, because of pay failing to keep up with inflation, and that by 2025 the loss will amount to 24,000 pounds; in the same period nurses lost 42,000 pounds in real earnings, obstetricians and paramedics 56,000. Train drivers, who had a pay rise of above the national average, with their average salary raised by 7.65% between 2011 and 2022, did, however, suffer from stoppages due to the pandemic and a lasting fall in the number of commuters and are now fighting against a plan of layoffs, restructuring and deteriorating working conditions.

The recent problems have thus added to older, structural ones, making things worse. In the third quarter of 2022, the British economy experienced a 0.2% dip, then came a further fall in the fourth quarter, which set the United Kingdom on the way to recession. The Bank of England expects the recession to be the longest since data started to be collected, i.e. in the Nineteen Twenties, and has warned that unemployment, now at the minimum for the last fifty years, may almost double, reaching 6.5% by 2025. The Bank of England believes that the economy has entered a downward spiral that will continue next year and also in the first half of 2024. Amongst the causes of the recession is first and foremost inflation. The increase in the price of food products, fuel and energy has put many families in difficulty, faced as they are with the greatest crisis in the cost of living since the Nineteen Fifties: and the fact that they have been obliged to cut their spending is inevitably having a negative effect on growth. Businesses are equally in difficulty, crushed by the drop in consumer spending on the one hand and the increase in the price of raw materials and energy on the other. Gross domestic product is

still below the level it was before the coronavirus pandemic. In the second quarter of 2022 the British economy still registered -0.4 per cent compared to the fourth quarter of 2019. GDP is expected to drop by 1.4% in 2023, the deepest recession amongst the leaders of advanced economies in 2023. The standard of living of British citizens will drop by 7% over the next two years, the most abrupt drop since the Nineteen Fifties. According to bourgeois analysts themselves, inflation will remain high for the whole of 2024, regardless of contingent factors, such as pandemic and the war in Ukraine. The chief economist of the Bank of England declared recently that Great Britain risks persistent inflationary pressure, even if the cost of natural gas were to stabilize or diminish.

And so, while everyone was announcing the end of economic battles, relegated to things of a past that was never to return (!), the contradictions within the capitalist system itself were mining deep below ground invisibly and imperceptibly, until the tensions exploded and rose to the surface... obliging the proletariat to take up the fight. And in what is considered the homeland and a clear example of working-class aristocracy, i.e. a privileged sector of workers who thought they could forever enjoy a position of power within the society of capital, finding themselves today with diminishing reserves, this sector is obliged to defend itself, whether willingly or not.

The appearance of the independent unions

A new season was anticipated by the battles of precarious and immigrant workers who, from 2012 onwards, organized themselves outside and against the Trade Unions, setting up independent unions such as the Independent Workers of Great Britain (IWGB) and the United Voices of the World (UVW). These organisms have been the protagonists of strikes and

pickets capable of going well beyond the strongly anti-worker legislation and the conservative and treacherous practice of the Trade Unions. They obtained victories that have obliged hospitals, universities and banks to integrate immigrant and precarious workers, previously taken on through outsourcing with no contract or guarantee. They have organized the workers in the so-called *gig economy*, winning victories against giants such as Amazon, Uber and Deliveroo. And by their example they have revived the fighting spirit that we are now witnessing amongst the workers still belonging to the Trade Unions.

Naturally, as we have witnessed in other parts of the world, these new union organisms also fall into the trap of their closure within their own category: they are afraid of growing, as if widespread unity amongst workers might irremediably lead to a degeneration along the lines of the Trade Unions' negative example. In "working-class democracy" they therefore see the magic formula for avoiding this degeneration, whilst any class direction is missing. This democratic way of proceeding is obviously a clear opposition to the bureaucratic practice of the conventional Trade Union barons who suffocate protests: yet at the same time, the faith in democratic practice as a thaumaturgical method, sufficient to give back power to the workers, will clash with the need for the class struggle, which rests on power relations more than on democracy, on their ability to see themselves as a class, recognizing their own enemies and what the State, the police force and democracy really are.

Fragmentation and the role of the Trade Unions. Anti-strike legislation

The strikes have been following on one another almost daily: but the Trade Unions Congress (TUC),

continued →

which brings together the hundreds of different category organizations has never dared declare a single, coordinated strike. Now and again, in the purely verbal polemics with the government, it threatens one, but in actual fact none have been held for years. The last strike of an entire category was declared in 2011, against pension reform: but in this case, too, it was boycotted by the TUC itself. At the time, up to two million workers in the public sector joined a one-day strike, organized by 37 different unions, against the attacks on pensions under the austerity régime of David Cameron's conservative government. Proclaimed the beginning of a renaissance of militant unionism by pseudo-leftist groups, the November 2011 strike instead marked the start of the final betrayal of bureaucracy in the pensions dispute. In the space of only a few weeks, the TUC cancelled all mobilisations and the individual unions started negotiating to give the government what it wanted.

Of course, this practice has caused the Trade Unions a loss of credibility: the percentage of workers enrolled in a union in the United Kingdom in 2021 came to 23.1%, with a 0.6% drop compared to 2020, whilst, in 1995, the percentage came to 32.4%, i.e. 8.9% more.

