

communist program

ORGAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTY

CONTENTS

- **Ukraine. A War that Continues to Pave the Way for Future Wars in Europe and the World** 1
- **From the Spiral of Incessant Massacres that Have Accompanied the History of the Middle East for the Last Hundred Years, the Way Out is not by Nationalism, but by the Struggle for Proletarian and Communist Revolution** 13
- **Some Reference Points on the "Palestinian Question"** 27
- **Theses on the Historical Task, Action and Structure of the World Communist Party, Based on Positions that Have Been the Historical Patrimony of the Communist Left for over Half a Century. (Theses of Naples, 1965)** 32
- **Supplementary Theses on the Historical Task, Action and Structure of the World Communist Party. (Milan 1966)** 40
- **Who We Are and What We Want:** 43
 - *On the Track of the Great Marxist Tradition* 43
 - *For the Restoration of the Revolutionary Marxist Theory* 44
 - *Reconstitution of the Communist Party on a Worldwide Scale* 50

WHAT DISTINGUISHES OUR PARTY: The political continuity which goes from Marx and Engels to Lenin, to the foundation of the Communist International and the Communist Party of Italy; the class 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 all popular fronts and national resistance blocs; the struggle against the principles and practice of bourgeois democracy, against interclassism and political and trade-union class collaboration, against any form of opportunism and nationalism; the difficult task of restoring the Marxist doctrine and the revolutionary organ par excellence - the class party - closely linked with the working class, and its daily struggle in opposition to capitalism and bourgeois oppression; the struggle against personal and electoral politics, against any form of indifferentism, of tailism, of movementism or the adventurist practice of "armed struggle"; the support of any proletarian struggle which breaks with social peace and rejects the discipline of interclassist collaborationism; the support of all efforts towards proletarian class reorganisation on the basis of economic associationism, with the perspective of a large scale resumption of the class struggle, proletarian internationalism and the revolutionary anticapitalist struggle.

COMMUNIST PROGRAM

Theoretical review of the International Communist Party

Supplement to the theoretical review
«programme communiste», ISSN-0033-037 X.
Registration number to the «commission paritaire de
presse»: 52926. Managing Editor: Dessus.
E-mail adress: «proletarian@pcint.org»
Printed on our press on May 2023.

Price for one issue:
USA+Cdn : US \$ 3 / Latin America : US \$ 2 / Europe:
£ 3 / 4 € / 8 CHF

Payments: by checks or international money,
order to: Dessus.

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English*) . One issue: USA + Cdn: US \$ 2 / Europe: 1.5
€ / £ 1 / 3 CHF

« **Communist Program** » (*Theoretical review, in
english*) . One issue: USA \$ 3 / CDN : \$ 3 / Latin
America: US \$ 2 / Europe: 4 € / 3 £ / 8 CHF

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dical, in italian*) . One issue: USA + Cdn \$ 8 / Euro-
pe: 8 € / £ 8 / 10 FS

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Suplemento Venezuela a « el programa comunista » .
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UKRAINE

A War that Continues to Pave the Way for Future Wars in Europe and the World

More than three months have passed since the beginning of a plundering war waged between Russia – the closest and most interested imperialist power – and Ukraine – the regional power, politically, economically and militarily supported by the Western imperialisms, led by the United States, in conjunction with Great Britain, Germany, France and Italy, and which is instigating yet another massacre of proletarians, both Ukrainian and Russian, with the sole aim of defending and/or dividing up a strategic territory brimming with energy and food resources.

Our position on who is the aggressor and who is the attacked is well known. Bourgeois war in the imperialist phase of capitalism is always a plundering war, regardless of who fired the first shot. Bourgeois politics, which is always a politics of defending the interests of national capitalism and exploiting its proletariat, cannot but turn into a bourgeois war under the development of conflicts between states and international competition, whose imperialist characteristic is due to the direct participation of the imperialist powers in order to expand their zones of influence and markets for their goods and capital. There is no doubt that the famous statement of the Prussian general von Clausewitz still applies : *war is the continuation of policy with other means*, namely military means. And since war always means the clash of two opposing armies or two opposing armed blocs, it means that the policy conducted up to that time by the respective governments has failed to resolve the disputes arising in the permanent competitive commercial war in which capitalism operates throughout the world ; it means that the policy conducted in the period of imperialist peace which precedes the period of imperialist war *is a policy of war and not of peace*. A competitive war, no doubt, but also a war that each bourgeoisie systematically wages against its own proletariat because it must subordinate it to the demands of capitalism, which it itself embodies and from which it derives exclusive benefit, while at the same time preparing it – by the various political means at its disposal, from repression to class collaboration – to submit to the demands of open warfare. This is true not only for Marxists, for Lenin and for all revolutionary communists of all epochs that capitalism *inevitably* leads to war ; the same point of view applies to the bourgeois, and it is for this reason that every state tends to become more and more advanced and powerful in its armaments. Every bourgeoisie knows that the time will come when competition will turn into war. The

economic crises of overproduction that characterize the development of capitalism teach us precisely this : markets that have reached a certain level can no longer transform commodities into money and can no longer be profitable for surplus capital. Capitalism and its gigantic increase in the production of commodities goes into crisis, has to free up markets for further commodities, and therefore intensifies competition between enterprises and between states to the level of political and therefore military confrontation. War, and the destruction that characterizes it, is the only political solution that the bourgeoisie adopts to overcome the crisis of overproduction ; but to wage war, each bourgeoisie must subject its proletariat to its strict discipline ; the proletariat which at the same time represents both the mass of labour power unusable by capital in crisis and the army of soldiers that must fight in defence of bourgeois power. And as long as classist and revolutionary tendencies do not emerge in the proletariat, the bourgeoisie in every country will have an easier way of deceiving it, diverting it from its own interests and bringing it into its national and imperialist military formations of National Defense. The proletarians are thus transformed from wage slaves in the capitalist galleys into cannon fodder for the benefit of His Majesty Capital.

There have always been pacifist movements which believe and continue to delude themselves that the same rulers who have carried their policies to the point of war can hold it back before it breaks out or stop it after it has broken out by returning to « peace » negotiations in which a compromise satisfactory to both belligerents can be found. The fact is that bourgeois politics is always made up of compromises because it is essentially a politics of mercantile exchanges, of blackmail, of acts of force, of traps set at every diplomatic level, of *quid pro quo* proposals that in « negotiations » usually benefit the strongest, the best equipped economically and militarily. But there are situations – and inter-imperialist conflicts constantly generate them – in which war is not decisive but becomes the norm, in which there may be periods of low, high or very high intensity, yet it is always war. Just think of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a territory where neither the victorious imperialisms of the Second World War, nor the Jewish people nor the Palestinian people have ever succeeded in resolving the problem of a national settlement that would satisfy the two peoples ; or the conflicts in which the Kurdish nation is systematically attacked by the Turks or the Syrians, by the

Iraqis or the Iranians, with the sole purpose of depriving it of control over the mountains and valleys of Kurdistan (rich in energy and mineral resources and fertile land for grain production). And the more the imperialist powers take an interest in these conflicts, the more the conflicts become long-lasting, festering wounds of mutual and continuous slaughter with no possibility of resolution to the benefit of the peoples involved, but with the open prospect of either permanent oppression or genocide. The real solution is not in the hands of the imperialist powers, which live off the oppression of weaker peoples and countries, but in the hands of the proletarian movement and its class struggle, whose historical objective is the overthrow of every bourgeois power and every bourgeois state through revolution, i.e. *class war*, the only war that can put an end – on the basis of victory at the international level – to all bourgeois and imperialist wars.

THE FIRST 100 DAYS OF WAR IN UKRAINE

The Russian-Ukrainian plundering war, by the very fact that besides the two countries concerned, other states, the USA and the EU, and indirectly China, India, Turkey, are directly involved in it, is not a *local* war, even if it is taking place only on Ukrainian territory, but a *stage* in an impending war of global proportions. At stake are not only territorial issues and the question of the « border » between Ukraine and Russia, but much broader aspects : raw materials for energy and agricultural commodities such as gas, oil and cereals ; furthermore, strategic areas for Russia regarding the control of certain sea and land trade routes ; political and military dominance over geopolitical areas over which the opposing powers are in direct tug of war (from the Black Sea to the eastern Mediterranean, as well as the entire 4 800 km strip of European territory, stretching from the Barents Sea and the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea) and in which the Euro-Atlantic military alliance NATO has gradually installed itself since the collapse of the USSR, aiming to integrate Ukraine (and Georgia), thus threatening Russia with its missiles not from afar but from a distance of several tens of kilometres. It was inevitable that this would greatly escalate tensions with Russia. Ever since the collapse of the USSR, Eastern European countries from the Baltic States to Bulgaria, except Belarus and Ukraine, have been integrated into NATO in the five years from 1999 to 2004. And the fact that NATO was created with an explicitly anti-Russian purpose and at the behest of the United States is well known. However, it is important to emphasize the fact that the 30 countries that are members of NATO today are all European, except the United States and Turkey. This does not mean that in every war in which a NATO country is involved, this entire military alliance is set in motion. In 1982, for example, there was a war between Argentina and the United Kingdom over the Falklands-Malvinas, which, apart from the political support of the United States for the United Kingdom, ended in an Anglo-Argentine

military clash ; this clash, however, took place far from Europe and its immediate borders, whereas, by contrast, as in the case of the wars in the former Yugoslavia in 1991–‘ 2001, the military intervention of NATO forces was forceful, or in the case of the war unleashed by NATO against Gaddafi’s Libya in 2011. Let alone the war unleashed by the coalition of countries of the democratic West against Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, which invaded Kuwait (1990–1991), or the war against Bashar Assad’s Syria (supported by Russia, Iran and even China), which was fought by Syrian rebel forces supported in turn by an international coalition led by the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, etc.

Until now, the powers grouped in NATO, and hence the West, led by the United States, have waged and supported wars against smaller countries (Serbia, Iraq, Libya, Syria, etc.), in which they have carefully avoided a direct attack against the great military and nuclear power, i.e. Russia. In today’s Russia-Ukraine war, unlike the wars in the former Yugoslavia, Russia is the direct protagonist, while the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and other NATO allies have declared from the beginning their intention not to get directly involved ; but they have guaranteed economic, financial, political support to Ukraine by pledging to send massive amounts of weaponry so that the Ukrainian army, already amply supplied by NATO countries with weaponry of all kinds for years, can wage war against Russia *on behalf* of NATO and the « democratic » West. This war, not only for Russia but also for the US and its allies, was *anticipated* and was to be confined to Ukraine alone. The Western chancelleries knew perfectly well that Russia, after amassing more than 100,000 troops on its border with Ukraine and after supporting pro-Russian forces in the Donbas in an eight-year low-intensity « war », would decide to cross the Ukrainian border with its own tanks. Russia’s intention has been clear from the outset : to join to Crimea, annexed in 2014, the entire coastal strip on the Sea of Azov, thereby securing a territorial continuity between Crimea and Donbas and thus gaining the entire south-eastern territory by dividing Ukraine in two – roughly as it was in the Korean War in 1950 – and, based on this territorial partition, preventing Ukraine from joining NATO.

Could the Western powers have prevented Russia from carrying out this its plan ? No, because it would have meant starting a war with their own military forces against Russian troops and thus starting World War III at this time. It would have meant mobilising hundreds of thousands of soldiers to join the two hundred thousand of the Ukrainian army to militarily occupy Ukraine and invade Belarus, which is Moscow’s ally and its western outpost. But before mobilising NATO forces against Russia, the US must have been certain that European countries would plunge into a world war with the risk of it becoming a nuclear war, benefiting who the most ? The United States, of course ; which country would sacrifice itself for the American cause ? Certainly, not Germany or France, but not even Great

Britain, no matter how closely tied to Washington it may be. Europe would thus become for the umpteenth time the epicentre of a world imperialist war that would destroy it a hundred times more than the Second World Imperialist War. If war is the continuation of policy with military means, there is no imperialist bourgeoisie which would voluntarily renounce its imperialist interests, defended on all fronts by its own imperialist policy, in order to exclusively favour the interests of a rival imperialist country or coalition.

That is, no to direct military action, yes – but with all due distinctions – to economic and financial sanctions. However, regarding the various sanctions packages with which Western countries have sought to subdue Russia financially and commercially, it turns out that if they agree on a course of conduct in words, they do not so easily agree on its application ; one only has to remember the supply of Russian gas and oil, on which 40% of Europe's energy depends, and particularly Germany and Italy, to understand that Russian imperialist power can rely on the disunity of interests among European countries themselves, even if anti-Russian sanctions would cause real damage to the Russian economy anyway (damage which, as capitalism commands, will be largely paid for by the Russian proletarian masses).

The international media repeatedly cried about « the attack on democracy », « the violation of national sovereignty », sang the praises of the values of Western civilization as the opposite of Russian totalitarianism and barbarism ; for these values the supply of huge amounts of weaponry to Zelenskyy's Ukraine is justified because « *Europe is being defended* » there. But they cannot fail to see that the sanctions that the EU, US and UK have adopted against Russia are undoubtedly causing damage to Moscow, but also to Europe, but not to the United States. If, therefore, the West thought that it would get the current Russian government into trouble with economic and financial sanctions (Biden even went so far as to say that the Russians would do well to overthrow Putin), to make it desist from continuing the war in Ukraine, we need only look back to the past to understand that the balance of power between states does not revolve solely around economic pressure. According to the Istituto per gli studi di politica internaziale (ISPI), even though the US embargo on Cuba has lasted for 60 years, but no one, at least so far, has got into government in Cuba that is distinctly pro-American ; likewise in Iran, with its government of Shiite clerics (43 years of sanctions), in North Korea (16 years of sanctions), in Maduro's chavista Venezuela (8 years of sanctions) or in Putin's Russia (8 years of sanctions, i.e. since 2014 as a result of the annexation of Crimea).

The policies of the various bourgeois governments do not always correspond to the purely « bare » laws of capitalism ; in the power relations between states – economically, financially, politically and militarily – the internal balance of forces between the classes and the social relations that have become established over time must always be considered for each state. Each

bourgeoisie tends to govern its own country based on its own history, the natural resources at its disposal, the economic strength it has attained over the years and, of course, the political, economic and financial support of other countries, but not least based on the cooperation between the classes, which must be obtained and maintained employing ad hoc political and social measures and employing repressive methods whenever the proletarian masses rebel against the established order.

The current Russia-Ukraine war is taking place at a time when the United States is fresh from a political and military debacle : after the rapid and chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan, the image of the world's gendarme of Western imperialism has been damaged ; another defeat has followed, and that in Syria, where Bashar al-Assad, who should have been overthrown thanks to domestic uprisings supported by the US and its allies, is, on the contrary, stronger than before ; and Iraq, where the US army became engaged up to after the liquidation of Saddam Hussein, which continues to be beset by internal conflicts, is in the process of rapprochement with Iran, the arch-enemy of the Middle East. And it is not so much about the Obama, Trump or Biden presidencies. It is US imperialism which has to deal with global competition that makes it no longer able to be present militarily and with the same repressive potential in every corner of the world as was once the case with England and, at the end of the Second World War, with the United States itself. The collapse of the USSR did not mean a clear-cut victory for US imperialism, although it has allowed it to strengthen itself, especially in Europe, which is not negligible.

The United States, however, looks not only towards the Atlantic, but also towards the Pacific Ocean, on the other side of which is China, a new imperialist power with as yet unfulfilled conquest ambitions (and it is not just Taiwan, which for mainland China is historic Chinese territory that is one day to return to Beijing's rule). The fact that the anti-Russian sanctions have forced Russia to trade its oil with China and India, which as good traders are surely interested in buying Russian oil cheaply (their imports have doubled since last year), proves once again that it is the market that dictates certain « policies » and not the smiles or strict faces of the rulers. On the other hand, the competition that China in particular poses to the United States is not limited to the Far East, although Japan, South Korea and Vietnam are the countries that, after the United States, form the centre of gravity of China's trade relations, with Germany being the country with which China has by far the most important trade relations in Europe. It is worth noting that for Ukraine, China was the country with the highest share of imports and exports in 2020, followed by Russia, Poland and Germany.

Of course, Ukraine's entry into the European Union would greatly benefit it from a commercial and financial point of view.

What was to be demagogically propagated in Russian declarations as a « special military operation » to « demilitarize and denazify » Ukraine immediately

turned out to be a war to oppress a smaller and weaker nation, perfectly in line with all the wars that Western imperialist countries, from the US to the UK to France, have always waged in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, the Middle East and Europe itself since the end of the Second World Imperialist War. Nothing new under the sun for us Marxists, for this is the inevitable course of capitalism and its insurmountable contradictions. In addition, these wars have served as an example to various regional powers, such as Israel in the struggle over the West Bank and the Syrian Golan Heights, Turkey in the struggle over the Kurdish territories and Syria, Morocco in the struggle over Western Sahara, Saudi Arabia with the US, UK, France, etc. in the war between Sunnis and Shiites in Yemen, Iran in the same Yemen war, etc., etc.

All this proves that the Russia-Ukraine war is an integral part of the phase of a war that has global dimensions, even if it has not yet brought the major imperialist countries to a head-to-head military confrontation. The war in Ukraine could last much longer than Russia would like because the aim of the Western imperialist bloc, given that it has no intention of going to war against Russia, is to exhaust it economically and isolate it politically until the « peace negotiations in Ukraine » have matured to a state where all the powers involved can benefit from it to the maximum.

The other dramatic aspect of this war, like all wars preceding it, is the systematic slaughter of the civilian population, for which all the world's democratic media always raise plaintive cries, but always use them to spread horrors in favour of pacifism and class collaboration, and plead for peace as if it were the conclusion of every war, when in fact it is merely a period of run-up to the subsequent wars. The demagogic Russian objective of the « de-Nazification » of Ukraine served to present this military expedition to Ukraine as if it were a repetition of the over-glorified « patriotic war against Nazism », which Stalinism used to justify itself for having dragged more than 27 millions proletarians into the slaughterhouse of the Second World War. But all did not go smoothly for the Russian military leadership. According to what the international media has reported so far, it has been not uncommon for Russian soldiers, very young, inadequately prepared, duped and sent to « war », to respond by damaging their own tanks and destroying their own ammunition. Examples of desertion have been recorded which signal deep discontent, even if they are not a portent of real rebellion against the war. However, if the war is much longer than Moscow, and Washington and London, had initially anticipated, such cases could be repeated, and on their wave, a not so toothless opposition to the war could gain momentum,

The resistance of the Ukrainian population to the Russian invasion has so far been under the banner of strong nationalism. The Ukrainian proletarians, as far as can be read from various international media, have not had the strength either to oppose the oppression of Russian-speaking Ukrainians in the Donbas by Kyiv over the past eight years, or to organise strikes and

demonstrations against the war with Russia, which has been maturing for some time. Trapped in the politics of class collaboration with the national bourgeoisie, they were confronted with the horrors of war, literally as meat for slaughter. Whether the butcher speaks Russian or Ukrainian was and is of relative importance from the class point of view : both these butchers pursue anti-proletarian objectives, in Ukraine and in Russia because the war into which the proletarians have been plunged has nothing historically progressive or revolutionary about it ; like the previous wars in the former Soviet republics, i.e. in Chechnya and Georgia, this war is reactionary, plundering. The proletarians of the Donbas or Crimea will continue to be exploited, oppressed and subjected to repression for the benefit of capital ; whether capital is in the hands of Russian or Ukrainian capitalists and landowners, the social situation of the proletarians does not change. Besides this war will not be short-lived precisely because of the conflicting imperialist interests at stake here ; and when there shall be « peace » negotiation – which will probably be taken up by a bunch of capitalist bandits who appear at present to be outsiders, such as China, Turkey, if not the crumbling UN – the factors of war that are present today will not vanish ; they will continue to foment the same contrasts that provoked it, and they will fuel the opposing nationalisms, until the outbreak of a much wider, global war.

A LOOK INTO THE PAST FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE FUTURE

Capitalism in its initial period of development, after the anti-feudal revolutions and the wars for the establishment of nation-states, needed, at least in Europe, a long period of peace to develop more rapidly and on a larger scale ; it was a period when the bourgeoisie, while plundering the continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America, tried to maintain social peace « at home » through supeprofits from the intensive exploitation of the colonies. This was the epoch of the so-called peaceful development of capitalism and at the same time the epoch of the development of the workers' movement, whose struggles won it a series of concessions from the rich bourgeoisie in terms of wage levels and trade union and political organisation. It was the epoch of socialist reformism, which, after the terrible and bloody defeat of the Paris Commune, asserted itself as a pacifist and parliamentary route to a proletarian emancipation that was considered indisputable due to the very development of capitalism. At the same time, however, capitalism, while developing to its maximum, was producing all the crisis factors that would lead to the clash of the most modern, civilised and industrialised states in the first great imperialist world war, which caused the collapse of the Second Proletarian International whose overwhelming majority of reformist social democratic parties became social chauvinists overnight.

Despite this immense tragedy of war, the international proletarian movement has shown that it still

possesses a great classist energy, thanks to which it opposed the war with strikes and mobilisations that even reached the war fronts, where cases of fraternisation between « enemy » soldiers were not rare. A classist energy which proved to be powerful even in the most backward and reactionary state of Europe, Tsarist Russia, and which, under the leadership of the class party headed by Lenin, fuelled not only the national bourgeois revolution, but above all the proletarian revolution as the first foothold of the international revolution, which called *to arms* not the *citizens*, and not only of Russia itself, but the *proletarians* of Russia and of the whole world.

The events of history revealed the historical backwardness of the class party in the very civilized Europe and the still strong grip of opportunism over the broad masses, who, despite their fierce struggle during and after the war, could not shake off the paralysing weight of social democracy and, after their physical and political defeat, once again surrendered themselves to the ruling bourgeois, whether they were democrats or fascists. The storming of the heavens, following the example of the Paris Commune, succeeded only in Petrograd and Moscow, not in Berlin, Paris, Rome or London. The metropolises of European imperialism were still laying down the law and preparing for the subsequent imperialist war, in which the involvement of the states took on a planetary dimension, the same dimension as the imperialist development of capitalism, which, despite its crises and its terrible effects on the broad proletarian and popular masses, was once again finding the strength to restart its deadly cycles of exploitation, competition and war. Proletarian and communist Petrograd and Moscow did not fall as a result of the civil war that the tsarist White troops and their Anglo-French-German-American supporters unleashed against Soviet power – a civil war, in which the Russian proletarian-revolutionaries, organised in Trotsky's Red Army, were victorious on all internal fronts – but because of the isolation and appalling economic backwardness in which Bolshevik Russia found itself in those decisive years for the revolution, not only in Russia but in the world. That fatal blow to the revolution in Russia and in the world – which was Lenin's throwing down the gauntlet to world imperialism, declaring that proletarian power in Russia would endure for twenty years waiting for the next revolutionary situation, and Trotsky, never succumbing to Stalinism and the theory of socialism in one country, at the Enlarged Executive of the Communist International in November and December 1926, threw in the face of Stalin and his lackeys the prospect that proletarian and communist power would defend the Russian revolutionary fortress for fifty years – this fatal blow, as we have said, was dealt by the Great Russian chauvinist opportunism. This chauvinism, defeated by the Bolsheviks led by Lenin, before, during and after the war, dramatically eroded the theoretical and political foundations of the Communist International and the Bolshevik Party itself, then passed off the failed victory of the revolution in Western Europe as an opportunity to start « building » socialism in Russia,

thereby counterfeiting Marxism as the theory of the international communist revolution into Marxism as the theory of socialism in a single country.

Among the theoretical and political foundations of Marxism, affirmed by Lenin and the Communist International at its first congresses, were the theses on the national and colonial question, which can be summed up in what was formulated as the self-determination of the peoples oppressed by imperialism, and first and foremost the self-determination of the peoples tyrannised by tsarist oppression. It is essential to grasp the essential points of this position to draw fundamental conclusions from it for today and the future as well.

The writings, speeches and resolutions on this question that arose thanks to Lenin are numerous ; but here it is sufficient to refer to his « *Letter to the workers and peasants of the Ukraine apropos of the victories over Denikin* » (1), in which Lenin stresses that, in addition to the struggle against the big landlords and capitalists for the abolition of land ownership, there is a specific problem in Ukraine – in comparison with Great Russia or Siberia : the national question. And Lenin emphasizes : « *All Bolsheviks and all politically-conscious workers and peasants must give careful thought to this question. The independence of the Ukraine has been recognised both by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee of the R.S.F.S.R. (Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic) and by the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks). It is therefore self-evident and generally recognised that only the Ukrainian workers and peasants themselves can and will decide at their All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets whether the Ukraine shall amalgamate with Russia, or whether she shall remain a separate and independent republic, and, in the latter case, what federal ties shall be established between that republic and Russia.* »

And Lenin immediately raises the question : « *How should this question be decided insofar as concerns the interests of the working people and the promotion of their fight for the complete emancipation of labour from the yoke of capital ?* ». The answer, then, must come first and foremost from the interests of the workers in their struggle against the bourgeoisie, i.e.

(1) See Lenin V. I., *Letter to the workers and peasants of the Ukraine apropos of the victories over Denikin*, 28 December 1919, in *Lenin Collected Works*, vol. 30, p. 292, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965. This letter refers to an earlier letter of August 1919, also sent to workers and peasants after the victory over Kolchak, in *Lenin Collected Works*, vol. 29, pp. 552–560, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965. It should be remembered that in 1919 the war unleashed by the Tsarist generals Kornilov, Kolchak, Denikin, Yudenich, Wrangler, etc. against Soviet power was still in full swing, and that the Red Army had already crushed Kolchak's troops and liberated the Urals and part of Siberia in the summer of 1919. By contrast, four months later, Denikin was scoring defeat after defeat in Ukraine.

the class that unites landlords and capitalists. Here are Lenin's words : « *In the first place, the interests of labour demand the fullest confidence and the closest alliance among the working people of different countries and nations. The supporters of the landowners and capitalists, of the bourgeoisie, strive to disunite the workers, to intensify national discord and enmity, in order to weaken the workers and strengthen the power of capital.* »

The fullest confidence between the workers of different nations, which the workers of the imperialist nation oppressing other nations have to earn through the struggle against their own imperialist national bourgeoisie, and which tends precisely through this struggle to unite with the proletarians of the oppressed countries. It is from this point of view, then, that the demand for independence of Ukraine, like that of every other country oppressed by Great Russia (there were many of them at that time : Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, etc.) was considered.

The vision of the revolutionary communists is internationalist in principle. Lenin indeed emphasised : « *We are opposed to national enmity and discord, to national exclusiveness. We are internationalists. We stand for the close union and the complete amalgamation of the workers and peasants of all nations in a single world Soviet republic* ». So that these words do not remain merely words, Lenin insists and states that in such cases the communists must give concrete meaning to these words and the first thing to be done is to recognise the right of the oppressed peoples to separate themselves from the nation which oppresses them, the right to political independence, to the establishment of an independent state. But the communists do not stop at this demand, which is absolutely bourgeois. This postulate is closely linked to the class interests of the proletarians of all nations ; that is why the communists call on the proletarians of the oppressing nation to fight together with the proletarians of the oppressed nations against their own bourgeoisie in favour of their self-determination, and thereby concretely show that they are fighting against national oppression and against the advantages accruing to them from this oppression in the form of their corruption, which each bourgeoisie uses to divide the proletarians of different nations.

The national enmity to which Lenin refers is caused by capitalism, which divides nations among a small number of imperialist states that oppress the vast majority of the remaining nations. If the world imperialist war of 1914–1918 accentuated this division, the second imperialist war accentuated it even more.

