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Content

The Coming Catastrophe

International Situation

Reality and Limits of the Present Working-Class Struggles

Preparation for War and the Attacks on the Proletariat: the Case of Belgium

Debate within the Revolutionary Camp

A New Revolutionary Publication : Communist Prometheus

Correspondence with Communist Prometheus :
On "self-organization" of the Struggles and the Mass Strike

Contribution : Capitalism and Nature

Struggle against Opportunism

Proletarian Internationalism and Revolutionary Defeatism

History of the Working-Class Movement

The Defeat of One's Own Government in the Imperialist War (Lenin, 1915)

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Summary

Wars and Heat Waves of the Summer of 2026: The Coming Catastrophe.....1

Reality and Limits of Today's Working-Class Struggles.....2

Preparation for War and Attacks on the Proletariat: The Case of Belgium.....5

On a New Revolutionary Publication: Communist Prometheus.....9

Communist Prometheus' Letter on our Article "How Councilism is Kicked out the Front Door only to Come back in through the Window".....12

Capitalism and Nature.....20

Proletarian Internationalism and Revolutionary Defeatism.....26

The Defeat of One's Own Government in the Imperialist War (Lenin, 1915).....30

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Wars and Heat Waves of the Summer of 2026: The Coming Catastrophe

The future grows darker by the day. Wars, crises, exponentially increasing widespread debt[1], poverty, intensifying exploitation, bombings and massacres of civilians, ethnic cleansing, mass migration, and repression are affecting every continent[2]. Add to this list the effects of global warming and environmental deterioration, which are impacting the working class directly worldwide. The summer of 2026 certainly left a lasting impression and caused deep-seated anxiety in many. *Socialism or barbarism*, said Rosa Luxemburg. We are there now.

All the imperialist powers—that is, all capitalist states and nations—are embarking on a frenzied arms race. Already, new means of destruction are emerging and striking: AI-targeted drones, hypersonic missiles, etc. The wars in Ukraine and Russia and in the Middle East are intensifying, with no end in sight. Increasingly, it is the civilian populations of major cities that are targeted, in both Ukraine and Russia. The same is true in Iran. In Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon, the Israeli army and settlers are on a rampage, systematically destroying villages and homes, and sowing terror. Even the bourgeois press, particularly in the West, can no longer conceal the genocide in Gaza and the ongoing ethnic cleansing in the West Bank. In Africa, the war in Sudan—to name just one example—is witnessing mass slaughter.

The summer of 2026 also revealed a consequence of global warming, namely more frequent extreme heat events. These have severe effects on populations and agriculture, which directly compound the unfolding catastrophe. As Marx already pointed out in 1844[3], capitalism separates and pits "man against nature." This environmental deterioration and climate change have their own dynamics. Yet, due to the crisis and the march toward war, the bourgeoisie no longer even has the means to curb the destruction of nature. The 2015 Paris Agreement on reducing greenhouse gas emissions is a thing of the past. The priority is defense and military spending. As a result, the climate issue is in turn becoming an element, a product, and a factor in imperialist rivalries and the march toward war. To give an example, droughts are making—and will continue to make—access to water a widespread struggle among all imperialist powers, large, medium, and small.

All these ills and tragedies—those that already exist and the even greater number yet to come—have but one cause: the capitalist mode of production. There is only one responsible: the capitalist class. To point the finger at the world bourgeoisie means that neither capitalism nor the misfortunes it causes are inevitable, a given, something inherent to "human nature", or something... natural. Capitalism is a social relation, a relation between human beings, who are themselves social beings.

Denouncing the ruling class means recognizing that this social relation has social antagonism at its core. It is a call to fight against the ever-more-difficult conditions that capitalism and the social class that embodies it impose on the main exploited class—the international proletariat—and, by extension, on the general population.

The proletariat does not struggle against the idea of capitalism's inequality and injustice; nor against the idea of war, nor against the idea or threat of disasters, including climate-related ones. The proletariat struggles—and must struggle—against all the material consequences of the capitalist mode of production on its living and working conditions.

Ongoing wars and the climate crisis are causing the pace of events to accelerate dangerously. Refusing any kind of sacrifice is the first step for the international proletariat to halt the dynamic toward generalized imperialist war and pave the way for the destruction of capitalism—a task that only the proletariat can carry out.

What about today's revolutionary political minorities—the communist groups? Their task is to defend and promote the revolutionary program, the communist program, among the proletarian class as a whole, and to fight to ensure political leadership of all the proletariat's struggles, thus making them as powerful and effective as possible. It is also up to them to debate and clarify the program and orientations, the historical and immediate slogans of struggle, so that tomorrow, with the utmost political clarity, they may establish the political party of the proletariat. It will then be the party's task to lead the insurrection of the entire proletariat and its revolutionary class dictatorship.

There is no turning back. A historic catastrophe is going to happen. The question is whether its outcome will be revolutionary or counterrevolutionary.

The Editorial Team, September 4, 2026

[1]. The explosion of U.S. debt and its diverse financial consequences—particularly rising interest rates—threaten the dollar's dominance and the financing of that debt by the rest of the world.

[2]. The limited number of pages in our journal and in this editorial does not allow us to list all the wars, massacres, and other catastrophes that have swept the world in recent months. Nor can we address all the key aspects of the current international situation, particularly imperialist antagonisms and developments on the international stage. We have made the editorial decision to focus this issue primarily on the debates within the revolutionary camp and on workers' struggles.

[3]. See the contribution *Capitalism and Nature* in this issue.

International Situation

Reality and Limits of Today's Working-Class Struggles

> *"In a country where real wages have been falling for nearly twenty years and which is grappling with inflation, we cannot tell the majority of citizens that military spending must take precedence over safeguarding the welfare state[4]."*

This remark by an "expert on Italian foreign policy" regarding his own country clearly highlights the key issue of the current historical situation. How *can one tell the majority of citizens* – that is, "convince" them – that they must accept even greater sacrifices in the interest of a massive increase in military spending? His answer is clear: *"it cannot."* Each national bourgeoisie must **impose** the new sacrifices essential to the general preparation for war against the so-called "popular will" – and more specifically against the will of the proletariat. Global capital will not be able to avoid massive class confrontations. There will be massive outbursts of anger and revolt, and there already are.

To date, most of these movements are limited, isolated, and scattered. For the time being, they remain largely ineffective and unable to directly enforce the demands they have put forward – such as wage increases, bonuses, improved working conditions, schedules, remote work – or to counter threats of layoffs or workplace closures. Their dynamic is far from sufficient to demonstrate and assert to all their latent content: the revolutionary proletarian alternative to the one imposed by capitalism. Defending wages and working conditions is the first – though not the only – essential step toward eventually at least slowing down, and then opposing, the march toward generalized imperialist war. That is why, however limited they may be, however ineffective they may seem in the immediate term, we strive to highlight these proletarian struggles and their historical significance.

In recent months, we have seen a wide variety of workers struggles around the world. A French online newspaper, *Club de Mediapart*, – provides a list[5] for the month of June alone that is worth noting and sharing. In addition to a whole series of localized and isolated strikes and protests in France across various sectors – both private and public – the list mentions strikes in Australia (in the oil sector), in Belgium across several sectors (airports and other private companies), in Greece in the tourism industry, in Portugal (an inter-union day of action on the 3rd), in Tunisia (banks) and in Egypt (textile sector) among others. In addition to demands related to the threats of "restructuring" or business closures – and thus worsening working conditions, when jobs are not eliminated – the majority of these struggles share the common goal of demanding wage increases. Inflation, caused first by the war in Ukraine, then by the conflict in the Middle East and the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, directly affects the world working class. For the current period, there is little doubt that the wage issue remains the one with which workers in all sectors and all countries can most easily identify and around which they can most effectively unite in the struggle. It is undoubtedly around this demand – without, of course, excluding others – that the international proletariat can attempt to establish what we call a "first line of defense," which would allow it to regroup and confront the ongoing and future drastic deterioration in living conditions. This is the historical significance of the present struggles related to workers' immediate conditions. For all that these struggles are presently limited in scope, revolutionaries and the proletariat as a whole must remain alert to any "sudden" or spontaneous outbreak of broader struggles that might occur. For the situation is, after all, ripe for massive revolts.

That is precisely what the street protests, strikes, and blockades that took place in Bolivia during the month of May expressed. The same is true of similar mobilizations in India last April (see *Revolution or War* #33[6]). The rise in gasoline and transportation prices caused by the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz – and thus by the war in Iran – was the spark that ignited the anger in Bolivia, just as it did in India[7]. Among the various demands – not all of which were linked to the working class – the call for a 20% wage increase was what enabled a large segment of the population, extending beyond the proletariat alone, to identify with the movement and participate in it. As reported by the Internationalist

[4]. Leo Goretti, an analyst specializing in Italian foreign policy, quoted by the French newspaper *Le Monde*, En Italie, le soutien à l'Ukraine contesté... [The support to Ukraine challenged] August 12, 2026.

[5]. https://blogs.mediapart.fr/courant-de-lutte-transsyndical-et-interprofessionnel/blog/260726/un-mois-de-greves-et-de-luttes-juin-2026.

[6]. https://igcl.org/Wave-of-Working-Class-Struggles-in

[7]Recently, the price of diesel, which is essential for logistics and which consequently affects the prices of all consumer goods, has reached record levels. This threatens further immiseration of the working class. https://www.npr.org/2026/09/04/nx-s1-5948016/diesel-price-record-high

Communist Tendency, *"For over a month, Bolivia was the scene of large-scale protests: blockades of major roads and transport routes, near-daily marches in the streets of La Paz and El Alto, strikes affecting key economic sectors, and violent clashes with police and army forces – with protesters even resorting to the use of dynamite. These movements brought together various sectors of the workforce – including health and education workers, informal sector workers, and miners, as well as impoverished peasants and "cocaleros" (coca growers), who are often of indigenous origin*[8]*."*

This is not about overestimating what happened. It is simply a matter of assessing its reality and its potential. For from the perspective of immediate political dynamics, the information at our disposal indicates that these remained limited, as the ICT article also points out. The Bolivian bourgeoisie, however historically weak it may be, has over a century of experience in controlling and repressing workers' struggles. In particular, it has at its disposal a trade union apparatus, the *Central Obrera Boliviana* [COB], which is ubiquitous, powerful and was built specifically to contain and divert the miners' almost constant struggles up to the present day[9]. As a result, the influence of the left and leftism – Trotskyism in particular – has historically been strong in the country. This in no way detracts from the reality of this mass struggle, nor from the promise it holds in the current international situation and in relation to the prospect of workers' revolts on an international scale.

The Limits of the Strike at Airbus in Spain

Equally important to note is the strike that affected Airbus plants in Spain throughout the month of July, centered on the Getafe plant in the suburbs of Madrid, which employs 14,000 workers. A large part of the changes in working conditions at the company – the very changes that have exacerbated discontent – are due to the industrial restructuring that Airbus is carrying out to fulfill contracts and comply with directives from European governments for military aircraft production. Economic competitiveness and preparations for war are converging to intensify the exploitation of labor.

Launched on July 1, this strike did not turn into what we refer to as a *mass strike*. It remained confined solely to the company, even though the rest of the working-class population in Getafe and Madrid viewed it sympathetically. The movement began with the "white-collar" workers – technicians and engineers – after Airbus's European management decided to reduce the number of remote work days from two to one. The elimination of a 2,000-euro bonus, which had been approved by the unions, had already fueled the anger. In Getafe, some of the most militant "blue-collar" sectors and workshops very quickly joined the "white-collar" workers. They then sent delegations to the other sectors or assembly lines to convince the workers to stop work and join them. An initial general assembly of 2,000 participants adopted and compelled the unions to file a notice of an indefinite strike for the entire month of July, with the central demands being an 18% wage increase, wage indexation to inflation, and 40% of working hours spent working remotely.

Spain's largest union, the CCOO – known as *Comisiones obreras* [Workers' Commissions] – which won a majority in the company elections, opposed the strike and the filing of the strike notice. It was SIPA, a corporatist union specific to Airbus Spain, that endorsed the strike notice, which was joined by other smaller unions – such as the UGT and CGT, for example[10]. In reality, the unions had no choice but to issue such a notice, lest a struggle and a wildcat strike break out – which they would have had great difficulty controlling. The strike then spread to other Airbus plants in Spain (in Seville, Cádiz, Illescas-Toledo, and Albacete).

The strikers in Getafe organized themselves into daily general assemblies and committees – which also met daily – held before the assembly to which they reported, to organize various actions or activities (*"communications, documentation, logistics, slogans..."*). Undoubtedly, the highlight of this mobilization was the demonstration by 4,000 workers through the streets of Getafe itself, all the way to City Hall, on July 16.

Nevertheless, according to the information available to us, the workers remained trapped in a mindset that limited the struggle solely to the Airbus company. This is evident in the fact that the prospect of generalizing the strike was primarily considered in terms of spreading it to Airbus plants in France – a perspective fueled by radical rank-and-file unionists and Trotskyist groups. Similarly, it is clear that there was an inability to draw into the struggle the thousands workers from subcontracting firms (around 200!) working in the same Airbus plants. The belief in the effectiveness of a struggle that halts production for as long as possible is an illusion and even a dead-end. Without knowing the concrete conditions that might have allowed the struggle – if not the strike itself – to be extended to the Madrid region, this is the direction in which street demonstrations and other actions should have been organized and led. Finally, it is just as telling of the reality of this strike that the general assembly allowed the unions to monopolize the discussions and negotiations

[8]. https://www.leftcom.org/en/articles/2026-06-25/protests-in-bolivia-an-unholy-alliance-of-trade-unionism-and-bourgeois

[9]. Although it is in decline, the mining industry—particularly tin mining—remains one of Bolivia's main resources today.

[10]. UGT, *Unión General de los Trabajadores*, is historically affiliated with the Socialist Party. The CGT, *Confederación General del Trabajo*, is an anarcho-syndicalist union set up in 1977 following a split within the historical anarchist union CNT.

with the company's management, rather than taking charge of them itself – including by appointing and insisting on its own delegates based on the demands discussed and adopted by the general assembly.

The lack of any attempt to enlarge the struggle beyond the company, as well as the failure to challenge the unions' actual leadership of the struggle – including by not contesting their monopoly on "delegations" with management – has left the field open to all the unions, including SIPA, to "negotiate" and scheme with management behind the backs of the workers and their assemblies throughout the strike. A preliminary agreement between management and the unions – all unions combined, except the CGT – to end the conflict was announced on July 23, much to the surprise and anger of the Getafe general assembly. It "generously granted" a 5% raise for 2026 and the same for 2027, plus a few other additional points, including a bonus of 2,000 euros before taxes. The company and the unions then organized a "referendum" on the agreement, which was held the following day: it was rejected by a vote of 49% to 46%. With 81% of the factory's employees participating in the vote, it means that a large plurality of the company's workers rejected it. Despite this, the SIPA union immediately withdrew its legal notice of strike, making any continuation of the strike illegal.

At the time of writing – and especially without any means of intervening directly on the ground – it is difficult to know whether this particular episode of mobilization among Airbus workers has definitively ended or not. The Getafe assembly had voted to resume the indefinite strike on August 24, upon the workers' return from vacation. The CCOO union has already scheduled a one-day strike for September 7, signaling that it is preparing to occupy the field and to quarantine the struggle its best ability to better manage the situation in case workers' mobilization resumes after the summer break.

For us, the lesson that the workers at Getafe and other Airbus plants – as well as the working class as a whole – must draw is this: by remaining confined to the company, the struggle loses its effectiveness and dynamics. In doing so, it leaves the field open to the unions' scheming and sabotage in collusion with company management. Spreading the struggle, even if only to orient it toward the rest of the working class, with or without immediate success, shifts the arena of confrontation beyond the individual company. In doing so, it limits the unions' ability to collude with management and opens up prospects for extension and generalization which, whether or not they materialize, strengthens the balance of power in favor of the workers in struggle. If, on top of that, the struggle does indeed spread and other sectors of the working class join it, then the prospects and the balance of power are strengthened all the more...