In today's far more explosive social conditions, union bureaucracy is very much afraid that the class war will escape its control and its betrayals will become even more evident. Within the TUC there are around 130 different union names and these, too, sometimes strike according to sub-categories or territory, or company. In November, one of the strongest unions, that of public and commercial services (PCS) obtained a mandate for strike action from 100 thousand members, recording the broadest strike mandate in the history of the union, with a majority of 86.2 per cent. The mandate was based on a 10 per cent salary claim, protection of jobs and pensions: but up to now the PCS has only brought

out 5 thousand workers, always company by company, and announced a strike of the whole sector for 1 February, which could involve 130 thousand workers, effectively blocking work in public services. This could have been the opportunity for a general strike, and also an answer to the anti-strike measures the government wishes to introduce: but there was an immediate split in the TUC over the prospect. Mainly category-bound, local, backward-looking tendencies emerged, fearing the reaction of public opinion and declaring openly that they only wanted to concern themselves with the interests of their own category.

Yet the government has not only resorted to the army to substitute the workers on strike. They are also approving a range of anti-worker measures, so as not to concede the pay claims. Employers will thus be able to replace the strikers with part-time staff, whilst this was prohibited by law up until now. English law is already strongly anti-worker: a strike must be voted by the majority of union members and the union must inform the bosses two weeks beforehand, while strikes of solidarity and political strikes have already been banned. Now the law has been further harshened through the obligation for many sectors to guarantee a minimum service and, when not respected, punishing the unions and therefore the workers with heavy fines. This measure will regard fire-fighting, postal, ambulance, hospital and transport services. Employers will also be able to draw up lists of the minimum number of workers needed in each sector in order to maintain a reduced service. They will therefore be able to stop the strike or later ask for compensation if the unions do not respect the obligations.

“Well dug, old mole!”

And so we return to economic determinism: to the objective factors that force proletarians to class war, just as they chain the bourgeoisie to eco-

omic laws. The outbreak of class war does not depend on anyone's will (not even that of the party) but is determined by the same economic laws of capital: the proletariat's spontaneous fighting spirit is itself bound to its objective conditions. The party can and must work alongside the proletariat so that this fighting spirit is not squandered but is instead channelled into the direction of revolution. But in the meantime, regardless of the future developments in the class war, which will depend on the class's encounter with its party, it is impossible to deny that there is a tendency for economic battles to return, not only in Great Britain but in all those countries that find themselves in similar conditions and thus in ultra-industrialized and “rich” countries. And this defeats all the myths about the power of the bourgeoisie to hold the proletariat in its spell, corrupting it with material concessions and confusing it with the many, different incantations of ruling, mainstream ideology. What is happening instead is that the bourgeoisie is producing the diggers of its own grave, because it is incapable of feeding its slaves.

On the other hand, since the contradictions are evident and on the rise, many people are imagining the collapse of the system, if not the extinction of the species: but not that the proletariat might manage to get organized, not that! Impossible! Absurd! The bourgeoisie, they say, is too powerful, invincible! And this is despite objective facts showing the bourgeoisie's incapability of governing an over-complex, oversized system of production that must grow out of necessity.

This lack of confidence in the proletariat obviously and dialectically has its roots in history itself, in objective facts, and in a century of counter-revolution. It could not be otherwise, in view of the incapability of all those who deny the class war to read historical developments in a materialist and dialectic light, on the basis of

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the real movement, the economic basis and power relations between the classes, which determine and shape consciousness. They mechanically project the present conditions into the future: but the awareness of being a class in its own right (and not a class for Capital) and thus of its own passive and apparently impotent position at present, depends on a whole series of past conditions, now out-of-date, linked to other economic situations which are not going to return, whilst the contradictions grow, digging away underground in the social subsoil in an apparently imperceptible manner and are already, and will increasingly be, forcing the proletariat to organize and fight to defend itself, modifying its attitudes and fighting spirit and thus, ultimately, its consciousness. The proletariat is obliged to fight, independently of the idea it has of itself. And it is the power of the bourgeoisie itself that obliges it to fight.

The negationists of class war, all those who believe it impossible for the proletariat to react, see the development of capitalism metaphysically: i.e. they see only the development of its weapons, of its accumulation, of its wealth and power, but they fail to understand (do not wish to understand) that each of these aspects contains within it, dialectically, the opposite of itself. The enormous production forces imply the impossibility of governing them; wealth implies poverty; the more sophisticated technological tools, such as

tools of communication, for instance, become weapons in the hands of the proletariat; the power of a giant that is growing but supported by feet of clay produces instability, cracks that widen and deepen; its power is its weakness.

“*Well dug, old mole!*” is an expression that was used, before the Communist Left used it, by Marx (*The 18 Brumaire of Luigi Bonaparte*) and taken up by Lenin (*State and Revolution*): and it signifies that the class war and revolutionary conditions act on things, *on objective facts*, before they do on consciousness; i.e. they act in the subsoil of history only to suddenly surface, just like a mole. They unleash themselves like an earthquake.

It is the objective facts that dig deep and transform the attitudes of the masses as well, their fighting spirit. Whilst those who think a return of class war impossible derive their fighting spirit exclusively from the power of mainstream ideology, considered in its turn as something static and everlasting, existing in the world of ideas. According to them, mainstream ideology, thanks to the modern tools of mass stupefying, has finally and irreversibly sealed the tomb of the proletarian’s capacity for reaction. Yet, as we have already documented and will continue to, dozens of examples from all over the

2. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1856/04/14.htm>

world are showing us that the proletariat is *forced to react*.