Lenin defined as the historical goal of the international proletarian and communist revolution the establishment of a single world Soviet republic, a goal which was not achieved at that time for the reasons given above and which remains valid for the future. In Lenin's time, the adjective « soviet » connoted the much broader concept of « socialist », broader in the sense that it meant both the « pure » proletarian revolution that concerned the advanced capitalist countries, and the

« multiple revolutions » that concerned a large number of economically backward countries, where for this reason the revolutionary masses were represented not only by the proletariat, but also by the poor peasantry. As the reader knows, the soviets were organs formed directly by the workers and peasants to defend their interests, not only strictly economic but also political, organs to fight against the reactionary power of the Tsarism, the landlords and the capitalists. They emerged as democratic-revolutionary organs during the 1905 Russian Revolution and remained throughout the era the model organisation of the working-class and peasant masses, joined by the soldiers fighting in the 1914–1918 world war. As immediate organisations they were mostly influenced by social democratic, Menshevik and anarchist political formations ; it was only after their development as democratic-revolutionary organisations, and after long and persistent propaganda, intervention and action of the Bolshevik-influenced proletarians, that the soviets began to be seen as organs capable of forming the backbone of the new state of the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants, a dictatorship which would become exclusively proletarian after the deposition of the socialist-revolutionaries who were the representatives of the peasants and who persistently sabotaged Bolshevik power.

The internationalist vision, which Lenin expressed succinctly in the letter we have quoted, is formulated as follows : « *We want a **voluntary** union of nations – a union which precludes any coercion of one nation by another – a union founded on complete confidence, on a clear recognition of brotherly unity, on absolutely voluntary consent. Such a union cannot be effected at one stroke ; we have to work towards it with the greatest patience and circumspection, so as not to spoil matters and not to arouse distrust, and so that the distrust inherited from centuries of landowner and capitalist oppression, centuries of private property and the enmity caused by its divisions and redivisions may have a chance to wear off.* »

National independence, of course, entails the definition of borders between states, and it is inevitable that the national systematisation of different countries goes through the definition of borders between one state and another. How important for communists is the boundary between states ? Lenin replies : « (...) *the demarcation of frontiers now, for the time being – for we are striving towards the complete abolition of frontiers – is a minor [question], it is not fundamental or important [one]. In this matter we can afford to wait, and must wait, because the national distrust among the broad mass of peasants and small owners is often extremely tenacious, and haste might only intensify it, in other words, jeopardise the cause of complete and ultimate unity* ».

It is a distrust that disappears and is overcome very slowly, as Lenin points out based on his direct experiences from the same years of the civil war, in which the close union of workers and peasants in a common struggle against the Russian landowners and capitalists supported by the capitalists of the Entente Powers, i.e.

a coalition of the richest capitalist countries – England, France, the United States, Japan, Italy – was the strong point of the very young Red Army ; a distrust against which the communists had to be very patient, had to make concessions and seek solutions because intransigence and inflexibility had to apply to Ukraine as well as to any other country *« in the underlying and fundamental questions which are the same for all nations, in questions of the proletarian struggle, of the proletarian dictatorship ; we must not tolerate compromise with the bourgeoisie or any division of the forces which are protecting us against Denikin »*.

But the union between Great Russian and Ukrainian workers was not to be taken for granted ; it was not enough to proclaim it and want it, it was necessary to take concrete steps to achieve and maintain it, and the necessary basis for achieving and maintaining it was full identification with Lenin's viewpoint : to stand firm on the fundamental questions, not to split over secondary questions (the boundaries of the state to be established, complete independence or complete unification of Ukraine and Russia, etc.); *« only the Ukrainian workers and peasants themselves can and will decide at their All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets whether the Ukraine shall amalgamate with Russia, or whether she shall remain a separate and independent republic, and, in the latter case, what federal ties shall be established between that republic and Russia »*. That is, be patient and persistent in this and *« one thing, or another, or a third may be tried »* to achieve a close union of the Great-Russian and Ukrainian workers. And if this union cannot be consolidated and maintained ?

Again Lenin : *« But if we fail to maintain the closest alliance, an alliance against Denikin, an alliance against the capitalists and kulaks of our countries and of all countries, the cause of labour will most certainly perish for many years to come in the sense that the capitalists will be able to crush and strangle both the Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Russia »*.

Lenin's dialectical acumen is indisputable : in the face of a problem such as the national question, so complicated and delicate, in which centuries of national dissensions, particularisms, divergences and regroupments stemming solely from the interests of the ruling classes persist, and hatred between nations fomented deliberately to divide and subjugate peoples, it was, is and will be important for revolutionary communists to be intransigent on the fundamental questions of the anti-capitalist class struggle, the proletarian revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the rejection of any collaboration with the bourgeoisie. This intransigence makes it possible not to lose the theoretical-political compass of the class party and to understand that in dealing with questions such as the national question it is necessary to consider the real situation in which the masses, proletarian and peasant, live and the influence to which they are inevitably subjected by the ideology of the ruling classes. The habits, prejudices, relations of economic, social and cultural dependence that have taken root over the centuries (just think of private property) persist even in periods when the revolution-

ary storm is knocking at the door and subverting the existing order, and thus constitute a material foothold for the restoration of the old social system and the old political power.

Lenin's last sentence we quoted was also a prediction. With the downfall of internationalism – and the admission of bourgeois categories (private property, wage labour, commodity production, money, commercial competition, etc.) as categories compatible with socialism, beyond the necessary *« steps backwards »* with regard to socialist incentives even in the economic sphere that revolutionary Russia had to take due to the failure of the proletarian revolution in the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe – the established proletarian dictatorship also collapsed, and with it the Bolshevik Party, which it had been called upon to exercise. The specific political characteristics of the proletarian dictatorship began to falter, and it gradually changed into a dictatorship of capital, i.e. a bourgeois one, which much more directly represented the force of the emerging national capitalism, i.e. a kind of state industrialism, which found its representatives and defenders in the same Bolshevik Party that had originally directed and guarded its advance, orienting it towards the international revolution.

The delay of the proletarian revolution in Western Europe and, above all, the hesitations and vacillations of the European communist currents and parties increasingly marked a negative period for revolutionary revival. Lenin's magnificently thrown down gauntlet in respect of *« twenty years of good relations with the peasants in Russia »*, which was linked to the strengthening of the Communist International, could not rest its success solely on the shoulders of the Russian Bolshevik Party and an economically backward and beleaguered Russia. Among the Western communists, only the Communist Left of Italy had assured itself the firm and solid theoretical and programmatic foothold that had allowed it over the years to accumulate valuable experience in the struggle against bourgeois democracy, against reformism and *« Maximalist »* opportunism ; experience that it had sought in every way and in every international forum to have adopted by the other parties, and particularly by the Bolshevik Party.

But its contribution was not enough to overcome the resistance that maximalism and reformism exerted through the dominant position of the German and French parties. The revolutionary achievements in Russia were overwhelmed by opportunism, which took on the characteristics of Stalinism and ate away at the Bolshevik Party and the Communist International from within like a deadly infection.

And so Russia, once proletarian, revolutionary and communist, was transformed from the beacon of the world proletarian revolution into the worst enemy of the Russian and international proletariat, and was preparing – as was inevitable – to participate in the second imperialist war as the eastern pillar of the imperialist bloc of the *« democratic »* West, which had organised itself against the imperialist bloc of the

« totalitarian » Axis powers, with Nazi Germany at its head. The participation of the Stalinised Russia in the imperialist war of 1939–1945 rested on the prior physical liquidation of the entire old Bolshevik Guard and the systematic suppression of any movement of resistance and rebellion against a power that was not any worse than that of the Tsar.

So much for the *voluntary* union of peoples : the iron heel of capitalist power was crushing the peoples of all the Russian lands under the oppressive domination of His Majesty the National Capitalism and its imperialist aims both in the East and in the West.

The victory of the « democratic » imperialist bloc in the Second World War, which Stalinist Russia joined after trying to gain an advantage by reaching an agreement with Nazi Germany, will deliver the proletariat of all countries into the hands of the most tragic opportunist wave of all time.

In fact, after the first opportunist wave in the ranks of the proletarian movement, represented by social democratic revisionism, which argued that socialism could be achieved gradually and by non-violent means (Bernstein), and after the second opportunist wave (Kautsky), which brought about the collapse of the Second International and which represented the sacred union of all classes in the face of the 1914–1918 war and the national alliance to defeat the states that could lead society back to « absolutist feudalism », the proletarian movement was hit by a third wave of degeneration. The wave which we have called Stalinist, and which, in addition to incorporating the deviations of the previous waves, also admitted the forms of action of armed confrontation and civil war, in which the « *alliances during the Civil War in Spain (during a period of international peace) as well as the entire partisan movement and the so-called 'Resistance' against the Germans or the fascist (during World War II)* » (2), were the clearest manifestation of the betrayal of the class struggle and another form of collaborationism with the forces of capitalism.

Each of these opportunist waves aimed to divert the proletarian movement from its class struggle, from the revolutionary confrontation with the bourgeois ruling classes, and to make it sacrifice its forces in defence of bourgeois and capitalist interests, from time to time, disguised in the veil of « defence of the fatherland », « defence of democracy against totalitarianism », « defence of modern society and civilisation against feudalism », of course for the sake of lasting peace between peoples...

A peace which in reality was and is nothing more than a truce between one war and another, as the history of imperialism itself has shown for at least a hundred and twenty years.

Lenin gives us another lesson about imperialist wars. In October 1921, in an article dedicated to the fourth anniversary of the October Revolution, he wrote :

« *The question of imperialist wars, of the international policy of finance capital which now dominates the whole world, a policy that must inevitably*

engender new imperialist wars, that must inevitably cause an extreme intensification of national oppression, pillage, brigandry and the strangulation of weak, backward and small nationalities by a handful of 'advanced' powers – that question has been the key-stone of all policy in all the countries of the globe since 1914.

It is a question of life and death for millions upon millions of people. It is a question of whether 20,000,000 people (as compared with the 10,000,000 who were killed in the war of 1914–18 and in the supplementary 'minor' wars that are still going on) are to be slaughtered in the next imperialist war [warning : Lenin foresees the second imperialist war !, Ed.], which the bourgeoisie are preparing, and which is growing out of capitalism before our very eyes. It is a question of whether in that future war, which is inevitable (if capitalism continues to exist), 60,000,000 people are to be maimed (compared with the 30,000,000 maimed in 1914-18).

In this question, too, our October Revolution marked the beginning of a new era in world history. » (3)

In fact, the new epoch began with the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war and struggle against all *the most cunning chauvinist and pacifist stratagems*. With the Brest-Litovsk peace, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party concretely demonstrated the deception of the imperialist peace because no delegation of the warring imperialist countries other than the German and Russian delegations came to its negotiation.

However, this peace, which the Bolshevik power firmly desired and which was signed at the cost of accepting considerable sacrifices, including territorial ones, to wrest Russia out of the imperialist war, showed the Russian proletarians and peasants that the only force that really wanted peace was the Soviet power established by the October Revolution.

And it was also thanks to this demonstration, together with the Bolshevik policy of the self-determination of peoples, that the Russian proletarians and peasants endured with enormous effort to fight against the armies of the Tsarist generals who intended to restore the old Tsarist power and who, for this reason, were supported by the armed forces of all the super-democratic imperialist countries which were waging war against the so-called Prussian power of Wilhelmine Germany.

Rightly, with proletarian and communist pride,

(2) See our *Characteristic Theses of the Party of December 1951*, published in English in « *Communist Program* », No. 6, 1980.

(3) Cf. Lenin V. I., *Fourth anniversary of the October Revolution*, October 14, 1921, in *Lenin Collected Works*, vol. 33, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973, p. 55.

Lenin would declare :

« *The first Bolshevik revolution has wrested the first hundred million people of this earth from the clutches of imperialist war and the imperialist world. Subsequent revolutions will deliver the rest of mankind from such wars and from such a world.* » (4)

The conclusion could not be other than this : « *it is impossible to escape imperialist war, and imperialist peace (...) which inevitably engenders imperialist war, that it is impossible to escape that inferno, except by a Bolshevik struggle and a Bolshevik revolution* », i.e. only through the **class struggle** and the **proletarian and communist revolution**.

The time of Lenin has passed, and with it the epoch of the proletarian and communist revolution at the international level. The threat of the proletarian revolution was thwarted, the imperialist powers were not only saved from the revolutionary onslaught of the world proletariat, they have grown stronger and numerically larger at the same time.

So will the world proletariat, and particularly the proletariat of the imperialist countries, ever again be able to raise its head and recover from the enormous defeat of the 1920s ?

One of the hypotheses put forward by Lenin during the Civil War in 1919, mentioned above, in which the Red Army confronted the armies of the Tsarist generals and the attacks of the imperialist powers, was this : such an eventuality would be lost if the proletarians didn't succeed in remaining united, firmly anchored in the leadership of the revolutionary communist party, and if the latter in turn failed to remain firmly united on fundamental questions such as the class struggle, the revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the categorical refusal to ally with the bourgeoisie on any political objective, etc.

Therefore, if the communists were divided on « minor » questions (the borders of the Soviet state, autonomous or federal or merged republics, etc.), they would bring their disagreements and quarrels to the level of absolutely key questions, and *the very cause of work*, the cause of **socialism**, and hence of the class struggle, the revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat, would certainly be lost, not for a short time, but *for many years* !

Unfortunately, that is precisely what happened, and the capitalists of the imperialist countries and backward Russia succeeded in crushing revolutionary Russia and with it every other Soviet republic, Ukraine or Georgia.

This was a much harsher defeat for the world proletariat, much harsher than the defeat of the Paris Communards, a defeat which broke the neck of another revolution in a backward country, the Chinese revolution of 1925–1927, and which put the world proletariat through the massacres of the subsequent imperialist wars.

It is precisely into this abyss that today's proletariat has been plunged, and it will not be able to get out of it except through an unprecedented eruption of social upheaval throughout the world, which will subvert any

existing imperialist order, and through the action of a revolutionary Communist Party brought back to life throughout the world.

THE PROLETARIAT OF THE PRESENT AND THE PROLETARIAN MOVEMENT OF THE FUTURE

European proletarians and proletarians of all other continents are still victims of the illusions and deceptions that the bourgeoisie constantly produces to divert their social energy onto the terrain of class collaboration. Whether the bourgeoisie uses democratic means (elections, parliament, freedom of the press and organisation, etc.) or authoritarian means (usually justified by the defence of the country against « terrorism » or foreign aggression), the fact remains that without the exploitation of wage labour, i.e. of the proletariat, in its own country and in the countries it oppresses, it does not achieve the aim of its class existence : the valorisation of capital, hence the making of profits. This aim is fundamentally antagonistic to the proletarian class's own existential aim, which is the defence against capitalist exploitation and the struggle for its elimination.

The class antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is a historical fact, not an ideological or economic « choice » of one class or the other. It arises directly from the capitalist mode of production, which is based on the private property and private appropriation of all social production by one class, the bourgeoisie, and the complete expropriation of all means of production and every product of the wage-earning class, the proletariat, which Marxism has defined as a class without reserves precisely because it has no « property » other than its individual labour power. A labour power that is not enough in itself to make a living, since it must be sold to the owners of the means of production and of production itself, destined to be sold on the market, for which they receive a wage in money, with which they must compulsorily go to the market to buy the necessary goods they need day after day to live. Without wages, and therefore without the possibility of buying the necessities of life on the market, the owner of only his labour power cannot live, and so the proletarian starves to death. In order not to starve to death, the proletarian is forced to sell himself for a lower, more precarious wage, for which he works more hours each day, thus entering into competition with other proletarians. The competitive struggle which the capitalists wage among themselves to win a share of the market in their favour is thus transferred to the proletarians, who have no other immediate aim than to feed themselves from day to day.

The competition and antagonism that divide one capitalist from another, one group of capitalists from other groups, one capitalist state from other capitalist

(4) Ibid.

states, are all intrinsic properties of this mode of production, due to which they exist as private owners of the means of production and private appropriators of social production. The domination of the bourgeoisie over society derives precisely from its social position. Each bourgeoisie, by entering into competition with other bourgeoisies, mobilises all the forces at its disposal : in essence, the means of production, the capital intended for investment, the labour power intended for exploitation ; all this is not enough because its dominant position derives not only from the economic power it possesses, but also from its political power. For it is precisely political power that gives it the ability to rule socially over the proletarian masses it exploits.

These masses, which are organised within the framework of labour linked to capitalist production and distribution, have matured in the history of their movement to the awareness that they represent not only a labour force, but a social force through which they can counter the scale and scope of capitalist exploitation. The class antagonism materially springs from the bourgeois social and production relations themselves, and the bourgeoisie cannot erase it because to do so would mean the removal of its class domination, its very existence as the ruling class. It must therefore cushion it, keep it within certain limits within which it does not provoke revolts, unrest, insurrections. However, revolts, unrest, insurrections in the course of the development of capitalism and its ever-increasing contradictions have been a warning sign and a threat to bourgeois power, since the struggle for the immediate defence of the living and working conditions of the proletariat tends, when it clashes with the bourgeoisie and its state, to rise to a political struggle, *class struggle*, which historically sets as its objective for the bourgeois ruling class the defence and preservation of political power by crushing the revolutionary attempts of the proletariat, and for the proletarian class the attack on the privileges and political power of the bourgeoisie aimed at the conquest of this power by the overthrow of its state and the inevitable war for the establishment, in turn, of a proletarian state.

The class struggle therefore means *class war* because the proletariat will have no other chance to achieve its emancipation from capitalist exploitation than by overthrowing the bourgeois political power ; a power which is nothing other than the dictatorship of the capitalist class and its imperialist policy by which it crushes and oppresses the proletariat in every country and the smaller and weaker nations. Unless the proletarian struggle reaches the level of the class struggle, that is, unless it sets itself the objective of revolutionary change of society by the conquest of political power, starting in a country where the situation is favourable for revolutionary struggle, and then extending this struggle to the international level, the proletariat will remain in the thrall of the bourgeoisie and will suffer the increasingly disastrous consequences of the contradictions that afflict capitalist society. And these consequences are ever more acute crises and bourgeois wars : in the first and second

cases, the proletarians pay for the capital's prosperity with misery, hunger, workplace deaths, ever more intense exploitation, so-called natural disasters, repression and wartime massacres.

How do we get out of this ?

Democratic and peaceful means have long since proved that they are not determining means ; on the contrary, they reinforce the subjugation of the proletariat to capitalist domination. Reformism and class collaboration between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie have proved that they are means exclusively for the benefit of capitalism and bourgeois power ; in fact, they mask the concrete economic dictatorship of capitalism and the concrete political dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. There have been violent reactions on the part of petty-bourgeois groups threatened with ruin due to the economic crises, which have fascinated the proletarian strata with their individual terrorism, such as the Red Brigades, but they have proved to be a pure illusion with an anarchist flavour, believing that they can positively affect social relations in favour of the proletariat by eliminating a few capitalists, a few generals and a few judges. This means too has proved ineffective regarding the emancipation of the proletariat and, on the contrary, has reinforced the propaganda of social peace and class collaboration by all the forces of social conservation, led by the opportunist ones.

The path of the class struggle in accordance with the historical realities, and not with the fantasies of the democrats, is the most arduous path for the proletariat because it has to get rid of all the illusions that electoral and parliamentary democracies produce ; it has to overcome habits that have been taken root during the long decades of the policy of class collaboration through which the imperialist bourgeoisies, in exchange for the social welfare measures in which they have invested, have obtained social peace, ever more brutal exploitation of the proletariat and a free hand in the oppression of the weaker nations. The result of this policy is not universal peace, it is not an end to social inequalities, it is not prosperity evenly distributed among the entire populations ; instead, it is greater oppression, greater repression, the exacerbation of crisis factors and bourgeois war, which is increasingly becoming the norm.

The proletariat of today in the imperialist countries is still completely subordinated to the needs of national capitalism ; and not only that, also to the needs of the international capitalist alliances. The proletariat of the imperialist countries still benefits – in comparison with the proletariat of the more capitalistically backward countries – from certain advantages which are denied to the proletarians of other countries, both in the economic and in the immediate social and political spheres. In fact, the super-rich bourgeoisie pays for these « advantages » not only by the exploitation of its own proletariat, but also by the bestial and slavish exploitation of the proletarians of the countries on the periphery of imperialism. Thus, the proletarians of each country, despite the competition between them fuelled by their own bourgeoisies, are bound to each other by

the same chains. Chains from which any bourgeois law, whether democratic or fascist, will never release them, on the contrary, it will tighten them even more.

Like slaves of ancient Rome, the wage slaves of ultra-modern capitalist society must free themselves from their chains by their own efforts. They must unite in organisations independent of all bourgeois institutions ; they must put themselves on the terrain of struggle with objectives that concern exclusively their interests as wage slaves, as proletarians ; they must adopt *classist* methods and means, i.e. be able to oppose effectively the methods and means used by the bosses and their state. It is the experience of such a struggle, on the terrain of the defence of immediate interests, that will give the proletariat the possibility of taking on the task of going beyond the limits of immediate defence, of immediate interests, and thus placing itself on the terrain of the classist political struggle ; a terrain on which the bourgeois and socially conservative forces will divert it – as they have always done – towards democratic, parliamentary and, of course, anti-fascist, pacifist and law-abiding objectives, demanding further reforms and « fairer » laws.

And what to do at a time like this, when war is knocking at the door ?

How did the Russian and Ukrainian proletarians react to the war unleashed on 24 February ?

What is known is that from late February to early March 2022, pacifist demonstrations against the war were held in Moscow, St. Petersburg and dozens of other cities. The riot police, of course, cracked down on the demonstrators, and it is believed that more than 14,000 people were arrested in various cities (5). There were no strikes, there were no specifically working-class demonstrations, which shows, on the one hand, the natural fear of becoming the target of blanket repression and, on the other, the extreme weakness of the Russian working class : evidently, even at the level of merely defending its immediate living and working conditions, it has not yet expressed the strength capable of producing a class political vanguard that would take on the task of fighting the bourgeoisie, precisely because the ruling class is the class that represents the economic and political power under which the proletariat is crushed, fragmented, isolated and enslaved.

The bourgeois power has no fear of pacifist demonstrations ; they cause annoyance and can complicate the work of social supervision of the Russian bourgeoisie, which has always been accustomed to concealing the dead of its wars while praising their sacrifice. But the repression of pacifist demonstrations at a time when the country is at war is, in turn, a warning to the working class to be aware that power will not spare it if it decides to protest against the war ; the feared effect that workers' protests against the war could have is to undermine the confidence and discipline of the soldiers sent to war while they have been mobilised for a « special operation » against the government in Kyiv accused of « militarism » and « Nazism ».

The Ukrainian proletarians, for their part, reacted

to the military invasion, the bombing, the looting, the massive destruction of villages and towns and the massacres of civilians in the way that any population under attack, unprepared and ignorant of the reasons for the aggression, reacts : taking refuge in basements, fleeing from bombed cities, trying to help the wounded and maimed, and submitting to the decrees of a government which, for the war against the « Russians », has imposed on all men the duty of remaining at the disposal of the army to defend the « fatherland », and which has proved and continues to prove that it sucks the blood of wage labour and devours human flesh exclusively for the benefit of the bourgeois ruling class. In this, the Ukrainian bourgeoisie is no different from the Russian bourgeoisie : the interests that have driven it to war for eight years are equally capitalist, but the interests of a national bourgeoisie that seeks to break out of its alliance – with Moscow – and thereby put itself at the service of the imperialist powers that are Moscow's rivals because of promises of more lucrative businesses.

The Russian and Ukrainian proletarians are still completely subordinated to their bourgeoisies and presently do not know how to react except through the means and methods which the bourgeoisies themselves systematically use to keep them subjugated : by being conscripted into the armed forces of their own state when their national capitalist interests are threatened by foreign competition ; by being disciplined and policed so that warfare is successful ; by being schooled through war propaganda designed purposely to incite national hatred against the actual « enemy. » And so, peoples of the same group, the same language, the same culture, who under the proletarian dictatorship that arose out of October 1917 experienced real fraternity and union, after having contributed to the fall of tsarist oppression, to the struggle against the tsarist generals who intended to restore it, and to the struggle of the international proletariat against the yoke of capitalist and pre-capitalist regimes, find themselves once again at war in the name of what ? In the name of territorial sovereignty, national capitalism and a regime that has had no scruples about turning hundreds of thousands of soldiers into cannon fodder.

Besides, the Russian and Ukrainian proletarians cannot even count on the classist struggle of the European or American proletarians ; they cannot be encouraged to follow the example of an anti-bourgeois struggle which does not even exist in Europe, the cradle of capitalism, but also the cradle of the proletarian revolution and the heart of the world revolution.

In 1967, we wrote : « Marx said a hundred years ago that industrial England was showing the rest of the then backward world a picture of its own future.

(5) Cf. <https://www.rainews.it/articoli/2022/03/manifestazioni-contro-la-guerra-in-tutta-la-russia-oltre-300-arresti-a-mosca-27274687-5501-47e7-9535-b104093a85b4.html>, 13 March 2022.

Today's hard-pressed England is showing Europe a picture of its future. Europe (...) despite its relative prosperity today, will never achieve the dominant position that England had in the last century and that the United States has today. Between Europe, even if united, and the United States, the inequality of development will inevitably widen. The problems that England faces today will face Europe tomorrow, and there will be no bigger markets to solve them, no Labour watchdogs to prevent them getting worse. Europe will be the heart of the world revolution » (6).

The economic and political crises of capitalism have never automatically provoked proletarian revolution. It did not happen in the past, and it will not happen in the future. But the objective factors that cause the ripening of the revolutionary situation are inherent exclusively to capitalism, and its inability to resolve them except by amplifying their negative forces. And it is precisely this negative effectiveness of the crisis factors which must reach such a level that the bourgeois ruling class can no longer live as it has lived up to that point, and the dominated class, the proletariat, can no longer tolerate the conditions in which it has lived up to that point.

The objective factors include the proletarian class struggle, i.e. the struggle by which the proletariat trains and prepares itself for the decisive confrontation with the ruling class. And part of this struggle is the presence, activity and influence of the **class party**, the revolutionary communist party, which has the task of leading the proletariat both in the class struggle and in the class revolution and, after achieving revolutionary victory, as Lenin constantly reminds us, in the exercise of class dictatorship, the only true instrument with the

help of which it is possible to transform the society of capitalist exploitation and oppression, its competitive combats and wars, into a society without classes, without class antagonisms, and therefore without national antagonisms, in which the nations will finally live in harmony.

We are under no illusion that this path can be embarked upon tomorrow or that it will be facilitated by the « raising to consciousness » of each individual proletarian. As we have already said, for capitalist society to be shaken at its foundations, a world storm must be unleashed in which not only the bourgeoisie of each country will be confronted with the danger of losing its power, its privileges, but in which the proletariat of each country will see no other way out of the abyss, into which it has been plunged by its own bourgeoisie, than to rise against the established powers, against the class enemies whose actions have finally been recognized as enemies and with whom neither truce nor peace can be concluded. Then the lessons of the Paris Commune of 1871 and the October Revolution of 1917 will prove to the last proletarian in the most remote country that they represent a precious unique heritage of the class struggle, which the proletariat has as its historic task to lead to revolutionary victory, to the world socialist republic. ●

(Il comunista, nr. 173, April-June 2022)

(6) See *Europe will be the heart of the world revolution* (L'Europa sarà il cuore della rivoluzione mondiale), « Il programma comunista », No. 6, 1967.

From the spiral of incessant massacres that have accompanied the history of the Middle East for the last hundred years, the way out is not by nationalism, but by the struggle for proletarian and communist revolution

With the 1967 war, after the defeat of the Arab armies, Israel seized not only the Syrian Golan Heights and the Egyptian Sinai, but also the West Bank and Gaza, where Palestinians were interned after waves of expropriations that had begun in 1948 with the creation of Israel as an independent state; throughout the period up to the Camp David Accords in 1978 (by which the Palestine Liberation Organization was forced to recognise Israel as a state entity), the Palestinian armed struggle waged by various formations within the PLO to establish a Palestinian state through the destruction of Israel ended in the worst possible way: the West Bank and the Gaza Strip became virtual prisons into which Palestinians who did not flee to Jordan, Lebanon, Syria or Egypt were de facto thrown, where they have been systematically oppressed, guarded by Israeli military forces and the PLO's (later Palestinian National Authority's) own repressive forces, and generally relegated to a no better than precarious survival. The guerrilla struggle of the various PLO formations since its establishment in 1964 soon proved to be completely ineffective and illusory in terms of the intended objective; not only because of the powerful Israeli military apparatus, but also because of the repressive actions of all the Arab states in which the Palestinians sought refuge (the "*Black September*" in Jordan and the *massacre in the Tall-El-Zaatar* camp in Lebanon are signs of the "final solution" by which the various Arab states sought to "resolve the Palestinian question"). The hypocritical Arab solidarity of the various Middle Eastern and North African states has not been limited to keeping the Palestinians as far away from their own territories as possible – while hypocritically nurturing the idea of first "Greater Palestine" and then "two peoples, two states" – but has tended to throw the Palestinians back in the jaws of their prime executioner in every possible way: Israel.

