

communist program

ORGAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTY

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WHAT DISTINGUISHES OUR PARTY

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

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Organ of the International Communist Party

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Once Again the Alternative : War or Revolution

In the period immediately following World War II, the myth that capitalism could march forward without the inevitable crises and world wars it had known in the past had at least the appearance of being true. The great business of the reconstruction of a good part of the planet and especially of Europe, and the strict regimentation of the working class who was forced (even under the heel of military occupation) to rebuild with its sweat what it had been made to destroy with its blood, enabled capital to embark once again on its cycle of accumulation on a gigantic scale. This post-war boom was presented as eternal by the bourgeoisie and gave fuel to its myth of future harmonious development — a myth which it utilized for the sole purpose of enlisting the collaboration of the working class in its own exploitation and oppression. In the economic sphere this was the myth of peaceful competition, in the area of diplomacy it was the myth of negotiated resolutions of conflicts and non-interference in the affairs of other countries, and on the military level it was the myth of the balance of power.

According to this myth, the differences between states and between powers were destined, if not to disappear, at least to diminish little by little. Conflicts would not totally vanish, but they at least would not escalate into violent antagonisms. All capitalisms would have access to the world market under more or less equal conditions. The small capitalisms would not cease to be small but they would find their legitimate place in relation to the great capitalisms ; and in the long run, if not in the immediate, the disequilibriums would be compensated for. In the same manner, the « community of nations » was supposedly destined to evolve in the direction of increasing harmony and the division into blocs (which would not be rigid) would be just as natural, mutually beneficial and non-antagonistic as the international division of labour between the imperialist countries and the underdeveloped areas.

After the frictions of the cold war, there came detente. The joint Russo-American domination sanctioned at Yalta and Potsdam confirmed

the following principle: it is true that all states are equal, but some (especially two certain ones) are more equal than others. Under the protection of these two states, the other states gradually regained their vitality and, on the periphery of the « civilized world » still others were born without causing serious disruptions for the world order. If wars broke out — and they certainly did during the last thirty years! — they remained localized and contained at the periphery of the part of the world « that counts ». Above all they did not merge into a single conflagration of the long colonized people against imperialism — something which the two partners, Russia and the U.S., were equally interested in preventing and which they did their utmost to extinguish, each in its own sphere of influence utilizing the most efficient technical means and political, financial or military resources.

Although the second imperialist carnage was not concluded by a formal peace treaty, the world lived (or *believed* to live and progress) within an entente analogous to the Treaty of Vienna which « stabilized » Europe by an entente between powers a century and a half ago. It is not by chance that Kissinger passed himself off as a second Metternich (the architect of the Treaty of Vienna) and that his « strategy of small steps » was designed not to disturb the equilibrium but instead to seal the fissures in the static edifice of a *de facto* peace.

The true reality was that behind the veil of increasing prosperity the irrepressible causes of collapse were maturing. Today the « equilibriums » of economic expansion and peaceful commerce have been shattered. The political and diplomatic equilibriums have begun to be shaken (and everything indicates that the situation is moving more and more in the direction of a break) while the specter of a social crisis becomes increasingly menacing. Confused realignments of forces are appearing which themselves are the prelude of violent upheavals. We are witnessing, most importantly, the gradual shift of their epicenter (which follows the path of the economic crisis) from the periphery of the capitalist world to its heart, i.e. to Europe or more precisely Euro-America. The system of weights and counter-weights on which rest peaceful coexistence, the development of « equal » and « mutually advantageous » exchange, the recognition of the sovereignty of the two « super powers » in their respective « empires », and the balance of power is thus put in jeopardy. The basic strategy of the « small steps » has rapidly lost its function. It is the hour for great dynamic steps on the path which is necessarily leading — although certainly not in the short run — to a confrontation. Let us be very clear: in the process of maturing are the pre-conditions for the only true capitalist solution for the crisis, general war.

* *

As is usual, what immediately comes to the eye is not the central nucleus of reality but its external manifestations. It is the competition between the different powers, fighting over shares of the world market or seeking to mutually rob from one another the reserves of raw mate-

rials in Africa or the Middle-East. It is the inclination both of Europe as a whole, as well as of the principal European states (in different proportions depending on their economic and financial weight), to « rely only on themselves ». It is the conflicts continually reappearing among the various « developing » countries which are crushed by the enormous weight of forced development and which increasingly oscillate between the different imperialist powers, simultaneously detesting and courting them, deploring their unwanted presence but nevertheless knowing it is indispensable if they want to receive weapons and capital. It is the emergence of China as a great power, rising from the ashes of a million socialist illusions spread among its proletariat and peasantry. It is the never extinguished turmoil of the Near-East.

All this is tragically evident, just as it is evident that within each country which is drawn into the whirlpool of the crisis, the rivalry between individual capitals develops with methods which are no longer those of simple « competition » but those of open commercial war. The same is true for the rivalry between countries regardless of whether or not they may be « allies ». But just as behind the peripheral crises there looms the world crisis, behind these various conflicts there stands the struggle with drawn swords between the US and the USSR, a struggle which is both military and political, no longer local but necessarily world-wide although its main theater is Europe. We must not therefore misinterpret the periodic attempts at independence by one or another of the advanced capitalist countries of Europe and Japan or by one or another of the internal political forces: in spite of appearances, it is the United States which more than ever rules the game in the West. Even if none of its present or potential competitors can bear the yoke of the U.S. without discomfort, all now more or less submit to its law which is nothing other than the law of the dollar.

Germany and Japan know that they necessarily are not two locomotives beside a third, but two supplementary and auxiliary motors of a single locomotive, the U.S. They may groan each time the latter imposes its demands, but in the end they submit, conscious that they have no other choice. In the same way but in a different sphere, the big show of national independence characteristic of Gaullism can well be taken up by the Communist Party of France, but the course of the latter leads irreversibly to Wall Street just as much as does the course of French President Giscard d'Estaing or Socialist Party leader Mitterrand, even if it is under other forms. The same is true for Italian Communist Party leader Berlinguer and his Spanish counterpart Carrillo: insofar as they serve the Italian or Spanish national interests, they must be oriented in the same direction as Andreotti or Suarez, towards the USA.

We are witnessing Eurocommunism on one side and Moscow's desperate although vain and contradictory calls to order on the other. At one pole there is the thrust of the Eastern European countries in their attempt to displace the axis of their search for capital and the axis of their commercial exchanges towards the West; at the other

pole there are the worried tugs on the rein by the Kremlin. There are the oscillations of the « third world » and the sudden reversals of fronts of the Islamic countries in their anxious search for arms suppliers. In China there are the denunciations of heroes alternating with the rehabilitation of former renegades, the comings and goings, in every sense, of leaders who are committed to the search for new pawns (whether willing or unwilling) for their own game. All these are only the changing and local aspects of a constant and general polarization of forces which is occurring not only on the economic level but also on the political and military level. They are, at the bottom, the manifestations of a conflict which is progressively maturing with the center of imperialism, the U.S., taking the offensive today. The USSR, militarily strong but relatively weak economically, is on the defensive and is becoming increasingly encircled.

* *

We of course are not dealing with an established fact but with a process which does not at all proceed in a linear way and which, as it unfolds, does not exclude the opening of breaches where in the present state of things there seems to be a solid front. The development of this process (which we predicted thirty years ago while the world was in the middle of an orgy of democracy, peace and beginning economic boom) is reflected in the accelerated arms race — with preference for conventional weapons, and this is not by chance — and in the spiraling expansion of the industry and commerce of armaments. It is reflected in the continuous swelling of the state machineries and police apparatuses, in short, in the merging, the osmosis, between democracy and fascism which we call « armored democracy ». All these in turn feed the nightmare of social tensions which are provoked by the crisis and even by the therapy which is adopted everywhere — with the *indispensable and necessary* complicity of opportunism — in an attempt to pull out of the crisis.

« Do not force us to become a police state », Willy Brandt implored after the last attack by the Red Army Faction. In this statement Brandt just repeats the bourgeois lie that the lamb of democracy, at the price of its soul would be forced to turn into the wolf due to the explosions of individual terrorism. The truth, Messieurs apostles and defenders of the established order, is that the « ultra-democratic » police state did not wait for a « gang » to perfect its apparatus. Instead individual terrorism and the ideology of the « propaganda of the deed » which distinguishes it are the desperate reactions to the pressing, suffocating, octopus-like omnipresence of the police state (just as they are a reaction to all the pathological phenomena of a decaying society, of which the new state monster is only *one* manifestation). This police state is not specific to a particular country and it does not take form as a result of whatever particular event (such as the terrorist attacks); in fact it was born after World War II when the « ultra-democratic » victors imposed a regime of permanent military occupation, with overt

police functions, over the territories which were divided up. Its severe measures are only the extension of techniques of repression developed against social « misfits » and dissidents at the experimental laboratories of Sing-Sing or Alcatraz in the West and Lubianka in the East and bequeathed to the « liberated » countries as well as to the « liberators » of second rank.

There is a tragic irony in the first signs of the « human rights crusade » whose hypocritical preachings accompany the physical preparation for the armed confrontation (but it is an irony which is not a novelty in history since the U.S. has already played it out twice). In this crusade we see the flag of freedom, human rights, pluralism and anti-dictatorship planted on all the towers of the international prison built by capitalism following a world massacre unparalleled in magnitude and ferocity; this prison is the most immense ever built in its sinister history, it is the prison of U.S. imperialism.

This is why in this tragedy of unemployment and underemployment, of wage reductions to a minimum (whether through actual wage cuts or through the workings of inflation), and of factory despotism pushed to the extreme, the workers must learn to see the true face behind all the talk of democracy, freedom and human rights. The course we are on not only is heading towards the imposition of still heavier sacrifices in regard to the proletariat's conditions of life and work but it is also heading towards the call once again for the proletariat to shed its blood. This future massacre will be for the workers « own good » of course, just as it is for « their own good » that they are forced to submit to an always greater exploitation in the factories and in the fields. The workers must recognize that against this future they have only one weapon, but one that is invincible, a weapon that runs counter to all the deceitful crusades for freedom, national independence, and civilization which we are told we must defend just as we are supposed to defend our national boundaries. This weapon is the uncompromising class struggle: the solidarity among all the exploited above all the boundaries of factory, trade, or nation; revolutionary defeatism in regard to the national economy in times of peace and in regard to the nation in times of war; organized class violence and, tomorrow, the red dictatorship.

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The Myth of «Socialist Planning» in Russia

Today, it is very plain that thirty years of «prosperity» and unbridled accumulation have merely brought Western capitalism once again to the infernal cycle of crises. The vicissitudes of capitalism in its Oriental and Russian forms however are still obscured by the myth that there are no crises in the East but instead «socialist planning», and stable growth.

The sad spectacle of the failure of Russian agriculture — a failure due neither to «communism» as the Western bourgeoisie would have us believe, nor to «climatic conditions» as their Russian counterparts pretend, but solely to the capitalist backwardness of Kolkhoz farming — is enough to show clearly that the Soviet economy is not spared by the crisis. In fact it is towards American capitalism (whose agriculture was incredibly prosperous even while its industry was struck head-on by the crisis) that Russia had to turn in order to feed its hungry — and all the while styling itself a socialist society in the process of constructing the «material basis of communism». But the myth remains alive, the myth of «socialist planning» in industry, high rates of growth which this makes possible, and the false equation which lies at the base of Stalinist and post-Stalinist propaganda: socialism equals planning plus frenzied growth. But still the majority of those who have come to recognize the lie of social peace and Western «prosperity» do so only to fall into another bourgeois trap by calling not for the end of this bestial epoch of frantic accumulation, but for its «planning» in order to reach still higher rates of accumulation.

This is why, before showing the reality of the so-called «planning» of Russian industry, it is necessary to recall an elementary Marxist truth — buried under the debris of the Stalinist counter-revolution: socialism is not characterised by enormous rates of growth; it does not measure its

results by the standards of the capitalist economy — it is not a « super-capitalism ».

Socialism ?

A truly socialist economy has no interest whatsoever in production for production's sake, the « overfulfilment » of plans, and economic competition with rivals (what rivals?). In place of running after objectives of an historically past epoch, the socialist mode of production will seek not only to produce for the needs of the species, but also to permit the species to develop in a way never before possible, the easing of society's productive effort, the elimination of the evil inheritances of capitalism — notably the division of labour — which have imprisoned human labour in a slave camp in the service of class society. In other words, socialism is not « constructed » by means of Stakhanovite slogans and frantic accumulation. On the contrary it is born from the final and complete destruction, at the hands of the proletarian dictatorship, of the social relations and economic laws of capitalism, along with the destruction of their material base — the capitalist relations of production.

Socialism is characterised then by the disappearance of the kingpin of the market and capitalist structure, the category with which Marx commenced his exposition of the theory of the capitalist mode of production, that is to say value, which is synonymous with the *private* appropriation of the product of the production process :

« From the moment when society enters into possession of the means of production and uses them in direct association for production, the labour of each individual, however varied its specifically useful character may be, becomes at the start and directly social labour. The quantity of social labour contained in a product need not then be established in a roundabout way ; daily experience shows in a direct way how much of it is required on the average. Society can simply calculate how many hours of labour are contained in a steam engine, a bushel of wheat of the last harvest, or a hundred square yards of cloth of a certain quality. It could therefore never occur to it still to express the quantities of labour put into the products which it will then know directly and in their absolute amounts, in a third product, in a measure which, besides, is only relative, fluctuating, inadequate, though formerly unavoidable for lack of a better, rather than express them in their natural, adequate and absolute measure, *time*. Just as little would it occur to chemical science still to express atomic weights in a roundabout way, relatively, by means of the hydrogen atom, if it were able to express them absolutely, in their adequate measure, namely in actual weights, in billionths or quadrillionths of a gramme. Hence, on the assumptions we made above, society will not assign values to products » (1).

(1) Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow, 1969, p. 366-7.

Socialism therefore has no use for the market categories which reign as master over the Russian economy. It does not know *value* since there are no *private* products and thus no *exchange* between private producers, implying that the producers have no need to know the relative values of their products. It thus knows neither the market nor *commodities*, and still less the particular commodity *money*. It knows neither selling nor buying and thus neither the selling nor buying of the commodity *labour-power* or *wage-labour* which, for the Marxist, is abolished during the first phase of communist society, or socialism. In this phase, to use Marx's expression, we are dealing with communist society « just as it *emerges* from capitalist society » and where the individual producer « receives a certificate from society that he has furnished such and such an amount of labour (after deducting his labour for the common funds), and with this certificate he draws from the social stock of means of consumption as much as the same amount of labour costs. The same amount of labour which he has given to society in one form he receives back in another » (2).

The fact that the Russian economy exhibits all of the commodity and capitalist categories, the fact that the Russian workers are subject to the slavery of *wages*, suffices to define it as *capitalist*. We have illustrated fully in the work of our Party (3) that the Russian economy has never ceased to be capitalist and that this fact was openly recognised by Lenin (which, of course, did not prevent the October Revolution and the power which was born from it from having been authentically communist). To mask its real nature, the Stalinist counter-revolution created the nonsensical theory that socialism is compatible with commodity categories, that it is characterised by the same categories as capitalism but with a different content. As if categories were not characterised *precisely* by their content! As if this content was not so inevitably that of the capitalist categories that the same concepts are *essential* to describe it! This type of argument has, moreover, already been utilised by the ineffable Herr Dühring to whom Engels had sharply retorted :

« To seek to abolish the capitalist form of production by establishing « true value » is therefore tantamount to attempting to abolish catholicism by establishing the « true » Pope, or to set up a society in which at last the producers control their products, by consistently carrying into life an economic category which is the most comprehensive expression of the enslavement of the producers by their own product » (4).

Stalinism has done much worse : it has instituted a « socialist » value, which signifies not only the enslavement of the producer, but also the abolition of Marxism.

(2) *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx-Engels, *Selected Works*, London, 1970, p. 319.

(3) See particularly *Struttura Economica e Sociale della Russia d'Oggi*, reprinted in book form by *Edizioni Il Programma Comunista*, Milan ; in English see « Marxism and Russia », *Communist Program* no. 3, May 1977.

(4) *Anti-Dühring*, *op. cit.*, p. 368.

The Socialist Plan

It follows from what has been said that the plan of a socialist society does not preoccupy itself with *value*, still less with money or the profitability on invested funds — as does the Russian plan. It is concerned only with *use-values*, that is to say the utility of the product and the time necessary for its manufacture :

« It is true that even then it will still be necessary for society to know how much labour each article of consumption requires for its production. It will have to arrange its plan of production in accordance with its means of production, which include, in particular, its labour-power. The useful effects of the various articles of consumption, compared with one another and with the quantities of labour required for their production, will in the end determine the plan. People will be able to manage everything very simply, without the intervention of much-vaunted « value » (5).

