

REVOLUTION or WAR

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Hollywood Screenwriters on Strike and the Movies *Oppenheimer* and *Barbie*

International Situation

The Drive to World War (CWO-ICT)

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New World, Old World (Battaglia comunista-ICT)

Struggle against Opportunism

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History of the Workers Movement

On the Book "Russia, Revolution and Counter-Revolution, 1905-1924"

The Tactics of the Comintern (International Communist), 1926-1940 (*Prometeo*, 1946-1947)

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Hollywood Screenwriters on Strike vs Oppenheimer and Barbie : Proletarian Struggle or March to Generalized War

Two American films are on the screens, *Oppenheimer* and *Barbie*. For several months now, there has been a strike for higher wages: that of Hollywood screenwriters. The very people who write for the movies. Two films and a strike “in the zeitgeist”. A summary of the current situation. Despite his pacifist conscience, in the film *Oppenheimer* justifies the race for the atomic bomb on the grounds that it must be made before the Nazis. *Barbie*, originally a stereotype of the “sexy” woman to attract men, has become the muse of the feminist struggle, identity politics and LGBTQ rights. The very ones that the Pentagon and NATO are promoting to recruit soldiers, men and women, for the imperialist war they prepare.¹

Once again, Hollywood is putting itself at the service of American “democratic” ideological propaganda to prepare public opinion for imperialist war: Putin and the other leaders called “illiberal” yesterday, “dictatorial” today, are openly homophobic and macho. And they have no *Oppenheimer* pacifist conscience. Is not it clear which side the proletariat of Western countries must choose? With the revolutionary *Barbie* and the humanist *Oppenheimer*, of course. And against the villain Ken – *Barbie*'s companion imposing patriarchy on *Barbie Land* – whose counterparts are Putin and the leaders of the so-called “illiberal” countries, starting with China. In passing, let us forget that the current Polish leaders, to name but among the most “war-mongering” within NATO, are just as homophobic and sexist as the former. As a counterpoint, in contrast, to “Western decadence”, the ideological campaigns in Russia, China, etc., preparing for war are carried out in the name of “traditionalist” values, Christian or otherwise, “conservative”, anti-gay and LGBTQ, openly nationalistic – the country is encircled and threatened by NATO or even in the China Sea. The macho and “virile” videos recruiting soldiers for the Russian army are equally caricatural.

At the very moment when *Oppenheimer* and *Barbie* are hitting the screens, here are the *proletarians* of this industry presenting, most certainly without being individually aware of it, the only answer that can rise up, slow down and then – we hope – oppose this race to war. Proletarians, the Hollywood screenwriters? It is true that they do not have calloused hands nor wear blue collars. No doubt they

only suffer from mouse-related tendinitis, backache and stress. More seriously, like all proletarians, they work and produce surplus value for the benefit of the capitalists who have invested in the entertainment industry, thereby increasing the original capital.² This may not make them the core of tomorrow's revolutionary proletariat, but the fact remains that they too are exploited as proletarians by capital. And yes, they are aware of this by striking for higher wages and opposing their capitalist. In short, albeit timidly, they are taking the only path that can respond to capital's impasse and the catastrophic outcome that generalized imperialist war promises: that of class struggle, of defending the class interests of proletarians.

Imperialist War and Capitalist Crisis Can only Get Worse

As the statement by our CWO-ICT comrades develops in the following article, *The Drive to World War*, imperialist war is not slowing down in its dynamic towards all-out war. Quite the contrary, in fact. The war on Ukrainian soil goes on and on. Imperialist tensions are “rising”, so to speak, from the economic-commercial and diplomatic dimensions to the military dimension, that of direct nuclear threats and gesticulations and other military maneuvers, often close to opposing borders. At the risk of going off the rails at any moment. All countries, starting with the major powers, are rearming and relaunching their “war economies”. Last but not least, the general tendency towards imperialist polarization around two axes, China and the United States, which were already in evidence before the war in Ukraine, is undergoing an acceleration and clarification hitherto unthinkable, as illustrated by the strengthening and renewed vitality of NATO and the affirmation of the BRICS alliance around China – both of which are expanding to include new countries. What some call the “chaos” provoked by the war in Ukraine, as seen in Africa with the recent coups d'état, is just one moment in the tendency – a contradictory and

¹ . See our article in this issue: *How Capital Uses Leftist Identity Politics and LGBTQ Rights for its Imperialist Warfare*.

² . “The only worker who is productive is one who produces surplus value for the capitalist, or in other words contributes towards the self-valorization of capital. If we may take an example from outside the sphere of material production, a schoolmaster is a productive worker when, in addition to belabouring the heads of his pupils, he works himself into the ground to enrich the owner of the school. That the latter has laid out his capital in a teaching factory, instead of a sausage factory, makes no difference to the relation.” (K. Marx, *Capital*, Volume 1, chap. XVI, Penguin Classics, 1976)

therefore non-linear process – towards imperialist bipolarization.

At the same time, the crisis is returning to hit the world economy with all the more violence, due to the imperialist war itself. All countries and continents are affected to varying degrees. Inflation has tripled (Syria, Egypt...), sometimes reaching three figures (Argentina, Lebanon...), widespread indebtedness, “slowdown” in production – a term which most often means a “recession” (Germany) or “deflation”, sometimes massive increases in unemployment, as in China³, threats of financial crises and bankruptcies, rising interest rates at US and European central banks, the fall and devaluation of the Russian ruble, the Argentine peso, the Lebanese pound... plunging billions of people into absolute poverty and misery.

Crisis and war feed off each other, as we have already stated in these pages. More importantly, crisis and war are occurring at the same time. This feature of the historical situation is an element that “historically weakens” the capitalist class in view of the inevitable class confrontations that crisis and war impose. It is more difficult for it to drag the populations, and above all the international proletariat, into sacrificing for war in the name of a supposed future prosperity. As was partly the case in the 1930s, for example: preparations for war enabled mass unemployment to be reduced, at least temporarily, and gave the impression that military victory would herald an improvement in living conditions. Likewise, it is more difficult for the bourgeoisie to play on aspirations for peace to gain acceptance of economic sacrifices, as in the two post-war periods of 1918-19 and 1945. The fact that the bourgeoisie cannot, or only with great difficulty, make promises of future prosperity or peace, diminishes its ability to manage the scale of massive confrontations to come between the classes.

For those who do not quite understand what we are talking about and the perspectives we are putting forward, let us make it clear: affirming that capital is ideologically “historically weakened” does not mean that the proletarian struggle is and will be a “long quiet river” or a “royal road”. The imperialist war in Ukraine shows both the immediate powerlessness of the Ukrainian and Russian proletariats, and of the international proletariat as a whole, to oppose it. Nor does the weakness of proletarian reactions at international level allow it to impose a minimal balance of power that would force capital to back down, even if

only momentarily and to a limited extent, from its economic attacks. But the fact remains that the international proletariat is tending, and only **tending**, to rise up in defense of its living and working conditions, against inflation and for wage increases in particular.

Illegality and Repression of Strikes and Workers' Struggles...

The international press does not dwell too much on the demonstrations, riots and “hunger” revolts that are multiplying, mainly in the face of soaring inflation, in Argentina, Lebanon, Tunisia, Iran, Syria, etc., to name but a few. And let us not forget the sudden and frequent clashes that regularly erupt in China, when they are not simply workers' strikes. Even if some of these “revolts” do not always have a directly proletarian dimension, and therefore offer few prospects in themselves, others directly or indirectly call on the proletariat as such, as a class, to give them direction and perspective. This is the case, for example, in Argentina, Iran and even more so in China; or even in... France⁴.

We would like to draw the attention of those who are skeptical about the perspectives we are putting forward to the reality, once again in motion, of workers' struggles and mobilizations. Sometimes on a massive scale, they have taken place on every continent, and particularly in the heart of capitalism's historic powers. Even if defeated, the mobilizations against inflation and for wage increases in Great Britain, initiated by a wave of wildcat strikes in the spring and summer of 2022, or the mobilization of millions of proletarians in France against the umpteenth pension “reform” in the first six months of 2023, are particular expressions of this international tendency not to accept any more economic sacrifices on the altar of the defense of national capital and, now, the development of national “war economy”. The same, albeit timid, dynamic has emerged in Germany, Italy and other Western European countries.

It has also emerged and is seeking to assert itself in the USA and Canada. Discontent and combativeness on the part of workers are forcing unions to organize legally binding votes to decide on strikes in major sectors such as railways, ports and the automobile industry. And very often, the votes cast are overwhelmingly in favor of strike action.⁵ Then the legal negotiation process

³ . China « *slipped into deflation. Key indicators, including industrial production, investment and retail sales, came in well below expectations.* » (The Guardian, Editorial, 21 août 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/aug/21/the-guardian-view-on-the-chinese-economy-it-looks-bad-what-we-cant-see-may-be-worse>)

⁴ . See the statement of the ICP-Le Prolétaire on the riots in the French cities of late June, that we reproduce in this issue.

⁵ . In a vote organized by the UAW auto union in the USA, 97% of workers voted in favor of strike action, and in Canada, 98.6%, organized by the Unifor union [the Canadian UAW]. The strike for General Motor, Ford and Stellantis (ex-Chrysler, Peugeot, etc.) is expected to start after September 14... if no agreement is reached between the auto bosses and the unions. At the time of writing, on September 9, we don't know whether the unions will

begins, imposing a time limit, often several weeks, before the strike is allowed to begin. This gives unions and companies ample time, under the watchful eye of the government and the state, to “negotiate” and break the momentum of combativity and sabotage the struggle. And in cases where the fighting spirit remains strong and the strike finally gets under way, the government will declare the strike illegal, as it jeopardizes the national interest, as was the case with the mobilization of American railway workers in September 2022, or Canadian dockworkers this summer.⁶

In most Western democratic countries, the “right to strike” boils down to the right to strike, provided that the strike is impotent and ineffective. The extension and development of *mass strike* is de facto illegal and a subject to repression. The “union right”, in particular the obligation to give advance notice of strike action, is used to sabotage and, thanks to the union tactics of days of action in particular, stifle the development of mass strikes; which seek to be effective by imposing a balance of power on the bourgeoisie. And if the situation gets out of hand, managerial repression in the workplace and, above all, police repression in the streets and at factory gates, enforce the de facto ban on any attempt at a massive strike.

... Impose the Mass Strike as a Necessity

Every proletarian needs to be aware of this: any consistent, effective struggle is bound to come up against the entire state apparatus, including unions, legislation and repression. This speaks volumes about the reality of bourgeois democracy. Formally, every sociologically proletarian citizen has the same democratic rights as Elon Musk and others. We all know it is theoretical only. But the proletariat as a class, and the proletarian as proletarian, have no “rights”. As soon as they struggle, they find themselves in basically the same situation as their class siblings in Russia, China and other so-called “non-democratic” countries: mass strikes are forbidden and repressed. The degree of repression varies on the country and the situations, but is always violent. This is undoubtedly not the only reason for the difficulties of proletarian struggles today, for their hesitancy and “timidity” in the face of the level and gravity of the attacks. But we have no doubt that it at least partly explains it. For each proletarian or group of proletarians, going on open strike, that is “illegal”, is also an individual risk.

Faced with this situation, the top priority is not to remain isolated, but to spread any strike or struggle as quickly as possible. The *mass strike*, as Rosa Luxemburg recognized and described it, and as Lenin and the Bolshevik Party brilliantly led from February to October 1917, is more necessary than ever, both to impose demands and develop the struggle, and to paralyze all forms of repression.

Encouraging proletarians to “outpace” the bourgeoisie and its state apparatus, first and foremost its trade unions, and to impose other terrains for demands and confrontations in particular, than those chosen by the capitalist state, must be a permanent concern and goal of communist groups, and tomorrow the party; and this in all countries, whatever their political regime. This is how revolutionary communists rise to the forefront of the class struggle, and can succeed in “politically leading” the proletariat as a whole. Of course, this cannot be decreed. It has to be won and proven in battle. In the reality of proletarian struggles themselves. Despite innumerable difficulties and limitations, communist groups have a compass pointing them north: the contradictions of capitalism, of which crisis and war are the main expressions, products and factors, can only lead to massive confrontations between classes, to an intensified class struggle. And the mass strike that will be theirs to lead to insurrection and the destruction of every capitalist state on the planet is the weapon best suited to the conditions imposed by state totalitarianism, by *state capitalism*, whether in its “democratic” or “non-democratic” form.

In this sense, too, “*the working men have no country*” and must refuse to let themselves be enlisted in the defense of one side against another in the imperialist war, whether “democratic” or not. And that is regardless of what Barbie and Oppenheimer on the one hand, or the Russian or Chinese Rambos on the other, aim at instilling in our heads.

The Editorial Team, September 9th 2023

succeed in imposing an agreement on the workers beforehand, thus avoiding a strike... as was the case at UPS, where the teamsters' union imposed an agreement at the last minute, thus avoiding a strike that had been widely voted for.

⁶ . See the following article on this issue : *On the recent strike of British Columbia dock workers.*

International Situation

We reproduce below an article from the Aurora bulletin of the Communist Workers Organization, the group of the Internationalist Communist Tendency (ICT) in Great Britain. It could well have served as an editorial for this issue of our own journal. We follow it with a brief account of the dockers' strike on Canada's West Coast. It illustrates how the bourgeoisie – government, unions and repressive apparatus – is even less reluctant than before the war in Ukraine to ban and repress any workers' struggle that is even remotely significant. All state apparatuses are in battle order to impose on the proletariat and, more broadly, on the populations, the march to generalized imperialist war. In particular, the ideological weapon is essential to justify the choice of one side against the other. The American bourgeoisie understands this. So much so that the Pentagon and NATO are now championing feminism and LGBTQ rights, as illustrated in our article on the subject. In addition to provoking working-class reactions, the exacerbation of social antagonisms as a result of the crisis and the war is precipitating revolts of all kinds, such as the one that set fire to French cities for five days last June following the murder of a young man by the police.

Finally, we reproduce a contribution by Battaglia comunista, the organ of the ICT in Italy, on new technologies such as ChatGPT. It recalls the Marxist and class position in the face of new technologies, automation, which change nothing in the capitalist relationship and mode of production, in particular the need for it to exploit living labor power to continue the accumulation of capital and the production of surplus value. New technologies linked to automation, which are driving labor productivity through the roof, further exacerbate the contradiction and growing imbalance between living labor – proletarians – and dead labor – machines and robots. The result is an even more accelerated worsening of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. Far from fading, capital's contradictions are deepening. They can only push it further into the historical impasse that leads to... generalized war.

The Drive to World War (CWO-ICT)

June marked the beginning of the spring counteroffensive in Ukraine. The preliminary results are in: at most a few dozen square kilometres of strategically insignificant territory have been exchanged for perhaps tens of thousands of human lives. With each passing day, the entire operation resembles the senseless slaughter of the First World War ever more closely.

Even so, our politicians and media attempt to "reassure" us that victory is within grasp – that is, so long as "we" continue to supply the Ukrainian army with the latest and greatest "lethal aid". To that end, Ukraine's western allies have been continually pushing the envelope, delivering ever more advanced and destructive weapons to the battlefield. July saw the deployment of controversial US-made cluster munitions, and there is every indication that a consignment of F-16 fighter jets will arrive in August.

Plainly, the main results of these "humanitarian" interventions will be a prolongation of the war, the maximisation of human suffering, and inflamed tensions between NATO and Russia. For its part, Russia has been more than happy to play into this spiral of escalation, with both Putin and Medvedev repeatedly and brazenly threatening the use of nuclear weapons in the event of direct NATO intervention. Meanwhile, the

Wagner Group, exiled to Belarus after its bizarre mutiny in June, has set the Polish government on high alert. An additional 10,000 soldiers of the Polish army – on track to becoming the largest in the EU – have been rushed to the Belarusian border.

Militarisation of the Sahel and the South China Sea

Whilst the Russia-Ukraine conflict continues to dominate the headlines, it's far from the only sign of the drive to generalised war. The end of July saw a successful coup in Niger. This follows similar military power grabs in Chad, Mali, and Burkina Faso, all of which took place in the last two years. The latest coup immediately provoked the threat of invasion from the pro-Western Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In response, the Burkinabe and Malian juntas pledged to aid in the defence of Niger. At the time of writing, the promised invasion has not yet materialised, but the situation is extremely precarious.