While the illusory "Arab unity" in the perpetually convulsing Middle East had completely collapsed and the long period of anti-colonial struggles in Africa and Asia was coming to an end, the so-called "Islamic Revolution" in Iran in 1979 brought down the Shah – after Israel the number two gendarme in the service of Western imperialism in the vast Middle East region. The events in Iran appeared at the time as a shock that could weaken Western imperialisms, especially the American one, and reignite the Arab revolts throughout the Middle East on a wave of Islamic fundamentalism

that in one way or another bound together all the peoples of the region. The blow suffered by the world's leading imperialist power in its quest for complete control of a region that was rich in oil and represented a strategic point of paramount importance for any imperialism was undeniable. In these decades, US imperialism replaced traditional British and French colonialism in the region, put a stop to Russian imperialism's efforts to establish itself there, and dictated the fate of the people of the Middle East and, naturally, the Palestinians, with its dollars and armaments to Israel, and subsequent agreements with Egypt and the oil powers, especially Saudi Arabia. However, all these negotiations and agreements, which have been initiated and terminated, have not prevented the regimes of the Middle Eastern countries from fighting each other to seize another piece of power in addition to that which they have already secured, not least through inter-Arab alliances, to prevent Israel from extending its territory beyond the Jordan Valley and into the Sinai Peninsula, but also through the – purposely financed – Palestinian independence struggle, on the one hand to keep Israel busy in an internal war, and on the other hand to prevent the struggle of the Palestinian proletariat from stepping off the democratic-bourgeois terrain onto the terrain of real and genuine class struggle. No state and no imperialist power wanted the Middle East to turn into a cradle of proletarian revolutionary struggle!

The Palestinian peasants, violently expropriated from their land, were thus forcibly transformed into proletarians, into workers who were at the disposal of any capitalist who wished to exploit them, whether that capitalist was Israeli, Lebanese, Syrian, Jordanian, Egyptian or Palestinian. Capitalism, this monstrous economic and social system of exploitation of human labour, although far behind in comparison with Europe and many other areas of the world, took root in the Arab countries with all the ruthless violence of which it proved capable; but as it developed, it also created a mass of wagedworkers, proletarians, whom the historical events put in a situation where they had to fight against everything and everyone just to survive one day after another.

After decades of massacres by the so-called "brother countries" and direct oppression by the Israeli bourgeoisie, the fate of the Palestinian people and the struggle waged by its bourgeoisie for the "liberation of Palestine" has reached its worst ever outcome: the pos-

sibility of a *Palestinian nation-state* with the material characteristics of an independent state born out of – true – a bourgeois, but at least *national-revolutionary* struggle (territorial continuity, political rule in the form of a republic, independent agricultural and industrial resources, internal market, etc.) had definitely faded. The Palestinian masses, the real “strangers in their homeland”, the vast majority of whom have been transformed into proletarians, people without reserves, into wagedworkers without rights, have been forced to migrate continuously from the territory that was once their land to the territory usurped by others. Their struggle, their resistance, subservient for decades to the intrigues of the Palestinian bourgeoisie, sold out to this or that regional or international power to preserve caste privileges, has been betrayed, sabotaged, trapped and diverted a thousand times over, which has decisively contributed to the realisation of the objective pursued by all the actors present in the Middle East (Zionists, Euro-American and Russian imperialists, Arab potentates), despite the contradictions in their relations: **to avert the potential class struggle of the Palestinian proletariat**, which alone could and hypothetically still can set in motion the entire Middle East with the prospect of the sole solution to all the problems that have developed in the region and which are intrinsically linked both to the still unresolved “national” issues (Palestinian, Yemeni, Kurdish, to mention the main ones), and the relations of dependence on the Western and Eastern imperialist powers : the **proletarian revolution**, the revolution that knows no boundaries and whose real driving force is not the national unification, but **the class unification** in the anti-bourgeois struggle of all proletarians in the region and throughout the world.

To the massacres that have marked the history of the Palestinian masses since the 1920s is now added yet another in a series of massacres carried out by Israel in Gaza after the deadly 7 October attack by Hamas combatants on Israeli kibbutzim near the Gaza border (killing more than 1 400 people, wounding 3 000 and taking 240 hostages who were then hidden in Gaza tunnels). At the time of writing, more than 11 000 people are dead in Gaza, besieged on all sides, with daily bombings and destruction of hospitals; for more than 20 days since the start of Israeli bombardment of Gaza, the civilian population has been deprived of food, water, medicine and fuel, and electricity has been purposely cut off; for two weeks now, Israel and Egypt have been keeping humanitarian aid trucks waiting in a queue at the Rafah crossing, and the people of northern Gaza, systematically bombed, have been forced to move south, where they are crowded into a huge human anthill where it is impossible to live.

Hamas, like Arafat’s PLO, and like Abu Mazen’s PNA, is a bourgeois political and armed organisation that uses every means to wrest a share of power in a region where the law is enforced through guns and cannons (and nowadays rockets), cloaking itself in a worn-out nationalist ideology that no longer has any historical revolutionary value, but which unfortunately still functions as a justification for its power and its

war. Furthermore it is hard to think that Hamas did not know that Israel would respond to its deadly incursion of 7 October as never before, and would massacre a civilian population that has no means of escape either northwards towards Lebanon, or southwards towards Egypt, or even to the open sea. Israel’s “cannibalism” thus goes hand in hand with Hamas’s “cannibalism”.

The counterpart to Palestinian nationalism is Jewish nationalism, the counterpart to Hamas terrorism is Israeli state terrorism, and thus the mere thought of a proletarian uprising in Gaza, as in the case of the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943, is stifled. After 7 October, the Israeli government headed by Netanyahu launched a long-awaited threat: *the total liquidation of Hamas!*, knowing full well that to liquidate it – or at least render it harmless for a long time – it will have to raze Gaza to the ground, just as the Nazis did with the Warsaw ghetto; provided, of course, that the US allows to carry out such a plan. The fact is that “the Palestinian question” is far from being a problem that concerns only Gaza, the West Bank or East Jerusalem, and it is not a problem that concerns only Israel. It has long since become an *international* problem, both on the side of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Indeed, it is precisely the events relating to the Palestinian revolts and their suppression, both in Israel and in every other Arab state, that demonstrate that, throughout the Middle East, the “Palestinian question” is no longer just a “Palestinian question” but an international question.

The absence of an independent Palestinian state, recognised by other states, in which social and political life is not conducted under constant persecution, torture, racism, repression and the absence of any civil rights, objectively falls like a heavy boulder on the uprooted Palestinian masses and the Palestinian proletariat; it is therefore quite understandable that the Palestinian people yearn, as in other civilised countries, not to live as refugees, not to live permanently on the margins of a society that rejects them. Moreover, the aspiration, wholly bourgeois and democratic, for an independent state is not plucked out of the air; it is part of the history of the bourgeois class, which, with the political revolution and the development of capitalism, has dismantled the social forms of feudalism and Asian despotism in a decidedly uneven manner in different regions of the world, however, so much so that today no country, not even the one most economically and socially backward, has a possibility of directing its own history without being strongly influenced by world capitalism and, especially after the Second World Imperialist War, by the imperialist powers that dominate the world.

BACK TO LENIN AND THE “QUESTION OF THE SELF-DETERMINATION OF NATIONS”

This unquestionable reality leads some political formations that call themselves communist, revolutionary or even those having a link to the Italian Communist Left (or its heirs) to deny that there is still a “Palestinian national question”; they argue, that for the Palestinian proletarians, as for any other population oppressed by other nations, this problem is no longer

an issue, and that they must therefore have an interest *only* in the international proletarian revolution to which all proletarians, of whatever nationality and from whatever country, are called. This is the old Proudhonian position, which Marx and later Lenin fought against. In practice, it is the same as saying that for the Palestinians there is no problem of struggle against the *national oppression* they suffer, and for the Israeli proletarians (Arab and Jewish) as if there were no task, above all, of struggling against that oppression exercised by *their national bourgeoisie*. There are dominant nations and oppressed nations, and this is for Lenin a central aspect for every communist because it “*forms the essence of imperialism*”; this division into nations “*is most significant from the angle of the revolutionary struggle against imperialism. It is from this division that our definition of the ‘right of nations to self-determination’ must follow, a definition that is consistently democratic, revolutionary, and in accord with the general task of the immediate struggle for socialism. It is for that right, and in a struggle to achieve sincere recognition for it, that the Social-Democrats [a term from 1915 which would correspond to revolutionary communists today, ed.] of the oppressor nations must demand that the oppressed nations should have the right of secession, for otherwise recognition of equal rights for nations and of international working-class solidarity would, in fact, be merely empty phrase-mongering, sheer hypocrisy*”. As for the “Social-Democrats”, i.e. the revolutionary communists, of the oppressed nations, they, Lenin continues, “*must attach prime significance to the unity and the merging of the workers of the oppressed nations with those of the oppressor nations; otherwise these Social-Democrats will involuntarily become the allies of their own national bourgeoisie, which always betrays the interests of the people and of democracy, and is always ready, in its turn, to annex territory and oppress other nations*” (1).

Referring to Marx’s and Engels’ positions on the “Irish question”, Lenin declares that “*the British proletariat’s internationalism would remain a hypocritical phrase if they did not demand the separation of Ireland*”. Besides he was also referring to the 1896 resolution of the International Socialist Congress in London which recognised the self-determination of nations, a resolution which was supplemented by the tactical directives Lenin himself had pointed out in texts devoted to the question in 1914–1916.

Our innovators of Marxism will object: but a lot of time has passed since the era of Marx and Engels in 1860–1870 and the one of Lenin in 1915; we are now in the middle of the imperialist phase in which democratic bourgeois revolution is no longer on the agenda; therefore, what was valid then is now outdated, no longer valid. They should have the courage to say outright that neither Marx, Engels nor Lenin could have foreseen that capitalism, in its imperialist phase, would make every “national” question a completely obsolete, non-historical, outdated question, and that the proletariat of any nation, whether *dominant* or *oppressed*, must no longer be concerned with it...

they “forget” that Marx always subordinated – but never obliterated – the “national question” to the “workers” question, to the question of the “proletarian revolution”, as was always the case for Lenin and the Italian Communist Left.

In spite of the position denying the right to self-determination, according to which imperialism should have led the proletarians of any country more than in previous phases of capitalist development to direct struggle for socialism, Lenin, after stating that “*the imperialism of our days [we are in the midst of a world imperialist war, ed.] has led to a situation in which the Great-Power oppression of nations has become general*”, he asserts that “*a socialist [today we say revolutionary communist, ed.] of an oppressor nation who does not conduct both peacetime and wartime propaganda in favour of freedom of secession for oppressed nations, is no socialist and no internationalist, but a chauvinist!*” (2). Lenin insists on the question of the freedom of the oppressed peoples to separate, and emphasizes it strongly: “*we demand it, not independently of our revolutionary struggle for socialism, but because this struggle will remain a hollow phrase if it is not linked up with a revolutionary approach to all questions of democracy, including the national question*”. And in order to avoid any misunderstanding, he repeats: “*We demand freedom of self-determination, i.e., independence, i.e., freedom of secession for the oppressed nations, not because we have dreamt of splitting up the country economically, or of the ideal of small states, but, on the contrary, because we want large states and the closer unity and even fusion of nations, only on a truly democratic, truly internationalist basis, which is inconceivable without the freedom to secede*”. Just as Marx in 1869 called for the separation of Ireland and England “*in the interests of the revolutionary struggle of the British proletariat, we in the same way consider the refusal of Russian socialists to demand freedom of self-determination for nations, in the sense we have indicated above, to be a direct betrayal of democracy, internationalism and socialism*” (3).

For Marx and Lenin, then, the interests of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat cannot, in the case of national oppression, but include the struggle for the freedom to separate the oppressed nation from the oppressor nation. That this is an immediate and democratic political demand is clear. But precisely because the proletarian struggle is directed against all capitalist oppression, all the more so in the imperialist epoch, and although in the imperialist epoch democratic demands can be “realised”, but in an incomplete (these are Lenin’s words) and sometimes “peaceful” way (such

(1) Cf. Lenin V. I., *The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, in *Lenin Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 409, Progress Publishers, 1974, Moscow.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

as separation of Norway from Sweden in 1905 or the separation of Slovakia from the Czech Republic in 1993), it by no means follows that revolutionary communism must renounce the immediate and determined struggle for these demands; the real problem is to formulate them *“not in a reformist, but in a revolutionary way; not by keeping within the framework of bourgeois legality, but by breaking through it; not by confining oneself to parliamentary speeches and verbal protests, but by drawing the masses into real action, by widening and fomenting the struggle for every kind of fundamental, democratic demand [e.g. from the right to strike to the right to self-determination of oppressed peoples, ed.], right up to and including the direct onslaught of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, i.e., to the socialist revolution, which will expropriate the bourgeoisie”*. In short, the right of oppressed peoples to self-determination is merely *“the logical expression of the struggle against national oppression in every form”* (4).

Lest this attitude imprison the proletarians and communists in the logic of bourgeois nationalist politics and distance them from their historic revolutionary task, it is necessary to hold, as Lenin says, that *“the aim of socialism is not only to end the division of mankind into tiny states and the isolation of nations in any form, it is not only to bring the nations closer together but to integrate them (...) In the same way as mankind can arrive at the abolition of classes only through a transition period of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, it can arrive at the inevitable integration of nations only through a transition period of the complete emancipation of all oppressed nations, i.e., their freedom to secede”* (5). All those who disagree with these statements of Lenin are free to abandon Lenin, Marxism and the Italian Communist Left and throw themselves into the arms of petty-bourgeois “left” utopianism, which, while waving the banner of the future world revolution, which will “unite” (by what actions is unknown) the proletarians of all nations, oppressed and dominant, but at the same time leaves intact the division of today’s proletarians into those who belong to the oppressed nations and those who belong to the dominant nations, thus effectively facilitating national oppression.

The petty-bourgeoisie believes in a “peaceful” capitalism, in a gradual equilibrium between all social classes on a democratic basis, and therefore in an ethereal equality between nations, without considering the reality of the class struggle and its intensification in any regime, even in a democratic regime. Under imperialism, the oppression of the smaller nations becomes a general phenomenon and increases with the development of inter-imperialist contrasts, while the factors of military confrontation and war between nations, between states, grow stronger. The peaceful unity between nations, for which the great imperialist powers founded the League of Nations in 1919, which failed miserably with the outbreak of the Second World Imperialist War, and which then became the United Nations inheriting the same deceptive objectives of world peace, was and remains a typical illusion of the

petty bourgeoisie, but one that is useful to the bourgeois ideology that wishes to pass off capitalism as a fundamentally “peaceful” system. It is a petty-bourgeois utopia shared by all the forces of political and trade union opportunism that negatively influence the proletarian masses of the world, and against which revolutionary communists must counter, as Lenin says, the division of the world into dominant and oppressed nations.

The recognition of this division from the proletarian and communist point of view implies different positions for the proletariat of the dominant nations and the proletariat of the oppressed nations: *“The proletariat of the oppressing nations cannot confine itself to the general hackneyed phrases against annexations and for the equal rights of nations in general, that may be repeated by any pacifist bourgeois. The proletariat cannot evade the question that is particularly ‘unpleasant’ for the imperialist bourgeoisie, namely, the question of the frontiers of a state that is based on national oppression. The proletariat cannot but fight against the forcible retention of the oppressed nations within the boundaries of a given state, and this is exactly what the struggle for the right of self-determination means. The proletariat must demand the right of political secession for the colonies and for the nations that ‘its own’ nation oppresses. Unless (...) mutual confidence and class solidarity between the workers of the oppressing and oppressed nations will be impossible”*.

As far as the question we are dealing with here is concerned, this applies to the Israeli proletariat.

The revolutionary communists of the oppressed nations, on the other hand, *“must particularly fight for and maintain complete, absolute unity (also organizational) between the workers of the oppressed nation and the workers of the oppressing nation. Without such unity it will be impossible to maintain an independent proletarian policy and class solidarity with the proletariat of other countries in the face of all the subterfuge, treachery and trickery of the bourgeoisie; for the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations always converts the slogan of national liberation into a means for deceiving the workers; in internal politics it utilizes these slogans as a means for concluding reactionary agreements with the bourgeoisie of the ruling nation (...); in the realm of foreign politics it strives to enter into pacts with one of the rival imperialist powers for the purpose of achieving its own predatory aims”* (6).

The task of the proletarians of the oppressed nations is certainly not an easy one; but if they want their struggle against national oppression to be successful, they must follow the path outlined by Lenin, otherwise they will be constantly trapped in the reactionary clutches of their

(4) Lenin V. I., *The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination (Theses)*, in *Lenin Collected Works*, Vol. 22, Progress Publishers, 1974, Moscow.

(5) Ibid.

(6) Ibid.

own bourgeoisie and in the clutches of the dominant bourgeoisie. The task of the proletarians of the oppressing nations is not easy either, as far as the question of the oppressed nations is concerned because they have to overcome the ideological, political and social obstacles by which the ruling bourgeoisie constantly flatter over them, relying on the economic privileges and civil rights which have been granted to them (but not to the population and proletarians of the oppressed nations) and which place them in a privileged position in relation to the proletarians of weaker countries. These are different tasks, since one is forced for a while to fight alongside the bourgeoisies of the same oppressed nations against the dominant bourgeoisies, only to later turn their struggle against their own national bourgeoisies; the others must fight against their own oppressing bourgeoisies for the self-determination of the nations oppressed by these bourgeoisies, knowing that they may lose the privileges which distinguish them from the proletarians of the oppressed nations; but precisely because they are proletarians they can rely on class unity in the perspective of the international proletarian revolution in the struggle against all bourgeois oppression. A people that oppresses another cannot itself be free, Marx and Engels would say, and Lenin reaffirmed it.

Can a proletariat be free which, by its passive attitude, allows its own bourgeoisie to oppress other nations? Of course not, since its own bourgeoisie does not limit itself to the oppression of other nations and other proletarians, but continues to oppress and exploit even its own domestic proletariat, even if it lets it have a few crumbs derived from the exploitation of other nations; crumbs which, moreover, it is ready to take back in the phases of recession of its own economy or more serious crises.

But Lenin does not stop at emphasizing the need to always consider the view between dominant and oppressed nations. He gives us a way of reading imperialist reality by drawing from it the necessary lessons for revolutionary struggle at all times. He writes that *three principal types of countries must be distinguished* (7):

“First, the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe and the United States of America. In these countries the bourgeois, progressive, national movements came to an end long ago. Every one of these ‘great’ nations oppresses other nations in the colonies and within its own country. The tasks of the proletariat of these ruling nations are the same as those of the proletariat in England in the nineteenth century in relation to Ireland”.

Given that imperialism has made the oppression of nations by the great powers a general phenomenon, this problem has not disappeared from the horizon of the proletarian struggle; on the contrary, it has become even greater. Even assuming that all the colonies have “liberated” themselves from national oppression by the old colonialist powers, and we do not suppose that, national oppression within the advanced capitalist countries persists (the Palestinians, the Kurds, etc. are proof of this). Thus, the tasks of the proletariat in the advanced capitalist countries

regarding this problem have not changed.

“Secondly, Eastern Europe: Austria, the Balkans and particularly Russia. Here it was the twentieth century that particularly developed the bourgeois-democratic national movements and intensified the national struggle. The tasks of the proletariat in these countries – in regard to the consummation of their bourgeois-democratic reformation, as well as in regard to assisting the socialist revolution in other countries – cannot be achieved unless it champions the right of nations to self-determination. In this connection the most difficult but most important task is to merge the class struggle of the workers in the oppressing nations with the class struggle of the workers in the oppressed nations”.

The end of the First World Imperialist War brought the collapse of Habsburg Austria and the troubled emergence of a number of independent nations in Eastern Europe (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Ukraine, while the various Slavic nations in the south united to form Yugoslavia and three regions – Veneto, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Trentino Alto Adige – were annexed to Italy). In 1917, at the height of the First World War, the revolution of the proletariat in Russia gave rise to a European and world revolutionary movement in which, as Lenin summarized in this second point, two historical tasks were intertwined, i.e. bourgeois democratic and proletarian socialist, for which Lenin magnificently laid out the communist tactics (the pivotal objective of which was the fusion of the class struggle of the workers of the dominant countries and the workers of the oppressed countries), as is evident from the quotations we have given.

*“Thirdly, the semi-colonial countries, like China, Persia, Turkey, and all the colonies, which have a combined population amounting to a billion [at that time there were about 2.5 billion inhabitants in the world, ed.]. In these countries the bourgeois-democratic movements have either hardly begun, or are far from having been completed. Socialists must not only demand the **unconditional and immediate liberation of the colonies without compensation** – and this demand in its political expression signifies nothing more nor less than the recognition of the right to self-determination – but must **render determined support to the more revolutionary elements in the bourgeois-democratic movements for national liberation** in these countries and assist their **rebellion** – and if need be, their **revolutionary war** – against the imperialist powers that oppress them”* (emphasis is ours in bold). As a demonstration of the continuity in time (Italian: *filotempismo*) of our party’s positions, we also decisively reaffirmed this position during the thirty years after the Second World War regarding the colonial movements, so much so that it became one of the causes of the clash and split with the comrades who later followed Damen’s group (“*battaglia comunista*”) (8). It is evident that the victory of the Bolshevik Rev-

(7) Ibid.

(8) See p. 18

olution in October 1917, the desire to end the war even at the cost of losing important territories (see Brest-Litovsk 1918), the founding of the Communist International (1919), the active support for the struggle of the so-called coloured peoples (see Congress of the Peoples of the East in Baku, 1920) and the civil war against the White Armies, which lasted until 1921, had a significant influence on the bourgeois democratic national liberation movements. Only the alliance of the imperialist forces that sought to stifle the Russian Revolution, and with it the revolution in the world, and the Stalinist counter-revolution, were able to put the brakes on the revolutionary proletarian movement in Europe, Asia, America and Africa to such an extent that even in the oppressor countries it was completely diverted to the terrain of nationalism and bourgeois imperialism. The massacre of Chinese proletarians and communists who rose up in Canton and Shanghai in 1927, facilitated by Stalin's counter-revolutionary policies, dealt a definitive blow to the opportunities that the world revolutionary movement had in the historical development that opened up with the First World Imperialist War and the revolution in Russia. This does not mean, however, that Lenin's politico-tactical instructions ceased to be valid.

If Marx's objective regarding the Irish question was to educate British workers to proletarian internationalism, Lenin and the Italian Communist Left had the same objective. There is no historical reason why this tactic should be left out of the tasks that are primarily incumbent on revolutionary communists and, of course, the most advanced proletarians conscious of their *class* interests. Let us repeat: with imperialism, the oppression of the dominant countries on the dominated population has intensified, not weakened. The fact that many of the colonies that existed in 1920 no longer exist – or rather have gained political independence and created their own nation-states, but from the point of view of dependence on the world market dominated by the imperialist powers, this dependence has not diminished, but on the contrary has increased enormously – has shown, that in semi-colonial countries and colonies with bourgeois democratic movements, albeit revolutionary (compared to previous political, economic and social conditions), bourgeois progress and the development of national capitalism, the fundamental contradictions of capitalism have not disappeared: the ever more intense exploitation of wage labour, the systematic oppression of women, the systematic oppression of national minorities. From the historical point of view, the positive side of capitalist progress in many formerly backward regions of the world is the transformation of the broad masses of peasants into proletarians, thus accentuating the primary social contradiction in these countries as well: the class antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, which gives room for the much larger masses of proletarians to enter the future class struggle, and also for those less intoxicated by the opportunistic inter-class collaborationism which has fully corrupted and still corrupts the proletarians of the older but powerful imperialist countries.

Lenin declared that for the revolutionary education of the masses, “*it will be the duty of the Socialists [i.e. revolutionary communists, ed.] to explain to the masses that English Socialists who fail to demand the freedom of secession for the colonies and for Ireland; that German Socialists who fail to demand the freedom of secession for the colonies, for the Alsations, for the Danes and for the Poles, and who fail to carry direct revolutionary propaganda and revolutionary mass action to the field of struggle against national oppression (...); that Russian Socialists who fail to demand freedom of secession for Finland, Poland, the Ukraine, etc., etc. – are behaving like chauvinists, like lackeys of the blood-and-mud-stained imperialist monarchies and the imperialist bourgeoisie*” (9). The historical events that followed the First World Imperialist War, although they brought independence to many previously dominated colonies and countries, did not erase national oppression by the dominant nations. The former colonial powers, which were later transformed into imperialist powers, were joined by other countries which, like Israel, were created specifically to function as regional gendarmes on behalf of the ruling imperialists.

The oppression of weaker nations, which has generally increased with imperialism, has thus been taken up in some areas of the planet by a nation that has taken the place of the previous direct colonialism/imperialism, thus allowing the imperialist powers that really dominate the world to play a diplomatic game of negotiation between two nations on the same territory – such as the Palestinians and the Israelis – vying for mutual state sovereignty. As early as 1947, the United Nations adopted a resolution on the creation of two states for two nations in the territory called Palestine, and presented it as the solution to the Jewish-Palestinian conflict that involved two Arab countries, Egypt and Jordan (which militarily occupied the territory inhabited by the Palestinians). In order for this resolution to be implemented, Egypt and Jordan would have had to make a decisive contribution to the creation of a Palestinian state; in fact, neither they nor Israel – which itself became a state in 1948, and an internationally recognised one – wanted the creation of such a state, and systematically sabotaged any initiative aimed at making it a reality. Over the decades, not only Israel, but also all the Arab states to which the Palestinians have fled in the face of persecution and massacres,

(8) There are many party texts devoted to the national and colonial question, but here we would like to point in particular to *Fattori di razza e nazione nella teoria marxista*, 1953 (in “il programma comunista”, no. 16–20, 1953) and *Le lotte di classe e di Strati nel mondo dei popoli non bianchi, storico campo vitale per la critica rivoluzionaria marxista*, 1958 (in “il programma comunista”, no. 3–6, 1958).

(9) Cf. Lenin, The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination, in *Lenin Collected Works*, vol. 22, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974.

have continued to sabotage the birth of that state, turning the Palestinian population into a mass of proletarians to be exploited and, if necessary, used as meat for slaughter. All of this clearly speaks of the declarations of the imperialist powers which, besides controlling the UN, directly and indirectly control the political (and military) forces involved in this perennial conflict in the Middle East. The objective of countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, i.e. the Arab countries most directly involved in the struggle of the Palestinians against national oppression, was never to contribute to the creation of an independent Palestinian state, but to “destroy” Israel, to seize parts of the Palestinian territory and to subjugate to themselves the Palestinian population, which was transforming from peasant to proletarian.

Destroy Israel? In 25 years they have tried to do so four times (1948–1949, 1956, 1967 and 1973), both directly and through the PLO-led guerrilla warfare. They failed not only because they were confronted with a modern state, militarily well-organised and supported by the most powerful Western imperialisms, especially the USA, but because both the plans of imperialism and the plans of the Arab states created right after the first and especially after the second world imperialist war did not actually envisage the constitution of a Palestinian state. The “*two nations, two states*” narrative, which is being rehashed even these days, when Israel is razing a good part of Gaza under the pretext of eliminating terrorism personified by Hamas, has never been believed by them and is no longer believed by anyone at all. The Palestinian bourgeoisie, which organised itself into the PNA after the PLO with the approval of the imperialist powers, is waiting for the US – the real masters of Israel – and the Arab countries, which are still interested in financing it, to give it the opportunity to obtain one more privilege than the miserable “autonomy” it has been granted so far. The Palestinian proletarians can expect nothing from this corrupt bourgeoisie, which is now selling itself out to one or another “buyer” without any hesitation, other than what they have been given so far: the illusion of reconciliation with Israel through the intervention of the biggest imperialists, but above all the reality of oppression, which is being inflected in all the most horrible possible forms.