Consequently, socialism is incompatible not only with the existence of *money*, but also with that brutal capitalist invention, the *rate of growth* which embraces in a common figure (in Russia as in the West) the necessities of life and the instruments of death, useful means of consumption and luxuries of the most idiotic type. Even if not expressed directly in money terms, the rate of growth in effect presupposes value and money, since the only way to compare the total production of two different years which comprise thousands of different objects from biscuits to machine-tools is to compare their values and these can only be expressed in money. Without value, which is the only universal standard of measure of different use-values, without money, which is the only universal standard of measure of value, no comparison is possible and so no rate of growth of production can exist. The only thing that socialist society will be able to measure as a function of total production will be the *amount of labour-time* furnished by the species in order to produce its means of existence — but it is the diminution of this quantity, the easing of the species' productive effort, which we shall perhaps amuse ourselves by measuring from one year to the next, since otherwise socialism makes no sense at all. What sense, what interest can there be for a socialist society to measure a rate of growth of total production? As Engels explained, its production is guided only by the *utility* of the various objects and the amount of labour necessary for their production. The only rate of growth which could be measured would be that of the actual physical production of each use-value taken separately. But there again, what would be the point in measuring this? If the needs of humanity for bicycles are estimated at 50 millions in one year, and 54 millions the next, the plan must organise this extra production. But what sense would there be in glorifying the rate of growth of 8 % in bicycle production? What sense would there be in trying to overstep this rate if this does not correspond to the needs of the species? And what would be the sense of always wanting to produce

(5) *Ibid.*, p. 367.

TABLE 1 - PRINCIPAL INDICATORS OF THE 10th FIVE-YEAR PLAN

	1975	1980 (proj.)	Growth 1976-1980	
	<i>billions*</i> of Roubles	<i>billions</i> of Roubles	<i>billions</i> of Roubles	%
NATIONAL REVENUE (1973 prices)	362	449-462	87-100	24-28
- consumption funds	266	337-344	71-78	27-29
- accumulation funds	96	112-118	16-22	17-23
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION (prices as at 1st July 1967)	523	710-729	187-206	35-39
- Group A (means of prod.)	380	524-540	144-160	38-42
- Group B (means of cons.)	143	186-189	43-46	30-32
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION Average figures, 1965 prices	91	104-106	13-15	14-17

Source : Kosygin : Address to the 25th Congress of the C.P.S.U., 1st March 1976 ; *Pravda*, 2 March 1976. * Billion is an American billion throughout.

more bicycles since there will be no profit to be made, no market to capture from rivals who no longer exist, no surplus-value to fight over with other capitalists? If it is estimated that the needs of humanity for individual transport require that automobile production be *decreased*, the plan must organise this also, and there will be no sense in lamenting the resulting negative rate of growth. There will be no point in attempting to prevent it by artificially stimulating new needs in order to avoid financial losses and bankruptcies (which will no longer exist) of the autonomous enterprises (which will have disappeared).

The rate of growth is merely one of the idols of the religion of *production for production's sake* which characterises capitalism, and only capitalism, just as do those idols of the commodity and money, and all that derive from them. The plan of a socialist society knows neither commodities, money, nor rates of growth.

And the Russian plan? Table 1, published by *Pravda*, summarizes the « principal indicators » of the 10th five-year plan (1976-80) announced by Kosygin at the 25th Congress of the C.P.S.U. To which Gods do these indicators refer? None other than the Gods Value, the Rouble, and Augmentation of Value — the very idols venerated by all capitalist states throughout the world. The Russian « plan » is figured in terms of commodities, money, and rates of growth. We need go no further to conclude that it is capitalist from A to Z : there is not an ounce of socialism in it.

Planning ?

After this necessary reminder, we now move on to the myth of planning. The anarchy and bankruptcy of Russian agriculture is known to all, and it is pointless to waste time showing that there is not the least amount of planning of agricultural production. Production in this sector is left entirely to the laws of the market in which the state is sometimes forced to intervene haphazardly. This is also done in all Western capitalist countries through fixing the prices of the principal products, providing subsidies, stockpiling commodities, controlling credit, etc. We shall concentrate therefore on the sphere of industrial production. The 10th five-year plan (1976-80), recently adopted at the 25th Congress of the C.P.S.U., forecasts for 1980 that industrial production will stand at 720 billions of roubles — a growth of 37 % in comparison with 1975. As with the French plan for example, the Russian plan forecasts the level of production of the principal products compared with 1975, the essentials of which have been summarized in Table 2.

Certainly it is the existence of these «targets», so complacently commented upon in speeches and in the official press, which provides much of the basis for the myth of planning. But in reality these targets do not «plan» anything because they are as a general rule only projections of tendencies already present in the economy. The self-styled planner has no control over the dynamics of production: far from being master of the economic machine, he can only follow it as best he can by trying to predict where it will take him. He fixes not production, but the *index* — an extrapolation of past trends. This is shown by the 8th, 9th and 10th five-year plans for the production of the principal products — summarized

TABLE 2 - PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVES OF THE 10th PLAN

Product	Produced in 1975	Objective for 1980	Growth %
Steel (<i>millions of metric tons</i>)	141	165	17
Coal (<i>do.</i>)	701	800	14
Oil (<i>do.</i>)	491	630	28
Gas (<i>billions of m3</i>)	289	418	44
Electricity (<i>billions of Kwh</i>)	1,038	1,360	31
Fertiliser (<i>millions of metric tons</i>)	90	143	59
Tractors (<i>thousands</i>)	550	590	7
Automobiles (<i>do.</i>)	1,964	2,150	9
Cement (<i>millions of metric tons</i>)	122	145	19

Sources: 1975 figures: *Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta* no. 6, February 1976; Objectives for 1980: *Pravda*, 2 March 1976; EG no. 11, March 1976.

TABLE 3 - PRODUCTION DURING THE COURSE OF THE 8th, 9th AND 10th PLANS (Growth in percent)

	Projected 1966-70	Realised 1960-70	Projected 1971-75	Realised 1971-75	Projected 1976-80
Steel	39	27	26	21	17
Coal	16	8	11	12	14
Oil	45	45	39	40	28
Gas	73	54	55	41	44
Electricity	66	46	42	40	31
Fertiliser	108	77	63	63	59
Tractors	73	29	25	20	7
Automobiles	132	48	125	114	9
Cement	41	31	31	28	19

Sources: the same as table 2; also: *Pravda*, 10 April 1966, 7 April 1971 (for the projections); *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR* (for the production actually realised).

in Table 3. The columns indicate for each product the rates of growth predicted and those subsequently achieved.

Let us examine the table line by line. For most of the products we have a series of decreasing figures. For example, for steel the 8th plan «fixed» a growth objective of 39 % for the ensuing 5 years. This was not attained, 27 % being actually realised. The following plan prudently fixed a new objective lower than that previously achieved — 26 %. This was not achieved either and the 10th plan has fixed a still lower rate, lower, in fact, than that actually achieved in the course of the 9th plan. This is the case for steel, electricity, tractors, and (with a minor difference) cement. In the case of oil and fertiliser the plan happens to have been realised, but the tendency is the same: in the vast majority of cases the plan «plans» nothing at all. It can only register and project the slackening rate of growth of industrial production. In the cases of gas, automobiles, and coal, while the slackening rate of growth is obvious on the whole, the series of figures is more capricious and might seem to reflect the influence of the state. But which products are these? Coal, a commodity whose production has seen a renewed effort because world prices have soared, which means that coal exports can earn hard currency, while its extraction does not require new methods of technology (unlike oil); gas, where contracts for large deliveries have been signed with the US and West Germany; and automobiles, whose factories have been imported and entirely installed by Western capitalisms. To sum up then, the Russian economy is «planned» by nothing other than the world market!

TABLE 4 - PRODUCTION REALISED IN RELATION TO THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN (in percent)

	5th 1951-55	6th 1956-60	7th 1961-65	8th 1966-70	9th 1971-75
Steel	+ 3	— 4	+ 3	— 8	— 3
Coal	+ 5	— 14	— 5	— 7	~
Oil	~	+ 3	+ 3	~	~
Gas	— 7	+ 18	— 14	— 15	— 9
Electricity	+ 4	— 9	~	— 12	~
Fertiliser	— 7	— 29	— 11	— 14	~
Tractors	+ 25	— 26	n.a.	— 25	— 4
Automobiles	+ 2	— 19	— 13	— 36	— 4
Cement	~	— 18	— 7	— 7	— 2

Sources : Calculations based on figures in *Pravda*, 20 August 1952, 15 January 1956, 8 February 1958, and sources cited previously. The sign ~ indicates that the plan was realised to within 1 %.

Furthermore, if the Russian plan can, in the vast majority of cases, only reflect and project tendencies already inherent in the dynamics of production, the forecasting of these tendencies cannot be much better than in the West. This is indeed the case as the reader can easily see by merely examining the last five plans which are summarised in Table 4. Of the series of five objectives successively fixed for the nine basic products shown, the planned target has been realised only eight times (to within 1 %). Nine times it has been surpassed — but surpassing the target implies frantic accumulation, Stakhanovism, more intense exploitation of the working class, quite the *contrary* of socialism. Finally, the plan's targets have not been reached on twenty-seven occasions with shortfalls of up to 36 % (514,000 automobiles less than the « plan » predicted!). In addition the figures refer only to the key products: one can imagine the state of affairs in other branches of production where the combination of bottlenecks can only increase the disorganisation and the shortfalls. This proves that far from being planned the Russian economy flounders in the midst of the *anarchy of the market*.

Close examination of the official figures also reveals that in order to conceal this anarchy, statisticians do not hesitate to manipulate the indices just as their Western counterparts do. The recent most flagrant case is that of the 8th five-year plan (1966-70). The least one can say about the results of this plan, the essentials of which are summarized in Table 5, is that they are lamentable: a shortfall of 10.5 million metric tons of steel, 4.6 million tons of coal, 35 billions of cubic metres of gas, 99 billions of Kwh of electricity, 9 million tons of fertilizer, 154,000 tractors, 514,000 transport vehicles, 7 million tons of cement. But no matter; by the

TABLE 5 - RESULTS OF THE 8th PLAN

	Objective for 1970	Realised by 1970	Amount short of objective	% short of objective
Steel (<i>millions of tons</i>)	126.5	116	— 10.5	— 8
Coal (<i>do.</i>)	670	624	— 46	— 7
Oil (<i>do.</i>)	350	349	— 1	~
Gas (<i>billions of m3</i>)	233	198	— 35	— 15
Electricity (<i>billions of Kwh</i>)	840	741	— 99	— 12
Fertiliser (<i>millions of tons</i>)	64	55	— 9	— 14
Tractors (<i>thousands</i>)	612	458	— 154	— 25
Automobiles (<i>do.</i>)	1,430	916	— 514	— 36
Cement (<i>millions of tons</i>)	102	95	— 7	— 7

Sources : See table 3.

miracles of « made in Moscow » socialism, Russian leaders were able to announce, in the midst of these considerable shortcomings, that the same period had seen a growth in industrial production which had *exceeded the plan*. A 50 % growth over the five years had occurred in place of the 48.5 % which had been predicted (6). This trick leaves us breathless, but it is only a continuation of those of the Stalinist period. The fact that with much smaller physical shortfalls (thanks to more modest objectives) the 9th plan (1971-75) saw a slight shortfall in the overall rate of industrial growth (43 % as against the predicted 44 %) (7) is an implicit acknowledgement that the books were cooked. It is much easier to plan those indices than to plan capitalist anarchy.

Passing on from five-year plans to the ten and twenty year projections we see that the idiocy of the Russian claims to planning appears even more glaringly. Table 6 summarizes the famous predictions made by Khrushchev in 1961 for the years 1970 and 1980. By 1965 it was apparent that the targets fixed for 1970 would not be achieved, and the 8th five-year plan « reset the sights » to a more sensible level (see table 5) — which did not prevent the occurrence of the most glaring inaccuracies. On the whole, actual production in 1970 varied between 10 % and 68 % below the targets set by Khrushchev, and more than half of the objectives which were to be realised by 1970 were not even attained five years later in 1975.

(6) Kosygin's speech to the 24th Congress of the C.P.S.U., quoted in *Pravda*, 7th April 1971. The figure of 50 % is, furthermore, effectively that which is used in the official Russian Statistical Yearbook (*Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR*).

(7) Brezhnev's speech to the 25th Congress of the C.P.S.U., quoted in *Pravda*, 25th February 1976.

TABLE 6 - KHRUSHCHEV PROJECTIONS COMPARED WITH RESULTS

	Projection for 1970	Realised by 1970	% short of projection	Projection for 1980	Objective for the 10th plan (1980)	Variation %
Steel	145	116	20	250	165	— 34
Coal	693	624	10	1,190	800	— 33
Oil	390	349	10	700	630	— 10
Gas	317	198	37	700	418	— 40
Electricity	950	741	22	2,850	1,350	— 52
Fertiliser	77	55	28	130	143	+ 10
Plastics	5,300	1,673	68	20,000	5,680	— 71
Cement	122	95	22	234	145	— 38

Sources: Khrushchev, speech at 22nd Congress of the C.P.S.U., 18 October 1961. Pravda, 19th October 1961 (1970 and 1980 projections); other figures are from sources previously cited. Units are the same as Tables 2 and 5; plastics in millions of metric tons.

Compared with the targets set for 1980, production lags still further behind. With practically only one exception the objectives of the 10th five-year plan are lower than those set by Khrushchev by amounts ranging from 10 % to 71 % (thus the production of electricity in 1980 will not be even half of that predicted by Khrushchev) — Oh the miracles of Russian market planning!

Atomisation of Production and Capitalist Anarchy

How can we explain the shattering reversals suffered by these self-styled «planners»? For Marxists the response is immediate: it is due to the anarchy of capitalist and commodity production which is characteristic of an economy composed of autonomous enterprises that function (whatever may be their legal form of ownership) according to the rules of capital within the framework of the market. But did Engels himself not affirm that even in a capitalist market economy the absence of a plan could to a certain extent *make way for planned production*? (8). Why then is this not the case in Russia? Precisely because there lacks in Russia those conditions outlined by Engels as necessary before planning begins to make its appearance — concentration and monopoly.

In an economy where production is split up among tens of thousands of autonomous enterprises each functioning as a centre for the accumulation of capital with its own accounts and its own financial autonomy, it is of little importance whether legal ownership is in the hands of the

(8) See *Anti-Dühring*, Part 3, Chapter 2. The question is far from an academic one, since the dictatorship of the proletariat will itself be confronted with the task of economic planning, originally within the market framework, in order to initiate the destruction of the commodity economy.

TABLE 7 - BREAKDOWN OF RUSSIAN INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES BY SIZE IN 1973

Number of workers	Number of enterprises	% of enterprises	% of total production
Less than 100	16,500	35	4.2
100 to 500	20,000	42.3	19.9
500 to 1,000	5,300	11.3	14.4
1,000 to 3,000	3,960	8.4	25.9
3,000 to 10,000	1,180	2.5	24
More than 10,000	140	0.3	11.6

Sources: Figures drawn from *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo S.S.S.R.*, 1973. The statistics only deal with around 47,200 enterprises. Electricity production is excluded in official Russian source.

state, the people, or whatever other entity: production in such a case can only be regulated by the market and not by a central plan. On January 1st, 1974, Russian industry consisted of 48,578 autonomous state enterprises (9). It must be pointed out that this figure does not include the building industry, nor the officially registered handicrafts, nor, above all, all the small enterprises which inevitably arise due to the market and wage-labour and whose existence is indirectly acknowledged by the Soviet press (such as small mechanical workshops, repair shops of all kinds, apartment decorators and fitters etc.). The breakdown of state industrial enterprises by size (according to the number of workers) is given in Table 7. Despite the incompleteness of the statistics it is easily seen that in the structure of Russian industry there exists that feature which is characteristic of all capitalist industrial structures: a myriad of small and medium sized businesses (generated by the market and constantly growing) dominated by a lesser number of big enterprises and a very few giants. But that part of the total industrial production carried out by the larger enterprises is *less* in Russia than in the West (they are «giants» only in the number of their employees). Comparatively more production is carried out by the not so large enterprises. This means that Russian industry is much less *concentrated* than that of Western countries — quite an achievement for a supposedly «advanced socialist economy».

Two figures suffice to illustrate this relative lack of concentration: according to Table 7, in 1973, 61.5 % of Russian industrial production was carried out by the 5,300 largest enterprises (a total of the last three lines of the table). In the United States in the same year a slightly larger portion of industrial production (65 %) was carried out by a mere 500

(9) *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR*, 1973. If one adds to this figure 300,000 auxiliary enterprises and factories (*SSSR v'tsifrah*, 1974) one arrives at the figure of about 350,000 production units or establishments.

firms. Another table of annual statistics for Russia tells us (again for 1973) that 31.1 % of industrial production was carried out by 1.4 % of the enterprises — numbering 660. In the United States the same percentage (31 %) is accounted for by 50 firms! (10) The relative weakness of concentration in Russian industry is plain. On the economic level the structure of the American industry lends itself much more to « planning » than that of Russian industry.

The « Reorganisation » of Russian Industry

Russian « managers » are concerned about this lack of concentration not because it hinders any planning but because it prevents the development of an advanced capitalist industry with really competitive enterprises which can one day rival those of the other capitalist countries. One of the spokesmen of these managers, the academician Aganbegian, recently explained that

« To give more autonomy to enterprises makes sense only if there exist enterprises worthy of the name. Soviet enterprises are small and weak... they are mainly establishments which employ 600 workers on average. These must be concentrated from the 49,000 which exist to around 5,000 » (11).

