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

Ukraine. Another step closer to a new world massacre

The blast of cannons draws ever nearer to the heart of Europe. But if the truth be told, the cannons have never ceased their rumbling since the end of the Second World massacre, openly declaring that "capitalism is war." No surprises there: long before even the *First* world war broke out, we communists had been demonstrating that *that* was in the DNA of capitalism – a mode of production that made a huge leap forwards when it supplanted the previous historically superseded modes of production, but which is now *itself* at the end of the line: more and more massacres, more devastation, more extreme poverty and instability, ever greater daily challenges facing the vast majority of the world's populations. The opening twenty years of the 21st century speak volumes: only the deaf and blind, and those who do not wish to hear or see, fail to realize what's going on!

The militarist dynamics of the capitalist mode of production receive a boost from economic crises. The Second World massacre never put an end to imperialist wars, far from it. Such wars enabled this or that State to plunder raw materials and control their movements, export capital, conquer markets or slices of markets and subjugate the proletarian and proletarianised masses, while skewing the struggles for freedom of those in thrall to the old colonial imperialism. So-called international organizations like the UN, EU, NATO, OECD, WTO and so on, are nothing more than *pacts among gangsters* that enshrine and underwrite the carve up, for as long as the balance of power among the dominant powers remains unaltered. In this way, as the economic crisis deepens, so its counter-trends make less of an impact and conflicts become increasingly necessary with new alliances. Hence the way is paved for the fast-approaching inter-imperialist war: events in the Balkans, the Middle East, Africa, Caucasia and, lastly, the Ukraine, are nothing if not cruel harbingers of what is to come.

And so today, the war in Ukraine – a war between bandits. In the red corner, the United States. *Like the rest of the world*, bogged down in an economic crisis, from which it is unable to escape; as always, it uses NATO (its military arm in Europe) to try and isolate and restrain its most direct rivals. And in the blue corner, Russia, which feels surrounded after what amounts to its ruinous 'Cold War' defeat, leveraging the nationalism of 'Great Russia'. Piggy in the middle, in a continent that increasingly appears to be a veritable *jungle of nationalisms*: the European Union States (first and foremost Germany), 'united' only in their decision to apply feckless economic sanctions and still unable to break away from their most powerful ally.

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In the meantime, we feast our eyes on the latest version of the ghoulish spectacle featuring the massacre of civilian populations and the disgusting hypocrisy of imperialist powers and 'mini-powers'. Their 'constitutions' (most notably that of Italy, the 'most beautiful in the world', according to some!) 'reject war' while playing with words. They started with 'peace missions', 'exporting democracy', and the 'battle against terrorism'; and recently Russia has come up with 'military special operation for the demilitarisation of Ukraine...'. Whatever they are called – wars 'of defence', 'of national self-determination', for the 'consolidation of borders' or 'pacification', etc. – they are *imperialist wars*: the military translation of permanent conflict, typical of the capitalistic mode of production and inherent in it. As we write in another article of this journal, and as we have always maintained:

"Von Clausewitz's definition of war as 'the continuation of politics by other means' (the politics, we would add, of the *preservation of capital*) suits bourgeois society down to a tee. So much so that it could easily be turned on its head to define politics as the perpetuation, by different means, of the permanent (albeit mostly clandestine) condition of war that is *capitalism's real mode of being and development*. War between individual sets of capital in everyday economic life; trade wars between concentrations of capital (and thus, in the long run, between States too) for the possession of markets and supremacy in crucial sectors for the production or supply of raw materials; wars at first diplomatic, that later become out-and-out wars when those antagonisms intimately bound up with the process of capital expansion reach boiling point and seek their 'solution' in organized armed violence, in war *tout court*.

"Of course, several factors must come together before the association between the consecutive stages of a single process becomes apparent, thus bringing to an ignominious end those intricate and widely propagated theories in favour of the oft-vaunted possibility that the various states of equilibrium reached in one of them should crystallise in a sort of 'everlasting (albeit troubled) peace'..."¹

We cannot yet tell if *this* conflict will remain within the confines of the specific Russo-Ukrainian question or if it will morph into a generalised war in Europe or,

worse, if it will end up sparking off an inter-imperialistic conflict. It is too early to say, and we have no intention of indulging the half-baked premonitions typical of the 'geo-politics' narrative beloved of those unwilling or unable to take a position on the thorny question of class. At present we can say with certainty that we are facing *an imperialist war on all fronts* that has yet to explode into an inter-imperialist war, even if *decisive steps in that direction have been taken*.

All wars have had – and will always have – an ideological front, a pretext for sending to the slaughter (active and passive) our fellow class comrades, trapped inside the confines of the cattle pen of National Unity, and the Homeland (whose epithets include socialist, democratic, home to civilization, chosen people, etc...), by the bourgeois State, which *is, and remains, the capitalist collective whose governing body is solely, and always, a bourgeois business committee*. And so, as the canons thunder, the foul gruntings of nationalism make themselves heard – 'foul' because when the Nation readies itself for the kill, it goes under the name of 'Homeland', when, in reality, *it is only – and always – the bourgeois State*. In other words, the instrument that guarantees the social division of labour, the private ownership of the means of production and the exploitation of the workers until their backs are broken. Meanwhile, the massacre of civilians (which goes hand in hand with the glorification of the 'heroic patriotic sacrifice' of more or less voluntary soldiers) provokes tears, laments and moral indignation: in close and direct relation to the 'normality' of workers' deaths in peacetime.

The pacifism that is humanitarian, religious, cultural, reformist, unarmed, disarming and 'resilient' (it is time to dispose of this ridiculous adjective which ratifies the status quo) is *powerless to stop war, and more of an accomplice*. Only the proletariat, which opposes national unity and the war economy with *strikes and the boycotting of the war machine*, can 'stop' war: but this active, operative pacifism, this *defeatism* taken to its extreme, implies transforming the war that the bourgeoisie wages between its States, and against the proletariat, into a *revolutionary class war to destroy all bourgeois States*.

March 13, 2020-2022

(You can read other articles on what's going on in Ukraine in our website www.internationalcommunistparty.org)

1. See below "Capitalism is War".

In Ukraine as in the whole world, in the face of the imperialist war, the proletarian watchword once again must be: revolutionary defeatism against all bourgeoisies and their States! (a leaflet)

War is the natural habitat of capitalism: imperialism means, in fact, increased international competition, sharpened trade wars, the export of capitals which inevitably come into conflict with each other, control of the sources of raw materials and their transport routes and therefore an attempt to exclude competitors, up to the uncontrolled explosion of conflicts first local and then, in perspective and in the presence of favorable and necessary material conditions, **worldwide**.

At this moment, the relations between the main imperialist powers express the contradictions that have arisen from the progress and worsening of the world economic crisis: they therefore require new relations of strength. The United States of America (economically in decline, but militarily aggressive) can no longer tolerate that other powers erode their dominion and areas of influence: above all, they can no longer tolerate that Germany, France, and even Italy do business with Russia and China, further freeing themselves from the USA's long dominion, represented by NATO. Of course, the pretext of war is always nationalism, the ultimate cause of any possible conflict, and the dunghill where it thrives are precisely the areas of encounter and conflict between the spheres of influence: and the most recent pretext is the clash between Ukrainian and Russian nationalism.

Faced with the jungle of nationalisms, reborn or only slightly dormant, in order not to end up like the Palestinian, Slavic, Iraqi, Afghan, Libyan, Syrian, Kurdish proletarians, the watchword of the international proletariat must go back to being **revolutionary defeatism**: the clear and total refusal to take sides, to support this or that bourgeoisie, and in the first place "one's own". No "homeland is in danger", no "democracy is violated", no "enemy is invader", no "army is the liberator": the only threatened class is the **proletariat** which must not fall into these deadly traps!

The only way to avoid other slaughters is through:

1. **Refusal to accept economic and social sacrifices in the name of the "national economy"**
2. **Organization of the struggle to defend the living and working conditions of the proletarians, in order to hit hard the war commitment of the bourgeoisie**
3. **Open rupture of social peace and a decisive return to the methods and objectives of the class struggle, the only real internationalist solidarity of the proletarians in both the imperialist metropolises and the imperialist peripheries**
4. **Rejection of any partisanism (nationalist, religious, patriotic, mercenary, humanitarian, pacifist) in favor of any of the imperialist fronts.**
5. **Strike actions up to the general strike against any kind of mobilization and war propaganda.**

Only on the basis of these premises, which demand **the independence of action of the proletariat**, will it be possible to organize **open revolutionary defeatism**, which will allow to crumble and break the war front and pave the way for class warfare. In this struggle, our allies are the proletarians of the whole world and in particular those of the countries massacred by the imperialist wars. **They are not and never will be this or that bourgeois state, this or that bourgeois fraction, however armed or "resistant", whatever its role, secular or religious, reformist or - worse still - pseudo-socialist.** The deep economic crisis and the armed interventions that have taken place in recent decades show that **the capitalist mode of production has now come to an end**: its long agony is only destructive. The tool to give him the coup de grace is **the organization of the proletariat in the international communist party**.

February 21, 2022

(distributed in several languages)

CAPITALISM IS WAR

(from “Il programma comunista”, no. 1/25 January 1991)

Over three decades have passed since our party published this work. During this time the main cast and supporting actors of the tragi-comedy of economic, political and military conflicts among capitalist States really got their act together. Switching roles among themselves, and improvising to the best of their ability, they never strayed from the story line imposed by capitalist relations of production.

During this thirty year period, and following hard upon the expansionary phase generated by the second gruelling inter-imperialist conflict, the crisis period of capital accumulation continued unabated its rollercoaster ride of pseudo-recoveries and far more tangible collapses (that of 2008 being the most significant), intensifying the deeply embedded causes of the imperialist clashes that are set to spark off a new, and necessary, inter-imperialist conflict.

Other works of ours trace and analyse the evolution of these clashes and the growing strengths and weaknesses of those involved, but the tenets underlying the critical analysis of this march towards conflict remain constant.

And the only strategy to hinder, interrupt and transform the war of Capital necessarily remains unchanged too; likewise the long, hard road to the organization of a proletarian opposition, cemented to the theory, principles, programme and tactics of the Communist Party, clear and decisive, in stark contrast to all those intellectuals of every order and degree who, like so many toxic, superfluous parasites, want to suck on the sufferings and energies of the vast majority of us workforce sellers, making a career for themselves as the flunkies of capital. Not a penny, not one soldier for the wars of capital! Defeatism and no unity with bourgeois nations: transform the imperialist war between the bourgeois States into a revolutionary war within the bourgeois States.

Von Clausewitz's definition of war as 'the continuation of politics by other means' (the politics, we would add, of the preservation of capital) suits bourgeois society down to a tee. So much so that it could easily be turned on its head to define politics as the perpetuation, by different means, of the permanent (albeit mostly clandestine) condition of war that is capitalism's real mode of being and development. War between individual sets of capital in everyday economic life; trade wars between concentrations of capital (and thus, in the long run, between States too) for

the possession of markets and supremacy in crucial sectors for the production or supply of raw materials; wars at first diplomatic, that later become out-and-out wars when those antagonisms intimately bound up with the process of capital expansion reach boiling point and seek their 'solution' in organized armed violence, in war *tout court*.

Of course, several factors must come together before the association between the consecutive stages of a single process becomes apparent, thus bringing to an ignominious end those intricate and widely propagated theories in favour of the oft-vaunted possibility that the various states of equilibrium reached in one of them should crystallise in a sort of 'everlasting (albeit troubled) peace'... And so, before the outbreak of the 1990 Gulf Crisis (as the Secretary General of the UN, Pérez de Cuéllar, noted recently), it seemed that war was something that "belonged to another time", an illusion which gained currency with the end of the bi-polarism between the US and USSR¹. However, all it took was for an area of vital importance to capitalism (above all, US capitalism, but not only), in terms of energy supplies and, especially, in terms of safeguarding oil revenues, their distribution and a huge network of connected interests, to become an indissoluble knot of disputes on a purely economic and diplomatic level, that the spectre of military confrontation (whose definitive demise had just been announced) once again reared up its ugly head; and an apparently peripheral ("Third World") conflict blew up into something almost planetary in nature; and, over and beyond the incidental reason for the conflict, a third world carnage looked an albeit remote possibility. The main players? The major economic powers of today: the USA, Japan, Germany, Europe in general.