RL, August 15th 2026

Latest News

Upon returning from vacation, Airbus workers in Spain went back on strike on August 25, as previously decided. Faced with this situation, the Spanish Socialist government joined forces with management and the main unions, CCOO and SIPA, to end the strike. On the August 28, Airbus management proposed discussing wage indexation to inflation and other demands on the condition that work resume. Eighty-one percent of workers voted to continue the strike. On September 4, wage indexation to inflation, the prospect of "restoring" purchasing power by 7.95% over four years, and a gross bonus of 2,000 euros were finally accepted by management under the government's auspices, along with other more secondary demands regarding remote work, vacation time, wage deductions in the event of sick leave, and other issues. The more "radical" unions, the CGT and ÙTIL, were not invited to participate in these negotiations.

The agreement was put to a vote again on September 7 and 8. Of all the plants, only the one in Getafe voted by a narrow majority against returning to work. In total, 51.2% voted to continue the strike, compared to 48.7%. In the wake of this, the UGT, CGT, and ÙTIL unions suspended their legal strike notice, effectively bringing the strike to an end.

We cannot draw lessons from the end of this struggle here. The website *Left Wing Communism* has published an account[11] of this strike in French, *"from a working-class and council-communist perspective,"* as it openly states. Perhaps we will have the opportunity to revisit this topic in a future issue.

September 10, 2026

[11]. https://leftdis.wordpress.com/2026/09/09/lessons-of-the-airbus-spain-strike-of-2026/

Preparation for War and Attacks on the Proletariat: The Case of Belgium

We received a contribution from the website Left Wing Communist, an Infantile Disorder[12]*, signed by MO, titled* "The Workers' Struggle and Militarization in Belgium Since Early 2026." *We felt it would be useful to share this text by translating and publishing it. Unfortunately, its length prevents us from publishing it in its entirety and has forced us to select excerpts. We refer French-speaking readers to the comrades' website for the full text—we do not know if it will be translated into other languages. Readers of* Revolution or War *will therefore be able to read a portion of it.*

We do not know if the author claims any political current, nor what their political positions are. Reading the entire text, it is clear that we do not share the author's position on unions: "The three major union organizations—FGTB/ABVV, CSC/ACV, and CGSLB/ACLVB—have played a central role in the resistance against the De Wever government. This resistance is real. Without union structures, the nationwide mobilizations of tens of thousands of workers would hardly have been possible." *This passage, not included in the excerpts that follow, fails to recognize that the "national mobilizations"—in other words, the union days of action—are not moments of mobilization and the generalization of workers' struggles; rather, they are countermeasures designed to prevent such a dynamic of opposition and confrontation with the bourgeois state. Far from offering resistance to the government, the unions—through their actions and propaganda—are an integral part of the process of militarization and preparation for war.*

Yet, this contribution is of immense interest in that it reveals how the Belgian bourgeoisie is attacking the proletariat not only to ensure the competitiveness of national capital against its economic rivals, but above all to prepare the entire Belgian "society" for a generalized imperialist war. The text outlines—and we hope we have included the most significant excerpts—the concrete implications for the proletariat of this march toward generalized war. Above all, it shows how these preparations for war and the attacks on the proletariat that they entail create the conditions for a widespread and united response by the proletariat both within the country and across Europe—what the text refers to as the internationalization of the workers' struggle.

It should be noted that we have removed the numerous footnotes from the text that cited the sources—many of which were Belgian government agencies—for the information provided in the text. Of course, readers can find them on the website (https://leftdis.wordpress.com/2026/08/27/lutte-ouvriere-et-militarisation-en-belgique-depuis-le-debut-de-2026).

Labor Struggles and Militarization in Belgium Since Early 2026
Social Dismantling and Preparations for War: Two Sides of the Same Restructuring

Since early 2026, Belgium has been the scene of an almost uninterrupted series of strikes, demonstrations, and other protests. Railroad workers, civil servants, teachers, private-sector workers, and other groups have opposed the De Wever government's reforms. The immediate causes vary: pensions, unemployment benefits, wage indexation, employment status, working conditions, and budget cuts in public services. But behind these distinct conflicts, a broader trend is emerging.

The Belgian state is attempting to radically change the conditions under which labor is sold, utilized, and reproduced. The unemployed must be pushed back into the labor market more quickly, the long-term sick must be "activated," workers must work longer, pension rights are being curtailed, and wage growth is being held back. At the same time, unprecedented resources are being allocated to armaments, military infrastructure, the defense industry, military logistics, and military personnel.

These processes do not occur independently of one another. They are part of a broader restructuring of Belgium within a Europe that is preparing for long-term international confrontations.

Moreover, this trend is not limited to a single linguistic region. The Belgian working class is deeply divided—politically, institutionally, and in terms of union membership—between Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels. Yet workers in all regions are facing the same federal reforms. At the same time, the different regions fulfill specific functions within the developing war economy: Wallonia primarily as a center of traditional arms manufacturing, Flanders as an industrial, technological, and logistical hub with Antwerp-Bruges and Zeebrugge, and Brussels as a center of political, administrative, and military command.

It is precisely this combination that has made Belgium,

[12]. A word on *Left Wing Communist* (https://leftdis.wordpress.com/) for reader who is not familiar with it. " Leftdis *is a multilingual website on actuality and history from proletarian internationalist point of view. It concentrates on texts from individuals and organizations inspired by the historic* Communist Left*, especially the German and Dutch Communist Left, or Council Communism, that Lenin in 1920 qualified as extremist and* an infantile disease of communism.". (About: https://leftdis.wordpress.com/about-2/)

since 2026, a particularly clear example of the link between class struggle and militarization. (...)

The Government is Restructuring the Workforce

The De Wever government primarily presents its policies as a response to budget deficits, an aging population, an excessively low employment rate, and the need to make the Belgian economy more competitive. From the working class's perspective, these same policies appear in a different light. They increase the pressure to make the workforce available to capital for longer periods, at a higher intensity, and with greater flexibility. (...)

The economic logic is clear: a larger portion of the population must remain available for wage work for a greater portion of their lives.

This does not mean that every specific reform is driven exclusively by militarization. Pressure on pensions, social security, and wages existed long before the current wave of rearmament. Population aging, budgetary problems, international competition, and long-standing attempts to make the labor market more flexible all have their own history.

But since 2025–2026, the context has changed fundamentally. While workers are being required to work longer and give up certain social rights, the government has simultaneously decided to allocate tens of billions more to defense. (...)

From the Defense Budget to War Economy

Belgium's militarization can no longer be described as a mere increase in the defense budget. (...) Ahead of the NATO summit in Ankara on July 7 and 8, 2026, the Belgian government has explicitly set itself the goal of confirming the new 5 percent benchmark and accelerating the development of the Belgian defense industry. According to NATO's methodology, this 5 percent does not consist solely of traditional military spending. A portion may be allocated to security, infrastructure, and resilience that are of military significance.

The line between the defense budget and the rest of the economy is thus becoming increasingly blurred.

Militarization therefore takes on a different meaning. It is not just about soldiers and weapons. It is about whether ports can handle large quantities of military equipment, whether railroads and roads are suited for military transport, whether ammunition stocks are sufficient, whether healthcare can continue to function under extreme circumstances, how computer networks are protected, and whether enough technicians, drivers, logistics workers, and medical personnel are available.

This is the development of **a war economy in preparation**: not an economy in which all production is already directly geared toward war, but one in which an increasing number of civilian functions are planned with potential military emergencies in mind.

SHIELD Plan: Militarization of Civil Society

A decisive step was taken with the SHIELD Plan, Belgium's first National Defense Plan since the end of the Cold War. The plan was approved on June 29, 2026, by the federal government and the federated entities.

Its scope is considerable. The government explicitly states that national defense is no longer solely the responsibility of the Ministry of Defense. Other public services and the federated entities must also ensure continuity and protection, particularly with regard **to ports, cyber-security, the road network, waterways, and healthcare**. (...) A much larger portion of social reproduction is thus integrated into military planning.

A nurse remains a civilian worker, but healthcare simultaneously becomes a component of national military resilience. A dockworker does not become a soldier, but his workplace becomes essential for the transport of military goods. A railroad worker is employed to transport people and goods for civilian purposes, but the same infrastructure is necessary to move troops and equipment.

The contradiction is clear.

On the one hand, the government can assert that the railroads, healthcare, infrastructure, and public services must cut costs and operate more efficiently. On the other hand, the same government discovers that these sectors are indispensable to military preparedness.

This is important for the workers' struggle. Sectors that, in the day-to-day functioning of capitalism, often seem separate from one another are materially linked by preparations for war.

Ports: Labor Power and Military Logistics

Due to its geographic location, Belgium plays a key role in Western European logistics. The Port of Antwerp-Bruges is one of the largest ports in Europe; Zeebrugge also plays an important role in roll-on/roll-off traffic and military supply. (...) This means that Belgian ports are not merely commercial hubs. They are systematically equipped as military logistics facilities.

This is where the war economy's dependence on wage labor becomes particularly evident.

Ships do not load and unload themselves. Military equipment does not move on its own. This requires dockworkers, pilots, crane operators, drivers, railroad workers, maintenance workers, planners, and countless

other employees.

It is precisely for this reason that labor disputes in ports and logistics have the potential to have a much broader impact than their immediate economic demands suggest. The same is true for railroads and transportation.

The military state seeks to make this logistics chain more robust. But in doing so, it simultaneously reveals just how much military power depends on the daily collective labor of people who themselves have no control over the purposes to which their labor is put.

Wallonia: From Traditional Industry to an Arms Hub

(...) Wallonia has the highest concentration of traditional defense industry. According to the Walloon Investment Agency, approximately **67 percent of Belgium's defense industry** is located in Wallonia. The region is home to more than two hundred companies that operate entirely or partially in the defense sector. (...)

A significant contradiction arises here for workers.

Military expansion can indeed create jobs. For regions marked by a long history of industrial decline, this may seem appealing. But employment and wages are then tied to an industry whose expansion depends on ongoing international rearmament and, ultimately, on the possibility of war.

This contradiction cannot, therefore, be resolved by simply demanding that defense contracts create "more Belgian jobs." This only binds workers more closely, economically speaking, to military competition between states.

Flanders: Logistics, Technology, and Infrastructure

Flanders occupies a different position. It has less traditional heavy defense industry than Wallonia, but it does have major ports, logistics companies, technology firms, an electronics industry, infrastructure, and research institutions. Flanders is therefore essential to the military production chain in the broadest sense.

The infrastructure related to the F-35 provides an example of this. In February 2026, the Ministry of Defense announced that new modular infrastructure for F-35 operations in Florennes had been delivered by the Belgian company Automation, based in Hal, in collaboration with Arcadis.

This type of project illustrates the gradual blurring of the distinction between "civilian" and "military" companies. Data centers, electronics, cybersecurity, communications, construction, logistics, and advanced manufacturing can all be integrated into military systems. (...)

The Military is Looking for the Same Kind of Workforce as Civilian Society

A war economy needs not only machinery, but also people. (...) This workforce is generally not one that can be used exclusively by the military. These are precisely the professions that civilian companies, hospitals, transportation companies, and public services also need. Militarization therefore intensifies competition for the workforce.

When the Department of Defense recruits technicians, IT specialists, and nursing staff, it competes, at least in part, with civilian sectors that are already facing labor shortages. Military expansion thus diverts not only money but also skilled labor toward preparations for war.

A particularly significant new initiative is the **Year of Military Service**. (...) The program is voluntary. It is therefore not a reinstatement of traditional compulsory military service. Politically, however, it represents a change. All 130,000 or so 17-year-olds receive information about participating in the program, which explicitly aims to build a new generation of reservists. The link between youth, the labor market, and the armed forces is thus systematically strengthened. (...)

From the Reproductive Struggle to the Autonomous Class Struggle?

Most struggles in Belgium remain, for the time being, forms of **reproductive class struggle**.

Workers are fighting against the deterioration of their living and working conditions, but generally in a sector-by-sector manner and within the framework of existing political and union structures.

This is not insignificant. A strike over pensions or working conditions cannot abolish capitalism, but through such struggles, workers gain concrete experience of the fact that their interests conflict with those of the state and capital.

The decisive question is what happens in the course of these conflicts.

Is a railway strike still just a conflict among railway workers? Is a port strike still just a problem for dockworkers? Is a strike in the education sector still just a struggle among teachers? If so, each sector can be negotiated separately, isolated, and ultimately brought back to work.

The situation changes when workers themselves begin to link their struggles.

The development of the war economy even makes this connection more visibly tangible. Railroads, ports, road transport, industry, healthcare, energy, IT, and public

services are treated by the state itself as components of a single national resilience structure. (...)

A Walloon worker at an arms manufacturer, a Flemish dockworker, a Brussels civil servant, a railroad worker from Charleroi or Antwerp, and a nurse from Ghent occupy different positions within the social division of labor. Yet their wages, pensions, job security, and working conditions are influenced by the same general development of capital and the state.

And militarization links their work in a new way.

The ammunition produced in Wallonia must be transported. Ports and railroads must function. Computer systems and communications must be available. The healthcare system must be prepared for crisis situations. Young people must be available for mobilization as reservists.

Preparation for war thus constitutes, in the final analysis, a massive organization of **collective social labor** under the command of the nation-states.

The force capable of opposing this cannot, therefore, remain Flemish, Walloon, or Belgian either.

Conclusion: The Working Class and the War Economy

(...) Belgian capital and its state need workers to produce competitively, pay taxes, and work longer. But they also need those same workers to produce weapons, keep ports operational, facilitate military transport, maintain communication systems, care for the wounded, and, ultimately, serve as soldiers or reservists.

This is also where the potential power of the working class lies. (...) This power lies in the fact that, without collective labor, both the capitalist economy and the military machine grind to a halt. (...) The development toward an autonomous class struggle begins when workers themselves link these separate struggles, create their own organs of struggle, do not leave it to permanent apparatuses to decide on the scope and end of actions, and establish contacts with workers beyond the company, the sector, the linguistic region, and national borders.

For the same arms race that militarizes Belgium also militarizes Germany, France, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, China, the United States, and other states. In the face of this internationalization of capital, armaments, and preparations for war, the only effective response is ultimately the internationalization of the workers' struggle.

M.O. 27-8-2026

Pamphlets (orders at intleftcom@gmail)

The Tactics of the Comintern (In French only for now)
IGCL Platform
Student Struggle and Assemblies of Neighbourhood (Internationalist Communists Klasbatalo)
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).

Debate within the Revolutionary Camp

On a New Revolutionary Publication: Communist Prometheus

Reading the first issue of the journal *Communist Prometheus*[13] (CP) confirmed our initial impressions based on the correspondence and discussions we have had with the comrades from this new group. The most notable positive aspect is that the journal and the group of militants behind it clearly and unambiguously assert that the current historical situation presents only one alternative, **with no third way**: world proletarian revolution or generalized imperialist war—a third world war. And in the face of imperialist war, they "extend" proletarian internationalism to "revolutionary defeatism"[14].

The Manifesto[15] that the comrades adopted as a programmatic document does not systematically set forth the group's positions of principle, as a political platform would. Nevertheless, many of the class frontiers defended by the Communist Left are mentioned... except those concerning the unions and the bourgeois class nature of Trotskyism[16]. Nothing is said about the unions. Obviously, the comrades will not be able to remain silent on the class nature of the unions today, if only to be able to intervene with a minimum of coherence in workers' struggles.

Actually, the challenge and the goal for any new grouping of revolutionaries – and the same applies to individual militants – is to reclaim the historical legacy of the International Communist Left, and, if possible, to place themselves within the tradition of the Communist Left of Italy. To do this, it is essential to break as clearly as possible with all political and ideological forms of leftism. This is the orientation that we, for our part, have defended towards the comrades since the beginning of our contacts. *"There can be no shortcuts, and the adoption of revolutionary positions cannot be achieved, after a wholly leftist experience (...) without a critical assessment and a clear and profound political break. It is during this very process of balance-sheet and rupture that you will be able to adopt revolutionary positions with complete political clarity and make the legacy of the Communist Left your own,"* we wrote to them in January 2026.