To this end the state has undertaken, with the 1973 reform, a reorganisation of Russian industry by introducing the « industrial combination » throughout Russia, after having experimented with it for several years. The official objective of this reform is to « concentrate further the principal enterprises in a given branch of production... in order to ensure an appreciable improvement in the productivity of labour, enhance quality, lower production costs and improve the other economic indicators. » (12)

Horizontal concentration and vertical integration are thus realised by operations of fusion and absorption of enterprises which (judicial fiction apart) are equivalent to those commonplace in Western countries and have the same objectives. Principally, these objectives are the increase of

(10) *Fortune*, May 1974. Note that these comparisons only apply to the respective percentages of industrial production and ignore their absolute levels. If we roughly estimate the value of American industrial output in 1973 as being double that of Russian industry we arrive at the conclusion that only 50 U.S. corporations produce as much as the top 5,300 Russian enterprises. This comparison — which relates only to size — speaks volumes about the quantitative and qualitative gap which separates the two economies, as well as the pain which Russia's full integration into the world market will cost her. To further illustrate the point we may note that in France in 1970, 63 % of industrial production was carried out by around 1,300 firms (*Economie et Statistique* no. 53, February 1974) and in Germany in 1972, 63 % was carried out by 1,667 firms (*Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 1975); finally, in Great Britain in 1970, 50 % of industrial production was carried out by 100 firms (*Financial Times*, 19 April 1972).

(11) *L'Expansion*, October 1975.

(12) Resolution of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. and of the Council of Ministers, quoted in *Pravda*, 3rd April 1973 (our emphasis).

profit (« increasing the profitability of production ») and the possibility of ensuring at the same time competitiveness on the world market (« to ensure the launching of new production whose technical and economic characteristics are such that they can compete with the most advanced soviet or foreign ones, and even surpass them ») (13). It is furthermore not difficult to predict corresponding effects for the working class, particularly in the matter of lay-offs. In 1974 there were more than 1,500 of these industrial combinations bringing together more than 6,000 enterprises which had previously been autonomous production units (14) and, according to Kosygin's speech to the 25th Congress, the number of these combinations had grown to 2,300 by the beginning of 1976.

At the same time, this reform seeks to rid the enterprises of the last constrictions placed upon them by attempts at central planning which have been characterised by an unwieldy and bureaucratic tutelage and which, without planning anything, merely hinders management :

« Ministries and administrations... must streamline the bureaucracy of sectoral management in industry so that the majority of economic decisions are decided directly in the enterprises, the *combinat*, or the industrial combination » (15).

The concentration of enterprises and the reduction of bureaucratic fetters upon a « normal » capitalist management (16) are two essential conditions, even if not in themselves sufficient, for the modernisation of a capitalism far inferior to its Western counterpart. In fact, the industrial reorganisation of Russian enterprises expresses a fundamental need : that of obtaining *higher productivity* and thus *better exploitation* of the working class in order to combat the tendency of the rate of economic growth to fall and to construct enterprises which will one day be able to compete internationally. We have already demonstrated the decline in growth of certain key areas of production (see Table 3). The statistics in Table 8 show this in its historic dimension : the rate of growth halves every quarter of a century.

This decline has entirely confirmed the predictions made in the works of our party twenty years ago when, in order to unmask the lie of the Stalinist thesis which saw in the large growth rates of the time the proof of the pretended « socialism », we showed that this rapid growth charac-

(13) *Ibid.*

(14) *SSSR v'tsifrah*, 1974.

(15) Resolution of the C.C. of the C.P.S.U... *ibid.*

(16) When we refer to « bureaucratic fetters » we are not making this into a « theory » as the Trotskyists do — we are merely stating a fact. These shackles on the « free » functioning of enterprises exist — to a greater or lesser extent — in all capitalist countries. We need only listen to the managing director of any British or American firm complaining about all the constraints and vexations to which he is subject in matters of tax, social security, controls of all kinds on his supply and sale prices, all nevertheless coming from a state which is that of his own class. The discipline is only imposed — to a limited degree of course — on the individual capitalist, the better to serve the interests of the entire class. The bureaucracy does not have its *own dynamic* (but on the contrary a powerful inertia).

terised all capitalisms in the period of their youth, and its decline is an ineluctable historic law of ageing capitalism. Russian capitalism is no exception. Setting out from a very low level of development aggravated by the devastations of civil war, it was natural for industry to have high rates of growth, which were accelerated still more (as is the case for the majority of newly born capitalisms — see for example Japan) by the strong impetus given by the state in its role as a centraliser of capital. The Stalinist period of accumulation was that of the formation of a real interior market, the transformation from a still predominantly pre-capitalist structure in which the working class formed only a small part of the population (10 % in 1913, as opposed to a peasant population of 76 %), to an entirely capitalist economy, and finally the extensive accumu-

TABLE 8 - RATE OF GROWTH OF RUSSIAN INDUSTRY

Period	Plan	Annual average rate of growth (%)
1922-1928	pre-plan	23
1929-1932	1st	19.3
1933-1937	2nd	17.1
1938-1940	3rd (3 years)	13.2
1941-1945	war	—
1946-1950	4th	13.5
1951-1955	5th	13
1956-1960	6th	10.4
1961-1965	7th (7-year plan 59-65)	8.6
1966-1970	8th	8.4
1971-1975	9th	7.4
1976-1980	10th (prediction)	6.5

Sources : Calculated on the basis of figures in *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo S.S.S.R.* of various years, and sources cited in table 2.

It must be remembered that the Russian statisticians themselves have been obliged to rectify the base of official figures given in the years before 1940, which had been falsified in the interests of Stalinist propaganda. Thus, in his report to the 17th Congress of the Russian Communist Party, 26th January 1934, Stalin indicated triumphantly that the index of industrial production had risen from 100 in 1913 to 391.9 in 1933 (*The Essential Stalin, Major Theoretical Writings, 1905-52, New York, 1972, p. 229*). At the following Congress, 10th March 1939, the figures given by the « Father of Peoples » indicated (again with 1913 = 100) an index of 380.5 for 1933 (a small correction) and 908.8 for the year 1938 (*op. cit., p. 350*). But the figures published in the official Russian Yearbook (*Narodnoe Khozyaistvo S.S.S.R.*) reveal that the indices Stalin presented as those for industrial production as a whole represented in fact only big industry which accumulated much faster. For industry as a whole, the indexes (1913 = 100) were 281 in 1933 and 657 in 1938. Stalin's figures were inflated by about a third.

This new series of figures had to be rectified in its turn in 1961 because it had been « forgotten » to include production in the territories occupied by the Russian Army in 1939 and definitively acquired in 1945 (which correspond roughly to the present-day republics of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Moldavia). Taking 1913 as 100, the index for 1940 was 852 (old series) and 769 (new series). The new series is still in use in the official Yearbook. The 1974 index stood at 12,200 which rose in 1975 to 13,000 according to figures published in the Russian press (*Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta* no. 6, February 1976). But the Yearbook maintains a discrete silence on the indices of pre-war industrial production. No figures are given for the entire period 1913 to 1940!

lation that allowed for the creation of an industry responsive to the needs of the interior market. The total number of industrial workers went from 3.9 million in 1913 to 12.2 million in 1950 and more than 27 million in 1975 — up by a factor of seven since the period before the revolution. The number of industrial manufacturing enterprises employing more than 100 workers rose from 2,805 in 1911 (employing 1,645,000 workers) to 11,591 in 1933 (employing 4.5 million workers) and to more than 26,000 in 1968 (employing nearly 19 million workers) (17) — a tenfold increase both in the numbers of enterprises and in the workers employed. These statistics illustrate the budding of a young capitalism, and its blossoming — ceaselessly creating new enterprises, extensively accumulating the absolute surplus-value extorted from the ever increasing army emerging from the land and regimented into industry. This extensive accumulation continued in the post-war period (18). From 1950 to 1970, the number of industrial workers more than doubled (in the United States, for the same period, the numbers of workers increased by a little more than a quarter). But this pace of accumulation slowed little by little and simultaneously the growth in the working population slackened also. The Russian agricultural population has decreased enormously since the revolution, but it still represents in 1975 about 25 % of the active population: a considerable proportion (for comparison this figure was reached in France in the mid-50's and in the U.S. during the mid-20's), which shows the extent to which the Russian economy, and thus industry, drags the ball and chain of a backward agriculture. This high agricultural population remains on the land because of relatively primitive agriculture and the backwardness of the Kolkhoz farming system. The flow of hands which fueled industrial growth has therefore tended to dry up. As the figures of Table 9 show, the effective number of industrial workers, which grew at the rate of 4 % or 5 % a year during the 50's, is projected to increase by less than 1 % a year during the course of the 10th Plan.

Still lacking the power to continue to tackle this backward agrarian structure, Russian capitalism is seeking, in the words of bourgeois economics, to « develop the latent reserves of productivity » which exist in its

(17) Figures taken from *SSSR i zarubeznye strany posle pobedy velikoi oktiabrskoi revoliutsii*, Moscow 1970. We use this source because it provides figures which are statistically coherent. Those contained in the Russian official Yearbook, *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR*, do not give a consistent picture of the evolution of the total number of industrial enterprises. Let us note however that the 1955 Yearbook gives for 1954 the astronomical figure — totally nonsensical for an economy decreed to be « socialist » — of 212,000 industrial State enterprises to which there is added 114,000 workshops and other industrial enterprises and artisanal co-operatives, 28,000 consumer co-operative industrial units and about 400,000 Kolkhozian enterprises and workshops (forges, windmills, etc.).

(18) To illustrate we quote Khrushchev at the 21st Congress: « We must construct or complete during the next seven years more than 140 large chemical enterprises and re-equip more than 130 » (*Pravda*, 8th February 1959). Boasting apart, what does this declaration show?

1) that these enterprises are not as « large » as Khrushchev would us believe since there is no sense in pretending that the installation of 140 « large » chemical units (in the sense as understood in the West) is possible in seven years;

2) the objective being pursued is the creation of a real chemical industry.

TABLE 9 - INDUSTRIAL WORKERS AND LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY

	5th Plan 1951-55	6th Plan 1956-60	7th Plan 1961-65	8th Plan 1966-70	9th Plan 1971-75	10th Plan 1976-80
Industrial workers at the beginning of the period (millions)	12.2	15.2	18,9	22.5	25.6	27.5
Increase over the the period (%)	24.6	24.3	19.0	13.8	7.4	3.9
Increase in labour productivity (%)	48	37	26	32	34	32
Increase in industrial production (%)	85	64	51	50	43	37

Sources : Narodnoe Khozjalstvo S.S.S.R., and sources cited in table 2.

industry. Put in the correct way this means passing from an extensive accumulation on the basis of absolute surplus-value to an intensive accumulation seeking gains in productivity in the already existing units, replacing workers by machines and more generally « reorganising » the process of production to increase productivity and the intensity of labour, i.e. seeking to produce *relative* surplus-value. Such measures are those of concentration and reorganisation to which we have already referred: the experiences of lay-offs typified by Chitchechino and the constant appeals of Russian managers and trade unions for more productivity and work discipline, etc.

While a socialist society will utilise improvements in productivity to *reduce* the productive effort of the species, in Russia, on the contrary, the *intensification* of labour is necessary to contribute to the growth of productivity for the greater prosperity of the enterprise and the greater good of the « national economy ». The appeal for more exploitation is a regularly occurring leitmotif which reappears with each Plan.

« The plan forecasts an acceleration in the pace of growth of labour productivity thanks to an extensive introduction of scientific and technical discovery into production, a greater specialisation of production, and the *scientific organisation of work*, and thanks to *the strengthening of economic incentives...* The mechanisation of auxiliary work, *the observation of regular rythm in production, the improvement in work discipline, the elimination of deadwork for the labour-force*, constitute important sources of latent reserves for the national economy ». (Kosygin, Speech to the 23rd Congress).

« Raising the efficiency of production, reducing costs, and *increasing the productivity of labour* — this is the path we must follow in order

to *increase profits...* In the enterprises which have passed over to the new system it has become the rule to pay, as a material incentive, an end-of-year bonus calculated on seniority, discipline, and quality of work. Experience has taught us that this form of *encouragement is conducive to the growth of labour productivity, the reduction of the fluctuations in workmanship and the strengthening of labour discipline* » (Kosygin, Speech to the 24th Congress).

« It is of course necessary to pay particular attention to the growth in the productivity of labour... In existing enterprises production must increase, as a general rule, *without augmentation of the workforce, and even with its reduction*. But it is no less important to *resolutely improve the organisation of work, eliminate time-wasting, and increase labour discipline* » (Kosygin, Speech to the 25th Congress).

« In the light of what has been said, faults which are particularly intolerable are those of *wastage of labour time and deadwork, irregularity in the pace of work, lack of discipline in work and technique*, and large turnover of personnel in enterprises » (Brezhnev, Speech to the 25th Congress) (19).

As we have shown, the industrial reorganisation aims at the same time to improve the ability of Russian industry to compete in the world market. But this supposes that Russia overcomes at least in part its technological backwardness compared to the capitalism of the developed West: whence the massive importation of modern equipment (often in the form of entire factories). This, added to the importation of wheat, weighs heavily on the Russian commercial balance (for 1975, the commercial deficit with the developed capitalist countries was 3.5 billion Roubles according to official figures) (20) and necessitates large capital loans from the West.

It is at this price — a price ultimately paid by the sacrifices of the Russian working class — that industry is able to make its enterprises competitive and increase its exports.

« One of our important tasks is to improve our external trade relations. To do this we intend to *regularly increase the country's export potential*, in new articles as well as traditional commodities... Ministers

(19) Respectively, *Pravda*, 10th April 1966, 7th April 1971, 2nd March 1976, 25th March 1976 (our emphasis). Exhortations of this kind can be counted in hundreds. A final extract from Kosygin's speech to the 25th Congress gives an idea of the level of the « socialist humanism » much-vaunted by its author:

« The role of social factors in the development of production and the raising of its efficiency will become more important during the course of the next five years. The level of qualification of management, an atmosphere of creative work and a good socio-psychological climate in the collective, concern for the workers' conditions of life, creation of cultural and sporting facilities in the enterprise are some of the things which render a man's life more interesting, more rich in content, and which *favourably influence the results of production* ». (*Pravda*, 2nd March, 1976, our emphasis).

In Russian « socialism » just as in the West, capital offers the same concern to its workers as it would to a herd of dairy cows to which one plays sweet music so that they *produce more*.

(20) *Vneshnyaya Torgovlya SSSR*, 1975.

and Departments must take *systematic measures to increase production*, and also to improve the quality and competitiveness of our exports. Foreign trade becoming an important part of our national economy, the question arises of organising, in certain cases, *enterprises specialising in exports*, in order to satisfy the specific needs of external markets » (Kosygin, Speech to the 25th Congress) (21).

The implications of this program for the working class are only too clear. The much-vaunted *competitiveness* of commodities signifies nothing other than economic war between rival capitalists. Behind commodities there are in fact proletarians of all countries placed in competition with one another in the effort and in exploitation by their respective capitals, which do not seek to « satisfy the specific needs » of a world market supersaturated with commodities, but to *exploit* and to pocket as much surplus-value as possible by capturing a greater share of the market at the expense of their competitors. The more acute this economic war becomes (and the participation of Russia can only aggravate it more), the more the constricting laws of capitalism tighten around the working class. They imply, in the East as in the West, « restructuring » and lay-offs, an end to « deadwork » and « underworked » workers, encouragement of competition between workers for bonuses and differentials, increase in the intensity of labour and the exhaustion of proletarians — in a word, *greater exploitation of the working class*.

The consequences of a programme so typically capitalist do not end there. The growing integration of Russia into the world market implies, in the short term, further financial and commercial outlets for the most powerful Western capitalists. Helping Russian industry to modernise however, can only aid a future competitor to arm itself. In the end the full participation of Russia in the world economy implies the arrival of a new source of commodities on a market already regularly saturated, and can only result in aggravating world capitalist crises. Conversely, the more the principal Russian industrial branches interact with the world market, the more industry in its entirety becomes dependent upon international exchanges, and the more world capitalist crises carry the Russian economy in their train.

This is why our conclusion is the same as that of over 20 years ago :

« Once the Iron Curtain has been transformed into a cobweb by international competition, the universal mercantile crisis will strike at the heart of young Russian industry. This is what lies in store as a result of the unification of markets and free circulation of blood in the capitalist monster! But those who bring about this unification, unify also the revolution, whose world-wide hour could well come in the wake of the crisis of the second interlude between wars and before the third world war breaks out » (22).

(21) *Pravda*, 2nd March 1976.

(22) *Struttura Economica e Sociale...*, op. cit., p. 270.

Force, Violence and Dictatorship in the Class Struggle

IV. Proletarian Struggle and Violence

The first three parts of this article have briefly outlined the historical development of the class struggles up to present-day bourgeois society. They presented the perspective which Marxist socialism has long given on this subject but which nevertheless continues to be an object of deviation and confusion.

To clarify the question we made the fundamental distinction between energy in the potential state (energy which is capable of entering into action but is not yet acting) and energy in the actual or kinetic state (energy which has already been set into motion and is producing its various effects). We explained the nature of this distinction in the physical world and extended it in a very simple way to the field of organic life and human society.

The problem was then to identify this energy, i.e. violence and coercive force, in the events of social life. We have emphasized that this is operating not only when there is a brutal physical act against the human body such as physical restraint, beating, and killing, but also in that much larger field where the actions of individuals are coerced through the simple threat and under the penalty of violence. This coercion arises inseparably with the first forms of collective productive activity and thus of what is considered to be civilized and political society. Coercion is an indispensable factor in the development of the whole course of history and in the development of the successive institutions and classes. The question is not to exalt or condemn it, but to recognize and consider it in the context of the different historical epochs and the various situations.

Parts I, II and III of this article, which originally appeared in our review *Prometeo* between 1946 and 1948, were published in *Communist Program* no. 1 and no. 3.

The second section compared feudal society with bourgeois capitalist society. Its aim was to illustrate the thesis, which of course is not new, that the passage from feudalism to capitalism — an event fundamental in the evolution of the technology of production as well as in the evolution of the economy — has not been accompanied by a decrease in the use of force, violence, and social oppression.