“In our days, everything seems pregnant with its contrary: Machinery, gifted with the wonderful power of shortening and fructifying human labour, we behold starving and overworking it. The new-fangled sources of wealth, by some strange, weird spell, are turned into sources of want. The victories of art seem bought by the loss of character.

“At the same pace that mankind masters nature, man seems to become enslaved to other men or to his own infamy. Even the pure light of science seems unable to shine but on the dark background of ignorance. All our invention and progress seem to result in endowing material forces with intellectual life, and in stultifying human life into a material force.

“This antagonism between modern industry and science on the one hand, modern misery and dissolution on the other hand; this antagonism between the productive powers and the social relations of our epoch is a fact, palpable, overwhelming, and not to be controverted... We know that to work well the new-fangled forces of society, they only want to be mastered by new-fangled men — and such are the working men. They are as much the invention of modern time as machinery itself.

“History is the judge — its executioner the proletarian” (K. Marx, “In memory of the Chartist uprisings”, 1856)².

January 2023

“WE ARE ALL ANTI-FASCISTS!” ... SO WHAT?

One of the most rhythmic slogans in the parades of young people who enter the first demonstrations of social and political commitment reads “We are all anti-fascists!”, without other attributes.

For us, old fighters for the revolutionary preparation of our class, this slogan has a fraudulent sound.

We cannot forget that generic and democratic anti-fascism was one of the tools with which, during the last agitated years of the Second World War, social democracy and Stalinism imprisoned our class in the nefarious inter-classist unity of the CLN [Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale], which later resulted in the trap of the Constituent Assembly and of the Italian Republic – as it served in Spain, in 1936-1939, to strangle any hope of social revolution.

Nor can we forget that rhetorical anti-fascism which was one of the “best” ideological devices with which the continuity of bourgeois domination was guaranteed in the perfection of the imperialist state: from Badoglio and Togliatti to Draghi and Meloni, His Excellency bows down to His Eminence, in the sacred name of the Resistance.

Anti-fascism *without class struggle* is just a reactionary waste of time, one of the many illusions that one can live under the rule of capital without the flaws of the bourgeois regime.

For these young people, anti-fascism *without attributes*, on the other hand, still has the flavor of a rebellion against

the authoritarian forms of bourgeois society: it still has the aura of romantic revolt, and expresses, if not exactly a socialistic instinct, at least a yearning for a less stinking society.

The communists’ task is to explain, starting from our own militant, proletarian and coherently anti-democratic experience, and certainly not with the pedantic tone of someone who “understood everything” because he was “born learned”, what is hidden behind anti-fascism without attributes – and help the pissed off among those young hopefuls to *overcome* it and to take a path that, from the *mythology* of the clash with the epigones of squadristism, leads them to the *concreteness* of the clash with all forms of bourgeois domination.

By way of example, as an outline and setting for an anti-fascism that is a little less *sillily superficial* and a little *more revolutionary*, we report the words, born from the experience of the years of struggle (even armed, to the extent possible), in which our comrades fought within the ranks of our class to *defend and advocate* the revolutionary perspective, against all national and inter-class unity. Words left in the memory of No. 7 of our underground journal *Prometeo* of May 1st 1944.

“Our anti-fascism

The anti-fascism of the democratic parties, which in the most acute phase of the Italian crisis joined fascism as an older brother; the anti-fascism of

the old and glorious socialist party, which out of congenital verbose political naivety opened the way for it by paving it with its weaknesses and its mistakes, is not our anti-fascism.

If anything, communism is anti-fascist in the same way that it is anti-liberal and anti-democratic; therefore the distinction between fascism and the anti-fascist bourgeoisie is, for us, extremely arbitrary, artificial and polemical, since both are born from the same historical matrix.

We conceive the fight against fascism as a fight that must be waged first and foremost against capitalism, which has given fascism body and soul, has instilled in it all the hatred that the mad fear of the loss of privilege can inspire, and has armed its hand to make it the blind, beastly executor of its class revenge.

Whoever distinguishes fascism from the bourgeoisie, fascist war from democratic war, on the level of theoretical formulation as on that of political struggle, is himself objectively, perhaps unconsciously, a potential fascist.

Only the total, ruthless struggle against capitalism, against all its manifestations, and in particular against war, which is the extreme, most iniquitous and barbarous manifestation of capitalism, guarantees the seriousness and concreteness of the struggle against Mussolini’s fascism today and the democratic fascism of tomorrow.”

HOW THE COMMUNIST PARTY WORKS

■ The counter-revolutionary surge that followed the “political-military” defeat of the proletarian movement (a movement which, as we never tire of repeating, engaged the united front of all bourgeois states for a good ten years, from the glorious days of Red October to the bloody repression of the uprisings in Shanghai and Canton in 1927), led to a series of crippling failures. One of the most difficult to address was that which undermined the organizational structure – and all its related functions and actions – of the Party of World Communist Revolution that was taking shape around the time of the first Comintern congresses.

The emergence and victory of the counter-revolution in Russia at the time of its nascent Soviets was characterized by a cannibalistic degeneration accompanied by outright regression: “Stalinism”. This cancer-like growth sought to wipe out – in part succeeding, unfortunately – the only opportunity our huge mass of “sellers of labour-power” possessed to move on from being a pulverized collection of individuals (*a class in itself*: more an economic than a social category of the capitalist mode of production) and become the fully aware agent (*a class for itself*) of the most important transformation of our species’ social organization: *the organization into a party*.