However, from this perspective, it seems to us that the journal's first issue falls short. The break with leftism seems to us at the very least insufficient as we will attempt to demonstrate. One immediate political consequence of this is that the group's members – who have just broken organizationally with the Italian leftist group *Lotta Comunista* – did not deem it necessary to first take a stance on the platforms and programs advocated by current Communist Left groups before adopting their own Manifesto and positions and forming another revolutionary group. Yet, even though CP defends a large number of class positions or *frontiers*, its explicit claim to organizational continuity, which passes through this two-decade experience with *Lotta* and the earlier history of the group of militants since 1998, can only weaken CP's political foundation and programmatic coherence as well as its internal political homogeneity. This is illustrated by its failure to take a stance on the union issue.

The editorial of the journal[17] – which we cannot reproduce here – presents CP as *"a natural result of nearly thirty years of work done by our group* [Kirov Marxist Group]*. (...) The first step was the publication of the newspaper* Komsa*, launched in June 1998 against the backdrop of a profound economic crisis in Russia. Unlike many 'leftist' groups, we did not regard 1991 as a 'bourgeois counter-revolution'; for us, it had already taken place in 1925, when Stalinism, having triumphed in the USSR, abandoned the course towards world revolution. (...) The principles of proletarian internationalism were inherent to our organisation from the very beginning. Therefore, when the inter-imperialist conflict intensified in 2014 and Ukraine became one of its military fronts, we had no need to revise our positions. (...) At a time when a significant part of the so-called 'left' descended into social chauvinism, we consistently defended the classical Marxist thesis: the proletariat has no fatherland, and every modern nation is merely a political and economic shell of capital. The task of the working class in any imperialist conflict is reduced to a single principle: the main enemy is at home. (...) Today, the situation demands that we advance to the next stage. As stated in the published 'Manifesto', the era of bourgeois-democratic revolutions and national liberation movements has definitively come to an end. Capitalism has finally*

[13]. 100 pages in Russian, Italian, Spanish and English! (https://comprom.org/)

[14]. https://comprom.org/en/about/

[15]. https://comprom.org/en/manifest/

[16]. *"The most famous of these movements is Trotskyism, which currently does not even have a unified theory and has degenerated to the level of petty-bourgeois ideologies that do not go beyond certain national demands or interclass alliances."* This passage from the Manifesto of Communist Prometheus does not denounce Trotskyism as a bourgeois and counterrevolutionary political current. It "criticizes" it for its theoretical shortcomings and its petty-bourgeois ideology. For the proletariat, the so-called "theoretical shortcomings" of Trotskyism are the hallmark of its now-bourgeois nature, and are therefore insurmountable. If these were merely theoretical shortcomings, then they could be overcome, and Trotskyism as a current—along with its organizations—could still return to the revolutionary camp.

[17]. https://comprom.org/en/blog/editorial-note/

bound the planet in the chains of the world market, while leaving the class of wage labourers divided.

The publication of Communist Prometheus *is dictated by the necessity of moving towards practical work on the formation of a world communist party. We assess our forces soberly, do not regard ourselves as a fully formed party, and recognise ourselves only as one part of the practical movement towards it. Along this path, we remain open to collaboration with all left-communist organisations that consistently uphold the positions of Marxism and proletarian internationalism."*

It therefore appears, first and foremost, that the new group is not "new," since it claims organizational and political continuity with the Russian group *Kirov Marxist Group* [KMG], formed in 1998. Another article in the journal, *Searching for a Way*[18], provides more information on the KMG's evolution up to today's *Communist Prometheus*, which may shed light on the nature and reality of this claimed organic continuity. There are three key moments in its history worth noting:

- quoting the editorial from the first issue of *Komsa*, *Searching for a Way* implies that they trace the group's origins to the youth organization of the Stalinist Russian Communist Party of that time, the Komsomol : *"In the late Soviet period,* Komsa *was the name given to the unruly, uncontrollable section of the mass organisation of the Komsomol – those who found it intolerable to sit through tediously uniform meetings."* ;

- *"In August 2000, the KMG took part in the Second Conference of the Movement for a Workers' Party (DzRP). At this conference, a split occurred: delegates of the Marxist Workers' Party and the Workers' Faction of the DzRP left the movement; shortly thereafter, the KMG also withdrew from the organisation."* The CP article does not state that the Workers' Party and the other participants in this conference were, for the most part, Trotskyist groups and nothing is said about the political reason for their withdrawal;

- finally, *"In the winter of 2000, the Italian organisation* Lotta Comunista *established contact with us. (...) This choice enabled us to: broaden our Marxist horizons and deepen our experience; gain access to the extensive long-term strategic analysis of international relations carried out by* Lotta Comunista *over decades, as well as to more specific, but equally valuable, scholarly materials on a wide range of questions; adopt a model of serious, responsible, disciplined, and systematic organisational work based on long-term planning*[19]*."*

Upon reading the published texts, it therefore turns out that *Komsa*'s entire trajectory up to *Communist Prometheus* is linked to left-wing and leftist currents and organizations – in other words, to counterrevolutionary and bourgeois organizations. This poses a political problem for any group, whether formal or informal, of revolutionary individuals and militants. Let us be clear: we are not here passing judgment on the specific circumstances that current CP members and individuals may have experienced throughout their lives as revolutionary militants, particularly in Russia. Based on what the comrades have told us, we have no doubt about the honesty and sincerity of their militant commitment. However, a distinction must be made between individual paths and the paths of political organizations. A political and principled break with leftism cannot occur without a break in continuity and an organizational split for any group of militants.

But the journal's articles do not provide us with clear – that is, programmatic and principled – explanations regarding the reasons for their break with the Stalinist Komsomol, the Trotskyists of the Workers Party or with *Lotta Comunista*[20]. Their break with Stalinism seems to have been more about secondary issues than matters of principle, if we base ourselves on what CP says. What they refer to their *"reconstruction of Leninist principles"*[21] focused on the following so-called "reconstructed Leninist principles": rejection of careerist militantism (the Stalinist bureaucrats?); *"in a non-revolutionary period, politics is the preserve of narrow, organised minorities – the vanguards of the classes"* ; *"the recognition of the necessity of a press organ of our own (...) as an organiser"*; *"the positioning of oneself as an organisation of the world working class"*; and *"a strategy formed on the basis of a Marxist analysis." "The state as an apparatus of class violence of the ruling class"* is the only element cited that might refer to a matter of class principle. Needless to say, many leftists, including Stalinists, can adopt all these so-called "principles" as their own. The same goes for *Lotta.* There is only a brief mention of a single matter of principle: " [Lotta's] *attitude towards the so-called 'Resistance Movement' during the Second World War."*

Even more dangerous is, as we saw in a previous quotation, that these comrades view their twenty-year stint at *Lotta comunista* as a positive phase in their development: ***"We have learnt a great deal over this quarter of a cen-***

[18]. https://comprom.org/en/blog/in-search-of-the-way/

[19]. It means that the CP's members draw a positive balance of their experience and militancy within *Lotta Comunista.*

[20]. The disagreements raised by the comrades do not concern questions of principle or the bourgeois character of *Lotta Comunista*, and are not sufficient to justify an organizational split, if this organization was to be considered as remaining in the revolutionary camp : *"However, after almost a quarter of a century, we were compelled to break relations with this organisation, since throughout all this time it failed to pose a number of interconnected key questions about the causes of the present passivity of our class; about the conditions under which it will overcome this passivity; and about what the model of the party itself, its methods of work, and the very type of proletarian revolutionary should be under precisely such conditions of the class."*

[21]. The comrades present this *reconstruction as "a romantic period of* [their] *revolutionary formation,"* thereby conflating there too individual trajectories with organizational continuity and class discontinuity.

tury, and have gained and taught new comrade. (...) ***This quarter of a century was not lost time. We have unquestionably become stronger*** *than we were at the moment of our acquaintance with Lotta Comunista. Precisely for this reason, it cannot be said that we have taken two steps back. We continue to move forward. Having understood that staying any further within Lotta Comunista is incompatible with the conclusions we have reached (set out in our "Manifesto"), we took the only possible decision – to break relations with this organisation."* (emphasis added)

The break with *Lotta Comunista* – as with Stalinism and Trotskyism – has not been fully accomplished in terms of principles, or at least it is not understood as such. This break cannot be reduced to issues of militancy, the need for a "collective organizing" journal, or anything of the sort, but rather on the fact that these currents betrayed proletarian internationalism, with the Stalinist theory of "socialism in one country," and the participation of Trotskyism and *Lotta Comunista*'s predecessors in the anti-fascist resistance movements during World War II. As a result, these currents and organizations have completely and irrevocably crossed over into the camp of the counterrevolution. Based on this historical fact, communists do not discuss or debate with them, nor do they "reconstruct so-called Leninist principles" that these groups have allegedly abandoned; rather, they denounce and combat them and call on their sincere militants to break politically with them and join or otherwise support the genuinely revolutionary organizations.

Perhaps the comrades are more or less aware of the weakness of their breakup as they expose it: *"More serious disagreements* [with *Lotta Comunista*] *will find their expression in the pages of our journal. Open polemic has always been a weapon of Marxism, and we shall continue to use it in our struggle"*, the journal asserts. We can only encourage them to commit resolutely to this path, setting aside all hesitation or timidity. The lack of a critical assessment of their past experience – and the absence of a clear break with all forms of leftism, including that of this organization[22] – can only hinder the work of historical reappropriation that CP's members must undertake. Ultimately, it is the very coherence of their principles and program – and, with it, the cohesion of the group itself – that would in turn be undermined, just as a historic storm is looming.

The stance we have taken toward the comrades since the beginning of our relationship has not changed. Our critical observations may seem harsh. They aim to contribute to the clarification and the most complete possible regroupment of the CP's members within the Communist Left. That is also why, despite our criticism, we welcome and support the comrades' willingness to participate in the debates taking place within the proletarian camp. We have no doubt that it is also through political debates and confrontations with groups within the Communist Left that CP's members will come to realize the necessity of a clear and decisive break with all forms of leftism[23].

The IGCL, July 2026

Notice

We sent this article to Communist Prometheus prior to publication. We received a letter strongly criticizing our position. Despite the comrades' request, we are unable to reproduce it in this issue. We have taken certain specific comments into account and revised a few passages. If necessary, we may yet publish excerpts from it in a future issue.

September 2, 2026

[22]. This organization, little known outside Italy and France "survives" on its control over an entire Italian trade union apparatus. It uses the funds obtained in this way to expand its organizational apparatus with "full-time staff" or militants in exile, paid with funds drawn from the trade union apparatus. Much like the Lambertists in France. Its internal functioning and the management of its members are sectarian in nature and even violent when necessary. While claiming to be part of the Italian anti-fascist resistance, it also claims to be a component of the Left of Italy—a claim that all currents and groups stemming from the Communist Party of Italy and its left fraction of the 1920s and 1930s rightly reject and denounce.

[23]. That is why we publish a critical letter from them regarding our article How Councilism is Kicked out the Front Door only to Come back in through the Window in our previous issue (See *Revolution or War* #33, https://igcl.org/Contribution-The-Workers-Councils). Their letter is followed by our response, which—as was our intention—goes well beyond the specific disagreement the comrades express regarding "self-organization."

Communist Prometheus' Letter on our Article "How Councilism is Kicked out the Front Door only to Come back in through the Window"

Dear comrades of the IGCL,

It is with great interest and comradely attention that we read your critical response to the article from *Controverses* ("The Workers' Councils and the Class Party"). We believe that the discussion you have raised regarding the dialectic of the relationship between the political vanguard (the party) and the organs of mass proletarian struggle (the councils) is of vital importance for clarifying positions within the contemporary revolutionary communist camp.

We strongly welcome your uncompromising struggle against organizational fetishism and the illusions of "councilism". Your assertion that the organizational form (whether a council, a strike committee, or an assembly) is secondary to its political content is absolutely correct and firmly rooted in the Bolshevik tradition. As is well known, in July 1917, V. Lenin temporarily withdrew the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" when they had turned into a fig leaf for the bourgeois Provisional Government (via the SRs and Mensheviks). A council stripped of a communist program will inevitably be integrated into the capitalist system.



We are also in complete solidarity with your excellent analysis of the dialectic between the economic and political struggles. Drawing on the historical lessons of the mass strikes brilliantly summarized by Rosa Luxemburg in 1906, you demolish the metaphysical "Chinese wall" between the struggle for daily needs and the struggle for revolution. As Luxemburg correctly demonstrated, the political and the economic are not isolated stages, but two inseparable aspects of a single pulsating process: the political struggle awakens new layers to the economic battle, and the mass economic struggle inevitably develops into a confrontation with the capitalist state.

Nevertheless, in the spirit of comradely polemics and the pursuit of theoretical clarity, we wish to draw attention to certain points in your text that, in our view, contradict the methodology of Marx and Lenin.

1. On "Self-Organization" and the Leninist Synthesis

In your text, you write:

"The term 'self-organization' is always at least ambiguous, when it is not directly used against the development of proletarian struggles. For our part, we prefer to speak of 'the organization of the proletarian struggle according to and for specific tasks' rather than the abstract and dangerous 'self-organization'".

We perfectly understand your justified fear of the anarcho-syndicalist deviation, which, under the slogan of "grassroots self-organization", often attempts to oust the party from the workers' movement. Indeed, as Lenin proved (and this was an important clarification to Luxemburg's theory), the spontaneous struggle of the masses by itself produces only trade-unionist consciousness; political consciousness and the organization of the insurrection are introduced by the vanguard.

However, completely rejecting the concept of "mass self-organization" risks leading us to the opposite extreme – toward a bureaucratic arrogance of the party towards the living, creative activity of the class. In *The Civil War in France*, Karl Marx admired precisely the spontaneous historical initiative of the masses that gave birth to the Paris Commune. In 1905 ("*Our Tasks and the Soviet of Workers' Deputies*"), Lenin wrote that the Soviet emerged as a result of the spontaneous self-organization of the strikers, and he welcomed this creative action as the embryo of a revolutionary government.

2. On the Dual Character of the Russian Revolution

Later in your text, we find the following critique:

"Let us point out that we disagree with the position that sees a dual character in the Russian Revolution, as mentioned in the section Historical Lessons and Perspectives... This is the Bordigist thesis, but also the councilist thesis, which sees a character that is both bourgeois and proletarian in the revolution. The bourgeois character is said to be due to the economic backwardness of Russia at the time and the bourgeois or capitalist tasks that resulted from it, such as the development of state capitalism in Russia. Its proletarian character is said to be – and actually is due to October 17 and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat".

By asserting that the revolution in Russia was "purely proletarian", you are, in our view, departing from historical materialism and Lenin's analysis of the 1917–1921 situation.

Undoubtedly, power in October was seized by the proletariat. But the socio-economic tasks that this power was forced to resolve in a backward, peasant country initially had a colossal bourgeois-democratic character (the abolition of landlord landownership, the destruction of the estate system).

Lenin wrote explicitly about this dual character. In his article "*Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution*" (1921), he unequivocally states:

"We have consummated the bourgeois-democratic revolution as nobody had done before. We are advancing towards the socialist revolution consciously, firmly and unswervingly, knowing that it is not separated from the bourgeois-democratic revolution by a Chinese Wall, and knowing too that (in the last analysis) struggle alone will determine how far we shall advance, what part of this immense and lofty task we shall accomplish, and what part of our victories we shall consolidate. Time will show".

It was precisely the historically compelled alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry (the petty bourgeoisie) that became the foundation for the victory in October. Denying that the revolution carried elements of a dual nature due to Russia's objective economic backwardness leads to an idealistic perception of October. This misunderstanding later formed the basis of many leftist errors that anticipated immediate "pure communism".

Conclusion

Comrades, the true Marxist synthesis that we are all striving to develop on the eve of the impending imperialist war is as follows: the Soviets are the form, and the party (the communist program) is the political content of the revolution.

Just as form without content leads to a reformist swamp (the tragedy of Germany in 1918), so too does the party's attempt to act in isolation from the mass, spontaneously emerging forms of class self-organization lead to sectarianism and ruin.

The article in *Controverses* slips into tailism (*khvostism*), forgetting Lenin's precept that spontaneity without the party is blind. You are absolutely right to attack this deviation. But we urge you in this struggle not to throw the baby out with the bathwater – that is, the living, creative initiative of the proletariat and the materialist understanding of the objective (including peasant and petty-bourgeois) historical conditions of past revolutions.