Therefore, no matter how the present crisis [1991] pans out, the "war question" has very much been posed.

Two bootless solutions to the prospect of war

At the time of the Gulf crisis, two answers to the prospects of a war, however limited in scope, were forthcoming. Both illusory.

The first was a generic – and toothless – pacifism, consisting of petitions, protests and demos (peaceful, of course), which brought together social forces of the most diverse nature. A pacifism incapable of scratching beneath the surface of the question, and ready to shift its allegiances as soon as the sacred values of the *homeland* (or the no less sacred values of the *nation*) seemed harmed or simply threatened. Based on the increasingly anachronistic idea that wars can

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1. It should be noted that for years this bi-polarism had been seen as a guarantee of general peace (excepting the occasional peripheral conflict) in the form of a "balance of terror"!

be “just” or “unjust”, this pacifism mutates into the most sinister interventionism – as history has confirmed time and again – whenever the imperatives of so called justice require it!

The second was more closely bound up with contingent factors (as, in this case, the *rapprochement* of East and West and all the sweet talk about a new “era of peace”) and – in common with all political persuasions – consisted of appealing to institutions teasingly invested with *supranational* roles and powers, which were deemed capable of imposing recognition of a pacifically established international order and resolving potential disagreements with diplomacy. Any vision which assumes history (and capitalism in particular) is regulated, or can be regulated, by laws, rights and conventions is absurd. Does the “world order” profaned by today’s chosen wrongdoer really take its origins, in turn, from something different from the interplay of *forces and counterforces* dominated by the great imperialist powers? Absurd. There are many so-called supranational authorities, and all of them are accountable to this or that power, or group of powers. The seven most industrialized countries, the famed G7, behave like a global business committee, more or less in agreement on the inside, and united towards the outside world. The UN’s Security Council acts as the right-hand man of the five permanent members of the same organization, whose opinions – homogeneous or otherwise – determine, in turn, what *passes off as autonomous decisions* of the Assembly’s members. Innumerable regional and inter-regional organisms seek to defend, where possible, the anything but “ideal” interests of power groups belonging to specific areas. And so on. The entire mechanism functions according to well-defined relations of economic, political and military strength, not international codes of good conduct, and its capacity to sanction rather than guarantee a certain “order” or, as it is called, a system of “international law”, depends on the degree to which one or more of the major powers manage to enforce *their law* – that is, *the law of the strongest*: the result of previous plunderings and sharings of spoils, they seek to ensure their preservation. As far as their origins and aims are concerned, international law and its organisms are far from being instruments of peace. In reality, they are *weapons of war*.

War is inescapable under capitalism

According to Marxism, not only is it true that wars are a necessary and inescapable product of the ruling mode of production, and the proletarian revolution alone can prevent their outbreak or violently interrupt their development. It is also true that, in periods of crisis, when the mechanism governing the accumulation of capital comes up short, wars are indeed the extreme remedy to which the bourgeoisie is *compelled* to resort to safeguard its own supremacy:

through the mass destruction of capital, commodities and workforce – in short, of human beings and what they produce. This does not mean the bourgeoisie goes to war on the basis of carefully thought out calculations or the free decisions taken by their legislative and executive organisms. Rather it is the very existence of capitalism itself, its need to survive, that sparks off the mechanism of confrontation, from the preliminaries behind what will become the official declaration of war until its material, practical and ideological enactment. Wars don’t break out “by chance” or because certain individuals or groups will them to happen. They are *the ultimate outlet for an objective situation* that has been evolving over a broad series of contexts, only to explode where and when the economic power relations of the warring countries reach a breaking point.

Once it has been invested, capital’s primary objective is reproduction with a profit: dominated by accumulation, the entire operating cycle of capitalism is thus geared to establishing unlimited production and, consequently, markets for its products. In each phase of the accumulation process, it is competition that first selects and causes individual capitals (or, to put it bluntly, individual capitalists) to clash; and then, as the need for accumulation becomes more intense, the collective bodies of production, the limited companies, the trusts, the multinationals – all of them, enterprises that are by tendency, or fully, monopolistic, whose interests, generally speaking, extend beyond national borders, but find their political expression and the upholder of their interests in the national State, the powerful machine organized in their defence.

Now while, technically speaking, the production process grows uninterruptedly and limitlessly, boosted by the same volcanic character of commodity production, the potential for placing the products under the conditions of “profitability” required so that, *in the conditions given*, the process of accumulation isn’t interrupted, tends to decrease²: the “volcano of production” tends to come up against “the swamp of the market” which, instead of expanding, stagnates. Here, at the very heart of the capitalistic economy, the most violent of its contradictions explodes; and here the crisis of the system imposes recourse to extreme solutions in terms of strength.

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2. “On the other hand, there is periodically a production of too many means of production and necessities of life to permit of their serving as means for the exploitation of the laborers at a certain rate of profit. Too many commodities are produced to permit of a realisation of the value and surplusvalue contained in them under the conditions of distribution and consumption peculiar to capitalist production, that is, too many to permit of the continuation of this process without ever recurring explosions. It is not a fact that too much wealth is produced. But it is true that there is periodical overproduction of wealth in its capitalistic and self-contradictory form” (Marx, *Capital*, Volume III, Section III, Chapter XV: Unraveling the Internal Contradictions of the Law).

In the world's most industrially advanced countries, entrepreneurs encounter serious limits investing accumulated capital because there is a complete or partial lack of locally available raw materials, indigenous manpower or markets for their finished goods. Today, the provision of non-local raw materials, the hiring of foreign labourers and the conquest of foreign markets, far from being achieved by purely economic means, or via mere competition, require continual effort to regulate and control prices of sale and purchase, and privileges gradually acquired by means of State measures or agreements among different states. Hence economic expansionism tends to transform itself from competitive to monopolistic, and finds its most characteristic expression in the form of finance, supported – where needs be – by powerful military means. Whether we are looking at controlling vast mineral deposits, masses to be proletarianized or target markets capable of absorbing the products of capitalist industrialisation, it is force that decides the outcome of the race towards the acquisition, control or direct command of increasingly vast sectors of the world economy. The global expression of the conflicts and crises resulting from this process is imperialism which, economically speaking, manifests itself in the process of centralization, whose point of arrival is the monopolistic organization of production and exchanges. Through financial capital, powers like the USA, Japan, Germany and other European and non-European countries throw their weight around unopposed on the international economic stage today. They are ready to rush in to this or that adventure, to sign this or that agreement, or, conversely, to threaten and, eventually, attack one another, if only as a knee jerk reaction to the *tendentious* (and, in times of crisis, *real*) fall in rates of profit. But this can only be achieved by securing and seeking to maintain positions of strength against national and international competitors; and when two or more imperialist powers with incompatible vital interests collide, armed conflict – the mechanism typical of capitalism, nay, it's very life blood – is necessarily set in motion. Much is at stake here: on at least a temporary basis, the defeat of the crisis at the expense of the competitor and as a result of securing newly advantageous positions in terms of exploitation of resources and labour in the defeated country or countries; but, especially, the re-launching of the cycle of capital accumulation through the large scale destruction of commodities and labour, and the ensuing orgy of reconstruction. This objective – and *this* is the crucial point – is common to all: friends and enemies, belligerent and non-belligerent, winners and losers.

And today?

The chief victors to emerge from the World War II, Russia and the USA, are currently experiencing various levels of difficulty in maintaining the economic and political

– and therefore, military – predominance they acquired following defeat of the Axis powers. Hence the *de facto* degeneration of the Yalta Agreements, the caving in of the empire of the East, the unification of Germany and, at the same time, the political and economic collapse of the USSR and the albeit more leisurely decline in the USA's status as a super power. Compared to yesteryear, competition in today's world markets is dominated less by American and Russian capitals and commodities and more by those of America, Japan and Germany (not to mention, obviously, a cast of “bit part actors” whose potentially aggressive on stage presence cannot be ignored) – countries that may well become the protagonists of future imperialist conflicts, even if, for the time being [1991], the alliance between Atlantic and Pacific powers seems to be holding. The problem now dominating the agenda following the Gulf crisis and the US intervention in the Middle East is about who controls energy supplies and the cash flows of oil revenues (hitherto monopolized by the USA), and who holds sway – directly or indirectly – over their sources. Entwined with a thousand other vital issues, it is a central problem for those imperialistic groups currently allied with the USA, but which are already in fierce competition with her for the mouth-watering markets that opened up after the fall of the Berlin Wall. And this probably marks the first step towards an *escalation* in tensions between today's friends. First, the opening up of the East, then the inclusion of the Gulf in America's “vital space” (extended, for that matter, to the rest of the world!) tend to shift the incubation process of the war from a local or regional plane to a more general and, finally, planetary plane, through a “militarization” of economic conflicts; and then the prospect – ever more tangible following America's intervention-occupation in the Arabian peninsula – of political and military formations of a different nature to those agreed at Yalta, building up in the already much-tormented Middle-Eastern area.

In the context of imperialism, given the unequal pace of development of the capitalistic economy, and the diverse stratification of the social and political forces in different countries as a result, it is the antagonisms among rival powers (even if not fundamentally important) that function as a detonator of worsening tensions between and within States. In the Middle-Eastern region, the long-repressed needs of Iraqi capitalism resulted in those most able to interpret those needs in the present historical contingency taking their place in history and command over the state apparatus: far from being this year's uppity “barbarian”, whose wings urgently need clipping in the name of law and civilization, Sadaam Hussein is the interpreter of the materialist urgings that already lay at the heart of the attack on Iran, and now at the invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent collapse of the precarious equilibrium in the area. The immensity of the interests concentrated here has sparked off mechanisms whose

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repercussions – well beyond the area in itself – on the worldwide capitalistic powder keg are already difficult to control today, let alone tomorrow. Whether the United States manages to unseat (or manoeuvre) Sadaam or not, the weaving together of all these factors promises much more than simply having super-industrial metropolises on one side, and one or more backward or minor countries of a capitalistic nature on the other. Facing up to one another instead will be today's dominant American imperialism, and other imperialistic powers which, up until today, have remained more or less directly under its wing *politically*, but which are economically in rapid ascendancy.

Pacifism, defendism or defeatism

All these problems are already part and parcel of the Marxists' revolutionary consciousness, epitomized by the class party. Their solution is absolutely distinct from that of any other social and political force, which deems possible and, what is more, effective the humanity's fight against the regime and logic of monopoly, to bring about a fair distribution of resources among States, as well as a peaceful coexistence in the name of justice, or even brotherhood.

For Marxism there is no therapy or surgical intervention within the capitalist mode of production that can circumscribe and, in the end, eliminate the bubo of imperialistic conflicts. We cannot be pacifists or "against war" because that would mean admitting war can be eliminated before capitalism, thereby yoking further still the proletarian masses to capital (and hence to war) and

diverting them from their historical class mission. The entire propaganda campaign on behalf of peace, and against the "provocateurs" ostensibly responsible for the armed conflicts, doesn't wash with us; indeed, it goes against the ultimate objectives underlying the struggle for the emancipation of the working class and, with it, humanity as a whole.

Proletarians shouldn't be asked which side they're on in a war, in defence of postulates that go from individual freedom to political democracy, from equality among men to "socialism in one country only" and its defence, from the rights of men and civilians to the safeguarding of the "rights of peoples" – all of which converge in the mighty effort to keep alive a mode of production and a society that are bleeding from every pore. The vicious circle of crises and wars, which is actually the life-blood of the developmental process of capitalism, must be broken. And only the communist revolution can tear it asunder.

Owning this fact is the necessary prerequisite *even* for the defence of the proletariat's immediate working and living conditions, because the united class struggle against capital is unhinged by the inter-classism that is inseparable from all kinds of pacifism and the national solidarity propagandized by bourgeois defendism.

This struggle cannot be limited to the confines of *one* country: either it is international, or it loses its meaning, its value, its *force*.

Its first prerequisite is the rebirth of the class-conscious organisation of a party built around revolutionary defeatism towards the bourgeoisie, and whose ultimate objective is the destruction of the capitalistic order and the establishment of communism.