Therefore, the perspective that Palestinian proletarians must adopt if they do not want to continue to be systematically massacred by their own and foreign bourgeoisies, starting with the Israeli one, is not nationalist and guerrilla terrorism; it is not reliance on Israel’s temporary rivals, such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey or Iran, but *class struggle*, on whose terrain it is necessary to wrest the solidarity of the Arab proletarians of the other countries of the Middle East and to address the Israeli proletariat as *class brothers* and not as an enemy population. It is the Israeli proletariat, whether in its majority or in its decisive part – to which the revolutionary communists must turn, as Lenin indicated, to fight against their own bourgeoisie for recognition of the right of the Palestinians to self-determination – that will have to respond on the terrain

of the proletarian class struggle. There are two possibilities: either the Israeli proletarians *will break with their own bourgeoisie* at some point in the long Israeli-Palestinian conflict and fight alongside the Palestinian proletarians in the way Lenin indicated, or they will continue to be complicit in the bestial exploitation of the Palestinian proletarians and the national oppression of the Palestinian people perpetrated by their own bourgeoisie, thus declaring themselves *enemies* not only of the Palestinian proletarians but of the proletarian struggle in general, the proletarian and revolutionary struggle for the general emancipation of the world proletariat. Until the Israeli proletarians break with their bourgeoisie, they will continue to be slaves of the capitalist interests *in peace and war*, and will continue to be turned into cannon fodder, solely for the purpose of defending the interests of the Israeli bourgeoisie.

“TWO NATIONS, TWO STATES”?

As noted above, the slogan “two nations, two states” has resonated whenever the oppression of the Palestinians, especially by Israel, has escalated tensions between the two nations into open warfare: this claim has appeared as a “solution” to the tensions caused by the never-resolved national question. Even today, in the face of Hamas’ terrorist attack on Israeli kibbutzim, with the horror of its violence, the dead, wounded and hostages taken to Gaza, and Israel’s deadly response with the horror of its bombardment, the tenfold massacre of civilians, the elderly, women and children, it has become fashionable once again to trot out this slogan. Who is trotting it out? Of course, the pacifists, the opportunists of all political stripes, the same imperialist super-powers and regional powers that have been striving all these decades to ensure that this “political solution” is not implemented. All the bourgeoisies, whether directly involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict or not, are waiting for the intervention of the imperialist powers – the United States, Russia, China, the European Union – and for their sign to put an end to the massacres, for the Palestinian and Israeli populations to “finally”, after so much bloodshed, find common ground and each begin to live in peace in their own “state”. Israel should therefore allow the Palestinians the freedom to self-determine their own independence and draw the borders of their state on territory that has already been divided into separate territories (the West Bank and Gaza) by the United Nations in recent decades and which has so far been the subject of violent clashes, military occupation by the Israeli army and theft by Israeli settlers; the territories which lack continuity and which would, in fact, consist of two separate enclaves within the borders of the State of Israel. In practice, even if the hypothetical formal constitution of a Palestinian state were to come to fruition, which would be by the grace of the imperialist powers and Israel (though for how long is unknown), it would still be a state whose economy would continue to depend on permitting the passage of commodities across Israel’s borders with Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt; whose economy would be easily stifled by

competition not only from Israel, but also from other Arab states in the region, which have hitherto become accustomed to treating the Palestinian proletariat – which constitutes the vast majority of the Palestinian people – as cheap work force and cannon fodder in their wars for survival, as demonstrated by Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, which are all rotten to the core states sustained by Euro-American and Russian imperialists who are fighting among themselves by all means for influence over the Middle East region that is too strategically important for each of them.

If the imperialist bourgeoisies have no interest in giving the Palestinians – directly or through local power – the freedom to form an independent republic (if they were willing to do so, they would have facilitated its formation, as they have done in the case of other states), the Israeli bourgeoisie and the Arab bourgeoisie, who, after decades of clashes and lost wars with Israel, have grown wiser and found it more advantageous to have good relations with Tel Aviv than to confront it militarily.

Considering that the Palestinian proletariat has exhausted itself in the fruitless bourgeois resistance struggle, that the Israeli proletariat is united in the defence of Israel's existence, and that the proletarians in the Arab countries are strongly marked by Islamic struggles, it is indeed difficult to imagine that a revolutionary proletarian movement could arise in this troubled area which would be able to push for democratic gains which the bourgeoisie alone has not been capable of realising. It therefore seems as if the watchword of the freedom of the peoples to self-determination has historically passed away forever because the proletarian struggle which would have had the strength to carry it out and use it is lacking, and which would have used it in such a way that it would have been able to step out of the way of its historic revolutionary objectives, with the proof that for the future in the confrontation with the bourgeoisie the most important and fruitful is internationalist and not nationalist struggle.

Certainly, if we take it for granted that the social and political marasmus through which the proletariat of the dominant countries of the world has been passing for more than eighty years is unlikely to be overcome, and that the defeats of the proletariat in the dominated countries have tripped up the revolutionary movements which have arisen in the colonies and oppressed countries, thereby making these proletarians even more enslaved to capital and their own bourgeoisies than before, then it is necessary to shelve the revolutionary preparation of the international proletariat envisaged by Marxism and to rely on the small steps theorised by classical reformism which spread the illusion that step by step, it is possible... to change the world. If, on the contrary, we look at the historical course of the development of capitalism throughout the world and focus on the strengths and weaknesses of its imperialist phase – which can only be done by using Marxism as a theory of the evolution of human society, as a theory of class struggle, which has a historical outcome *predetermined* by its entire previous course – then the faith that revolutionary communists have in the future

advent of socialism is not based on the hope that a great leader will be born by a particular astral combination who will win over the broad proletarian masses of the world and lead them towards a “bright future”; nor is it based on the idea that the broad proletarian masses of the world are waiting for nothing but a “party” which will enlighten their consciences and convince them that their path is not the path indicated to them by the bourgeoisie and opportunist forces, but the path indicated by revolutionary communists; and that the proletarian masses in particular must think only of their revolution and not waste energies, forces and time in dealing with *immediate political* questions – such as the “national” question, which, coincidentally, no longer directly concerns the white peoples of the countries where capitalism has developed, but the non-white peoples, colonised and oppressed by white peoples – because these questions will automatically be solved by the international revolution itself...

We, in the party meetings beginning with 1951–1952, have systematically dealt with this great national and colonial question in connection with the theses of the II Congress of the Communist International – theses which we have never considered to be outdated – and which, moreover, were the outcome of the theoretical work in which Lenin, in many of his texts, dealt precisely with the self-determination of the nations and how the proletarians in the colonising countries and the proletarians in the countries colonised by white peoples should behave. Their central point was, and is, that the “national” question, and therefore the self-determination of nations, cannot be regarded as an anachronism, even though it is raised in one case in a thousand by the struggle against national oppression. This is why, in dealing with the “Palestinian question” (but also the “Kurdish question” and others), we, as consistent revolutionary communists, do not intend to cut it out of our propaganda and must necessarily frame it within the general struggle against the division of nations, but for their unification.

FOR UNITY BETWEEN THE PROLETARIANS OF THE DOMINANT NATIONS AND THE PROLETARIANS OF THE OPPRESSED NATIONS

That the proletarian revolution, if led by the revolutionary communist party – as it was led in Russia by Lenin's Bolshevik party – will open the way to the solution of all the contradictions and problems which bourgeois society has not solved – but which, on the contrary, has aggravated them in the course of time – is a great and impressive affirmation because through it and through the dictatorship of the proletariat, to which the revolution must lead, it will be possible to realise the historical task which rests exclusively on the world proletarian class, that is, to overcome all the contradictions of bourgeois society and capitalism, to put an end to all exploitation of Man by Man, to all oppression, and to lead mankind to community of species, to full communism.

But what are the real political problems of the proletarians who, in addition to wage oppression, suffer national and racial oppression from people of the oppressor countries? How do they arrive at a revolution against their own bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie of the dominant country? What *class relations* should they establish with the proletariat of the oppressor nations? How can the proletariat of the oppressor nations show to the proletariat of the oppressed nations that it is their ally in whom they can trust and with whom they can engage in the same struggle for freedom?

Given that all political activity of the social classes is situated in the existing economic and social reality, and that the political activity of the subordinate classes is inevitably influenced and conditioned by the politics of the ruling classes, it is equally inevitable that the political activity of the dominated classes – if it is to be effective and correspond to their interests – must be materially antagonistic to the interests of the ruling classes. In a world in which the bourgeois class dominates, its specific interests clash on the one hand with the specific interests of foreign bourgeoisies (the competitive struggle and wars between them are constant proof of this) and on the other hand, push each bourgeoisie to fight against its own subordinate classes. But the struggle which the poor peasants, the proletarians, the dispossessed masses wage against the established order to escape the cruel domination which daily threatens their lives has no chance of success, not even partial, unless it is waged on the terrain of violent confrontation, i.e., on the terrain of **class struggle**. As Marxism has always affirmed, the class struggle is a *political* struggle, it draws the antagonistic classes to fight on the terrain where the fate of political power is decided. And on this terrain, the bourgeoisie of a given country – as the history of class struggles, revolutions and counter-revolutions has demonstrated – in its struggle against the uprising of the dispossessed masses, and still more against the proletarian insurrection, not only uses all the economic, social, religious, political and military means at its disposal, but it can count on alliances with the bourgeoisies of other countries whenever the social explosion that has erupted in “its” country has the potential to spread to other countries. For the proletariat, in a sense, the same applies: the struggle it wages in one country against its national bourgeoisie has a chance of success provided that it has at its side the proletarian struggle in other countries, particularly in the most powerful capitalist countries using this their strength to help the bourgeoisie (or bourgeoisies) that finds itself (or find themselves) under proletarian attack.

A practical example. How should the Palestinian proletariat – assuming that local and international objective factors will cause the accumulated contradictions in Israel and the Middle East to explode and that from this eruption class sparks will arise in its movement of struggle that will lead even a small minority of proletarian forces to form the revolutionary communist party – proceed so that its struggle will follow the path of revolution? How should it deal with the Israeli

proletariat, which is part of the nation that has oppressed it for decades and which, thanks to this oppression, receives privileged treatment in return compared to the Palestinian proletariat and even the Arab proletarians who have Israeli citizenship? It is evident that until the proletarians of countries that systematically oppress the Palestinians, as Palestinians and as proletarians, starting with the proletarians of Israel, demonstrate **by deeds** that they too are fighting against the national oppression, the Palestinian proletarians will never be able to consider them as their allies; they will always see them as accomplices of the enemies, in fact, as equal enemies as the rulers of Israel and the other dominant countries. The Israeli people, since Israel constituted itself into an independent state, has founded its “freedom”, its “democracy” and its “independence” on the oppression of the Palestinian people; it has developed its economy on this oppression, it has played and plays the role of a gendarme on behalf of US imperialism and its allies throughout the Middle East region, and it proves that it is capable of oppressing and suppressing any force that opposes this role: it is, in fact, one of the main bastions of bourgeois reaction. But as Marx said, a people that oppresses other peoples cannot be free; it is a people enslaved by capitalism, enslaved by a mode of production that conditions every economic, political and social activity to the point of making it an instrument of capitalist oppression. The only “freedom” that the ruling classes of oppressive peoples understand is the freedom to exploit the subjugated classes, to crush and suppress them whenever they rebel against the existing order, and is precisely the freedom to oppress weaker peoples. What “freedom” do the subjugated classes, the dominated classes, the oppressed peoples have? None, except that which is won primarily by the struggle of the proletarian class insofar as it forces the ruling bourgeois classes to yield to certain democratic demands, of which the right to self-determination is also a part. The revolutionary communists are perfectly aware that such political demands are **not** an absolute, but – as Lenin says – “*a small part of the general-democratic (...) world movement*”, and he specifies: “*now: general-socialist (...) world movement*”. A small part, i.e. something which, *in given situations*, may also contradict the whole “*general-socialist (...) world movement*” and therefore must be rejected (10). The point is to evaluate these “given situations”, and here only the Marxist method, which examines all the economic, social, political, power relations and historical aspects of the situations in question, can help us.

In concert with Marx and Engels, Lenin took up the question of the self-determination of the nations and gave the Bolshevik Party and the communists of all other countries a political-tactical directive, which, as we have already reiterated, has not lost its value, for with the

(10) Cf. Lenin, The Discussion On Self-Determination Summed Up, in Lenin Collected Works, vol. 22, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974.

development of imperialism the national oppression by the more powerful countries against the weaker peoples and countries has not disappeared, but on the contrary has become even more intensified. During the years of the First World War and the proletarian revolution that achieved victory in Russia, the “national” question was still very much alive and historically decisive in most areas of the world dominated by European colonialism. This was also the case during and after the years of the Second World Imperialist War, as demonstrated by the “liberation” struggles against the European colonial powers, especially in Asia and Africa. The grand revolutionary design of Lenin and the Communist International, which saw an extremely positive linkage between the proletarian revolution in Europe and America – that is, in the most developed imperialist countries – and the struggle of the colonial peoples for political independence from the same imperialist countries that were also the main colonialist powers, presaged the dawn of the world revolution led by the proletariat on all continents.

That the counter-revolution defeated the revolutionary proletarian movement and the communist party that led it, is an indisputable fact; however, this does not mean that in drawing lessons from the counter-revolution it is possible to erase the existence of national oppression suffered by many nations and therefore by many proletarian classes under the iron heel of the imperialist powers and their regional offshoots.

It is undeniable to us that today, with the development of capitalism in many areas of the world that were completely undeveloped eighty years ago, and with the emergence of many states that were at least formally “independent”, the “workers”, “proletarian” question takes precedence over all other social questions. And it is indisputable that precisely because the development of capitalism has brought with it the formation of much more numerous proletarian masses than in the past, the question of the “proletarian revolution” has become more urgent in many countries which, from a historical point of view, still had the problem of implementing the bourgeois revolution, that is, its bourgeois economic and political aspects. However, the contrasts between bourgeoisies and between imperialisms have been increasing and involving more countries numerically, even in terms of military power, as indeed the local, regional and territorial wars of the last eighty years demonstrate. The conflicts between the various bourgeoisies inevitably affect different methods of oppression, aggravating all kinds of oppression, including national and racial oppression. It is therefore absurd when those who claim to be communists, and revolutionaries at that, claim that the “national question” is not an issue of concern to communists today, when it is obvious even to a blind man that Palestinians, Kurds, Yemenis, Uighurs and hundreds of other populations are systematically crushed by national oppression.

The Palestinian, Kurdish, Yemeni, Uighur and other oppressed proletarians also have the historical task of fighting for the proletarian communist revolution, since they suffer the same conditions as wagedworkers under

capitalist exploitation in the same way, even more than the proletarians in the oppressor countries, and because the struggle between the classes which has developed in the last two centuries in the most capitalistically advanced countries is the same as that which has developed and develops in those countries. But the specifically national oppression they suffer inevitably dominates their daily life and conditions their struggle of resistance, since this oppression also materially affects all the other strata of their nationality, i.e., the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie, urban and rural; it is this specific commonality which, in the immediate horizon, objectively unites the proletarians and the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation.

The struggle of the Palestinian proletarians or proletarians of other nationalities against national oppression could have had (and might have) a more historically beneficial and decisive perspective if it had been fought, yes, on *immediately national-revolutionary* terrain, but set in the perspective of the *proletarian revolution*, a perspective that has always required a political and practical organization completely independent of any other social force, since, as Lenin argued, its task does not end with the struggle against the *foreign* bourgeoisie for national independence; it continues with the struggle against *its own* bourgeoisie, which – after finally coming to power in the new independent state thanks to the victory of the national-revolutionary struggle – will immediately exploit and oppress the poor proletarian and peasant masses and take the place of the *foreign* bourgeoisie forced out of the country. The revolution in Russia in 1917 proved this beyond all doubt, as did later revolutions in China, Algeria, Cuba, the Congo, etc. The alliance between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie of an oppressed nationality had its *raison d'être* when such a bourgeoisie was fighting on the national-revolutionary terrain against the oppression exercised by the foreign bourgeoisie; it no longer had any reason to continue when the events of this struggle demonstrated with facts that the primary task of this bourgeoisie is to suppress the proletariat and the poor peasantry under conditions of exploitation that are perhaps even worse than those of the previous ones. And there is no doubt that the struggles waged by the bourgeoisie in Palestine, Kurdistan or any other oppressed nation have for some time no longer had the characteristics of national-revolutionary struggles, such as those in Algeria or Vietnam; this does not detract from the fact that the national oppression exercised by the bourgeoisies of the dominant countries continues even on them, and that in a future situation of a general crisis of imperialism, in some areas where national oppression has beset the population for many decades and which continues to rebel against it, social conditions could reappear in which not only the proletariat but also certain bourgeois fractions would be thrown onto the terrain of national-revolutionary struggle.

The situation experienced by Germany in 1850, Russia in 1917, China in 1927 and then again in 1949, and the colonial countries in the 1950s–1970s, could occur again, certainly with different specific aspects, but confronting revolutionary communists and prole-

tarians with essentially the same basic problems: if the world is divided into dominant and dominated nations – and with the development of imperialism this division has intensified, making all kinds of social oppression, including “national” oppression, increasingly intolerable – what are the tasks of the proletariat of the dominant countries, and what are the tasks of the proletariat of the dominated countries? How will the proletariat of the dominant countries be able to *show* to the proletariat of the dominated countries that it is not complicit in the national oppression exercised by its own imperialist bourgeoisie, if not by fighting against it to recognise the right of the oppressed nation to separation in the first place? Take again the case of the struggle for the increase in wages and the abolition of wage labour: there have been and are communists who are convinced that proletarians should not fight for an immediate demand such as the increase in wages because that would be to confirm the capitalist regime of wage oppression, whereas they should fight directly and only for the ultimate demand, i.e. abolition of wage labour, which means fighting directly and only for socialism. These “communists” forget one of the fundamental teachings of Marxism about the proletarian struggle for the immediate defence of living conditions: that the most important fruit of this struggle is not the increase in wages themselves or any other immediate demands which the bourgeoisie can always take back, but the **class solidarity** which is generated in this struggle when it is waged by classist means and methods, hence the consciousness that the workers do belong to a class which has the potential and the strength to set itself higher goals in the face of a ruling class which imposes social domination by violence, by repression in defence of its interests which are antagonistic to those of the proletariat: it is this consciousness of **class antagonism** that is the lever of the class party to educate the proletariat to fight not only for immediate demands, not only against the competition between the proletarians themselves, but for higher political goals up to the revolutionary conquest of central political power. Without these materialistically compulsory steps, dictated by the existing balance of power between the ruling bourgeois class and the proletarian class, the proletariat will forever be a prisoner not only of bourgeois ideology but also of political and social methods and means, which the bourgeoisie adopts and allows to be adopted, to make the proletarians abandon the class and revolutionary perspective, or even come close to considering it, and adopt the democratic and reformist perspective, since the latter is wholly a component of the class domination of the ruling bourgeoisie.

FOR PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM

The development of capitalism after the First World Imperialist War and especially after the Second World Imperialist War has passed in many once very backward countries the phase when bourgeois revolution was on the agenda from the economic and political point of view and when the respective bourgeoisies had the

role of leading proletarian and peasant masses in this revolution. In numerous instances, however, the bourgeoisies of the small nations, of oppressed nationalities, were *bought off* by the bourgeoisies of the large dominant nations or put themselves at their service, becoming de facto another oppressive and repressive force against their own proletariat, thus confirming Lenin’s perspective, according to which the proletariat had to have its own class organisation and its own class political perspective, completely independent of any other social force, internal or external, and to pursue it exclusively alongside the proletarians of all other countries in the same emancipatory struggle. A perspective for which the Communist International was born, which was later destroyed by the Stalinist counter-revolution.

As revolutionary communists, we stand for proletarian internationalism, we propagate proletarian internationalism, and we must show by our program, our policy and our tactics that we give the proletarian internationalism a practical demonstration, especially regarding the proletarians of the dominated nations, the oppressed nations. As revolutionary communists, we are against the oppression of the small nations exercised by the big imperialist bourgeoisies, and at the same time against the narrowed perspectives of the smaller nations, their isolation, their particularism; we struggle for the subordination of every particular interest, including the national interest, to the general interests of the world proletarian movement, to which the proletarians of the imperialist countries are obliged to contribute to the greatest extent precisely because they belong to the nations that dominate the world.

Such a conception was clearly expressed by Lenin, who did not fail to point out that: “*The important thing is not whether one-fiftieth or one-hundredth of the small nations are liberated before the socialist revolution, but the fact that in the epoch of imperialism, owing to objective causes, the proletariat has been split into two international camps, one of which has been corrupted by the crumbs that fall from the table of the dominant-nation bourgeoisie – obtained, among other things, from the double or triple exploitation of small nations – while the other cannot liberate itself without liberating the small nations. without educating the masses in an anti-chauvinist, i.e., anti-annexationist, i.e., ‘self-determinationist’, spirit*”. And there comes his lashing at the communists, who are internationalist revolutionaries in words and in deeds, accomplices of imperialism and its policy of oppressing the smaller nations:

“*In the internationalist education of the workers of the oppressor countries, emphasis must necessarily be laid on their advocating freedom for the oppressed countries to secede and their fighting for it. Without this there can be **no** internationalism. It is our right and duty to treat every Social-Democrat [every communist, ed.] of an oppressor nation who **fails** to conduct such propaganda as a scoundrel and an imperialist. This is an absolute demand, even where the chance of secession being possible and ‘practicable’ before the introduction of socialism is **only one** in a thousand.*”

(11). And we emphasize three times: **this is an absolute demand, even if the secession would be possible and “practicable” only one in a thousand until the introduction of socialism!!!** Lenin speaks of the introduction of socialism, which, as we well know, concerns the international proletarian movement, the world revolution, the countries of the world, and a goal that has not yet been achieved anywhere; he speaks of the freedom of the secession of the oppressed countries as an absolute demand, a demand that must be supported, even if it were practicable **only one in a thousand!** It is obvious, and Lenin goes on to warn every communist, that support for the slogan of freedom of secession, self-determination of the oppressed nation, must always be subordinated to the *general* struggle of the proletariat for socialism, and must in every case be correctly weighed against an evaluation of the historical situation, of the concrete conditions of the oppressed country or countries in which independence, freedom of secession, is demanded, and whether or not this goal is practicable through wars or revolutions. Therefore, beyond the particularities of one such smaller nation, what must guide the position of the revolutionary communists, the class party, on this question is precisely **internationalism**, that is, the struggle for the unity of the proletarians of the oppressor and oppressed nations, a struggle – as already said – by which the proletariat of the oppressor nation must prove in facts that it is neither an active part of national oppression nor indifferent to the national oppression which its own bourgeoisie exerts on the weaker nations.

THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIANS OF THE IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES

Although the important phase of the anti-colonial struggles in the first thirty years after the Second World War has come to an end, the “national” question in many parts of the world is still very much alive and certainly poses a complication in the pursuit of the proletarian class perspective. The ideological and political power of the bourgeoisie, condensed in the demand for national independence and democracy, through which all classes of people are deceived into believing that they have the possibility of expressing their needs and satisfying them through the support of various democratic institutions, is based on the economic power of national and international capitalism. However, under capitalist imperialism, liberal democracy has completely lost its political value; nevertheless, drawing on the economic and military strength of the world imperialist powers, it still maintains its ideological influence by deluding the proletarian masses not only of the imperialist countries but also of the oppressed countries that it can eliminate or substantially alleviate the various forms of social oppression precisely through negotiation, bargaining, civilised and peaceful “dialogue”, by which, according to the bourgeois, the most sharp disputes can be overcome and wars brought to an end. For a hundred years and more, the history of contradictions between the bourgeoisies has been unfolded through trade wars,

sharp political contradictions and open wars, which have weighed heavily above all on the living conditions of the proletarian masses tending to worsen all the time, thereby proving that no dialogue between classes “resolves” social contradictions and no dialogue between states eliminates or substantially reduces the frictions and contrasts that the very development of capitalism itself constantly generates.

This is **yet** one more reason, and not less, why the proletarians of imperialist countries – who, willingly or unwillingly, enjoy, even if only in crumbs, the ever more widespread and more violent oppression exercised by their own imperialist bourgeoisie on weaker countries – *must demonstrate* to the proletarians of the weaker countries and of the oppressed nationalities, that they are on the side of the oppressed, to fight for an end to the forms of oppression of their own imperialist bourgeoisies, starting with the most intolerable ones, such as national oppression, which, together with religious oppression and the oppression exercised on women, are among the most deeply rooted in the long history of class-divided societies.

To argue, then, that the working class today should no longer occupy itself with the “national” question – that is, with *immediate politics* – is, as Marx said in 1870 in a letter to Paul and Laura Lafargue (12), the same as rejecting that it should be concerned with the question of wages in the manner of the old socialists, with the objection that “*you want to abolish wages labour, and to struggle with the capitalist about the rate of wages is to acknowledge the wages system!*”. Here it is not understood that “*every class movement as a class movement, is necessarily and was always a political movement*”. To deal with *politics* for communists, for Marxists, is to consider the dialectical reality in every question concerning society, which is a contradictory reality that develops, as Lenin reminds us, in leaps, dramatically, revolutionarily, that is, not linearly, not gradually, not in a straightforward way. Just as from the immediate defensive economic struggle, the proletariat does not develop its movement gradually, linearly, into the struggle on the general *class* political plane, but does so to such an extent, in so far as, in the clash with the bourgeoisie and through the intervention and decisive influence of the class party in its movement, it acquires the perspective of social and revolutionary rupture as its only perspective of historical development, so in the struggle on the *immediate political* plane for political demands which are absolutely incompatible with the bourgeois political system – from the right to organise in unions, political parties, the right to assemble and demonstrate, the right to strike, the right to the press, to the right of self-determination of nations and their secession into independent states (rights that can be won in certain historical exceptional situations

(11) Ibid.

(12) Cf. Marx to Paul Lafargue – 19 April 1870, in *Marx & Engels Collected Works*, vol. 43, Lawrence & Wishart, 2010.

without violent class conflict), the proletariat has every interest in removing from the terrain of its *classist* struggle all ideological and political obstacles that the bourgeoisie purposely puts up to divert, weaken, paralyse and liquidate its class movement. And there is no doubt that the “national” question, precisely because of the specific oppression that continues to be exercised by the most powerful bourgeoisies, constitutes even today an enormous obstacle to the resumption and development of the classist struggle of the proletariat, both in the weaker capitalist countries and in the imperialist ones.

The leap from the immediate economic and political struggle at the enterprise and national level to the *class* political struggle, i.e. to the general struggle and the struggle at the supranational and world level, will not take place unless there is a profound **social rupture**, towards which it is possible to make steps not only through an economic defensive struggle waged by the means and methods of the class struggle (i.e. incompatible with social peace and inter-class collaboration), but also through the development of the political struggle aimed at the unification of the proletarian class beyond not only categories, sectors, sex and age, but also nationalities and borders, within which every bourgeois state tries with all its might to confine its proletarians. To struggle against the national oppression of the dominant countries is also to struggle with the perspective of the proletarians of all countries united against the domination of each individual bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisies united in the struggle against the proletarians of the whole world.

The historical revolutionary objective of the proletariat is not, after the overthrow of the bourgeois state, to replace it with another class state, but to sweep away from the face of the earth every social division into classes, and thus every state, every armed force set up to defend the ruling class, every class privilege, every oppression. But for this to happen, not only in one country, which is historically impossible, but internationally, the proletariat must wage the revolutionary struggle allied to the proletarians of other countries – dominant and oppressed – for a not so short period of time, with whose help it will establish its class domination, its class dictatorship, to be able to intervene with a whole series of political, economic and social measures aimed at economic and social transformation of the whole of human society in a decisive struggle against the resistance which the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois classes will inevitably and violently put up to their end.