It is possible that on certain points we have not grasped your exact meaning, as we are judging based only on one specific article; therefore, we would welcome further explanations and clarifications. We understand that the texts and theses we reference are undoubtedly familiar to you. But it very often happens that not only the same texts, but even the same facts are interpreted differently. Let us therefore clarify and refine our positions. Under present conditions, this is one of the key tasks for all groups and individuals engaged in the preparatory work for the creation of a world communist party.

We hope our critical remarks will be received in the same spirit in which they are written – in a spirit of comradely solidarity and the joint pursuit of truth. We propose to bring this important and useful discussion to the pages of our journals and websites, inviting other organizations and even individual comrades to participate.

Taking this opportunity, we are sending you the previously submitted translation of your article, to which we have added precise references to the Russian-language sources and corrected a few typos.

We eagerly await your reply.

With internationalist communist greetings,

Communist Prometheus

June 29, 2026

Our Response to Communist Prometheus

The IGCL to *Communist* Prometheus,

Dear comrades,

Our response to your letter of June 29 will set aside the disagreement regarding the alleged dual nature – bourgeois and proletarian – of the Russian Revolution of 1917. For our part, we consider it to be **exclusively** proletarian. It is true that the proletariat in Russia at that time had to rally the peasantry behind it and make economic and political concessions to it – both to ensure the success of the workers' insurrection and to maintain the exercise of its class dictatorship in a Russia that was economically backward and devastated by the imperialist war, **all while awaiting the international spread of the revolution**. But all this does not alter its proletarian character. Is it necessary to emphasize here that in the future – depending on the circumstances and the countries where victorious workers' uprisings will first occur – the international proletariat will have to try to win over the petty-bourgeois classes, particularly the peasantry, to its cause as much as possible, or at the very least prevent them from joining the counterrevolutionary forces of the bourgeoisie and capital? But that is a different debate from the one we wish to address here.

Communist Prometheus (CP) welcomes and supports our effort to ensure that the proletarian camp as a whole debates *"the dialectic of the relationship between the political vanguard (the party) and the organs of mass proletarian struggle (the councils).*" Indeed, we believe that clarifying this issue and the political struggle surrounding it have become a priority in the face of the historic tragedy resulting from the march toward generalized imperialist war. We therefore accept your proposal *"to bring this important and useful discussion to the pages of our journals and websites, inviting other organizations and even individual comrades to participate"* – which, in fact, has always been standard practice for our group. That is why this letter will not limit itself to answering only the specific question you raise about "self-organization" but will seek to broaden the discussion for the benefit of as many as possible by returning once again to the topic of the *mass strike*. As a result, our reply will be much longer than your letter.

About the *Mass Strike*...

To assert that "only the proletariat can offer an alternative" – that is, its revolutionary perspective – to the generalized holocaust that capitalism is preparing is certainly indispensable. But that is far, very far, from being enough. In order to move beyond a mere abstract declaration of principle, today's communist groups and the party of tomorrow must also understand as fully and precisely as possible the conditions and the very dynamics of the class confrontations that are bound to arise. The conditions and dynamics of today's and tomorrow's proletarian struggles cannot be invented in advance, nor can they be decreed. *"Yes, the experience of 1905 created a deep-rooted and great tradition of mass strikes*[24]*."* (Lenin) Yes, historical experience provides us with signposts. To put it simply here, the signposts identified and established by Rosa Luxemburg, but also by Trotsky, Pannekoek, and Lenin (among the leading theorists of the working class movement), indicate that the proletariat's practical response lies in the *historical phenomenon of the mass strike*, to paraphrase Rosa Luxemburg. Lenin shares the same understanding and position on the mass strike.

"In 1905 the revolutionary proletariat found for itself a different way 'to go among the people', and a different means of drawing the masses into the movement. That means is revolutionary strikes, stubborn strikes shifting from place to place, from one part of the country to another, recurrent strikes, strikes which rouse the back ward to a new life of struggle for economic improvements, strikes which brand and lash every salient act of violence or tyranny, every crime of tsarism, strike-demonstrations which unfurl the red banner in the streets of the capital cities and bring revolutionary speeches and revolutionary slogans to the crowd, to the mass of the people. Such strikes cannot be called forth artificially, but neither can they be stopped once they have begun to involve hundreds and hundreds of thousands[25]*."* (Lenin)

Far from being a thing of the past, the *mass strike* or *mass struggle* – as a method and form of proletarian struggle – is more relevant today than ever before. The immediate pursuit of spreading and generalizing every struggle – and to break out of the isolation that leads to failure – is the only response the proletariat can mount against the attacks of capitalism today. Faced with monopolies and the rise of imperialism, and later with the development of state capitalism – primarily for the needs of World War I and World War II – the proletariat had sought and *"found for itself a different way,"* as Lenin put it: that of the mass strike, in contrast to the trade-union and corporatist methods of struggle that had become powerless. With the use of digital technology and now artificial intelligence, the capitalist state's control and hold over all aspects and spheres of social life has become virtually "total," even in so-called democratic countries. These technologies enable the state to monitor populations and individuals, to increase social at-

[24]. The Revolutionary Upswing, 1912, *Lenin Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, 1975, Moscow, Volume 18.

[25]. *Ibid.,* The Development of Revolutionary Strikes and Street Demonstrations, 1913.

omization and the omnipresence of bourgeois ideology – individualism in particular – and, more broadly, to control any dissent and, above all, to suppress any proletarian revolt and struggle. Needless to say, any workers' struggle in defense of proletarian – that is, class – interests will be denounced by the media and others as "selfish," irresponsible, unpatriotic, treasonous to the nation, instigated by the "enemy", and thus directly and violently repressed. As a result, only the fastest possible mass mobilization of broad sectors of the proletariat into the struggle can counter both union sabotage and police repression of workers' struggles.

In the present and coming period, the party-class relationship can only be understood, debated, and clarified by recognizing the phenomenon of the proletariat's mass struggle as **the** response to the march toward generalized war. Otherwise, it is hard to understand our specific struggle against councilist organizational fetishism, in particular our rejection of the use of the slogan "self-organization", and tear down *"the metaphysical 'Chinese wall' between the struggle for daily needs and the struggle for revolution"* – as you rightly write. It is therefore within this framework of – and as part of – this political fight that we must address the critical comments you have directed at our text *"The Workers' Councils and the Class Party": Or How Councilism is Kicked out the Front Door only to Come back in through the Window*[26].

About "Self-Organization"...

In your opinion, *"completely rejecting the concept of "mass self-organization" risks leading us to the opposite extreme – toward a bureaucratic arrogance of the party towards the living, creative activity of the class. Just as form without content leads to a reformist swamp (the tragedy of Germany in 1918), so too does the party's attempt to act in isolation from the mass, spontaneously emerging forms of class self-organization lead to sectarianism and ruin."*

We do not reject the use of the term "self-organization" because of *"anarcho-syndicalist deviation, which, under the slogan of 'grassroots self-organization', often attempts to oust the party from the workers' movement"*; nor even because bourgeois forces within the working-class milieu – unions, leftists, including anarcho-syndicalists – might use it to prevent the party and communists from intervening in the workers' struggles – in working class's assemblies for instance. It should be noted in passing that it happens – more frequently than one might think – that proletarian elements influenced by anarcho-councilist ideologies – whether individuals, circles, or groups – also actively participate in these attempts under the pretext of "respect for assembly-based democracy" and the rejection of "manipulation by political organizations"[27]. But our reservation regarding the term self-organization touches on a much broader issue: is the slogan of self-organization a moment – an effective step – in the struggle for the generalization of the mass strike?

If workers organize to spread and generalize their ongoing struggle – and thus also to oppose union sabotage and other attempts to undermine this dynamic – then the term self-organization has no other meaning than that of "organization of the struggle" according to its various stages and battles, or indeed, its needs and necessities. The problem and the danger – both of which are real and constant – are that the slogan "self-organization" is co-opted by opponents – unions and leftists in particular – of the development of struggles, for "emptying" the organizational form of all proletarian political content, namely the extension, generalization, centralization and unification of struggles. The danger, therefore, is that by turning self-organization for itself – assemblies for themselves, councils for themselves – into a fetish, we strip these unitary organizations – which the working class creates according to its successive needs during struggles – of their function and their very reason for being. In fact, by turning it into a formula, the way is opened for bourgeois forces within the working-class milieu to freeze self-organization, then strip it of its purpose, and turn it against the interests and goals of proletarian struggles, thereby leading them to failure.

The most striking and dramatic historical example of the *fetishism of the council form* was the experience of the German Revolution during the November 1918 Congress of Workers Councils. On that occasion, the Social Democracy – behind which all the bourgeois forces that had until recently supported Emperor Wilhelm, foremost among them the army itself, rallied – succeeded in stripping the councils of their political function and substance, namely *their role and function as organs of the insurrection and of the proletarian dictatorship*. Two months later, it was able to crush the Berlin workers in a bloodbath and assassinate Rosa Luxemburg and Karl

[26]. See *Revolution or War* #33, https://igcl.org/Contribution-The-Workers-Councils.

[27]. The ban on Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht from participating in the November 1918 Congress of Workers' Councils – because they were neither workers nor delegates – became standard practice for unions and, often, leftists to exclude communist groups from any participation in assemblies and other bodies of the workers' struggle, the argument being that they are not "delegates" and that one must respect the formal democracy of... "self-organization." This was frequent and almost systematic in the massive workers' struggles of the 1970s and 1980s – in France in particular, but not exclusively. This argument is all the more "effective" because the scheming and other manipulations by leftist and Stalinist groups and parties within assemblies and other forms of organization fuel the initial "anti-party" and apolitical mistrust among workers in struggle. Combating these councilist sentiments within the working class itself is also a dimension of the struggle that communist groups must wage.

Liebknecht. The form of the council itself – the "self-organization" that had been achieved and "democratically respected" in November 1918 – turned itself against the proletariat and its revolutionary struggle. In *Lessons of October* (1924), Trotsky shows how in Germany *"soviets were several times created organs of insurrection without an insurrection taking place – and as organs of state power – without any power*[28]*"*, which turned them into a *"form of organization, without any real content"* and led to the defeat of the revolution.

The issue is not merely historical, much less a matter of semantics. Today, the bourgeoisie is already preparing – or, more precisely, is already preparing a portion of its most left-wing forces, the leftists – to occupy the terrain of self-organization in order to counter any significant overreach by the union apparatuses. Trotskyist groups in particular – often with the active participation of anarchist groups – are preemptively establishing, in response to any emerging workers' mobilization, forms of self-organization whose sole purpose is to impose a "self-organizational straitjacket" (so to speak), aimed first and foremost at containing and constraining any dynamic of workers' struggle; and then to steer it back onto bourgeois ground – trade unionist ground, in particular. This practice developed particularly during the successive workers' mobilizations in France, most of which took place in response to the equally successive attacks on the workers pensions and working conditions in 2013, 2016, 2019[29]... Anyone who reads some of these Trotskyist groups carefully today cannot be surprised[30].

"This is why the PTS and our international current[31]*, make* ***the permanent struggle for grassroots*** [sic!] ***self-organization*** *one of its defining characteristics. (...) We must understand that* ***self-organization is the key to the situation****. (...) We must create (...) self-organizing institutions in every factory, every university, every hospital, applying the tactic of unity of action and, in the direction of the class, that of the united workers' front. (...) In other words, we want the development of these forms of self-organization to be one of the central objectives of every committee. (...) I would first like to return to what defines a Trotskyist activist today. Is it defending the self-organization of the working class or managing small, competing apparatuses? Our answer is: defending self-organization. (...) If we succeed in implementing everything I've outlined during this interview – the committees, the coordinating frameworks, the self-organizing bodies, the united front imposed on the major trade union and political organizations, the open parliamentary office – then the FIT-U will become a far more powerful force than it is today, far more powerful than a mere electoral front*[32]*."*

In this passage, there is no mention of the class as a whole, nor of the concrete necessities of workers' struggles – which can be roughly defined as the quest for extension and generalization – in order to break the isolation of these struggles. For *Revolution Permanente* and *Left Voice* and for Trotskyism in general, "self-organization" boils down to establishing committees independently of the dynamics and needs of the struggle, but which they control. These committees proclaim themselves "self-organization," "assembly," or "inter-professional assembly" – as is the case in France, for example – which also allows them to cover the scope of extension beyond a single trade or professional sector; or even a committee – or a strike committee – before any strike has even taken place, in order to stifle any inclination or dynamics for a workers' struggle that "distances itself" from, if not opposes, the unions and left and leftist parties. What is the point of holding a general assembly to decide on a strike when one has already been artificially set up? What is the point of appointing a strike committee through the strikers' assembly, since one already exists? And in the end, the goal is clearly stated: to reintroduce the Trotskyist "united workers' front" – in other words, today's alliance between left-wing and leftist parties – in order to better manage, control, and sabotage any dynamics of mass struggle.

Please understand that we reject the use of the slogan "self-organization" not only because it leaves the door wide open to anarcho-councilist and democratic vi-

[28]. https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1924/lessons/ch8.htm

[29]. The struggle against the 2010 pension reform, the protests against the El-Khomri law in 2016 (see Revolution or *War* [RW] #6: https://igcl.org/Editorial-1266), and against yet another pension "reform" in December 2019 (see our communique of December 8, 2019: https://igcl.org/Communique-on-the-Strikes-in and *RW* #14, https://igcl.org/2nd-Communique-on-the-Strikes-in-544). All these mobilizations were massive and were contained only by the unions' ability to use successive and repeated, but separated in time, 24-hour days of action as a countermeasure against the spread of indefinite strikes and their unification across sectors. It was in 2010 (following the equally massive workers' mobilizations of 2009 and 2003 and their failure) that so-called "interprofessional" assemblies emerged, which—as genuine struggle committees sometimes bringing together several hundred workers (particularly at the Bourse du Travail in Paris)— aimed to spread and unify the strikes beyond the corporations and sectors, particularly beyond the railway workers alone. It was in 2016 that the Trotskyists took the lead by creating "interpro assemblies" from scratch, particularly in Paris and the Normandy region.

[30]. Other example: the Trotskyist World Socialist Web Site of "the International Committee of the Fourth International", an influential figure in the United States, consistently promotes his grassroots committees: *"By establishing democratically controlled rank-and-file committees, workers will gain the independent organizational and political machinery needed to develop their own demands and organize collective action against management, its union "partners" and the entire ruling-class agenda of austerity and war."*

[31]. *Left Voice* (https://www.leftvoice.org/the-revolutionary-left-in-argentina-and-the-question-of-self-organization-an-interview-with-emilio-albamonte/)

[32]. https://www.leftvoice.org/the-revolutionary-left-in-argentina-and-the-question-of-self-organization-an-interview-with-emilio-albamonte/

sions that freeze the forms of organization the struggling proletariat must adopt, but also because it is and will be used by the bourgeoisie to sabotage workers' struggles.

The Workers Councils: the Form? The Party: the Content?

But based on what you have written, we believe that our difference goes beyond the simple notion of "self-organization" to the recognition of the very dynamics of the *universal phenomenon of the mass strike*. Despite your reference to *"the historical lessons of the mass strikes brilliantly summarized by Rosa Luxemburg in 1906,"* your letter and comments never refer to the concrete conditions of the proletarian struggle today, nor to the experiences of the past, which makes your comments relatively general, if not abstract, in our view.

You argue that *"the Soviets are the form, and the party (the communist program) is the political content of the revolution*[33]*."* Here you introduce a separation between form and content that neither Rosa Luxemburg, nor Trotsky, nor Pannekoek – and certainly not Lenin – ever established when they described the mass strike or when they defined general guidelines for winning its political leadership. And this does not correspond to historical experience: 1905 and 1917 in Russia, of course; January 1918 in Austria and Germany, followed by November 1918; but also Berlin in 1952, May 1968 in France, and Poland in 1970 and 1980 – to name just a few examples of significant mass strikes in history. Quite the contrary. One of the essential lessons of October 1917 in Russia – and in contrast to the failure of the revolution in Germany in January 1918 and thereafter – is precisely that the Soviet form is nothing, from the proletariat's standpoint, if it does not "contain" or embody the perspective of insurrection and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The form of organization – assemblies, councils, etc. – must embody an object, a goal, a political necessity – such as extension, generalization, centralization, insurrection, etc. But from means, the form of organization can and, depending on the circumstances, must itself become a concrete goal and the focus of a particular struggle, since at its turn it can become a specific moment in the process of extension or generalization, and so on. It then also becomes "content."