Almost the entirety of the Sahel is now under the control of military juntas, which seem to be aligning into an anti-ECOWAS bloc with the encouragement of the Russian government. Russia, which has already established a military foothold in the region through the Wagner Group, gave a significant boost to its

African charm offensive at the recent Russia-Africa Summit in St. Petersburg, promising six of the continent's poorest countries 50,000 tonnes of free grain and debt forgiveness to the tune of 23 billion USD. It seems unlikely that the West will allow further regional realignment without a fight – after all, France and the US have soldiers stationed in Niger, and Niger's uranium mines supply 20% of the uranium for French nuclear power stations.

Meanwhile, there is no sign of de-escalation in the South China Sea. The past five years have seen the US and Chinese governments adopting increasingly belligerent attitudes over the Taiwanese question, with both sides conducting massive drills and war games in anticipation of an invasion from the mainland. Unlike Ukraine, where NATO has been able to outsource the immediate responsibility for killing and dying to locals, a war over Taiwan would almost certainly involve the active participation of US military personnel in combat roles from day one; as a result, escalation into a worldwide conflict could be rapid.

Against the False Promise of Pacifism

At first glance, the drive to generalised war can seem inexplicable. Humanity only stands to lose from it, and yet we seem to be inching towards it every day. However, it is not the result of pure madness, or pig-headed politicians and generals making the wrong

choices. There is an inescapable force, rooted in the search for greater profits which drives the international capitalist system into crises that cannot be resolved through peaceful means. So long as we live in this system, in which antagonistic states clash to defend the particular interests of their own national capitals, we will continue to see bloody conflicts paid for by people with no skin in the game; namely, the global working class.

History has shown again and again that effective opposition to imperialist wars cannot take the form of simple pacifism. Following the working class in Russia who had taken power into their own hands in 1917, the revolutionary uprising of the working class in Germany finally brought an end to the First World War. It was the threat of revolution and civil war that caused the powers of Europe to finally halt the slaughter to save their own necks. But ultimately, capitalism survived the day. Barely one generation later, the working class was once again massacred by the tens of millions in the cataclysm of the Second World War.

The working class must learn the lessons of history. We need to get politically organised for our own agenda which, far from fighting each other, is no less than taking power into our own hands and ending the next World War before it can begin!

Aurora #64, bulletin of the Communist Workers' Organisation.

Pamphlets (orders at [intleftcom@gmail](mailto:intleftcom@gmail.com))

IGCL Platform

Student Struggle and Assemblies of Neighbourhood (Internationalist Communists - Klabatalo)

La dégénérescence de l'IC : le PCF (1924-1927) (International Fraction of the ICC, only in French)

Groupe des Travailleurs Marxistes (Mexique, 1938) (International Fraction of the ICC, only in French and Spanish)

La question de la guerre (1935) (International Fraction of the ICC, only in French)

Morale prolétarienne, lutte de classes et révisionnisme (IGCL from the IFICC, only in French and Spanish)

Unions Against the Working Class (1976, reprinted from the ICC Pamphlet).

On the Recent Strike of British Columbia Dock Workers

Starting on July 1st of 2023, there was a strike of 7,400 dock workers in the Canadian province of British Columbia that shut down more than 30 ports. The ILWU reported that 99.24% of the members voted in favour of the strike, continuing the recent trend in Canada of unionized workers voting overwhelmingly to strike. Each day, these ports move cargo worth 800 million CAD (600 million USD). While not a small strike in terms of the number of participants, the effect of the strike was out of proportion to the number of strikers because of the strategic nature of the ports.

The ILWU had initially endorsed an agreement imposed by the Federal government after 13 days of the strike. This initial deal was resoundingly rejected by the union membership. At this point in the sequence of events, the vitriol directed at the port workers from the bourgeoisie became shrill and calls to declare the strike illegal and impose back-to-work legislation were being made. There was subsequently a brief renewal of the strike after an approximately two week pause. This brief second period of strike was declared illegal by the Canada Industrial Relation Board (CIRB) on the grounds that the union did not provide 72 hours strike notice. The ILWU then issued a 72-hour strike notice only to rescind it hours later and announce that it had recommended the new deal be voted on by the membership. On July 27-28, ILWU members voted to reject the new deal. The next day, the Labour Minister of Canada reported that he directed the CIRB to impose a new deal or arbitration. In the context of this threat to impose a contract from the Federal Government, a new deal was reached and 75% of the ILWU membership voted to accept it.

Predictably, throughout this whole process there was the usual whining about the effects of the strike on small businesses that depend on the movement of goods through the ports. However, the significance of this strike go well beyond the effect on small

businesses. The backdrop to this strike is the ongoing imperialist polarization, which demands that strategic sectors of the economy function normally. Canada's previous Labour Minister, Seamus O'Regan, emphasized the importance of the ports for the "national interest" and Chrystia Freeland, the Deputy Prime Minister, has said that the economic impact of the strike was "intolerable". What is intolerable for workers is their rising cost of living, including as a consequence of the drive towards generalized imperialist war. Moreover, even if the current pay raises were to match or exceed by a small margin the projected inflation rate, this does not come close to being sufficient as the costs of housing have sky-rocketed over the past twenty years and our purchasing power has steadily been eroded over the same period.

This recent episode also highlights the role played by the union in undermining and rendering impotent what should have been a powerful strike, because of the strategic nature of the ports. The entire state apparatus was arrayed against the workers, from the media to the provincial and federal governments to the unions, which are themselves integral to the capitalist state apparatus. It was the union, after all, which had manoeuvred workers into a position of having to accept a deal or face back-to-work legislation and a legally imposed contract. By keeping the strike isolated to a single sector, even if it is strategically vital, the union succeeded in paralyzing the strike because what can 7,400 workers do faced with the combined force of the state? Only by generalizing the strikes to all sectors on a geographical basis, by picketing in front of nearby workplaces and sending delegations to invite other workplaces to join the strike for common demands, can workers impose a balance of forces that favours them. In such a situation of generalization and mass strike, back-to-work legislation would be a purely formal and impotent gesture.

Stavros, August 6th, 2023

How Capital Uses Leftist Identity Politics and LGBTQ Rights for its Imperialist Warfare

“The fight for Ukraine is also a fight for LGBTQ rights.” So proclaimed *Vanity Fair* in March 2022 with its article on Ukrainian LGBTQ activists during the Russian-Ukrainian War. Such arguments have become increasingly common for NATO apologists who continuously use the language and logic of social justice to advocate for the continuation of the war and the general strengthening of NATO. NATO itself has positioned itself as a force for social justice. On International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (May 17 2023), Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg gave a speech on its importance to Nato. Stating that “NATO’s strength is our diversity,” Stoltenberg characterized himself and NATO as an “ally” of the LGBTQ community.⁷ The United States Secretary of Defense, Lloyd J. Austin III, put out a similar statement at the beginning of LGBTQ Pride Month, stating that the Defense Department honors “the service, commitment, and sacrifice of the LGBTQ+ Service members and personnel who volunteer to defend our country. Their proud service adds to America’s strength.”⁸ These statements indicate that the United States government and its allies believe it is necessary to utilize pro-LGBTQ rhetoric in times of imperialist war.

Such statements are clearly linked to the rising prominence of “intersectionality.” This idea rejects Marxist notions of class in favor of discussing various identities people share such as race, sexuality, and gender. As the IGCL has discussed before: “What is partly developed below has the task of demonstrating, particularly in the United States, in what and how this notion only serves the spheres of domination, in what way by categorising it reifies into a multitude of sub-categories by re-naturalising them in all the specificities and particularisms with the sole aim of diverting the class struggle, the proletariat from its true goal, the seizure of power and the establishment of its dictatorship.” Nowhere in our current situation is this made clearer than liberal justifications for the imperialist war in Ukraine.

Changing views about gender and sexuality, especially amongst young people, certainly, help explain why NATO and the United States present themselves as fighting for LGBTQ rights, even before the war in Ukraine began. Younger generations are less patriotic, and religious, and not inclined to join the armed services.⁹ At the

same time, they are much more likely to accept the reality of gay and trans people or to identify as gay or trans than their elders.¹⁰ Whereas previous military recruitment campaigns have relied solely upon high degrees of machismo, an increasing number of NATO’s militaries have employed the language of inclusivity and diversity to increase historically low enlistment numbers.¹¹ In 2021 the US Army told the story of a corporal with two mothers as part of their “The Calling” campaign, and a 2018 ad for the British Army has a gay soldier assure the audience that they won’t need to hide their sexuality to join the military.¹² With the threat of imperialist war on the horizon, new commercials for the American military combine the diversity of previous ads with a whole new level of what can only be described as “war porn.” In the U.S. Marines’ latest commercial, a diverse set of characters blow up what appears to be an Arctic base and a Russian battlecruiser. Although this ad doesn’t say anything about inclusivity explicitly, this diversity points to the American military’s effort to be seen as an inclusive place for all genders and sexualities.¹³ With this threat of imperialist war only increasing, it appears likely that the Department of Defense will continue making propaganda that presents the sterilized spectacle of battle as part of the struggle for sexual and gender inclusion.

Another reason Western imperialists present the war in Ukraine as an LGBTQ struggle is to demonize Russia as a civilizational opponent. The scale of the Russo-Ukrainian War make it necessary for NATO apologists to not just criticize Russia’s government, but dehumanize

271/statement-by-secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-on-pride-month/.

¹⁰ . <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/military/every-branch-us-military-struggling-meet-2022-recruiting-goals-official-rcna35078>.

¹¹ . <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/02/22/lgbtq-people-young-americans/>; <https://thehill.com/changing-america/enrichment/arts-culture/3920015-fewer-americans-prioritizing-hard-work-patriotism-religious-faith-poll>.

¹² . <https://www.thepinknews.com/2021/05/12/us-army-recruitment-drive-the-calling-queer-story-woke-video/>; <https://www.gaytimes.co.uk/life/new-british-army-advert-encourages-lgbtq-people-join/>.

¹³ . <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9gTAjbiQEM>. It is worth noting that this commercial has not received any sort of backlash from social conservatives unlike the aforementioned advertisements. It appears that the DoD has realized as long as it includes enough explosions, it can continue trying to present itself as an inclusive institution without receiving any ire for being “too woke.”

⁷ . <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q112DRB5NuU&t=127s>.

⁸ . https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_214646.htm.

⁹ . <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3413>

entire peoples. In a Ukrainian Pride parade in Warsaw, activists have carried signs saying “*Leave Homophobia to Russia*,” and pundits have presented Russia as an agent of homophobia in a battle “*between East and West*.”¹⁴ As will be discussed in a forthcoming article, the Russian government and their apologists are also eager to back this narrative, painting themselves as the defenders of traditional values and their opponents as advocates for “*degradation and degeneration*.”¹⁵ This account does not stand under much scrutiny, as numerous governments in NATO have proven to be just as homophobic and transphobic as Russia’s government. Turkey, the holder of NATO’s second-largest military, arrested more than 100 LGBTQ activists as part of the government’s efforts to ban Pride parades. Poland’s government, one of Ukraine’s most important allies, is notoriously homophobic and transphobic, allowing the existence of “LGBT free zones.” throughout much of the country.¹⁶ The United States, the largest supplier of arms to Ukraine, is of course no stranger to intolerance. Florida’s “Parental Rights in Education Law,” infamously known as the “*Don’t Say Gay Law*,” prevents educators from discussing or lecturing on gender identity and sexual orientation in the classroom, and other pieces of legislation allow individuals to ban any book with “inappropriate” sexual content.¹⁷ This has effectively allowed both right-wing organizations and reactionary individuals to censor works for any sexual content whatsoever, leading the school board of Hillsborough County to restrict sections of Shakespeare and to prevent student participation in the Advance Placement psychology course and exam.¹⁸ In addition to this rise in censorship, lawmakers in 37 U.S. states have introduced legislation to restrict gender-affirming care for trans-individuals.¹⁹ It is hard to imagine Ukraine itself transforming into a paradise for LGBTQ people after this war as activists have suggested. With the Ukrainian Government recently raising the profile of newly released fighters from the Azov Regiment, a neo-Nazi organization that has physically targeted Pride gatherings, as “*the Defenders of Mariupol*,” it is patently absurd to suggest that the Ukrainian military is part of

a civilizational struggle on behalf LGBTQ rights.²⁰

The *Vanity Fair* piece on Ukrainian LGBTQ activists contains an anecdote that certainly undermines this “woke” bourgeois case for war even further:

“Many queer Ukrainians are serving in the Ukrainian military, but many trans people—who are illegible for a medical exemption from the order that all men ages 18-60 remain in the country—are being blocked at the border by Ukrainian officials who see an “M” on their official documents, according to reports from many NGOs assisting them.”

This paragraph recognizes that many trans people are understandably trying to flee Ukraine in order to avoid being conscripted but still presents queer service in the Ukrainian military as a commendable service. Through obfuscation the author, J. Lester Feder, presents this treatment as proof that the fight for LGBTQ rights is not over within Ukraine and that military victory against Russia is necessary for future advances. It is quite convenient for NATO apologists that the only queer Ukrainians that speak to are two activists, Olena Shevchenko, and Lenny Emson. Why don’t the trans-Ukrainians, detained by border officials in order to send them to the front lines, have a voice as to whether this conflict is “a fight for LGBTQ rights”? Is it perhaps that trans-Ukrainians do not share political interests based on their sexual identity? Having LGBTQ activists discuss the importance of Ukrainian military victory while other trans-Ukrainians try desperately to avoid conscription, thus undermining their nation’s war effort, proves the mystifications both in *Vanity Fair*’s presentation of the conflict and in the framework of “intersectionality” itself. These trans-Ukrainians at the border certainly face their own unique challenges but in terms of political interests, they are in the same position as straight and cis-Ukrainian draft dodgers, not the queer activists eager to send them into battle. It is quite revealing that these activists now wield signs demanding the freedom of neo-Nazi Azov fighters despite Azov’s attempts to sue Shevchenko for using Ukrainian symbols at an LGBTQ rally before the war.²¹ There is no time like an imperialist war to spark bourgeois unity while splitting the proletariat through various identitarian lines.

Even adherents to identity politics who reject the imperialist war in Ukraine are incapable of challenging the bourgeoisie. While some would suggest that an intersectional lens does not get rid of class as a

¹⁴ . <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-02-24/full-transcript-vladimir-putin-s-televised-address-to-russia-on-ukraine-feb-24#xj4y7vzkg>.

¹⁵ . <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/lesterfeder/russia-exports-homosexual-propaganda-law-in-effort-to-fight>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q112DRB5NuU&t=127s>.

¹⁶ . <https://www.fairplanet.org/story/are-polands-lgbt-free-zones-here-to-stay/>.

¹⁷ . <https://www.reuters.com/graphics/USA-HEALTHCARE/TRANS-BILLS/zgvorreyapd/>.

¹⁸ . <https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20230712-azov-commanders-return-home-a-diplomatic-win-for-ukraine-a-slap-in-the-face-for-russia>.

¹⁹ . <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q112DRB5NuU&t=127s>.

²⁰ . <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch02.htm>

²¹ . <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/staterev/ch02.htm>

category, the compartmentalization of class as another meager category of human existence fails to explain how gender and sexual relations are determined by material relations. As Marx says in the Communist Manifesto:

*“On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form, this family exists only among the bourgeoisie.”*²²

More importantly, intersectionality utterly fails to offer a solution to bourgeois war. As Lenin states in *The State and the Revolution*:

*“The overthrow of bourgeois rule can be accomplished only by the proletariat, the particular class whose economic conditions of existence prepare it for this task and provide it with the possibility and the power to perform it. While the bourgeoisie break up and disintegrate the peasantry and all the petty-bourgeois groups, they weld together, unite and organize the proletariat. Only the proletariat — by virtue of the economic role it plays in large-scale production — is capable of being the leader of all the working and exploited people, whom the bourgeoisie exploit, oppress and crush, often not less but more than they do the proletarians, but who are incapable of waging an independent struggle for their emancipation.”*²³

Intersectionality treats oppression alone as the catalyst for revolutionary activity, but what Lenin illustrates is that it is the proletariat’s proximity to the means of production while being the oppressed class that allows them to carry out revolutionary activity. Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* also makes this clear:

*“All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air.”*²⁴

It should not be necessary for a Marxist publication to make this point, but even self-described “Marxist” publications have tried to put forward a defense of intersectionality.²⁵ Communists do not reject identity politics simply because it engenders the sort of liberal apologetics for imperialism seen in this article, but

because it divides the proletariat and divorces it from its historical strength. This does not mean the communist movement should ignore discrimination against LGBTQ peoples. The Stalinist recriminalization of homosexuality is just one example of how homophobia and transphobia are dangerous to internationalism as they not only divide the working class, but empower traditionalist chauvinists who justify societal divisions. Rather it means that the proletariat under party leadership is the only force historically capable of the root cause of both imperialist war and bigotry. The Ukrainian Army and an intersectionalist approach are incapable of fighting for LGBTQ rights. Only the proletariat with a communist approach can.