The working class is revolutionary or it is nothing!

Proletarians of all countries, unite!

Against ongoing imperialist wars and those under preparation

■ The umpteenth, ferocious massacre of Palestinian proletarians by Israeli imperialism, with the active and self-interested complacency of the Arab bourgeoisies (represented first and foremost by Hamas and the Palestinian National Authority) and by European and US imperialisms, confirms once again, with bombs and bloodshed, that *capitalism is war*.

It is unceasing trade war and unceasing military war: have we already forgotten Syria and Lebanon, Yemen, Mali and Tigray, an Africa prey first to the colonialists and then to the imperialists, a Middle East that has been a bloodbath for decades, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan - to quote only a few examples?

And it is also unceasing *pro-war propaganda, preparation for war*. One may smile at the military vessels sent into the English Channel by Great Britain and France to protect fishing rights, or at the constant, renewed arm-wrestling between Turkey and Greece, or the recurring trials of strength by the Chinese and Japanese navies in the South and Eastern China Sea. But only the incurably obtuse would fail to see as many military drills in these events, involving powerful armies, based on huge economic interests and dating back to decade-long political clashes, which may change into the Sarajevo of the third millennium with a fuse lit to set off a worldwide explosion.

Indeed, armaments are not goods destined to remain in the warehouses and are not meant to become obsolete: like any other commodity they must be incremented, consumed, reintegrated. From year to year Italian military expenditure merely grows: a recent decision raises it to 24.97 billion dollars for 2021, with a growth rate of '8.1% compared to 2020 and 15.7% compared to 2019 (data provided by MilEx, the observatory on Italian military expenditure), and what has determined the increase is the purchase of *new systems of weapons*. Something a bit different from the Recovery Plan! It is the same worldwide. Data from SIPRI (the International Peace Research Institute in Stockholm) on military expenditure in 2020 demonstrates this with dazzling clarity: Italy, + 7.5% compared to 2019; Germany, + 5.2%; South Korea, + 4.9%; United States, +4.4%; France, + 2.9%; Great Britain, + 2.9%; Russia, + 2.5%; India, + 2.1%; Japan, + 1.2%, and so on... The incurably obtuse shut their eyes and cover their ears.

Capitalism is war, the struggle for supremacy on the world market! War does not just represent the natural fruit of capitalism - a fruit that is particularly poisonous

to the proletariat, which serves as cannon fodder - necessary from time to time in order to restore vitality to an economy which, once it has lost the explosive thrust produced by post-war reconstruction, sinks yet again into the mire of over-production. Capital lives *as a function of war*, to the same extent that it is functional to growth in profits *and* its own survival. And so the hotbeds of war multiply: as soon as one seems to die down, another two or three flare up. A glance back over the seventy-five years that separate us from the end of the second world slaughter is sufficient to see this. The main ingredient of this unrelenting state of affairs is thus *the preparation for war*, in which the bourgeoisies of all national states are constantly involved.

It is a preparation that is carried out at different levels. Mainstream ideology, through all available channels (schools, the press, the media, the family, churches of all faiths, politics at all levels, everyday language), does nothing but vehicle images of war, bringing it close up even when it declares it is "pacifist", getting us used to it: let us just remember the dynamics that have developed throughout this year of pandemic, with "curfews" and appeals to "obedience", the virus as the enemy to fight, the recourse to soldiers in various uniforms and so on. Believe-obey-fight: how topical Mussolini's slogan has become!

The appeal to "national unity" has become more frequent and determined and prepares the long arm of the *union sacrée* which, in two world wars (and the infamous wars that *immediately* followed), allowed the slaughter of entire populations in the name of the "threat to the fatherland", the "fight against the barbarians", the "bringing of democracy", the elimination of the "enemy of the moment" (a business partner right up to the moment before!)... Nationalism in all its forms, democratic as well as sovereignist (two sides of the same coin: *class domination*), fills the pages of the newspapers and computer screens, mobile phones and televisions. But it is not only a matter of language. In every country an enormous effort is being made (and here, too, the approach of a war extending beyond the local can be felt) to provide the proletariat with the illusion of a welfare state to be defended tooth and nail against its enemies: this has been clearly evident in the passage from the puppet Trump ("America First") to the puppet Biden (the "New New Deal"), both committed to exalting the Nation and the State as sources of well-being for everyone and as such potentially under threat and thus to be defended. To these ends the proletariat must not just be repressed and disciplined: it must also be bought off, placed in

such desperate conditions that it will have to sell itself to the Nation and the State.

The tragic events in the Middle East (the periodical surge of bloody destruction) are examples of all this: on both sides, we have a proletariat that is held hostage as a mass to be manoeuvred by interests that are not its own, glorified and defended by religious factions, a mass for whom signing up to them is the only means of survival and of supporting entire families deprived of any other means of support. The bloody events that periodically recur in the area and so afflict the impotent fine souls are the practical form taken by the proletariat's tragic fate under arms: the creation of mercenaries, robot assassins, for whom the army is equivalent to the State and the Nation and, consequently, guarantees a minimum of Social Welfare.

All this stands as an emblem of the difficulties the proletariat will have to face in order to break any form of subordination to the State and the ruling class. The Palestinian proletarians will have to shake off the bastard nationalist ideology that for decades has been sending them to the slaughter, often (dis)armed with sticks and stones, for the mirage, renewed eternally on the piles of corpses and rubble, of a Homeland that would savagely exploit them just like any other national capitalism. Israel's composite proletariat (Jewish, Arab-Israeli, immigrants from Africa and from the Indian sub-continent) will have to take battle against the State which is already squeezing them alive like any other bourgeois State, refusing any obscene religious, ideological, political and military blackmail and standing without

hesitation alongside the battling Palestinian proletariat. But above all, it is the task of the proletariat in Europe and America to make a move forward: to move beyond the widespread fear and passivity and make a clean break once and for all with its own bourgeoisie, and with the illusions spread abroad by reformists of all types, unions and politicians, right-wing or "left", to move towards *the fight* and towards an international proletarian front that finally has the objective of *abolishing nations and fatherlands*.

Class struggle will come up again against all these barriers: national, ideological, ethnic, religious, economic. It will have to overthrow them and direct its arms against the only true enemy: *the capitalist mode of production*.

We communists are not pacifists. To avoid the umpteenth world conflict that is being prepared, war must be declared on all bourgeoisies, and first and foremost one's own bourgeoisie, returning to the practice of revolutionary defeatism in all its forms: the active and militant refusal to identify with a national unity that claims to stand above social classes.

Yes, this is a hard and rocky path to climb, partly because the weight of the counter-revolution that has oppressed us for so many decades is still paralysing: an authentic millstone. But proletarians should know that, as always, we communists are at their side in the *inevitable class war*. Which will have to flare up and spread unless we want to end up once again in the monstrous meat grinder of a third world war.

June 2020-2021

READ OUR INTERNATIONAL PRESS:

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cahiers internationalistes

Afghanistan: the crocodile tears of imperialism

■ The abrupt “withdrawal” from Afghanistan by the United States which, after decades of “exporting democracy” (shady alliances, the financing and training of ambiguous groups and factions: in a word, the precise bases for the present chaos), rediscover their own recurrent and equally elusive “vocation for isolationism”. The pitiful rush to get out by the western powers which only yesterday were gathering in the country in large numbers to secure “good business” behind the shield of the Stars and Stripes, suddenly find themselves without protection. The umpteenth proof of the non-existence of Europe as a united political entity and its being instead a rocky terrain where obscene national egoisms clash, is indeed inevitable in the realm of Capital and Profit. The long arm of China and Russia extending towards a region of extreme geo-political and economic interest, with its rare earth metals, its oil and gas, its talc and, yes, its opium - a precious raw material for general stultification. The role of bloody slaves played by the clans, the warlords, local

bourgeois factions, always ready to put themselves into the hands and hire of one imperialist power or the other and change sides as soon as the wind veers in another direction. Added to this pretty picture are the other tensions that continue to balloon and explode in the nearby Middle East or which break out in the not so far-away Mediterranean (such as the recent ones between Algeria and Morocco)...

In all this the eternal tragedy of civilian populations persecuted by wars, divisions, changes of régime and alliances, merciless repression of all sorts, the difficulty of surviving from day to day, hunger and famine, refused by *everyone* – those *everyones* who, with their hands dripping blood after having plundered and tormented territories and populations in their infinite “missions of peace and civilisation”, now shed crocodile tears over the “sad fate of the refugees”.

What more is there to say, except that another disgusting chapter is being written in the infamous history of imperialism, the higher stage of capitalism?

This many-headed monster must be eliminated once and for all, if we wish to avoid that, out of the proliferation and aggravation of hotbeds of local warfare, the death throes of capitalism (a mode of production historically obsolete and in deep crisis) generate a new collective massacre, a third world war.

The enemy is in our own homes: it consists of the national bourgeoisies, thirsting for profit and in relentless competition. What proletarians must do is unite and prepare to fight them and overthrow them! As always, we communists are and always will be alongside them, demonstrating the urgent need to practice once again that anti-patriotic defeatism against the national economy and growing military involvement of their respective bourgeoisies and working towards strengthening and rooting the revolutionary party, able to guide them towards seizing power and implementing the dictatorship of the proletariat, on the path to communism.

25/8/2021

MAY 1st 2022

Against the wars of capitalism, prepare revolutionary defeatism

(a leaflet)

In the metropolises of the oldest States, as in those of the youngest, and in the peripheries of the entire capitalist world, the economic living and working conditions of the salaried workers (and, alternatively, of the half classes in decline and the proletarianised masses) worsen day by day: across-the-board increases in the cost of energy and staple commodities (housing included) and galloping inflation (resulting from the “monetary policy” of state banks that continue to deposit and lend money without managing to generate enough capital and surplus value to increase the average rate of profit). The unrelenting *crisis of overproduction* that has brought about a worldwide restructuring of economic enterprises (multinationals, individual or family-run firms, co-operatives, state-run companies, nationalized or otherwise), continues to spawn growing numbers of jobless and temporary workers, and an increasingly unsustainable work rate – the first and only cause behind the dizzying rise in the number of murders, serious traumatic injuries and diseases in the workplace. And the farcical wage increases of renewed contracts – for the most part dependent upon so-called ‘productivity’ – have proved worthless.

More than two years of “health crises” have only served to conceal and worsen the irreversible nature of this crisis. The “pandemic” was dealt with in criminally wicked fashion, proving that “citizen welfare” was way down on the list of bourgeois State objectives unless, of course, money could be made from ill health and its management – be that hypocritically in its “public” guise, or cynically in its “private” guise: with drugs (homeopathic and phytotherapeutic included), with vaccines (created by means of old or new technologies), with tests and diagnostic or therapeutic equipment, with the transformation of clinics into “hospital-companies” (tantamount to outright surgical-medical industries, where a rigid and alienating division of labour prevails, including contracts and precarious employment, etc.) and with more or less assisted residential institutions for the “elderly” and the “chronically ill”. In their social management of the emergency, the States resorted to the “public health” alibi and came up with a wealth of extravagant and authoritarian measures, most notably those aimed at *limiting and regulating still further the “right to strike”, protest and hold meetings in public*. With greater determination and efficiency than during their handling of so called “Islamic terrorism”, the States reinforced the structures of repression and political control so that the population (*in primis*

and, unequivocally, our working class) might get used to a “state of emergency and national unity” which, in the build up to the war, would restrain as far as possible any attempt at resistance, protest, rebellion or organized opposition to the general worsening of living and working conditions.

The crisis also gives a boost to the militarist dynamics typical of the capitalist mode of production. The Second World Massacre never put paid to imperialist wars – far from it. Such wars have enabled this or that State to plunder raw materials and control their movements, export capital, conquer markets (or slices of markets) and subjugate the proletarian and proletarianised masses, while skewing the struggles for freedom of those in thrall to the old colonial imperialism. So-called international organizations like the UN, NATO, EU, OECD, WTO and so on, are nothing more than “pacts among thieves” that enshrine and underwrite the carve up, for as long as the balance of power among the dominant powers remains unaltered. As the economic crisis deepens, so the counter-measures put in place by all the States become less effective, and conflict between new alliances becomes a necessity – thus is the way paved for the fast-approaching inter-imperialist war: events in the Balkans, the Middle East, Africa, Caucasasia and, lastly, the Ukraine, are nothing if not cruel harbingers of what is to come.