Example: In countries with a "closed-shop" union tradition, where permanent employment is reserved exclusively for union members, particularly the United States, United Kingdom and Canada, the struggle to ensure that genuine general assemblies are held to decide on strikes or other actions—and especially physical assemblies bringing together all workers at a workplace, whether unionized or not—does not take place under the same conditions as in countries with other "union traditions." The immediate strategies and slogans that communist groups must put forward may therefore differ. During the 2023 strike by American auto workers, the UAW union imposed so-called assemblies exclusively on union members, thereby excluding workers from subcontracting firms, and conducted the strike vote online and via videoconference, thus prohibiting any in-person gatherings, debate, or questioning of the union's leadership of the struggle[34]. In this case, the struggle to hold an in-person general assembly can become a crucial, central moment for developing and spreading the ongoing struggle—sometimes even simply to vote on it and impose it on the unions. The organizational form, which was once a means to an end, then becomes the objective of a battle. It is not certain that such battles are as central in countries or sectors where traditions of assemblies bringing together all workers at the workplace—unionized or not, across all trades—still persist to a greater or lesser extent, as in France or Spain, for example. To the best of our knowledge—and at the risk of being proven wrong—there was no specific, at least not central, struggle waged by Airbus workers in Getafe, Spain, to ensure that general assemblies[35] were held regularly during their July 2026 strike. The central issue at the time was to break the isolation and expand the struggle—not only to other Airbus plants across the country, but above all to workers of Madrid and the entire surrounding region. This is the objective – the political goal – which the efforts must be concentrated on. In both situations – the United States in 2023 and Spain in 2026 – the calls for immediate action that the communist groups would have issued had they been able to intervene were therefore different.

There are, therefore, two understandings or positions. One views the unitary organizations of the class – assemblies, councils, etc. – as merely a form, and the party as the "political" content, with the party's essential function being to introduce the so-called political content – namely, the communist program as you write yourself – into the organizational form, into the workers' councils. This separation of form and content amounts to viewing the class as a static and passive entity, one that is not in motion unless the party succeeds in introducing communist consciousness in it. What about the process of class struggle that leads from immediate struggles to the mass strike, to workers' insur-

[33]. By the way, this wording may seem to contradict what you said earlier in your letter: *"Your assertion that the organizational form (whether a council, a strike committee, or an assembly) is secondary to its political content is absolutely correct."*

[34]. See *Revolution or War* #26 : https://igcl.org/United-States-Workers-Defeat-UAW-s

[35]. With the exception of subcontractor workers, who apparently were not included in the struggle and therefore did not participate in the meetings. This needs to be verified.

rection, and to the exercise of the dictatorship of the proletariat? What are the orientations and slogans that the party – or communist groups – should put forwards in these struggles? Simply those related to promoting the communist program? Or rather intervening and seeking to win the political leadership of these struggles – or, more precisely, to provide the orientations and slogans that enable the struggling proletarians to best defend their material living and working conditions, and even to achieve concrete gains?

"The Party organisations, ***in extending and intensifying their agitation for the immediate demands*** *(...) must make it one of the prime objects of their activity to give all-round support to revolutionary mass strikes, and to develop and organise all forms of revolutionary action by the masses*[36]*."* (Lenin, emphasis added)

The other conception – the one we seek to defend and which Lenin himself defends above – views the class's unitary organizations in struggle and the proletarian political party as two tools and two closely linked dimensions of the same proletarian struggle. This struggle is by definition **political.** It presupposes that the proletariat is a class in motion and an active subject. It follows that the party or communist groups – the vanguard of the "active subject" – must also struggle constantly – in accordance with their capabilities, of course – to formulate orientations and slogans that correspond to the immediate needs of each struggle. The political leadership that the party must assume is not limited to introducing the communist program to the masses, which falls within the realm of propaganda – and which must be done. It extends and "rises up" to the definition of tactics to be determined and adopted, within the framework of the communist program and guided by the communist principles, according to the specific circumstances of time and place – the only limitation being the actual strength or militant capabilities of the revolutionaries.

You will note with us that these two visions imply – if not directly introduce – two different conceptions of the role of the party and of revolutionary groups; two different conceptions of the party-class relationship. The first tends to reduce the party's role to the introduction, or the bringing or restoring, of class consciousness and the communist program of which it is the bearer, among and within the class. The other constantly strives to fight to defend, articulate, and win political leadership **over all the struggles of the proletariat** and **every phase of those struggles** – whether limited or not, local or widespread – obviously in accordance with the communist program and principles. It does not limit, nor reduce itself to "introducing" the communist program into the workers' councils or the masses *per se*. Through the validity and efficiency of its immediate orientations and methods of struggle, it demonstrates the full value of the communist program in the eyes of the masses, as *"the only faithful and reliable compass in all the complex issues of the economic struggle*[37]*."*

The first, when driven by forces that claim to be "pro-party," leads – albeit by a roundabout route that is hardly any slower – to a councilist view of the relationship between the party and the class, or between revolutionaries and the class:

"For the parties – then remains the second function, to spread insight and knowledge, to study, discuss and formulate social ideas, and by their propaganda to enlighten the minds of the masses. The workers' councils are the organs for practical action and fight of the working class; to the parties falls the task of the building up of its spiritual power. Their work forms an indispensable part in the self-liberation of the working class[38]*."*

The second seeks to build on the long-standing position of Marxism, which the Left of Italy summarized so well:

"It would be a common mistake to assume that participating in the struggle for contingent and limited gains is at odds with preparing for the revolutionary struggle. (...) The Communist Party therefore participates in all forms of proletarian economic organization open to all workers regardless of their political convictions (unions, works councils, cooperatives, etc.[39]*). Its fundamental position regarding organizations of this nature is that they must include all workers in a given economic situation, and it is by consistently defending this position that the Party will most effectively carry out its work. (...) It is not merely a matter of educating the masses, and even less of presenting a Party that is intrinsically pure and perfect,* ***but rather of achieving the best possible results in the actual process***[40]*."* (emphasis added)

The Party-Class relationship – and even more so the party-mass strike relationship – is not that of a teacher

[36]. Lenin, *Op.cit*, Resolution of the Cracow Meeting of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P on the The Revolutionary Upswing, the Strikes, and the Tasks of the Party, February 1913.

[37]. 2nd Congress of the Communist International, Theses on the Trade Union Movement, Factory Committees and the Third International, 1920. We translate from the French version. The English one from marxists.org is the following: *"...which alone is the platform for the economic struggle"* whose political content and meaning may be understood differently.

[38]. Anton Pannekoek, Theses on the Fight of the Working Class, against Capitalism, 1947, https://www.marxists.org/archive/pannekoe/1947/theses-fight.htm.

[39]. Obviously, today's forms of workers' unitarian organization no longer take the form of unions or cooperatives.

[40]. Theses on the Tactic of the Communist Party of Italy (Theses of Rome). We translate from the French version of International Communist Party-Communist Program. We think the translation into English made by the "Bordiguist" group which publishes *The International Communist Party* is not well translated and can change some specific political meanings of the original version. Unfortunately, as far as we know, one can find an English of Theses of Rome only on its website: https://www.international-communist-party.org/BasicTexts/English/22TeRome.htm

to a student, or of an enlightened advisor to ignorant masses. As the *Communist Manifesto* states, it is the relationship between *"the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others;* [that] *theoretically, have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding* ***the line of march****, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement"* and *"the proletarians as a whole."* (emphasis added)

Assuming the Political Confrontation with the Unions and the Leftist Movement

The role of workers' councils and any unified body of the working class is thus also **political**. This is also why they are the prime arenas for the political confrontation between proletarian and communist forces on the one hand, and the forces of the bourgeoisie within the working class, the unions, the left, and leftists on the other. It would be an unforgivable naivety and a denial of historical experience – for both communist and revolutionary groups and for the proletariat as a whole – to believe that it would be possible to advance and defend concrete strategies for spreading and unifying the struggles without the unions and left-leftist parties opposing it in any concrete way, whether openly or covertly. Unless, of course, one believes that the bourgeoisie could abandon the arena of class confrontation in the workplaces and neighborhoods. The function of the unions and left-wing parties – regardless of what their members may think as individuals – is precisely to oppose the development and effectiveness of the struggles and to sabotage them from within. As a result, the working class as a whole – and especially its most advanced and militant fractions, first and foremost the communist groups and the Communist Party – must take up this political struggle against the unions and the leftists in the very course of the struggles themselves and, primarily, in relation to their needs[41]. The illusion that there could be a "pure" struggle, free of unions and leftists within them – particularly in assemblies and... tomorrow, workers' councils – is itself a political error of an anarcho-councilist nature.

This is also why the party is indispensable. Armed with the communist program, it is also best able – by definition, and of course this must be verified in practice, since it is not inevitable – to identify the forces that oppose the development of proletarian struggles and that serve the counterrevolution and capitalism. For, *"if the revolution is to succeed, it must know as exactly as possible with whom it can go into battle, which of its allies is unreliable and who is its real enemy[42]."* And so the party is also destined to be at the forefront of the struggle against the *real* class *enemies*, while at the same time, in the very course of the workers' struggles and for their sake, leading and convincing the entire proletariat to take up this political struggle as well in assemblies, committees of all kinds, street demonstrations, the workers' councils themselves, etc.

The relationship Party-Councils, or soviets, is not one of content to form, but rather that of the proletariat's political vanguard – the political minority it has chosen to provide political leadership for its struggles – to the proletariat as a whole, to its masses. The unity of the two – party and class – can only be conceived if both are viewed as being in motion. Their relationship is dynamic and interactive; in other words, dialectical. It can only be understood and put into practice by reclaiming the experience of past mass strikes and the lessons that our "masters" drew from them and bequeathed to us.

So, dear comrades, this, in broad strokes, is what we intended to say directly in response to the question of "self-organization" and, even more so, elaborate upon for the entire proletarian camp, taking advantage of the opportunity your letter provides us regarding the mass strike – or, more precisely, regarding the topicality of the mass strike, its dynamics, and the leading role that revolutionaries and communist groups must assume within it.

Internationalist Greetings, the IGCL

[41]. The point is not to constantly denounce trade unions and leftists in itself, but to defend and promote the approaches that correspond to the needs of the ongoing struggle. When a union or a delegate calls for a strike and revolutionaries also believe at that moment that the strike or struggle is necessary, it would be foolish to denounce trade unionism "by principle." On the other hand, when it runs counter to the needs of the struggle—for example, breaking the isolation through extension—then the slogans and intervention of the communists differ from and oppose those of trade unionism, while demonstrating the value of the... communist program, which has enabled the coherent and effective formulation of their immediate slogans and orientations.

[42]. Lenin, *Op.cit*, The Development of Revolutionary Strikes and Street Demonstrations.

Capitalism and Nature

We are publishing here the first part of a contribution by an IGCL sympathizer. He had begun working on this piece before the summer—that is, before the widespread extreme heat waves reached the scale we so abruptly witnessed since June. His insight is worth highlighting. As the comrade points out, the dramatic and extremely serious environmental and climate deterioration is one of the characteristics and consequences of the capitalist mode of production. He reminds us that Marxism has, for 180 years now—since 1844—highlighted how capital separates and even pits "Man and Nature" against one another.

This contribution therefore has the theoretical merit of revealing how capitalism can only make the planet increasingly inhospitable to human life[(a)]. It thus helps arm communist groups and militants against environmentalist ideology and so-called "green" political organizations, whose character and class-based actions are entirely bourgeois and anti-proletarian. It also has the merit of prompting the entire proletarian camp to reflect on the "place" that communist groups—and the future party—must accord to this issue in their thinking, propaganda, and intervention, in relation to the other issues facing the international proletariat as a class that is both exploited and revolutionary; and first and foremost, the issue of war.

The introduction rightly establishes a close link between the current rapid acceleration of the deterioration of nature and the equally rapid acceleration of the drive toward generalized imperialist war. They mutually reinforce one another. But what is the dialectical relationship between the two? Is there one that is determining—or at the very least dominant—in shaping the arenas and moments of class antagonism? And thus for the revolutionary perspective of destroying capitalism? To put it simply here: against which danger or prospect posed by capital must communist groups not merely alert the proletariat—both, of course!—but mobilize it? On what should they primarily and as a matter of priority base and define their orientations and interventions? On generalized imperialist war, as we defend? Or on both that and global warming simultaneously, as equivalent arenas of confrontation? The question may seem academic or speculative to those who do not consider themselves militants or a militant fraction of the revolutionary proletariat. But from a militant communist perspective, it will have political implications. It already has some. Raising the issue without delay, debating it, and clarifying it is also a step in the struggle for the party of tomorrow.

The Editorial Team, August 2026

Note [(a)]: See Revolution or War #13, 2019, "Saving the Planet" Requires the Destruction of the Capitalist State and the Exercise of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat! (https://igcl.org/Saving-the-Planet-Requires-the-496)

Capitalism and Nature

General Introduction

The air feels hot—even stifling. After yet another summer marked by record-breaking temperatures, an unprecedented drought, endless wildfires ravaging habitats and forests, and hundreds, if not thousands, of deaths, as the tragic example of Nepal reminds us, this year feels like a tipping point when it comes to climate change. Upon closer inspection, however, this did not begin in 2026; the literally stifling temperatures in India and Pakistan, the slow but inexorable rise in sea levels, and so on—the process had long since begun to unfold before everyone's eyes. The first warnings were issued in the 1970s; scientists must surely have heard the echo of their own cries, for their words fell on deaf ears. It is true that at the time, the consequences of the ongoing crisis were not yet apparent. Today, however, it is difficult to escape them—the disaster is right there, before our eyes. But a segment of the bourgeoisie pretends not to see anything; *business as usual*—or rather, *"after me, the flood*[43]*."* Another segment of the bourgeoisie, meanwhile, claims to be fighting the ongoing crisis: carbon credit markets, electric cars, renewable energy... At the very least, one cannot deny its inventiveness, which, for better or worse, masks its inability and refusal to truly put an end to the ongoing climate crisis.

Fundamentally, the bourgeoisie is grappling with a problem it cannot solve: it is the capitalist mode of production that lies at the root of the crisis. Let us make this clear from the outset: it is the very logic of this mode of production that is at the root of the disaster, and not one of its historically or geographically specific forms, as we will have the opportunity to demonstrate. And it is against this that the only class capable of averting the catastrophe must rise up, by overthrowing capitalism in favor of a communist society: the proletariat. For this historic alternative—revolution or climate crisis—may well be the last in human history, at least as we know it today. For, given the projections for the coming decades and centuries, the death toll will no longer be counted in the thousands, but in the millions, if not more[44]. In short, we stand at a crossroads,

[43]. Rarely has this expression taken on such a literal meaning; one has to go back to a certain Noah to see it take on such relevance today.

[44]. https://www.currentaffairs.org/news/the-massive-climate-lie-that-will-destroy-human-civilization

between communism and destruction. The first part of this article will focus on the intrinsic link between capitalism and the climate crisis.

There is often a grain of truth in popular sayings, and when people say that *misfortune never comes alone*, one cannot help but be struck by the accuracy of such a maxim. For on top of the ecological crisis comes the inter-imperialist crisis—the march toward war, which is gathering momentum a little more each day, hurtling forward at full speed. The march toward war and the climate crisis are intrinsically linked; they fuel one another; resources are running out, and with that, inter-imperialist tensions escalate, sometimes erupting; conflicts arise, and then planes, drones, and other weapons destroy people and the environment (not to mention the cost of simply preparing for war: maximum mobilization of the productive apparatus, etc.). We will need to discuss the relationship between these two factors; does one take precedence over the other, which would then be subordinate to it? Are they inextricably linked? Asking this question and attempting to answer it means striving to establish the most accurate analytical framework possible, in order to act accordingly. For far from being a mere abstract analysis, these reflections are inseparable from the activities of a communist militant. One thing is certain, however: it is up to the working class to take control of society in order to get it back on its feet, and thereby give humanity a future.