Fred, August 2023

The image shows the cover of a pamphlet. At the top, the title "Revolution or War (IGCL)" is written in red, with "Pamphlet" below it. In the center, there is a small, dark, square image. Below that, a large red rectangular box contains the text "Political Platform" in white, followed by "International Group of the Communist Left (2021)" in white. At the bottom of the red box, in small white text, it says "E-mail : intleftcom@gmail.com, site web : www.igcl.org" and "4 dollars/2 euros". Below the red box, the text "Our pamphlet contains our Platform as well as the statements we had adopted on the ICT and ICC Platforms. It can be ordered at : intleftcom@gmail.com" is written in black.

²² . <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm>.

²³ . <https://socialistworker.org/2017/08/01/a-marxist-case-for-intersectionality>;

²⁴ . <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2023/04/03/bmad-a03.html>.

²⁵ . <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2023/08/11/reqd-a11.html>. The Advanced Placement Exam is a method for high-school students to obtain college credits.

Revolts and riots in French cities

We reproduce here the position taken in leaflet form by the International Communist Party, which publishes *Le prolétaire* in France (pcint.org), on the riots that have just broken out in the French suburbs and cities following the police murder of a 17-year-old youth. We agree with its gist. Just one political interrogation: the leaflet ends with the assessment that “by at least temporarily tearing apart the asphyxiating social peace, the current spontaneous revolt contributes objectively to bringing this perspective closer”, the one of the revolutionary struggle against capital. Of course, it's undeniable that it's breaking the “social peace” and expressing the dramatic and inevitable exacerbation of social antagonisms and the historical impasse of capitalism. However, it is not certain that the current revolt is a favorable moment, even “objectively”, for the development of proletarian and revolutionary struggle. If only because of the political and ideological use that the entire bourgeois state apparatus is beginning to make of it, to better divide between those, the proletarians, who “understand” and sympathize with the young and those who “worry” about the nihilism, aimless violence and destruction that the latter are causing out of despair, rage and impotence.

Only a specific workers' mobilization could present and give a collective and unitary, i.e. class-based, perspective to the revolt itself, and enable the young people in revolt to glimpse the possibility of another society and the need to join in this revolutionary fight for communism. In this sense, the ICP leaflet itself is a moment or factor in the alternative that revolutionaries must defend and present today to rebels of all ages. That is why we are taking it up and reproducing it here.

The IGCL, July 1st 2023

Revolt in proletarian neighborhoods

Capitalism is Responsible for Police Crimes, Oppression and Misery: It is the One to Fight, the One to Destroy!

A third night of rioting has shaken the country. Confrontations of varying degrees of violence took place in practically every town in the Paris region (and in Paris itself), and spread to many large and medium-sized provincial cities: Lille, Roubaix, Strasbourg, Grenoble, Lyon, Saint Etienne, Marseille, Bordeaux Toulouse, Tours, Rennes, Rouen, Nantes, Nancy, Nice, Brest, Pau, Amiens, Annecy, Macon... the list is too long to mention them all. The massive mobilization of various police forces (40,000 policemen and gendarmes according to official figures), the stoppage of public transport and the curfews sometimes decreed failed to maintain order in the proletarian neighborhoods. Dozens of public buildings and police stations were attacked by youths with molotov cocktails and firecrackers, stores were looted and vehicles set on fire, while the police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at the rioters; almost 900 people were arrested...

The cause of this outburst of anger is well known: young Nahel (17) shot at point-blank range during a car check in Nanterre by a policeman who claimed “self-defense”; but an amateur video showed that the policeman was not threatened and that his teammate was shouting “shoot him!” so it was a crime. Subsequent reports from police sources claimed that Nahel had a criminal record (even “as long as your arm”, according to a far-right C. News journalist), implying that he was a petty thug who got what he deserved: these “reports” were false. When the police

lie was proven, the government, remembering the 3 weeks of rioting during the 2005 “suburb revolt”, tried to calm things down. Macron described the police officer's act as “inexplicable and unjustifiable”, arousing the anger of the far-right and the “Alliance” police union, and organized a minute's silence in the Assembly. But these play-acting had no effect on the anger of the inhabitants.

“YOUNG PEOPLE ARE RIGHT TO REVOLT”.

Such is the reaction of many proletarians from these neighborhoods who testified before the cameras²⁶. After the first riots, Macron declared that they had been “marked by scenes of violence (...) against institutions and the Republic” that are “unjustifiable”. But for proletarians young and old, what is unjustifiable and increasingly unbearable is the situation in which they find themselves, imposed in the final analysis by these bourgeois institutions and Republic! Over and above police crime, it is this situation that gives rise to revolt. The democrats incriminate a Socialist government law passed in 2017 to facilitate the use of weapons by the police during roadside checks, and they plead, without laughing, for better “training of police officers in the defense of Human Rights.” While it's true that since then an average of one person has been killed by the police every month in France in such circumstances

²⁶ . For instance : <https://www.leparisien.fr/video/video-je-suis-content-que-les-jeunes-se-revoltent-a-nanterre-des-habitants-tres-en-colere-apres-la-mort-de-nahel-28-06-2023-OHMOZ7V7GFHSJONRQYYFZMOZCI.php>

(compared to one in 10 years in Germany!), police crimes didn't wait for this law to be passed: witness the numerous cases of police violence that regularly hit the headlines, most of which end in the acquittal of the police officers. Talk of a “police force at the service of citizens” is nothing more than empty rhetoric: the fundamental role of the police is to defend the bourgeois order through violence, potential or overt, and they are at the service of the violence of capitalist social relations based on exploitation.

The fight against police violence is inseparable from the fight against capitalism. The powerful outburst of revolt by young people in proletarian neighborhoods is a resounding disavowal of the legalistic, pacifist policies of the reformist trade unions and political organizations, which are committed to class collaboration. These policies, which have been the cause of all working-class defeats, are responsible for

the proletariat's powerlessness in the face of the bourgeoisie and its state.

But if the revolt is to be anything more than a flash in the pan, a momentary explosion of anger, it will have to find its way into organized revolutionary struggle, into the class struggle against the whole system of misery, oppression and repression, which alone can avenge all its victims. This won't happen overnight; repression aside, there will be many obstacles to overcome, political appropriation to avoid, false “left” or “democratic” friends to discard; but by at least temporarily tearing apart the asphyxiating social peace, the current spontaneous revolt is objectively helping to bring this perspective closer.

International Communist Party-Le Prolétaire
(pcint.org) , June 30, 2023

New World, Old World (Battaglia comunista, ICT)

That we live in a world in constant becoming now seems even superfluous to remember, so lapidary is it. “*Todo cambia*” [Everything changes], as the symbol of Argentina's singing Mercedes Sosa used to sing, referring to the things of the world as it passes and goes.

We live in an age where you go to sleep at night and get up the next morning with a message on WhatsApp announcing, “Dear sir it was nice to have you in our big and beloved family, but circumstances, stronger than us, impose on us, with great sorrow ... in short, I don't know if you understand, we no longer need your services. As of today you are dismissed.” Greetings and kisses. See? *Todo cambia, todo cambiaa*? But why didn't the bosses fire before? Well sure, the way has changed, however, even just ten years ago these methods were still not used. This is also the sign of the times, just by breathing (possibly well protected), you can feel the change in the air every minute. Industrial/technological revolutions follow one another at a frantic pace, and at every turn of the tide, trawling takes its victims with it. The bourgeoisie looks no one in the face, not even its mother, because the mother or father, to which it genuflects is only one: Profit. *Todo cambia*, but not profit, not exploitation, not wage labor slavery, not layoffs. *Todo cambia*, but, as Tomasi di Lampedusa said in *The Leopard* (not coincidentally a nobleman), “*One must change everything to change nothing.*” Indeed, one must change everything

precisely to keep the proletariat increasingly subjugated to the interests of capital. Change everything to keep the chains of wage labor slavery always tightly around the necks of the wage-earning masses. But let us proceed in order.

Industrial Revolutions

A premise first, we do not want to make a historical treatise on the industrial revolutions, especially with regard to the past centuries, but simply fix in the memory the most important steps, from the historical point of view, of the path of modern capitalism.

The first industrial revolution began to take its first steps in the second half of the 18th century, almost exclusively in Britain, between the 1760s/80s and the first half of the 1800s. From a technological point of view, the discovery that gave a formidable boost to production was undoubtedly the steam engine. But the discoveries in technology especially in textiles, which were followed by mining, iron and steel, and mechanical engineering; were increasingly accompanied by a complete revolution also in a new organization of labor: the first factories and the new division of labor arose, with great concentrations of masses of workers. There began for the nascent working class and the proletariat the modern hell, new **technological tortures** so well recounted by Engels in his *Condition of the Working Class in England*. Even with the obvious differences, the fate of the oppressed always beats the same chime.

“This condemnation to be buried alive in the mill, to give constant attention to the tireless machine is felt as the keenest torture by the operatives, and its action upon mind and body is in the long run stunting in the highest degree.” (Engels)²⁷. The misery of the "buried alive," of today's stellar, modern, civilized society, passes like a raging fury over modern workers without leaving a visible trace, but it clouds consciences and brains as never before. A silent and invisible fury that sweeps whatever stands in its way. Even today, whatever one may say, the proletarians who are "lucky" enough to be exploited are automatons in the service of automatons. The ultimate goal, profit, has not changed. What has changed are the feelings, the anger, the eyes, yes the eyes of the working class that have become clouded and can no longer distinguish in the masters their enemy. Engels again quotes a poem in his writing that expresses with great efficacy, the "opinion of the English workers on the factory system": *“His priesthood [the bourgeoisie] are a hungry band, Blood-thirsty, proud, and bold/’Tis they direct his giant hand, In turning blood to gold/For filthy gain in their servile chain All nature’s rights they bind/They mock at lovely woman’s pain, And to manly tears are blind/The sighs and groans of Labour’s sons Are music in their ear/And the skeleton shades, of lads and maids, In the Steam King’s hell appear.”*

We wanted to report almost in full this cry of pain of the English workers against the bourgeoisie, in this case against its tool (the steam engine). But it is a cry of pain that should resonate throughout the world; it is a cry of pain that surely Russian and Ukrainian mothers, women and men know well. Because those hundreds of thousands of dead on the altar of the interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie of all the actors in the war, it is "Music" to the ears of these criminals, but it is the same as in 1845, the same legitimate "Music" daughter of that steam engine, of that loom with the "iron arm"; it is a cry of pain that should be turned into rage; it is a cry of pain that should unite proletarians all over the world against the common enemy: The bourgeoisie, capitalism.

The Second Industrial Revolution

This was immediately followed by the second industrial revolution, which began almost uninterrupted in the second half of the 19th century (around 1860) and spread to several European countries. It continued until about the end of 1915. This period was marked above all by the application of electricity on a large scale, with the obvious spin-offs to electric machines and thus to the locomotion and construction of new machines and new products; then the internal combustion engine was invented, followed by the automobile. This opened up

new horizons in all fields. "Industrial gigantism" with factories of thousands of workers was becoming more and more established. Both finance capital and so-called globalization began to take their first steps. The United States and Germany overtook Britain, world trade was doing business as never before. "Fordism" (the putting into practice of Taylorism), i.e., the parcelization of work, the assembly line (as we can see, even in the choice of the momi-**chain**- the bourgeoisie makes things clear right away), which reduced man similar to a monkey, (with all due respect to the poor animal), endlessly repeating the exact same operation throughout the work shift, (a clear example in this regard is provided by C. Chaplin in *Modern Times*), draining him of all psycho-physical energy. But even today on assembly lines, albeit with the help of robots, information technology and a new organization of work – think of *just-in-time*, of Japanese origin, which almost completely eliminates warehouse inventories – Fordism is still alive and well.

The third-industrial revolution is identified, in a nutshell, with the transition from mechanical and analog technology to digital electronic technology, i.e., information technology, It begins to take its first steps in the second half of the 20th century. Before delving into the dark forest of further revolutions, fourth, fifth etc., it is interesting to point out the teachings of the Great Treccani Encyclopedia , in reference to the Industrial Revolution: *“The Industrial Revolution was the very expression of that liberal revolution (sic!) which replaced the king by God’s will with a nation and a state. In this nation, individuals were established less and less by the blood rights acquired from their ancestors, and more and more by the ability to accumulate sufficient wealth to be co-opted into the command system of the society in which they lived.”* The masterminds produce the ideological crap apt to keep the working masses subjugated, and in so doing they confirm all the more the validity of obsolete and antiquated Marxism: *“The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force.”* (K. Marx, *German Ideology*)

We leave behind the world of yesterday by repeating, once again, that it is always the mother of all revolutions. We do so with a premise that could easily have opened our writing. We begin again with Marx and Engels: *“The bourgeoisie cannot exist without continually revolutionizing the instruments of production, then the relations of production, then the whole set of social relations. By contrast, the first condition of existence of all previous industrial classes was the unchanged preservation of the old system of production. The continuous revolutionizing of production, the uninterrupted shaking of all social conditions, the eternal uncertainty and movement distinguish*

²⁷ . The Condition of the Working Class in England, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/condition-working-class-england.pdf>

the epoch of the bourgeoisie from all others.”²⁸

The New Way

The epoch we are going through confronts us with epochal changes. All the best intelligentsia of the globe is prone at the feet of capital with the hope of getting it out of the “entanglements” and giving it new life. The “production of ideas” follows material production step by step in its constant changes and upheavals. From right to left it is all a teeming with debates on the goodness of the eternal “best” society ever, despite all its flaws.

One author who caused a sensation with the release of his book in 1995, titled *The End of Work*, was U.S. economist and sociologist Jeremy Rifkin. He predicts how, with the ever-increasing use of computers, robotics, and automation increased and tend to continue to increase unemployment. He shows, with data in hand, that despite a sharp increase in labor productivity, unemployment continues to rise: *“Despite a 2.8 percent growth in the economy in 2002 and a rapid 4.7 percent growth in labor productivity-the most conspicuous increase since 1950-more than a million workers have exited the job market in the past year.”* [translated from the Italian version]

Rifkin (militant in the peace movement since the Vietnam War years) offers his wonder recipes, which are already concluded in the subtitle of his book, *The Decline of the Global Labor Force and the Dawn of the Post-Market Era*. That is, in order to avoid the dystopia of a barbaric and criminal world as a consequence of the array of hundreds of millions of unemployed, underclass and criminals as a result of the most intense automation ever in human history, he proposes the utopia of... volunteerism, the third sector as he calls it. To substantiate his thesis he resorts to Alexis de Tocqueville and his moral associations: *“In democratic countries, knowing how to aggregate is the mother of all other knowledge, and on its progress depends that of all others.”²⁹* Had we known that voluntary associations were enough, historically, to build C. Fourier's modern phalanstery (again, not to stray too far from Tocqueville), we could have turned our energies to building the perfect community, without masters or capitalists. But perhaps today the time is ripe to implore the Musks, the Bezos, Goldman Sachs: Let us pass, we are volunteers.

Today the debate is overwhelmingly about Artificial Intelligence (AI), and especially its effects, which many, if action is not taken in time, call disastrous (perhaps).

Before we move through acronyms (ChatGPT, LLM, BigG, Bard), it would be useful to remember that hand

in hand with the military war, which currently sees Ukraine as the hottest point, it is useful to recall that a war, no less bloody, is being played out in the global markets in chips and semiconductors of which Taiwan is the world's undisputed leader. Late last year Biden had enacted severe restrictions on U.S. companies, prohibiting them from “exporting critical chip-making tools to China”, also “companies of any nationality will be prevented from supplying Chinese entities with U.S.-component hardware or software.” These measures seek in every way, to put its major rival/enemy in trouble in the high-tech and AI sector; the rival just shortly after, responded just as harshly. Micron Technology (a U.S. multinational company active in various types of semiconductors), was “banned by Xi's government, decreeing a trade blockade.”

The Present and the Future

And now let us take a closer look at what the present and future holds for the working class. On the horizon, unfortunately, we see only tsunami-like waves. But let us unravel the mysteries of new technologies. Of course, we are not interested in the mainly technical aspect, except for a cursory glance; that is a field of expertise of computer scientists at all levels. What we are particularly concerned with is the fallout, in all respects on the proletariat at large.