According to the theses of Marxism, the revolutionary preparation, the leadership of the revolution and the exercise of the dictatorship of the proletariat must take place under the leadership of the class party, the revolutionary communist party, the supreme revolutionary organ historically charged with these tasks. And part of this revolutionary preparation is the application of a political tactic which considers the social questions unresolved by the bourgeoisie – such as the national question of the oppressed peoples – as questions which are within the competence of the revolutionary strug-

gle of the proletariat with orientations which promote the unity of the proletarians of the dominant and oppressed nations.

The class party – and the history of class struggles, revolutions and counter-revolutions proves that – is not endowed with a magic wand with which it can rouse the proletariat of a particular country or of all countries in a single worldwide revolutionary movement; the class party of the proletariat is not a sorcerer like the bourgeoisie was in terms of the uncontrolled development of the productive forces within its economic system. It will have to wage the anti-capitalist and anti-bourgeois struggle in every sphere and on every social question that bourgeois society has not resolved, could not resolve and will not be able to resolve because of the congenital contradictions of its economic and social system.

And if, for the sake of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which will be victorious in a given country, it will be necessary – as it was in Russia during the years of the Bolshevik Revolution led by Lenin – to prove to the proletarians of the oppressed nations, who are still under the influence of their own bourgeoisie, that the self-determination of the nations was not a false promise, but a promise which the dictatorship of the proletariat (unlike the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie) will concretely fulfil, then the secession of the nations will not be resisted. The fact remains, however, that along with this promise, the revolutionary communists belonging to these nations never cease to propagate among the proletarian masses the necessity of their political preparation and organisation independent of any other social force; that they will continue to fight alongside the proletariat against the bourgeoisie for the same end as the proletarians in other countries: i.e., to overthrow the bourgeois power, even if it has just been established with their own contribution, and to establish their own class dictatorship alongside the proletarian dictatorships that may already exist in other countries. The “double revolution” in Russia is an example for us: on the one side, the Kerensky government and its supporters (the Russian, European bourgeoisies, the White Guards and the opportunists) and, on the other side, the soviets of workers, soldiers and poor peasants led by the Bolshevik Party fought for victory over tsarism; the Kerensky bourgeois government naturally stopped at that *national-bourgeois stage* and intended to continue the imperialist war begun by tsarism; the proletariat led by the Bolsheviks was prepared to go much further in the revolution and fought against the bourgeois government to establish its own class dictatorship, to put an end to the imperialist war and to work for the *international* proletarian revolution. What is important even today, although the question of the “double revolution” is no longer on the agenda in the same terms as it was after the first and second imperialist wars, is not to conceal the fact that the proletarians of the oppressed nations are still very much ideologically and politically conditioned by their own bourgeois classes and tend also to look upon the proletarians of the oppressor countries as their en-

emies. Until this situation is set right, until the proletarians of the oppressor countries radically break with their own bourgeoisie by becoming organisationally and politically independent of it, it will be almost impossible for the proletarians of the oppressed nations to succeed on the field where the proletarians of the oppressor countries have been failing.

And here is the enormous responsibility of the proletarians of the imperialist countries, the oppressor countries. Until they make a clear break with class collaboration with their own bourgeoisies, they will continue to appear as accomplices of the oppression, and therefore of the massacres, which these bourgeoisies order for the sole purpose of imposing their domination over both the masses of the oppressed nations and the domestic proletarian masses. Therefore, for the Israeli bourgeoisie and the Arab bourgeoisies who share with it the fear of the outbreak of **class struggle**, of which the Palestinian proletariat could be the primary protagonist, the Palestinian proletarians are the preferred target of all oppression, of all massacres.

It is not Hamas that the Israeli bourgeoisie, in Netanyahu's words, really wants to liquidate: it has used Hamas against the Palestinian National Authority in previous years and may do so in the future, even if its official name is changed because the objective is to divide the Palestinian proletarians, to set them against each other, to pit the Palestinian proletarians against the other Arab proletarians and, above all, to prevent them from the possibility – which today, in truth, seems remote – of infecting the Israeli proletariat, especially the Arab-Israeli proletariat, with their struggle, and thus intensifying the potential of the class struggle in which they could also draw the proletarians of the other Arab states.

Today, we cannot know in which country or countries the objective and subjective conditions will be so ripe that proletarian revolution will not only break out there, but will reach a victorious end. But revolutionary communists, in the vital reconstitution of the class party, without which no revolutionary proletarian movement has a future, cannot and must not evade any political question which bourgeois society poses in the social arena of capitalist relations of production and power. And as the wars and armed conflicts which have marked the period of the last hundred years, in which the great imperialist countries have stood against the multitude of small oppressed countries of this capitalist world, show, the “national” question remains a political question to which there can be an answer of this kind: imperialism has triumphed, and therefore we must no longer concern ourselves with immediate political questions such as these; let us deal with the great political

question of the world proletarian revolution...

The class party is the historical consciousness of the class struggle of the international proletariat, it is the guiding organ which dialectically unites class consciousness and the revolutionary will, without which the proletariat of any country in the world, even if it struggles strenuously against the ruling classes which oppress it, both at the immediate economic level and at the broader political-military level, can never transform itself from being class *for capital* into **class for itself**, into revolutionary class. On the tortuous and rough path to the world proletarian revolution, the immediate economic, social and political problems do not disappear, but come more and more insistently and forcefully to the fore, and tend to paralyse and break down the proletarian struggle at its very material base: in the struggle of resistance against the pressures of the capitalists, in the struggle of immediate economic defence, which, when it is waged by classist means and methods, constitutes the very basis of the general possibility of revolutionary political struggle. It is precisely on the terrain of the immediate economic and political struggle of defence that the proletariat tests its strength, its class solidarity, and organises itself independently of the bourgeoisie and any other forces of social conservation (above all the opportunist forces); on the one hand, the proletariat tests on it its capacity to persevere in the conflict with the ruling bourgeoisie despite the lost battles, and on the other hand, it has on it the opportunity to get to know the class party, its instructions, its programme, its will to develop the classist struggle on the immediate terrain and to unify the proletarians by fighting against their mutual competition, its dedication to the historical cause of the proletarian class, without any deviation from the final objectives of the proletarian struggle, and even in the daily struggle alongside the proletarians in resisting the attacks of the capitalists. Woe betide the class party which would embrace the idea of facilitating its revolutionary task by skipping the long phase of the battles on the immediate terrain, which are not only of economic and union character, but also political, as in the question of national oppression and internationalism, which, if it is not to remain an empty slogan, must be concretely manifested in actions and instructions, for which no new policy, no new tactics can be invented: it is enough to follow in the footsteps of Marx, Engels, Lenin and, we would like to add, Bordiga, as examples of theoretical intransigence, from which political and tactical instructions derive, which are an affirmation of Marxism and which fight against every update, every innovation, every adaptation to specific situations... ●

(Il comunista, Nr. 179, September-November 2023).

Some Reference Points on the “Palestinian Question”

INTRODUCTION

This article was part of a critique of the erroneous positions into which the party had fallen in the autumn of 1982 in relation to the “Palestinian question” – what we called the “fuse” of the general crisis in the party at that time – and of the general balance-sheet of that crisis. Two fundamental errors in particular were criticised: 1) considering “pan-Arab national sentiment” as a revolutionary driving force in the entire Middle East region, provided it were carried forward... only by the proletarian masses; as if, in the absence of a homeland conquered by the anti-colonial bourgeois revolution in the three decades after the Second World Imperialist War, in which “national liberation” struggles were taking place (as in several African colonies), the proletarians could use the “pan-Arab” movement as a vehicle to facilitate their unification movement against fragmentation into different nationalities; as if the proletarians could automatically elevate the “national” struggle to the more general class struggle; 2) the binding – as a matter of principle – of the proletarian struggle for its *class* interests to the *national* struggle, these class interests being delimited only to the terrain of the immediate struggle and defence – in this case armed – of the immediate interests; as if the absence of the independent political *class* organisation, i.e. revolutionary communist party – the only one capable of providing the proletariat with the political and historical class orientation (the orientation which contains instructions for struggle on the immediate terrain, yet this does not mean that it is their automatic result) – could be resolved simply by the proletarian struggle within the national struggle, albeit armed, of the Palestinian people united with the other Arab peoples.

These fundamental errors were not mere tactical errors; they were the inevitable result of a wrong evaluation of the historical phase, of the social forces at work on the scene, and of the relations between them. And as Marxists we know that the evaluation of a situation is foremost a theoretical question, then a political and therefore tactical one; a situation that is not contingent on specific circumstances, not local or linked to a particular area, but international. What most party militants of the time had completely lost sight of was that the general situation is not going to change from counter-revolutionary to revolutionary unless the proletariat, not only of the capitalist underdeveloped countries, but above all the more advanced

capitalist countries, enters the scene; and unless this proletariat accumulates solidly acquired experience in the *classist* struggle, in the anti-bourgeois struggle par excellence, *both on the immediate terrain and on the political terrain*, i.e. in the presence of the class party – the revolutionary communist party – which has had the objective possibility of exerting its influence on the most advanced strata of the proletariat itself.

The armed struggle of an oppressed people against a colonial power, against an imperialist country or an alliance of countries that oppress and exploit it to the extreme based on their dominant position may be tenacious, long-lasting, but it will never open the way for the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, if the proletariat does not free itself from the illusions of the politics of inter-class collaboration, democracy and national illusions, if it has not fought independently not only against the reactionary and ruling powers, but also against these illusions and the social and political forces that keep them alive and that spread them.

It is indisputable that the “national question” is particularly complex and always has been, from the end of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century; one only has to read the articles of Marx and Engels on the Irish question or on India, Russia and China, or the articles of Lenin regarding the “self-determination of peoples” and the Theses of the Communist International on the national and colonial question. Like the “trade union question”, the “national question” will not see a final *solution* until capitalism has been defeated.

However, until then, revolutionary communists, Marxists, cannot respond to these questions in the following way: today, already possessing economic, financial, political and organizational power, and taking advantage of the defeat of the proletarian and communist revolution in the 1920s, imperialism has corrupted both the trade union organizations and the national liberation movements, depriving the proletarians of a field of action that in the last century could still have provided a basis for their emancipatory struggle. There are those who say that trade union organising is already fit for the scrapheap and must be replaced by purely *political* action and organisation; there are also those who say that the “national” question is no longer a question that concerns the proletariat and that it must concern itself only with preparing for the genuine and unequivocal international proletarian revolution. These are not political positions, let alone backed by unques-

Palestinian Question

tionable theoretical foundations; they are mere and empty declarations that provide no answers to the real problems that actually affect all proletarians, in both developed and underdeveloped countries. Certainly, considering the development of capitalist exploitation in all parts of the world, including countries that were once on the “periphery” of imperialism, the “national” question no longer arises as it did in the 19th and 20th centuries, given that the bourgeois strata that were forming in the countries of this periphery had become either sold-out bourgeoisies in the pay of a foreign power, or bourgeoisies with such strong tendencies towards independence that they were forced to adopt the *national-revolutionary* course in a given historical period (such as, for example, in China, Algeria, Congo, Cuba, Vietnam, etc.), alongside which the proletariat, organised on the classist basis and independently, had a role to play, as was the case in Russia in 1917–1922. But this historical period, which re-emerged after the Second World Imperialist War, ended in the mid-1970s with the independence of Angola and Mozambique, while the proletariat of the advanced countries demonstrated that it did not have the strength to take advantage of the weakening of the colonial and imperialist powers to go on the offensive against the ruling classes of the advanced countries; nor could the proletariat of the colonies, in the absence of the revolutionary communist party and its influence over it, have the strength to attack the newly established bourgeoisie after having assisted it in its national revolution. This is a strength that the proletariat does not have even today, and which will take some time to acquire before it can again become the real class enemy in the imperialist metropolises.

But this does not detract from the fact that national oppression, instead of diminishing, has intensified, not only on the part of the imperialist powers, but also on the part of the younger bourgeoisies that have come to power in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. If a population is oppressed by other peoples, it means that the “national” question remains a lever which the bourgeois strata of the oppressed population continue to use and will continue to use to drag the proletarians to their side by means of nationalism, the myth of the “independent state”, the myth of democracy. And thanks to this lever, the national bourgeoisies of the countries oppressed by imperialism can easily point out the entire population of the oppressing countries, including the proletarians, as their oppressors. And there is no doubt that the proletarians of the oppressed country regard the proletarians of the oppressing country as accomplices of the foreign bourgeoisie which oppresses them. In order to prove that there is no such complicity, the proletarians of the oppressing country must fight *against their own bourgeoisie* by demanding that the oppressed population, which includes the proletarians there, should have the freedom of “self-determination”. Lenin asserts that this tactic is the *only one* that allows the proletarians of the oppressing country to support the struggle of the proletarians of the oppressed country in their fight against the foreign

bourgeoisie, provided that the proletarians of the oppressed country are themselves organised in complete independence of the other social forces (bourgeoisie, urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, lumpenproletariat) and that at the same time they wage struggle against their own national bourgeoisie, struggle in which they will be able to find unity with the proletarians of the oppressing countries for the international proletarian revolution, always provided that these proletarians break decisively from class collaboration with their own bourgeoisie. To demand that the proletarians of the oppressed countries – especially in the general situation which has arisen since the Second World War, when there has been a very strong decline in the proletarian struggle in the advanced capitalist countries – should take on, and take on alone, the tasks which concern the proletariat of the whole world and, in the first place, the proletariat of the oppressor countries, is to turn one’s back on tasks which only the proletarians of the advanced capitalist countries must take on. The lessons of the great revolution in Russia in October 1917, which our party has been instrumental in bringing about throughout the period of the restoration of the doctrine and the reorganisation of the class party from 1945 onwards, show that the proletarian and communist revolution – in the presence of an organised, independent and influential party such as the Bolshevik Party of Lenin – can, under certain world-historical circumstances, break out even in a capitalistically backward country and be victorious, but if the decisive revolutionary contribution of the proletarians of capitalistically advanced countries with their revolution is absent, the victory achieved, as in Russia at that time, is destined sooner or later to a suffocating isolation which can lead to defeat and to counter-revolution not only in the country where the revolution has triumphed, but also in the world. Notwithstanding the great combativeness and generosity of the Russian proletarian masses, willing to endure the immense sacrifices that were to contribute to the spread of the proletarian revolution throughout Europe – and thus throughout the world – and notwithstanding the intransigence of the healthy forces of the Bolshevik Party and their determination to endure in power of the proletarian dictatorship even for twenty years (Lenin) or fifty years (Trotsky), as support for the course of the international revolution, the unrealised revolutionary contribution of the European proletarian parties, which at that time influenced and led the proletariat, greatly facilitated the role of the social-democratic, inter-class collaboration and social preservation forces in the intoxication and ultimately the degeneration of the proletarian parties and movements.

Opportunism, and hence the political and organisational degeneration of the proletarian parties and the proletarian movement which is influenced by the party, derive their success from the same material basis on which the political power of the bourgeois class has been erected and is preserved; they represent another instrument of social preservation and, if necessary, of

repression against the proletariat and the revolutionary struggle. The bourgeoisie never throws in the towel, even in the most dangerous situations for its power; on the contrary, in these situations, as Trotsky put it, the bourgeoisie multiplies its forces tenfold, never surrenders, not so much because of some sort of ideological fanaticism that makes it believe it is invincible, but rather because of the mighty power of its economy, which in two centuries has transformed the world in which the old pre-capitalist societies had survived for millennia. This is why the proletarian revolution differs from the revolutions of previous revolutionary classes in that it is not based on a mode of production that developed in the old society and then pushed the new social forces to conquer political power so that the new mode of production would be free to develop fully; it is essentially a *political* revolution, where the proletariat – i.e. the producer class – will have to smash the existing political power to transform from top to bottom the social economy and hence the existing social relations. With capitalism, class-divided society has undergone the maximum possible historical development, both economic, political and social, and has dialectically laid the foundations for its demise; however, it will not disappear by a kind of exhaustion; it will disappear as a result of the proletarian revolution led by the class party as long as it is necessary for the political class dictatorship to fully carry out its task also in the economic transformation of society on an international scale.

For this to happen, we need not only a proletariat that regains and surpasses the level of its unification at the international level that it reached in the 1920s, both in the advanced and in the more backward countries, but also a class party that will be strengthened theoretically, politically and at the level of real struggle, and that will gain decisive influence at least on the most advanced layers of the proletariat internationally. A utopian goal? No, the historical proof is the Bolshevik Party under the lead of Lenin and the constitution of the Third International with its theses on the role of the communist party, on its activity in all spheres, from the political-tactical to the economic-trade union to the agrarian and national-colonial. Human history does not advance in gradual stages, but in leaps and bounds. “Marx – as was aptly written in a 1951 Party text – *did not envisage a rise and then a decline of capitalism, but instead the simultaneous and dialectical expansion of the mass of the productive forces that capitalism controls, their unlimited accumulation and concentration, and, at the same time, the antagonistic reaction constituted by one of the dominated forces, which is the proletarian class. The general productive and economic potential always rises, until the equilibrium is broken, and a revolutionary explosive phase sets in, in which, in a very short, precipitous period, when the old forms of production are broken down, the productive forces fall back to give themselves a new order and resume a more powerful rise*” (1).

Among the many texts we have written on the “Palestinian question”, we are now republishing the

following article (published in 1989 in “il comunista”, No. 16, and in “le proletaire”, No. 401), which sums up the fundamental positions on this question that are still valid for us.

* * *

1) Condemnation of the role of Palestinian nationalism as a distraction from and a tool against the class struggle

For twenty years this nationalism has been a political “corpse” and for twenty years this corpse has been “still on its feet”, infesting the proletarians. Far from wishing for its revival in a “leftist” version, which would only be a return of its dead radicalism, we see a positive aspect in the current moderate evolution of all its currents, including the most extreme ones, and we take note of the *de facto* – in our opinion salutary – final capitulation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and encourage the proletarians to take from it what the very evolution of things is throwing at them: with the conclusion of every solution to the racial and national question, the path of your redemption is the only one, i.e. the path of the intransigent class struggle, until all states in the region are destroyed, and the proletarian dictatorship is installed, Palestine will not win; the proletarian revolution will win!

2) Condemnation of the reactionary nature of the Palestinian mini-state

In fact, the consequences of such a “solution” cannot be other than **negative** in terms of the development of the class struggle, on the one hand, because such a solution would tend to confine the most advanced and combative part of the proletariat in the whole region to a genuine ghetto, and thus isolate the other proletariats as much as possible from the Palestinian “contagion”, on the other because in any case it would entail a weakening of the pressure exerted by the destitute Palestinian masses on Israel and, consequently, a postponement in time of the moment when the front of inter-class collaboration would break up there too, which would finally allow the Israeli workers to give a hand to their Palestinian class brothers.

The only potential positive effect of the creation of such a mini-state, i.e. the “unmasking” of the Palestinian bourgeoisie as the enemy class in the eyes of the exploited masses, is by no means an automatic given. On the contrary, unless there is a political force – the class party – that immediately condemns nationalism

(1) See *Teoria e azione nella dottrina marxista* (report delivered at the party meeting in Rome, April 1, 1951), 1. *Il rovesciamento della prassi nella teoria marxista*, in collection “Partito e classe”, No. 4 of the series I testi del partito comunista internazionale, 1972, and supplementary Table II, on p. 131.

Palestinian Question

and immediately opposes it with a class line – which unfortunately is not the case in the present circumstances – it is inevitable that disillusionment that would inevitably follow the establishment of the so-called “independent State” will not be translated into an impetus for the proletarians to rise up with new energy against the bourgeoisie at home, but will constitute the precursor of a state of lethargy for a period whose length cannot be foreseen. What we can say already now is that the state-prison looming on the horizon will not be able to absorb all the Palestinian masses in the diaspora. Palestinian proletarians cannot all be ghettoised. And that means that the states in the region that have gobbled up Palestine (and the Palestinians themselves) will not be able to **stand it**, not even through the use of that reactionary mini-state.

3) Condemnation of the ultra-pacifist tactics used by the PLO during the intifada, but also before it, as a deliberate organisation of the massacre of Palestinian proletarians

The PLO, in other words, lets Israeli butchers do the “dirty work” of massacring, morally and economically exhausting the dispossessed masses in the occupied territories. If the coveted mini-state is achieved, it will only happen when the Palestinian proletariat has been sufficiently battered and exhausted by its Israeli companions. That is why the path to the goal of the ‘independent state’ is unfolding by the PLO in **slow motion**. Also, the filth of this programmed “normalization” of the destitute Palestinian masses must be condemned without hesitation and vacillation.

4) Reaffirmation the fact that the proletarian revolution throughout the region is the only way to resolve the Palestinian national question as well

This means that only the proletarian dictatorship will be able to secure for the Palestinians, if they still so desire, the right to organise themselves into an independent state. Which in no way excludes, but rather implies, that the party will endeavour to promote and support the opposite perspective, namely the free union of proletarians of different nationalities also in the Middle East in a proletarian state as large as possible.

5) Reaffirmation of the need for the formation of the class political party based on the programme, theses and teachings of the international communist movement, set out consistently with intransigent Marxism in the 1920s at the first three congresses of the Communist International.

Formation that cannot come about other than through an open break with the false emancipatory remedies of democratic, pluralist, independentist and pacifist character; and that only **by combining the sparks of class consciousness** that the struggle of the Palestinian people has evoked and continues to evoke, with the rock-solid communist program and Marxist doctrine **reconquered and restored by the communist Left through its class battles against Stalinism**

and all opportunist variants of social-democratic, popular and national stamp; and only by reconnecting with the historical continuity of militant activity defended by the communist Left, especially in Italy, in the course of the reconstitution of the supreme political organ of the modern revolutionary class, that is, the party that is communist and international.

At the same time, it is the reaffirmation of the fact that the struggle against the national oppression of the Palestinian proletarians takes an opposing path to the nationalist one, however radical it may be. This means, therefore, that it is the struggle that must be situated and waged on the terrain of the more general class struggle: transposing the anti-bourgeois struggle from the terrain of the “conquest of a homeland” to the terrain of the anti-bourgeois struggle against all discrimination against proletarians of different nationalities and religions at the level of wages, laws and norms, trade union and political rights.

6) Reaffirmation of the fact that the “natural” class brothers of the Palestinian proletariat, the Arab proletarians of the entire region, will never find the way to classist solidarity and to their own emancipation from the yoke of the bloodthirsty and repressive national bourgeoisies (as a series of events have shown – from the so-called Tunisian bread riots in 1983–1984 to strikes in Egypt, workers’ agitations in Morocco to the recent proletarian uprising in Algeria in 1988) unless they definitively break ideological, practical and organisational ties with “their” bourgeoisies and petty bourgeoisies, which have hitherto used and continue to use “pan-Arabism”, religious fetishism and the false “national paths to socialism” against the proletarians and the impoverished dispossessed strata, so ridiculously represented by champions of the double game like Gaddafi or murderous democratic presidents like Chadli Bendjedid (Algerian President from 1979 – 1992, ed.).

The “Arab national factor”, which for a certain historical period – from the collapse of the Turkish empire to the Second World War – could have been one of the unifying elements of populations composed of nomads and merchants rather than settled and peasant populations, had already completely exhausted all its even slight “potential possibility” for historical progress in this vast area covering North Africa from the Atlantic eastwards to the Middle East (and including it). It had exhausted it in the context of a number of factors, including the mode of capitalist development in the area – retarded in terms of industrial and agrarian structure, very contemporary in terms of mineral, gas and oil extraction, and very contemporary in terms of banking capital –; the pattern of the division of the territory into nation-states, which is determined more by the boundaries resulting from the occupations of colonial and imperialist powers than by the natural distribution of the indigenous peoples, who, moreover, are predominantly nomadic; the shape of the bourgeois classes (more “sold out” than from an industrial background),

which is the result of the contradictory development of the mode of production and forms of capitalism, and the persistence of feudal, theocratic and tribal survivals that have never been completely eradicated. The very formation of the proletariat, little concentrated in factories and industrial complexes, and rather scattered over vast and poorly fertile territories, but important for natural resources, is a reflection of the process of national development in the area, which is **totally dependent** on the world market and the prices of raw materials that only the large capitalist countries can redraw; an area that is **prone to instability** internally and in relations between states.

However weak the bourgeois and proletarian classes are throughout the region, the historic leap towards capitalism has already been made, and what the reality – however unstable – of the present Arab bourgeois states offers is the reality of the class interests of the **national bourgeoisies**, irrespective of the now completely powerless “Arab factor”, with each one of them keen to profit from “their” Arab proletarians as much as from the proletarians from Korea, India, Pakistan or Africa who immigrate to the rich oil-producing countries.

7) **Reaffirmation of the fact that it will be impossible to arrive at a united front of struggle that will unite the Jewish proletarians of Israel and the proletarians of Palestine until the former have broken the bonds that keep them bound to the machinery of their bourgeoisie**; and that the necessary step for the Israeli proletarians to break with their bourgeoisie is the *abandonment of any support* on their part for the national oppression that the latter continues to perpetrate on the Palestinians. There is no greater misfortune for a people than when it subjugates another, Marx said, referring to the English oppression of Ireland. To get out of this their situation, unfortunate from the perspective of the class struggle, the Israeli

Jewish proletarians will have to place themselves on a twofold terrain of struggle: the terrain of struggle against the discrimination of Arab and Palestinian proletarians in the workplace and in social life (and therefore against the Judaic sectarianism of the Jewish state), and the terrain of struggle to defend the right of all Palestinians to form a truly independent state on the territory of Palestine.

8) **The fact is that the necessary solidarity of the communists of the West and the proletarians of the West with the Palestinian proletarians** does not mean at all – as the Autonomia Operaia-style “leftists”, Trotskyists or others believe – shouting louder than others “long live the struggle for Palestinian national independence”, but **means working for the resumption of the class struggle here at home and for the formation of a compact, strong, international communist party**.

In fact, this is the only way to give the Palestinian proletarians a fraternal hand because the help we can give them consists either in offering their struggle a visible point of support with the reality of the anti-bourgeois struggle, which we can relate to in a perspective that is classist, internationalist and revolutionary, or it is pure demagogy.

Let us understand, then, that the Palestinian proletariat – and with it the proletarians of the whole region who are inserted in the Palestinian national struggle – will inevitably be prisoners of the methods, aims and means of organisation serving exclusively national bourgeois interests until the social movement of the proletarians in the imperialist countries – in our countries of the West – raises its head again and confronts “its” national bourgeoisie in various countries finally on the terrain of the class struggle. ●

(*Il comunista*, No. 179; September-November 2023)

Theses on the Historical Task, Action and Structure of the World Communist Party, Based on Positions that Have Been the Historical Patrimony of the Communist Left for over Half a Century

(Theses of Naples, 1965)

1. The historically formulated positions regarding the party's ideology and theory, its action in successive historical situations, and hence its program, tactics and organizational structure, must be considered as a unified whole. On many occasions in the course of its struggle the Left has reorganized and reiterated these positions without ever changing them. The party's press will reproduce the texts on these questions, the more fundamental ones being:

- a) All the theses of the Italian Communist Abstentionist Faction from 1920;
- b) Rome Theses, the theses of the 2nd Congress of the Communist Party of Italy in 1922;
- c) Positions defended by the Communist Left at the International's congresses from 1922 to 1924 and at the 1926 Enlarged Executive;
- d) Theses of the Left at the illegal conference of the Communist Party of Italy in May, 1924;
- e) Theses presented by the Left at the 3rd congress of the Communist Party of Italy, Lyon, 1926. 2.

2. In these texts, as well as in numerous other texts we will be using, which will be published in volumes of our History of the Communist Left, we have defended and reaffirmed, with perfect continuity, certain historical analyses which form the patrimony of revolutionary Marxism, basing ourselves on classic programmatic texts such as the Manifesto of the Communist Party and the Statutes of the 1st International from 1864.