Finally, there is the question of what comes next—undoubtedly more speculative, but just as essential. In the far-fetched scenario that everything were to come to a halt tomorrow, certain ecocidal processes are already underway and will take centuries to reverse; more broadly, the infrastructure that capitalist society will leave us will not be sustainable, and we will have to completely rethink the very way we produce for the future. The danger, however, is falling into the paradigm of degrowth, which poses a real threat to the proletariat, as we will have the opportunity to demonstrate. We will attempt to show that, in the face of such deceptions, the only possible response is a communist one. This will be the focus of the third and final part of this article.

This contribution therefore has a broad scope; however, it cannot—nor does it seek to—provide an exhaustive treatment of the issue. It will simply set out a few guidelines and points of reference that can be discussed and critiqued by all revolutionary militants. But it also aims to bring the ecological question to the forefront within the proletarian camp as a central, fundamental issue. For while it is indeed mentioned in passing by various groups, it has all too rarely been the subject of in-depth debate. It is true that venturing into such territory is not without risk; one can very quickly get bogged down in the dangerous quagmire of interclassism—since the struggle to preserve "Nature" (a completely abstract concept here!) should, for some, take precedence over the class struggle... Addressing this subject, while remaining aware of the risk of political drift that one is entering into, remains a necessity for communist militants; for by avoiding such a discussion, we prevent ourselves from fully understanding the world, and we will be powerless when it comes to changing it.

Understanding the stakes of the current ecological crisis requires, first and foremost, grasping the relationship between the capitalist mode of production and nature—that is, the environment in which it operates. While this is an extremely broad subject, it can nevertheless be approached from the dual perspectives of *alienation* and *rupture* on the one hand, and *destructio*n on the other. This will allow us to show that it is the very logic of this mode of production that underlies the current situation, and not simply one of its particular historical forms; it is, in fact, this observation that leads us to prefer the term "crises" to other terms sometimes used, such as "catastrophe," "collapse," or any other superlative that, while perhaps more striking, seems to overlook the fact that it is a specific mode of production that underlies the situation we face today.

The few elements that will be presented in this section are, in truth, deeply interconnected and intertwined; and if they appear separately, it is only for the sake of clarity in our presentation. It therefore seems important to us to view the various ideas as individual brushstrokes that, when viewed from a distance, form a coherent overall picture.

1) Capitalism as Alienation and Rupture

"This communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism[45]": this is how Marx, in the *1844 Manuscripts*, presented one of the characteristics of communism—a close bond between humanity and nature. If communism is *"fully realized naturalism,"* it is precisely because, as Marx shows, the worker in the capitalist mode of production—in addition to being alienated in and by labor—is estranged from nature; and it is precisely this broken bond that communism must rebuild, to enable humanity to attain its true being.

The capitalist mode of production thus produces an alienation of Humankind from its environment, preventing its access to what resembles to its essence. It is difficult, however, not to see in these formulations vestiges of idealism—symptoms of the still-fledgling labor

[45]. https://marxists.architexturez.net/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/rent.htm

movement, which had not yet developed a clear and scientific doctrine[46]. This is, in fact, a limitation that Marx would come to recognize and correct over time; for while the relationship between Humankind and Nature is central to his work, he would subsequently give it a far more materialist character, notably through a careful reading of Justus von Liebig (1803–1873). The works of this German chemist—who was immensely influential and is considered one of the founders of modern chemistry—were of paramount importance to Marx, to the point that he wrote to Engels in 1866 that *"Liebig and Schöbein (...) are more important to this question* [of ground rent] *than all the economists put together[47]."*

We owe, in particular, John Bellamy Foster and Kohei Saito for some in-depth and insightful research on the subject (though not without serious political shortcomings[48]), which we cannot, however, cover fully and adequately here. Let us therefore limit ourselves, for the purposes of this discussion, to the essentials; in the 1850s, Liebig emphasized the importance of returning to the soil all the mineral substances that had been extracted, so as not to disrupt the existing metabolism and, ultimately, render the land unusable. Marx would adopt these conclusions as his own: indeed, the idea of a "metabolic rift" began to take shape in his thinking: because the capitalist mode of production, by separating Humankind from the land and confining it to vast industrial centers, makes it impossible to return minerals to their original soil (since human waste—though rich in extracted minerals—is left to rot in cities or surrounding rivers —Marx sees this very concretely in the case of the Thames), the preservation of this earth is rendered impossible; and it is then, in the long run, the very conditions for the preservation of humanity that are at stake.

The metabolic rift, then, is the disconnection between Humankind and Nature, which disrupts the harmony of mineral replenishment that once enabled sustainable production. And Marx adds, in Volume 1 of *Capital*: *"Moreover, all progress in capitalist agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the worker, but of robbing the soil ; all progress in increasing the fertility of the soil for a given time is a progress towards ruining the long-lasting sources of that fertility[49]"*; a particularly interesting quote in that it draws a connection between the exploitation of the worker and that of nature. We can thus see that the idea of alienation is never far away and hovers over the concept of metabolic rift; however, it now seems to have descended from the realm of ideas and abstractions back down into the real, material world.

It should be noted right away that this quotation—and Marx's thought more generally—also raises the issue of what might be called "intensive production"; but we will address this topic in detail later on.

While Marx raises the issue of the "metabolic rift" in the context of agriculture (which is, incidentally, the perspective from which Foster and Saito will approach the subject), this issue has now broadened considerably. To take just one example among many, sand extraction (the second mo serf cannot leave his st widely used resource in the world, after water) is in crisis, because capitalists are extracting river sediments—which are necessary for the formation of sand—faster than the processes required for their renewal can keep up[50]. While not an exact analogy, we can nevertheless observe that the dynamics are very similar.

The fact remains that the capitalist mode of production thus creates a rift between Humankind and Nature, with political, social, economic, and ecological consequences. It is difficult, however, to stop at this observation; for, to get to the heart of the matter, we cannot limit ourselves to describing—even briefly—the effects of the separation between Humankind and Nature: we must demonstrate the *specifically capitalist character* of this phenomenon; a detour through history is therefore necessary.

Pre-capitalist societies are all characterized by an organic, close, and unalienated relationship with nature, without any systematic metabolic rupture. This is strikingly evident when one considers certain indigenous North American communities (from the various groups belonging to the *Clovis culture* to the Iroquois), the nomadic peoples of the Asian steppes (Kereit, Mongols, Tatars, Naiman, etc.), and so on.

The same applies to populations living in societies organized according to the Asian mode of production. While this concept has been debated, let us simply note that it is characterized in particular by a strong, centralized authority that ensures the reproduction of

[46]. Thus, the *1844 Manuscripts* still contain fairly abstract formulations and concepts, the result of a Hegelian legacy. Nevertheless, one cannot agree with certain scholars when they speak of an epistemological break between a "young" and an "old" Marx; rather, Marx's thought must be understood as a constantly evolving whole.

[47]. We did not find any English translation of that letter.

[48]. Among other things, Foster and Saito tend to believe that Marx is useful for understanding the current crisis almost exclusively through the lens of the metabolic rift. For a critique of this view, see *L'Ecocide capitaliste*, Vol. 2, by A. Bihr, published by Syllepses. It should also be noted that these authors' political conclusions turn out to be counterrevolutionary. For a critique of Saito and his political perspectives, see, for example, the ICT article: https://www.left-com.org/en/articles/2023-07-25/degrowth-and-marxism-a-critique.

[49]. *Capital*, volume 1 Machinery and Large Scale Industry, Penguin Classics.

[50]. On this subject, one can read the explanatory article published in *Science Alert* : https://www.sciencealert.com/the-worlds-rivers-are-running-out-of-sand.
For the full scientific article, see : https://agupubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1029/2024RG000868.

these societies as well as the organization of collective labor, and that relies on a myriad of small villages or communes—which are relatively or even completely self-sufficient—that for the most part cultivate the land collectively. While these villages are, first and foremost, as communities, the collective owners of arable land—even after losing formal ownership due to confiscatory actions by the central government—they nevertheless remain the actual possessors of that land. It is these communities and this strong bond with the land that, once again, illustrate—by contrast—the distinct nature of the capitalist mode of production in its relationship to nature, a relationship that is strained, if not completely severed. We will conclude on this point by noting that the term *"Asian mode of production"* is rather a misnomer; while Asian societies truly began to interest Marx and Engels during the British parliamentary debates concerning India's status in the mid-19th century, this concept would expand and shift beyond its original geographical scope: in addition to India—and, for example, China—it can be found in South America (notably among the Incas), in Egypt, etc.[51]

But this connection with nature is also found in societies that experienced the feudal mode of production; and since capitalism arose from the contradictions of the feudal system, we will focus on it: in this way, the distinctive feature of capitalism—the rupture between Humankind and Nature—will become clear. Feudalism, like all modes of production, takes on many different forms depending on the social configurations of the territories where it emerges; the observations presented here are therefore broad in scope and tend to apply universally, despite notable exceptions [52].

Fundamentally, feudal relations of production are based on a specific form of exploitation of peasants: the latter are reduced to the status of serfs. The concept of *glebae adscripti*, coined retrospectively by medieval jurists to define and justify this status, accurately captures the unique nature of this situation, particularly in its relationship to the land, since it literally means "bound to the land." This bond is at once customary, legal, and social—to the extent that a serf cannot leave his land without risking fines or even punishment. Serfdom is also characterized by the obligation to cultivate the land on behalf of one's lord (who, incidentally, is bound by vassalage—another characteristic of feudalism that we will not explore here), at least in part. This latter relationship, however, is often misunderstood: the serf is neither a slave nor an employee of the lord; he is, at least formally, the usufructuary[53] of the land he cultivates. But, particularly in the early centuries of the Middle Ages, the fruits of his labor were almost entirely appropriated by the lord, through taxes or corvée labor (compulsory labor to be performed for the lord in exchange for the right to use the land). His status as a usufructuary was thus merely formal and did not benefit him in any way.

At the same time, the feudal system of production generally granted all serf families hereditary ownership of a *manse*—a complex consisting of a house, usually accompanied by various outbuildings (pigsty, stable), and, above all, a plot of arable land and the tools necessary to work it.

These various elements thus allow us to begin to discern the distinctive features of feudalism compared to capitalism with regard to the relationship between worker and nature. Indeed, in this configuration, we observe *"the domination of the land as an alien power over men" ,"* thereby making the serf *"the adjunct of the land"* (Marx, *1844 Manuscripts*). This is what leads Marx to state that, unlike some of his contemporaries who idealize the past by focusing on the damage the capitalist mode of production inflicts on people and nature, he does not *"join in the sentimental tears wept over this by romanticism."* A salutary reminder of the folly and danger of the political proposals of those who see a "return to our roots" (often grossly distorted, in defiance of all scientific accuracy) as a viable solution for overcoming the crisis.

We must therefore have no illusions about the relationship to nature under feudalism: far from being idyllic, it already involved suffering and oppression for the producer. However, unlike under the capitalist mode of production, although reduced to a mere appendage of the land—which tends to become increasingly alien to him—the serf nevertheless maintains a personal bond with it; a bond that is also reflected in the relationship between the lord and the serf. Indeed, *"those working on the estate have not the position of day-labourers; but they are in part themselves his property, as are serfs; and in part they are bound to him by ties of respect, allegiance, and duty. His relation to them is therefore directly political, and has likewise a human, intimate side[54]."*

This connection to nature is all the stronger because

[51]. For a more in-depth exploration of the concept of the "Asiatic mode of production," see certain sections in the *Grundrisse* (K. Marx, 1857–1858). For an analysis of the concept, see M. Godelier's article in the appendix to *Sur les sociétés précapitalistes*, by K. Marx and F. Engels, ed. Sociales, pp. 493–575). See also P. Anderson's discussion in the appendix to *L'État absolutiste, tome 2 – l'Europe de l'Est*, ed. Maspero, p. 290-386.

[52]. Thus, the situations in England, Sweden, Spain, and so on are radically different. It is undoubtedly French feudalism that most closely corresponds to the very "concept" of feudalism; indeed, it was in that same country that the most fully developed form of absolutism would emerge. However, even within a single country, one can find regional and local differences, and so on.

[53]. Editor's note: *usufruct* is the legal right to benefit from property that belongs to the another.

[54]. *1844 Manuscripts*

the feudal system of production also includes communal lands—a true common good that all the inhabitants of a village can cultivate collectively—although the terms under which these lands are appropriated differ both in terms of the method and the area involved.

Thus, feudalism is characterized by a fairly strong connection between the land, and therefore nature, and the producer; and while, due to this immobility (the peasant is, in essence, tied to the field he cultivates), the alienation humankind/nature is less pronounced, and the metabolic relationship is functional—in the sense that minerals are effectively returned to the soil, contributing to its preservation and sustainability—this does not prevent the peasant from being exploited by the lord, from experiencing significant hardship, and even, as we have seen, from being dominated by nature. This opens the way to a twofold perspective: first, that of capitalism's specific nature in terms of its impact on the relationship humankind/nature (but also, since the two are linked, on the relationship city/countryside), and second, the overcoming of existing alienation toward a society in which the relationship between the producer and his environment is no longer, as under the feudal mode of production, a cause of enslavement, but is, on the contrary, emancipatory; in short, a communist society.

What remains to be addressed here is the question of the historical emergence of such alienation and rupture; for only in this way can we demonstrate that it is truly inherent in the capitalist mode of production, and not merely a particular or recent form of it.

While, as has already been noted on several occasions, feudalism is characterized by a particular relationship of the peasant to his land, it is also distinguished by the fact that social and political organization is structured around the primacy of the countryside over the city. But, as we shall see, it is paradoxically this marginalization that will make urban centers one of the driving forces behind the development of capitalist social relations.

> **The revolutionary struggle to destroy these dreadful, sprawling urban areas can be defined as follows: communist oxygen versus capitalist cesspool. Space versus cement."**
>
> **(Amadeo Bordiga, 1953, Space versus Cement)**

We cannot provide a comprehensive overview of the issue here; we will therefore limit ourselves to the main dynamics, focusing in particular on certain points that are sometimes not addressed sufficiently.

Although commercial dynamics were, for a time, held back by the corporatist system, the establishment of businesses, most often on the outskirts of urban centers in defiance of the guilds, allowed commercial capital to develop. These merchants, primarily artisans, emerged as a result of long-distance trade and itinerant commerce as early as the 11th century; indeed, these merchants, traveling from town to town and from fair to fair, needed to be able to meet their needs for both food and production tools (barrels, carts, etc.).

This growing urban market opened up opportunities for rural areas, which were thereby be integrated into the cities' market economy. However, this integration into an increasingly dynamic economy would not be without consequences for the relationship between the producer and the land; as has been noted, the peasant was, strictly speaking, a usufructuary of the lord's lands: in other words, once he has produced what he owes to the lord, the remainder of the produce belonged to him. However, the gradual development of a new market would prompt some serfs to no longer produce solely for their own consumption, but also to sell part of their harvest to the city. No need for a Guizot here to urge them to enrich themselves. Thus, a portion of the serfs was able to begin accumulating capital, improving their productivity (by purchasing increasingly efficient tools), and becoming true "farmers "; conversely, the segment of the peasantry that was unable to integrate into the cities' market circuits became comparatively poorer and would become what would be called "day laborers" or "brassiers": the terms speak for themselves and clearly show that these individuals had only their hands or arms as tools of labor. Here we find what could be considered a "proto-proletariat."

But it was between the 12th and 13th centuries that the turning point occurred; with the transformation of

land into a commodity, farmers were able to expand their holdings, often by paying a certain sum to the lord, the former owner; conversely, day laborers could quickly, in the event of problems (illness, poor harvest, etc.), quickly find themselves in debt and, over time, end up completely dispossessed, with nothing left to sell but their labor – most often to lords who had become landowners, or to farmers. We must therefore not be misled when La Fontaine has the farmer say that work is a treasure; it is far more the day laborers who represent the working class and who form the foundation of production. Add to this the organized action of the capitalist class (the rising bourgeoisie or the transformed nobility) to destroy all common property; the example of the English enclosures, discussed at length by Marx in Volume 1 of *Capital*, is obviously the most famous illustration of this phenomenon.