ChatGPT

More precisely ChatGPT (OpenAI) *Chatbot Bing GPT-4*. Let us first explain what a bot is: A bot is a computer program designed to mimic or replace the actions of a human being by performing automated, repetitive tasks. And so far we are still in the “old”, because those who tinker with PCs will have happened dozens of times to have to answer forms that at the bottom contain a box to check off “I am not a robot”, after, however, correctly typing deliberately distorted alphanumeric characters (also known as CAPTCHA). The chatbot, on the other hand, is already a much more sophisticated leap forward: *“Basically, it is software that simulates and processes human conversations (written or spoken), enabling users to interact with digital devices as if they were communicating with a real person.”* ChatGPT is in order of time the latest revolution in the field of Artificial Intelligence:

“More specifically, it is a large language model (LLM) designed to produce human-like text and converse with people, hence the “Chat” in ChatGPT. GPT stands for Generative Pre-trained Transformer. The GPT models are pre-trained by human developers and then are left to learn for themselves and generate ever increasing amounts of knowledge, delivering that knowledge in an acceptable way to humans (chat). Practically, this means you present the model with a query or request by entering it into a text box. The AI then processes this request and responds based on the

²⁸ . Translated directly by the IGCL from BC's Italian version.

²⁹ . *Idem*.

information that it has available. It can do many tasks, from holding a conversation to writing an entire exam paper; from making a brand logo to composing music and more. So much more than a simple Google-type search engine or Wikipedia, it is claimed. Human developers are working to raise the 'intelligence' of GPTs. The current version of GPT is 3.5 with 4.0 coming out by the end of this year. And it is rumoured that ChatGPT-5 could achieve 'artificial general intelligence' (AGI). This means it could pass the Turing test, which is a test that determines if a computer can communicate in a manner that is indistinguishable from a human."³⁰

The AI sector has determined but more importantly will determine a no-holds-barred competition among the five biggest Big Tech companies: Google, Amazon, Apple, Microsoft and Meta, whose revenues are around 1,47 trillion dollars; to give an idea of what this means, just think that the GDP of Spain (the fourth largest in the EU), is around 1,4 trillion euros. Despite the dangers threatened about AI: "annihilating humanity," Elon Musk (the founder of Tesla) is already at work creating his own creature to compete with ChatGPT; it will be called TruthGpt. Meanwhile, to combat the dominance of Google, the Chatbot Bing GPT-4 the search engine of Microsoft since early May this year is available for everyone. But Google also launched again in May its BARD, also based on LLM (Large Linguistic Model). And while Big Tech with their bosses in person and teams of well-meaning philosophers and intellectuals, devoutly religious of holy capital, lament about the catastrophic effects of AI, they all jump into the new gold seam because profit is profit and everything else can go screw itself: let Samson and the entire human race perish.

The employment effects of today's technologies of robotics, automation, and work organization – see also smart working (intelligent work (?) being done at home) – are already showing their impact: "According to *Layoffs.fyi*, which records job cuts across the industry, some 152 thousand employees were laid off by 2022 from more than 1,000 companies. Another report by the firm *Challenger, Gray and Christmas*, which has been tracking the labor market for nearly 30 years, says the biggest spike in layoffs in the technology sector occurred in November, with nearly 53 thousand cuts. The figure is the highest monthly total for the industry since 2000, when the firm began keeping detailed track of the tech industry. It is also the highest year-over-year number of layoffs for the industry since 2002."⁽²⁾ Amazon, Twitter, Meta, in the second half of 2022 made tens of thousands of layoffs. We are talking about the technology sector alone, and the forecast for 2023 is no different.

"The level of robotics use has nearly doubled in the major

*capitalist economies over the past decade. Japan and Korea have the highest number of robots per production employee, over 300 per 10,000 employees, followed by Germany with over 250 per 10,000 employees. The United States has less than half as many robots per 10,000 employees as Japan and the Republic of Korea. The rate of robot adoption increased during this period by 40 percent in Brazil, 210 percent in China, 11 percent in Germany, 57 percent in the Republic of Korea, and 41 percent in the United States."*³¹ This is the future, and here is what lies ahead: "Artificial intelligence could replace the equivalent of 300 million full-time jobs. That's one of the highlights of the report by Goldman Sachs, which mentions that about **two-thirds of occupations** are exposed to some degree to IA. Some more and some less. In fact, **a quarter of the labor activity** in the United States and Europe are likely to be totally replaced. According to the report, those who lose 50 percent or more of their daily workload due to a bot."

The future? Will it be more or less distant? Hard to say. As Marxists we are not used to reasoning with a crystal ball. We leave that to magicians, priests and hucksters. We can only say that the "compensation theory" will tend to "compensate" less and less, that is, workers who are "set free" in one sector will with increasing difficulty find jobs in other sectors or branches of production. But from this Marxian theory we come to its most important law: The tendential fall in the profit rate, precisely as a consequence of a different organic composition of total capital. Roberts and other "Marxists" while striving to understand (?), continue to use capitalist categories even in the language: "Robots and AI will intensify the contradiction under capitalism between the drive by capitalists to raise the productivity of labour through 'mechanisation' (robots) and the resulting **tendency for the profitability** in this investment for the owners of capital **to fall**. This is Marx's most important law in political economy – and it becomes even more relevant in the world of robots." (*Ibidem*) Aside from the fact that his explanation is rather smoky, that a "Marxist" would turn the falling trend of the profit rate, into the falling trend of profitability, is all telling, and mind you that in his article and posts, he never talks about profit but always about profitability. But he continues in his narrative by quoting another "Marxist" sympathizer John Lanchester: "**It seems to me that the only way that world would work is with alternative forms of ownership**. The reason, the only reason, for thinking this better world is possible is that the dystopian future of capitalism-plus-robots may prove just too grim to be politically viable. This alternative future would be the kind of world dreamed of by William Morris, full of humans engaged in meaningful and sanely remunerated labour." What then he means by alternative forms of property would be interesting to

³⁰ . Michael Roberts:
<https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2023/04/08/ai-gpt-a-game-changer/>

³¹ . Micheal Roberts:
<https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2015/09/24/robots-and-ai-utopia-or-dystopia-part-three/>

know. But those already exist and are called private property: i.e., the form and basis on which today's social edifice stands: the capitalist state. Then we come to the slums of the better enlightened bourgeoisie with “*meaningful and sanely remunerated labour.*” What does it mean that we will be paid with sanitized and disinfected money? So money one of the fundamental categories of the capitalist system will continue to circulate in a celestial world? And this is where Mark Zuckerberg may come to the rescue with his “Metaverse” and plunge us into a virtual world, where instead of cocaine, there will be goggles to keep us always suspended in the void, hovering ethereally in the heavenly world of angels. We are on the verge of vomiting... Not least because as soon as we take off the goggles we find ourselves in the usual bourgeois pigsty. But back to the true Marxist, Roberts: “*Indeed, the biggest obstacle to a world of super-abundance is capital itself. Well before we get to ‘singularity’ (if we ever do) and human labour is totally replaced, capitalism will experience an increasingly deeper series of **man-made** economic crises*” But how, first he picks on capitalism, “*the biggest obstacle*”, and then? It's **man's** fault for causing the crises: the metalworker on 1,000 euros a month, the unemployed person on zero euros, the maid, the garbage collector, Musk, Soros all together passionately. Ooh la la! But it's not over because finally, served on a golden platter comes the solution to the enigma that has given us so much trouble, here it is: “*A super-abundant society where human toil is reduced to a minimum and poverty is eliminated won't happen unless **the ownership of the means of production changes from private control (capitalist oligarchy) to ownership in common (democratic socialism).** That's the choice between utopia and dystopia.*” (*Ibidem*). So what was needed, tomorrow morning, a year from now, no hurry, is that we go to the bourgeois capitalists and tell them, hat in hand, as befits polite people, excuse me gentlemen will you step aside?,

because we have decided to establish democratic socialism, if you agree.

The reality is quite different, let us leave these Marxists of Holy Natal to their fate, to their pastures. Enemies of the proletariat on a par with the “real” enemies.

The former in good company with fake “communists”, are on the opposite side of the barricade, always ready to turn the other cheek, always willing to reason to “set things right”. There is no example in history of the bourgeoisie willingly surrendering its power. The latter are criminals who do not disdain for one minute to send millions of proletarians to the pavement, to laugh in the faces of the starving, to send tons of goods to the scrap to keep prices from falling, to spend trillions on armaments, to send millions of proletarians to the slaughterhouse, as they have always done. And when we say criminals, we don't do it just to say something bombastic, we do it because we always have before our eyes the children, women, old people, men who croak every day for the dirty interests of those who should disappear from the face not of the Earth, but of the universe. Because we don't stand for making this an everyday normality, like drinking a glass of water. These criminals are the capitalist bourgeoisie. Their interests are irreconcilable with the interests of the vast majority of society. The emancipation of the proletarians, their liberation from the slavery of wage labor, from slavery in general, passes through the violent destruction of the capitalist social organization and its state, No conciliation is possible. But to achieve this goal the proletariat must organize itself as “one man”, and to do so it must build with self-denial and sacrifice its main instrument, the International Party to lead it toward the only dream worth dreaming: a society without classes and without masters, the future communist society.

Battaglia Comunista, August 2, 2023

Struggle against Opportunism

Political Impasse of the International Communist Current

In all our activities, we try to be consistent with our conception of the central role of the proletarian political party – and in its absence of the communist groups and minorities – in the revolutionary process and future of our class, as well as in its daily struggles. Therefore, it is by principle that we regard the congresses and other conferences, assemblies or general meetings, etc., of other revolutionary groups, and especially of the Communist Left, as very special moments of the life of the proletarian political camp and the struggle for the party.

On reading the documents published of the ICC's 25th congress, it seemed to us that there was nothing particularly at stake for the proletarian camp. Entangled in its idealistic theoretical-political contradictions, in particular its rejection of any dynamic towards the generalized imperialist war that capital is trying to impose, the ICC finds itself bogged down in the constantly renewed justification and defense of its opportunist theory of *Decomposition*, which is taking on water on all sides in the face of historical reality. This congress merely expresses the growing political marginalization of this organization both within the camp and vis-à-vis the historical stakes facing the international proletariat. Two pages would suffice. And then...

And then... at the beginning of August, on its website in French, later in English, the ICC announced a “full dossier” of six articles on the IGCL alone, at the risk of offending our modesty. It already published three in a row: *Political parasitism is not a myth, and the IGCL is a dangerous expression of it*³², *The Marxist foundations of the notion of political parasitism and the fight against this scourge*³³ and *The IGCL's pseudo-"critique" of the ICC platform - A sham analysis to discredit the ICC and its political inheritance (the Communist Left)*³⁴. As a result, we are obliged to go into a little more detail on this organization than we had planned, We have therefore decided to first take a position on the text dealing with

the ICC platform. And then to reproduce our position on the congress, unchanged, as it was written before the ICC launched its offensive against our group.

Quick Attempt to Explain Such an Anti-IGCL Attack

How to explain that *the most important organization of the Communist Left*, in its own words, “stoops” to dedicate dozens of pages to respond to the political criticisms voiced by “*this small parasitic group*”? This in itself is an indication of its current political disarray. As it does about the dynamics opposing the *pro-* and *anti-party* forces within the proletarian camp. Make no mistake about it: behind us, the target of the ICC and its “anti-parasite” policy is the entire proletarian camp and its components working towards political clarification and regrouping of communist forces. Why such an offensive, which the report on the congress does not announce? Apart from introducing division and sectarianism into the proletarian camp, there are **at least two other immediate or contingent** reasons. One, calling for the “defense of the organization” in front of the IGCL, “*a parasitic group of the worst kind*”, forces all its members to silence their doubts about the organization's political positions, analyses and dynamics; and so to close ranks internally against the “*police agency of the capitalist state*”³⁵ that we would be, the ICC has been hammering incessantly since our constitution in 2013³⁶. Two, it is forced to answer

³² . <https://en.internationalism.org/content/17392/political-parasitism-not-myth-and-igcl-dangerous-expression-it>

³³ . <https://en.internationalism.org/content/17391/marxist-foundations-notion-political-parasitism-and-fight-against-scurge>

³⁴ . <https://en.internationalism.org/content/17393/igcls-pseudo-critique-icc-platform-sham-analysis-discredit-icc-and-its-political>

³⁵ . ICC Communiqué of 2014, <https://en.internationalism.org/content/9742/communique-our-readers-icc-under-attack-new-agency-bourgeois-state>

³⁶ . Let's skip that the IGCL is not the IFICC - if only because of its composition and, above all, its platform. And that the latter was not a split, contrary to the lie – a true one – of the text *Foundations of Parasitism...* from the ICC, but was excluded. Even more ludicrous in this accusation: in 2001, only two of our members, including only one former CCI militant, Juan, were adults. The other comrades, the vast majority, were between ten and two years old. Barely born and already parasites and cops! As for the denying of the accusations against the IFICC, anyone wishing to verify it can do so by referring to the 60 *Communist Bulletin* of the IFICC (http://fractioncommuniste.org/index_eng.php?SEC=b00), then of the International Fraction of the Communist Left. In particular, he or she will be able to find out who really violated the organizational principles and statutes of the ICC in a summary of *the IS History* in its Bulletin 25 (http://fractioncommuniste.org/ficci_eng/b25/index-3.html).

questions put to it by contacts and young militants moving closer to the Communist Left about the positions of other groups, the ICT and the IGCL in particular. The reality in the making of the proletarian camp, and of the new forces and individuals moving towards it, which it is obliged to take into account, at least in part, thus puts it in open contradiction with its theory of parasitism, as we had already reported at the NWBCW committee meeting in Paris.³⁷ The impasse it has locked itself in, is the inescapable result of the objective, historical contradictions caused by the adoption of the opportunistic and idealistic theory of Decomposition, and “parasitism” that accompanies it. In short, do not let the virulence of the comments and the dozens of pages already published and still to come impress you: this offensive does not express a position of strength and dynamism, but of growing and inevitable political weakness and disorientation, both internal and external.

The Debate Method Specific to the ICC

Let us turn to its “response” on its platform. First of all, we warmly invite our readers and militants and sympathizers of the Communist Left, or those who are close to it, agreeing or disagreeing with our positions and wishing to be consistent, to read our *Statement on the ICC's Platform*³⁸ to form their own opinion. And, in particular, to judge the “defamatory, misleading and slanderous” nature of our arguments. They will also be able to compare our method of political debate and confrontation with that of the ICC. Our text is relatively short. Six pages.

The method used by the ICC can be summarized by the following quotations: “The councilist flaws that the IGCL attribute to the ICC's platform are pure slander... These “criticisms” are grossly misleading... Open defamation, denigration and slander... enormous-shameless-huge [etc.] lies, misleading assertions, huge lies... fraudulent criticisms...”, etc. etc. Hence “the necessary re-establishment of the truth about our political positions”, it explains. In their place, we would have written the “Truth”. Faced with our criticism on this or that point of the very platform, the ICC also refers to other articles to establish our “lies and slanders”. We doubt that such rebuttals can win any support other than that of the sect's followers and believers. It does not defend the point of the platform in question, nor does it make it explicit, but refers to another text.

Example: our statement points out the weaknesses, in our view, of the ICC's platform on parliamentarianism.

Instead of responding by defending its platform, it replies as follows: “What the IGCL is quick not to mention here is that Lenin's theses are reproduced in full in the following ICC article ‘Lenin's Theses on bourgeois democracy and proletarian dictatorship (reprint)’. This reduces to nothing the criticism of an alleged weakness of our position on this question and illustrates once again the devious method of the IGCL.” The article in question was published in 2000, and is merely a republication of Lenin's *Theses on Bourgeois Democracy and Proletarian Dictatorship*, adopted at the 1st Congress of the Communist International in 1919. So what? What does this have to do with the platform written in 1976? Surprising and convincing, isn't it?

Or still: “Contrary to these misleading assertions, the ICC in no way minimizes the fundamental role played by the party in the success of the Russian revolution (...). This is borne out by the many articles in various pamphlets we have devoted to this question.” And it refers to other articles and a brochure published in the 1990s. What does that have to do with the price of tea in China? What about the platform itself? What about our criticism? Nothing.

We shall leave aside the... various lies from the ICC itself. Come on, just one for fun: “Only a mythomaniac with the aplomb of the IGCL is capable of spouting such nonsense. The ICC has never considered itself to be a party (or a party in miniature)” states, with emphasis [in the French version only], its response. Quote from the Resolution on the International Situation of the 16th ICC Congress: “the ICC already constitutes the skeleton of the future party.”³⁹ And, Report on the Question of Organization, 1975: “we must constitute the pivot, the ‘skeleton’ of the future world party of the proletariat.”⁴⁰ Would we be liars and mythomaniacs? Ah, the harsh reality that belies idealistic postulates and precipitates into contradictions and deadlock...

And then there are the silences and omissions.