We also lay claim to the programmatic foundations of the 1st and 2nd congresses of the 3rd International, founded in 1919, as well as Lenin's earlier theses on the imperialist war and revolution. At the same time, taking a clear position on the major crises faced by the proletarian movement, the Left claims the historical and programmatic lessons Marxism has drawn from these, including the theory of counter-revolutions and the theory of the struggle against the recurring danger of opportunism. Among these historical lessons, products both of a healthy theoretical vision and of large-scale mass struggles, should be noted:

a) The liquidation of petty-bourgeois and anarchist currents, sought by Marx to restore the fundamental principle of centralization and discipline toward the center of the organization, and to definitively condemn harmful conceptions such as autonomy of local sections and federalism for different sections of the world party; these conceptions lay at the root of the ignoble collapse of the 2nd International, which had been founded in 1889 and supported the war in 1914.

b) The lessons of the heroic experience of the Paris Commune in texts written by Marx for the International, sanctioning the rejection of parliamentary methods and applauding the insurrectional, terrorist vigor of the great Parisian movement.

c) The condemnation, issued on the eve of the last world war by the true revolutionary Marxist left, of both revisionist, evolutionist reformism, which had contaminated the whole International and sought to dismantle the Marxist perspective of revolutionary catastrophe, and the revolutionary syndicalism of Sorel and others which was able to pass for a proletarian reaction to reformism, though it was actually only a "workerist" reaction and consequently converged with extreme right "Labourism"; on the pretext of returning to direct, violent action, revolutionary syndicalism in fact rejected the fundamental position of Marxism which affirms the necessity of a centralized revolutionary party and a dictatorial, terrorist proletarian state, the only instruments capable of smashing the bourgeois counter-offensive's attempts at reaction and corruption and laying the foundations of the classless, stateless communist society, which will crown the proletarian victory in the whole world.

d) The merciless critique and demolition, by Lenin and the Left in all countries, of the shameless betrayal of 1914, the most mortal and ruinous aspect of which was not just the rallying to the banners of state and nation, but a relapse into deviations that were born at the same time as Marxist communism, and which claim to imprison the program and action of the working class within bourgeois principles of freedom and parliamentary democracy, and celebrate the conquests of the world bourgeoisie as eternal gains.

3. During the period of the new International the unforgettable heritage of the Left is concretized in its correct historical diagnosis of the opportunist dangers that took shape in the first years of the International. The historical method enables us to explain this point without an unwieldy theoretical development. The first manifestations of opportunism denounced and combated by the Left appeared in tactics involving relations with the old socialist parties of the 2nd International, from which communists had separated organizationally by means of splits. These tendencies subsequently also appeared in the form of incorrect organizational measures.

From 1921 it was apparent that the great post-war revolutionary wave was weakening, and that capitalism would attempt an economic and political counter-offensive. The 3rd congress correctly observed that it was not enough to have formed communist parties firmly oriented on the program of violent action, the proletarian dictatorship and the communist state, if a large fraction of the proletarian masses remained accessible to the influence of opportunist parties, which all communists then considered to be the most lethal instruments of bourgeois counter-revolution, and which had the blood of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg on their hands. But the Communist Left did not accept the formula which sought to avoid Blanquist initiatives by revolutionary action to the conquest of the "majority" of the proletariat (it was never possible to say whether this meant a majority of the real wage-earning workers, craftsmen and all sorts of other petty-bourgeois strata). This majority formula, with its democratic allure, raised a new danger which was unfortunately confirmed by history: that opportunism would be reborn in the new International in the usual form of a worship of the hated notions of democracy and electoral consultation.

The 4th congress (held at the end of 1922) and subsequent congresses confirmed the Left's pessimistic forecasts. The Left continued its vigorous fight and denunciation of dangerous tactics (united front between communist and socialist parties, the "workers government" slogan) and organizational mistakes (attempts to increase membership in the communist parties, both by integrating proletarians who had abandoned other parties with social-democratic programs, action and structures, and through mergers with entire parties or fractions of parties after negotiations with their leadership or, worse yet, through admitting so-called "sympathizing" parties as national sections of the Comintern, which obviously amounted to a federalist error).

The third point, at which the Left's criticism was directed involved working methods within the International. Very early it began to denounce – and continued to do so more strenuously in subsequent years – the growing danger of opportunism implied by the center's (i. e., the Moscow Executive's) use of "ideological terror" and, particularly, of organizational pressure on parties or even sections of parties that might have made political mistakes. This method represented

an incorrect application and subsequently, a total falsification of the correct principles of absolute centralization and discipline. These were used increasingly in all countries, and especially after 1923 in Italy, where the Left, followed by the whole party gave an exemplary demonstration of discipline by relinquishing its leadership to right and center comrades designated by Moscow. For the sole purpose of perpetuating dangerous centrist errors in the party's practice, the specter of "factionalism" was continuously paraded out, and the left current was threatened with expulsion on the deceitful pretext that it was preparing a split. This third vital point was thoroughly discussed in the International congresses and in Italy, and it is just as important as the condemnation of opportunist tactics and federalist organizational formulae. In Italy, for example, the centrist leadership, while accusing the Left leadership of 1921-22 of having imposed a dictatorship on the party (which nonetheless showed its total agreement on many occasions), brandished the threat of orders from Moscow, and even dared to exploit the formula "international communist party" as Palmiro Togliatti, a true champion of the liquidation of the Communist International, did in 1925 in the polemic that preceded the Lyon congress.

4. When the Left spoke out against the signals that prefigured a mortal crisis, it was only too easy to accuse it of having purely doctrinal concerns. It is thus important to show that history has provided confirmations of its criticisms and diagnosis.

With regard to tactical questions, it should be noted that the united front was originally proposed as a means for "ruining" the socialist parties and depriving their leaderships of a mass following, which was supposed to come over to our side. The history of this tactic showed that it involved a danger of betrayal and an abandoning of our revolutionary class foundations and program. The historical heirs of the 1922 *united front* are well known to everyone today: they are the popular fronts set up to support democratic capitalism's second world war, and the anti-fascist "liberation fronts" which led to the broadest class collaboration, which included overtly bourgeois parties. This was the monstrous fruit of the second wave of opportunism that unfurled over the corpse of the 3rd International. The first organizational maneuvers – the 1922 mergers – laid the foundations for today's total confusion, in which parliamentarism and democratism are the common ground of all parties including the communist party, which has completely renounced Lenin's 2nd congress thesis on parliamentarism. Sacrificing the unity of the world organization to admit various socialist, workers and even populist parties in a number of countries, the 20th congress of the Russian party in 1956 finally did exactly what the Left had predicted it would: it also abandoned the program of the dictatorship of the proletariat, presenting it as an exclusively Russian phenomenon and introducing "national" and "democratic" roads to socialism. This can only signify a relapse into the disgraceful opportunism of 1914 – or rather,

into an even more vile and disguising opportunism which dares to hide behind Lenin's name.

The third point concerns the fierce Stalinist terror which has given historical confirmation that the Left was correct to speak out against the International's working methods and the harmful pressures brought to bear from above. In fact, the object of the Stalinist terror was to demolish the party from within, by using state power to carry out tens of thousands of assassinations and smash a resistance waged in the name of a return to revolutionary Marxism and the great Leninist and Bolshevik traditions of the October revolution. The Left, which had correctly rejected a fallacious offer of "a bit more democracy in the party and the International" in 1926, to remain in opposition (though up to that time – 1926 – it had not talked about leaving the International or bringing about a split), had predicted the further course of events precisely in all respects: the relationship of forces unfortunately did not allow it to prevent the disgraceful third opportunist wave from engulfing everything.

The Left had indicated in good time the correct path to follow in relations between the parties and the International, on the one hand, and between the Russian party and state, on the other hand. Historically, the inversion of these positions is connected to the question of relations between the policy of the Russian state and the policy of the proletariat in other countries. At the Executive of the International in the fall of 1926, Stalin played his cards, declaring that the Russian state would no longer subordinate its future to a general class confrontation capable of overthrowing capitalist power in all other countries, and that from then on, its internal social economy would be aimed at "building socialism" – which for Lenin could only mean building capitalism. Thereafter it was easy to predict the sequence of events, marked by the bloody conflict in which the opposition, which appeared too late in Russia, was quickly crushed under the disgusting accusation of factionism, and finally exterminated.

This question leads to a delicate problem: in the name of a bastard centralism, a suffocating apparatus was imposed on all parties in which ardent revolutionaries were active, by resorting less to the prestige of Bolshevism, Lenin and red October than to a vulgar economic relationship – the state in Moscow possessed the means with which to pay the officials of the International.

The Left faced this degradation with a heroic silence, because it knew there was another terrible danger of a petty-bourgeois, anarchist deviation from which it risked eliciting the usual lamentations: "you see, this is what always happens; whenever there is a state, whenever there is a power, whenever there is a party, there is corruption, and if the proletariat wants to emancipate itself it will have to do so without authoritarian parties or states". We were too well aware that if Stalin's orientation after 1926 amounted to yielding the victory to the bourgeois enemy, the aberrations of petty-bourgeois intellectuals are always (and have for a century) provided the best guarantee of the survival

of odious capitalism, since they deprive its grave diggers of the only weapon that can defeat it.

Combined with the degrading influence of money – which will disappear in communist society, but only after a series of events of which the creation of the proletarian dictatorship is only the first act – was the use within the International of a weapon which the Left openly denounced as worthy of parliaments and bourgeois diplomacy, or of the very bourgeois League of Nations. The careerism and vain personal ambitions of the little chieftains that abounded in the ranks of the movement were encouraged and flaunted such that each individual found himself faced with the alternative of immediate and comfortable notoriety if he quietly accepted the theses of the omnipotent center, or an irremediable anonymity and possible poverty if he wished to defend the correct revolutionary these from which the center had deviated.

Today it is an obvious historical fact that the international and national centers were on the road to deviation and betrayal; as the Left has always asserted, this is why they have no right to demand the blind obedience of the rank-and-file in the name of a hypocritical discipline.

5. The work done to rebuild the class party after the end of the second world war has come up against an extremely unfavorable situation. The international social events of this terrible epoch have enabled opportunism to obscure all the terms of the class conflict and to convince a blinded proletariat of the need to help in rebuilding parliamentary and democratic constitutional regimes all over the world.

Our movement, which inevitably found itself going against the stream, especially when the broad proletarian masses had hurled themselves body and soul into the mortal practice of electoralism (for which fake revolutionaries were pronouncing apologies a thousand times more shameless than those of the revisionists fifty years earlier), could only answer by basing itself on the entire heritage that it had defended during this long unfavorable period. Applying the classic Marxist method, which seeks to retie the "threads of time", our movement worked to remind the proletariat of the value of the historical lessons learned throughout its painful retreat. This did not mean limiting ourselves to a function of disseminating culture or propaganda for the petty doctrines of sects; it meant demonstrating that theory and action are dialectically inseparable elements and that the lessons of history are not pedantry or merely academic, but result from (to avoid the expression "experiences", which is the cream pie of all philistines) the dynamic balance sheets we have drawn from confrontations that have taken place between enormous real forces on a large scale, using even cases in which revolutionary forces were finally defeated. This is what we have called the "lessons of counter-revolutions", according to a classic Marxist criterion.

6. In its efforts to organize itself on its own foundations, our movement encountered other difficulties

resulting from excessively optimistic forecasts. Some felt that, just as the end of the first world war had engendered an immense revolutionary wave and the condemnation of the opportunist plague thanks to the action of the Bolsheviks, Lenin and the revolutionary victory in Russia, so the end of the second world war in 1945 would also produce a rapid reconstruction of the revolutionary party in line with its great traditions.

This perspective may have been generous, but it nonetheless represented a serious mistake, because it did not take into account the “hunger for democracy” that had been created in the proletariat not so much by the more or less ferocious exploits of Italian and German fascism, as by the disgusting illusion that all one had to do was restore democracy and everyone would return quite naturally to revolutionary positions.

Yet what constitutes one of the fundamental points of the Left’s patrimony is the consciousness that populist and social-democratic illusions represent the greatest danger, and that they do not lead to a revolution that once again makes the leap from Kerensky to Lenin, but instead are at the root of opportunism, which is the most powerful counter-revolutionary force.

For the Left, opportunism is not a moral phenomenon that reduces to the corruption of individuals, but a social and historical phenomenon consisting in the fact that, instead of combating the reactionary front of the bourgeois strata the proletariat vanguard tends to establish a weld between the proletariat and the middle classes. In this the social phenomenon of opportunism is no different from fascism, since the proletariat is subordinated in both cases to petty-bourgeois strata (“intellectuals”, a “political class” and a bureaucratic administrative class) which in reality are not classes endowed with their own historical vitality, but entirely contemptible marginal and parasitic strata. These are not the deserters from the bourgeoisie whose fatal passage to the camp of the revolution Marx describes, but, on the contrary, the best servants and defenders of capitalist preservation who live off surplus value extorted from proletarians.

The new movement almost succumbed to the illusion that there was still something to be done in bourgeois parliaments, placing itself, it is true, in the perspective of Lenin’s famous theses, which it sought to resuscitate without understanding that an irrevocable historical balance sheet has shown that this tactic was of no use, no matter how great and noble the revolutionary perspectives for the overthrow of parliaments from within might have been in 1920, at a time when all of history seemed on the verge of an eruption: the whole thing was instead reduced to a trivial revenge against fascism as in Modigliani’s exclamation: “Long live parliament”.

7. The problem was to transmit the historical experience of the generation that had lived through the glorious struggles after the first world war and the Leghorn split to the new generation of proletarians who had to be freed from the senseless enthusiasm generated by the fall of fascism, and bring it back to a

consciousness of the need for an autonomous action by the revolutionary party against all other parties, particularly against the social-democratic party, and to reconstitute forces determined to fight for the big bourgeoisie and its disgusting lackeys. To accomplish this task, the new movement organically and spontaneously found a structural form of activity which has proved itself in the past fifteen years. The party has accomplished aspirations which were already present in the Communist Left at the time of the 2nd International, and which subsequently expressed themselves in the course of its theoretical struggle against the first manifestations of opportunist danger in the 3rd International. This century old aspiration is the struggle against democracy and any influence by this repugnant bourgeois myth in perfect continuity with the Marxist critique, the fundamental texts and first documents of proletarian organizations, ever since the Manifesto of the Communist Party.

The history of mankind is not explained by the influence of exceptional individuals, by their strength and physical or even intellectual and moral value. It would be incorrect and anti-Marxist to consider the political struggle as a process of selection of such exceptional personalities, and democratism, which claims to accomplish this selection by counting the votes of all members of society, is even more alien to us than the ancient doctrines that reduce it to the work of the divinity or the prerogative of a social aristocracy. History is rather the history of the class struggle. It can only be deciphered and its lessons applied to battles that are not just theoretical and critical but also violent and armed, between different opposing classes, if one lays bare the economic relationships which, in recent given forms of production, are established between classes. This fundamental theorem had been confirmed by the sacrifices of innumerable militants who have fallen under the blows of capital, and whose generous efforts had been broken by the democratic mystification. The communist Left elaborated its revolutionary patrimony on this balance sheet of oppression, exploitation and treason.

It was therefore clear that the only path to follow was the one that would free us even more from the mortal democratic mechanism, not only in society and its various institutions, but in the revolutionary class itself, and especially in its political party. The Left’s aim could be accomplished neither by a miraculous investiture nor by the illumination of some thinker but would flow directly from a series of real, violent, bloody merciless struggles, even those that ended with the defeat of the revolutionary forces. There are historical traces of this in all the manifestations of the Left, whether at the time it fought against electoral blocs and the influence of Masonic ideology, against colonial wars and the monstrous first European war, which triumphed over the proletarian aspiration to desert from the army and turn the weapons against one’s own bourgeoisie (primarily by means of a vulgar propaganda about the conquest of freedom and democracy) or at the time when, in all the countries of Europe and behind the

Russian revolutionary proletariat the Left hurled itself into the struggle to destroy its direct enemy, which guarded the heart of the capitalist bourgeoisie: the social-democratic right-wing, and even more despicable centrism, which, slandering us as it had slandered Bolshevism, Leninism and the Russian soviet dictatorship, made every effort to rebuild a bridge – for us it was a trap – between the proletariat in motion and criminal democratic illusions. Alongside this, the desire to rid ourselves of all influence from democracy even in our vocabulary, is to be seen in the countless texts of the Left, some of which were enumerated at the beginning of these theses.

8. The scope, difficulty and historical duration of the work to be done by the new movement could never attract doubtful elements desirous of making a fast career, because rather than promise short-term historical success, they exclude such a possibility. Work has been organized on the basis of frequent meetings between delegates of the entire organization, in which there have been neither polemical debates nor disputes between opposed theses, nor for that matter the slightest sporadic manifestation of nostalgia for the sickness of democratic anti-fascism. In these meetings, there has been nothing to vote on or deliberate, since their goal was only to organically pursue the important task of transmitting the fertile lessons of the past through history to the present and future generations, to new vanguards that are destined to form in the proletarian masses. Beaten, tricked and deceived a hundred times, the masses will rise in insurrection against the suffering imposed on them by the purulent decomposition of capitalist society, and will at least feel in their living flesh how the extreme and most poisonous enemy are the ranks of populist opportunism of bureaucrats of big unions and parties, and of the ridiculous pleiad of alleged cerebral intellectuals and artists, “committed” or “engaged” in earning some loaves for their harmful activity, by entering through the traitor parties the rich classes’ service like bootlickers, and by serving as well the bourgeois and capitalist soul of the middle classes posing as “people”. This work and this dynamic is inspired by the classic teachings of Marx and Lenin, who presented the great historical revolutionary truths in the form of theses; and these reports and theses of ours, faithfully grounded in the great Marxist tradition, now over a century old, were transmitted by all those present – thanks partly to our press communications – at the local and regional meetings, where this historic material was brought into contact with the party as a whole. It would be nonsense to claim they are perfect texts, irrevocable and unchangeable, because all these many years we have always stated that this material was continuously being elaborated and was destined to receive a better and more complete form. Moreover, we have not ceased to note increasingly frequent and excellent contributions, in perfect agreement with the classic positions of the Left, coming from the whole party and even from very young comrades.

Only by developing our work in this direction will

we be able to hope for a quantitative growth in our membership and spontaneous proselytes who come to the party and who one day will make it into a more important social force.

9. Before we leave the question of the formation of the party after the second world war, it would be wise to re-affirm certain results which today have the force of characteristic theses for the party because, despite the small numbers of our movement, these are historical results and not inventions by useless geniuses or solemn resolutions by “sovereign” congresses.

The party very quickly recognized that, even in an extremely unfavorable situation and even in countries where this is still so, we must avoid the mistake of regarding the movement as a pure activity of written propaganda and political propaganda. Everywhere, always and without exception, the life of the party must be integrated into an incessant effort to insert itself into the life of the masses, even when its manifestations are influenced by directives opposed to ours. It is an old thesis of left Marxism that we must accept working in right-wing unions in which the workers are to be found; the party rejects the individualist attitude of those who disdain to set foot in them and even end up theorizing sabotage of the rare and timid strikes the present unions may risk. In some regions, the party has already conducted a not negligible activity in this direction, even though it always comes up against serious difficulties and opposed forces that are superior to its own, at least numerically. It is important to specify that even where this work has not been appreciably developed, we must reject the conception that would reduce our party to closed circles without any link to the outside, or content itself to seek new members in the world of opinions alone, which, in the eyes of Marxists is a false world as long as it is not treated as a superstructure of the world of economic conflicts. It would be just as false to wish to subdivide the party or its local sections into watertight compartments, each one devoting itself exclusively to theory, study, historical research, propaganda, proselytism or union activity in the spirit of our theory and our history these domains are absolutely inseparable and, in principle, accessible to any and all militants.

Another point that constitutes an historical gain the party can never renounce is the absolute refusal of any proposition that seeks to increase membership and enlarge its basis by means of common constitutive congresses with the numerous groups and grouplets that have been springing up since the end of the war, in elaborate incoherent and absurd theses, or have no other basis than the condemnation of Russian Stalinism and all its local derivatives.

10. Returning to the history of the first years of the Communist International, we will recall that the Russian leaders, who had behind them not only a profound knowledge of the doctrine and history of Marxism, but also the grandiose result of the revolutionary victory in October, regarded the theses, such

as Lenin's, as material that all militants had to accept, while recognizing that they could later be developed in the life of the international party. They never asked anyone to vote, because all the theses had to be accepted by unanimous consent, spontaneously confirmed by the entire periphery of the organization which, in those glorious years, lived in an atmosphere of enthusiasm and, in places, triumph.

The Left shared these generous aspirations, but it believed that, in order to achieve the results we sought, certain organizational and constitutional measures of the single communist party would have to be made more rigorous and more rigid, and all tactical norms would have to be made more precise in consequence.

When it appeared that a certain laxity – which we had denounced to Lenin himself – in these fundamental areas was beginning to have harmful effects, we were obliged to oppose our reports to those of the Executive, and our theses to its theses.

Unlike other opposition groups, including groups that have formed in Russia, including the Trotskyist current, we always carefully avoided giving our work in the International the form of a demand for democratic and electoral consultations of the whole rank-and-file, or demanding general elections for leadership committees.

The Left hoped to save the International and its healthy trunk, steeped in great traditions, without organizing split movements, and it always rejected the accusation that it had organized or wanted to organize faction or party within the party. Even when manifestations of a growing opportunism became increasingly obvious, it neither encouraged nor approved the system of individual resignations from the party or the International.

However, a hundred passages from the above-mentioned texts show that the Left, in its fundamental thinking, has always considered that the path leading to the suppression of elections of comrades or votes on general theses would also lead to the abolition of suspensions, expulsions and the dissolving of local groups, another shameless practice of pseudo-political democratism. On several occasions we spelled out the thesis that such disciplinary procedures would have to become more and more exceptional and gradually disappear.

If the opposite comes about, and, worse yet, if these disciplinary questions serve to impose the conscious or unconscious positions of a nascent opportunism – as was the case in 1924, 1925 and 1926 – rather than help to save healthy revolutionary positions this can only mean that the center has not fulfilled its duties correctly, that it has caused it to lose all real influence over the rank-and-file, and that it is less able to achieve discipline the louder it sings the praises of a perfectly artificial disciplinary rigor.

In the early years, the Left hoped that concessions being made with regard to organization and tactics were due only to the potential of that historical moment, that they would only be temporary, since they were tied to Lenin's perspective that envisaged major revolutions

in Central and, perhaps, Western Europe, and that later we would return to a clear line of conduct in total conformity with our central principles. But this hope gradually gave way to a certainty that the International was going to ruin, and that the new opportunism could not fail to assume the classic form of a glorification and exultation of democratic and electoral intrigue. The Left thus continued its historical fight in defense of communism, without even relinquishing its contempt for the democratic mechanism, even when some people might have believed it would be forced to do so against its will by veritable operations of electoral trickery within parties. When fascism falsified elections, it was correct to face this fact by urging the proletariat to take up the challenge arms in hand. But when these practices were adopted within communist parties, impudently perpetrated by the fathers of the new opportunism that was doing its utmost to reconquer the parties and the International, it was necessary to denounce them openly. Even though we could theoretically feel a certain ironic satisfaction at hearing them say "There are ten of us and we want all one thousand of you to submit", we were only too sure that they would succeed in their repugnant quest by stealing votes from workers by the million.

11. The Left's position has nonetheless always been firm and consistent: if disciplinary crises multiply to the point that they become the rule, this means that something is not right in the party's general leadership, and that the problem ought to be studied. Naturally, we will not renounce our own principles by committing the folly of believing that salvation lies in a search for more capable individuals and a replacement of leaders, both big and small, because these are nothing other than the typical positions of the historical antagonist of revolutionary left Marxism, opportunism.

Another of Marx's and Lenin's theses on which the Left is extremely firm is that the remedy for the problems and historical crises to which the proletarian party is necessarily exposed is not to be found in a constitutional or organizational formula that has the magic virtue of being able to prevent it from degenerating. This illusion originates in petty-bourgeois conceptions that go back to Proudhon and, through a long development, culminate in Italian Ordiovism, i. e., the conception that the social problem can be solved by a formula for the organization of the producers. Undeniable in the evolution of parties, it is possible to oppose the ascending curve of the historical party and the tormented line of formal parties with its zigzags, its ups and downs, and even brutal descents. Left Marxists, in fact, endeavor to act on the broken line of contingent parties to bring it back onto the continuous, harmonious curve of the historical party. This is a principled position, but it would be puerile to try to transform it into an organizational recipe. According to our historical line, we utilize not only the knowledge of humanity's past and present, but also a direct and sure knowledge of the future of society and humanity, as our doctrine predicts it with certain-

ty, nameely the classless and stateless society, which in a sense may be a party-less society, unless one understands a party to be an organ that does not struggle against other parties, but ensures the defense of the human species against risks it is forced to run by physical nature with its evolutionary and eventually catastrophic processes.

The Communist Left has always considered that it waged its long struggle against the unfortunate contingent vicissitudes of the formal parties of the proletariat by stating positions that flow continuously and harmoniously in the luminous stream of the historical party, which stretches across years and centuries without hearing, from the first formulations of the nascent proletarian doctrine to the future society, which we know well, to the extent we have learned well how to recognize the tissues and the nerve centers of this odious society, which the revolution will have to destroy.

Engels' proposal to adopt the excellent old German word *Gemeinwesen* (common being, i. e., social community) instead of the word state, was similar to Marx's opinion that the Paris Commune was no longer a state precisely because it was no longer a democratic corporation. Since Lenin, this question has needed no further theoretical clarification, and there is no contradiction in the inspired observation that, in appearance, Marx was much more for the state than Engels, insofar as it was Marx who noted more clearly that the dictatorship is a real state endowed with armed forces, a repressive police and political judiciary applying the terror without letting itself be hemmed in by legal scruples. The question is also related to Marx's and Engels' condemnation of the revisionist idealization that characterizes the German socialists' stupid formula of "free popular state": not only does this formula reek of bourgeois democratism, but it also destroys the whole notion of the irresistible struggle between classes with the destruction of the historical state of the bourgeoisie and the erecting on its ruins of the revolutionary dictatorship which, though it does not lay claim to eternal constitutions is nonetheless the most merciless state that ever existed.

The point was not to find a "model" of the future state in constitutional or organizational provisions, which is as stupid as trying to build a model for socialist states and societies for other countries in the first country conquered by the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But the idea of constructing a model of a perfect party would be just as vain, and perhaps even more so. Such an idea reflects the weaknesses of the decadent bourgeoisie which, powerless to defend its power, preserves its economic system as it goes to pieces, and even to master its theoretical thought, takes refuge in an absurd robotized technology, seeking a guarantee of survival in these stupid automatic formal models in order to escape from the scientific certainty which enabled us to pronounce an infallible sentence on the bourgeois epoch and its "civilization": death!

12. Among the doctrinal formulations that we will provisionally call "philosophical", and which are part

of the tasks of the Communist Left and its international movement, we should mention a thesis on which we have already made numerous clarifications, showing that it is entirely in conformity with the classical positions of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

The first truth that man can master is the notion of the future communist society. This notion makes no borrowings from this repugnant capitalist democratic or Christian society, and it absolutely does not seek a human heritage on which to base itself in the so-called positive science elaborated by the bourgeois revolution, which for us is a class science which has to be destroyed and replaced in its entirety, like the religions and scholastic creeds of preceding production forms with regard to the theory of economic transformations enabling us to go from capitalism – the structure of which we know quite well, whereas the official economists are incapable of understanding it – to communism, we can also do without the contributions of bourgeois science, and we have a similar contempt for bourgeois technique and technology, which everyone, opportunist traitors foremost, proclaims to be headed for great discovers. We have to build a science of society, its current existence and future development, in a revolutionary way. When this work of the human mind is complete – and it cannot be until after the demise of capitalism, its useless schools, science and technology – man will also, for the first time, write the science and history of physical nature and solve the great problems of the life of the Universe from its origins (which scientist who accept the dogma continue to call "creation") to its developments on the infinitely large and infinitely small scales in the most distant future, which is today undecipherable.

13. These, and still other, problems are a domain of the party's action which we maintain physically alive and which is not unworthy of being included in the line of the great historical party. But these elevated theoretical notions are not experiences that will allow us to resolve the small human quarrels and uncertainties which, unfortunately, will persist as long as there are among us individuals surrounded and dominated by the barbaric milieu of capitalist civilization. These developments cannot serve to define the mode of existence characteristic of a party free from opportunism: contained in the notion of organic centralism, this mode of existence asserts itself gradually, and cannot arise from a "revelation".