Mind you, not just any “worker’s” group destined to represent, within the limits of institutional politics (including all bourgeois state “constitutions”, be they multi-party or single-party parliamentary democracies, “totalitarian” or consociational along the lines of the now defunct “People’s Socialist Republics” or National Socialist-Fascists) the interests of the “working class”! No! The *organization of the Communist Party*.

A Party that represents not only the simultaneously temporary and historical interest of the many “without-reserves” among us, but constitutes

the weapon through which it is only possible to establish ourselves as a proletarian class. This means being aware of what we’re doing and why we have to do it and, in turn, who we are and who we have a duty to be.

Our class is revolutionary or it is nothing. It is only revolutionary if, when and because it expresses and recognizes itself in that *unity of theory, principles, programme, tactics and organization* of men and women assembled together in the operational unity of the Party, knowingly guiding it throughout the entire historical process of the class struggle (preparing for the proletarian revolution, guiding the proletarian revolution and directing the dictatorship of the proletariat). The actual “how it works” (organization) of this party is by no means indifferent to, or independent of, the revolutionary process that must carry the modern class struggle “through to the end”, i.e., to the point where the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and all the institutions making up its State are overthrown, and our dictatorship is established, with our transitory institutions on the path towards a very different and, arguably, better organization of human society.

The experience itself of our revolutionary class movement – generations of comrades have been through all this for nearly two centuries now – compels us to affirm and hone still further this method of working. Never more so than now, in this historical moment, when the vast mass of our class brothers is passively living through economic blackmail, political diktat and the inevitable ideological domination of the bourgeoisie, and even those meager ranks of the avant-garde loath to abide by the monstrous rules governing the capitalist mode of production are having a hard time liberating themselves from the “laws of bourgeois politics” with all their glorification of individualist voluntarism and democratic abstraction.

But there’s worse. The legacy of the mythological “mass party” hangs like a millstone round the neck, and it’s hard to get rid of: the coefficient of the revolutionary party’s operability of action (i.e., its ability to organize other proletarians contacting them on the groundwork involved in day-to-day struggles, thereby “educating” them to see *the need for revolutionary preparation*) is replaced by unwelcome data regarding the “number of cardholders”. And these then become an amorphous mass to be maneuvered with tactical acumen and cunning, to be split up into groups and currents that “conquer” posts and positions in sideshows fit for all kinds of personal politicking, with electioneering more or less in mind... In this too, the Communist Party is something else, as can be seen from much of what we wrote in the “never completed” work of re-settling the revolutionary party in terms of doctrine (a hard-to-stomach word for those thrashing about in the world of contemporary cultural relativism!), practice and theory. For instance, on page 130 of our text *In difesa della continuità del programma comunista* (*In Defence of the Continuity of the Communist Programme*):

“The way we see it [...] the Party is characterized by an *organic centrality* because it isn’t a ‘part’ – albeit the most advanced – of the proletarian class, but its *organ*. It is a synthesis of all its elemental impulses and of all its militants, whatever their provenance; and *it is such* because it possesses a theory, a set of principles and a programme which override the temporal limitations of today, to express the historical tendency, the final objective and the *modus operandi* of past, present and future generations of proletarians and communists, and which transcend the confines of nationality and state to embody the interests of revolutionary wage earners

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across the whole world. And *thus it is*, we might add, *on the strength of* a forecast, broadly speaking, as to the unfolding of historical events and, therefore, the ability to *nail down* a series of guidelines and tactical norms that must be followed by all [...].

“If the party possesses such theoretical and practical homogeneity (which, far from being an established fact guaranteed for eternity is, rather, a reality to be defended tooth and nail and, if needs be, conquered anew every time), its organization – at one and the same time, its discipline – is conceived and develops *organically*, shackled to the unitary bedrock of programme and practical action. In its various forms of execution and the hierarchy of its organs, the party perfectly adheres to the entirety of its functions. None excluded.

“Organization, like discipline, is not a departure point but *a point of arrival*. It has no need for statutory codification or disciplinary regulation, and it recognizes no antithesis between ‘base’ and ‘summit’. It excludes the *rigid barriers* of the division of labour inherited from the capitalist regime, not because ‘bosses’ or ‘experts’ aren’t required in certain sectors, but because such figures – as much as, nay, *more* than the most ‘humble’ of militants – are, and must be, tied hand and foot to a programme, a doctrine and a clear, unambiguous definition of the tactical norms valid for the *whole* party, understood by *all* its members, *publicly* affirmed and, most importantly, *put into practice* before the class in its entirety. They are *necessary* albeit *expendable*: delegated to carry out certain tasks by the party according to natural selection (rather than by means of bogus head-counting), they are given their marching orders the moment they fail to match expectations or – worse still – should they deviate from the common path.

“A party of this kind (as our tends and strives to be, albeit neglecting expectations as to anti-historical ‘purity’ and ‘perfection’) doesn’t allow its internal life, its development or – let us be frank – its hierarchy of *techni-*

cal functions to be conditioned on the whim of contingent or majority decisions. It grows and strengthens by means of the dynamics of the class struggle in general, and its own role in that struggle in particular. At all levels its battle weapons and ‘organs’ are created without any kind of prior calculation. It has no need [...] to expel (after a regular ‘trial’) those no longer willing to follow the immutable, common path because it *must be* able to eliminate them from its bosom, just as a healthy organism spontaneously rids itself of its own waste.