The ICC Platform's Councilist Stance on Class Consciousness

There is one passage and one argument that the ICC text does not mention, not even as a *lie*. And with good reason: we base our argument on an article from its *International Review* and an ICC Resolution, both from the 1980s. We apologize to the reader for quoting the entire passage on this point of our statement on the ICC's platform. Indeed, beyond the immediate polemic, this question is of fundamental importance in the fight for the party and is, in our view, part of the lessons of the Communist Left that needs to be debated and that goes beyond the ICC alone.

“Many passages of this point [of the ICC platform – PF]

³⁷ . *Revolution or War #23*, Impasse and Contradictions of the ICC in front of the So-called “Parasitism”, the ICT and the IGCL (<http://igcl.org/Impasse-and-Contradictions-of-the>)

³⁸ . *RW #18*, Statement on the ICC's Platform, (<http://igcl.org/Statement-on-The-International>)

³⁹ . https://en.internationalism.org/ir/122_intsitres

⁴⁰ . <https://en.internationalism.org/content/2503/report-question-organization-our-international-communist-current>

are right in themselves, but they are contradicted by others of an openly councilist nature and content. For example:

‘The self-organization of workers’ struggles and the exercise of power by the class itself is not just one of the roads to communism which can be weighed against others: it is the only road. (...) The organization of revolutionaries (whose most advanced form is the party) is the necessary organ with which the class equips itself to become conscious of its historic future and to politically orient the struggle for this future.’ [ICC’s PF]

It is councilism to substitute **the workers’ councils as organs of the proletarian insurrection and of the exercise of the dictatorship of the proletariat** by the *self-organization of struggles and the exercise of power* – needless to say that every leftist, especially anarchist, even a little bit radical, recognizes him/herself enthusiastically in this anarchistic verbiage, which is more than confused from the Marxist and class points of view. It is councilism to reduce the role of the party to the sole dimension of *becoming conscious and orientating for the future* instead of the historical dimension, broader, and concrete, more immediate, of political leadership both towards this future and in the daily struggles of the revolutionary class.

This reduction of the role of the party to a mere adviser or guide of the class⁴¹ is based on the central thesis of economism and councilism, which is unfortunately present in the platform.

‘Class consciousness develops along a tortuous path through the struggle of the class, its successes and defeats.’ [ICC’s PF] This economist position is the same one that Lenin rightly fought against in *What is to be done* and that the ICC in turn had to fight within its own ranks in the 1980s.

‘By presenting consciousness as a determined and never a determining factor in the class struggle; by considering that the ‘one and only crucible of class consciousness is the massive, open struggle’, [this thesis] leaves no place for revolutionary organizations (...). The only major difference between this vision [centrist towards councilism] and councilism is that the latter takes the approach to its logical conclusion by explicitly rejecting the necessity for communist organization...’⁴² [ICC’s article of 1985] It was following

this internal debate that the ICC adopted a Resolution in January 1984 specifying, among other things, that *‘the condition for coming to consciousness by the class is given by the historic existence of a class capable of apprehending its future, not by its contingent, immediate struggles.’* In doing so, it was in contradiction with this point of the ICC platform, which nevertheless has never been rectified.”⁴³

The quotation we rely on is therefore an “official” ICC text, **an organizational Resolution**, itself contradicting the specific point of its platform on the question of class consciousness and defining its formulation as *centrism vis-à-vis councilism*. One can disagree with us, but it is hard to call it a lie or a slander. The ICC's impasse? To keep banging its head against the material and historical reality, there texts of organization, it keeps trying to deny.

But despite these crude dodges, the ICC is compelled to provide some political elements. And here... the least we can say is that they largely and clearly confirm not only that the 1976 platform is under the influence of councilism, but that this influence is even more pervasive in today's ICC.

On the Trade Union Question, German Left or Left of Italy?

Let's take just one example: the union issue. Let's recall that our main criticism of the platform is that it is permeated by a councilist and economist approach, expressed particularly in the **tendency** to explain class frontiers only by the impossibility of reform in the decadence of capitalism.⁴⁴

For lack of space, we shall not go into the ICC simplistic argument – let us be gentle – that to say, as we do, that *“the passage of the unions into the camp of the bourgeoisie was the product of a balance of forces”* would mean that we are arguing that it would have been possible to maintain the unions as a class organization. No cry of outrage on our part. The ICC and others have every right to think that, and we are ready to debate it. Let us just note for the reader that, in our view, to do so is to miss the political struggle that the Left of Italy, including the group called *Gauche communiste de France* (GCF) which the ICC of today claims to its continuity, was waging in the trade unions right up to 1945. And therefore ignore the political and **principled** approach and method that animated the Left of Italy in opposition to that of the

⁴¹ . The paradox of a passage from a mechanical materialist approach to idealism is only apparent. The inconsistent councilist who does not go so far as to deny absolutely the necessity of political organization is forced to reduce its role only “to spread insight and knowledge, to study, discuss and formulate social ideas, and by their propaganda to enlighten the minds of the masses” (Anton Pannekoek, *Cinq thèses sur la lutte de classe*, 1947, in Pannekoek et les conseils ouvriers, EDI Paris, 1969, translated by us).

⁴² . Centrist Slidings Towards Councilism, *International Review* #42, 1985, <https://en.internationalism.org/content/2978/internal-debate-centrist-slidings-towards-councilism>

⁴³ . Statement on the ICC Platform, *op.cit.*

⁴⁴ . “As capitalism entered its decadent phase it was no longer able to accord reforms and improvements in living conditions to the working class. Having lost all possibility of fulfilling their initial function of defending working class interests, and confronted with an historic situation in which only the abolition of wage labor and with it, the disappearance of trade unions, was on the agenda, the trade unions became true defenders of capitalism, agencies of the bourgeois state within the working class” (ICC Platform)

German-Dutch Left.

However, in its reply, the ICC refers precisely to the latter: “In fact, the only really ‘inspiring’ struggles for the proletariat in relation to the trade union question are those which have called into question this institution as a tool of class struggle, as was the case in particular during the revolution in Germany.” The statement remains vague, though it is no less clear that what the ICC considers “inspiring” is the experience of the KAPD and the AAUD and AAUE in the early 1920s. What did this policy mean from the point of view of the class and its struggles? What were the AAUD? Radical “new unions” with a “communist” political platform, excluding workers who were not, and rejecting the specific political leadership role of the Communist Party. In this respect, the KAPD’s *economist-councilist* policy differed little **at the level of the principles** from the opportunist trade union policy of the Communist International, both calling for the splitting and division of what were considered the unitary organizations of the class.⁴⁵

For our part, and without getting into the fundamental debate, we claim the policy defended by the CP of Italy, then the Left of Italy, which opposed the “union split” in the name of the unity of workers in struggle, whatever their political opinion. Let’s dwell on this point for a moment, as it raises a question of principle and illustrates the “lightness” and ignorance of our kind opponents. In footnote 7 of their reply, referring to the 1944 *Schema of program*⁴⁶ for the PCint, the ICC directly challenges us: “They must therefore endorse formulations such as ‘our party, which does not underestimate the influence of other mass parties, is the defender of the unique front’⁴⁷, a policy of the Communist International during its opportunist decline and which had been opposed by the Italian Left since the early 1920s.” The article’s editor and the team around have shown a guilty laziness here. Why did not they read the whole point? The formula that uses “unique front” in quotation marks, an omission from the ICC, is very clear: the “unique front” as “the organic manifestation of the unity of the proletariat outside the parties, indispensable to struggle and victory.” In other words, the 1944 program schema merely reiterates the Left of Italy’s long-standing position: “The united front tactic shouldn’t be interpreted as a political coalition with other so-called workers’ parties, but as a utilization of immediate demands in particular situations to increase the communist party’s influence over the masses with-

out compromising its autonomous position. The basis for the United Front must therefore be sought in the proletarian organizations which workers join because of their social position and independently of their political faith or affiliation to an organized party.” (Rome Theses of the Left of Italy CP, 1926) Despite its cries of outrage and repeated scandals, the ICC’s laziness and crass ignorance of the real positions of the Left of Italy do indeed verify and confirm our criticism that its platform’s claim of the German, Dutch and Italian Lefts “left little room for the Italian Left and much for the German-Dutch” – criticism which the ICC describes as an “outright lie”.

The fact that the German Left perceived “earlier” that the unions were becoming counter-revolutionary does not make its struggle any more just or “inspiring” in terms of principles; or even... immediate struggles, whether they were still in the revolutionary flow until the very early 1920s, or in the counter-revolutionary ebb from 1923 onwards. The policy that would and could have enabled to establish lines of defense in face of the international reflux, and thus preserve the proletariat from the unleashing of counter-revolution, was class unity on the grounds of demands. Alone against all, against the CI and the German-Dutch Left of the time, the Left of Italy put forwards this policy. In this sense, and without putting it on the same level as the degenerating International, the KAPD and the German Left of the time also played their part in aggravating the workers’ reflux and final defeat.

Each to its own school and inspiration, thus. For the ICC, the KAPD, paving the way for the councilism of the 1930s. For us, the Left of Italy. One may not agree with our criticism of the weaknesses and the councilist approach of the historical document that is the ICC’s 1976 platform. But the confrontation of different positions and their clarification deserve better than the ICC’s insults and stupid denials. Especially for the younger generations of revolutionaries, starting with the militants and sympathizers of this organization itself, who need to arm themselves theoretically and politically by truly re-appropriating the lessons and debates of the Communist Left.

August 2023

⁴⁵ . Our criticism of the KAPD and its AAUD-AAUE is beyond the scope of this article.

⁴⁶ . To our knowledge, not translated in English update.

⁴⁷ . The English uses “united front”, while the French and Italian use “front unique”, which can be differentiated from “united” referring to the unity of different parties in stead of the unity of the workers while in struggle. The Left of Italy is clear that it refers to the “unity of all workers in the workplaces” while using “unique front”.

25th Congress of the ICC: “Destruction of Humanity” or Generalized Imperialist War? (July 2023)

The International Communist Current has held its 25th congress, which it reports on in a presentation.⁴⁸ This was accompanied by the publication of various reports on imperialist tensions, the economic crisis and the class struggle, as well as an *Update of its theses on decomposition*. This time, there is no new questioning or opportunist rejection of the classic positions of the original ICC and Marxism, as were in their time the substitution of a third way for the historical alternative of revolution or war (15th Congress, 2003), the disappearance of any possibility of generalized imperialist war (17th Congress, 2007) or the rejection of the notion of the historical course (23rd Congress, 2019), to name only the most significant. Apart from the ritual call against the danger of *parasitism*, there are no specific statements on the proletarian camp.

Likewise, there is no balance-sheet of the activities and the realization of the perspectives put forward at the previous congress. What about the orientations put forward for 2021? What about “*the struggle against opportunism within the organizations of the Communist Left, linked to the struggle against parasitism [and] the defense of the organization against the attacks of parasitism and for breaking the cordon sanitaire?*”⁴⁹ What about “*the ability to analyze the world and historical situation (...) one of the pillars of our immediate perspectives?*” Clearly, the so-called *cordon sanitaire* that parasitism – in fact, our group, according to it – sought to establish, i.e., the *isolation* of the ICC, persists. So much so that we are often obliged to fight to convince those, and not only young militants, who do not want to hear about it, that it remains an organization of the Communist Left and that it continues to defend class positions despite its opportunist and sectarian drift. The IGCL, “*the most dangerous of the parasitic groups*”, made up of “*gangsters and cops*” according to the ICC, is very often the only one to defend it! Sweet pleasure of defending proletarian principles on these occasions.

And what about its capacity for analysis? We had seen that one of the aims, if not the main one, of the previous congresses was to justify the theory of decomposition internally at all costs⁵⁰, in the face of its own

members' doubts and lack of conviction about this theory; which is rejected by the whole proletarian camp. One of the main political implications of decomposition is the denial of any prospect of generalized imperialist war, of a Third World War, as capital's only way out of its crisis. And all this with the main argument that the chaos and “every-man-for-himself” attitude provoked by decomposition annihilates any possibility of, or even tendency towards, the constitution of imperialist blocs.⁵¹ But since then, imperialist war has broken out in Ukraine. It has provoked a heightened imperialist polarization, evident to all, and further confirmed by the latest NATO summit in Vilnius; and it marks a first significant step in the push towards generalized imperialist war. These moves are manifested by the fact that **direct and indirect preparation for war, general and precipitous rearmament, and the establishment of war economies, are the central factors in the situation, and tend to determine and dictate all the policies that each national bourgeoisie is now forced to implement, particularly against its own proletariat.**

Unless losing all credibility, the ICC of the decomposition is therefore obliged to recognize, empirically, the reality of imperialist war – after having denied it – as a factor in the situation, while clinging to the thesis, against all evidence, that there is no dynamic of imperialist polarization. Responding to its members who disagree on this issue⁵², the 25th Congress affirms that “*the consequences of the conflict in Ukraine do not lead to a 'rationalization' of tensions through a 'bipolar' alignment of imperialisms behind two dominant 'godfathers', but on the contrary to the explosion of a multiplicity of imperialist ambitions, which are not limited to those of the major imperialisms (to be examined in the next section), or to Eastern Europe and Central Asia, thus accentuating the chaotic and irrational character of the confrontations.*”

What the report – of the very Congress! – on imperialist tensions actually contradicts. “*If the war [in Ukraine] was indeed initiated by Russia, it is the consequence of the strategy of encirclement and suffocation of the latter by the United States. In this way, the United States has succeeded in intensifying its aggressive policy, which has a much more ambitious objective than simply stopping Russia's ambitions.*”

⁴⁸ <https://en.internationalism.org/content/17373/international-revolution-or-destruction-humanity-crucial-responsibility-revolutionary>. Readers interested in reading the almost 80-90 pages of all these documents can find them on the ICC website.

⁴⁹ . Balance of the previous congress: <https://en.internationalism.org/content/17105/balance-sheet-congress-understanding-historical-situation-and-preparing-future>

⁵⁰ . See our past statements in this journal, for instance: <http://www.igcl.org/ICC-24th-Congress-The-Row-Boat-of>

⁵¹ . Today's ICC scarcely cares that the blocs as such were only formed on the eve, a week before the outbreak of the 2nd World War, with the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact of August 1939.

⁵² . There is little to expect from this internal tendency, which is careful not to question the framework and dogma of decomposition, despite its recognition of a dynamic of imperialist polarization and generalized war. The conclusion it draws is that the proletariat is incapable of opposing war, and that the time has come not for intervention, but for theoretical deepening. In short, it is even more “right-wing” than the official ICC line.

And this part concludes with the fact that the United States “tightened the screws within NATO by forcing European countries to come under the Alliance's banner, especially France and Germany.”

So, tendency towards imperialist polarization or not? So, is American imperialist policy irrational and out of control? Or is it a well-thought-out and effectively implemented policy that demonstrates the strength and unity of the state apparatus and the American capitalist class? The problem with the so-called dialectical method so loudly claimed by the ICC is that it is still trapped in the metaphysical opposition of opposites. It still has not understood, or does not want to understand – at the risk of destroying one of the pillars of the theory of decomposition – that the defense by each national capital of its own interests, the “each-one-for-himself” attitude, is only a moment of imperialist polarization. Any gang leader knows that he must seek an alliance, if possible with a stronger godfather, if he is to defend his own interests. In the same way that the strongest godfathers often seek to ally, often by imposition, themselves with weaker gangs.

This denial of generalized imperialist war as one of the poles of the historical alternative, and therefore as a factor in the situation and its concrete development, results in... a tendency to underestimate and deny class struggle as the driving force of history. “*This general dynamic of capitalist decadence is no longer directly determined by the balance of power between classes. Whatever the balance of power, world war is no longer on the agenda, but capitalism will continue to sink into decay, since social decomposition tends to spiral out of the control of the contending classes.*”⁵³

In so doing, today's ICC is incapable of understanding the immediate terrain and stakes of the attacks that each national bourgeoisie has begun to carry out, and will carry out more and more, against each proletariat. And this in relation to the path that each must follow, economically, politically, ideologically, etc., to prepare for war. The result – and we can't go into too much detail here – is abstract and general considerations and orientations, ultimately of an economist nature, which reduce proletarian struggle to the return of “class identity” as a prerequisite for struggle. But more importantly, by denying the evolution of the balance of forces between classes, and hence class struggle, as the central factor in the development of capitalist society, the ICC substitutes to it the struggle against decomposition. In

other words, the idea of decomposition. Examples: “*the current effectiveness of union control relies on the weaknesses that derive from decomposition. (...) One of the most effective weapons of the ruling class is its ability to turn the effects of decomposition against the class. (...) The proletariat of the world's first power, in spite of numerous obstacles generated by decomposition, of which the US has become the epicenter.*”⁵⁴ In short, the obstacles to proletarian struggle are not the very real political forces of the bourgeois state apparatus, but the *effects of decomposition*.