This obvious Marxist thesis belongs to the patrimony of the Left, and it can be found in all the polemics it directed against the degenerating Moscow center. The party is both a factor and a product of the historical development of situations and, barring a relapse into a new utopianism even more lamentable than the previous one, it can never be considered an external, abstract element capable of dominating the world around it.

That it is possible to work in the party to create a fiercely anti-bourgeois milieu which – to a great extent anticipates the features of communist society – was

stated long ago, for example by the young Italian communists in 1912.

But this just aspiration must not induce us to regard the ideal party as a monastic “phalanx” surrounded by impenetrable walls.

In our conception of organic centralism, we have always stated, in opposition to the Moscow centrists, that there is only one guarantee in the selection of party members. The party must tirelessly continue to express more clearly the guiding principles of its doctrine, its action and its tactics on the basis of a method unified in space and in time. Anyone who feels uneasy with these positions has the obvious option of leaving the party. Even after the conquest of power it is not possible to conceive of forced membership in the party. This is why disciplinary terrorism is alien to the correct understanding of organic centralism: such measures only

copy (even in their vocabulary) the constitutional practices the bourgeoisie has already used to excess, such as the ability of the executive power to dissolve and reconstitute elected assemblies—forms that have long been considered obsolete both for the proletarian party and for the historically transitory revolutionary state of the victorious proletariat. For any one who wants to join the party does not have to work out constitutional and legal blueprints of the future society, since such forms are characteristic of class societies and only of class societies. Anyone who, seeing the party advance along this clear, definite path which we have attempted to summarize in these theses for the Naples general meeting in July 1965 does not feel equal to the historical task, knows perfectly well he can adopt any other path different from ours. We have no other measures to take in the matter. ●

Summaries of previous issues of « communist program »

Nr. 9 (May 2023)

- Forty Years of Reconstituting the Class Party
- About the Russian-Ukrainian War. Against the War, on Both Sides, while the War Goes On
- Theses Project Presented by the Left to the Third Congress of the Communist Party of Italy (Lyon Theses - 1926)
 - Introduction
 - I. General Questions
 - II. International Questions
 - III. Italian Questions
- Iran. Arrests, Torture, Murders, Disappearances and Secret Burials: the Fundamental Religious Regime Uses an Iron Fist to Keep itself on its Feet

Nr. 8 (February 2022)

- Communist Program Resumes its Publication
- The Commune Was Great because of What it Was Forced to Be, not because of What its Creators Wanted it to Be («programme communiste», N° 51-52, 1974)
- In Defense of the Continuity of the Communist Program: Theses on the Tactics of the Communist Party of Italy (Rome theses 1922)
- The Party and the Trade Union Question («programme communiste», n° 53-54, 1971-1972)

Nr. 7 (september 1981)

- The Class Struggle Is More Alive

- Than Ever
- The Blida Trial
- Poland Confirms : The Need for Organization, the Need for the Party
- The Volcano of the Middle East:
 - The Agonizing Transformation of the Palestinian Peasants into Proletarians
 - The Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty and the New Imperialist Order in the Middle East
- The Democratic Principle
- The Social Imperialism of the Spartacists or An Obituary on a Living Tendency
- Reinforcement of the Bourgeois Dictatorship in Turkey
- The Chinese Proletariat Is Awakening

Nr. 6 (September 1980)

- The Era of Wars and Revolutions
- Terrorism and the Difficult Road to a General Resurgence of the Class Struggle
- Fundamental Theses of the Party 1. Introduction - 2. Fundamental Theses of the Party
- The Abolition of Wage Labour Means the Abolition of Production for the Sake of Production
- Nicaragua: The Sorry Path of Sandinism

Nr. 5 (June 1979)

- Terrorism and the Difficult Road to a General Revival of the Class Struggle

- Theses of the Communist Abstentionist Faction of the Italian Socialist Party – May 1920
- Force, Violence and Dictatorship in the Class Struggle - Part V. The Degeneration of Proletarian Power in Russia and the Question of the Dictatorship
- The Evolution of Inter-Imperialist Relations Since the Second World War
- Iran - The Legacy of the Shah: Capitalist Transformation Forced from Above
- Party Interventions:
 - May Day
 - Socialism Is International and Internationalist or It Is Not Socialism

Nr. 4 (April 1978)

- Once Again the Alternative: War or Revolution
- The Myth of «Socialist Planning» in Russia
- Force, Violence and Dictatorship in the Class Struggle. Part IV. Proletarian Struggle and Violence
- Terrorism and Communism. On the Events in Germany:
 - In Germany, a Holy Alliance Against Terrorism
 - Leaflets Distributed by Our Party
 - Today the Revolt of Baader, Tomorrow the Revolt of the Working Class
 - In Memory of Andreas Baader and His Comrades
- What Distinguishes Our Party
- Book Review: Proletarian Order

Supplementary Theses on the Historical Task, Action and Structure of the World Communist Party (Milan, April 1966)

1. The Naples Theses defend the continuity of positions which have constituted the patrimony of the Communist Left for over half a century. One will never succeed in understanding these positions and applying them naturally and spontaneously by consulting articles of codes or regulations. Nor can this application be guaranteed by electoral ballots or – worse – by colleges or tribunals convoked to pass judgment on questions raised by less enlightened elements. The praxis which we have always striven for and which we finally adopted, is quite different. The difficult work that we have done to achieve these results cannot be completed if we do not use the vast historical material taken from the living experience of the revolutionary movement during the various cycles of its long struggle, material that we have assiduously striven to order and distribute collectively, both before and after the publication of theses.

2. Our present small movement is well aware that in the quite barren historical phase we are now passing through it is very difficult at such great historical distance to use the lessons of momentous past struggles (not only resounding victories, but also bloody defeats and inglorious retreats). In our current's correct, unreformed vision, neither doctrinal rigor nor profundity of historical critique are enough to forge the revolutionary program, because it derives its vital lymph from a line with the masses in revolt in periods when they are irresistible compelled to fight. This dialectical link is particularly difficult to establish today, when the painfully slow development of the crisis of senile capitalism and the continued betrayals of opportunist currents have extinguished the masses' elan. While recognizing that the party's influence is limited, we must be aware that we are preparing the real – both healthy and effective – party for the historical epoch when the infamies of contemporary society will once again push the insurgent masses into the vanguard of history; we must realise that their revolt may once again fail if it lacks the party – not plethoric, but compact and powerful – which is the indispensable organ of the revolution. As onerous as this may be, we must surmount the contradictions of this period by drawing the dialectical lesson of the bitter disillusionments of the past and by courageously pointing out the dangers the Left recognized and exposed when they first appeared, and all the insidious forms in which the terrible opportunist infec-

tion has manifested itself in the course of history.

3. We will therefore develop an even more thorough activity of critical appraisal of past battles and the repeated reaction of the revolutionary Marxist Left to the historical waves of deviationism and vacillations which, for more than a century, have posed any obstacle to the forward march of the proletarian revolution only by referring to these phases when the conditions of an ardent class struggle existed but the factor of revolutionary theory and strategy were lacking, and above all by retracing the history of events that destroyed the 3rd International (when everyone thought the point of no return had been passed forever) and recalling the critical positions taken by the Left to stave off the growing danger and the disaster which unfortunately ensued, will we be able to draw the lessons which cannot and do not pretend to be recipes for success: rather they are a severe warning to overcome the weaknesses and defend ourselves against the dangers and pitfalls into which history has so often caused forces that nonetheless seemed devoted to the cause of the revolution to fall.

4. The brief illustrations we give here must be understood not as a direct allusion to errors or difficulties that might threaten our current work, but as an additional contribution to transmitting the experience of past generations. This experience was formed in a phase in which there had already been an excellent restoration of the correct doctrine (the proletarian dictatorship in Russia; Lenin's and the Bolshevik's work on theoretical questions; the founding of the 3rd International in terms of practical work) and in which, on the other hand, in Italy and in the rest of the world, thereal revolutionary struggle of communist parties was at a fever pitch with broad mass participation.

These factors are today historically and chronologically quite "out of phase", but their correct utilization remains a vital necessity for the present as well as for the future, which we know with certainty will be more fertile than the present.

5. One of the fundamental characteristics of the phenomenon Lenin, following Marx and Engels, called opportunism, and which he never ceased to combat mercilessly is that it prefers a shorter, more comfortable and less arduous road to the long, difficult road,

strewn with obstacles which is the only one on which there can be a full and complete convergence between the assertion of our principles and program, i. e., our final goals, and immediate and direct practical action in the real situation of the moment. Lenin was right when he said that it was not possible to use the extreme difficulty of communist and revolutionary action in parliament as an argument in support of the tactical proposal to renounce electoral and parliamentary action from that point on (the end of the first world war), since the armed insurrection and control of the long and complex economic transformation of the social world wrested by violence from capitalism would assuredly be even more difficult. We, on the other hand showed that a preference for employing the democratic method could obviously be explained as a tendency to prefer the comfortable rites of legal action to the tragic difficulties of illegal action, and that such a practice would not fail to cause the whole communist movement to relapse into the fatal social-democratic error, from which we had just escaped through no less than heroic efforts.

Like Lenin, we knew that opportunism is not a moral or ethical defect, but that it corresponds (as Marx and Engels had already shown in the case of England at the end of the 19th century) to the predominance among the workers of positions characteristic of intermediate, petty-bourgeois strata more or less consciously inspired by the parent ideas of the ruling class, i. e., by its social interests. Lenin's powerful and generous position on parliamentary action as an element of the struggle for the violent destruction of the bourgeois system and the democratic apparatus itself, and its replacement by the proletarian dictatorship, would, in our view, lead to subjecting proletarian deputies to the worst influences of petty-bourgeois weaknesses, which would culminate in the negation of communism and betrayal, and possibly an overt and venal selling-out to the enemy.

From this confirmation, obtained on an immense historical scale (even if such a broad generalization may seem not to be contained literally in Lenin's teaching – we too learned in the school of history), we draw the lesson that the party must avoid any decision or choice that might be dictated by the desire to obtain good results for less work or sacrifice. Such a desire may seem innocent but it translates the petty-bourgeois tendency toward laziness and responds to the influence of the fundamental capitalist norm of obtaining maximum profits with the slightest cost.

6. Another constant and recurring aspect of the opportunist phenomenon as it rose within the Second International and as it triumphs today after the even worse ruin of the Third, is that of showing at the same time, both the worst deviation from party principles, and a pretended admiration for the classical texts, for the words and work of big masters and chiefs. A constant character of petty-bourgeois hypocrisy is the servile praise of the power of the victorious leader, of the greatness of famous authors' texts, of the eloquent

speaker's fluency; while in practice the most despicable and contradictory degenerations are displayed. A body of theses is therefore worthless, if those who welcome it with a literary-type enthusiasm are not able afterwards, in practical action, to understand its spirit and to respect it; and try to disguise their deviation from it, through an emphasized but platonic adherence to the theoretical texts.

7. Another lesson we can draw from events in the life of the Third International, (which the Left often pointed out at the time in criticisms that can be found in our texts): the lesson of the futility of "ideological terror".

Whereas our doctrine spreads through contact with real forces in ferment in the social milieu, this disastrous method consisted in seeking to replace this natural process with a forced indoctrination of recalcitrant or errant elements, either for reasons that were stronger than individuals and the party, or for reasons related to the imperfection of the party itself, by humiliating and mortifying them publicly in congresses under the very eyes of the class enemy, even when they had represented our party and led our action in episode of political and historical significance. Imitating the fideist and pietist method of penitence and *mea culpa*, people fell into the habit of obliging these elements to confess their errors publicly, most often placing them before the alternative of resuming or losing an important position in the organizational apparatus. This truly philistine method, worthy of bourgeois morality, has never improved any member of the party or protected anyone from the danger of degeneration. When the revolutionary party is developing fully and is advancing toward victory, militants obey spontaneously and totally, not blindly and under compulsion. Discipline to the center corresponds (as our theses and the supporting documentation show) to the perfect harmony between the rank and file's and the center's duties and activities. This cannot be replaced by a bureaucratic intervention that betrays an anti-Marxist voluntarism.

The capital importance of this point for a correct understanding or organic centralism is explained by the terrible memory of the confessions wrenched from the great revolutionary leaders who were massacred in Stalin's purges, the useless self-criticisms to which they had to subject themselves under penalty of being expelled from the party and defamed as traitors: infamies and absurdities that the no less bigoted and bourgeois method of "rehabilitation" will never erase. The growing abuse of such methods only marks the triumphant progress of the latest and most terrible opportunist wave.

8. In order for the party's action to be truly organic and have a collective function that surpasses and eliminates all personalism and individualism, the party must distribute its members among the various duties and activities that constitute its life. The succession of comrades in these tasks is a natural fact that cannot obey rules similar to those governing bourgeois bu-

reaucratic careerism. In the party there is no competition to win more or less elevated or prominent positions. We must strive organically for this distribution of duties, which is not an imitation of the bourgeois division of labor, but a natural adaptation of the complex, structured organ of the party to its function.

We are well aware that the dialectic of history leads every combat organ to perfect its methods of attack by employing the enemy's techniques. We deduce from this that in the phase of armed struggle communists will have a military apparatus with an organization that will ensure the best results from concerted action. But this truth must not be copied senselessly for all even non-military ones. The channel along with directives are transmitted must be a single one, but this lesson from bourgeois bureaucracy must not cause us to forget how this rule is corrupted and degenerates, even when it is adopted by workers' associations. The organic character of the party by no means requires each comrade to see the personification of the party's strength in one or another comrade who has been specifically designated to transmit orders coming from above. This transmission among the various molecules that make up the organ-party is always conducted in both directions, and the dynamic of each unit is integrated into the historical dynamics of the whole. Unnecessary abuse of organizational formalism has

always been and will always be a stupid and suspicious defect, and a danger.

9. Capitalism, the historical form of production that mystifies and dissimulates the monopoly of a minority class behind the myth of the right of all individuals to private property, needed great names with a widespread reputation to designate the articulations, structures and stages of its evolution, which has now become an involution. Through the long bourgeois cycle, whose sinister history weighs like a yoke on our rebellious shoulders, it was originally the most capable and strongest person who obtained the greatest reputation and sought supreme power. Today, under the dominance of petty-bourgeois philistinism, the most vile and weakest individual can become a great personage thanks to the lurid methods of advertising.

Our party, whose task is so difficult, is now making every effort to free itself once and for all from the wave of betrayal which, it was thought, could be identified with the names of illustrious persons, and to reject definitively the method which, in achieving objectives and securing successes, relies on fabricating a stupid fame by making publicity for even more names. Nowhere along its tortuous path should the party lack the will and courage to fight for these objectives, which truly anticipate the history and society of tomorrow. ●

Who We Are and What We Want

This text was first published with this title in French, in the first issue of “Le Prolétaire” in July 1963; an Italian translation of large extracts was published in various issues of “Il programma comunista” from October 1963 onwards. In 1969 it was published with a few modifications and the addition of other articles in the form of booklets in Italian and French; an English version was published later under the title: “the party’s programme”. We have taken this translation and corrected it according to the original.

On the Track of the Great Marxist Tradition

Based on its programme (see on the cover), the International Communist Party claims in their integrity the fundamental doctrinal principles of Marxism : the dialectical materialism as a system of conception of the world and of human history, the fundamental economic doctrines contained in Marx’s Capital as a method of interpretation of the capitalist economy, the programmatic formulations of the Manifesto of the Communist Party as an historical and political lay-out for the emancipation of the world’s working class, the whole system of principles and methods shown by the victorious experience of the Russian revolution, the theoretical and practical work of Lenin and of the Bolshevik party in the crucial years of the rise to power and the civil war; the classic theses of the Second Congress of the Communist International, represented the confirmation, the restoration and the consequent development, of these principles which are today still more emphasised by the lessons of the tragic revisionist wave which began in 1926-27 under the name of « socialism in one country ». This wave, that only conventionally we tie up with the name of the individual Stalin, because it originated from the pressure of objective social forces towering above Russia, owing to the failed extension in the whole world of the revolutionary fire of October 1917 – pressure on which it wasn’t believed to oppose in time a programmatic and tactical barrier, that, even if unable to avoid the defeat, would have made less difficult and tormenting the rebirth of the International Communist Movement, – had much more lethal effects than the opportunist disease that troubled the brief existence of the First International (anarchist deviations), than the one that threw down the Second in the abyss of the adhesion to the Union Sacrée and then to the 1914 imperialistic war (gradualism, parliamentarism, democratism). Thus today, 30 years after the Second World War, the situation of the workers’ movement appears a thousand times more critical than in the days of the vertiginous collapse of the Second International at the outbreak of the First War.

The Third International was born in 1919 with a

programme that, re-establishing the basis of the Marxist doctrine, was breaking irrevocably with the democratic, gradualist, parliamentary and pacifistic illusions of the Second (wrecked moreover in the more ignoble chauvinism and warmongering during the war) ; and the fact that, in a certain measure, the danger of an involution of the Communist International outlined itself since the very beginning both with a too hurried way of constituting the communist Party especially in Western Europe, and with very elastic tactics adopted to « conquer the masses », doesn’t diminish at all the immense historical contribution of Lenin, Trotsky and of the old Bolshevik guard. This method and these tactics for the creators of the Red October, were not signifying and should not signify, in any case, the neglect of the basic principle of the violent conquest of power, of the destruction of the bourgeois parliamentary and democratic state apparatus, of the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship directed by the Party, and their application could avoid disastrous effects if the revolution, as it was hoped, would rapidly flare up in the whole world; but, as the Left warned, since the Second Congress in 1920 there was the risk of having the most negative consequences on the insecure body of parties often collected at random, not sufficiently immunised against the possibility of social democratic relapse as soon as the wave had flown back, and unfortunately, it did flow back, bringing to the surface not only and not so much the men, but above all the cancerous illnesses of a too recent past.

The criterion which made us oppose the tactics of the « united political front », first, and the tactics of the « worker-peasant governments » (equivocal reserve formula in place of the unmistakable « proletarian dictatorship »), after ; the criterion which made us deplore the method of the direct adhesion to the International of organisations independent from the local Communist Party and of the acceptance of sympathiser parties, like in rejecting the praxis of infiltration of pseudo-workers or even bourgeois parties (like the Kuomintang), and, worse still, of the « blocks », even if temporary, with parties apparently related or contingently aligned on « similar » positions, was and remains the following: the reinforcement of the communist parties depends not on tactical manoeuvres or on displays of subjective voluntarism, but on the objective revolutionary course that hasn’t any reason

to obey the canons of a continuous and linear progress . The rise to power can be far or near, and in both cases, but above all in the first, preparing for it means repelling any action likely to give rise in the communist organisation to an opportunism similar to that of the Second International, namely to a break of the inseparable bond between means and ends, tactics and principles, immediate and ultimate objectives, which result can only be the return to electoralism and to democratism in politics and to reformism in the social fields.

Since 1926, the contrast transferred directly on the political level and terminated in the break between the International and the Left. The two questions on the carpet were « socialism in one country » and, soon after, « antifascism ». « Socialism in one country » is a double negation of Leninism, firstly because it contrabands as socialism what Lenin used to call « capitalistic development in the European manner in the petty-bourgeois and semi-medieval Russia », and secondly because detaches the destinies of the Russian revolution from those of the worldwide proletarian revolution. **It is the doctrine of the counter-revolution:** to the inside it justified the repression against the old Marxist and international guard, starting with Trotsky; outside the borders of the U.S.S.R. it favoured the crushing of the left currents by the centre fractions, often direct social-democratic survivals, « totalling surrendering to the bourgeoisie », (Trotsky).

The principal manifestation of this neglect of the programmatic supports of the worldwide communist struggle was precisely the substitution of the watchword of the revolutionary conquest of power, with that of the defence of democracy against fascism almost as if the two regimes would not both be defenders of the capitalist regime in front of the danger of a new proletarian revolutionary wave, alternating themselves at the helm of the State, according to the imperious demands of the dynamics of the class struggle. The phenomenon expressed itself not only in the Third International after the fall of the German bastion, owing to the victory of Hitler in 1933, but also in the « Trotskyist » opposition which used the Stalinist watchword in the defence of democracy against fascism, even if showing it as a « phase » or « stage » to go through before being able to ask for the maximum demands of the revolutionary proletariat. In both cases it brought to the destruction of the working class as a political distinctive force; with objectives antithetical to those of any other social strata, to the mobilization of the workers of different countries for the defence, first of the democratic institutions, then of the « fatherland », to the rebirth and to the exasperation of the chauvinistic hatreds ; at last to the dissolution, also formal of the Communist International and to the temporary annihilation of any yearning for its reconstruction.

The working class being joined to the bloody wagon of the imperialist war, 1939-1945, the slender forces of communism, international and internationalist, if and where they had survived, were not therefore able to do anything to influence the situation in any way : the

cry of « transformation of the imperialist war into civil war », first announcement in 1914 of the Russian revolution of 1917, fell in the vacuum – and in contempt. Not only did the post-war period maintain the naive « hopes » of an expansion of revolutionary communism at the tips of the Russian bayonets, but saw the triumph of a neo-ministerialism even worse than that of the Second International right-wings, because exercised in the more difficult period of the capitalistic reconstruction in favour of the restoration of the State authority, of the rescue of the national economy (reconstruction loans, austerity acceptance in the name of the superior interests of the nation, etcetera) and, later, in the « popular democracies, in favour of the re-establishment of an order passed for « Soviet » (Berlin, Poznań, Budapest). At the helm of the State, the « communist » parties affiliated at the Kremlin were driven out again to the margins of an « opposition » merely parliamentary, by the allies of war and of « peace », in a world increasingly more fascist ; but far from finding again Lenin's master way (a thing that on the other hand they would not have been able to do, not even supposing they would have wanted it). They fell still more in the abyss of a complete revision of the Marxist doctrine, until touching the bottom of these years, in which it is not foreseen or any more predicted the end, either of capitalism or of bourgeois parliamentarism, instead it is supposed to be defended « against » the attacks of the bourgeoisie itself, which would have forgotten its glorious past ; and it is not even foreseen or predicted, the development of that so-called struggle between « socialist field » and « capitalist field » to which Stalinism has arrived to reduce the class struggle, as on an international scale the watchword has become « co-existence and peaceable competition ».

It is from the bottom of this precipice, anticipating the proletarian revolt that comes the cry « Working men of all countries unite! » and « Proletarian dictatorship ». It is our cry.

For the Restoration of the Revolutionary Marxist Theory

BACK TO « CATASTROPHISM »

On the level of the general doctrine of historical and social revolution, the political degeneration, at this point complete of the old communist movement, brought to the denial of Marx's catastrophic vision ; neither the class contrasts, nor the conflicts among States, will end up – they say – in the violent struggle, in armed conflicts. Fundamentally the prospective is at the same time that of an international peace, named **pacif co-**

existence and that of a social peace guaranteed by the conservative and reactionary watchword of a « new democracy » based on the « democratic planning », on the structural reforms, and on the « struggle against the monopolies ». In reality, « Stalinist » communism (and still more « post-Stalinist ») is only an apology of Progress, to the extent in which it exalts the increase of production and productivity ; it is only an apology of Capitalism, to the extent in which it exalts the growth of trade.

Opposing these positions, which are the pure and simple reproduction of the ones of the « progressive » bourgeoisie of the second half of the 19th century, the Marxist positions remain unchanged : under capitalism, increase of production and of productivity signifies growing exploitation of work by the capital, an enormous increase of the unpaid part of work, of surplus value. The workers consumption, – the « reserve » of the surplus value that the working class constitutes whether in individual or social form (assistance against illness and old age ; family legislation etc.) can grow ; at the same rate increase the subjection of the producer to the capital and the insecurity of its condition, tied to the ups and downs of the market economy. The class antagonism is not at all subdued ; in fact it is driven to its maximum.

Extension of trade signifies extension of rule of the underdeveloped countries by developed countries, and progressive embittering of the naturel concurrence between civilised countries. Connecting the different peoples, the different continents in the meshes of a still more worldwide economy which is a real, even if involuntary, conquest – it shows dialectically a ‘negative’ aspect that all its apologisers pretend to ignore : the preparation of commercial and therefore financial and industrial crises, the outlet of which, today like yesterday, can only be the imperialistic war. Moreover, an increasing part of the productive forces is today wasted, not just in the production of the « goods and services » that the « honest trade » and « at mutual interests » dear to the opportunists of the West and of the East « would lavish » to all « humanity », but in the production of destructive weapons which function is much more economical than military.

In front of more classically reformist arguments of post-Stalinism, the positions of revolutionary Marxism are those that were at the time of social-democracy : modern capitalism is not at all characterised (Engels already verified it!) by « absence of a plan » ; but the « planning » alone, whichever it is, cannot at all characterise socialism. Not even the disappearance (more or less real) of the social figure of the capitalist, that is supposed to distinguish the Russian society of today, is enough to prove the abolition of capitalism itself (Marx already verified it!), since capitalism is nothing but the reduction of the modern worker to the wage-earning conditions and where this survives, that continues to survive.

The apology of capitalism and the reformism of the old-fashioned social-democrat style, which fusion is characteristic of the « communism » of Russian or

Chinese mark, even worse than the classic reformism, ally themselves to a defeatism that, as psychological and ideological reflection of the disintegration of the revolutionary force of the proletariat, sterilizes even the revolt that this apology and this reformism stirs up in certain workers’ strata ; it consists, first of all, in denying the working class every possibility of surpassing the exasperated concurrence that divides it today, of rebelling itself against the despotism of the needs created by the capitalistic prosperity, of escaping from the stunniness generated by the stupidity of the organisation of welfare, of amusements, or « culture », to rally itself in a revolutionary party ; and secondly consists in admitting, implicitly or explicitly, that the armaments possessed today by the ruling class are invincible. All these positions are equivalent to the abdication of every revolutionary hope in face of the actual, but for us historically transitory, omnipotence of capital.

Also in this, the Marxist positions are those of always ; capitalism divides but at the same time concentrates and organises the proletariat ; and at the end the concentration has the upper hand on the division. Capitalism corrupts and weakens but unwillingly revolutionarily educates the proletariat, and in the end such education has the upper hand on the corruption. In effect, all the sophisticated products of the « pleasure industries » are just as impotent in soothing the increasing disposition of social life (either urban or rural) as the tranquillizers of modern medicine are impotent in restoring to the man of the capitalistic society the harmony in relations with himself and others, that the « modern life » namely, « capitalistic », destroys. Much more than in these kinds of corruptions, the strength of capital lies, today like yesterday, in the crushing of the producer with the length of the working day, of the working week, of the working year and of the working life. But capitalism **must**, by force of circumstances, historically limit this length ; it does so in a slow, miserable way, with continuous steps back, **but cannot avoid doing it**, and the consequence of that, like Marx and Engels foresaw, will necessarily be revolutionary, if we think that on the other hand it is similarly obligated to **instruct** (dulling them at the same time ; why not ?) those that will become its « gravediggers ». Therefore, there are two main perspectives : 1) the explosion of a crisis as in 1929 (for us the most likely) and 2) a long historical phase of expansion and « prosperity » ; but only those who openly practise defeatism can deduce (as on different points of view Maoists, Castroists, Guevarists, etc., are doing) from the disorganization of the working class a definite historical condemnation, « sociologically determined » impotence to the reconstruction of the Party and of the Class International, and then deduce the need that other social strata or sociological categories (peasants, students and so on) would take its place at the vanguard of the social revolution.

It is all the more absurd to believe that, with the

superior social power that the same development of capitalism gives to the wage-earning class this has become impotent to carry out the first duty of any social revolution in history : the disarmament of the class enemy, the totalitarian appropriation of its military potential.

BACK TO REVOLUTIONARY « TOTALITARIANISM »

On the political and social level, the final victory of democratism on the proletarian revolutionary doctrine in the old communist movement succeeded in presenting the « resistance to totalitarianism », as the task both of the proletariat and of all the social strata oppressed by capital.