“The revolution is not a question of the form of organization.’ Quite the opposite, it is the organization in all its various forms that is constituted according to the needs of the revolution, *envisaged not only in terms of its final outcome but also the path taken*. Consultations, constitutions and statutes are part and parcel of societies divided into classes, and of parties that, in their turn, represent not so much the historical path of one class than the commingling of *divergent or at least not fully convergent paths of several classes*. Far from being antithetical, internal democracy (involving discussion of inclinations, opinions and tactical expedients) and ‘bureaucratism’, homage to the ‘freedom of expression’ of the individual or group and ‘ideological terrorism’ are dialectically connected terms: unity of doctrine and tactical action, and the organic character of organizational centralism, are equally sides of the same coin.”

At the beginning of this “memo-randum” we mentioned our efforts to ensure our organ-party is a synthesis (careful: *synthesis* is not the same thing as a sum total!) of the “elemental impulses” of its members, “whatever their provenance”. We group together in territorial operational groups (sections) and learn collectively how to better handle the instruments required for revolution and how to develop “agitprop” in the life and struggles of our class.

Besides this, what really binds us together – the connective tissue which allows us to truly *live* communist

discipline – are our use of periodicals as “collective organizers” and our practice of holding regular meetings, where we plan and render active and operational the unification of the “impulses” and “abilities” of each and every one of us (a bi-directional process that reinforces trust – the awareness of being able to “count on” one another, the sharing and realization of the common project).

It is precisely in the field of so called “political practice” that our way of working has set us apart from the rest: not only from “democratic”, “social-democratic” and self-styled “communist” (or perhaps we should say ex-“communist”) parties, but also from those groups that deem themselves to be “revolutionary”, using/abusing pompous patronymics like “Leninist”, “Marxist”, “Internationalist”. Precisely their way of “doing politics” (congresses, tendencies, political platforms aimed at unification, conventions, sharing the latest sociological developments...) reveals them to be nothing more than an expression of those parasitical high-browed social strata, whose historical function has been that of milking the potential or current energies of our class, and redirecting them towards immediate and ostensibly easy successes and eternal conquests, thus maintaining themselves as indispensable and irremovable “leaders” and “managers”...

Nothing new or invented under the sun here: we limit ourselves to executing the mandate detailing the outcome of the battle waged by our comrades in 1926 in Lyon (III Congress of Communist Party of Italy), to counter the Stalinist degeneration whose most refined instrument was Gramscian idealism. The Theses they presented at that Congress read: “The party’s activity cannot, nay, must not, limit itself either solely to maintaining the purity of the theoretical principles and organizational structure, or to the accomplishment by any means necessary of immediate successes and numerical popularity. At all times and in all situations,

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the party's activity must embrace the following three points:

- a) to defend and clarify, in the face of new groups of facts that present themselves, the essential programmatic postulates, that is, the theoretical conscience of the working class movement
- b) to guarantee the continuity of the party's organizational structure and efficiency, as well as its defence against pollution from outside sources hostile to the revolutionary interests of the proletariat;
- c) to actively participate in all working class struggles, including those spurred by limited or partial interests, in order to encourage their development, whilst never failing to stress their link with the ultimate revolutionary objectives; and presenting the conquests of the class struggle as bridges to the inevitable struggles of the future, while denouncing the danger of confusing partial achievements with *fait accompli*, and of using them to barter the conditions of the classist activity and combativeness of the proletariat, such as the autonomy and independence of its ideology and organizations, first and foremost among these, the party.

"The crowning aim of this complex activity is to prepare the subjective conditions of the preparation of the proletariat so that it is able to take advantage of the objective revolutionary possibilities brought about by history as soon as these appear, and to emerge from the struggle victorious, not vanquished." (From the "Theses", presented by the Left at the Lyon Conference, 1926, reproduced in our former review *Internationalist Papers*, n. 14, Spring-Summer 2009). Precisely because this activity is so complex and unitary – just as the party is a unity of theory-principles-programme-tactics-organization – we lay claim to all its forms, without ever erecting a barrier between theory and practical action, as far as it is in our power to do so. And without ever considering the activity divisible in two separate fields, where certain elements are dedicated

to "study" and others to "action" – a deadly distinction, not only for the party "structure" but especially for the political, combatant and combative formation of all comrades.

Indeed (as can be understood from a reading of our *Tesi sul compito storico, l'azione e la struttura del partito comunista, secondo le posizioni che da oltre mezzo secolo formano il patrimonio storico della sinistra comunista*, or *Theses on the Historical Task, Action and Structure of the Communist Party, in Accordance with the Positions that have Shaped the Form of the Communist Left's Historical Patrimony for Over a Century – Naples, July 1965*, reproduced in the text mentioned at the beginnings), "the sense behind unitarism and organic centralism is that the party develops within itself the organs suited to various functions that we call propaganda, proselytism, proletarian organization, trade union work, etc., up to the armed organization of tomorrow. Yet nothing should be concluded from the number of comrades thought to be responsible for such functions because, in principle, no single comrade must be uninvolved with any of these" (idem).