All wars have had – and will always have – an ideological front, a pretext for sending to the slaughter (active and passive), our fellow class comrades, against this or that “enemy”, trapped inside the confines of the cattle pen of “National Unity”, and the “Homeland” (whose multiple epithets include socialist, democratic, home to civilization, chosen people, etc...) by the bourgeois State, *which is, and remains, the collective capitalist whose governing body is solely, and always, a bourgeois business committee*. What is currently taking place in Ukraine is the most obvious and dramatic example: one step further towards a new generalized war, a new worldwide massacre.

All this brings us to the most difficult part of the story. As always, there’s a lot to do. But what? And how? First of all, let us dismiss the hope that the sole action generated by the precipitous and generalized worsening of our conditions of life and survival, the exhaustion of limited

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reserves and the erosion of reformist guarantees (or even war itself), may *mechanically* ensure a reaction of political revolt. Our class has endured – and continues to suffer from – a decades-long reactionary conditioning of democratic-Nazi-Fascist-Stalinist (and post-Stalinist) measures, whose origins can be traced back to the systematic destruction of our revolutionary organizations, and nourished by the hard earned scraps obtained through ordinary union struggles. And today the reformist siren-calls beckon *ad nauseam*, duping the majority of our class brothers and sisters into believing there is still something to be gained from breaking our backs in the name of capitalism, with the active complicity of the official unions by now wholly integrated into the State: ballot-boxed institutions, economic democracy, “culture”, “civilization”, the vague “interests of the people” versus the ravenous appetites of the usual speculators, the welfare state, the redistribution of wealth through an inheritance tax ...

The road to recovery will be painful and toilsome, but there are no alternatives: our working class *alone* has the chance and (in the making) the social and political wherewithal to put an end to the filthy society of Capital, provided it first organizes itself and fights for its own survival and then, consequently, does away with the milita-

rist power of the capitalist bourgeoisie.

Resume the path of strike action to strike at the heart of bourgeois interests and interrupt the production of capitalist wealth – a path that implies the blockade of proletarian neighborhoods together with any other practice for breaking up the nominal “social peace”.

Resume the path of independent political struggle, pitted against and enemy to all political parties and institutions of the State, *of all States*.

Get stronger and unite in a Communist Party with established roots worldwide: a tool, a weapon, an indispensable organ in the struggle to defeat the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and its reformist skivvies, to guide the revolutionary process that ensures our class constitutes the ruling class, and to direct the organs of its domination (the transitory yet necessary phase involving the *dictatorship of the proletariat*). A domination that will finally put an end to all societies built upon a ruthless and alienating social division of labour, and where private ownership of the land and means of production is sacred. To this task, to this fight, the comrades of the International Communist Party call you!

May 1, 2022

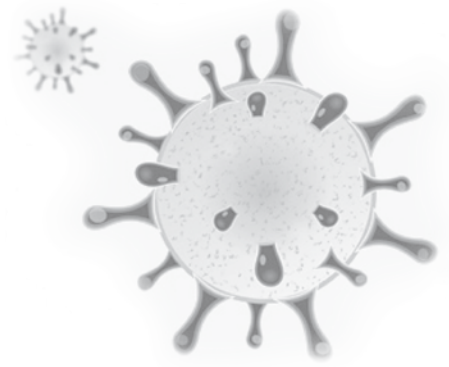
(distributed on several occasions, in several languages)

“It is not a question of what this or that proletarian, or even the whole proletariat, at the moment regards as its aim. It is a question of what the proletariat is, and what, in accordance with this being, it will historically be compelled to do.”

(Marx, *The Holy Family*)

FROM THE PANDEMIC FRONT

React against fear, the chaos in society and healthcare, more intense exploitation and growing state repression



Over all these months, workers in every country have experienced at their own cost the disastrous effects of the survival of the capitalist mode of production, which has for some time now reached the end of its historical deadline. The 2008 crisis, *never resolved*, had already resulted in authentic social massacre: unemployment, increasingly precarious jobs, intensification of exploitation, massive forced emigration, destruction of natural resources – all in the name of a desperate search for profit to stem the tendential fall of its average rate. Onto this dramatic scenario, burst the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, widely predicted by numerous scientific studies and institutional bodies worldwide, which no countries were prepared for. A surprise? No. Capital does not reason far in advance according to long-term hypotheses or forecasts, and certainly not in terms of prevention, because *its law is that of self-valorisation in the shortest possible time - on pain of its own death*.

So the workers (male and female, employed or unemployed, pensioners and redundant, locked down and pushed back into domestic work and care-giving) have paid heavily for this chaos in society and healthcare which has accompanied the outbreak and spread of the pandemic: in workplaces that were never closed (factories, building yards, storehouses, etc.), turned into hotbeds of infection: hospitals and care centres quite incapable of facing up to exceptional demands of this nature; in working-class homes and neighbourhoods, where it is impossible to “practice social distancing” and ensure “hygiene measures” - whole populations gripped by fear and disorientation, subjected to barrages of contradictory data and information, political polemics, contrasting statements

by quarrelsome and contemptuous “experts” and “scientists” inevitably under the thumb of a “medical science” that subordinates public health to the laws of economic advantage. Culpable ineptitude and obedience to the law of profit at all costs!

The already tragic consequences of the 2008 crisis thus worsened all over the world: more lay-offs, more precariousness and redundancy pay, more ridiculous benefits scattered as a prelude to lay-offs, as well as regimentation, the suspension and annulment of any initiative, demonstration or struggle under the pretext of the “ban on crowds”, the control and harsh repression of those (*and there were more than a few of them!*) who dared and dare to raise their voices and their heads.

Economic crises and social crises: the capitalist mode of production has demonstrated, *yet again*, that it is impotent when faced with disasters caused by its own way of functioning. An end needs to be made to it: these death throes have been dragging on for a century and a half and - as well as the general debasement of social life and the enormous daily suffering of proletarians exploited to the bone and sick or dead because of their work - have produced two world bloodbaths and hundreds of local wars and are preparing (you can feel it in your bones) *more, inter-imperialist slaughter*.

It is necessary to react against the fear, the chaos in society and healthcare, the exploitation growing day by day and the increasing state repression!

Hold out against all threats, all abuses and tyranny, on the streets, in the squares and in society!

Resume the path of the class struggle: not a moral but a *vital* imperative!

We must struggle, fight, once again claim drastic reductions to working hours for the same wages, with rises

and guarantees for everyone (male and female, young and old, immigrants and domestic workers...), with the State and “owners’ associations” paying for those who are laid off or unemployed.

We must claim the “duty of health” starting from the places where we are obliged to work and the neighbourhoods we are obliged to live in.

We must organise ourselves on the territory and centrally to defend ourselves from the attack by Capital, led by its armed wing (*the State, which is not a father and benefactor to us, but our immediate enemy*), refusing both the cages and prisons of all types represented by the practices of trade unions and associations wholly integrated into the system, and the foggy demagoguery of those who wish to take advantage of a militant proletariat to build themselves an institutional “political” career.

All this, *which must nonetheless be secured and defended militantly*, is not enough.

Or rather: it is not possible unless we direct ourselves towards something reaching well beyond the immediate, everyday horizon; unless the resumption of a defensive economic and social struggle is seen as training and preparation for something far more drastic and definitive; i.e. unless we once again place on the table the question of *winning power and overthrowing bourgeois institutions* to put into practice the dictatorship of the proletariat which will have the task of getting rid of all the foul and blood-streaked remains of a mode of production condemned by history, opening the gates to a classless society, to *communism*. A *conquest and an exercise in power* which are indeed far from immediate and may appear to be a mirage: but which are the only possibility of survival for us

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and for the generations to come. And which, above all, must be prepared today, with patience, method, passion and *organisation* (objectives, means, precise, clear and coherent methods).

There is no alternative: all around us smoking ruins and immense suffering are accumulating, whilst a new, devastating world war looms on the horizon.

It's back to the fight, organising the revolutionary party and resuming the path towards communism.
There is no time to waste!

March-April 2021

“ISOLATED LIVING ACCESSORIES” (K. Marx)

The shock of pandemic accelerates the capitalist tendency towards concentration and expropriation

(from “il programma comunista”, no. 3, May-June 2021)

Permanent emergency

The Covid “pandemic” is certainly one of those events that establish turning points and not only as a health emergency, but as the start of a new, more generalised crisis of indeterminate duration, promoted to a method for managing the social and economic emergency. In terms of the effects it is generating, the scope of the event is comparable to the one which, at the start of the new millennium, sparked off the long season of the “war on terrorism” of Islamic stamp, the after-effects of which are still being suffered today. While it is true that this war was not of use, as was the intention of those who started it, in reaffirming the United States’ role as the sole world power and stemming its decline, now that the attacks are becoming less far-reaching and less frequent, the emergency legislation that was set up more or less everywhere still remains intact - starting from the U.S. Patriot Act. Just as the attack on the Twin Towers - the details of which remain in many ways all but clear - generated planet-wide consequences at the time, the same is happening with the rise of Covid, whose repercussions, however, seem to extend well beyond the security-oriented and war-mongering direction that followed 11 September, and to assume a more generalised significance and a more profound effect.

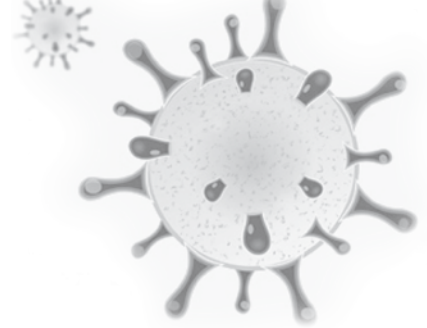
We are unable to say for sure what really originated these extraordinary

events, which have in common the evident and clamorous inefficiency of the civilian and military bodies established to prevent and contrast similar catastrophes, organisms which are, by the way, equipped with extremely powerful means for forecasting and intervening in similar cases. Nevertheless, even accepting the official version of the facts, there is no doubt that those events gave rise to generalised action for containing and resolving capitalist contradictions. Just like 11 September, the pandemic emergency led to the introduction of elements appertaining to a state of warfare.

Just as for Islamic terrorism, for the pandemic, too, the war is worldwide but the decisive battlefield was and remains Western Europe. Here, after 11 September, the bloodiest attacks against western citizens took place and in this territory the pandemic experienced some of its most highly symbolic and intensely dramatic moments. Both events produced a reaction to a *death threat*, the former from a flesh and blood enemy, identifiable in “Islamic terrorist”, the latter from an even more devious and unpredictable enemy that can be transported by any of our kind, all the more so if connected to us by bonds of affection and proximity. With the advent of the virus, attention is no longer focused on an outside enemy that insinuates itself into the world’s apparently peaceful daily life, but on a wholly internal threat to this daily routine, indeed, a *domestic*

one. The battle is waged *at home*. It is no longer the responsibility of security services and the police: it’s each individual’s business to make a contribution to the battle by assuming the prescribed behaviour (you mustn’t say *imposed* - that would be unpleasant). Everyone must take action or, to use a military term, *mobilise*. From the very beginning both events brought their death toll, which - as happens in times of war - is reported in daily bulletins. The fact that this is *undeniable* - because the deaths actually have taken place - makes the *need* for intervention by the authorities undeniable, in order to contain and bring the drama to an end using all possible means. It is this undoubtedly effective emotional assumption that is the basis for attacks on whoever dares advance any criticism of the emergency measures. Whoever calls into question the need for restrictions gives priority to an abstract right to freedom over the more important right to safety and in the end *to life*; in the context of the pandemic, this person is immediately labelled a negationist, not so much due to the accusation of denying the existence of the virus or else the danger of it, so much as for the implicit accusation of *denying the deaths* or the suffering of the sick, exactly as the negationist historian denies or downsizes the holocaust. A rascal like this certainly does appear to deserve prison or at least forced recovery in a psychiatric

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ward. Some have indeed ended up there. The subliminal message is not so different from the *believe, obey, fight* we remember so well: *believe* in the official narration of the virus's pandemic threat; obey the cast-iron rules imposed from above (in contempt of bourgeois legislation itself); *fight* the common battle by respecting the rules and stigmatizing whoever might have objections, not forgetting a polite invitation to snitch.