It is in the course of this dynamic, which we have outlined extremely briefly, that the early signs of the capitalist mode of production take shape; but it is this very same movement that, by distinguishing between farmers and day laborers and by expropriating the latter, creates a *de facto* rupture in the bond that existed with the land – a rupture that is therefore distinctly capitalist[55].

At this point, we can add two elements. First, while the process described is indeed at the root of the alienation between the worker and nature (through the *commodification* of nature and the worker's *proletarianization*), other elements, also linked to the development of capitalism due to the contradictions of feudalism, have played a role in this separation between Humankind and nature: one might mention, in particular, the rural exodus, which severed the ties of a growing portion of the population to environments other than urban ones, which are particularly destructive to the environment, thus bringing to the fore the question of abolishing the distinction between city and countryside under communism, a topic discussed at length in *The German Ideology*.

Next, we must emphasize the nonlinear nature of such a process; while we have described above the main trends of a historical evolution spanning several centuries, there were setbacks, slowdowns, and accelerations; especially since, as noted, geographic diversity entails specific local variations in certain regions. Thus, agricultural wage laborers, who could be found in certain European regions, actually continued to have a status that, in practical terms, was that of a serf, just as, indeed, did the most precarious class of small farmers; but there was also a variety of other statuses, from tenant farmers to sharecroppers, including those holding alleutary land, all of which were part of this transitional period between feudalism and capitalism.

Thus, we have seen that it is within the very development of capitalist relations of production that this separation, this movement of rupture-alienation, between the producer and nature takes place, which makes this separation, as we argued at the outset, an intrinsic characteristic of the capitalist mode of production. And, as noted above, while a non-alienated relationship with nature does not in itself imply the end of all exploitation, the end of all exploitation requires such a non-alienated relationship; and it is only through communist society, as we will demonstrate in the next parts of this contribution, that such a prospect becomes possible, a prospect which is becoming increasingly urgent in light of capitalism's destructive nature.

Ross, July 2026

[55]. The approach presented here seems to us to have the merit of moving beyond certain binary, academic debates—notably the now-famous "Brenner debate"—which trace the origins of capitalism either to cities (particularly Italian city-states such as Venice and later Genoa)—a position also defended by certain historians such as F. Braudel—or to the countryside. In truth, it is indeed the interaction of these two worlds that gave rise to this mode of production, with both spheres playing an equal role in the emergence of such a social relationship. This position is, for example, defended—in our view, quite rightly—in *La préhistoire du Capital*, A. Bihr, ed. Page 2.

Struggle against Opportunism

Proletarian Internationalism and Revolutionary Defeatism

The question of the political position that revolutionary forces must adopt toward imperialist war has become central in the current period. Clarifying this as thoroughly as possible will determine the ability of communist forces—groups and the future party—to put forward orientations and slogans to the proletariat as a whole in the face of the looming generalized imperialist war; and, in the course of openly declared war itself, should the international proletariat be unable to prevent its outbreak and destroy its instigator, capitalism and the international chain of bourgeois states. Furthermore, the positions taken on this issue will also constitute one of the criteria for selecting the proletarian political forces and currents that will participate in the formation of the party of tomorrow. Today's battle over the question of proletarian internationalism, particularly within the proletarian camp, is but one moment—albeit one of the most important—in the historic struggle for the party.

For now, the focus has been on the specific slogans that proletarian internationalism must adapt or apply, depending on the situation—such as "revolutionary defeatism" or "transforming the imperialist war into a civil war," to name just two. The first is already the subject of a confrontation within the proletarian camp between those who embrace it today and those who reject it. In fact, the International Communist Current is the main—if not the only—organized force to openly declare its "anti-defeatism."

The slogan of "revolutionary defeatism" is discussed, or even considered, by the ICC only in the context of a war that has already broken out. However, while the slogan "turn the imperialist war into a civil war" can only apply to a situation of open war, it would be wrong to limit the application of the former to that situation alone. Yet this is, in fact, the primary argument of the ICC: *"The current dynamics of global capitalism bear no resemblance whatsoever to those within which the slogan of 'revolutionary defeatism' was first raised. Today, it does not in any way tend towards the formation of blocs with a view to a third world war, or even the mobilisation of tens of millions of proletarians at the front*[56]. Let us give credit to the ICC and its logic: if, as it has argued since its 15th Congress in 2003, there is no longer any risk of a generalized imperialist war, of a Third World War, or even of a dynamic leading toward one, then the slogan of defeatism has no place. Logical. The problem seems solved.

But the ICC does not stop there. It also rejects defeatism in the event of war—both the wars of the past and the one, which it considers unlikely, of the future. In doing so, as we argue here, it aligns itself with the "pacifists" and "centrists" of the Second International during World War I. Moreover, it opens the door to desertion from the class struggle, if not to its future betrayal.

Let us take this opportunity to clarify something for everyone. For us, the ICC remains a full-fledged component of the proletarian camp[57], even though we consider it to be its opportunist right-wing. It has the "great advantage"—if one can call it that, since the danger is all the greater—of openly expressing and exposing the influence of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologies within the communist forces on the one hand, and within the proletariat as a whole on the other —such as the illusions about a capitalism that could "return to normal as in previous decades", remain free of war, and whose exploitation would remain "bearable". How many proletarians—and even revolutionaries—are burying their heads in the sand, refusing to notice the yawning abyss beneath our feet?

The critique that follows is therefore intended as a step in the struggle for the party. Its primary aim is not to target the ICC itself, but to equip today's and tomorrow's militants—and their respective organizations—as best as possible in the face of the coming storm and tragedies; as well as to enable them to resist the constant pressure of opportunism and its infiltration into the ranks of the proletariat and communists.

The ICC Position and Arguments

For the ICC, *"the slogan of 'revolutionary defeatism' was certainly put forward by Lenin during the First World War. However, he was then seeking to respond to the sophistries of the 'centrists', who while being 'in principle' against any participation in imperialist war, advised that you should wait until the workers in the 'enemy' countries were ready to enter into struggle against the war before calling on workers in 'your' country to do the same. In support of this position, they put forward the argument that if the workers of one country rose up before those in the opposing countries, they would facili-*

[56]. *World Revolution* #406, Should Revolutionaries Put Forward the Slogan of Revolutionary Defeatism? (https://en.internationalism.org/content/17797/should-revolutionaries-put-forward-slogan-revolutionary-defeatism)

[57]. How many times have we had to defend this position to militants —both young and old—and other communist groups, to the point of advocating, often alone and against the unanimous opinion of the other organizers, for its participation and its invitation to public meetings and other events?

tate the imperialist victory of the latter. Against this conditional 'internationalism', Lenin replied very correctly that the working class of any given country had no common interest with 'its' bourgeoisie. In particular, he pointed out that the latter's defeat could only facilitate the workers' struggle, as had been the case with the Paris Commune (following France's defeat by Prussia) and the 1905 revolution in Russia (which was beaten in the war with Japan). From this observation he concluded that each proletariat should 'wish for' the defeat of 'its' bourgeoisie. This last position was already wrong at the time, since it led the revolutionaries of each country to demand for 'their' proletariat the most favourable conditions for the proletarian revolution, whereas the revolution had to take place on a world-wide level, and above all in the big advanced countries, which were all involved in the war. (...) With Lenin, the weakness of this position never put his intransigent internationalism in question (we can even say it was precisely his intransigence which led to the error). In particular, Lenin never had the idea of supporting the bourgeoisie of an 'enemy' country - even if this might be the logical conclusion of his 'wishes'." Further on, the ICC denounces *"the nationalist vision of the revolution contained in the slogan of 'revolutionary defeatism'."*

Finally, *"the old schema of revolutionary defeatism, which held that the defeat of one's own government is favourable to the development of the revolution, as well as containing an inherent ambiguity about the need to oppose all governments in a situation of war, has been demonstrably refuted by the fact that the division between victorious and defeated nations creates deep divisions in the world proletariat, as was most clearly seen in the wake of the 1914-18 war."*

So, three arguments:

- The first argues that "revolutionary defeatism" breaks with internationalism by "hoping" for more favorable conditions for "one's own" proletariat at the expense of others;

- the second criticizes the national—not international—perspective underlying the "wishes" for the defeat of one's own bourgeoisie, whose *"logical conclusion* [would be] *supporting the bourgeoisie of an enemy country"*;

- The third asserts that historical experience—the postwar period of 1918–1919—disproved the validity of revolutionary defeatism, since the defeat of certain imperialist powers and the victory of others created a division between the proletariat of the victorious countries and that of the defeated countries.

Historical experience would thus prove the danger of revolutionary defeatism to the unity of the proletariat. The nationalist outlook underlying it—the defeat of one's own bourgeoisie, and thus the victory of imperialist rivals—would logically lead to support for the enemy bourgeoisie and class betrayal. Let us say this right away: Lenin had already responded to these arguments in 1918, both in substance and form, in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*[58]. Let us, in turn and more modestly, attempt to scrutinize them through the lens of today's criticism.

Defeatism would Divide the Proletariat

Let us begin with the third argument, which strikes us as surprising, to say the least, from the standpoint of historical facts—not to say misleading. The Russian workers' uprisings of February 1917[59] and the German workers' uprisings of November 1918 precipitated the military defeats of Russian and German imperialism. **First and foremost, they set in motion an international revolutionary wave** in which the world proletariat—including that of the victorious countries—recognized itself and tended to unite. This fact is all the more notable **from a class perspective**—in terms of historical rupture and trends—given that it followed the real divisions caused by four years of mobilization and slaughter in the trenches. What characterizes the postwar period, therefore, is not division, but the dynamic of unity within the international proletariat. The value of revolutionary defeatism in practice was therefore not disproved by the postwar period, as the ICC claims, but on the contrary, was largely confirmed. It was not division, but the affirmation of the international unity of the proletariat that resulted from the revolutionary defeatism actually carried out in Russia and Central Europe. Take, for example, the founding of the Communist International in 1919 following the success of the workers' insurrection and the exercise of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia—unless one believes that its founding was not the highest expression of the international unity of the proletariat after four years of carnage. The fact that the bourgeoisies of the victorious countries were subsequently able to control and subdue the revolutionary aspirations of their proletariat more easily than "defeated" Germany certainly is not the determining factor—nor even one of the determining factors—in the failure of the revolutionary wave...

Historical experience tells us exactly the opposite of what the ICC claims[60].

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[58]. https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1918/prrk/internationalism.htm

[59]. The argument that Lenin no longer used the slogan of "revolutionary defeatism" after February does not refute its validity. Once tsarism was overthrown and a revolutionary period began—in particular, a period of "dual power" between the bourgeois government and the workers' and soldiers' soviets—the slogan was no longer relevant.

[60]. We will set aside here the fact that the ICC's argument—that defeatism logically leads to support for the "enemy" country—lends credence to the slander, still circulating today, leveled against Lenin regarding his return from Switzerland to Petrograd by a *sealed train* that passed through Germany. This was supposedly proof that he was a German agent.

Defeatism would Oppose Proletarian Internationalism

Let us continue. It is striking to see how the first two arguments pit revolutionary defeatism against proletarian internationalism. The first is said to stem from a perspective presented as national, the second as international. To criticize Lenin and defeatism, the ICC proclaims loud and clear that *"the revolution had to take place on a world-wide level, and above all in the big advanced countries, which were all involved in the war."* The statement sounds genuinely internationalist and revolutionary... except that the revolution did not take place "where it was supposed to" but in backward Russia. They simply rehash the typical Menshevik schema, which ruled out any proletarian revolution in Russia because of its historical backwardness. From the perspective of the proletariat and its struggle, it is *"an empty and meaningless exclamation,"* according to Lenin in his text "The Defeat of One's Own Government in the Imperialist War[61]." And it hardly hides its political opportunism. Marxism has always made it clear, ever since the *Communist Manifesto*, that the international struggle of the proletariat involves the struggle of each proletariat against "its own bourgeoisie"—that is, within a national framework, against the bourgeois state apparatus, which is, by definition, national: *"Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie."*

Therefore, setting out orientations and slogans for proletarian struggles within a national framework—in this case, the "defeat of one's own bourgeoisie"—is entirely consistent with proletarian principles in general and internationalism in particular.

In contrast, separating and pitting the national framework of the proletarian struggle against its international and internationalist character in an absolute, metaphysical way is typical of a vision—of a line of reasoning—that strays from the actual terrain of the international class struggle, as it unfolds within the reality of capitalism. The defense and, above all, the application of the principle of proletarian internationalism in the event of an imperialist war cannot remain "general" and abstract, waiting to be translated into action only *"on a worldwide level,"* as the ICC puts it. As if it could be applied by decree or by the will of the Holy Spirit at the very same moment, simultaneously, and everywhere at once. This vision, which cloaks itself in the banner of rejecting "any concession" of a national nature, does little to hide its anarchistic approach; as with the myth of the general strike. On D-Day, we'll all sit back and do nothing together—in every country at the same time.

Behind the revolutionary phrase—which envisions a global revolution based on the model of the anarchist general strike—lies the same logic as that of the pacifist centrists of the Second International. The latter "waited" for no country to be invaded—even as the imperialist war raged and numerous territories were "occupied by the enemy". Before applying proletarian internationalism. *"it is obligatory for a Marxist to count on a European revolution if a revolutionary situation exists. (...) Having become a renegade, Kautsky feared to put this question, which is obligatory for a Marxist. Kautsky argues like a typical petty bourgeois, a philistine, or like an ignorant peasant: has a "general European revolution" begun or not? If it has, then he too is prepared to become a revolutionary![62]"* For its part, the ICC expects that *"the revolution had to take place on a world-wide level, and above all in the big advanced countries, which were all involved in the war..."* More than a century apart, both sides are united in their rejection of revolutionary defeatism. Their concern is not the development of the proletarian struggle as it may actually unfold in the face of war—**and thus regardless of the fate of each bourgeoisie**. No, the logic of their opportunistic reasoning makes the victory or defeat of "their" bourgeoisie the criterion for advancing concrete slogans of proletarian internationalism. Behind this lies the barely concealed petty bourgeois anxiety about the consequences for itself of an imperialist defeat suffered by "**its**" own bourgeoisie.

The principle of proletarian internationalism can only be applied and translated into concrete slogans in connection with the very process of class struggle; in other words, with the phenomenon of the mass strike, as taught to us by the Russian Revolution of 1917 and—even though it was defeated—the German Revolution of 1918. However, unlike the anarchist "general strike," the mass strike is a process in which certain sectors of the proletariat—and thus also certain territorial [or "national"] fractions of the proletariat—engage in the struggle before others do. Historically, it was the Russian proletariat that engaged in this struggle against its own bourgeoisie in the midst of a world war, thereby hastening the Russian bourgeoisie's defeat—first on the imperialist front, then politically—with the workers' insurrection of October 1917. In doing so, far from demanding *"for 'their' proletariat the most favourable conditions for the proletarian revolution"* at the expense of other international sections of the proletariat, the Russian workers, led by the Bolshevik Party, on the contrary fostered the conditions for the international rise of the proletariat and accelerated the emergence of the international revolutionary wave that swept across all

[61]. https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1915/jul/26.htm, 1915.

[62]. Lenin, The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky, *op.cit.*

of Europe and most continents.

Does revolutionary defeatism benefit the bourgeoisie of the other side?

"Hoping" that one's own bourgeoisie would be as weak as possible *would logically lead to support for the enemy bourgeoisie*, says the ICC. This reasoning is based on the following premise: if one imperialism loses, the other wins. Here again, it does not adopt the standpoint of the proletariat and the class struggle. It *"argues not like a socialist, not like an internationalist, not like a revolutionary proletarian, but like* ***a petty-bourgeois nationalist****. Because this argument ignores the revolutionary class struggle of the workers against capital, it ignores the appraisal of the war as a whole from the point of view of the world bourgeoisie and the world proletariat, that is, it ignores internationalism, and all that remains is miserable and narrow-minded nationalism*[63]*."* In other words, it is the forgetting of class struggle as the foundation of the reasoning—the hallmark of petty-bourgeois ideology, which turns its back on proletarian internationalism—and not the consideration of the national framework within which class struggle develops, as highlighted in *The Communist Manifesto*.