At the end of the day, this is the only way to be proletarians and communists. And it is the only way to be numbered among those professional revolutionaries (whose "professionalism" so many self-serving idiots "misconstrue" in the hope of being "paid by the party": errand boys, pen pushers and section managers along the lines of the Italian *Lotta Comunista*!) who, *in the fiercely anti-bourgeois fight waged by the party*, have "forgotten, disowned and torn from their hearts and minds the label allotted by this putrid society's registry office..." to develop and shape the awareness they are laying the ground for "the attributes of communist society".

"The proletarian programme implies emancipation from today's dominant, privileged class, as well as freeing the human collective from the economic laws that have enslaved it. These laws

will be then dominated in an economy that is, at last, rational, scientific and subject to the direct intervention of man's work. [...]. If proletarian humankind – which is still a long way off – will be free and possessed of a willpower divorced from any sentimental illusion and, rather, blessed with a readiness to organize and govern the economy in the broadest sense of the word; and if, today, the proletarian class is still *determined* by outside influences in terms of its own actions – albeit less so than other classes – , on the contrary the organ in which the greatest volitional power and initiative in its field of action is synthesized is the political party. Not any old party, of course, but the party of the proletarian class, the communist party, tied – one might say – to the ultimate aims of the future process by an uninterrupted thread.

"Such a volitional capacity, along with its consciousness and theoretical competence, are supremely collective functions of the party, and the Marxist explication of the task assigned within the party itself to its leaders lies in considering them as instruments and operatives who are best equipped to understand and explain reality and direct and encourage action, while ensuring always that such capabilities have their origin in the existence and character of the collective body. As we mentioned, it is out of these considerations that the Marxist concept of the party and its action shrinks from both fatalism – passive spectator of phenomena upon which it believes no direct influence can be exerted – and any voluntaristic notion in an individual sense, according to which the qualities of theoretical preparation, willpower and sacrificial spirit, in short, a special type of moral figure and a required "purity", are to be indiscriminately demanded of every single militant inside the party, reducing this to a distinct élite superior to the remaining social elements that make up the working class; whereas the fatalist and passivist error would lead, if not to a negation of the par-

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ty's function and usefulness, at least to its certainly adhering to the proletarian class in the statistical, economic sense. The conclusions hinted at in the thesis surrounding the nature of the party are affirmed anew, condemning both the workerist concept and that of an élite of intellectual and moral character: both of them deviant from Marxism and shepherded to meet one another along the path to opportunistic outcome."

In our *Theses* prepared for the above-mentioned III Congress of the Communist Party of Italy (held in Lyon in 1926 (a crucial moment in a battle which would conclude in the 6th Enlarged Executive of Comintern by reaffirming the achievements of Comintern precisely during the Stalinist degeneration, and an essential basis for our restoration work of the revolutionary class organ), the issues of method and organization behind Comintern's removal from the terrain of our class's revolutionary preparations were addressed without hypocrisy, so as to enable the "Marxist tactical solution" to become operative. While "one of the tasks (or rather, *merits*) of Comintern was that of ridding the proletariat's distrust of political action (the result of years of opportunistic parliamentary degeneration)" by means of the organization, the collective preparation with an active participation in the revolutionary process of political action – something radically different not only from the social-democratic practice of democratically "delegating" expert mediators through parliament, but also the libertarian and anarcho-syndicalist practice of "direct action" –, the practice of so called Bolshevization was transforming Comintern into a collection of associations whose militants were gradually reduced to mere executors of directives issued by centralized executives, hogging, among other things, the monopoly of tactical intelligence.

"Marxism," on the other hand, "doesn't speak of politics as the common art cum-technique boasting parliamentary or diplomatic expedients of intrigue which every party would adopt for its own ends. Proletarian

politics pits itself against the method of bourgeois politics, advancing superior forms of relationships that culminate in the art of revolutionary insurrection. This detachment (this split, this permanent state of war requiring the action, passion, intelligence and mutual trust of all comrades "of every order and degree"), which would need a wider theoretical presentation here, is a vital pre-requisite for the advantageous connection between the revolutionary proletariat and its communist high command or for the profitable selection process of the latter."

To successfully direct the rest of its class (which, lest we forget, acts first and foremost as a summation of individuals never equal to itself), the party groups together its most combative elements and those most finely tuned to the possibilities of the revolutionary outcome of the struggles, and must carry out its work by consolidating all the impulses derived from the economic, social and political spheres.

Reminding us that "greater scrupulousness would've been more expedient when proceeding with organizational criteria (during the foundation of Comintern)", our comrades summarized nicely: "The watchword of the parties' cell-like organization, established after the Fifth Congress, failed in its efforts to address the shortcomings mutually agreed upon in the Comintern sections. In its generalization and, especially, in the interpretation afforded it by the Italian central body, such a watchword was seriously error-prone, deviating not only from the Marxist postulate that the revolution is not a question of forms of organization, but also the Leninist theory that an organic solution can never be valid for all times and places."

Territorial grouping thus turned out to be more functional for party work and the permanent formation of its militants into "proletarians and communists" during periods when class confrontation is less incandescent, and the laws of the dominant bourgeoisie permits public activity; but also in periods when it is more incan-

descent, and a mass political movement pushes towards insurrectional clash, and as a consequence the bourgeois dictatorship requires a necessarily clandestine activity. Obviously, the organization has to be modified in accordance with the "two different" requirements for action.