Acknowledging this state of affairs does not imply either underestimating the impact of the virus or confirming *tout court* the thesis of a "health dictatorship", generally sustained by democratic-bourgeois viewpoints and the expression of what the half-classes most affected by the consequences of the restrictions are feeling. It must be acknowledged, however, that a similar mass psychological mechanism is identical to what happens in times of war: when the young sons of the Fatherland die at the front in order to defend it, whoever dares question the war is pointed at as a criminal to be persecuted by all possible means, a renegade in the pay of the enemy. The young men's deaths, the celebration of their almost always involuntary "sacrifice" obscures the responsibility of those who sent them off to die. Not invoking a firing squad becomes a sign of generosity; in the same way, in the collective psychology people who minimise Covid deserve to die of Covid, ignoring the responsibility of those who did little or nothing to prevent the slaughter. Whoever opposes

vaccination deserves the same fate: comments expressing hope that those who oppose vaccination are excluded from treatment are not infrequent on the internet. These sentiments, which are artfully fuelled and upheld daily in the media, easily succeed in capturing the minds of those who have been educated in fear or simply, crushed by the daily grind, haven't had the time to think about it and have to put up with the available menu.

If, then, the attack on the Twin Towers was the premise for setting up a climate that was the prelude to sparking off conflicts in the field, the pandemic already embodies many aspects of war, a war that on the surface is fought against the virus but deep beneath this with other objectives. *The context of pandemic crisis favours an attack against the obstacles and resistance that impede the progressive affirmation of Capital in every aspect of social life and this also comes about through disciplining and conditioning. The pandemic thus marks a watershed in time and a change in the terrain, entering a context that is largely new, reaffirming the connotations of capitalist society, and consequently the terms of the class conflict - the battle, whose outcome is uncertain, between a dying society and the only one that can historically succeed it: communism.*

Since the start of the pandemic crisis, the various State institutions have made a massive effort to support the drastic work of containment,

testing their capacity for controlling society. Faced with the attack by the pandemic, governments seemed mostly unprepared and the super-developed Western World's health structures unable to deal with the emergency. In reality, according to official documents¹ a similar event had long been announced and the leading governments and international institutions had been *amply informed in detail* of the timing and areas affected by the spread of a pandemic. If it is true - and it certainly wouldn't be the first time in history² - that those who should have intervened were aware of what was about to happen, then in the best of hypotheses we are looking at the manifest inability of the ruling classes to draw the due consequences in terms of organisation and financing for dealing with the health emergency. This goes for almost all the capitalist States affected, though to differing extents, according to how well their public systems were organised. In a communist society an emergency of this type would not only be foreseen but dealt with accordingly; the eventuality of a lockdown for public health reasons would be included in the plan for the species and the effects on collective existence would be limited to the indispensable. The system would shut down to protect the weaker sectors, all resources would be brought into play to boost the health system's ability to respond, scientific knowledge would be directed towards finding the most effective solutions to deal with the disease and root it out, all essential services would be ensured, supplies would be guaranteed to everyone, with no time limits, thanks to reserves set aside to deal with the recurrent emergencies that mark our species' presence on this planet. All this can only derive from overall planning, which capitalism is incapable even of conceiving of. Instead the crisis

1. This is what the Italian investigative journalist Franco Fracassi states, supported by a wealth of evidence, in his book *Protocollo contagio* (Indigraf, 2020). The book is about the many mysteries circulating about the secret laboratory in Wuhan, a highly complicated crossroads of international interests directly involving not only China but also France and the United States, and as far as financial commitment is concerned, the three leading world investment funds, which alone handle a large slice of the total value produced on the planet every year.

2. There is no lack of historical parallels to events foreseen but left unopposed. According to some interpretations of the controversial episode of the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbour - categorically rejected for obvious official historiographical motives - Roosevelt knew in advance of the imminent Japanese attack but failed to communicate it in time to the military commanders, in view of the advantages that the *shock* at the destruction of a part of the Pacific fleet and the death of so many countrymen would provoke in public opinion. The decision to join the war would thus no longer encounter resistance from the masses and the *élites* contrary to intervention.

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clamorously reveals the limits of the capitalist system in providing for social needs, its disorderly, speculative and violently classist nature, since it is increasingly clear that in this pandemic there are those who pay and those who gain. The effect of the system's fragility is the spread of uncertainty, of fear and for the ruling classes the natural and obligatory choice is to recur to wartime measures or measures that go even further, supported by the structures of the bourgeois State, first and foremost those responsible for public law and order, which cannot afford to be less than efficient. The malfunctioning of other public institutions instead proves to be objectively functional to the implementation of interventions that are a prelude to radical changes in the political, institutional and social balance.

It isn't hard to situate this overall redefinition within the *process of a "neo-liberist" transformation of society that has been going on for decades now and which finds in the pandemic an opportunity for acceleration that will come closer to establishing a society where Capital can exercise its rule without limits, obstacles and without the apparent mediation of other interests. It is impossible to set up a society like this, since the rule of dictatorship imposes on the bourgeoisie the function (and fiction) of being the "general class": but this is what Capital tends towards.*

What we are experiencing then, is in its own way a war, without wanting to insist on labelling it any specific sort of war, for example bacteriological warfare, though this is not something to be excluded. Basically, what counts in a war are not the means used - although they prove decisive in the end - but the results achieved in terms of the relations between imperialisms and class relations. If in a war fought on the battlefield the Fatherland is in danger, in whose name there are those who sacrifice their lives, in the case of the war on

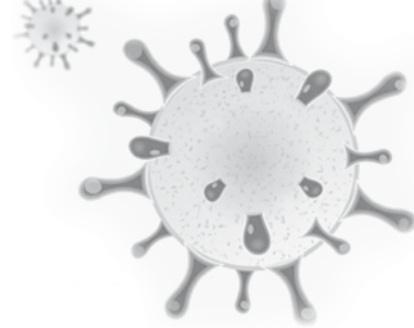
terrorism it is safety and a way of life in whose name the same principles of freedom are sacrificed as those on which they are based. In the end, here too, *the lives of the people exposed to the threat of terror are at stake but it is only through Covid that the threat is directly to life itself, so as to justify any form of restriction to support health policy. Political action qualifies as an act of mass therapy, a far more profound and decisive intervention than the safety measures introduced by the "war on terrorism"*.

It isn't hard to recognise the harmony between such an intervention and "neo-liberist" political ideology, which proposes to make the individual's existence conform to the logic of the market: "biopolitics". The point of it is not a generic precondition for social cohabitation but the biological existence of its members, which is to be oriented towards a "normality" defined by being arranged in order to realise itself as "human capital". The individual's whole life is reduced to a sort of investment in itself that can lead to valorising its own human capital, or to bankruptcy. A person's existence begins and ends in the economy and every aspect of her or his life, work, consuming, affections and health come into the category of investment³. In this vision, classes do not exist: just individuals - little, desperate monads devoted to extracting profit from the economic cycle corresponding to the arc of their own existence. Whoever does not follow this line of behaviour is not to be considered "normal", but a "loser" and a "deviant" and as such in need of therapy. Poverty, unemployment, social exclusion are not to be attributed to an infamous society but to the inability of the individual to make herself or himself into a profitable capital resource. Poverty is reduced to a "disease of the soul". This idiotic concept is an integral part of the

3. E. Bazzanella, *L'ideologia nel Capitale* (2019).

"neo-liberist" faith that guides the world's élites. If they limited themselves to professing it, they could discuss it amongst themselves and congratulate themselves on having achieved success as "human capital". Unfortunately, they work to make it into the world's current religion. If it is true that in the context of the pandemic political action is assuming the role of mass therapy, coherently with the mainstream ideology the objective of the action is not overall public health but the normalisation of social relations by disciplining social behaviour. *The main objective of the restrictive measures, whose effectiveness in fighting the virus is at the very least dubious, is not to safeguard public health but to condition public and private behaviour. This conditioning takes on the form of "therapeutic intervention" in order to direct individual existences through isolation and distancing and achieve complete ideological and practical subordination to the apparatus of dominion and control. In order to help digest the ideological mishmash justifying humankind being reduced to an appendix of capital - which is already a real result of the process of capitalist development extending mechanisation to all aspects of life - individuals must be isolated, breaking down all community ties, giving priority to breaking the sense of belonging to a class that does not identify with the values and behaviour of the bourgeoisie. Here we have reached the end of a long path of demolition to which the bourgeoisie's official trade unions and "left-wing" parties have made a fundamental contribution. Now is the time for the attack to be directed even against the community forms of family, Nation, Church, to demolish which Capital hides behind the "progressive" value of "diversity", behind which are concealed homogenisation and the neutralisation of any form of antagonism worthy of the name. It can be seen why this sombre*

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*transition is being guided in general by the “left-wing” parties, whilst the right-wing generally forms the opposition.*⁴

And so an explanation has been found for why public bodies were so unprepared when faced with the pandemic attack, a lack of preparation confirmed - at least but not only in the case of Italy - by the fact that the same inadequate conditions re-occurred when the so-called “second wave” arrived, an inevitable consequence of the fact that, over the months when the virus was lying in wait, “public spending”, instead of converging on public health structures, was busy handing out bonuses for scooters, electric bicycles and family holidays. Here the dysfunctional aspect is objectively confirmed as being functional to recreating the conditions for a new lockdown.

The proof is based on clues only but they should be sufficient to at least induce the suspicion that public health, at the very moment when it proclaims the so-called “right to health” (inexistent because all that exists is the “right to treatment”, quite often denied) superior to any other constitutional right, is not the central concern of emergency government. The priority that the health emergency assigns to biological existence, to life, involves instead a series of consequences affecting political and social balance, which

in the end allow State institutions, the expression of the ruling class, room for *tendentially unlimited intervention*.

It is always as well to remember - so as to distinguish ourselves from those who tear their hair out at the insult to freedom and democracy - that this “power” does not arise with the pandemic or other manifestations of war, and that Capital exercises its *dictatorship* independently of the political forms it assumes. The recourse to emergency is merely the key to an open and fully-fledged display of its prerogatives, hiding behind the invocation of a need presented as evident and undeniable. Here again there is no lack of historical precedents: suffice it to remember the use that Nazism made of article 48 of the Weimar Constitution, thanks to which Hitler was able to claim recourse to an emergency law and guarantee himself unlimited power in a substantially legal fashion. Today history is repeating itself, needless to say as *farce*, considering all the absurdities and lies that are offered up and which would merit guffaws of laughter, were it not that they fully constitute so many manifestations of an abuse of power all the more dangerous as it is clearly *grotesque*.

The “neo-liberist” concept of the State’s function is very different, however, to that of Nazi-Fascist totalitarianism. Where the totalitarian

State’s role included decision-making with regard to political choices defending capitalist law and order; the role of the State in a “neo-liberist” régime is to back up the decisions taken in supra-national circles, in the places where the institutions of political and financial power are coordinated. The totalitarianism of the State as such is not affirmed but, through the State, what is affirmed is the totalitarianism of the market. Taking a closer look, the fascist and “neo-liberist” solutions would seem to be antitheses of one another; within a shared perspective of conserving the present mode of production. Our current has always described fascism as politics’ tendency to slow down and control the development of production forces to moderate their impact on social balances, whilst “neo-liberism” pursues the free movement of capital and goods and, consequently, the free spread of Capital’s destructive potential, the potential to break down the existing order and as such deserving of the label “revolutionary” (Marx, “Speech on the question of free exchange”). Here the “revolutionary” nature of the free market and the forces operating in it may regard solely the weakening of old established balances and thus, from a historical perspective, of bourgeois order itself. And it is this possibility that encourages bourgeois élites to contemplate a new totalitarianism within which these forces can act without leading to the collapse of the system. So it would be inappropriate and misleading to speak of a “new fascism” when looking at the advancing totalitarianism. Compared to the coming totalitarianism, historical fascism seems a rather crude and far less pervasive form of totalitarian power; equipped with extremely primitive technical means of control and conditioning compared to those that the bourgeoisie brings onto the field today. From this point of

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4. The *contrast Capital-labour* in social production, in which the former stands opposite *goods-labour*, the human being as a commodity, extends and becomes generalised over the whole of society and regards every individual. This process corresponds to the actual historical course of Capital which progressively takes over every aspect of life. In the interpretation given by “neo-liberist” ideology, the functions of Capital and commodities-labour co-exist in everyone: the individual has the task of exploiting her/his own capacity for work according to the valorisation of the self as Capital. Self-exploitation becomes the condition of each individual existence. Marx unmasked a similar myth when discussing the tendency of economists to conceive of salary as being the interest on work understood as a form of capital (Marx, *Capital*, Book III, Editori Riuniti, 1980, p.549).