For Marx, the capitalist form of economy and society is the most *antagonistic* that history has presented until now. In its birth, its development, and its resistance against its own destruction, capitalism reaches a level of exploitation, persecution, and human suffering unknown before. This level is so high in quality and quantity, in potential and mass, in severity and range and — if we translate it into the ethical-literary terms which are not ours — in ferocity and immensity, that it has reached the masses, the peoples, and the races of all corners of the earth.

Finally the third section dealt with the comparison between the liberal-democratic and the fascist-totalitarian forms of bourgeois rule, showing that it is an illusion to consider the first to be less oppressive and more tolerant than the second. If we take into consideration not violence as it is openly manifested, but instead the actual potential of the modern state apparatuses, that is to say their ability and capacity to resist all antagonistic, revolutionary assaults, we can easily substitute the blind common-place present-day attitude, one that rejoices because two world wars supposedly drove back the forces of reaction and tyranny, and replace it by the obvious and clear verification that the capitalist system has more than doubled its strength, a strength concentrated in the great state monsters and in the world Leviathan of class rule now being constructed. Our proof of this is not based on an examination of the juridical hypocrysy or of the written or oratorical demagoguery of today, which anyway are more revolting than they were under the defeated regimes of the Axis powers. Instead it is based on the scientific calculation of the financial, military, and police forces, in the measurement of the frantic accumulation and concentration of private or public, but always bourgeois, capital.

In comparison to 1914, 1919, 1922, 1933, and 1943, the capitalist regime of 1947 weighs down more, always more, in its economic exploitation and in its political oppression of the working masses and of everyone and everything that crosses its path. This is true for the « Great Powers » after their totalitarian suppression of the German and Japanese state machines. It is also and no less true even for the Italian state: although defeated, derided, forced into vassalage, salable and sold in all directions, it is nevertheless more armed with police and more reactionary now than under Giolitti and Mussolini, and it will be even more reactionary if it passes from the hands of De Gasperi (1) to those of the *left* parties.

(1) The Christian-Democratic Prime Minister in 1947 — Ed

Having summarized the first three parts, we must now deal with the question of the use of force and violence in the social struggle when these methods of action are taken up by the revolutionary class of the present epoch, the modern proletariat.

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In the course of about a century, the method of class struggle has been accepted in words by so many and such various movements and schools that the most widely differing interpretations have clashed in violent polemics, reflecting the ups and downs and the turning points of the history of capitalism and of the antagonisms to which it gives rise.

The polemic has been clarified in a classic way in the period between World War I and the Russian Revolution. Lenin, Trotsky, and the left-wing communist groups (2) who gathered in Moscow's International settled the questions of force, violence, the conquest of power, the state, and the dictatorship in a way we must consider as definitive on the theoretical and programmatic level.

Opposed to them were the countless deformations of social-democratic opportunism. It is not necessary to repeat our refutation of these positions but it is useful to simply recall some points which clarify the concepts which distinguish us. Moreover, many of these false positions, which were then trampled to the ground and which seemed to have been dispersed forever, have reappeared in almost identical forms in the working class movement today.

Revisionism pretended to show that the prediction of a revolutionary clash between the working class and the defensive network of bourgeois power was an obsolete part of the Marxist system. Falsifying and exploiting the Marxist texts (in this case a famous preface and letter of Engels) (3) it maintained that the progress of military technology precluded any perspective of a victorious armed insurrection. It claimed instead that the working class would achieve power very shortly through legal and peaceful means due to the development and strengthening of working class unions and of parliamentary political parties.

(2) This expression refers to the left currents headed by Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg who struggled inside the Second International against revisionism and social-pacifism. During World War I and after the October revolution they were violently attacked by the social democrats and the centrists, notably Kautsky — Ed.

(3) This refers to Engels' introduction to a reedition of Marx's « Class Struggles in France » in 1895. The leadership of the German Social Democratic Party censored Engels' introduction so that it appeared as an apology of legality at all costs and a demonstration that insurrection was impossible. In spite of the fact that Engels protested this in a letter to Kautsky, the latter did not publish the original introduction. Engels was to die some months later. The original text was discovered only in 1925 — Ed.

Revisionism sought to spread throughout the ranks of the working class the firm conviction that IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE to overthrow the power of the capitalist class by force and, furthermore, that IT WAS POSSIBLE to realize socialism after conquering the executive organs of the state by means of a majority in the representative institutions. Left Marxists were accused of a worship of violence, elevating it from a means to an end and invoking it almost sadistically even when it was possible to spare it and attain the same result in a peaceful way. But in the face of the eloquence of the historical developments this polemic soon unveiled its content. It was a mystique not so much of non-violence as it was an apology of the principles of the bourgeois order.

After the armed revolution triumphed in Leningrad over the resistance of both the Czarist regime and the Russian bourgeois class, the argument that IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE to conquer power with arms changed into the argument that IT MUST NOT BE DONE, even if it is possible. This was combined with the idiotic preaching of a general humanitarianism and social pacifism which of course repudiates the violence utilized for the victory of the working class revolutions, but does not denounce the violence used by the bourgeoisie for its historical revolutions, not even the extreme terroristic manifestations of this violence. Moreover, in all the controversial debates, in historical situations which were decisive for the socialist movement, when the right contested the propositions of direct action, it admitted that it would have agreed with the necessity of resorting to insurrection if it were for other objectives. For example, the Italian reformist socialists in May 1915 opposed the proposal for a general strike at the moment of war mobilization, using ideological and political arguments in addition to a tactical evaluation of the relation of forces; but they admitted that if Italy intervened in the war on the side of Austria and Germany they would call the people to insurrection.

In the same way, those who theorize the « utilization » of legal and democratic ways are ready to admit that popular violence is legitimate and necessary when there is an attempt from above to abolish constitutional rights. But in such a case how can it be explained that the development of military technology in the hands of the state is no longer an insurmountable obstacle? How can it be foreseen, in the event of a peaceful conquest of the majority, that the bourgeoisie will not use those military means in order to maintain power? How can the proletariat in these situations victoriously use the violence which is criticized and condemned as a class means? The social democrats cannot answer this because in doing so they would be obliged to confess that they are pure and simple accomplices in preserving bourgeois rule.

A system of tactical slogans such as theirs can in fact be reconciled only with a clearly anti-Marxist apology of bourgeois civilization which precisely is the essence of the politics of those parties which have risen from the deformed trunk of anti-fascism.

The social-democratic thesis contends that the last historical

situation where the recourse to violence and forms of civil war was necessary was precisely that situation which enabled the bourgeois order to rise from the ruins of the old feudal and despotic regimes. With the conquest of political liberties an era of civilized and peaceful struggles is supposedly opened in which all other conquests, such as economic and social equality, can be realized without further bloody conflicts.

According to this ignoble falsification, the historical movement of the modern proletariat and socialism are no longer the most radical battle of history. They are no longer the destruction of an entire world down to its foundations, from its economic framework and its legal and political system to its ideologies still impregnated with all the lies transmitted by previous forms of oppression and still poisoning even the very air we breathe.

Socialism is reduced to a stupid and irresolute combination of supposed legal and constitutional conquests by which the capitalist form has pretendedly enriched and enlightened society and vague social postulates which can be grafted and transplanted onto the trunk of the bourgeois system.

Marx measured the irresistible and increasing pressures in the social depths which will cause the mantle of the bourgeois forms of production to explode, just as geological cataclysms break the crust of the planet. His formidable historical vision of social antagonisms is replaced by the contemptible deception of a Roosevelt who adds to the short list of bourgeois liberties those of freedom from fear and freedom from need, or of a Pius XII who, after blessing once again the eternal principle of property in its modern capitalist form, pretends to weep over the abyss which exists between the poverty of the multitude and the monstrous accumulations of wealth.

Lenin's theoretical restoration of the revolutionary doctrine re-established the definition of the state as a machine which one social class uses to oppress other classes. This definition above all is fully valid for the modern bourgeois, democratic, and parliamentary state. But as a crowning point of the historical polemic, it must be made clear that the proletarian class force cannot take over this machine and use it for its own purposes; instead of conquering it, it must smash it and break it to pieces.

The proletarian struggle is not a struggle that takes place within the state and its organs but a struggle outside the state, against it, and against all its manifestations and forms.

The proletarian struggle does not aim at seizing or conquering the state as if it were a fortress which the victorious army seeks to occupy. Its aim instead is to destroy it and to raze its defeated defenses and fortifications to the ground.

Yet after the destruction of the bourgeois state a form of political state becomes necessary, i.e. the new organized class power of the

proletariat. This is due to the necessity of directing the use of an organized class violence by means of which the privileges of capital are rooted out and the organization of the freed productive forces in the new, non-private, non-commodity communist forms is made possible.

Consequently it is correct to speak of the *conquest of power*, meaning a non-legal, non-peaceful, but violent, armed, revolutionary conquest. It is correct to speak of the passage of power from the hands of the bourgeoisie to those of the proletariat precisely because our doctrine considers *power* not only authority and law based on the weight of the tradition of the past but also the dynamics of force and violence thrust into the future, sweeping away the barriers and obstacles of institutions. It would not be exact to speak of the *conquest of the state* or the *passage of the state* from the administration of one class to that of another precisely because the state of a ruling class must perish and be shattered as a condition for the victory of the formerly subjected class. To violate this essential point of Marxism, or to make the slightest concession to it (for instance allowing the possibility that the passage of power can take place within the scope of a parliamentary action, even one accompanied by street fighting and battles, and by acts of war between states) leads to the utmost conservatism. This is because such a concession is tantamount to conceding that the state structure is a form which is opened to totally different and opposed contents and therefore stands above the opposing classes and their historical conflict. This can only lead to the reverential respect of legality and the vulgar apology for the existing order.

It is not only a question of an error of scientific evaluation but also of a real degenerative historical process which took place before our eyes. It is this process which has led the ex-communist parties down hill, turning their backs on Lenin's theses and arriving at the coalition with the social-democratic traitors, the « worker's government », and then the democratic government, that is to say a direct collaboration with the bourgeoisie and at its service.

With the unequivocally clear thesis of the *destruction of the state*, Lenin re-established the thesis of the establishment of the *proletarian state*. The second thesis does not please the anarchists who, though they had the merit of advancing the first, had the illusion that immediately after bourgeois power was smashed society could dispense with all forms of organized power and therefore with the political state, that is to say with a system of social violence. Since the transformation of the economy from private to socialist cannot be instantaneous, it follows that the elimination of the non-laboring class cannot be instantaneous and cannot be accomplished through the physical elimination of its members. Throughout the far from brief period during which the capitalist economic forms persist while constantly diminishing, the organized revolutionary state must function, which means — as Lenin unhypercritically said — maintaining soldiers, police forces, and prisons.

With the progressive reduction of the sector of the economy still

organized in private forms, there is a corresponding reduction of the area in which it is necessary to use political coercion, and the state tends to progressively disappear.

The points which we have recalled here in a schematic way are enough to demonstrate how both a magnificent polemical campaign ridiculing and crushing its opponents and, above all, how the greatest event up to now in the history of the class struggle have brought out in all their clarity the classical theses of Marx and Engels, the *Communist Manifesto*, and the conclusions which have been drawn from the defeat of the Paris Commune. These are the theses of the *conquest of political power*, the *proletarian dictatorship*, the *despotic intervention* in the bourgeois relationships of production, and the final *withering away* of the state. The right of speaking of historical confirmations parallel to the brilliant theoretical construction seems to cease when this last phase is attained since we have not yet witnessed — in Russia or anywhere else — the process of the withering away, the dying down of itself, the dissolving away (*Auflösung* in Engels) of the state. The question is important and difficult since a sound dialectic can demonstrate nothing with certainty on the basis of a more or less brilliant series of spoken or written words. Conclusions can only be based on facts.

The bourgeois states, in whatever atmospheres and ideological climates, inflate in a more and more terrible way before our eyes. The only state which [*in 1947 - Ed.*] is presented, through tremendous propaganda, as a working class state, expands its apparatus and its bureaucratic, legal, police, and military functions beyond all limits.

So it is not surprising that the prediction of the shriveling up and elimination of the state, after it has fulfilled its decisive role in the class struggle, is greeted with a widespread scepticism.

Common opinion seems to say to us: « You can always wait, you who theorize even red dictatorships! The state organ, like a tumor in the body of society, will not regress and will instead invade all its tissues and all its innermost recesses until suffocating it ». It is this commonplace attitude which encourages all the individualist, liberal, and anarchist ideologies, and even the old and new deformed hybrids between the class method and the liberal one, all of which are served to us by socialisms based on nothing less than the *personality* and on the plenitude of its manifestation.

It is quite remarkable that even the few groups in the communist camp which reacted to the opportunist degeneration of the parties of the now dissolved International of Moscow, tend to display a hesitation on this point. In their preoccupation with fighting against the suffocating centralization of the Stalinist bureaucracy, they have been led to cast doubts on the Marxist principles re-established by Lenin, and they reveal they believe that Lenin — and along with him all the revolutionary communists in the glorious period of 1917-20 — were guilty of an idolization of the state.

We must firmly and clearly state that the current of the Italian Marxist left, with which this review is linked, does not have the slightest hesitance or repentance on this point. It rejects any revision of Marx and Lenin's fundamental principle that the revolution, as it is a violent process *par excellence*, is thus a highly *authoritarian, totalitarian, and centralizing* act.

Our condemnation of the Stalinist orientation is not based on the abstract, scholastic, and constitutionalist accusation that it committed the sinful acts of abusing bureaucratism, state intervention, and despotic authority. It is based instead on quite different evaluations, i.e. the economic, social, and political development of Russia and the world, of which the monstrous swelling of the state machine is not the sinful cause but the inevitable consequence.

The hesitation about accepting and defending the dictatorship is rooted not only in vague and stupid moralizing about the pretended right of the individual or the group not to be pressured by or forced to yield to a greater force, but also in the distinction — undoubtedly very important — made between the concept of a dictatorship of one class over another and the relationships of organization and power within the working class which constitutes the revolutionary state.

With this point we have reached the aim of the present article. Having restated the basic facts in their correct terms, we of course do not pretend to have exhausted these questions, which is something that only history can do (as we consider it to have done with the question of the necessity of violence in the conquest of power). The task of the party's theoretical work and militancy is something other: it is to avoid, in the search for a solution to these questions, the unconscious utilization of arguments which are dictated or influenced by enemy ideologies, and thus by the interests of the enemy class.

Dictatorship is the second and dialectical aspect of revolutionary force. This force, in the first phase of the conquest of power, acts from below and concentrates innumerable efforts in the attempts to smash the long-established state form. After the success of such an attempt, this same class force continues to act but in an opposite direction, i.e. from above, in the exercise of power entrusted to a new state body fully constituted in its whole and its parts and even more robust, more resolute and, if necessary, more pitiless and terrorist than that which was defeated.

The outcries against the call for the proletarian dictatorship (a claim that even the politicians of the iron Moscow regime are hypocritically hiding today) as well as the cries of alarm against the pretended impossibility of curbing the lust for power and consequently for material privilege on the part of the bureaucratic personnel crystallized into a new ruling class of caste, all this corresponds to the vulgar and metaphysical position which treats society and the state as abstract entities. Such a position is incapable of finding the key to problems through an investigation into the facts of production and

into the transformation of all relationships, which the collision between classes will give birth to.

Thus it is a banal confusion to equate the concept of dictatorship that we Marxists call for, with the vulgar conception of tyranny, despotism, and autocracy. The proletarian dictatorship is thus confused with personal power, and on the basis of the same stupidities, Lenin is condemned just like Hitler, Mussolini, or Stalin.

We must remember that the Marxist analysis completely disclaims the assertion that the state machines act under the impulse of the will of these contemporary «Duces». These «Duces» are nothing but chessmen, having only symbolic importance, which are moved on the chessboard of history by forces from which they cannot escape.

Furthermore we have shown many times that the bourgeois ideologists do not have the right to be shocked by a Franco, a Tito, or the vigorous methods used by the states which present them as their leaders, since these ideologists do not hesitate to justify the dictatorship and terror to which the bourgeoisie resorted precisely in the period following its conquest of power. Thus no right-minded historian classifies the dictator of Naples in 1860, Giuseppe Garibaldi, as a political criminal but on the contrary exalts him as a true champion of humanity.

The proletarian dictatorship, therefore, is not manifested in the power of a man, even if he has exceptional personal qualities.

Does this dictatorship then have as its acting agent a political party which acts in the name and in the interests of the working class? Our current answers this question, today as well as at the time of the Russian Revolution, with an unconditional «yes».

Since it is undeniable that the parties which pretend to represent the proletarian class have undergone profound crises and have repeatedly broken up or undergone splits, our decidedly affirmative answer raises the following question: is it possible to determine which party has in effect such a revolutionary prerogative, and what criterion is to be used to determine it? The question is thus transferred to the examination of the relationship between the broad class base and the more limited and well defined organ which is the party.

In answering the questions on this point we must not lose sight of the distinctive characteristic of the dictatorship. As is always the case with our method, before concrete historical events reveal the positive aspects of this dictatorship, we shall define it by its negative aspect.

A regime in which the defeated class still exists physically and constitutes from a statistical viewpoint a significant part of the social agglomerate *but is kept outside of the state by force*, is a dictatorship. Moreover this defeated class is kept in conditions which make it

impossible to attempt a reconquest of power because it is denied the rights of association, propaganda, and the press.