In 2003, at its 15th congress, the ICC, definitively won over by opportunism, had liquidated its position on the historical alternative of *revolution or war* in favor of a “third way”, the classic opportunist thesis.⁵⁵ Since then, and no doubt in the face of the – and our – criticisms, it has had to abandon any reference to this third way, which smelled too sweetly, and too openly, of opportunism and revisionism. But that doesn't mean it has stopped falling into the latter. Admittedly, it has re-established a historical alternative that may seem harmless to the uninformed or less rigorous reader and militant. *Destruction of humanity or generalized imperialist war*, is not it the same thing? Well, no. From the point of view of the proletarian struggle, its different stakes and battles, its terrains and timing, the *destruction of humanity* is merely an idea, a postulate that has nothing material about it – let's be precise: politically and historically material. The march to generalized war directly and concretely imposes even greater sacrifices for its preparation and the establishment of war economies. And it forces the bourgeoisie, a material force acting on the equally material terrain of class struggle, to attack the proletariat not only for the economic defense of its national capital, but also in preparation for war.

The formal return to an “alternative” is by no means a step forward for the ICC. Rather, it is a reaffirmation of the organization's idealist approach and its opportunist and revisionist course.

RL, July 23rd 2023

⁵³ . Resolution on the international situation of the 23rd Congress, 2019, (<https://fr.internationalism.org/content/9922/resolution-situation-internationale-2019-conflits-imperialistes-vie-bourgeoisie-crise>). It is worth reporting that the French version is not exactly the same, that it refers more directly to decomposition only: “*Whatever the balance of power, world war is no longer on the agenda, but capitalism will continue to sink into decomposition.*”

⁵⁴ . Resolution on the international situation of the 25th Congress of the ICC, <https://en.internationalism.org/content/17360/resolution-international-situation-25th-icc-congress>

⁵⁵ . At the time of the 2nd International, the 3rd way was that of reform and a peaceful, gradual transition to socialism.

Political Dilemma of the ICC Minoritarians: Be Consistent and Tackle the Dogma of Decomposition

As this issue draws to a close, the ICC publishes a text by Ferdinand, *Disagreement with the International Resolution of the 24th Congress of the ICC*⁵⁶ – accompanied by a *Response to Ferdinand* – both only in French so far. And so, two years after this congress. The first is in addition to the texts already published under Steinklopper's pseudonym, which attempt to oppose the ICC's most caricatured and blind positions on the international situation, and in particular on the tendency towards imperialist bipolarization and generalized war. At first sight, there is little to expect from this internal tendency, which clearly refrains from questioning the framework and dogma of Decomposition. From its observations, the *Divergences* text concludes “*an asymptotic process towards the definitive defeat*” of the proletariat, leaving revolutionaries only with the task of “*disseminating revolutionary positions, but **above all** qualitative, theoretical work, in-depth analysis of current trends.*” (emphasis added) In other words, an inward-looking orientation. And an armchair preservation of the principles?

Nevertheless, it is sweet and pleasant to us to note the text's long-standing criticism of the idealist method used by the ICC. It starts from the postulate of Decomposition and reduces all facts to it: “*Everything is a product of decomposition – and all growth is therefore null and false. What is more: everything decomposes homogeneously, a kind of smooth disintegration not only of human relations, morality, culture and society, but of capitalism itself. (...) The implications of the contradiction between our ‘classical’ views and reality were too radical.*” And, not to spoil our pleasure, we have even better: “*this understanding of the period of decomposition is schematic and (...) **an abandonment of Marxism.***” (emphasis added) In short, it is not just the IGCL cops and parasites who denounce the ICC's abandonment of Marxism.

Eternal optimists, we are. Let's not despair of this internal tendency, even if it seems to be positioned more to the “right” than to the “left”. Let's help it: one more effort comrades, free yourselves from the taboo of the Decomposition framework. Because – and in this we agree with the so-called “majority” position of the ICC – your “*arguments call into question*” the concept of decomposition, as it had already been replied to Steinklopper.

If you want to be politically consistent, you will have to go all the way, risking a **violent** internal battle and personal risks – Steinklopper knows the music. He was *first violin* during the internal crisis of 2001-2002. And in case you have any doubts, the *Response to Ferdinand* reveals a piece of the score: Ferdinand has “*an **insidious way** of casting doubt on the organization's analysis*” and uses a “***fallacious argumentation** [in which,] despite the formal expression of agreement with this framework [of decomposition], in reality transpires, through a cloud of smoke, a concrete questioning of it.*”

The slightest internal questioning of Decomposition presents such “organizational” stakes, in fact of faction and personal power, that the consequent political struggle can only be difficult and painful. After all, the theory of Decomposition is also used to underpin the psychologizing theories of clans, anti-organizational parasitism and Stalinist-style internal ICC practices implemented in the 1990s and especially the 2000s. To call it into question is also to call into question the outrageous organizational practices of the past. The accusations already made by the “majority” that your positions contradict this theory and your previous agreement with it should not intimidate you. Any communist militant can and must go back on positions he now considers erroneous. There is no shame, and even less betrayal, in changing your position, provided you make it explicit. It is a question of loyalty to your communist convictions and your militant commitment. Demanding that you renounce today's political convictions in the name of a past vote is a typical Stalinist practice. It destroys militants as communist militants and as individuals.

September 10, 2023

⁵⁶ . <https://fr.internationalism.org/content/11141/divergences-resolution-situation-internationale-du-24e-congres-du-cci> and <https://fr.internationalism.org/content/11146/reponse-a-ferdinand-divergences-resolution-situation-internationale-du-24e-congres-du-cci>.

History of The Workers Movement

Russia, Revolution and Counter-Revolution 1905-1924 A View from the Communist Left

We draw the attention of all our readers and revolutionary militants, especially those who can read English, to the publication of the book *Russia, Revolution and Counter-Revolution 1905-1924*, subtitled *A View from the Communist Left*. We strongly encourage anyone who can read English to obtain it from *Prometheus Publication* by contacting the Internationalist Communist Tendency at uk@leftcom.org. The book is published under the name of Jock Dominie, who is also known as a member of the ICT-CWO.

Based on a very thorough compilation of most of the historical studies and testimonies of revolutionary militants, the book provides us with a homogeneous vision of the entire historical process and the issues facing the proletariat and its party, the Bolshevik Party. For this reason alone, we warmly encourage the younger, and not so younger, generations of revolutionaries to make it a reference work, enabling them to re-appropriate the essentials of the revolutionary experience of the time. But above all, it provides the general position of the Communist Left on the Russian Revolution. This position is all the more important in that it differentiates itself from other political currents, whether bourgeois – such as the Stalinists, Trotskyists and anarchists – or not, such as Councilism, on the basis of the two fundamental principles of the workers' movement: *proletarian internationalism* and the one of *the dictatorship of the proletariat*. As a result, only today's Communist Left maintains that the Russian Revolution was a proletarian revolution. That is why the introduction is right to remind us that “any understanding of revolutionary experience has to take the Russian Revolution as its starting point.” This is how the book is presented:

« This work is divided in two parts. The first demonstrates that in its historically-discovered form of government: the soviets, the Russian Revolution provided a lasting gain for the working class everywhere. We also demonstrate how, despite its inevitable subjective errors (much magnified by our class enemy), the Bolshevik Party became a genuinely

revolutionary weapon of the Russian proletariat. On the way we debunk the myth that the October Revolution was a carefully planned coup by a bunch of professional conspirators, and demonstrate the profoundly mass character of October 1917.

The second half analyses how the revolution that began with so much promise of working class emancipation slid step by step into the creation of a one party state. The decline of working class initiative began as a result of an economic and social cataclysm which led to the working class abandoning their factories in hundreds of thousands, and was compounded by the civil war. »

In so doing, the book exposes the difficulties and contradictions encountered by the proletariat in Russia, as a result of its international isolation. And it presents the political questions to which the only organized force left in a devastated country, the Bolshevik Party, as the mobilization of the broad masses of the proletariat gradually weakened, tried to respond in order to keep the dictatorship of the proletariat as best it could alive, in expectation of the international extension of the revolution. One of these responses was precisely to take on the responsibilities and tasks that the starving, exhausted proletariat as a whole was less and less able to assume, and so to be led to substitute to it. In this, the book is right to point out that “the relationship of party and class was never clearly defined [and that the process of bringing the party to exercise power alone] as in every other aspect of the October Revolution, was dictated more by circumstances than design.” (p. 207-208) In addition to analyzing events within the framework of the essential principles of the proletarian movement, the comrade's work also has the great merit of refusing to give clear-cut, definitive answers to a whole host of “tactical” questions that arose at the time, and which we can still consider “open”. “Unlike the Trotskyists (ever seeking to provide the 'right leadership' for workers, we will not be looking for a precise re-run or promoting any single 'formula' for success.”

(p. 220) There are several questions that reading the book reminds us of or awakens. Thus, from a militant point of view, it encourages reflection, debate and political confrontation on issues that we would be wrong to believe belong only to the past, even if we know “that there will be no repeat of the conditions which produced that revolution.” (p. 5)

We cannot deal with them here, or even mention them all. But these issues are part of the reflection that every communist group must carry out on the Russian experience, and of the debates, even political confrontations, that the proletarian camp of today should assume. Quite often, these questions and differences of opinion run through communist groups themselves – including our own, of course. This is normal and unavoidable, unless we are to declare a facade of unanimity in the face of a complex and extremely fluid historical reality specific to revolutionary periods. Even if most of these questions do not raise issues of principle or immediate political stakes, the fact remains that they may conceal different political approaches and methods. They should be openly confronted even before they arise, or be urgently and dramatically revived, in the very course of events, in the very class confrontations and at the very heart of the coming historical turmoil.

We would have a lot to say, some of it critical. They deal with secondary issues. Among them, we would be more critical of the “Bukharin Fraction” of 1918 than the book, even though it acknowledges that it was Lenin who was right about the signing of the Brest-Litvosk Treaty. Similarly, the tendency to place the start of the counter-revolution in 1921, after the dramatic and bloody episode in Kronstadt, should be discussed. If this were the case, it would be appropriate to question the validity of some of the political orientations that the Left of Italy, to which we – the ICT like ourselves – lay claim, adopted, put forward and defended within the Communist International itself.⁵⁷ Similarly, while we

agree with the exposition and analysis of the different moments in the Russian Revolution and the difficulties caused mainly by international isolation, we would be more measured about the criticisms of the Bolshevik party and Lenin in particular that appear here and there. For instance, the formula “Lenin had created the conditions for the rise of Stalin” (p. 216), which follows a passage criticizing the rise of “discipline in itself”

within the party, seems to us, in itself false, in the context of the book at the very least confusing and too hasty – it would deserve to be argued – and in contradiction with the book's general approach and thesis explaining the final failure.

These observations in no way detract, on the contrary, from our invitation and encouragement to obtain the book and make it a document for re-appropriation and work to strengthen the forces called upon to constitute the party of tomorrow. Reviewing the difficulties as they arose and examining the responses provided by the Bolshevik Party and, more broadly, the Communist International, not from

positions supposedly established today, in a dogmatic and a-historical way, but in the very course of events, this is the method the book presents and offers us. If today's meagre communist forces are to be fully prepared for the challenges that lie ahead, this is the method we must use: to study the positions that the different currents or even fractions put forwards on the various *barricades* that class antagonisms, sharpened by the revolutionary situation and historical drama, erected throughout the period. For this reason alone, the book is a must-have.

RL, September 2023



⁵⁷ . We refer our readers to our introduction to the *Prometeo* text

from 1946-47, which is reproduced on the next page.

The following text on The Tactics of the Comintern from 1926 to 1940 was published in 1946 and 1947 in numbers 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 of the journal *Prometeo* of the Partito Comunista Internazionale, founded in Italy in 1943. Because of its length, we too are obliged to publish it in several editions. To our knowledge, it has never been translated into French. An English version exists on the website of the International Communist Party so-called “of Florence”⁵⁸, which publishes *Il Partito comunista* in Italian and *The Communist Party* in English. But it was thanks to its translation into Spanish by the comrades of the Barbaria revolutionary group (<https://barbaria.net>) that we realized the importance of translating it and making it as widely known as possible.⁵⁹

Signed by Vercesi (Ottorino Perrone), one of the historic leaders of the CP of Italy, then of its fraction outside Italy, “this study, which has only an informative character on the tactics of the Comintern [that is the International Communist] from 1926 to 1940, and which cannot even begin to exhaust such a complex question, must reduce itself to offering the essential elements of this tactic in its fundamental stages, which we list here as: the Anglo-Russian Committee (1926); the Russian Question (1927); the Chinese question (1927); the Tactics of the offensive and social-fascism (1929-1933); the Tactics of anti-fascism and the Popular Front (1934-1938); the Tactics of communist parties during the second world imperialist conflict.”

The Russian Revolution and the international revolutionary wave from 1917 to 1923, the high points marking the turning steps, victories and defeats of this period, are generally well known. Regrettably, this is too often understood in a superficial or Manichean way, according to the political dogmas of the ones and the others. On the other hand, the counter-revolutionary period that followed, which was played out first and foremost within the Communist International itself, the rise of Stalinism and the defeat of the lefts, remains largely unknown. Yet it too is full of lessons. For many revolutionary currents, by 1923, or even 1921, there was nothing left to do but “preserve the principles”, given the international ebb and the isolation of revolutionary Russia.

The experience recounted in this contribution reminds us that this was not the path taken by the Left of Italy. As well as providing a clear - and necessary - exposition of the process and the various key moments in the degeneration of the International, it also demonstrates that there was still “much to be done”. The defense of principles per se - at that time, that of proletarian internationalism in particular, in the face of the theoretical and principle abomination of “socialism in one country” advocated by Stalinism - is not enough if it is not accompanied by the putting forward of political orientations aimed at the proletariat, even when the latter backslides. It was appropriate and possible - albeit very difficult, of course - to put forward alternative orientations to the directives of the International and of the national Communist Parties, enabling the international proletariat to establish minimum lines of defense against the international, including Russian, forces of counter-revolution. If, after 1923, the general ebb was imposing itself, the unleashing of international counter-revolution - of which Stalinism became the central factor - could have been thwarted and limited. There was no fatality despite the successive defeats that followed, that it should take on such a dramatic extent and depth we still suffer today, a century later. The fact that the Left failed to guide the proletariat and “lead” it towards an “orderly” international retreat in no way detracts from the validity and exemplary character of its struggles, both in terms of principle and in political and tactical terms. It is an integral part of the experience that the young generations who will form tomorrow's party need to re-appropriate for the massive class confrontation that the capitalist crisis and imperialist war are once again imposing today.

The Tactics of the Comintern from 1926 to 1940 (*Prometeo*, #2-4, 6-8 of 1946/1947)

In March 1926 the Session of the Fourth Enlarged Executive took place in Moscow, and Bordiga finished his speech by stating that the time had come for the other parties of the International to pay back the Russian Party for what it had given to them in the ideological and political field, and expressly requested that the Russian question be put on the agenda of the following debates of the International.

If, from the formal point of view, this proposal had a favorable outcome, since at the Seventh Enlarged

Executive as well as at the following plenary session of the Executive of the International, the Russian question was widely debated, substantially things were quite different, as all the parties of the International blocked the theoretical, political and disciplinary solutions previously given by the Russian Party. These resolutions fully the fundamental principles on which the Communist International had been built and were brought into the very core of the Russian revolution those substantial transformations, which lead to the ruthless repression against those who fought the

⁵⁸ . <https://www.international-communist-party.org/>

⁵⁹ . We take back the English version published by ICP-The Communist Party.

revolution and to the concurrent overthrow of the Russia ruled by the workers' Soviets, destined now to eventually become one of the essential instruments of the counter-revolution and of the preparation of the second imperialist conflict.

The truth is that, already in 1926, and thanks to the success of that "bolshevization" that Zinoviev had made triumph at the Fifth International Congress of 1924, the leading cadres of all parties had been radically changed. To the currents which in 1920, at the rise of the International, had organically converged towards the same revolutionary path affirmed in a decisive way in the triumph of Russian October, other tendencies had been substituted; and these tendencies, real trend-chasers who had followed the victorious chariot of the Russian revolution without making any contribution to the formation of the communist parties, who were snoozing at them waiting for their hour to shine, could only take up the call of the counter-revolution rising in Russia and give it a hand in the work then just sketched out of breaking up the militants of the International.