In actual fact, the so-called "Bolshevization" of communist parties was a repudiation of the lesson in "revolutionary organization" that the communists grouped around Lenin had learnt, disseminated and practised in *What is to be Done?*: "the organization of revolutionaries must first and foremost include men whose profession is revolutionary action (and this is why I speak of an organization of *revolutionaries* when referring to [communist revolutionaries]). It is by virtue of this characteristic, shared by all members of the organization, that *absolutely no distinction must exist between workers and intellectuals* and, with all the more reason, no distinction on the basis of profession or trade." A slap in the face to supporters of the "mass party" follows ("Out of necessity, such an organization must not be too widespread") together with a reminder of our ceaseless antagonism: hence, even when *we are tolerated* by the bourgeois dictatorship, we should remember to be sensible as well as prudent", and the organization "must be as clandestine as possible."

To conclude, and in defence of the organization, "Lyon 1926" continues: "As regards those parties operating today, and in countries with stable parliamentary democracies, the cell-based organization seems less adequate than that organized along territorial lines. A theoretical mistake is made by those who affirm that the territory-based party is a social-democratic party and that the cell-based party is a real communist party. In practice, the second type has a harder time of it when it comes to the party's task of unifying groups of proletarians from different categories and industries – an increasingly serious task when conditions are un-

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favourable and the opportunities for proletarian organization are fewer. When deemed the exclusive basis for the party, the cell-based organization presents a number of practical drawbacks. [...]

“The apparatus of officials in all the upper echelons of the cell-based system consists of a network of non-workers and ex-workers, and this as a consequence does not increase workers’ influence within the party. Regarding the flaws underlying the Comintern’s working method, the Bolshevization watchword – in terms of organization – corresponds to an uninspiring and inadequate applica-

tion of the Russian experience; in many countries it already leans towards a system that immobilizes (also involuntarily) spontaneous proletarian and classist energies and initiatives, driven by an apparatus whose selection and function are conducted with largely artificial criteria.

“If the organization of the territorial base remains the preserve of the party, this doesn’t mean having to eschew party organs on the shop floor: these must consist of communist groups linked to and directed by the party, and included in its trade union framework. Such a system is far more effective at facilitating con-

tact with the masses and ensures the party’s basic organization is less visible.”

Exactly what was asserted in Lenin’s *What is to be Done?*: “The political struggle of social democracy [i.e., of communism – ed.] is much greater and far more complex than the economic struggle of workers against bosses and the government. Equally (and for this reason), the organization of a revolutionary social-democratic [i.e., communist – ed. party must necessarily *be distinct* from the workers’ organization for the economic struggle.”

Need we say more?

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)

May Day 2023

TO FIGHT AGAINST THE WAR OF CAPITAL, WE NEED TO FIGHT AGAIN AGAINST THE PEACE OF CAPITAL

In the metropolises of the States of older capitalism as well as in those of younger capitalism and in the peripheries of the whole capitalist world, the economic, living and working conditions of wage workers (and, subordinately, of the declining half classes and the proletarianized masses) continue to worsen, with generalized and constant increases in the cost of basic necessities, including housing, gas and electricity.

Everywhere, the restructuring of economic enterprises (multinationals, individually- or family-owned, co-operatives, state-owned, nationalized or of any other “business name”), induced by the irrepressible crisis of overproduction, generates more and more unemployment and precarious workers, and increasingly forces women back into the home, in underpaid work for the family, together with a more and more unsustainable increase in working hours and pace of work – the first and only cause of the growing number of homicides, serious traumatic injuries and illnesses in the workplace.

The negligible wage increases of contract renewals (when they are renewed!) are worthless, moreover linked to so-called productivity which is nothing if not an intensification of the exploitation of the workforce.

Two years and more of a “health crisis” (at first acute but now chronic, to the cynical indifference of those who blathered that “nothing would be the same as before”) then did nothing but mask and worsen the irreversibility of the crisis.

The wicked and criminal management of the “pandemic” has definitively and irreversibly demonstrated that the “well-being of citizens” is the

least of the objectives of bourgeois States, unless profits are made from diseases and their management, both in the hypocritical “public” form and in the more sincere “private” form: with medicines (homeopathic and phytotherapeutic products included), with vaccines (using old or new technology), with tests and diagnostic and therapeutic devices, with the transformation of clinics, hospitals, outpatient networks in “healthcare and hospital companies” (real medical-surgical industries where, at the cost of the patients, the division of labor, precariousness and the system of contracts and subcontracts are in force, alienating and rigid), with the “residences” more or less subsidised and transformed into the sad antechambers of cemeteries, for the elderly, the chronically ill and the non self-sufficient.

Resorting to the alibi of “public health” in the social management of the emergency, with a succession of impositions ranging from the extravagant to the authoritarian, and above all by limiting and regulating more and more the “right to strike”, to demonstrate and to meet in public and for the public, national States have strengthened (better than they have done to “control” so-called “terrorism”, more or less of an Islamic stamp) the repressive and political control structures, to “accustom” the population (and foremost our working class lacking any further resources) to a “state of emergency and national unity” – in order to curb as far as possible, in the climate of preparation for war, any attempt at resistance, contrast, rebellion and organization antagonistic to the general dilapidation of the environment in which we live, and of our living and working conditions.

Police repression is becoming increasingly violent: beatings, thrashings, harassment, as we have already suffered in the strikes and mobilizations of recent decades; and it will be increasingly supported and sustained by judicial repression, with administrative provisions, extension of crimes of association, emergency legislation becoming routine – an expression of what the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is preparing (has always prepared) to face and repress the social conflict that the economic crisis generates slowly but inevitably. And it does so, by historically alternating (as convenient!) the complementary forms of fascism and democracy, which only reactionaries in bad faith can pass off as “opposite”.