5. The trumpeting of the establishment media about the presumed fascist nature of some demonstrations protesting against the emergency clashes dramatically with the total silence that enveloped the use of explicitly Nazi formations and figures during the coup d’état in Ukraine in 2014 and the bloody, mass killings ensuing. In that case, everything was depicted as a democratic, people’s revolution, fully legitimate, because it was useful to the manoeuvres to extend NATO influence in East Europe (F. Fracassi, *Il IV Reich*, 2020). Briefly, agreeing with the lords of misinformation, the massacres are democratic, the massacred are fascists...

view, a mobilisation that calls itself “antifascist” according to the old categories, risks favouring a new, far more ferocious totalitarianism. One-way propaganda blithely hangs the label of neo-fascist or Nazi onto anyone who dares to express a critical position towards whatever is imposed by the authorities under the pretext of the pandemic, whilst it totally ignores the threatening rise in real neo-Nazism when this corresponds to western geopolitical interests in opposition to Russia⁵. The dissolution of the old political categories in the bourgeois context, confirms that our current, the communist Left, had got it right when labelling anti-fascism as a democratic bourgeois ideology, the worst product of fascism.

In the new context, the previously cited inefficiency is well suited to the role of the State. In “neo-liberist” régimes the State cannot claim to resolve emergencies. It delegates to agencies and experts in which economic and professional groups and sub-groups have invested interests, sometimes clearly defined, at others less recognisable because they are situated “behind the scenes” in decision-making centres. The solution to the emergency is delegated to the private sector, to big economic and financial groups which, taking advantage of their henchmen at the vital nodes of public institutions and in the various “task forces”, using pressure from lobbying and corruption, are able to make the State subordinate to their own interests, all the more easily if the latter is indebted and thus lacks monetary independence. And so the State does not intervene with effective solutions to contrast the pandemic and promotes the vaccine as the sole solution, advertising it with the support of public and private mass media.⁶ Never so much as in this case, has the

term “campaign”, synonymous with warfare and advertising, been so well-suited to the situation: the front line of attack is the bombardment by the media which exasperate the dramatic aspect of events and spread contrasting information. The overruling confusion of mass communications, amplified by the large number of actors on the scene is useful for maintaining a condition of prolonged uncertainty. What is presented as a democratic debate actually excludes or sidelines all deviant interpretations or those that might simply reduce tension and lead the discussion back onto the rails of rationality. Fragments of truth are cocooned and digested in the hotchpotch of communication, and critical interpretations are distorted and served up as the ravings of eccentric individuals, deformed, pathological manifestations of the “normality” of emergency. The hammering of the State’s communication services does not transmit a single voice, as happened in the cinema newsreels of the Istituto Luce, but a “democratic” range of voices that debate, contradict one another and squabble. Yet all the tongues wagging in the Babel of the media carefully avoid touching on sensitive topics that might rock the boat. Our Party, an expression of the communist Left, has kept the helm of Marxism steady by describing democracy as the form best suited to the dictatorship of Capital.

Nonetheless, the shift from “normality” to emergency or to the “normality of emergency”, is not merely arbitrary but always the result of grave threats arising to the stability of the established order and the need to respond to them or stop them emerging. This is not the place to reconstruct the phases of the profound crisis that is spreading through the capitalist mode of production and which emerged in all

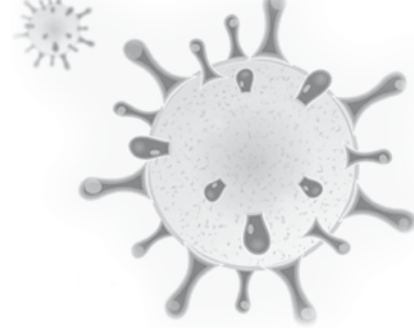
its fury in the 2008-2009 recession. The decade that has passed since then has been marked by an increase in the weight of financial capital but also by an unstoppable increase in its values - mainly fake ones - which distance them more and more from a world production that is advancing ever more haltingly. The general crisis brings with it more acute tension between imperialisms, greater divergences between ruling States and States subordinate to them, greater difficulty in the management of the social effects of more uncertain growth. Briefly the contradictions tormenting the capitalist world have reached such a level that the ruling class is forced to gain access to wider room for manoeuvre, to allow it to spread the mark of its own logic more widely, extending it beyond national limits. Political and economic logic go hand in hand: precisely because it is a slave to the logic of the market, political action frees itself from the legislative and institutional ties that slow it down whilst it shifts into a higher gear where that same market logic can have an even stronger influence on all aspects of existence everywhere. The forms of class rule must adapt accordingly, better without bloodshed and not perceived as the passage to a state of class dictatorship more oppressive than the previous one. In the declarations by rulers an admonition, not even too carefully veiled, can be sensed against displays of resistance to this shift, where benevolence can quickly turn into repression. One word sums up the feeling in the air everywhere: *curfew*. The sudden and unsettling shift encounters episodic and poorly organised resistance. The forces of opposition are criminalised, critical voices sidelined and censored.

The resisters

The pandemic emergency presents itself as a manifestation of the crisis that allows Capital to deal with it by activating preventive measures for solving the situation to its own advantage and at the same time

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6. Authoritative studies of the correlations between the mass anti-flu vaccine campaigns and exposure to serious forms of Covid in some areas (as in the Bergamo area in Italy) have not even been taken into consideration. The campaign raising the anti-flu vaccine to the status of a booster to the immune system triumphs, to the advantage of the potential profits of big pharmaceutical groups which are getting ready to distribute millions of doses of vaccine without respecting the codified procedures that foresee years of experimentation.



consolidating the foundations of the existing world order. We have repeated several times that capitalism was experiencing a profound crisis well before the pandemic and the solutions adopted for dealing with the consequences of the 2009 crash merely increased the distance between financial value and real production, between States and classes and between old and new imperialisms. Out of the general instability and climate of uncertainty that resulted, out of the variegated “neopopulist” and “sovereignist” front (from now onwards we shall use the term “sovereignist” for both positions) emerged forces of opposition to the “neo-liberist” trend that had been dominant for forty years, their greatest successes being their impact on the election of Trump and Brexit. This front, today visibly weakened by the counterattacks of forces sustaining the interests of international finance, from their more moderate to their most extreme forms, has in common the exhumation of national values as a way of stemming the consequences of mondialisation. The 5 Stelle (Five Stars movement) themselves gained affirmation thanks to openly anti-EU and anti-Euro declarations, in favour of State machinery as a tool for redistributing income. Politically defunct now and practically at the same level as the hotel business their members are so close to, their role has been taken over by a range of forces, from the institutional right wing (Lega and Fratelli d'Italia / The League and Brothers of Italy), which are intermittently anti-Europe and always available for compromise, to explicitly Fascist formations. A relatively new development are the variations that pursue a national policy with socialist-like features and proclaim themselves “leftwing” forces with “rightwing” values (Vox Italia) or improvise as supporters of a national-popular policy that in many ways might be compared to the old PCI (Italian “Communist” Party), starting from their out-and-out defence of the Constitution (Sovereignist Front).⁷ This self-proclaimed “democratic sovereignism”, to distinguish it

from either the Fascist-like right wing or less coherent forms of sovereignism, has expressed radical criticism of the emergency measures and their political, economic and social consequences. It must be acknowledged that in the climate of censorship created by the media, theirs is a courageous condemnation of the servility of politics towards financial élites and the European institutions led by Germany, of the reduction of constitutional rights and the annulment of democratic institutions; more in general these forces claim that, with the pretext of the pandemic, an unprecedented attack is being made on people's interests, in particular those of the petit bourgeoisie, by forces that represent big Capital. Here they have definitely grasped an objective phenomenon, but since they have failed to link it to the dynamics that sustain Capital, they have interpreted it subjectively attributing the responsibilities to individuals or power groups. What is missing is recognition of the fact that the concentration of power in only a few hands and the polarisation that are occurring are the inevitable effects of the *irreversible* dynamics of capitalist development and that, therefore, claiming to fight them by using *conservative solutions* is an illusion and in the end *reactionary*. There is nothing new in all this with respect to what Marx and Engels wrote in far-off 1848:

“The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history” (Manifesto of the Communist Party, Chapter I: “Bourgeois and Proletarians”).

In representing the instances of these classes threatened by the inexorable dynamics of Capital, democratic sovereignism takes on board some class content, diluting it within the limits of substantially conservative national claims and tax issues, harking back to the good old days when it was easier to do business and welfare was more generous, and this makes it possible to gather consensus in the ranks of the proletariat. In their opposition to the “markets” these movements re-propose certain recognisable values which, over forty years of “neo-liberism”, have been progressively weakened by the dynamics of Capital acting on the world economic situation, and made to conform to commercial interests. Right at the centre the myth is reaffirmed that the State is politically independent and the protagonist of inter-state relations, effectively capable of sustaining the internal market and the country's economic position internationally; a State which, by virtue of this strength, is also independent in safeguarding and guaranteeing essential social services; the Central Bank as the ultimate lending power free of conditioning by the international markets; the myth of the Nation as the reference point for collective identity. In the sovereignist vision, these suppositions are vital for guaranteeing the country's democratic balance and keeping totalitarian turns at bay. The characteristics of the State desired by the sovereignists are the expression of a synthesis of the historical continuity between fascism and postwar social democracy up until the advent of neoliberalism in the early Eighties. Any discontinuity between the two moments lies in the

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7. Compared to formations like Vox Italia and Fronte sovranista, where the substance of their politics is not weighed down by empty ideology, those that openly refer to the tradition of a big national-popular party like Rizzo's Communist Party, have the limit of identifying themselves ideologically as “communist” and as such appear to belong to a long-dead past.

form and not in the substance. The totalitarian form, as it is the product of a clash between revolution and counter-revolution, is obliged to take on certain elements pertaining to revolution (anti-democratic politics and state intervention in the economy); the democratic form which became widespread in the postwar years is the effect of an expansive phase in capital and the consequent growth of profits and income, in itself a guarantee of relative social stability, yet it still inherits from fascism the strong State intervention in social and economic life, the integration of workers' representation into the State and beneath its benevolent exterior it conserves the violently oppressive nature that on some occasions surfaces dramatically (Genoa 2001). The democratic form itself has progressively rid itself of prerogatives, also disbanding reformist organisations, converting social democracy to neoliberalism and concentrating power in the hands of international financial centres, which have got better and better at heavily conditioning the decisions taken by governments. The 2008 crisis represented a watershed, on the far side of which events occurred that have marked just as many turning points in the direction of a new world capitalist order: considering Europe alone, the Greek crisis - an authentic experimental laboratory for ultra-liberist politics and the subjection of a nation to the interests of imperialism - the 2011 crisis of the spread, with Italy as the epicentre, and now the pandemic crisis.

The forces that today oppose the advance of Capital starting out from an interpretation of the present while looking to the past, nurture the hope of an unrealistic return to phases of capitalist development that are now outdated, with growth rates that are inconceivable. Despite their contradictions and their limits, this does not prevent them from being an obstacle to the *dynamics* that are proceeding to impose mercantile logic anywhere it hasn't yet fully asserted itself. They express a

resistance to the advance of Capital in its work of global desertification and homologation and today we might add *sanification*. These dynamics lead to concentration, and concentration with the complicity of the crisis sweeps away vast sectors of small and medium-sized commercial and production enterprises, sectors that make up the composite social basis of these movements. What the sovereignists can't see, because of their limited vision focused on the past, are the *explosive* elements contained in these dynamics. We shall take up this aspect again later.