If we have recalled the proposals made by the Italian left, as expressed by Bordiga, to the VI Enlarged Executive of the International, we have done so in order to underline that this current was already aware of all the great events which were ripening and of their central point: the radical shift which was being prepared in the politics of Soviet Russia.

It was the last time that the Italian left could make itself heard at the very center of the International and of the Party: one year later, not only it, but every other current of Opposition was conclusively purged from the International and the condition for belonging to it became the recognition of the theory of "socialism in one country", which represented a clear break with the principle of the programs on which the International itself had been founded.

The subjugation of the Comintern to the interests of the Russian State had now occurred, and the Communist parties of the various nations, instead of moving toward the one real goal of the revolutionary struggle against their capitalism at home, were simply used as pawns in the diplomatic game in which Russia was engaged in with the other powers and led, when these needs required it, to the most unsuccessful compromises with the forces of centrist opportunism and the bourgeoisie.

This study, which has only an informative character on the tactics of the Comintern from 1926 to 1940, and which cannot even begin to exhaust such a complex question, must reduce itself to offering the essential elements of this tactic in its fundamental stages, which we list here as:

1st- Anglo-Russian Committee (1926); 2nd- Russian

Question (1927); 3th- Chinese question (1927); 4th- Tactics of the offensive and social-fascism (1929-1933); 5th- Tactics of anti-fascism and the Popular Front (1934-1938); 6th- Tactics of communist parties during the second world imperialist conflict.

1 – The Anglo-Russian Committee

In 1926, an event of great importance disturbed both the analysis of the situation, given by the Fifth Congress of the International (1924), and the policy that had followed in Russia and other countries. The world situation had been characterized by the formula of "stabilization", which evidently did not exclude the possibility of a resumption of the revolutionary wave, but – because of the changes in tactics that it implied – far from facilitating the orientation of the International towards a resumption of the proletarian struggle, it was to make it a prisoner of tactical formulations and organisms, which cannot be modified or broken overnight.

In fact, the political process is not a patchwork of tactical expedients, in which the party can apply to each situation what mechanically corresponds to it as a doctor would after having diagnosed the disease. The party, a factor in the direction of historical evolution, cannot but be itself shaped by the tactics and politics it applies, and it will be able to intervene in a revolutionary situation only to the extent that it has been able to prepare for it in the phases which preceded it. In the absence of this preparation, it's evident that the party, having become stuck in an unrelated political process, will be unable to take charge of the revolution and thus prevents itself from directing the proletarian struggle.

Now, when in 1924 there was talk of "stabilization", it was evidently not limited to a purely statistical and technical examination of economic evolution, but, from the indisputable observation of the decline of the revolutionary wave that followed the defeat of the German revolution in 1923, arose a political discourse in perfect harmony with the tactical decisions of the International.

These decisions were based on the fundamental objective of maintaining communist influence on the masses. And since that, said unfavorable situation, contact with the broad masses was only possible through the development of political relations with the social-democratic organizations which benefited from the retreat of the revolution, the formula of "stabilization" involved the tactic of entryism into the leaderships of the social-democratic parties and trade unions.

When, in 1926, the gigantic strike of the English miners broke out, the International could thus only act

consequently in the ways that these already established tactics permitted them. The trade-union leaders were quick to establish permanent agreements with the leaders of the Soviet trade unions, and the Anglo-Russian Committee was forced to exercise whatever role that the circumstances demanded.

The strike became general, and if all the economic analysis made by the Fifth Congress was obliterated, the same can't be said for the tactics that emanated from it. The International not only found itself unable to reveal to the masses the counter-revolutionary role of the trade union leaders, but it had to maintain solidarity with them throughout the entire events of this important proletarian agitation in one of the world centers of capitalism.

In order to better grasp the tactics of the International in this matter, it's be necessary to remember that, at the same time, the right-wing tendency of Bukharin-Rykov triumphed in Russia. This tendency had developed within the general framework of a tactic which, after having tied the fate of the Russian State to the fate of the world proletariat together, had proceeded to make the policy of the Communist parties dependent on the needs of that State. And Bukharin would then go on to justify the tactics used in the Anglo-Russian Committee by appealing to the "diplomatic interests of the USSR" (Executive of the International of May 1927)

Regarding this tactic, it is sufficient to recall that after the Anglo-French Conferences of Paris in July 1926 and Berlin in August 1926, at the Berlin Conference of April 1927 the Russian delegates, who had recognized the General Council as «the sole representative and spokesman of the trade union movement of England», pledged themselves «not to diminish the authority» of the trade union leaders and «not to concern themselves with the internal affairs of the English trade unions» after the open betrayal of the general strike by the Social Democratic leadership. And it is not unnecessary to mention that English capitalism, as soon as it can liquidate the general strike, will repay with its usual gratitude the Russian leaders who had been so prodigal to it, and that, directly in London, indirectly in Beijing, Baldwin's government will go on the offensive against the Soviet diplomatic representations.

The magazine "Lo Stato Operaio", published by the Italian Communist Party in Paris, in issue 5 of July 1927, in an article on "the Executive and the struggle against the war" (which is to say, the Executive of the International), polemicizing against the Russian opposition, writes the following on the Anglo-Russian Committee:

"This tendency (of the opposition, ed.) comes to light even better in the criticism of the meeting of the Anglo-Russian

Committee. The Berlin meeting of the Anglo-Russian Committee must be considered and judged carefully without haste and without partiality. The time at which the ARC met in Berlin was internationally very serious. The British Conservative Government was preparing the break with Russia. The campaign for isolating Russia from the entire civilized world was in full swing. Was the delegation of the Russian trade unions well advised or ill-advised to make some concessions in order to not break with the delegation of the British trade unions at that time?" This document raises the question of the tactics followed by the delegation of Russian trade unions at the meeting in Berlin, but, as we have seen, Bukharin was very explicit in stating that it was necessary not to break with the Anglo-Russian Committee for the sake of the diplomatic interest of the Russian State, a committee that served as a smokescreen for the trade union leaders to sabotage the general strike, while officially recognizing in it the "only representatives of the English trade union movement".

The same official documents unequivocally posed an issue: that a mighty proletarian movement would be sacrificed because the defense of Russian State matters required it.

Here, moreover, is a new confirmation of the role played by the ARC within the English movement. The magazine *L'Internationale Communiste* (issue 17 of 15-8-28) contains in an article by R.Palme Dutt on the plenary assembly of the Chinese Communist Party of February 1928 the following statements: "Here is a decisive turning point in the attitude of the Communist Party towards the masses. Until now the Party had criticized the movement directed by the reformists and acted as an independent agitator (and thus as its own ideological leader). From now on the task of the Communist Party is to fight the reformist leaders in order to put itself at the head of the masses."

And in an author's note he adds: "It is sometimes said that we have passed from the slogan 'fight for leadership' to that of 'change of direction'. This is not accurate. As a matter of fact, the slogan "change of direction" had already been implemented before the new tactic, even when this new tactic was being fought, and it only means one thing: the "right" of the Labor Party must be replaced at the head of the movement by the "left" of the same party. At present the party is fighting for its own interests, and not to correct the mistakes of the Labor Party. It is necessary to fight to regroup the masses behind the Communist Party and the elements associated with it (minorities, etc.). It is in this sense that the slogan "change of direction" is valid for the current period."

The Party's role had thus been in 1926 to act as the "ideological leader" of the movement directed by the reformists and to "correct the mistakes of the Labor Party". As for the "new tactic", which will be just as deleterious to the proletarian movement as the

opposite tactic of the Anglo-Russian Committee, we will discuss it again in the chapter devoted to the “offensive” and “socialism”.

2 – The Russian Question

In 1926-27 Russia went through a serious economic crisis. Since 1923-24, two opposing positions had been defended within the Russian Party: that of the Bukharin-Rykov Right who, breaking with the prejudicial conditions laid down by Lenin during the NEP (see *The Tax in Kind*⁶⁰), advocated support for the expansion of the capitalist strata, especially in the countryside; the other of the trotskist Left who, on the basis of Lenin’s formulations, tended towards the establishment of an economic plan that focused on strengthening the State and the socialist sector of the economy to the detriment of the private and capitalist sector.

The Russian party moved on to the fight against Trotski; but the ruling bloc going from Bukharin-Rykov to Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev, while proceeding united in the fight against a so-called “trotskism”, did not reach a unity of views on what the solutions to the serious economic problems which the establishment of the NEP had given rise to actually were. The Right launched the slogan “peasants, get rich” which openly threatened the monopoly of foreign trade, but neither arrived at an economic and political plan clearly oriented towards the annihilation of the prejudicial conditions posed by Lenin in the NEP, nor differed clearly from the center then personified by Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev (to limit itself to the most important Russian leaders). As always, the Right had no need to define clear positions and relies above all on the direct impulse of events, which, in circumstances unfavorable to the revolutionary movement, can only be favorable to it. The essential thing for it is the struggle against the proletarian tendency, and for this purpose it uses the Center, which can carry out this counter-revolutionary task much better than the Right.

The years 1926 and 1927 saw a situation in which the different currents within the Russian Party did not confront each other with a view to particular solutions to be adopted in the face of the serious economic problems with which Russia was struggling with, with the debates being mostly concerned with general and theoretical questions. The practical solutions came later, at the XVI Conference of the Russian Party (1929) in which the first five-year plan will be decided. In 1926-27 the struggle is confined to the essential task of the hour: to disperse any proletarian reaction within the Russian Party. According to the report of the

plenary meeting of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the Russian Party (see the *Lo Stato Operaio* of September 1927) the opposition is divided into three groups: 1st an extreme left group headed by comrades Saprionov and Smirnov; 2nd the group that accepts Trotski’s hegemony and to which belong, among the best known, Zinoviev, Kamenev, etc; 3rd a group that strives to take an intermediate position between the opposition currents and the Central Committee (Kasparova, Bielincaia, etc.)

With regard to the first group the official document characterizes in the following points its analysis of the situation: a) the struggle within the party has a character of class struggle, between the working-class part of the party and an army of bureaucrats; b) this struggle cannot be limited to the interior of the party, but must involve the great masses without whose support the opposition cannot win; c) it is possible that the opposition will be defeated; it must therefore constitute itself as an active agent, which will defend the cause of the proletarian revolution in the future; d) the Trotski-Zinoviev bloc does not understand this vital need and tends to compromise with the Stalin group, has no clear tactical line; having erred in signing the declaration of October 16, 1926 of obedience to the Party, it must trample on its own principles; the hesitations of Trotski and Zinoviev must be denounced and unmasked like those of the Stalin group; e) In recent years the capitalist elements of production have developed more rapidly than the socialist elements; given the technical backwardness of the country and the low level of labor productivity, it is not possible to pass to a true socialist organization of production without the help of the technically advanced countries or without the intervention of the world revolution; f) The main error of the Party’s economic policy consists in the reduction of prices, which benefits not the working class, but all consumers, and therefore also the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie; g) the liquidation of party democracy and workers’ democracy, in 1923, is the prelude to the establishment of a democracy of wealthy peasants; h) in order to change this state of affairs, it is necessary to pass to the organization of large State enterprises with perfected production techniques for the transformation of the products of agriculture; i) the GPU, instead of repressing the counter-revolution, is fighting against the justified discontent of the workers; the Red Army threatens to transform itself into an instrument of Bonapartist adventures; the CC is a “Stalinist” fraction which, by initiating the liquidation of the party will lead to the end of the dictatorship of the proletariat; it is necessary to “restore” the Soviet system.

This current is deemed by the CC as “a group of enemies of the party and the proletarian revolution”.

⁶⁰ <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1921/apr/21.htm> [footnote added by the IGCL]

The same CC states that it “is solidly constituted as an illegal fraction, not only in the sense of the Party, but in the very sense of the Trotsky-Zinoviev fraction. It turns out that one of the groups of this fraction, the Omsk group, had set as its program the preparation of a general strike throughout Siberia and the halting of the activity of the large electric companies in the region.”

As for the Trotsky-Zinoviev group, the same document of the CC of the Russian Party writes: “The Trotsky-Zinoviev group is responsible for the most violent attacks on the CC and its political line, and for the most brazen fraction activity developed during 1927, openly breaking the solemn commitments made in the declaration of October 16, 1926. In recent times this group has concentrated its attacks against the party line in international politics (China, England) by speculating on the difficulties that have arisen in this field. It has responded to the preparation for war against the USSR with statements which represent a sabotage of the action which the Party is carrying out for the mobilization of the masses against the war and for resistance. A typical assertion is the characterization of the CC of the Party as a Thermidorian reaction, that the course of Party policy is “national-conservative”, that the Party line is one of “old peasants”, that the greatest danger threatening Russia is not the war but the internal Party regime, etc. These statements were accompanied by acts of violation of discipline and open factionism: publishing of fraction documents, organization of fraction, circles, conferences, etc., Zinoviev’s speech against the CC at a non-party assembly, Trotsky’s attitude at the Executive meeting, accusation of “Thermidorism” brought by Trotsky against the Party at a meeting of the controlling CC, public demonstration against the Party at Smilga’s departure from a Moscow station. Finally, a petition campaign was organized against the CC by circulating a document signed by the 83 leading opposition figures. In addition, the Trotsky-Zinoviev group maintained a relationship with the extreme left group excluded from the German Party (Maslov-Fischer).

“All this shows that the Trotsky-Zinoviev group has not only violated all the commitments it made in the declaration of October 16, 1926, but: 1) has placed itself on a path which leads to being against the unconditional defense of the USSR in the struggle against imperialism; the accusations of Thermidorism hurled against the CC have the logical consequence of proclaiming the necessity of the defense of the USSR only after this CC has been overthrown; 2) it has placed itself on the path leading to the splitting of the Comintern; 3) it has placed itself on the path leading to the splitting of the Russian Party and the organization of a new party in Russia.”

As for the intermediate group, the CC of the Russian Party considers it “a group of vague opposition, probably out of the bafflement that has arisen in some less self-confident elements in the face of the serious difficulties of the moment.”

This entire quotation allows us to understand the gravity of the situation existing in Russia at this time.

Although there are obvious exaggerations in the way the points of view of the extreme left fraction and the Trotsky-Zinoviev fraction are presented, it’s obvious that not even what the hostile CC wrote allows one to conclude that the two opposing groups could be compared to the Mensheviks and the counterrevolutionaries.

As for the positions defended by the right, they undoubtedly represented the vehicle for a restoration of the bourgeois class in Russia according to the classical type of the reconstitution of an economy based on private property and enterprises. But history was to rule out this eventuality. In the phase of monopoly imperialism and State totalitarianism, the reversal of Russian politics would take place along the other path of the five-year plans, which we will discuss later, and State capitalism.

But, as we were saying, before reaching this decisive step, it was necessary to definitively win the battle against the various opposition groups, a battle which was actually directed against the Party itself and against the International, since it concerned the fundamental point of Marxist doctrine: the international and internationalist notion of communism.

The aforementioned resolution of the CC represented a “half-measure” because the issues were not definitively resolved. It was in December 1927, at the 15th Congress of the Russian Party, after the failure of the show of force attempted by the opposition with the demonstration in Leningrad, that the problems would be fully addressed.

The great battle of the XV Congress took place around the new theory of “socialism in one country” and the incompatibility of being a member of the Party and the International and the not accepting this thesis.

On this fundamental point the Seventh Enlarged Executive (November-December 1926) had expressed itself in these terms: “The Party starts from the point of view that our revolution is a socialist revolution, that the October Revolution represents not only the signal for a leap forward and the starting point of the socialist revolution in the West, but: 1) it represents a basis for the future development of the world revolution; 2) it opens up the period of transition from capitalism to socialism in the Soviet Union (the dictatorship of the proletariat), in which the proletariat has the possibility of successfully edifying, by means of a just policy toward the peasant class, a complete socialist society. This construction will be realized, however, only if the strength of the international workers’ movement on the one hand, and the strength of the proletariat of the Soviet Union on the other hand, are so great as to protect the Soviet State from military intervention.”

Note how the realization of the “complete socialist

society” no longer depends, as in Lenin’s time, on the triumph of the revolution in other countries, but on the ability of the international workers’ movement to “protect the Soviet State from military intervention”. Events have proven that it will be instead the two most powerful imperialist States, Great Britain and the United States, that will “protect” Soviet Russia.

Both at the 7th Enlarged Executive and at the other numerous meetings of the Russian Party and the Executive of the International, the Russian and international proletariat lost the battle. The consecration of this defeat came at the 15th Congress of the Russian Party (December 1927) when the incompatibility between membership in the Party and the denial of the “possibility of the construction of socialism in one country” was proclaimed.