It is not necessary to determine from the start who maintains the defeated class in this strict state of subjugation: the very course of the historical struggle itself will tell us. Provided that the class we fight is reduced to this state of a social minority, undergoing this social death pending its statistical one, we will admit for a moment that the *acting agent* can be either the entire victorious social majority (an extreme hypothesis which is unrealizable), or a part of that majority, or a solid vanguard group (even if it is a statistical minority), or finally, in a brief crisis, even a single man (another extreme hypothesis, which was close to being realized in only one historical example — that of Lenin, who in April 1917, alone against the entire Central Committee and the old Bolsheviks, was able to read in advance in the march of events and to determine in his theses the new course of the history of the party and of the revolution, just as in November he had the Constituent Assembly dissolved by the Red Guard).

As the Marxist method is not a revelation, a prophecy, or a scholasticism, it achieves first of all the understanding of the way in which the historical forces act and determines their relationships and their collisions. Then, with theoretical research and practical struggle continuing, it determines the characteristics of the manifestation of these forces and the nature of the means by which they act.

The Paris Commune has confirmed that the proletarian forces must smash the old state instead of entering it and taking it over; its means must not be legality but insurrection.

The very defeat of the proletariat in that class battle and the October victory at Leningrad have shown that it is necessary to organize a new form of armed state whose « secret » is in the following: it denies political survival to the members of the defeated *class* and to all its various parties.

Once this decisive secret has been drawn from history, we still have not clarified and studied all the physiology and the dynamics of the new organ that has been produced. Unfortunately an extremely difficult area, its pathology, remains open.

Above all else the determining negative characteristic is the exclusion of the defeated class from the state organ (regardless of whether or not it has multiple institutions: the representative, executive, judicial and bureaucratic). This radically distinguishes our state from the bourgeois state which pretends to welcome all social strata in its bodies.

Yet this change cannot seem absurd to the defeated bourgeoisie. Once it succeeded in bringing down the old state based on two orders — the nobility and the clergy — it understood that it had made a mistake by only demanding to enter as the Third Estate in the new state body. Under the Convention and under the Terror it chased the aristocrats out of the state. It was easy for it to historically close

up the phase of open dictatorship since the privileges of the two orders which were based on legal prerogatives rather than on the productive organization could rapidly be destroyed and thereby the priest and the noble could rapidly be reduced to simple ordinary citizens.

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In this article we have defined what fundamentally distinguishes the historical form of the proletarian dictatorship. In the next article of this series we will examine the relationship between the various organs and institutions through which the proletarian dictatorship is exercised: the class party, workers councils, unions, and factory councils.

In other words we will conclude by discussing the problem of the so-called proletarian democracy (an expression utilized by some texts of the Third International but which it would be good to eliminate) which is supposedly to be instituted after the dictatorship has historically buried bourgeois democracy.

(To be continued)

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Terrorism and Communism : On the Events in Germany

In Germany, a « Holy Alliance » Against Terrorism

(From Le Prolétaire no. 250, September 24, 1977.)

After the kidnapping of Schleyer — that boss of the bosses, director of Daimler-Benz, former SS officer and adviser to « socialist » Chancellor Brandt — the pack of guard dogs of capital has not ceased to howl for death.

On September 5th the German head of state addressed the nation on television, urging the people to cooperate with the police in the search for the « killers »: « The bloody provocation at Cologne is directed against all of us [...]. The state must respond to the provocations of terrorism with whatever severity necessary [...]. Terrorism does not have a chance because not only the state but the entire people is against it ».

A « crisis headquarters » including the leading figures of politics, the judiciary and business was immediately set up. The chorus of hired ideologists of the ruling class joined in with the voice of their leader. The liberal journalists as well as those of the right-wing Springer group, social democratic intellectuals as well as apologists for nazism, Nobel prize theologians and humanists of all shades were unanimous: « Death to the gangsters, death to the common criminals ».

In the first rank were the great democrats, as a man behind the president of the Socialist International, Willy Brandt: « The terrorists are murderers just like those who destroyed the Weimar Republic ». Death for the red fascists! Isolate them! Denounce their « dastardly and criminal » sympathizers! Dismiss all the lawyers that the prisoners trust, replace them by public defenders!

Public opinion, this idol of the democrats, docily echoes the ruling class: Enough weakness! Kill them one by one! Reestablish the death penalty!

Mirrored in the events in social democratic Germany, the democracy which emerged from World War II, from the « anti-Nazi »

crusade, reveals itself in all its hideousness as *the inheritor and continuator of fascism*. This democracy is a hundred times more violent than fascism because the direct terrorism of the bourgeois state (which no democracy has ever hesitated to use) is reinforced by an ideological terrorism a hundred times more insidious. On one side there are the bunker-like court rooms, the tanks in the streets, the tremendous reinforcement of the police, the torture and « sensory isolation » of the political prisoners, the persecutions against their lawyers, and the witch hunt against civil employees. On the other side there are the opinion polls and Schmidt's public appeals for the « collaboration » of all citizens, i.e. decentralized repression based on « direct democracy ».

If the Red Army Faction has brought down against it such a hysterical unanimity from all the defenders of the bourgeois state, this certainly is not because it represents such a *present danger* for the bourgeois order. There is an enormous disproportion between the assaults by a handful of terrorists and the incessant, omnipresent violence of the German democratic state. In this country which is not only in the heart of capitalism but at the epicenter of its world contradictions, such a fact did not prevent the RAF from taking up in words and in deeds the hatred and violence of the working class against the oppressor class. The present suffocating « social peace » in Germany had been paid for by the blood of hundreds of thousands of proletarians, the flower of the world working class, massacred by the « Weimar » social democracy after each of its several upsurges before being massacred by Nazism with the complicity of Stalinism. The crime committed by the RAF was of having denounced this iron dictatorship of capital that rests beneath the innocent cloak of democracy. It proclaimed through its actions the necessity of opposing force by force and terror by terror, attacking not only the representatives of German capitalism but also the outposts of the international American policeman (see the attempt in 1972 against the central computer controlling the bombing of Vietnam). It is for this reason that these militants merit, on the part of the international capitalist order, the worst hatred and punishment, and on our part, *total solidarity* against repression.

Our militant solidarity towards the rebels of the RAF (just as towards all those who stand up against the modern slavery of capitalism) does not exempt us from the duty of criticizing the *ideology* of the organizations who channel their energies in a sterile way. To believe, as does the RAF, that through the « propaganda of the deed » the working class can be drawn out of the lethargy where it has been plunged for decades of counter-revolution, is in fact to repeat the old idealist and spontaneist errors of the working-class movement. Terrorism and armed actions of individuals or groups can neither raise the political consciousness of the masses nor unleash the class struggle. They are not a replacement for the maturation of the objective, material conditions of the revolution; neither are they a replacement for the subjective conditions, the preparation of the revolution by the

party through all the complex forms of struggle (political, theoretical and economic) against the bourgeoisie and against the disastrous influence of democracy and opportunism over the proletariat, a struggle to win the largest possible layers of the proletariat to the principles of communism.

With this said, at the present moment when the RAF is confronted not only by the repression of the bourgeoisie but also by the condemnation of the whole gamut of opportunism, both from the right and the left, it is necessary for us to recall some points which are a question of principle for Marxists.

First of all, the call for violent revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat has no sense if it is not accompanied by the call for red terror as the *indispensable means*, not of course for « rousing » the proletariat, but for intimidating the enemy, for destroying its nerve center and breaking its will. Secondly, in the violence and mass terror exercised by the proletariat in arms and directed by the revolutionary party, *no form* of violence can be excluded in principle including taking hostages, actions of reprisal or sabotage, and executions of the representatives of bourgeois reaction. It is solely a question of means to attain an aim; the only rules are the needs of revolutionary victory and later, its defense.

Finally, the proletarian revolution is not born through a process of raising the consciousness of the totality or even of the majority of the proletariat which develops according to schemas that are completely laid out in advance by the party. It is born instead, as Lenin explained in 1916, as an « outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry oppressed and discontented elements » (« The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up », *Collected Works, Vol. 22*, p. 356). As such it cannot but be accompanied by the « inevitable participation » of sections of the petty bourgeoisie and backwards workers who bring into the movement « their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and errors », but who « objectively will attack capital ». The actions, at first glance discordant, of this motley mass must not be denied (how can a material reality be denied!). Instead they must be « united and directed », centralized by the party in a comprehensive strategy, towards the victory of the revolution. Revolutions are not created, they are prepared and led.

The present upsurge of terrorism in the advanced capitalist countries, such as Germany and Italy, is the product of a despair faced with a situation of persistent social stagnation; it is an attempt to react, although inadequately, against the crushing pressure of capital and opportunism. At the same time it is the symptom of a *deep crisis* of the bourgeois order; it is a forewarning of future upheavals which will be all the more explosive as they are longer suppressed. The preparation for the proletarian solution to this crisis requires more than ever that communists intensify their struggle against the bourgeoisie and against all forms of opportunist capitulation. This is a preliminary condition for bringing together the individual reactions and even heroic

deeds (which find their expression today in dead-end ideologies) and integrating them in an anti-bourgeois war that is directed by the party according to a systematic plan guided by communist principles.

Today Baader, Tomorrow the Working Class

(Leaflet distributed by our comrades in France)

Andreas Baader and his comrades have been coldly assassinated in their prison cells by the ignoble « democratic » bourgeois order. These militants of the Red Army Faction had been condemned everywhere and by everyone: from the open bourgeois parties to those which still pretend to be proletarian, from official reformism (see the reactions of the European Communist parties) to the far-left (see the condemnations of Lutte Ouvriere and the German and French sections of the United Secretariat), all have participated in a disgusting « holy union » to denounce terrorism. What a tremendous victory for the imperialist order! All that then remained was for the executioner to crown this condemnation with the execution of the sentence. Only because of a last scruple of democratic hypocrisy did the German bourgeoisie officially present this massacre by its state terrorism as « suicides ».

What was the crime of the martyrs of Stuttgart? They revolted arms in hand against the ignoble bourgeois order which exploits, pillages, oppresses and carries out its massacres every day throughout the world. It is for this reason that they were captured, imprisoned and killed, first one by one and then *en masse*, in front of the entire world so that their cadavers will serve as an example for all the exploited and oppressed who would be tempted to revolt.

The philistines of the left and far-left hypocritically shed tears: « These executions are horrible. But the methods of individual violence lead to nothing and play into the hands of the capitalists! » Certainly Baader and his comrades were terribly deluded to hope by their courageous example to substitute themselves for the objective forces which do not depend on any individual action and to hope by these acts to open the way for a proletarian upsurge, and they paid for their error with their lives. Their action has only been a scratch on the enormous armor of bourgeois democracy. But faced with the always more suffocating decay and oppression of capitalist society, faced with the daily treachery of reformism and its submission to the established order, faced with the wishy-washiness of the supposed « revolutionaries » of the Trotskyist, Maoist or other varieties, and in the absence of a true class alternative, it is inevitable that these desperate acts will be more and more numerous in spite of the ruth-

less repression against their perpetrators. To say that they play into the hands of the bourgeoisie is to spit in the face and on the cadavers of all those who revolt against the imperialist order. As if the state had waited for the « terrorists » in order to perfect its immense arsenal of repression and death and to ceaselessly expand its police and military forces! As if the terrorists were the *cause* of the arming of oppression and not one of its products! Those who pretend that the terrorists serve the bourgeoisie are only hiding behind empty words their *basic pacifism*, their renunciation of all violence, and their present or future submission to the bourgeois order. If we were to listen to them, it is necessary to renounce *all* struggle because *any* struggle provokes reaction from the bourgeoisie and repression from its state! If this state is continually strengthening itself, it is because it feels the deepening crisis of capitalism and mounting social tensions and antagonisms (of which terrorism is only the expression), and because it is preparing to confront the only enemy which it really fears: the proletariat finally risen from its knees and no longer hesitating to use its own class violence.

Today's massacre is therefore a warning that the bourgeois gives to its proletarian adversary of tomorrow, once the reformist lies are no longer sufficient to drown the proletariat's energy in class collaboration or in electoral mascarades: « Workers, keep still or beware! » At the same time it is a lesson for all the exploited and oppressed: « Submit or you will die! » In other words there is no third choice, there is no peaceful solution, in short there is no alternative other than resignation or struggle to the death against the exploiters' order. For the mass of exploited to win this struggle they will have to ruthlessly use this same law against their masters of today, submitting the capitalists to the dictatorship and terror of the working class: « Submit capitalists, submit to the smashing of your state, to the ending of your privileges, to the abolition of classes, and to the destruction of your rotten commodity society, or you will die! »

This is the lesson which the working class must draw from the Stuttgart massacre. Individual violence of despair is generous but impotent. This is no reason, however, to reject violence; on the contrary, the final confrontation will be inevitable. This is the reason to begin the preparation now, long in advance, for the exercise of working class violence which alone will be able to destroy this infamous society of exploitation. The first task, therefore, is to ruthlessly combat pacifism and the spirit of resignation which the bourgeoisie and its « working class » accomplices (including certain so-called « revolutionaries ») methodically instill in the minds of the working class through incessant bludgeoning.

Today faced with the hysteria of the ruling class and the internationalization of repression and with the aim of preparing for class battles to come, it is urgent to struggle in all the working class organizations of an open character:

- for the immediate and unconditional freedom for political prisoners
- against expulsions and extraditions
- for class solidarity with the victims of bourgeois repression
- for working class self-defense
- for the international solidarity of the working class!

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTY, October 1977.

Terrorism and Communism

(Leaflet distributed by our comrades in Germany)

« As long as human labor power, and, consequently, life itself, remain articles of sale and purchase, of exploitation and robbery, the principle of the « sacredness of human life » remains a shameful lie, uttered with the object of keeping the oppressed slaves in their chains » (Trotsky, Terrorism and Communism, 1921).

The entire bourgeois world, who supposedly holds dear the sacredness of human life, is rejoicing over the defeat of the terrorist action of these last days [the hijacking of the Lufthansa airliner] and the deaths of the militants of the Red Army Faction and their comrades in struggle, the latest victims of its inhuman social order.

The representatives and beneficiaries of capitalist society — a society responsible for two imperialist wars (more than 70 million victims), the extermination of entire peoples, countless colonial wars, a life without hope for the mass of exploited and the deaths silently caused daily by the violence of its production for profit — have been celebrating throughout the world following these events, and they do so for good reason. They are all the more overjoyed because they even have been able to temporarily re-direct the conscious and unconscious revolt, the dissatisfaction and bitterness caused by capitalism, so that it is directed against the very ones who have dared to fight this system with the only weapons this system knows and recognizes: the weapons of violence.

Are the terrorists responsible for unemployment? For speedup? For the fall of real wages? For the rising rents? For the world economic crisis? For the progressive transformation of the entire world into a polluted zone? For the increasing antagonisms between states? For the arms buildup throughout the world in preparation for new massacres? In short are they responsible for the turbulence

and growing insecurity which characterize capitalist society in the East as in the West? Of course not, this is obvious. Individual terrorism is a consequence and a symptom of the crisis of capitalist society. In the case we are dealing with today it is a particularly significant symptom since the terrorists try more or less directly to strike the state, that is to say the organ of coercion which protects this society of exploitation, insecurity and massacres, and which utilizes for this purpose all possible means of repression, ideological manipulation and armed violence.

All the parties, all the institutions and personalities who support this state, point to the terrorist actions to justify the growing repression and make the terrorists into scapegoats. However this repression is not aimed just at the terrorists. Those who govern know perfectly well that a handful of terrorists cannot shake capitalist rule. However they also know that the terrorists today — as isolated and powerless as they are — give just the first taste of what the working class will inevitably do tomorrow as it is pushed by the increasing misery of its life. The terrorists are breaking the monopoly which the capitalist state has over political violence; they are attacking the bourgeoisie with the means it has used itself for centuries in order to assure its privileges. The ruling class knows perfectly well that its social order will less and less be able to provide the essentials of life for its slaves. It knows perfectly well that individual violence is a symptom of the crisis of society and that this very crisis provokes the increasing danger of the *collective violence of the proletariat directed by a communist party and conscious of its aims*. Today the entire bourgeoisie is engaging in a class struggle from above on the international level, and moreover it is doing this with success. All violence not exercised by the capitalist state, its agents and its institutions is stigmatized as a crime and declared to be insane, reactionary and even « fascist ». At the same time, the state shows in the most explicit way that any attempt against its social order will be met by pitiless repression. In short, it directs a widespread campaign of intimidation against the whole working class, against the only force which can seriously threaten its state. Consequently it is only by utilizing violence in its different forms — open or latent — that the working class can defend its immediate interests. It is only through armed and organized violence that it can accomplish its *historic task* — the establishment of its own dictatorship to destroy this infamous society which is based only on violence and breeds only violence, and the opening of the way to a new social form without exploitation and thus without oppression. This is why the bourgeoisie does all it can to maintain intact the wall which it has built between the working class and the weapon of violence. This is why it mobilizes all its forces in order to cry « Down With the Terrorists! ».

Just as any major symptom of the earthquakes which are developing in the depths of this society, just as any serious and objective manifestation of the contradictions and the crisis of capitalism,

present day terrorism has the merit of contributing to the clarification of fronts. In effect, such manifestations oblige each political organization to show where it stands and where it is going.