The great social drama now taking place might prove to be just an anticipation of far more devastating upheavals to come. As we write, the Italian political class has just approved the reform of the ESM (the European Stability Mechanism), choosing to take up this line of financing. The ESM is no more and no less than the tool by which, paying homage to German "ordo-liberism" and the interests of German and French banks, Greece was reduced to a country of starving derelicts, to be looted by the big banks and the big international investment funds.

The about-turn of the 5 Stelle regarding an aspect that was a matter of principle in their electoral manifesto confirms the structural unreliability of formations inevitably destined to become a tool of the powers they originally declared they wished to fight. The turncoats hide behind the noose that was set up by the EU in terms of

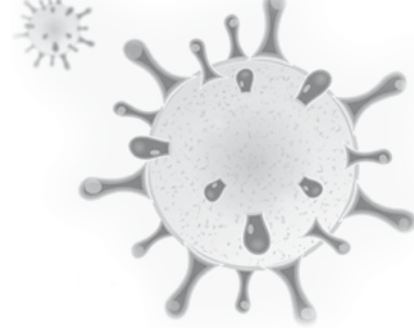
the conditions for conceding loans due to the pandemic, but when this emergency is over, there is the serious risk, even without recurring to the ESM, that Italy might be considered by the "markets" a financially bankrupt country to all effects. There are those who argue that the reform of the ESM was conceived on purpose to encourage restructuring of the Italian public debt. If this were true, then all the conditions are in place for Italy's destiny to become the same as Greece's to the nth degree in the more or less immediate future⁸, although, considering the size of the country, it might not be entirely inappropriate to recall the conditions of Germany subjected to the diktat of Versailles after the First World War. It would be the outcome of a long war, fought this time with the weapons of politics and the economy, to impose German supremacy once and for all on the European continent.⁹

Italy, a medium-level capitalist country, with increasingly less autonomy to become an active player in local geopolitical balances and those between imperialisms, is suffering an attack equivalent to warfare by international financial institutions with their executive department in the EU. As happened for Greece, the objective is to put the country up for sale and wipe out its considerable industrial and economic heritage, without neglecting all that pertains to its history. For Capital, the need for the "markets"

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8. These are subjects dealt with in the interview with G. Trombetta, of the Fronte sovranista italiano (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJx1i02p8rg>). On the statements by W. Munchau in the *Financial Times*, see the online article in *italiaoggi*, 2.12.2020: "For Munchau (*Financial Times*) it is inevitable for the Italian debt to be restructured: this is what the ESM is for". On the present situation of Greece a book has recently come out by Antonio di Siena, entitled *Memorandum, Grecia 2010-2020* (2020).

9. The situation relaunches the extremely delicate matter, from a Marxist point of view, of the right to self determination of nations oppressed by imperialism, which we cannot go into here. The discussion arises inside the Communist International and the KPD (the Communist Party of Germany) in the period following World War 1, in relation to the condition in which defeated Germany found itself, subjected to pressure and oppression from the victorious powers of the Entente. Italy is heading towards a condition that in some ways is analogous to that of Germany at the time. As then, the problem is arising of the relations between the proletariat and the half classes, in a context of higher capitalist development and with very different perspectives.



predatory logic to exert itself without encountering impediments is all the greater when faced with an unprecedented historical crisis reaching far beyond the present pandemic. An economic and social crisis of vast proportions such as the one that is taking shape is a splendid opportunity for financial capital to strengthen its stranglehold on society and attempt an overall redefinition of it, as well as making considerable earnings. Faced with a potentially catastrophic perspective, the PD (Democratic Party) continues to distinguish itself in terms of its servile pro-Europe stance and the CGIL (an official trade union) calls for recourse to European financing. In this case, again, we see confirmation that in the range of forces representing the interests of the bourgeoisie, the attempt to oppose the perpetration of a real social crime, or the deadly logic of the “markets”, comes solely from the ranks of so-called sovereigntism in its most consequent expressions.

Death of reformist democracy and the start of the new totalitarianism

Typically, capital tends to revolutionise incessantly the means of production and with them relations in production, the mode in which people and classes interact with one another. Capital cannot survive without keeping alive these destructive/creative dynamics which allow it to redefine itself and reorganise on new and more advanced bases. In this way, at the same time it develops its contradictions to the maximum and nevertheless these contradictions can become an element of reorganisation and stabilisation. The workers’ battles of the ‘Sixties and ‘Seventies were the class response to the closure of the postwar phase of development and objectively speaking called into question capitalist order; however, they ended in a claim to greater participation in the benefits of that development and integration into the system. The Capital-labour pact which was organically realised in the fascist régimes by State corporatism,

in a democratic régime arose out of the compromise that recognised the function of the workers’ organisations in the structure of the State.

The result was a redefinition of the State and production apparatus, the forms of class rule adapted and in the capitalist west pay rises were allowed and certain benefits in terms of welfare. The early ‘Eighties marked the climax and conclusion of this process: the “victory” of working-class reformism resulted in the crisis and often elimination of all the revolutionary organisations (or those that claimed to be so) that addressed the proletariat. Our own Party suffered this backlash and risked disappearing. From that moment onwards Capital organised itself to dismantle everything it had had to concede to the workers’ battles. The upheavals that followed one upon the other in the following decades completely transformed the balance of production and government of world capital, marking the apparent triumph of its inexorable laws but determining ever more complex and contradictory scenarios. Today, rather than being just round the corner, the chaos is already part of the present and it becomes necessary for Capital to impose an order on new bases, a radical adaptation to the forms of dominion. Authoritarian order is the condition in which the social chaos provoked by capitalist dynamics left to act freely can reveal itself without class relations being endangered.

The “state of exception” is a passage in this authoritarian adaptation, a stage in the epochal clash between classes that again reinforces the initiative of Capital and sees the proletariat succumb, as yet unable to give proof of any real resistance. Those who still have doubts about the significance of what is happening should consider reading the “Law for the Protection of the Population”, approved by the Reichstag in November 2020 - a sinister reminder

of the “Law on the Defence of the People and the Reich” of far-off 1933, which we referred to earlier. With the pretext of protecting health, this law introduces Draconian measures limiting or removing personal freedom, including the inviolability of the home. The content is analogous to that introduced in Italy by Dpcm (Decree of the Prime Minister) in March 2020, with the notable difference that here it is an authentic law, not an “Italian-style” expedient to get round the current limits on legislation. The law, approved in record time, is destined to completely overturn the liberal-democratic balance of the German State, with inevitable effects on other EU countries. What is worthy of note is the fact - in actual fact a clear sign of the times - that the only parliamentary force openly and explicitly positioned against the law is the rightwing Alternative für Deutschland. In Italy, on the other hand, a daily like “il Manifesto”, which is not ashamed to call itself a “communist newspaper”, presented the big demonstration in Berlin on 19 November as a “Nazi gathering” against the anti-Covid measures. The demonstration – videos on the Web offer documentary proof – was entirely devoid of any evident political connotations and was attended by peaceful individuals, including families with children, who came out onto the streets because they were aware that something serious was going on in the Reichstag. The harmless demonstrators were blasted with freezing cold water by the police, regardless of the health risks for the people resisting the violence, soaking wet in the cold.¹⁰ We are witnessing a strange turn of events where those who up until yesterday were singled out as the historical enemy of “rights” now appear as their

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10. <https://www.byoblu.com/2020/11/12/germania-costituzione-a-rischio-come-nel-1933-michael-mross/>

only defender and those representing the radical left-wing bourgeoisie defend to the last the inhuman logic of the new, global “power”.

The final stage on the path that international Capital has been travelling since the early Eighties in order to impose mercantile logic on every aspect of social life worldwide, is now becoming more clearly evident in terms of its political and institutional implications. History is “turning somersaults”: the bourgeois left wing supports the most infamous bourgeoisie, the right wing seems to be setting itself up as the “defender of the people”. The communist Left does not see this as upturning the “values” of the two fronts but as a confirmation of each one’s homogeneity with the historical interests of Capital, the former with those of the great, dominant financial capital, the latter with those of the vanishing petit and middle-class bourgeois entrepreneurs.

One last observation here: Capital is about to abandon to its own resources a large part of society that up to now has constituted a fundamental factor of stability and conservation, stemmed the pressure from the proletariat, provided intellectuality as “progressive” as it is conservative, moulded mainstream culture, the very sense of a bourgeois “civilisation”. The disappearance of the middle class equals the disappearance of bourgeois culture as it has manifested itself up to now, kicked out by a science-enslaved culture that annuls any impulse marked by something that is not reduced to “mere life”. This is the new Dogma, the new world Religion. It can thus be understood why some of the strongest accusations against what is going on come from the rank and

file of the Church, even in opposition to its top management which seems to have fully embraced the logic of the new order under construction. To the abandonment of the middle class to its own fate corresponds the elimination of democracy in the form that represented its interests and its moods. For concentrated Capital, which can now avail itself of powerful tools of direct control over society, the “conservative” function of the middle classes, with the strength of their inertia, is no longer so essential in the fight against the proletariat. It is rather a matter of managing the enormous mass of population exceeding opportunities for valorisation, which has increased because of the fall of the intermediate classes.

In this picture, the feeble forces that represent the historical interests of the proletariat are marginalised and remain silent. Taking up the defence of the ruined half classes is not a task of the proletariat. Their disappearance is an inevitable consequence of the historical tendency of capitalist accumulation, just as the creation of an increasingly vast relative excess of population. Undoubtedly a larger number of proletarians will emerge from these events and will no longer have to deal with the social diaphragm of a widespread petit, or middle-class bourgeois buffer that separates them from the real bourgeoisie representing the interests of concentrated Capital. It is a question of evaluating whether it is possible as from now to lay the bases for the future unification of the proletariat, accompanying the embattled half classes in the fight they are about to engage against big capital, not to sustain their vain efforts at conservation, but to oppose a prospective studded with pre-

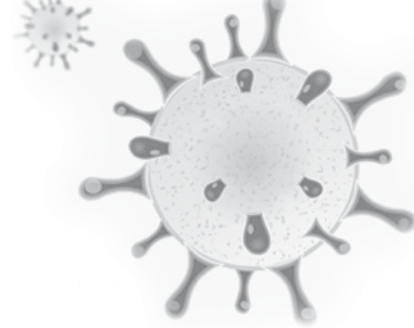
announced failure - from 5 Stelle to Trump - with the only one possible: the one indicated by the communist party Manifesto and proletarian internationalism.

From techno-finance to social zoo-tech

In almost all the more capitalistically advanced countries a climate of moral high ground has been created around the “pandemic”, a bigoted climate, which, behind the veil of health emergency and the paternalistic call to “respect the dead”, aims at the strict disciplining of social behaviour. The supreme good of health is the pretext justifying the ongoing process of brutal regimentation, capillary control and militarisation of society. The question of whether the virus, in terms of its diffusion and effects, justifies all this does not meet with a unanimous reply from the world of “science” but the media have unanimously imposed the most catastrophic interpretation and the debate has simply not taken place, or has been covered up.¹¹ An open debate would have been able to shed light on certain ambiguous aspects regarding the origin of the epidemic, on its real dimensions, on its real effects on public health and on the real consequences for those infected. The *inconsistency* of the replies capital has and can offer to social needs would have emerged and it is not to be excluded that the actual impact of the epidemic would have proved to be downsized with the risk of making the stage collapse. But inconvenient questions are answered with anathemas by the master’s voice. At this point the bourgeoisie seems to have rejected the *anti-dogmatic* premises of science which at least made an exchange possible between “free thinkers” - or those presumed to be so - to affirm a dogmatism modelled on the interests of those forces that have taken possession of the potential of science, understood by Marxism as the historical result of the species’ collective work.