This orientation, whose first historical manifestation was war and pre-war anti-fascism, didn't spare any of the parties bound to Moscow leading to the negation of the **sole party**, undoubtedly communist and Leninist form at the beginning, as a necessary guide to the revolution and to the proletarian dictatorship. Whilst in the « popular democracies » of the so-called « socialist camp » the power is in the hands of popular or national « fronts », that is, of parties or « leagues » that explicitly incarnate a block of several classes, the « communist » parties operating in the « bourgeois camp » have solemnly abjured the doctrine of the class revolutionary violence as the **only** way to power, and of the dictatorship exerted by the class through **solely** the Communist Party as the **only** way to maintain it ; they promise to the courted interlocutors of other parties (Socialist, Catholic and others) a « socialism » jointly managed by more parties representing the « people ». Welcomed favourably by all the enemies of the proletarian revolution, who in the « communism » of Stalinist inspiration, repelled everything that reminded them of the striking Red October, this orientation is not only defeatist, but illusive. As the proletariat does not claim any **liberty** in the picture of capital's despotic regime and therefore doesn't accept the flag of democracy, neither « formal » nor « real » thus as an integral part of his programme, the **suppression of all the liberties** for social groups bound to the capital, in the pattern of the **despotic** regime that, once in power, he will impose on the defeated class. If the bourgeoisie masks his own dictatorship behind the democratic fiction, the communists, who, since the time of the Manifesto « disdain to conceal their views and aims », proclaim openly that the revolutionary conquest of power, as an unnecessary prelude to the social palingenesis, signifies at the same time the totalitarian rule of the former oppressed class, through its party, on the former dominant class.

Anti-totalitarianism is a demand of those classes that move on the same social basis as that of the capitalist class (private appropriation of production means and products, but they are invariably crushed by it) ; it is the ideology – common to the multi-coloured movements of « intellectuals », « students »,

etc., which infest today's political scene – of the urban and petty bourgeoisie, grasped at the myths of small production, of the sovereignty of the individual and of « direct democracy ». It is therefore bourgeois and anti-historical at the same time and for these these motives anti-proletarian. The ruin of the petty bourgeoisie under the hammer blows of big capital is historically inevitable, and socially constitutes a step forward towards the socialist revolution as it makes effective the true and only historical contribution of capitalism: the production centralization, the socialization of productive activity.

The proletariat, for whom returning (even if possible) to less concentrated forms of production would mean deserting his own historical task of a completely **social** production and **disposal of products**, doesn't recognise as his own duty neither the defence of the petty bourgeoisies against big business (equally both enemies of socialism) nor the adoption in **politics** of that pluralism which it does not have any reason to accept on an **economic and social** level.

How reactionary is the watchword of the « struggle against the monopolies » in defence of the small production, in the same way are reactionary all those movements that consider the revolutionary course as a gradual conquest of peripheric « power » islands made by undifferentiated proletarian organisms on a factory basis (expressing so-called « direct democracy »), thus ignoring the **central** problem of the conquest of political power, of the destruction of the capitalistic state, and then of the Party as centralising organ the class ; by the same token are reactionary those movements which present as an already achieved socialism, a system based on « self-managed » firms, thus destroying the possibility of that « **social production regulated by the social prevision** » in which Marx indicated the « political economy of the working class », and that can be achieved only by getting over the basic productive cells of the capitalist economy and the « blind rule » of the market in which they find the only, chaotic and unforeseeable connective element.

Before and after the rise to power, in politics or in economy, the revolutionary proletariat doesn't and cannot make any concession to anti-totalitarianism, a new version of that idealistic and utopian anti-authoritarianism that Marx and Engels denounced in the long polemic with the anarchists and that Lenin in **State and Revolution** demonstrated, being convergent with the democratic and gradualist reformism. For what concerns the **small producers**, the socialist proletariat will not use the cruelty with capitalism has shown in all its history ; but, **for what concerns the small production and its political, ideological and religious reflexes**, its action will be infinitely more decided, rapid and, in short, totalitarian. The proletarian dictatorship will spare mankind the infinite amount of violence and misery that under capitalism constitutes its « daily bread », but will be able to do it precisely in as much as it will not hesitate to use the force, the intimidation and, if necessary, the most

decided repression against any social group, small or large, which would obstruct the fulfilment of its historical mission.

Concluding, whoever joins the notion of socialism to any form of liberalism, democratism, localism, multipartitism, or worse, anti-partitism, places himself outside the history, outside the track that leads to the reconstitution of the Party and of the International, both totalitarianly communist.

BACK TO INTERNATIONALISM

Since 1848, that is to say since the appearance of the Manifesto of the Communist Party, communism and the fight for the revolutionary, transformation of the society are for definition international and internationalists: « The Workers have no fatherland » ; « The united action at least in the civilised countries is one of the first conditions of the emancipation of the proletariat ».

At the moment of its constitution in 1864, the International Association of Workers inscribed in its general statutes the recognition that « all the efforts to reach the great end of the economic emancipation of the working class are up till now unsuccessful for the lack of solidarity among the various categories of workers in every country and for the absence of a fraternal union among the working classes of different countries », and proclaimed with force « that the emancipation of the workers is neither a local nor national problem, but a social problem, that embraces all the countries in which exists the modern society and which solution depends on the practical and theoretical collaboration of the more progressive countries ». In 1920 the Communist International born from the long struggle of the worldwide internationalist Left for the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war whether in the more democratic of the republics or in the more autocratic of the empires, or the most constitutional and parliamentary of monarchies, repossessed the statutes of the First International and proclaimed that « the new Workers' International is created for the organisation of common actions of the workers of different countries, aiming for the sole end of the knocking-down of capitalism, the foundation of the proletarian dictatorship and of an International Soviet Republic for the complete elimination of all the classes for the achievement of socialism, the first stage of the communist society », adding that « the organisational apparatus of the Communist International must assure the workers of every country the chance of receiving in every given moment the biggest possible aid by the organised proletarians of ether countries. » The thread of this great tradition has been broken during the first post-war period by the joint action of the theory and praxis of « socialism in one country » and by the substitution of this struggle for democracy against fascism in place of the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship. The first direction released the destinies of Russia's victorious revolution from the ones of the worldwide proletarian

revolutionary movement conditioning the growth of this to the fickle diplomatic interests of the Soviet **State** ; the second, by dividing the world into fascist and democratic countries, but ordering the proletarians living in totalitarian regime to fight against their own governments not for the revolutionary conquest of power, but for the restoration of the democratic and parliamentary institutions, and by ordering the proletarians living in the democratic regimes to **defend** their own governments and, if needed, to fight for them against their brothers on the other side of the border, has tied the destiny of the working class to that of the respective « fatherlands » and of their bourgeois institutions.

The dissolution of the Communist International in the course of the Second World War was the unavoidable result of this overturning of doctrine, strategy and tactics. From the new imperialistic massacre appeared states in Eastern Europe which call themselves socialists but which proclaim and furiously defend their own « **national** sovereignty » ; calling themselves brothers, while isolated by jealously kept **borders** ; calling themselves members of a « socialist camp » while divided by economic contrasts to solve which, when they reach a point of extreme tension, only remains the use of brute force (Hungary Czechoslovakia) or where the military intervention is not possible, give away to deep lacerations as in the cases of China and Yugoslavia. In their turn the parties not yet in « power » defend the possession of their own particular national way to socialism (which is for them all **the same** way of abjuring the revolution and the proletarian dictatorship and of a complete adhesion to the democratic, parliamentary and reformist ideology) and present themselves, in a proud defence of their autonomy from the other « brother » parties, as the heirs of the purest political and patriotic traditions of the respective bourgeoisies, ready to pick up – to use Stalin's phrase – the flag that these have dropped.

In such a situation, internationalism has become a word still more empty and rhetoric than the phrase of the « international peoples brotherhood », that Marx in « **Critique of the Gotha programme** » violently flung in the face of the German workers' Party as « borrowed » by the bourgeois league for freedom and « peace ». No international solidarity is possible – and no actual international solidarity has further taken place, as a matter of fact, not even in moment of hard social tension (miners' strikes in Belgium, dockers' strikes in England, revolts of black proletarians of the American car industry, general strike in France in 1968, etc.) – since it is proclaimed that every proletariat and every « communist » party have to resolve, and **are the only ones able to resolve, their own particular problems**, and each one of them sets up as defender of the fatherland's institutions and traditions, of the national economy, and even of the sacred « borders ». What for, besides, an internationalism not with words but « with facts » (Lenin) if the message to the world of the « new parties » is that of pacific co-existence and of emulative competition between capitalism and

« socialism »?

The proletarian movement will revive in the fullness of its historical features only on the condition of acknowledging that in any country there is one unique way towards its emancipation, and similarly unique must be its Party – unique in doctrine, unique in principles, programme and practical rules of action – and not a hybrid whole of confusedly conflicting programmes, « but an organic and secure overcoming of all the particular pushes of proletarian groups, **in a synthetic force acting in the sense of the world revolution** » (Party's. Political platform 1945).

* * *

The abdication of the communist movement to its international revolutionary duties mirrors, in a similarly crude way, in the complete and shameful desertion of the classic Marxist position in front of the insurrectional struggles of the colonial peoples against the imperialist oppression, struggles that in the second post-war period have assumed forms of extreme violence while the proletariat of the imperialistic metropolis was cowardly subdued to the yoke of the bourgeois « reconstruction ». In front of the **armed** struggles of the colonial peoples which already in the first post-war period were shaking the imperialism, in 1920 the 2nd Congress of the Communist International and the 1st Congress of Eastern Peoples outlined the grand perspective of a unique world strategy which welded the defeatism of the social insurrection in the capitalist metropolis with the national revolt in the colonies and semi-colonies. This revolt, politically led by the young colonial bourgeoisies, pursued the **bourgeois** aims of unity and national independence, but, at a juncture which « puts on the agenda on a worldwide scale the proletarian dictatorship » (Lenin), on the one hand the active intervention in the struggle of the young communist parties (politically and organisationally **independent**) at the head of gigantic workers' and peasant masses, and on the other hand the attack of the metropolitan proletariat against the citadel of colonialism, would have made possible the stepping over of the national-revolutionary parties and the transformation of originally bourgeois revolutions into proletarian revolutions, according to the scheme of the revolution in permanence traced by Marx and carried out by the Bolsheviks in the semi-feudal Russia of 1917. The axis of this strategy was and could only be, the revolutionary proletariat of the « more civilised » countries, that is, more economically advanced, because their victory and **only that** would have allowed the **economically** retrograde countries colonial world to overcome the historical handicap of their backwardness : once master in the West of power and of the means of production, the metropolitan proletariat would have acquainted with it the economy of the former colonies through a « world economic plan » which, unitary like the one towards which capitalism leans, wouldn't, as opposed to this, have wanted any

oppression or conquest, any extermination or exploitation ; and the colonial peoples, thanks to the « subordination of the immediate interests of the revolutionarily victorious countries to the **general interests** of the world revolution », would have achieved socialism without having to get through the horrors of a capitalistic phase, more ferocious, because more compelled to rocket to the top to bring itself up to the level of the more advanced economies. No part of this powerful edifice has been left standing by the opportunism, since the years 1926-27 when the destinies of the Chinese revolution were decided. In the colonies the so-called communist parties, above all after the Second World War (far from « placing themselves at the head of the exploited masses » **to speed up the separation of them** from the shapeless block of more classes established under the flag of national independence), placed themselves at the tow of the indigenous bourgeoisie and even of « anti-imperialistic » feudal classes and powers, or when they have risen to power they have defended the political programme of constitutional parliamentary and multiparty democracy, « forgetting » to « put in the foreground the question of property » and at least to start confiscating, with no indemnity, the immense properties of landlords (vitaly tied to the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie, and through it, to the imperialism), without ever placing the young, battle hardened and concentrated, local proletariat at the vanguard of the semi-proletarian and peasant masses in order that they can shake off altogether the yoke of capital. On the other hand, in the imperialistic metropolis, they have abjured the principles of the violent revolution and of the proletarian dictatorship and, falling still lower than the Second International reformists, they limited themselves, in France during the last part of the Algerian War of Independence and in America during the course of the Vietnamese war, to invoke « place and negotiations » and to demand to the respective governments that « formal and merely official recognition of equality and independence » for the young nations, branded by the Third International as a hypocritical watchword of the « bourgeois democrats that camouflage themselves as socialists ».

The consequence of this complete loss of the Marxist prospect of double revolutions has been and is that the gigantic revolutionary potentialities contained in grand and often bloody riots, the burden of which having always and only been borne by millions of proletarian and poor peasants, have been wasted : in the countries formerly independent, the corrupt, greedy and parasitic bourgeoisies are today in power, the more willing to re-ally themselves with yesterday's « enemy », the imperialism, the more they are conscious of the threat that comes up from the urban and rural exploited masses ; while capital, untouched in its countries, re-enters in the territories from which it was ignominiously forced to take to its heels, thanks to the « aids », the loans and the commerce of raw materials and manufactures. At the same time the paralysis of the proletarian and communist movement

could historically justify the degenerate Maoist, Castroist and Guevarist theories, which point out phantom peasants, popular or anarchic revolutions as the sole way to get out of the world marsh or constitutional and pacifistic reformism. Such a point was reached (unavoidably) by the abandonment of the right road of Internationalism.

But how, renegated by the parties which refer to Moscow or Peking, internationalism is ingrained **in the facts** of an always more **worldwide** economy and regime of exchanges, thus the end of the nationalistic task which in colonies strengthened the united front of all classes, their forced industrialisation, the rapid transformation of their political and social structures, can only put everywhere on the agenda the question of the class war and of the proletarian dictatorship and from now on point out to the International Communist Party the duty of helping the young, native working class of the so-called Third World to definitively share its own destiny with that of the social strata in power, and to take the place that it harshly conquered for itself in the world army of the communist revolution.

BACK TO THE COMMUNIST PROGRAMME

On the programmatic level, our conception of socialism stands out from all the others in that it postulates the need of a preliminary violent revolution, the destruction of all the institutions of the bourgeois State, and the creation of a new State apparatus directed in an opposite way by a sole party : this party being the one which will have prepared, unified and led to the victory the proletarian assaults on the old regime.

But, as we reject the conception of a gradual and pacific transition from capitalism to socialism without political revolution, namely, without destruction of democracy, so we reject the anarchical conception that limits the duties of the revolution to the knocking-down of the existing State power. The political revolution opens, for orthodox Marxism, a new social epoch of which is important to redefine the main phases.

1) Phase of Transition

Politically, it is characterised by the proletarian dictatorship ; economically, by survival of forms specifically tied to capitalism : a mercantile distribution of products, even if those of big industry and, in certain sectors, particularly agricultural, a little private production. These forms can only be surpassed by virtue of **despotic** measures of the proletarian power : the passing under its management of all the sectors, already with a social and collective nature (large scale industry, agriculture and trade, transport, etc.) ; the setting to work of a vast distribution apparatus, independent from private trade, but still functioning at least in the beginning on mercantile rules.

In this phase, however, the duty of the military struggle takes priority on the one of social and economic reorganisation, unless, against any reasonable prevision, the class overthrown on the inside and threatened on the outside would renounce to any armed resistance.

The duration of this phase depends, on the one hand, on the importance of the difficulties that the capitalist class will go forth to create to the revolutionary proletariat, and on the other hand, on the width of the organizational work which is in inverse ratio with the economic and social stage reached in each sector and in cash country, and which is therefore easier in the more advanced countries.

2) Phase of Inferior Socialism (or Socialist Phase)

It dialectically derives from the first phase. Its characteristics are the following : the proletarian State controls at this point all the exchangeable product, even if a sector of small production still exists; this is the condition to pass to a distribution that is no longer monetary, but still keeps an exchange character, as the assignment of products to the producers depends on their work performance and it is executed through the works coupons which vouch for it. Such a system differs substantially from that of the wage-labourer which ties the workers' earnings to the value of his labour-force, digs an abyss between the life of individuals and the social richness ; because in socialism there will not be any obstacles between the needs and their satisfaction, except the obligation for all the valid individuals to work, and every progress, (which under the capitalist society's regime transforms into an enemy of the producing class, the proletariat) becomes immediately a means of emancipation of the whole species. Nevertheless we still have dealings with forms directly inherited from the bourgeois society : – « The same amount of labour which the producer has given to society in one form he receives back in another. Here obviously the same principle prevails as that which regulate the exchange of commodities, as far as this is exchange of equal values... Hence, **equal right** here is still in principle **bourgeois right**, although principle and practice are no longer at loggerheads, while the exchange of equivalents in commodity exchange only exist **on the average** and net in the individual case. In spite of this advance, this equal right is still constantly stigmatised by a bourgeois limitation. The right of the producers is **proportional** to the labour they supply » (Marx : **Critique of the Gotha Programme**). Above all, work still appears as a social constriction yet always less oppressing by the way in which the general conditions of work improve.

On the other hand, the proletarian state having the means of production at its disposal, it is possible (after the severe suppression of all the useless or anti-social economic sectors, which has already begun in the transitory phase) to have an accelerated development of the sectors neglected by capitalism, above all hou-

sing and agriculture : moreover, it is possible to have a geographical reorganisation of the apparatus of production, leading to the suppression of the antagonism between city and country and to the constitution of a production unit on a continental scale.

Finally, all these advances imply the abolition of the general conditions which on the one hand confine the female sex to an unproductive and menial housework and on the other hand limit a large number of producers to merely manual activities, making the intellectual work, and the scientific knowledges a social privilege for one class alone. Thus it is outlined together with the abolition of classes in their own relations with the means of production, the disappearance of the fixed attribution of given social duties to given human groups.

3) Phase of Superior Socialism (or communist phase)

The more it performs these tasks, for which it was born, and that go beyond its historical function of prevention and repression of the attempts of capitalist restoration, the State tends to disappear as a State, that is as a rule on men, to become a simple apparatus for the administration of things. This decay is bound to the disappearance of classes, distinct and opposed in the bosom of society and then it is realised, with the transformation of the peasant (or artisan) into an out and out industrial producer. Thus we arrive at the stage of the superior communism which Marx characterised in this way : « In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished ; after labour has become not only a means of life but life's prime want ; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development on the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly – only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners : From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs! ».

This great historical result goes beyond the destruction of antagonisms among the men, the effects of which were the restlessness, the « general », particular, everlasting « insecurity » (Babeuf), man's destiny in the capitalist society ; it is the condition of a real dominion of society upon nature, what Engels used to call « the transition from the kingdom of need to that of freedom », where the same development of the human forces becomes for the first time an aim of man's activity. It is then, also, that in the social praxis, the solution of all the antinomies of all traditional theoretical thought comes to an end, « between existence and essence, objectivation and affirmation of itself, liberty and necessity, individual and genus (Marx), so that communism merits the attribute that founders of scientific socialism gave to it, of « enigma finally resolved by the history ».

Reconstitution of the Communist Party on a Worldwide Scale

The reconstitution on a national and international scale of a proletarian political party, able to assure the continuity of the revolutionary policy, will historically take place on the sole condition that the vanguard forces of the proletariat of the advanced and under-developed countries will concentrate on the above-mentioned fundamental positions. Orthodox communism stands out from all the varieties of more or less left-wing extremism, in that it denies that the laws which cause in the present –substantially fascist– phase of capitalist rule, the exhaustion of the political struggles among the bourgeois parties, render the proletariat for the same reason unable to constitute itself as a revolutionary party. It declares, on the contrary, that precisely the disappearance of oppositions between classic right and left wings, between liberalism and authoritarianism, between fascism and democracy, gives the best historical base to the development of a resolutely communist and revolutionary party. The realisation of this possibility is bound not only to the inevitable explosion of an open crisis, whatever be its term or form, but also to the objective deterioration of social contrasts in the phases of expansion and prosperity. Whoever expresses the minimum doubt on this point, in actual fact doubts the historical prospect of the communist revolution.

The development of the Party cannot obey formal rules such as the ones that many anti-Stalinist oppositions have claimed under the name of « democratic socialism » and which consist of believing that the right orientation depends on the free expression of thought and the will of the proletarian « base », and, on respecting democratic rules and electoral canons in designating the persons in charge at different levels. Even though the suffocation of oppositions and irregularities in procedure have indeed helped, in Russia and in the world, to get rid of the revolutionary communist tradition, our Party defines and has always defined this liquidation as the liquidation of a **program and tactics**, and any return to the sound organisational norms, as wanted by Trotskyists, wouldn't have prevented it at all. For the same reason we rely not just on the statute involving a large and regular use of the democratic mechanism, but on a **definition**, without misunderstandings and concessions of the means of the revolutionary struggle. The Party must be able to generate in its bosom organisms suitable for the enforcement, with no hesitations, of its « catechism », or it is not the Party. In any case, it is the selection that has to be made and not some sort of model of international functioning: This is the content of the formula of « organic centralism »; that our current before, and the Party, have always opposed

and oppose to the one of democratic centralism. It stresses the only really essential element, that is, **the respect not of the majority but of the programme ; not of the individual opinion, but of the historical and ideological tradition of the movement**. To this conception corresponds an internal structure that puts into effect the **sine qua non** condition of the existence of the Party as a revolutionary organism : the **dictatorship of principles**. Once this condition is achieved, the discipline of the base to the decisions of the **centre**, is obtained with the minimum of friction while an out and out dictatorship becomes necessary when the Party's tactics are no longer under the programme's authority, giving rise to tension and clashes which can be settled only by virtue of disciplinary measures as happened in the International even before Stalin's victory.

The historical development of the class party displays, whenever it occurs, the « transfer of a proletarian vanguard from the fields of spontaneous movements stirred up by partial and group interests, to the one of a proletarian action ». This result is favoured not by a denial of these elementary movements, but on the contrary by participation to the physical struggles of the proletariat of the work of ideological propaganda and of proselytism which naturally follows the infra-uterine phase of ideological clarification cannot therefore be separated from the participation in the economic movements that while never considering the trade union « conquests » as the ultimate aim, is important for two reasons : to make these movements an instrument in order to acquire the experience and training, indispensable for an effective revolutionary preparation, through an unmerciful criticism of forecasts, postulates and methods of the Trade Unions and of the collaborationist parties which control them and, on a more advanced level, to realise their unification and their revolutionary overcoming in living experience, pushing them towards their whole and

complete realization.

If it is true that, today, all the problems relative to the Party's development show themselves in the historical picture of an unprecedented, ideological and practical crisis of the international socialist movement; nevertheless the past experience is enough to establish a law : the reconstitution of the offensive power of the working class can't be the result of a revision, of a modernization of Marxism, and let alone, of the « creation » of an alleged new doctrine, but can only be the fruit of that restoration of the original programme which, in front of the deviations of the Second International, had been assured by the Bolshevik Party and which, in front of those of the Third, was assured by the Italian Marxist Left, in still worse general conditions. Whatever will be the sectors in which the struggle for communism is destined to revive; whenever it will be, the future international movement is the historical stage of arrival of the struggle maintained by this current and it is likely that also physically it will have to bear a decisive role in it. That's why in the present phase the reconstitution of an embryo of International can take only one form : the adhesion to the programme and to the action of the International Communist Party and to the creation of such organisational ties with it, that would meet the principle of organic centralism and would be exempt from any form of democratism.

Communism is an absolute world necessity of the present society. Sooner or later, the proletarian masses will return to the assault of the fortresses of capitalism in an immense revolutionary wave. The destruction of these fortresses, the victory of the proletariat, can happen only if the trend towards the reconstitution of the class party deepens and extends itself to the entire world. The constitution of the world party of the proletariat : here is the end of all those who want the victory of the communist revolution against which the allied forces of the bourgeois International are already fighting. ●

PROGRAM OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTY

The International Communist Party is constituted on the basis of the following principles established at Leghorn in 1921 on the foundation of the Communist Party of Italy (Section of the Communist International) :

1. In the present capitalist social regime there develops an increasing contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, giving rise to the antithesis of interests and to the class struggle between the proletariat and the ruling bourgeoisie.

2. The present day production relations are protected by the power of the bourgeois State, that, whatever the form of representative system and the use of elective democracy, constitutes the organ for the defense of the interests of the capitalist class.

3. The proletariat can neither crush or modify the mechanism of capitalist production relations from which its exploitation derives, without the violent destruction of the bourgeois power.

4. The indispensable organ of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat is the class party. The Communist Party consists of the most advanced and resolute part of the proletariat; it unites the efforts of the working masses transforming their struggles for group interests and contingent issues into the general struggle for the revolutionary emancipation of the proletariat. It is up to the Party to propagate revolutionary theory among the masses, to organize the material means of action, to lead the working class during its struggle, securing the historical continuity and the international unity of the movement.

5. After it has smashed the power of the capitalist State, the proletariat must completely destroy the old State apparatus in order to organize itself as the ruling class and set up its own dictatorship; meanwhile depriving the bourgeoisie and members of the bourgeois class of all political rights and functions as long as they survive socially, founding the organs of the new regime exclusively on the productive class. Such is the program that the Communist Party sets itself and which characterizes it. It is this party therefore which exclusively represents, organizes and directs the proletarian dictatorship. The requisite defence of the proletarian state against all counter-revolutionary initiatives can only be assured by depriving the bourgeoisie and 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 in order to repel all interior and exterior attacks.

6. Only the force of the proletarian State will be able to systematically put into effect the necessary measures for intervening in the relations of the social economy, by means of which the collective administration of production and distribution will take the place of the capitalist system.

7. This transformation of the economy and consequently of the whole social life will lead to the gradual elimination of the necessity for the political State, which will progressively give way to the rational administration of human activities.

* * *

Faced with the situation in the capitalist world and the workers' movement following the Second World War the position of the Party is the following :

8. In the course of the first half of the twentieth century the capitalist social system has been developing, in the economic field, creating monopolistic trusts among the employers, and trying to control and manage production and ex-

change according to central plans with State management of whole sectors of production. In the political field, there has been an increase of the police and military potential of the State, with governments adopting a more totalitarian form. All these are neither new sorts of social organizations in transition from capitalism to socialism, nor revivals of pre-bourgeois political regimes. On the contrary, they are definite forms of a more and more direct and exclusive management of power and the State by the most developed forces of capital.

This course excludes the progressive, pacifist interpretations of the evolution of the bourgeois regime, and confirms the Marxist prevision of the concentration and the antagonistic array of class forces. So that the proletariat may confront its enemies' growing potential with strengthened revolutionary energy, it must reject the illusory revival of democratic liberalism and constitutional guarantees. The Party must not even accept this as a means of agitation ; it must finish historically once and for all with the practice of alliances, even for transitory issues, with the bourgeois or petit-bourgeois parties, or with pseudo-workers' parties with a reformist program.

9. The global imperialist wars show that the crisis of disintegration of capitalism is inevitable because it has entered the phase when its expansion, instead of signifying a continual increment of the productive forces, is conditioned by repeated and ever-growing destruction. These wars have caused repeated deep crises in the global workers' organizations because the dominant classes could impose on them military and national solidarity with one or the other of the belligerents. The opposing historical solution for which we fight, is the awakening of the class struggle, leading to civil war, the destruction of all international coalitions by the reconstitution of the International Communist Party as an autonomous force independent of any existing political or military power.

10. The proletarian State, to the extent that its apparatus is an instrument and a weapon of struggle in a historical epoch of transition does not derive its organizational strength from constitutional rules nor from representative schemas whatsoever. The most complete historical example of such a State up to the present is that of the Soviets (workers' councils) which were created during the October 1917 revolution, when the working class armed itself under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party. The Constituent Assembly having been dissolved, they became the exclusive organs of power repelling the attacks by foreign bourgeois governments and, inside the country, stamping out the rebellion of the vanquished classes and of the middle and petit-bourgeois layers and of the opportunist parties which, in the decisive phases, are inevitably allied with the counter-revolution

11. The defense of the proletarian regime against the dangers of degeneration inherent in the failures and possible retreats in the work of economic and social transformation – whose integral realization is inconceivable within the limits of only one country – can only be assured by the constant coordination between the policy the workers' State and the united international struggle, incessant in times of peace as in times of war, of the proletariat of each country against its bourgeoisie and its State and military apparatus. This co-ordination can only be secured by means of the political and programmatic control of the world communist party over the State apparatus where the working class has seized power.