The crisis also accelerates the war-mongering dynamics typical of the capitalist mode of production. Since the end of the Second World Slaughterhouse, imperialist wars, those which serve this or that state to rob raw materials and control their flows, export capital, conquer markets, subjugate proletarian and proletarianized masses, have never ceased, even distorting the struggles of liberation from the rule of the old colonial imperialism. The so-called international organizations (UN, EU, OECD, WTO, and so on) are nothing more than “pacts between gangsters” to sanction and guarantee the division, as long as the balance of power between the concentrations of power does not change. The more the crisis deepens, and the less effective the countertendencies put in place by all the States are, the more clashes become necessary, together with new alliances. Thus the way is opened to the intra-imperialist war – the one that is

continued →

approaching ever faster and of which the events in the Balkans, the Middle East, the Caucasus, ending with the gangrene of the Russian “special military operation” in Ukraine, are but cruel signs.

Every war has had, has and will continue to have its own ideological cover: the pretext to drive our class brothers trapped by bourgeois states to massacre (active and passive). But these States are and remain the collective capitalist, and their governments are merely the board of directors appointed by the assembly of shareholders that they call Parliament and as such an instrument of domination and dictatorship by the impersonal bourgeois class. Against this or that “enemy”, they trap us in the cage of “National Unity”, of the “Homeland” with many epithets: socialist, democratic, the “chosen people”, “the common good”, “guardians of civilization” – always and in any case criminal associations aimed at prosecuting the exploitation of wage labour, natural resources and the valorisation of capital.

So, as always there is plenty to do. But how and why to act?

First of all, we must clear the field of the illusory hope that the mere pressure generated by the precipitous and generalized worsening of our living and survival conditions, the depletion of scarce reserves and the erosion of reformist guarantees (or even the war itself) mechanically generate a reaction of political revolt. Our class has suffered and still suffers from the reactionary influences of decades and decades of democratic-Nazi-Fascist-Stalinist (and post-Stalinist) “reformist” measures, arising from the systematic destruction of its revolutionary organizations and fed by the crumbs laboriously snatched away by ordinary trade union struggle. Thus, there are still many reformist sirens who, with the active complicity of the official unions increasingly integrated into the State, delude the majority of our class brothers that there is still something to gain and improve, rowing with their backs bent to keep the capitalist boat make head-

way: electoral institutions, economic democracy, “culture”, “civilization”, the indistinct “interest of the people” opposed to the greedy appetites of the usual speculators, the fraud of the “welfare state”, the redistribution of wealth with taxes on assets... In short, everything that still sells us our chains as gold bracelets.

The road to recovery will be painful and tiring. But there are no alternatives, because only our class, the immense group of those without further resources who are obliged to sell their labour, has the possibility and (in the making) the social and political capacity to do away with the filthy society of Capital.

The comrades of the International Communist Party invite proletarians to fight and organize – all those who can no longer bear the disastrous and devastating rule of the bourgeoisie, those who feel with their minds and hearts the need to fight the democratic dictatorship of capital methodically and consistently, against all the official institutions, the instruments, the parties and the unions of all States, one more imperialist than the other.

Organization of the struggle to defend living and working conditions, to strike hard at the economic and political interests of the bourgeoisie.

Refusal to accept economic and social sacrifices in the name of the “national economy”.

Open break with social peace and a decisive return to the methods and objectives of the class struggle, the only real and practicable internationalist solidarity of us proletarians, both in the metropolises and in the imperialist peripheries.

Rejection of any accomplice participation (nationalist, religious, patriotic, mercenary, humanitarian, socialist, pacifist...) in favor of any of the States or fronts and alliances of the States involved in the wars.

Economic and social strike actions that lead to real general strikes to paralyze national life and pave the way for political strikes, aimed at

slowing down, boycotting, impeding all mobilization and war propaganda.

Only on the basis of these practical cornerstones will it be possible to prepare to reject the misery, pain and mourning that affect the majority of our class, sacrificed on the battlefronts and in the rearguard in the name of “Homeland” which (we repeat and shall repeat again and again!) are only criminal associations with the aim of perpetuating capitalist exploitation – an exploitation that over the course of just over two centuries is undermining the conditions for the existence of our species and nature, of which we are a part.

Only by regaining possession of these practical cornerstones (and in the course of the battles that it is and will be called and forced to fight), will our class, the immense group of those who can only live on by selling their labour, be able to regain independent struggle against its historic enemy, the bourgeoisie, and the multitude of intellectual and parasitic half-classes that support it, against their State and all their institutions.

Not unless the militant avant-gardes of our class and the possible “traitors of the ruling classes” organize themselves on the basis of these contents (and not only on the terrain of the necessary but limited trade union, environmental, social, etc. action) and reach out and strengthen the party of the communist revolution, will we be able to prepare for actions of open anti-militarism and anti-patriotic defeatism: that is, allowing one’s own State and its allies to be defeated, to disobey the military hierarchies in an organized manner, to desert and fraternize with our class brothers (they too trapped in their own “Homelands”), hold tight to arms and war machinery, first to defend themselves and then to free themselves from the tentacles of bourgeois institutions, of all bourgeois States, and finally transform the war between States into civil war for the international, proletarian, communist revolution.

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