Faced with the terrorist actions, the bourgeoisie must *openly admit* in its daily practice *that democracy is not able to dispel the contradictions which this society inevitably breeds, other than by using open violence*. This is what frightens the «conscious democrats», but the bourgeoisie must require from its members as well as from its «clients» an unquestioned discipline and unequivocal words. Of course it obtains this. The liberal intellectuals even feel affronted to see the «right» doubt their loyalty. The «personalities» and organizations of the «left», who claim to represent the working class and the revolution, are no exceptions and reveal their true class colours. With more or less prudish airs they throw off the last fig leaf, revealing what side of the class line they are really on. The bourgeoisie tries to exploit the terrorist actions just as it does with each episode of rebellion against its order. It brazenly announces, «Because of the terrorists, I am obliged to oppress always more». The «left» servilely repeats, «The terrorist actions only serve the right». In fact it is the «left» who does the greatest work to justify the growing repression. As the constitutional state shows more and more what it really is, the more it is clear what the democratic rights are really worth, and the more the «left» tries to defend, and calls the workers to defend, the constitutional state and the democratic rights. In the «best» case this «left» tries to bridge the gulf opened up by the terrorist attacks and bourgeois repression, and to throw a hypocritical veil over this general class polarization.

The revolutionary proletariat acts in a totally different way. Neither bourgeois reaction nor the desperate attempts to fight this reaction by commando actions can make it forget its principles. The class struggle is not conducted by means of legal rights and reforms but by all forms of violence; it does not lead to democracy but to the dictatorship of the proletariat which will utilize all forms of terror to break the resistance of the bourgeoisie. Proletarians have no rights to lose in this society; they have only rights to violate in the collective struggle, and finally to destroy all right which presides over exploitation and oppression. If the «personalities» and organizations have shown their true face, we must applaud this fact and not help them to put their mask back on. Far from erecting a bridge over the chasm which has opened up in society, it is necessary to deepen it and to aid the working masses to take their stand on the side to which history has summoned them, the side of revolutionary violence. This political cleavage is a condition for the awakening of the revolutionary class struggle, just as much as it is the play of objective forces which will push the working masses to rank themselves on *their* side of the class line.

The proletariat must not denounce individual violence which stands up against the bourgeois state, and it must not keep its

distance from it. The bourgeoisie of course wishes that the proletariat would do so since any manifestation of solidarity of the workers with the bourgeois state enables it to repress and exploit still more. It is insane or criminal to enter in its game.

The working class instead must resolutely oppose this collaboration. This is the only way we can prepare the conditions for the political and material arming of the proletariat and prevent it from submitting to the logic of the enemy. Only in this way can we aid it to find once again its historical perspective defended by the communist party — the perspective of its collective class violence — and thereby enable it to accomplish its task. Only in this way can these heroic energies that are wasted today in individual violence be merged together and integrated as precious components of the collective class violence of the proletariat struggling for its emancipation. As Marx (nicknamed the «red terror doctor» by the bourgeoisie of the last century) proclaimed in his *Address to the Central Committee of the Communist League* in 1850: «Far from opposing so-called excesses — instances of popular revenge against hated individuals or public buildings that are associated only with hateful recollections — such instances must not only be tolerated but the leadership of them taken in hand». As Communists we work for the return of the situation which will permit us to carry out this function.

Today the Revolt of Baader, Tomorrow the Revolt of the Working Class

(From *Le Prolétaire* no. 253, November 5, 1977.)

The bourgeoisie is triumphant. Even French chauvinism eased up on its anti-Germanism for once to applaud the victory of the German government as a victory for liberal and democratic society.

This triumph is the triumph of imperialism. The international established order saw the most unlikely pairs — Schmidt and Honecker, Carter and Brezhnev, Begin and Arafat — forget their differences and join in a united front for the defense of their privileges, all concealed behind the flag of liberties, morality and other pious lies. In order to struggle against social disorder and to preserve social peace, the bourgeoisie abolished all the frontiers that it normally erects for protecting itself from foreign competition, for splitting the working class struggles and for tying the workers to the defense, whether economic or military, of their exploiters. Faced with the menace of subversion, however weak today, the bourgeoisie launched a tremendous manhunt on the international level and, as is natural, is preparing in these maneuvers of today for the true battles it will engage in tomorrow.

« Blow for blow », headlined the French newspaper *Le Figaro* on October 20th. « Hans Martin Schleyer has fallen in a war... A war between the liberal states and terrorism. A war which is all the more cruel as we are on the verge of winning it ». Schmidt, followed by the conscious ideologues of the bourgeoisie, praised the « international solidarity » which was manifested, the reconciliation of differences among all governments and their collaboration in the hunt for terrorists. So how could the proletariat still listen to the petty bourgeois who dream of an impossible return to the tranquility of the past and wish to contain the proletarian struggles within strictly national limits! Even our enemy shows us the way! Since the working class has the same interests throughout the world, our struggle for all the more reason must be international!

This triumph is the triumph of democracy. It is the triumph of the democratic method of the bourgeoisie, who has learned to use a tremendous arsenal of repression within the framework of constitutions and laws ratified by universal suffrage. The bourgeoisie has learned how the working masses, still stunned by the terrible defeats of the past, can be made to believe that it is also in their name and in their interest that it exercises its oppression. It justifies its legal and state terror by the defense of this so-called « common good » of all the classes which it calls « human rights and freedoms ». This triumph is all the more great when the « revolutionaries » themselves rally behind these same bourgeois principles and call the workers to struggle against bourgeois terror in the name of these « democratic rights » which are supposedly above classes. How could the working class lead its own struggle under the banners of the bourgeoisie and in the name of the principles which are the basis of bourgeois domination?

Contrary to what is pretended by some philistines disguised as revolutionaries, this triumph of democracy is not due to the terrorist's action which supposedly provoked the holy alliance of all parties. If this were true it would be necessary to condemn all proletarian struggle and renounce it once and for all. The struggle of the proletariat on its own ground and for its own objectives has always provoked and will always provoke the union of all the god-fearing bourgeois conservators — much more so than a few attacks by a small terrorist group. This triumph of democracy was due to the practically universal denunciation of terrorism on the part of the parties which call themselves working-class (from official reformism to the far-left and even the ultra-left). This rallying to the positions of the bourgeoisie is all the more ignoble since it is hidden behind the pretention of protecting the working class struggles and organizations from the attacks by the state. Certainly the bourgeoisie takes advantage of this occasion in order to repress any social struggle. But those who pretend to defend the struggles and the organizations of the working class — which are being reborn so difficultly and painfully — by taking refuge behind the principles of the enemy, by disavowing the use of violence and terror, and by confining the class struggle to the democratic framework, are actually hindering the reawakening of the working class. The pretended antidote, « democracy », which they administer to the class

movement, is in fact a terrible poison which, even if it does not check its growth today, will paralyze it tomorrow!

The bloody zeal with which the bourgeoisie assassinates the hostages detained in its model prisons and the tremendous demonstration of force which it parades once its victory is secured have precisely this aim: to attempt to delay the awakening of the proletarian struggle, the haunting memory of which has been rekindled in the mind of the working class by the tragic epic of Baader and his comrades.

It is not by chance that the terrorism reappearing in the imperialist countries has reached its height in Germany, a country twice crushed militarily, then divided and occupied by the victors through the first imperialist war. It is in fact in Germany where the most tremendous means of intimidation and repression of the whole international order are concentrated. It is there where the hatred and revolt against the infamous world imperialist order erupts, although in an inadequate and impotent way. The courageous acts of the martyrs of today will not open the way to the proletarian upsurge as they had thought, but these acts do indicate the epicenter of this upsurge and they herald its approaching tempests.

It is not by chance either that Baader's terrorism has found an ally in Palestinian terrorism, that acute expression of the struggle of the impoverished masses of the backward continents submitted to the crushing yoke of the international order. The support of Palestinian terrorism was a response to the first acts of the German terrorists, which significantly were aimed at aiding the Indo-Chinese revolution. These actions were directed, even if in a confused way, towards linking together the struggles of the proletariat in the imperialist nations with those of the oppressed peoples, a demand raised by the Communist International in 1920. However insufficient these actions and this alliance may be, they are a pledge for tomorrow: when the proletariat of the imperialist countries raises its head, the oppressed masses of the subjugated continents will no longer be alone in the fight against imperialism. The whole established order reacted with a tremendous fear to the foreboding signs of this powerful future alliance. It is a fear which it had been able to forget during these last horribly long decades but which now pushes it to react with a barbarous ferocity in an attempt to ward off the specter of the awakening of the working class.

The proletariat, which produces all the wealth of the world, can become an enormous force if it succeeds in linking the consciousness of its great aim — its emancipation from a society in which it has nothing to defend — with its specific means of struggle and with the organization and discipline which it is more capable of than any other class. Fifty years of counter-revolution, of war and economic boom, of social democracy, of fascism, and of Stalinism have destroyed the organizations of the working class, broken its traditions and obliterated its class politics. Today still, in spite of economic and social

jolts, the workers respond to the direct attacks of capital only in an uncoordinated and sporadic way; their reactions are still largely checked and contained by the network of organizations and control of the pseudo-working class parties.

It is only by the proletariat's return into the fray, struggling for its immediate and historic class aims and using its class means — which are necessarily violent and anti-democratic — that the errors of terrorism such as Baader's can be overcome and surpassed. This will not come about by negating and rejecting violent and terroristic acts but by integrating them into the mass struggle, by gathering these energies which have been pushed to the struggle to the death against the bourgeois order and organizing them in the collective struggle of the proletariat. As Marx (nicknamed the « red terror doctor » by the bourgeoisie of the last century) proclaimed in his *Address to the Central Committee of the Communist League in 1850*: « Far from opposing so-called excesses — instances of popular revenge against hated individuals or public buildings that are associated only with hateful recollections — such instances must not only be tolerated but the leadership of them taken in hand ».

It is the crisis of capitalist society which pushes the isolated elements to revolt; it is the crisis of capitalist society which will push the masses into struggle. Our task is to prepare the political and organizational conditions which will make this struggle effective. The proletarian revolution will avenge the death of all those who, even if they were wrong, have sought the way to communism.

The orgy of terror in which the bourgeoisie intoxicates itself, trying to forget its somber destiny, was brought on by the enormous force which capitalism inevitably produces in spite of itself, a force whose foreboding signs can be clearly recognized in today's explosions of violence. All this confirms that the proletarian struggle can only be violent, anti-democratic and international. It calls for the reconstruction of the world party of the proletarian revolution and dictatorship! It calls for communism!

In Memory of Andreas Baader and His Comrades

(From *Le Prolétaire* no. 254, November 19, 1977.)

Marxism has nothing in common with any kind of culturalist idealism. The latter supposes that the proletariat will be stirred into action as a result of inspiring preaching and work of consciousness raising. Marxism on the contrary sees the revolutionary struggle as the *living unity* between the real movement and the party. This fusion can only be realized through a long and difficult process, in the course

of which the incomplete solutions offered to the struggle by the idealist, spontaneist and immediatist currents are overcome and surpassed on *the whole*. It is also through this process that the proletarian movement and its organ of leadership, the party, assimilate and organize the healthy elements (that is those who are open to the science of the revolution) who had believed these false solutions offered a response to the real needs of the struggle against bourgeois society.

Marxism is the theory of the proletariat because it is — and it has already proven this historically, experimentally — *the science* of the proletarian struggle. It is the science of the aims, the needs and the conditions for the victory of this struggle — in other words it is the science of its method and principles. Our small party calls itself a communist party because it is the only one which is able to give the class *its own class doctrine and principles in their entirety* after a long and terrible historical period (a period during which our party held true to the proletarian doctrine and principles and drew the historical balance sheet of the last revolutionary wave and above all of the counter-revolution) and because *it acts on these firm bases*.

Only the professors of Marxism (who underestimate the destructive effects of the counter-revolution because they are unable to understand that the party is the heart and brain of the class movement) are incapable of imagining how many misguided efforts and hopes, temporary set-backs, sacrifices and heroism are necessary for the reconstruction of the proletarian movement and, inseparably, for the rebirth of the unity which has temporarily been destroyed between communist theory and the action of the proletarian masses.

This painful reawakening of the proletarian movement requires a certain level and a certain continuity of working class struggles which can push groups of proletarians to organize their fellow workers. It is entirely natural, however, that this awakening is manifested at first by outbursts from layers occupying the outermost fringes of the working class and even from layers intermediary between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, where the counter-revolutionary apparatus and its social shock absorbers are less absolute and less efficient.

The premises for the awakening of the class also necessarily include efforts by revolutionary groups, not exclusively composed of proletarians, thrust by the pressure of capitalism through the fissures which the antagonisms of capitalism provoke in its protective shell. These groups can find certain Marxist positions in their trajectory; however, because they lack the tradition of revolutionary communism, they are fatally unable to link these positions together into a whole.

It is inevitable that these attempts will multiply, but it is also inevitable that from the start they will appear in the most extreme confusion and under the most diverse ideological expressions. We who have struggled hard to defend and preserve our theoretical class weapons know that only *the action of the party* can enable all these

outbursts to fuse together. But this fusing is only possible by recognizing the needs to which these actions respond while ridding them of the idealistic aspects under which they generally appear. This is only possible by integrating these outbursts in a co-ordinated action of the class, that is to say in an action which gives the true proportions to the different needs of the proletarian struggle and which is linked to the final objectives of communism.

What an error it would be if in the first quiverings of life we see only the dung heap on which it appears! What an error it would be if in these repeated outbursts we see only the « ugliness » of the embryo without realizing the promise that it holds! What an error it would be to imitate these « moralists » who want to reject it because it does not appear at once in its « ideal » form!

It is with this spirit that we have anxiously followed the tragic epic of Andreas Baader and his comrades who have participated in this movement, the movement of the slow accumulation of the premises for the proletarian awakening although accompanied by all sorts of inevitable confusions and aberrations.

We have in front of us a paper written by Ulrike Meinhoff and Andreas Baader in 1976, « Project for another trial », which appeared in the French newspaper *Liberation*, Nov. 26, 1976. It is sufficient to make piece meal of all the insults which have been uttered against the Red Army Faction by philistines disguised as revolutionaries. These philistines had the gaul to place Schmidt and Baader on the same footing under the pretext that the « objectives » and the « methods » of the terrorists « too closely resemble » those of our exploiters and that the terrorists have « contempt » for the workers.

We will not respond here to the first slander because we already have done so sufficiently elsewhere — we demonstrated that such a position is simply a promise, made to the bourgeoisie, to paralyze the working class struggle tomorrow. As for the second slander, it comes from the fact that Baader and his comrades upheld the idea that the cause of the apathy of the European proletariat lies in its *bourgeoisification*. Certainly they have a moralistic and idealistic, and consequently non-Marxist, interpretation of the passivity of the working class in certain historical periods. But it would do well to recall that Marx, Engels and Lenin had already found the explanation for this phenomenon, as concerns the upper layers of the proletariat, the labor aristocracy, in the fact that they share in the crumbs which fall from the imperialist table. As for the passivity of the great masses of the working class, this is the result of a combination of factors among which we must not forget to include the long-term consequences of the defeats suffered by the class in the most terrible counter-revolution in history. But be that as it may, the action of the R.A.F. was directed towards the awakening of the working class, which it recognized as the only true creator of a new history.

No one can deny that Baader and his comrades had the courage to *declare war* on imperialism and opportunism, even if this struggle was theoretically much too inept and practically much too unequal. Let us read some extracts from the article we mentioned :

« Our line is : *the main enemy is the USA*. Therefore, in this perspective, the main line of demarcation, or better yet the front, is the North-South conflict — where the armed confrontations between the world proletariat and American imperialism take place. It is in the imperialist countries that the second line of demarcation unfolds [...]. It is necessary to transform these demarcations into a true front, that is to say, into a political-military confrontation ».

The true crying need of the proletarian struggle which is expressed in this orientation in spite of its erroneous view of imperialism — and a demand which we Marxists can only take up — is the necessity of carrying the struggle waged by the proletarian and poor peasant masses of the « third world » *into the very heart of imperialism*. This necessity makes up a part of what could be called the « strategic perspective » of communism. This is the *alliance between the proletarians in the imperialist countries and the exploited masses of the subjugated countries against a common enemy*. In theory we have taken up this demand. However with the temporary break between theory and proletarian action resulting from the terrible sleep forced upon the proletariat, is there any possible way for this demand to be carried out by the real movement (especially in its petty-bourgeois fringes) other than in the form of heroic, but ineffectual, acts ?

It is almost unnecessary to recall that the action of Baader and his comrades against the American logistical apparatus of the Vietnam War was one of the rare acts of practical solidarity with the anti-colonial struggles, one of the rare gusts of oxygen in a stifling atmosphere. It is therefore not astonishing that this action found a significant response not only in Indo-China but also in Palestine, something which those who applauded this action yesterday forget in their shameless condemnation of the « objectives » and « methods » of terrorism today. This shows the abyss into which certain groups have fallen in the space of a few years.

Of course, with Baader and Meinhoff the necessity of linking together the struggles in the imperialist countries with the anti-imperialist struggles is accompanied by a false theorization or rather a *theorization of the period* where the center of gravity of the social struggle was located in the subjugated continents and where this struggle followed the road of national revolutions against the old classes and imperialism. It is undoubtedly correct to say that Baader and his comrades have not understood the capacity and tremendous potential of struggle represented by the proletariat of the imperialist countries whom we are expecting to return into the struggle in the historical period opened by the world crisis. This struggle will replace the center of the revolutionary struggle once again in the imperialist countries and enable the blow delivered against imperialism to be fatal this time.