Proletarian internationalism does not consist in refusing to take sides with one or the other of the imperialist camps. That is the position of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois pacifism. Proletarian internationalist's duty *"is to prepare for the* ***world proletarian revolution*** *as the* ***only*** *escape from the horrors of a world slaughter. I must argue, not from the point of view of 'my' country (for that is the argument of a wretched, stupid, petty-bourgeois nationalist who does not realise that he is only a plaything in the hands of the imperialist bourgeoisie), but from the point of view of* ***my share*** *in the preparation, in the propaganda, and in the acceleration of the world proletarian revolution."* (*idem*)

The statement seems very clear to us.... But for those who might be acting in bad faith or who cannot read, we take the liberty of clarifying: *it is from the perspective of preparing for the world proletarian revolution—and not from the perspective of "my" country—that I must view the proletarian struggle against "my" bourgeoisie and its state apparatus.*

Topicality of Revolutionary Defeatism

For the international proletariat, the issue today is not *to transform an imperialist* war between great powers, that has not yet been openly declared, *into a civil war*. Rather, it must rise up, resist, and oppose the drive toward war and the preparations for it, which the world's bourgeoisies as a whole are seeking to accelerate and, above all, to impose. Yet any workers' struggle today can, in fact, only serve to weaken and hinder the preparations for war by each national bourgeoisie against its imperialist enemies. In doing so, any struggle by a sector or fraction of the proletariat carries within it the potential imperialist defeat of "its" bourgeoisie. Ignoring this reality is merely a manifestation of an incomplete, inconsistent internationalism that leads to pacifism. Ultimately, it reveals the panic—among those political elements and forces that remain sincere—in the face of the consequences and implications of the fierce class struggle that both war and its preparations provoke. Politically, this often manifests as one form or another of pacifism, direct or indirect, in the face of war—when it does not lead to outright class betrayal. For let no one be in doubt: any period of war or preparation for war exerts terrible pressure—and repression—not only on the proletariat as a whole, but also on revolutionary forces, organizations, and militants, which it is very difficult to resist. Especially if they are not sufficiently armed at the levels of political, theoretical and communist principles.

To undermine one's own bourgeoisie's preparations for war? That is to betray the homeland and the nation by practicing *revolutionary defeatism*—or, if you will, *proletarian defeatism*.

August 2026

[63]. *Idem.*

History of the Working Class Movement

The Defeat of One's Own Government in the Imperialist War (Lenin, 1915)

During a reactionary war a revolutionary class cannot but desire the defeat of its government.

This is axiomatic, and disputed only by conscious partisans or helpless satellites of the social-chauvinists. Among the former, for instance, is Semkovsky of the Organising Committee (No. 2 of its *Izvestia*), and among the latter, Trotsky and Bukvoyed[64], and Kautsky in Germany. To desire Russia's defeat, Trotsky writes, is "an uncalled-for and absolutely unjustifiable concession to the political methodology of social-patriotism, which would replace the revolutionary struggle against the war and the conditions causing it, with an orientation—highly arbitrary in the present conditions—towards the lesser evil" (*Nashe Slovo* No. 105).

This is an instance of high-flown phraseology with which Trotsky always justifies opportunism. A "revolutionary struggle against the war" is merely an empty and meaning less exclamation, something at which the heroes of the Second International excel, *unless* it means revolutionary action against *one's own government* even in wartime. One has only to do some thinking in order to understand this. Wartime revolutionary action against one's own government indubitably means, not only desiring its defeat, but really facilitating such a defeat. ("Discerning reader": note that this does not mean "blowing up bridges", organising unsuccessful strikes in the war industries, and in general helping the government defeat the revolutionaries.)

The phrase-bandying Trotsky has completely lost his bearings on a simple issue. It seems to him that to desire Russia's defeat *means* desiring the victory of Germany. (Bukvoyed and Semkovsky give more direct expression to the "thought", or rather want of thought, which they share with Trotsky.) But Trotsky regards this as the "methodology of social-patriotism"! To help people that are unable to think for themselves, the Berne resolution (*Sotsial Demokrat* No. 40) made it clear, that in *all* imperialist countries the proletariat must now desire the defeat of its own government. Bukvoyed and Trotsky preferred to avoid this truth, while Semkovsky (an opportunist who is more useful to the working class than all the others, thanks to his naively frank reiteration of bourgeois wisdom) blurted out the following: "This is nonsense, because either Germany or Russia can win" (*Izvestia* No. 2).

Take the example of the Paris Commune. France was defeated by Germany but the workers were defeated by Bismarck and Thiers! Had Bukvoyed and Trotsky done a little thinking, they would have realised that *they* have adopted the viewpoint on the war held by *governments and the bourgeoisie*, i.e., that they cringe to the "political methodology of social-patriotism", to use Trotsky's pretentious language.

A revolution in wartime means civil war; the *conversion* of a war between governments into a civil war is, on the one hand, facilitated by military reverses ("defeats") of governments; on the other hand, one *cannot* actually strive for such a conversion without thereby facilitating defeat.

The reason why the chauvinists (including the Organising Committee and the Chkheidze group) repudiate the defeat "slogan" is that *this slogan alone* implies a consistent call for revolutionary action against one's own government in wartime. Without such action, millions of ultra-revolutionary phrases such as a war against "the war and the conditions, etc." are not worth a brass farthing.

Anyone who would in all earnest refute the "slogan" of defeat for one's own government in the imperialist war should prove one of three things: (1) that the war of 1914-15 is not reactionary, or (2) that a revolution stemming from that war is impossible, or (3) that coordination and mutual aid are possible between revolutionary movements in *all* the belligerent countries. The third point is particularly important to Russia, a most backward country, where an immediate socialist revolution is impossible. That is why the Russian Social-Democrats had to be the first to advance the "theory and practice" of the defeat "slogan". The tsarist government was perfectly right in asserting that the agitation conducted by the Russian Social-Democratic Labour group in the Duma—the *sole* instance in the International, not only of parliamentary opposition but of genuine revolutionary anti-government agitation among the masses—that this agitation has weakened Russia's "military might" and is likely to lead to its defeat. This is a fact to which it is foolish to close one's eyes.

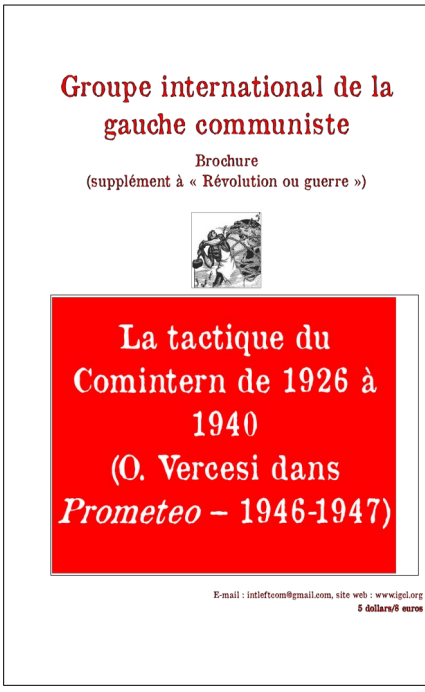
The opponents of the defeat slogan are simply afraid of themselves when they refuse to recognise the very obvious fact of the inseparable link between revolutionary agitation against the government and helping bring about its defeat.

[64]. Bukvoyed-D. Ryazanov

Are co-ordination and mutual aid possible between the Russian movement, which is revolutionary in the bourgeois- democratic sense, and th socialist movement in the West? No socialist who has publicly spoken on the matter during the last decade has doubted this, the movement among the Austrian proletariat after October 17, 1905, *actually* proving it possible.

Ask any Social-Democrat who calls himself an internationalist whether or not he approves of an understanding between the Social-Democrats of the various belligerent countries on joint revolutionary action against all belligerent governments. Many of them will reply that it is impossible, as Kautsky has done (*Die Neue Zeit*, October 2, 1914), thereby *fully proving* his social-chauvinism. This, on the one hand, is a deliberate and vicious lie, which clashes with the generally known facts and the Basle Manifesto. On the other hand, if it were true, *the opportunists would be quite right in many respects*!

Many will voice their approval of such an understanding. To this we shall say: if this approval is not hypocritical, it is ridiculous to think that, in wartime and for the conduct of a war, some "formal" understanding is necessary, such as the election of representatives, the arrangement of a meeting, the signing of an agreement, and the choice of the day and hour! Only the Semkovskys are capable of thinking so. An understanding on revolutionary action even in a *single* country, to say nothing of a number of countries, can be achieved *only* by the force of the *example* of serious revolutionary action, by *launching* such action and *developing* it. However, such action cannot be launched without desiring the defeat of the government, and without contributing to such a defeat. The conversion of the imperialist war into a civil war cannot be "made", any more than a revolution can be "made". It *develops* out of a number of diverse phenomena, aspects, features, characteristics and consequences of the imperialist war. That development is *impossible* without a series of military reverses and defeats of governments that receive blows from their *own* oppressed classes.



New Pamphlet in French !

The Tactics of the Comintern from 1926 à 1940 written by O. Vercesi (Prometeo 1946-1947) IGCL's Introduction (8 euros)

We hope to be able to publish this pamphlet in English as soon as possibles

To repudiate the defeat slogan means allowing one's revolutionary ardour to degenerate into an empty phrase, or sheer hypocrisy.

What is the substitute proposed for the defeat slogan? It is that of "neither victory nor defeat" (Semkovsky in *Izvestia* No. 2; also the *entire* Organising Committee in No. *1).* This, however, is nothing but a paraphrase of the *"defence of the fatherland"* slogan. It means shifting the issue to the level of a war between governments (who, according to the content of this slogan, are to *keep* to their old stand, "retain their positions"), and not to the level of the *struggle* of the oppressed classes against their governments! It means justifying the chauvinism of *all* the imperialist nations, whose bourgeoisie are always ready to *say—and do say to the people—that* they are "only" fighting "against defeat". "The significance of our August 4 vote was that we are not for war *but against defeat,"* David, a leader of the opportunists, writes in his book. The Organising Committee, together with Bukvoyed and Trotsky, stand on *fully* the same ground as David when they defend the "neither-victory nor-defeat" slogan.

On closer examination, this slogan will be found to mean a "class truce", the renunciation of the class struggle by the oppressed classes in all belligerent countries, since the class struggle is impossible without dealing blows at one's "own" bourgeoisie, one's "own" government, whereas dealing a blow at one's own government in wartime *is* (for Bukvoyed's information) high treason, *means* contributing to the defeat of one's own country. Those who accept the "neither victory-nor-defeat" slogan can only be hypocritically in favour of the class struggle, of "disrupting the class truce"; *in practice*, such people are renouncing an independent proletarian policy because they subordinate the proletariat of all belligerent countries to the *absolutely bourgeois* task of safeguarding the imperialist governments against defeat. The only policy of actual, not verbal disruption of the "class truce", of acceptance of the class struggle, is for the proletariat *to take advantage* of the *difficulties* experienced by its government and its bourgeoisie *in order to overthrow them.* This, however, cannot be achieved or

striven for, without desiring the defeat of one's own government and without contributing to that defeat.

When, before the war, the Italian Social-Democrats raised the question of a mass strike, the bourgeoisie replied, no doubt correctly from their *own* point of view, that this would be high treason, and that Social-Democrats would be dealt with as traitors. That is true, just as it is true that fraternisation in the trenches is high treason. Those who write against "high treason", as Bukvoyed does, or against the "disintegration of Russia", as Semkovsky does, are adopting the bourgeois, not the proletarian point of view. A proletarian *cannot* deal a class blow at his government or hold out (in fact) a hand to his brother, the proletarian of the "foreign" country which is at war with "our side", *without committing* "high treason", *without contributing* to the defeat, to the *disintegration* of his "own", imperialist "Great" Power.

Whoever is in favour of the slogan of "neither victory nor defeat" is consciously or unconsciously a chauvinist; at best he is a conciliatory petty bourgeois but in any case he is an *enemy* to proletarian policy, a partisan of the existing ·governments, of the present-day ruling classes.

Let us look at the question from yet another angle. The war cannot but evoke among the masses the most turbulent sentiments, which upset the usual sluggish state of mass mentality. Revolutionary tactics are *impossible* if they are not adjusted to these new turbulent sentiments.

What are the main currents of these turbulent sentiments? They are: (1) Horror and despair. Hence, a growth of religious feeling. Again the churches are crowded, the reactionaries joyfully declare. "Wherever there is suffering there is religion," says the arch-reactionary Barrès. He is right, too. (2) Hatred of the "enemy", a sentiment that is carefully fostered by the bourgeoisie (not so much by the priests), and is of economic and political value *only to the bourgeoisie*. (3) Hatred of one's *own* government and one's *own* bourgeoisie—the sentiment of all class-conscious workers who understand, on the one hand, that war is a "continuation of the politics" of imperialism, which they counter by a "continuation" of their hatred of their class enemy, and, on the other hand, that "a war against war" is a banal phrase unless it means a revolution against their *own* government. Hatred of one's own government and one's own bourgeoisie cannot be aroused unless their defeat is desired; one *cannot* be a sincere opponent of a civil (i.e., class) truce without arousing hatred of one's own government and bourgeoisie!

Those who stand for the "neither-victory-nor-defeat" slogan are in fact on the side of the bourgeoisie and the opportunists, for they do not believe in the possibility of international revolutionary action by the working class against their own governments, and *do not wish* to help develop such action, which, though undoubtedly difficult, is the only task worthy of a proletarian, the only socialist task. It is the proletariat in the most backward of the belligerent Great Powers which, through the medium of their party, have had to adopt—especially in view of the shameful treachery of the German and French Social-Democrats— revolutionary tactics that are quite unfeasible unless they "contribute to the defeat" of their own government, but which alone lead to a European revolution, to the permanent peace of socialism, to the liberation of humanity from the horrors, misery, savagery and brutality now prevailing.

Lenin, July 26, 1915

- **The English version of our journal *Revolution or War* is on sale at the following locations :**

United Kingdom
- Housmans Bookshop 5 Caledonian Road, London

Hungary
- Gondolkodó Autonóm Antikvárium Budapest Orczy út 46-48. 1089 Magyarország

It can also be downloaded from our website (https://igcl.org) or requested by email (intleftcom@gmail.com)

Summary of the journal #32 and #33

#32 January 2026

- The Key of the Coming Tragedy?
- Slow But Real Emergence of International Proletarian Struggles:
  - Proletarian Mobilization in Canada and Revolutionaries' Intervention
  - One Class, One Struggle! (Leaflet of NWBCW Committees in Canada)
  - Three Days of General Strike in Belgium (November 2025)
- On the Need for Struggle Committees Today
- Contribution: The Mass Strike and the March Towards Generalized Imperialist War
- Correspondence on Lenin's "What is to Be Done?" and Class Consciousness
- Introduction of our Pamphlet Reproducing "The Tactics of the Comintern" by O. Vercesi

#33 May 2026

- How to Resist and Halt the Drive toward Generalized Imperialist War?
- Wave of Working Class Struggles in India in Face of the Consequences of the War in Iran
- Strike of 'Blue Collar' Workers of the City of Montreal (Canada)
- Communique on the US Attack on Venezuela (January 4th 2026)
- Communique on the War in Iran and Lebanon (March 6th 2026)
- The Wheels Are Coming off the American Imperial Wagon
- 'Progressive Book Club' in Canada and our Intervention
- Report of the GRI (ICT) Public Meeting in Paris (March 7th 2026)
- On the Proletarian Economic Demands and Political Struggle
- Contribution on the Workers Councils and the Class Party
- 'Workers Councils and the Class Party': or How Councilism is Kicked out the Front Door only to Come back through the Window
- Lenin-Rosa Luxemburg-Liebknecht (Bilan #39, 1937)

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.