But this defeat was to have decisive consequences both within Russia and in the international communist movement. Class struggle does not allow half-ways, especially in climatic moments, such as those of our epoch. The proclamation of the theory of socialism in one country, since it could not in practice be resolved by the extraction of Russia from a world in which – after the defeat of the Chinese revolution – capitalism was everywhere going on the counter-offensive and, by the very fact of breaking the necessary link between the struggle of the working class of each country against its capitalism and the struggle for socialism within Russia, was denying the proletarian class factor, had inevitably to admit another one, on which Russia was increasingly relying: world capitalism. Evidently, this transition of the Russian State was only possible under two conditions: 1) that the communist parties cease to pose a threat to capitalism; 2) that within Russia the principle of the capitalist economy – the exploitation of the workers – be re-instituted.

In this chapter we shall deal with the second point; in subsequent chapters with the first.

* * *

On the basis of a logic which we would like to call “chronological”, the opinion has been formed that the line of degeneration of the Russian State starts from the adoption of the NEP in March 1921 and inevitably arrives at the new course introduced after 1927.

This opinion is superficial and does not correspond to an analysis of events conducted according to Marxist principles.

It must be made clear that this economic maneuver was necessarily required by the events, by the insurmountable difficulties in which the proletarian dictatorship found itself, and it was possible precisely because it was carried out in a regime of proletarian

dictatorship. This does not mean, of course, that the bourgeois economic forces didn’t increase and that the political balance of power didn’t tend to change: however, this change in the balance of power that favored bourgeois forces, brought about by NEP, could become dangerous and lethal for the proletarian dictatorship in Russia only if the international balance of power shifted, as it did, towards the prevalence of bourgeois reaction and the ebbing of the revolutionary wave. Otherwise the momentary recovery of the bourgeois forces would have been overwhelmed by the proletarian dictatorship which had maintained its political positions.

Lenin’s position, since 1917, has been based on these main considerations: 1) an absolute political intransigence which will lead the Bolshevik Party to take positions of the most open struggle against all bourgeois political formations, including those of the extreme social-democratic left. It is well known that, in January 1918, Lenin, after having analyzed the results of the elections for the Constituent Assembly not according to the vulgar criteria of parliamentary democracy but rather according to its opposite, to class criteria, having thus ascertained that the Bolsheviks were an arithmetical and global minority in the country, but were a majority in the industrial centers, proceeded to violently disperse the Assembly elected on the basis of democratic principles. 2) A shrewd economic policy which delimited the possibilities of the proletariat – and consequently of the class Party – in connection with the concrete possibilities offered by the modest degree of development of the forces and technique of production. Lenin’s program implied the simple “control of production”, which meant the permanence of the capitalists at the head of industries.

This apparent contradiction between an economic policy of concessions and an extremely intransigent general policy is inexplicable if one does not place oneself – as Lenin constantly did – on the international plane and therefore does not consider the Russian revolution in connection with the development of the world revolution. If, from the Russian national point of view, concessions in the economic field are unavoidable because of the country’s backward industrial development, from the political point of view instead – since the experiment of the proletarian dictatorship is a function of international events – the most intransigent policy becomes not only possible but necessary, since it is ultimately a single episode in the world struggle of the proletariat.

Lenin acted according to Marxist principles both in 1917, when he limited himself to the “control of industries”, and during the phase of war communism between 1918 and 1920, and when he announced in

March 1921 the policy of NEP. The whole of his policy stems from an international approach to the Russian question, and the NEP itself will be considered inevitable because of the delay in the revolutionary rise of the world proletariat, while on the other hand the fundamental conditions will be specified under which the concessions contained in the policy of NEP will have to be strictly maintained.

It is well known that Lenin, by substituting the tax in kind (the peasant became free to dispose of the remaining product after the transfer of the share devolved to the State) for the system of requisitions (which deprived the peasant of any possibility of disposing of his product) and by authorizing the re-establishment of the market and of small industry, divided the Russian economy into two sectors: socialist and private. The first sector – the State sector – had to engage in a speedy race to reach the second one in order to defeat it in the economic field thanks to the superiority of the yield of work and the increase in production.

However, the qualification of socialist given to the State sector did not mean that the State form was sufficient to make the nature of this sector socialist. On a thousand occasions, Lenin insisted that the chances of success of the State sector resulted in no way from the fact that, instead of the private sector, it was the State that ran industry, but from the fact that this was a proletarian State closely linked to the course of world revolution.

Lenin established the NEP in March of 1921. It was in 1923-24 that the first results of NEP became apparent, and at the same time the struggle within the Russian Party showed that the predictions based on a development of the socialist sector to the detriment of the private sector were not confirmed by events. While Trotski will advocate provisions destined to the development of the socialist sector and to the struggle against the resurgent bourgeoisie, especially in the countryside, Bukharin's right wing will see no other solution to the economic problems than a greater freedom in favor of the capitalist elements of the Soviet economy.

In 1926-27 the struggle takes, within the Party and the International, the proportions we have already mentioned, which ends in a total defeat for the leftist elements, who will only be able to remain in the Party if they put aside the international and internationalist principle of the struggle for socialism.

Historical evolution does not obey formalistic criteria to such an extent that a restoration of the economic principles of capitalism could only be considered possible in Russia through the re-establishment of the classical form of individual property. Russia will find

itself in 1927 and later more and more in a world situation characterized, as in the last century, not by the reflection of liberal economic principles in the private appropriation of the means of production and surplus value, but in another situation which knows State totalitarianism and the subjugation to it of all forms of private initiative.

After the defeat of the Left within the Russian Party, we do not witness – because of the indicated characteristics of the general historical evolution – a triumph of the Right, due to the fact that the solution of economic problems can only be obtained through a struggle against the capitalist stratifications which arose during the NEP.

But between the policy of the NEP and that which was to triumph later, of the Five-Year Plans, is there or is there not a solution of continuity? In order to answer this question, one must first consider that, as Charles Bettelheim demonstrates in his book *Soviet Planning*, the NEP had not achieved its objectives either in the political field, since it had led to a hypertrophy of the bureaucracy, or in the economic field, since instead of having ensured the victory of the socialist sector, it had led to a strengthening of the private sector, or finally in the more general economic field, since 1926-27 had seen a serious economic crisis in Russia.

In the presence of what Bettelheim qualifies as “the failure of NEP” the question arises over whether 1927 was to unavoidably mark the hour of reckoning and whether, because of the very unfavorable international circumstances, no further possibility existed of keeping the Russian State in the hands of the proletariat. But we must not concern ourselves with this problem, our task being mainly informative about the course of events.

The indisputable fact is that the re-establishment of the economic principle of capitalist exploitation is enshrined in the Five-Year Plans, the first of which will be decided at the 16th Russian Party Conference in April 1929 and approved by the 5th Congress of Soviets in May 1929; the basic point of these Plans is first the attainment and then the continuous surpassing of production indices taking as reference points both the period prior to 1914 and the results obtained in other countries. In a word, what will be the substance of the new Soviet reconstruction? The official documents make no mystery of it: it is about reconstructing an economy of the same type as the capitalist one, and it will be qualified as “socialist” the higher the heights reached by production will be.

The economic plan conceived by Lenin and approved at the IX Congress of the Russian Communist Party in April 1920 set the whole problem on the increase of consumer industry: this meant that the essential purpose of the Soviet economy was the improvement of

the living conditions of the working masses. On the other hand, the theory of the Five-Year Plans aims at the highest development of heavy industry at the expense of consumer industry. The outcome of the Five-Year Plans in the war economy and in the war was therefore just as inevitable as the corresponding arrangement of the economy in the rest of the capitalist world.

Corresponding to the substantial change that will occur in the aims of production, which will be solely those of a constant accumulation of capital in heavy industry, another change will be made in the conception of “socialist industry” whose distinctive criterion will be established in the non-private and State form: the master State will become a God to whom will be immolated not only the sacrifices of the millions of Russian workers who will have to revitalize with zeal in the quantity and quality of production in order not to incur the accusation and condemnation of being “trotskists”, but also the corpses of the creators of the Russian revolution.

The economic principle of increasing exploitation of the workers proper to capitalism, will be re-instituted in Russia in parallel with the general laws of historical evolution that lead to an increasing and totalitarian intervention of the State. Even the Right leader Bukharin and his comrade Rykov will be executed. What triumphs in Russia is what will then triumph in all countries: State totalitarianism; and the consequence can only be the same in Russia: the preparation and the gigantic participation in the Second World War.

The Italian left, foreseeing from the very beginning the substance of the political evolution in Russia, did not allow itself – as Trotski did – to be captivated by the State form of property in Russia, and as early as 1933 it raised the necessity of assimilating Soviet Russia to the capitalist world, foreshadowing the same tactics in the course of the imperialist conflict, where it would inevitably be led by the theory of “socialism in one country” and the theory of the Five-Year Plans.

(to continue)

**Letter to K. Korch, Bordiga, October 26th 1926
(Extract)**

We can't say that “the Russian revolution was a bourgeois revolution”. The 1917 revolution was a proletarian revolution, even if generalising about the “tactical” lessons which can be derived from it is a mistake. The problem we are presented with now is this: What will become of the proletarian dictatorship in one country if revolutions don't follow elsewhere. There may be a counterrevolution, there may be an external intervention, or there may be a degenerative process in which case it would be a matter of uncovering the symptoms and reflexes within the communist party.

We can't simply say that Russia is a country where capitalism is expanding. The matter is much more complex; it is a question of new forms of class struggle, which have no historical precedents; it is a question of showing how the entire conception of the relations with the middle classes supported by the Stalinists is a renunciation of the communist programme. It would appear that you rule out the possibility of the Russian Communist Party engaging in any other politics than that which equates with the restoration of capitalism. This is tantamount to a justification of Stalin, or to support for the inadmissible politics of “giving up power”. Rather it is necessary to say that a correct and classist policy for Russia would have been possible if the whole of the “Leninist old guard” hadn't made a series of serious mistakes in international policy.

And then I have the impression – I restrict myself to vague impressions – that in your tactical formulations, even when they are acceptable, you place too much value on influences arising from the objective circumstances which may today appear to have swung to the left. You are aware that we, the Italian lefts, are accused of not taking the situation into account: this is not true. And yet we do aim to construct a **left line** which is truly of a general, rather than of an occasional, application; one which remains intact during the various phases and developments of situations into the distant future.

(...)

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OUR BASIC POSITIONS

- The IGCL considers and defines all its activities, both internal and external, in relation to and as moments of the struggle for the constitution of the world political party of the proletariat, indispensable tool for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a communist society.
- In addition to intervening in the proletariat's struggles, the IGCL leads this struggle especially in the international proletarian camp. This camp is composed of revolutionary political groups defending and sharing the class positions of the proletariat, in particular proletarian internationalism and the necessity of the class dictatorship of the proletariat.
- The IGCL claims the First, Second and Third Internationals and the struggle of the left fractions within them. In particular, it claims the struggle of the left fraction of the CP of Italy within the Communist International against its Stalinist degeneration and for the programmatic contributions that it has been able to develop and pass on us to this day.
- Only the proletariat, exploited and revolutionary class at the same time, is able to destroy capitalism and to establish communism, the classless society. The consciousness of this revolution, the *communist consciousness*, is produced by the historical struggle of the proletariat. So that it can materialize, defend and develop itself, the proletariat produces communist minorities who organize themselves in parties and whose permanent function is to carry this communist consciousness and to return it to the whole proletariat.
- As the highest expression of this consciousness, the party – or, in its absence, the communist fractions or groups – constitutes and must assume the political leadership of the proletariat. In particular, the party is the only organ that can lead the proletariat to the insurrection and to the destruction of the capitalist state, and to the exercise of the dictatorship of the proletariat.
- The party is organized and functions on the basis of the principles that govern the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, *proletarian internationalism* and *centralism* as moments of its international unity and struggle. From the start, the party constitutes, functions and intervenes as an international and centralized party. From its very start, the IGCL constitutes, functions and intervenes as an international and centralized group.
- The party, as well as the IGCL, bases its program, its principles, its political positions and its action on the theory of *historical materialism*. By explaining the course of history through the development of the class struggle and by recognizing the proletariat as the revolutionary class, it is the only world view that places itself from its point of view. It is the theory of the revolutionary proletariat.
- Only after the victorious insurrection and the disappearance of the bourgeois state will the proletariat be able to organize itself as a ruling class under the political leadership of its party. Its class domination, the dictatorship of the proletariat, is exercised by means of the workers' councils, or soviets. These can only maintain themselves as a unitary organization of the proletariat if they become *organs of the insurrection* and *organs of the class dictatorship*, that is to say, by making the party's slogans their own.
- The dictatorship of the proletariat consists in using the class power of its mass organizations, the councils or soviets, to abolish the economic power of the bourgeoisie and ensure the transition to a classless communist society. The state of the transition period, of the class dictatorship, between capitalism and communism is destined to disappear with the disappearance of the classes, of the proletariat itself and of its party, and the advent of the communist society.
- Since the First World War in 1914, generalized imperialist war and state capitalism have been the main expressions of the historical phase of decadence of capitalism.
- In face of the unceasing development of state capitalism, the proletariat can only advance the research for its unity in all its struggles, even the most limited or localized ones, by taking charge of their extension and generalization. Every workers' struggle, even the most limited, confronts the state apparatus as a whole, against which

the proletariat can only advance the perspective and the weapon of the *mass strike*.

- In the era of dominant state capitalism, the trade unions as a whole, the leadership as well as the base sections, are nowadays full-fledged organs of the bourgeois state within the working class milieu. They aim at maintaining the capitalist order within its ranks, at framing the working class and at preventing, counteracting and sabotaging any proletarian struggle, in particular any extension, generalization and centralization of proletarian fights. Any defense of the trade unions and trade unionism is counter-revolutionary.
- In the era of dominant state capitalism, all fractions of the bourgeoisie are equally reactionary. All the so-called workers', "socialist", "communist" parties, leftist organizations (Trotskyists, Maoists, Anarchists), or even those presenting themselves as anti-capitalist, constitute the left of the political apparatus of capital. All the tactics of popular front, anti-fascist front or united front mixing the interests of the proletariat with those of a fraction of the bourgeoisie, only serve to contain and divert the struggle of the proletariat. Any frontist policy with left parties of the bourgeoisie is counter-revolutionary.
- In the era of dominant state capitalism, parliament and electoral campaigns, and in general bourgeois democracy, can no longer be used by the proletariat for its affirmation as a class and for the development of its struggles. Any call to participate in the electoral processes and to vote only reinforces the mystification presenting these elections as a real choice for the exploited and, as such, is counter-revolutionary.
- Communism requires the conscious abolition by the proletariat of capitalist social relations: commodity production, wage labor and classes. The communist transformation of society through the dictatorship of the proletariat does not mean self-management or nationalization of the economy. Any defense of one or the other is counter-revolutionary.
- The so-called "socialist" or even "communist" countries, the former USSR and its Eastern European satellites, China, Cuba, Vietnam, or even Chavez's Venezuela, have only been particularly brutal forms of the universal tendency to state capitalism. Any support, even critical, for the so-called socialist or progressive character of these countries is counter-revolutionary.
- In a world now totally conquered by capitalism and where imperialism imposes itself on every state, any national liberation struggle, far from constituting any kind of progressive movement, is in fact a moment in the constant confrontation between rival imperialisms. Any defense of nationalist ideology, of the "right of peoples to self-determination", of any national liberation struggle is counter-revolutionary today.
- By their very content, the *partial* struggles, anti-racist, feminist, environmentalist, and other aspects of everyday life, far from strengthening the unity and autonomy of the working class, tend on the contrary to divide and dilute it in the confusion of particular categories (race, gender, youth, etc.). Any ideology and movement that advocates *identitarianism*, anti-racism, etc., in the name of the *intersectionality* of struggles, are counter-revolutionary ideologies and movements.
- Terrorism is an expression of social strata without a historical future and of the decomposition of the petty-bourgeoisie, when it is not directly the emanation of the war that the States are permanently waging against each other. It always constitutes a privileged terrain for the police manipulations and provocations of the bourgeoisie. Advocating the secret action of small minorities, it is in complete opposition to class violence, which is conditioned by the conscious and organized mass action of the proletariat.
- The IGCL fights, from today, so that the future party is constituted on the programmatic basis of the principles and positions that precede. The formal constitution of the party is necessary at the latest when the intervention, the orientations and the slogans of the communist groups or fractions become permanent material elements of the immediate situation and direct factors of the balance of power between the classes. Then, the immediate struggle for the formal constitution of the party is necessary and becomes urgent.