The Baader-Meinhoff theory is the echo of a return of the proletariat of the imperialist countries into the struggle and, at all events, of the urgency of this return. This necessity however is transferred onto the idealist level of heroic actions. These actions are substituted not only for the objective forces which could bring about this return but also for the subjective factor, the party, which alone can lead the objective forces towards the destruction of bourgeois society.

This incomprehension of the basic dialectic of history has also caused them to see the concentration of the bourgeois state and the internationalization of repression (they call it the « new fascism ») as existing without contradictions. And it is in this incomprehension that we must seek the reason for their burning hope of raising the proletariat from its stupor through the exemplary action, a notion which is the ultimate in idealism. The following is a significant quote :

« The central point that must be brought to light is that from the time where it can be established that reaction is an organized process and scheme on the international level, revolutionary strategy must be internationalist. Thus if it can be said that the political-economic analysis of the situation today coincides with the Marxist conceptual scheme, this signifies concretely that the strategy of the *Manifesto*, « *Workers of the World Unite!* », has found a new ferment on the level of the organization of the guerrilla which anticipates the international reconstruction of proletarian politics. The form of organization of proletarian internationalism in the centers of capital will be the guerrilla in the metropolis ».

In this way the strongly expressed necessities of *internationalism* and of *violence* against imperialism — although expressed in an idealist and moralistic form — are translated into the classic theory of *excitative terrorism* which replaces the political party by the organization for armed struggle. The true communist party will be able to integrate the thrusts of the real movement only by taking up, not condemning, these thrusts and by showing that the only way to respond to these in a consistent and appropriate manner is to build the party which will be able to utilize violence and terrorism in a collective and international class action. This can only be done by combatting all the spontaneist or terrorist romanticisms and idealisms.

The proletarian struggle will know other martyrs in the course of its long and difficult climb out of the abyss into which it has been thrown by the counter-revolution. But this struggle will be reborn if we know how to draw the lessons from the sacrifices of those who have fallen in their search for the way to communism.

Because Baader and his comrades fought and died *in this search*, they objectively have placed themselves *on our side of the barricade* in the struggle against capitalism.

What Distinguishes Our Party

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

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

The purpose of these few words is to give a brief and general indication of what characterizes our Party. Although it was not intended to be a detailed explanation, a distinctive feature of our movement is immediately made clear to the reader : for us, contrary to the whole myriad of « modernizers » of Marxism, there exists a continuous, unchanged, unalterable line which defines the Communist Party. This is so precisely because the party rises above the ups and downs, the set-backs and advances, the rare but glorious victories and the numerous and catastrophic defeats of the working class on the difficult path of its struggle for emancipation. It is in fact only thanks to the uninterrupted permanence of this line that the proletariat exists as a class ; indeed this line does not reflect the temporary and often contradictory position of the proletariat at this or that stage of its path, in space and time, but the direction that it must necessarily take as it leaves its situation as a lowly and exploited class, to become the ruling class and then achieve, throughout the world, the abolition of all classes and communism. While the material conditions for this path were created by the capitalist mode of production itself, it does not fall from the sky and it can be travelled to the end only by struggling all along the way. It is the Marxist doctrine which knows its necessary phases, its indispensable means, as well as its ultimate aims.

This is why Lenin, paraphrasing a famous text of Marx, said that he is not a Marxist who does not extend the recognition of the class struggle up to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a necessary product of that struggle and as an obligatory stage on the path « towards the abolition of all classes and a classless society ».

To recognize the class struggle and the conflict of interests between capital and labor is merely to acknowledge a bare fact — the situation of the proletariat in bourgeois society. To limit oneself to this however is to exclude what historical determinism itself compels the proletariat to become in order to free itself from capitalist exploitation: the weapon for violently destroying the bourgeois state power which protects and defends the capitalist relations of production, and the weapon for establishing its own dictatorship, the « political phase of transition » (according to Marx) in the process of the « revolutionary transformation of capitalist society into communist society ». It would be to accept the state of subjection which is the lot of the proletariat in bourgeois society even when it struggles for the defense of its immediate interests against the yoke of capital. It would be to deny the proletariat the historical task of liberating humanity while liberating itself, which alone makes it into a class, the class which will « give birth to a new society ».

This line which unites the past and the present of the working class with its future is nothing other than the theory, the program, and the principles of revolutionary communism and it is kept unchanged above the vicissitudes of the class struggle inasmuch as it is embodied in a party which unreservedly makes it its own, in an organization which defends it, fights for it, and translates it into action. This is why Marx wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* that « Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement ».

Since the proletariat « has no country » and as a class pursues aims which go beyond all the limitations of trade, locality, factory, shop, etc., that which distinguishes Communists, Marx adds, is: « 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole. »

These are the fundamental characteristics which distinguish Communists. These prohibit the name Communist from being applied to those who deny the *international* character of the aim towards which the proletarian movement is directed and the international character of the struggle for attaining this aim; who deny that this aim and this

struggle coincide with the interests of the movement in its totality and of its future; who deny the necessity of the violent revolution and of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the obligatory path towards socialism; and who deny that the party, armed with the science of Marxism, is indispensable as an organ of this gigantic struggle. No link in this chain can be broken without the whole chain breaking and without the proletariat falling into a resigned acceptance of its position as an exploited class for eternity.

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

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

This was the battle waged by Marx and Engels in the First International to destroy Proudhonism, which refused the immediate struggle, strikes, and the economic organization of the proletariat; to destroy Bakuninism, which refused the party and the dictatorship that the party centrally exercises in the name of the working class and in its interests; and to destroy « parliamentary cretinism » which had infiltrated into the ranks of the proletariat from the surrounding social strata. This was Lenin's battle within Russia against populism, economism, legalism and Menshevism. On the international level this was his battle first against Bernstein's social-democratic revisionism and later against the capitulation before the imperialist war, a struggle not only for the refusal of war credits, and for the refusal of the social truce during the war, but also for revolutionary defeatism and

the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war. This was the battle that was waged to destroy all hesitations, all the « wait and see » and legalist inertias, and all procrastination caused by the respect of the rules of democratic play; it was the battle that was waged to conquer power in a dictatorial way in the brilliant blaze of October 1917, thus laying at the same time the foundations of the finally reconstructed Communist International.

« It is the aim of the Communist International to fight by all available means, including armed struggle, for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie and for the creation of an international Soviet Republic as a transitional stage to the complete abolition of the state ». This was solemnly proclaimed by the Communists of all countries who had assembled in Moscow in July 1920, thus taking up again and reasserting the line of « political continuity which goes from Marx to Lenin ». « The Communist International considers the dictatorship of the proletariat as the only means for the liberation of humanity from the horrors of capitalism. [...] The imperialist war is responsible for the close union of the fate of the workers of one country with the fate of the workers of all other countries. The imperialist war emphasizes once more what is pointed out in the statute of the First International: that the emancipation of labor is neither a local, nor a national task, but one of an international character. [...] The Communist International recognizes that in order to hasten victory, the Workingmen's Association which is fighting to annihilate capitalism and create communism must have a strongly centralized organization. The Communist International must, in fact and in deed, be a single communist party of the entire world. The parties working in the various countries are but its separate sections. The organizational machinery of the Communist International must guarantee the workers of each country the opportunity of getting the utmost help from the organized proletariat of other countries at any given moment ».

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

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

« 1. An ever growing contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production is developing in present capitalist society, bringing along with it the conflict of interests and class struggle between the proletariat and the ruling bourgeoisie.

« 2. The present relations of production are protected and defended by the bourgeois state power founded on the representative system of

democracy, which constitutes the organ for the defense of the interests of the capitalist class.

« 3. The proletariat can neither break nor change the system of capitalist production relations from which its exploitation stems without overthrowing bourgeois power by violence.

« 4. The indispensable organ of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat is the political class party.

« The Communist Party, uniting in its ranks the most advanced and the most conscious part of the proletariat, unites the efforts of the laboring masses, leading them from the struggle for group interests and temporary results to the struggle for the revolutionary emancipation of the proletariat.

« The Party has the role of developing revolutionary consciousness among the masses, of organizing the material means of action, and of leading the proletariat through the development of the struggle.

« 5. The World War was caused by the incurable internal contradictions in the capitalist regime which gave birth to modern imperialism. It opened a crisis in the throes of which capitalist society is falling to pieces, and where the class struggle can only lead to an armed conflict between the laboring masses and the power of the various bourgeois states.

« 6. After the overthrow of bourgeois power, the proletariat can organize itself as a ruling class only by destroying the old state apparatus and instituting its own dictatorship, that is to say by basing the representative state organs only on the class of producers and depriving the bourgeoisie of all political rights.

« 7. The form of political representation in the proletarian state is the system of councils of laborers (workers and peasants) already prevailing in the Russian revolution, which marks the beginning of the world revolution and the first stable realization of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

« 8. The necessary defense of the proletarian state against all counter-revolutionary attempts can only be ensured by depriving the bourgeoisie and the parties which are enemies of the proletarian dictatorship of all means of agitation and political propaganda, and by equipping the proletariat with an armed organization for repelling all internal or external attacks.

« 9. It is only the proletarian state which will be able to systematically intervene in the relations of the social economy, carrying out the whole series of measures which will assure the replacement of the capitalist system by the collective management of production and distribution.

« 10. This transformation of the economy and consequently of all the activities of social life will have the effect, once the division of

society into classes is eliminated, of also eliminating little by little the necessity for the political state, whose apparatus will progressively be reduced to that of a rational administration of human activities ».

* *

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

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

The tragedy of the world proletariat in the first post-war period was that the gigantic effort of the Bolsheviks to control and dominate the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces springing from the Russian economic and social substratum and to extend the revolutionary flame to the whole world, was not met in the crucial areas of fully capitalist Europe by the process of an organic and rigorous formation of Communist parties. The democratic, parliamentary and legalist traditions had been weighing too heavily on the Western workers' movements, and the leadership of the Communist International (whom our current, however, would have been the last to hold responsible for a historical course which had its origin in the rotten bourgeois world of the West) did not always clearly understand that the harshness with which Lenin and his party had struggled against opportunism for twenty years and

the determination with which they had conquered power (excluding from it not only the openly bourgeois parties but also the workers' parties of a conciliatory type) must become even more strict and unremitting in the West where the bourgeois revolution had already been an accomplished fact for half a century and more. Whereas the situation was such that it was urgent to proceed with a rigorous selection of membership from the old socialist parties, the prevailing attitude instead was by far too lax : it was considered — a generous idea, but one which proved to be mistaken — that the debris from the past would be burned up in the blaze ignited in St. Petersburg and Moscow. In order for the working class to defend itself efficiently against bourgeois counterrevolution, which now appeared also under the fascist banner, and if possible to pass on to the counter-attack, it would have been an urgent necessity to develop a well defined tactic, uniting the proletarians around the revolutionary Marxist party in the defense of their conditions of life and work within bourgeois society, which would have been able to tear them away not only from the influence of reformism, but also from the illusion that those who had abandoned the line « which goes from Marx to Lenin and to the Communist International » could be won back to the cause of the proletarian revolution. On the contrary, poorly defined slogans were launched which, *against the intentions of the Bolsheviks and in spite of them*, left the door open to this illusion, and so much the more so when these slogans were adopted by the old repeated offenders of reformism or even of social-chauvinism who were flocking around the flag of the International. Such was the case with the slogan of the « united front » which, because it was insufficiently defined, left the door open for varying and even contradictory interpretations. It was the same with the « workers' government », which was sometimes presented as a « synonym of the dictatorship of the proletariat » and sometimes as a different way, indeed as a parliamentary way, to power. And thus it went up to the « Bolshevization » which adulterated the nature of the Communist parties and ran the risk of turning them into some kind of Labour Parties, erasing little by little the boundary line — so clear in the beginning — between the Communist parties on the one hand and on the other the peasant parties and movements in the capitalist countries and the national revolutionary parties and movements in the colonies, a phenomenon which paved the way for the catastrophic re-edition in China of the Menshevik story of the « revolution by stages ».

It was also because of this gradual slackening of the fabric of organization and tactics that the International, instead of controlling and directing the process of purifying the Communist parties born of traditional socialism, was in the end *conditioned* by the Western parties which were Communist in name only. The results were disastrous from two points of view : the world revolution, which had been expected shortly, was delayed, and at the same time the bourgeois social forces which were putting pressure on the Bolshevik dictatorship both from within Russia and above all from without, strengthened

themselves to the point of sweeping away the party which had been the magnificent instrument of the leadership of the October Revolution and of the Civil War. Stalinism was the expression of this reversal of the relations of forces between the classes on a world scale. It *had to* massacre the Old Guard in order to advance without hindrance on the path of capitalist accumulation. Even before that, it *had to* camouflage its counter-revolutionary role behind the flag of «socialism in one country», that theory which is the origin of the «national, peaceful and democratic» ways to socialism. A candidate to succeed social democracy in its task, Stalinism eventually called on the proletarians of all countries to massacre each other on the fronts of the second imperialist war.

This is why for us the line that goes from Marx to Lenin, to the foundation of the Third International and its first brilliant years, finds its continuation in the struggle of the Italian Left against the first manifestations of an opportunist danger within the Comintern (only a danger at first, later a cruel reality determined by objective factors) and in the struggle, led in 1926 parallel with that of the Russian Opposition, against Stalinism which was on its way to make itself master of the Soviet state and Lenin's International.

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

This is why the line which links Marx and Engels to Lenin, to the foundation of the Communist International, and to the struggle of the Left against the degeneration of the International and then against Stalinism, is inseparable for us from the historical struggle against the popular fronts, war fronts, national fronts, and all their offshoots up to and including the most recent manifestations of an

opportunism whose virulence is unequalled even by the bloody beginnings of the old German social democracy. It is inseparable from the denunciation of the essentially fascist course, be it under the cloak of democracy, of capitalist imperialism with Washington as its center, as well as of the false socialism reigning in Moscow or Peking, a socialism based on commodity production, wage labor, and all the other bourgeois economic characteristics.

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To take up again the red line of the doctrine, the program, the principles, the tactics, and the methods of organization of revolutionary communism requires that we return to the world outlook of the Communist International in its founding years, completed on the level of organization and tactics by the balance sheet which the history of the last 50 years has given us and which confirms the obstinate struggle of the Left. This balance sheet has been drawn by our Party, especially after 1952, in a series of theses included in our book, *Defense of the Continuity of the Communist Program* (1).

There is no possible meeting-point between democracy and communism. There is no way for the emancipation of the proletariat other than that which, outside the official democratic or fascist bourgeois institutions and against them, already prepares in the present for the proletarian revolution. This preparation excludes, even as a means of agitation, resorting to elections and, worse yet, parliamentary politics. It is accomplished on the one hand by constantly taking part in the immediate struggles of the working class to defend its conditions of life, work, and struggle and by enlarging, reinforcing, and developing these struggles on class bases and through class means. It is accomplished on the other hand through the incessant propaganda of the final aim of the proletarian movement, in relation to which the struggle for immediate demands is a *school of war* (but only a school) provided this struggle is led in a consistent way, never forgetting or hiding its limitations; through organizing around the party strata of proletarians who instinctively commit themselves to the open class struggle, and organizing into the party the proletarian minority which has become aware of the indispensable ways and means of final victory; through the strengthening of the immediate organizations born of economic and union struggles which react against the betrayal of the union leadership and which are potentially capable of developing in a political direction; and finally through the struggle in the heart of the existing unions with the perspective (which can neither be excluded nor be held for certain) of winning them back not only to a class tradition, but also to a Communist orientation, in situations — which are today far away — of intense social tension.

(1) At the moment available only in Italian and French.

There is no place on this path for the spontaneist illusion, always unfortunately reappearing, of a revolution and of a dictatorship of the proletariat not prepared for and led by the Party. Neither is there a place for the Trotskyist illusion of a fatal crisis of capitalism which would only need the shock provoked by an organized vanguard to be brought down, after having passed through the intermediary stage of « workers' governments » composed of parties which supposedly, even if they have passed lock, stock and barrel to the counter-revolution, can be regenerated thanks to the push of the ebullient masses and to the skillfulness of communist manoeuvring, just as the « degenerated workers' states » like the USSR, China, Cuba and others can be won back to the cause of revolutionary proletariat. If, in workerist spontaneism, one sees an age-old adversary of marxism, in the Trotskyist illusion (an adjective which Trotsky, in spite of his errors, would today be the first to be ashamed of) the tactical errors of the decadent International reappear, terribly exaggerated and, on such bases, those deviations of *principle* in regard to the sound doctrine which alone can explain why some people take nationalizations in industry and economic planning *in themselves* for socialism.

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

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

Book Review

Proletarian Order

Proletarian Order - Antonio Gramsci, Factory Councils and the Origins of Communism in Italy 1911-1921. By GWYN A. WILLIAMS. (London: Pluto Press, 1975).

The title of Williams' book, perhaps selected for its popular appeal, must not cause a misunderstanding. With a far from superficial knowledge of the facts, Williams is one of the rare contemporary historians who does not take the occupation of factories in September 1920 in Italy for the eve of the revolution or still less as an instance, even a brief one, of the establishment of a « proletarian order ». Let us say more, although the book is essentially devoted to Gramsci and *Ordine Nuovo*, Williams knows the ABC's fairly well enough to recognize the great distance separating Gramsci and his current from Marxism, and he does not fall into the mythology of elevating Gramscism to the rank of a variant of the Marxist doctrine, which it is not. He knows at least, since unlike too many historians he has read the documents of the years 1914-1920, that if orthodox Marxism had one, and only one, representative in Italy it was Amadeo Bordiga (1). On this point William is even so « heterodox » an historian that his book is a detailed account of the course through which Gramsci, with incessant oscillations and pains, partially freed his « conciliarism » of its Crocian and Sorelian idealist trappings in order to assimilate in a certain manner the Leninist and Bordigan conception of the party and Marxism.

If Williams' book was this, and only this, we would be able to prescribe it as an antidote, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world, against the recurrent bouts of spontaneism and in particular against the recent « Gramsci craze » which is the posthumous incarnation of this same virus.

Unfortunately, however, this book *does not* limit itself to what could have served as a reexamination (and in the long run, like it or not, a *demolition*) of the Gramscian mythology in all its varieties. The author only *destroys* one pyramid of historiographical falsifi-

(1) It must be understood that we do not accept the idea of the individual elevated to the rank of a *protagonist* of History without roots in the real movement or in a *current* that expresses this movement (such as the current of the Socialist Left of 1912-1920).

cation to *construct* another («*destruam et aedificabo*» as Proudhon said). According to Williams, Gramsci's extra-Marxism or pre-Marxism has its historical justification, *just as does* the true Marxism of Bordiga (such a conception and the Hegelian version of Providence are as alike as twins...). For him the latter was science, and a communist party deserving of the name would be inconceivable without this fundamental requisite. The former was *will*, the complementary dialectical pole of *theory*, and even before being *will* it was the physical («*molecular*» as Williams says) living experience of the *instinctive and elementary* movement of the masses; without this supplementary ingredient there could be no communist party or proletarian revolution. Therefore, for Williams, the two poles are not in contradiction but they *complete each other*. Gramsci's «*optimism of the will*» made up for his «*pessimism of the intelligence*»; Bordiga's «*optimism of the intelligence*» would have been reduced to a «*do-nothingism*» in practice if historical Providence had not caused a coming together of these two men. The synthesis resulting from this providential meeting, the Communist Party of Italy, would never have been born in January 1921 at Livorno, Williams continues, without the «*Bordigan*» scientific rigor, but it never would have become «*Leninist*» and therefore a *true* section of the Third International without Gramsci's «*revolutionary passion*». The *rigor* of the first necessitated the destruction, stone by stone, of the «*theoretical*» edifice of Ordinovism; the *passion* of the second by hidden ways, and without any doubt, providential ones, rehabilitated «*Ordinovism*» as the flesh of Bordiga's doctrinal framework.

Historical providence (or to use Hegel's term the «*cunningness of Reason*») has ways so complex that the semi-revalorization of Bordiga within the framework of a high-level synthesis leads, in the end, to the following conclusion:

1) «*without Bordiga's sense of marxism as a 'science', without his fundamental 'rupture' from the bourgeois world, without his strong, combative and thorough assertion of marxism, it is difficult to see how communism is possible. Without Gramsci's global and molecular marxist exploration of human experience [!], without his examination, in total human reality, of the process of Bordiga's 'conversion', it is difficult to see how communism is realizable*» (p. 307).

2) «*an effective communist movement*» cannot «*be built*» if there is an exclusion of one or the other of the twin poles exemplified by Bordiga and Gramsci, Marxism as «*science*» and Marxism as «*living history*» (p. 179).

3) contrary to what both thought at the time, the «*synthesis*», the Congress of Livorno, made possible or to be more exact anticipated that final triumph of the late «*turn*» towards national-communism, polycentrism, and democratic and patriotic «*communism*».

Setting out with these premises, even the resistance of the Communist Party of Italy to the most «*elastic*» interpretation of the

tactic of the united front in the Comintern (which admitted the possibility of a «*front*» between parties) and the harshness with which it denounced social democracy as the ally of fascism (2) becomes the providential precondition for the Italian Communist Party of today, the party of Togliatti and Berlinguer. To quote Williams:

«*This [Bordiga's] under-estimate of the specificity of fascism (which Gramsci was more alert to) had very serious consequences for the personnel of the party and resulted ultimately in its near-destruction as a human organization within Italy. On the other hand, this kind of thinking, which survived Bordiga's displacement from the leadership, made the party quite remarkably tough, resilient and ultimately indestructible. It was in part because of the character given to communism in Italy by its first definition, that the party survived the twenty years of fascist repression to become the largest and in some senses the most effective communist party in Europe*». (p. 300).

Long live «*science*» then if it makes possible *the abandonment of all science* in favor of the servile acceptance of the *fact* and the theorization of this abandonment! Long live the internationalism of Lenin and Bordiga since the idealistic interpretation of history enables their internationalism to be reconciled with the «*great power chauvinism*» of Stalin and, in part, with the embryonic national-socialism of Gramsci and the fully developed national-socialism of Togliatti! Long live the «*optimism of the will*» if it places, by its mysterious ways, the *scientific and organizational* rigor of the «*Bordighists*» — these curious «*do-nothings*» who, according to the same Williams, were the only ones capable of providing the *practical* solidity and compactness indispensable for a revolutionary party — at the service of the «*pessimism of the intelligence*»!

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A history in which the conflicts are toned down to the point of disappearing, in which all becomes relative and in which everything has its useful role for «*humanity*», a history such as this is simply on a par with revisionism. Revisionism presents the present as relative; a history such as Williams' presents the past as relative. If the aim is nothing and the movement is all, as Bernstein said, then in the movement itself, science and non-science, dialectical materialism and experimentalist eclecticism, theory as a necessary guide to action and action as a substitute for theory *and* a guide to it (or to use names, Marx and Proudhon, Engels and Sorel, Lenin and Bergson or Croce), all are *on the same level* since they are neutral moments of the «*movement*».

(2) The *ally*, and not *the same thing as fascism* as Williams seems to think, whose knowledge of the C.P. of Italy and its *open and public* positions does not go beyond what he can draw from the work of his idol, the Stalinist historian Paolo Spriano.

Revisionist opportunism is ready, if it becomes necessary, to physically eliminate revolutionaries or to politically outlaw them. But it revives them in a noble and even monumental way in the field of historiography *in order to better kill and banish them a second time*, turning them into the direct or indirect forefathers of the only reality which it can accept, *the accomplished fact*. In effect Williams' theses, details aside, are the same as the most recent of Giorgio Amendola or of Franco Livorsi (3) for whom Bordiga is no longer to be condemned as a «traitor» and as a «fascist» but is fully entitled to be entered in the Pantheon of revered «inoffensive icons» of the «new party». For Amendola, without the historical precedent of the *Bolshevik* discipline instituted by the Left in 1921 — although to him it was in a generally «erroneous» perspective — and without the persistence of this discipline, this «new party» would never have been possible (which is an indirect way of «redeeming» Lenin with respect to Stalin, Stalin with respect to the de-Stalinizers, and of readmitting them in the museum of historiography, to the eternal glory of... Kautsky, who has also been «redeemed»!) For Livorsi, Bordiga's politics and tactics are completely erroneous, his theory completely true, and his historical resurrection serves to remind a party which hates all theory that without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary action (but, take note, *only* to «remind», while neglecting revolutionary theory in fact).

This operation, obviously, is possible only if one does violence to history — to *true* history that is, not history revised and amended in the manner of Hegel or Croce. In the case which interests us, Gramsci can be given a place in the history of *communism* only on the condition of baptizing as communist (as Williams does on each page) *every* mass movement of a certain magnitude (such as that of the Turin workers), *every* organizational form by which this movement seeks to free itself from the crushing weight of reformism (such as the factory councils of 1920), and *every* theorization of this movement by the intellectual groups of various political and cultural origins (such as *Ordine Nuovo*). To give him this place would require that we forget the tenacious reluctance of Gramsci and the «Ordinovists» not only towards recognizing the *priority* of the question of the party *in general* but also towards breaking with a party such as the Italian Socialist Party of the years 1919-20 *in particular*, and towards understanding that without the party-organ the revolutionary reversal of society was a vain dream however generous and powerful may be the outburst of the masses. It would be necessary to ignore that Gramsci's support fort the conception of the party as the *organ* of the revolution and of the proletarian dictatorship was so *occasional* — just as his support for the theses of the First and Second Congress of the Comintern — that he was the first of all the Ordinovists to promote the Stalinist liquidation, thus denying more than two years of *disciplined submission* to the leadership of the

(3) G. Amendola, *Intervista sull'antifascismo*, Bari, 1976; F. Livorsi, *Amadeo Bordiga*, Rome, 1977.

Left within the Communist Party of Italy. That he was the first to desert was not by chance but because he was the only one of the Ordinovists who during World War I and immediately thereafter did not develop as a militant of a class party (be it a rotten one like the Italian Socialist Party) but as an intellectual outsider, a fellow traveler (and one who kept his distance). To make a place for Gramsci in the *specifically communist* movement, we would have to ignore or *hide* the fact that support of the Livorno split signified, at least, since the Communist International had not reversed its principles, a *total rejection* of the postulates of Ordinovism, and that the «star» of Gramsci *only* appeared on the international horizon when the communist movement began to change its colors and *potentially* transform into a *popular* and *national* party. Finally, we could make a place for Gramsci only on the condition of admitting that there is still some bit of communism, be it only an atom, in the Italian Communist Party of today, a party which *legitimately* traces itself to Gramsci (if for no other reason than his attachment to the glories of the *Risorgimento* and to the national «tradition» and its culture). We could make a place for Gramsci only on the condition of affirming, along the lines of Croce, that the class antagonisms in their practical manifestations and their theoretical reflections are pure and simple exchanges in a dialogue and that, consequently, classes do not have irreconcilable interests and will not experience a collision but a collaboration.

It is true that Stalinism has achieved what social democracy could never achieve: it wrested from the Bolshevik Party, that is to say from Marxism, the secret of the *dictatorship* on the state level and *centralization* on the party level, in order to turn them *against* the dictatorship and the party of Lenin, with all the prestige of Red October behind it. But the historian who deduces from this a line of descent from Lenin to Stalin belongs to the world of «dialectic of differences» which Croce substituted for Hegel's «dialectic of opposites», itself already conciliatory in nature; it is thus the complete opposite of dialectical materialism which is the theory of the *irreconcilable* antagonisms between classes and between the parties which embody their historic interests. Only someone who conceives of science and doctrine as something *completely apart from the struggle* instead of the necessary instrument for its preparation and its indispensable guide, can consider that «science» and «will» have acted as «reconcilers of opposite poles» in the post-World War I period in Italy. For the Marxist militant (and a Marxist is a militant or is no Marxist at all) this is all a purely *intellectual exercise*. Only someone who interprets history merely through a distorting prism could imagine that Bordiga considered the party as some kind of «Creator» and the class as *brute matter* which the party can manipulate *at will* without any intermediate link to connect one to the other — no unions, no factory councils, nothing unless it is the «Word». «*Dismissing the trade unions as counter-revolutionary, he [Bordiga] rejected any organization by category or craft*»! (Williams, p. 107). The truth is that for our current it was not and

could not have been a question of « dismissing » the economic organizations whether they were by industry or trade, but on the contrary of *conquering them* to communist *political* leadership as indispensable factors of the revolution. It was not a question of « rejecting » the union but of refusing to *identify it with the party or to superimpose it over the party*. Likewise it was not a question of disregarding the factory councils but of combating the mythology which placed them *on the same footing as the Soviets* or which pretended to *substitute them for the party*. At the same time it was a question of combating the conception which counterposed the « *intrinsically revolutionary* » factory organizations to the « *intrinsically counter-revolutionary* » union and exalted the local and peripheral economic organizations to the detriment of the central and centralizing economic organizations (that is to say this conception promoted organizations which were in a certain sense *obligatory* because they corresponded to the factory and its organizational fabric, to the detriment of the organizations which were in a certain sense *voluntary*). It was a question of recognizing the *Marxist principle* that « revolutions are not created, they are led ». In the Marxist perspective there can be no revolution without immediate and intermediary organizations focalizing the elementary and materially determined impulses of the masses ; on the other hand, the revolution will stop mid-road and turn back on itself if it does not have a *political leadership* which, through its active presence, gives a revolutionary character to those organs which cannot be revolutionary *in themselves*. Those who study first hand (and not second hand) the history of the Communist Party of Italy when it was led by the Left, especially during the years 1921-22, will see that the entire effort of the party was directed towards winning over to *its influence* the great masses who could not be won over to its *closed and rigorously selective organization*. Such a conquest is accomplished by taking part in *every* episode, however small, in the struggle for immediate demands and impregnating these episodes with a political content. This is completely different from pure « science », as opposed to « will », and theory as opposed to practice !

If for Marxists there could be any sense in speaking of « optimism » and « pessimism », « will » and « absence of will » we would have to respond that « optimism of the intelligence » is *by definition* « optimism of the will » (see *Theses on Feuerbach*). Moreover a typical banner of reformism is an « optimism of the will » intended to *compensate* for its « pessimism of the intelligence », an optimism which in fact signifies the *renunciation* of struggling to break the structure of the capitalist mode of production and the bourgeois ideological and political schemes. Sorel invented « *myths* » as substitutes for the scientific laws of Marxism ; Gramsci, as Mussolini before him, was a follower of the Sorelian school's *fundamentally pessimistic* view of history (if we must use this kind of vocabulary). The individual and the current who can only conceive of the revolution in the limits of the *factory* and socialism on the model of the

capitalist *enterprise*, will logically become the theorizers of two gross blunders :

1. the theorization of the revolutionary communist movement as the *final completion* of an incompletely achieved bourgeois revolution ;
2. the theorization of the proletarian dictatorship as the institution of the political and cultural *hegemony* of the proletariat to safeguard the *national culture*.

However even for this aim the councils are not enough : *the party* is necessary. Gramsci recognized this in the end and thereby ceased (*but only in regard to this question*) to be Gramscian. In any case, the simple recognition of the necessity of the party is not enough : even the reformists, including Stalin and his colleagues, recognize the necessity of the party and have a long experience in utilizing it... in the service of the counter-revolution.

What distinguishes Bordiga (in our language, the Italian Left) from Gramsci (that is to say *Ordine Nuovo*) is not the question of ignoring or disregarding the national « specificities » of the Italian situation. That is another historical untruth, and Williams would do well to read the enormous amount of work on this question that was done by the Communist Party of Italy in 1921-22. What distinguishes Bordiga is the decisive fact that he did not let himself be conditioned by these local and national « specificities » in defining the *strategy* of the revolutionary process ; this strategy must take these factors into account in *applying the universal* tactical criteria to the relations of forces between classes, but it must not subordinate the *general principles* to these factors, just as it cannot ignore (or, still worse, be defined in contradiction with) the *principles* of a struggle that is by definition a struggle on the *world level*. The heart of Gramscism lies in the *opposite* outlook, one that is empirical, eclectic, « situationist » and local ; this is what places him in the sewer of reformism and marks him as the real, and not just reputed, father of the legal, democratic, national, reformist and moralist party of *today*, a party which is *everything but communist*. For us the national « specificities » are a ball and a chain which we must take into consideration only in the aim of *passing beyond its limits*. They are an aspect of the relations of forces which we want to *change*, through the use of two weapons which are only formally contradictory : these weapons are programmatic rigor and, *in order to realize the program*, a careful consideration of all the aspects of the situation where we must apply our tactics, which in their general outlines are already known and established beforehand. For the Ordinovists, national « specificities » were on the contrary the *natural surroundings* which had to be taken into account not with the aim of changing them, but in order to *adapt* the principles, the program, and the tactics to them. The Ordinovists found a place in the party constituted at Livorno only by *disowning themselves* and submitting to its discipline (that is, until Stalinism gave them the *carte blanche*). As for us, we would not have even

thought of looking for a place in the « new » (i.e. Stalinist) party. Did Williams ever ask himself why the rise of « Bordighism » coincided with the period of the *rise* of the Third International, while the *rise* of « Gramscism » coincided with its *fall*? What can this mean if not that these two currents — which had come together due to a particular *world* historical situation that produced much greater rapprochments — were not two poles of a synthesis but the two extremities of an *antithesis* which were destined to separate in a different historical situation.

The historiography which awards the Bordigas (or the Trotskys) with academic honors only to reduce them to the involuntary but providential artisans of the worst democratism, is more destructive (because it is more subtle) than the historiographies written along the lines of police chronicles and drawing upon defamatory accusations. In the latter, however revolting they may be, there remains *at least* the sense of an *irreconcilable* class antagonism; in the first, there reigns « the night where all the cats are grey » with every dividing line erased — *it is the historiography of interclassism elevated to a principle.*

It is time to cry out loudly against those pretendedly impartial historians who place themselves above the conflict. It is necessary to emphatically state that the currents which were led fifty years ago by Bordiga and Gramsci (and the respective descendants of these currents today) were and remain *two opposite poles* which do not complete each other but on the contrary exclude one another. In 1922-23 « Bordighism » prevailed over « Gramscism »; after 1924 the situation was reversed. This corresponds to the succession of two phases: the phase of the rise of revolutionary communism, then the phase of its rapid decline. In Italy the Communist Party was founded on the basis of a radical extirpation of reformism. Consequently when it passed over to Stalinism it went through a complete reversal of direction (not of a few degrees but of 180 degrees) which would not have been possible without the organizational and disciplinary pressures of Stalinism coming down upon it (unlike the process in the countries where the roots of reformism had never been eradicated and where stalinization did not necessitate an about-face and was possible without a radical alteration of direction). Today the Stalinist counter-revolution has triumphed on the world scale. The revolutionary course can begin again only on the programmatic bases of what historians like Williams call « Bordighism » and which for us is simply orthodox Marxism without any immediatist, idealist or Ordinovist deformation or interpretation. This is something that these historians will never be able to understand.

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