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11. F. Cappello, *Covid or influence?* Sinistrainrete. The overall figure of 60 thousand deaths from the pulmonary complications of flu from 2014/15 to 2016/17 in Italy have gone unobserved and the deaths due to a normal flu infection have disappeared from the WHO’s 2020 world statistics. These statistical eccentricities tell us that the real *negationists* are those forces that deny the right to shed light on what is happening, which withdraw from an exchange of opinions with discordant scientific visions, suggesting a univocal interpretation that is not at all the only one viable, and instead is the expression of invested interests that have nothing to do with the general interest.



Only in a communist society will science's reply emerge as a unanimous synthesis, because the objective within the general project of the species will be unanimous. On the contrary, the administrators of capitalist interests must reconcile the unreconcilable: private profits - in all forms, sometimes in competition with one another - and the "common good", the circulation of goods and a brake on the circulation of the virus that circulates with them. The claim of bourgeois science to be "free" from any conditioning is the premise for its being enslaved to the laws of Capital; its freedom is freedom to sell its discoveries to the highest offer, with no regard for the objectives that may be pursued. It itself works like a business company, is structured like a company or constitutes its "research and development" sector. Objectives that contradict the company's interests and those of its identifiable shareholders, which at this point, far more than any Uncle Scrooge, lie with the world's big investment funds, in the anonymous management of an enormous and highly concentrated mass of capital, concentrated on capital that is the fruit of saving, severance pay and real capital coming from society. Science free of the objectives it works towards is the condition for its being completely enslaved to the interests of those who finance and organise it.

What is confirmed by the pandemic is not only the inconsistency of present-day science in solving human problems, since it is *misdirected* by the objectives of the company's financial plan, but its very ability to arrive at real knowledge of phenomena. In our words: ***"We argue [...] that this impotence of capitalist 'civilisation' and 'culture' to possess social and historical science is equivalent to the impotence of science in general, the knowledge of nature and the cosmos in the physical world, too. There is therefore no common metre of 'science' against which to measure our conclusions***

and those of the bourgeois world" (from our publication *"Left-Wing Communism. An Infantile Disorder"*, a condemnation of all future renegades, a commentary of Lenin's work, published in 1961 on our Italian journal "il programma comunista").

It is precisely to this presumed science that the party of Capital entrusts itself, not simply to obtain advice or consultation but to get otherwise unacceptable political decisions implemented. The Scientist, the Technician, the Expert, from the giddy heights of their competence, take the place of the black-shirt Tyrant and they are the Monsters of the Third millennium. In Italy, the super-experts of the CTS (Scientific-Technical Committee), elevated to the stature of sole and unchallenged interpreters of the health crisis, are spreading an alarm-mongering interpretation, just as the interpretation of the public debt crisis was alarm-mongering and brought super-experts like Monti (Professor of Economics at the Bocconi University in Milan) into government. Now, as then, the technicians are presented as the saviours of the Fatherland from certain catastrophe, by virtue of their high academic merits.

There is a thread of continuity connecting the technical solutions of Monti's government (2012) to those of the CTS that today's rulers depend upon: the crisis must be in some way *directed*, in order to deal with the factors of structural risk in society, directing them towards settlements that are better suited to capitalist needs. Monti's government bombed the health system and pensions with the excuse of the public debt and today Monti is rewarded by the WHO with the Presidency of the "European Commission for Health and Sustainable Development". As a good "neo-liberist" Monti argued then that *shocks* are to be hoped for, as they make it possible to push through reforms that would otherwise be unacceptable. When he was in the government as the bearer of the

"neo-liberist" message, he declared he wished to "contribute to changing the mentality of the Italians," and thereby hoped to persuade the population by hook or by crook of the need for extreme rigour. At that time the pandemic was of a financial nature and the focus was on the crisis of the spread between governments bonds. Propaganda was sounding the alarm about the imminent risk of default which would shortly sink the country to the same level as wretched Greece. With the Bocconi man in the government, the financial pandemic - who'd have thought it? - suddenly ended. If the simple threat of a financial shock was enough then to push through reforms involving "blood and tears", we should be trembling at the thought of what hellish gates a pandemic like this might open up, having already brought the pension reform to its conclusion, getting rid of outdated "human capital" which is expensive to maintain and doesn't produce anything but needs. What could be more effective for changing people's minds than the *shock* the population was subjected to when helicopters circled overhead and people were even afraid to go and throw out the rubbish? Anyone who crossed the threshold of their own home was made to feel guilty of placing other people's lives at risk, of "attempted murder", of lack of scruples, lack of civil responsibility and as much of the rest of it as you can think of. Conte's government - all the more functional to capitalist interests as it was mediocre - under the pretext of protecting public health managed to transform the whole national territory into an open-air prison but did little to put the health services in any condition to respond to the "second wave". The so-called "lockdown" solution - in Italian it would be "segregation" which is an ugly word, to be avoided - can

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be enforced whenever necessary by a simple administrative act. The pandemic is perfecting the project to dismantle the public structures responsible for performing social functions. The health and education systems have only avoided collapse thanks to the sacrifices of those who work in them and the public insurance system will be hard put to it to deal with the economic crisis Covid leaves in its trail. It is difficult to believe that all this is just a coincidence, but even if this were the case, the present crisis cannot fail to be associated with an advance in the neoliberalist design which, after having weakened the capacity of public structures to respond, through the spending review, proposes to exploit their impotence to dismantle what remains of welfare and assign to Capital the vast opportunities for profit offered by basic social needs. Health is delegated to the interests of the big pharmaceutical groups controlled by top financial funds, which see vaccines as an opportunity to boost their profits with the public money that the governments at their beck and call are and have been ready to hand over without concern over the sums involved - in this case yes, striving for the utmost efficiency. Politics that shamelessly support these interests are not only the slaves of financial groups but treat human beings like a factory farm treats its cows: applying a sort of *social zoo-technology*. We are right in the midst of *biopolitics*, politics that open and close fences, mark out grazing areas, intervene widely using psychological pressure, instil an atmosphere of permanent uncertainty and fear, using conditioning by the media, the economy and health organisation in order to make individuals conform and homologate with the totalitarian reality of Capital: to sum up, we are witnessing a further step forward in the process of *taming the masses*.

Whatever ones thinks about the virus, the emergency undeniably offers Capital the opportunity of taking possession of human existence to an even greater extent

and this objective cannot do without a political turn tending towards the overall reorganisation of society in a strongly authoritarian sense. What it has been possible to achieve in terms of restrictions on individual and social freedom represents a precedent from which it is difficult to retrace your steps.¹²

Technopower in the “factory society”

The process of capitalist concentration also brings with it political (State) concentration, and, as happens in the field of production, technological development is itself a factor and a product of this concentration. Today the Capitalist State's institutions have a technical capacity available that makes it possible to concentrate and manage an enormous amount of information and tools of widespread social control, and the pandemic crisis has propelled the possibility for trying out and broadening this capacity in view of increasingly focused, individualised control. The same procedures for tracking infections and vaccinations can

become intermediaries for collecting data on genetic patrimonies and even for *intervention* on individuals' health conditions, with effects in terms of the conditioning and directing of behaviour. Imagining limitations on freedom of movement or firing people who refuse tracing or vaccination is not science fiction; nor is it science fiction to foresee blocking the current accounts of subjects who resist conditioning, worse still if they have a tendency to rebel. All this is technically possible and has been for some time and the spirit of the age commands that what *can* be done, *must* be done, just as what *can* be produced *must* be produced even if - like the atom bomb - it opens up an apocalyptic scenario (see Gunther Anders, *Humankind is old-fashioned*). The mere possibility of doing something, however terrible, renders it already present, current, not only as a threat but as *ongoing* conditioning of human affairs. All the potential contained in the technical tools Capital holds in its hands weighs on humanity like a presence that places it at the mercy of the folly

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12. Whether the pandemic has been a little gift of coincidence or the fruit of deliberate action does not change the reality of things, and in the end is only of relative importance. By embracing the former hypothesis or simply neglecting the question we free ourselves of the accusation of being “conspiracy theorists” but we do not take the opportunity to find out something more about our enemies and their range of action. The history of Capital is full of conspiracies, from the Sarajevo attack to our “State murders”, from the non-existent “weapons of mass destruction” to the “State-Mafia” negotiations in Italy. Should we really be surprised by our enemies' brutality and lack of scruples? The very term “conspiracy theorist” comes from eloquent origins. After the assassination of J.F. Kennedy, the American government had to face criticism from a part of the press that called into question the story of the facts provided by the government commission (the Warren Commission), from which various anomalies emerged. To get themselves out of a corner, the CIA came up with a highly effective “linguistic” strategy: instead of entering into the merits of the polemics in terms of content, the challengers were labeled “en bloc” as “conspiracy theorists”, and written off as such. This same solution is applied in all fields where a few pains-in-the-ass call into question the mainstream version of critical issues. The use of a pejorative expression to identify an enemy force is the first and fundamental means for defeating it. By using this system, today the “no vax” and “negationists” have all been lumped together on the black list. This doesn't mean that low-quality “conspiracy theory” does not exist. It certainly does, and is growing fast, but this is simply the other face of the mainstream voice, whose entire function is to give value to the sordid bullshit passed off as “truth” by information at the service of power. What is not permissible is to call into question “truths” based on facts. And so demented “conspiracy theories” are most welcome in order to chuck all the criticism into the same old hotpot. The establishment clowns contribute to the attempt to condition the masses by targeting the stereotype of the crazy conspiracy theorist. A pity for them that the price to pay for *satire at the service of power* is that it doesn't make anyone laugh.

of a historically condemned class whose ambition is to shape the world to its pleasure, condemning it both to a present that is constantly changing but without a future and to the “end of History”, the perpetuation of capital.

To this enormous concentration of technological power in the hands of the State – an integral part of the great economic concentrations and their faithful executive – corresponds society’s tendency to break down into isolated individuals for whom social contact, reduced to a minimum, is replaced by the increase in online connections. The imposition of lockdown is strictly correlated to boosting and generalising the use of IT in society at all levels, from healthcare to education, from public administration to work. For concentrated capital there are enormous advantages: unlimited possibilities for the control and conditioning of social behaviour; the increase in productivity in all fields from factories to service industries; the apportionment of the labour force and extension of labour’s subordination to capital by means of technology; the reduction of social spaces where a sense of belonging can still be felt; the progressive destruction of small-scale production and trade; limitation of the possibilities for the harmonious physical and mental development of the new generations, the most likely to challenge the world and now demoted to terminals of the IT Leviathan.

What has this dystopian scenario to do with the class struggle? A great deal! Right from its origins Capital has reacted to the resistance of the proletariat against exploitation by means of technological innovations. Marx talks about this in the section of the first book of *Capital* devoted to the production of relative surplus value. Technology has always been the weapon used by Capital at all levels against the proletariat to affirm and consolidate its rule, so much so, that the first organised workers’ reactions were directed against the machines (see Marx, *Capital*, Book

I). If it hadn’t been for the workers’ resistance to exploitation, capitalists wouldn’t have had any interest in developing machinism; in this sense, technological development *is the result of the class struggle*, and, being a product of human labour which Capital has taken possession of, the main tool for subordinating labour to Capital. Wars, both widespread and the myriad of local conflicts, have provided the opportunities for bringing onto the battlefield the most advanced techniques of mass murder and destruction, but they have also been a laboratory for experimenting technological innovations with direct effects on production for civilian purposes in all fields. The fact that the principal technological innovations - including the Internet - have emerged from military research centres says a lot about their objectives. From IT to robotics, from biotechnology to linguistics, Capital’s laboratories churn out as many weapons against the proletariat and the more the proletariat extends, the more these weapons are directed against the species.

In Marx’s day machines were confined to the places of production. Marx saw in them the *embodiment of a social relation* which allowed Capital to extract a greater amount of surplus value from the individual worker and increase productivity, at the same time imposing on the factory its own rule in terms of the timing, pace and mode of production. By means of the machine, the worker was robbed of his capacity for work and deprived of control over the conditions of production. The factory system thus marked the shift from the formal subordination of work to Capital to its real subordination, to which the extraction of growing rates of surplus value corresponded. Faced with the machine, workers were obliged to adapt to the needs of the implement and make themselves appendices of it, emerging transformed in body and spirit, reduced to a tool. The only possibility of recovering their own, full humanity was to recognise themselves as members of an exploited class, organising and

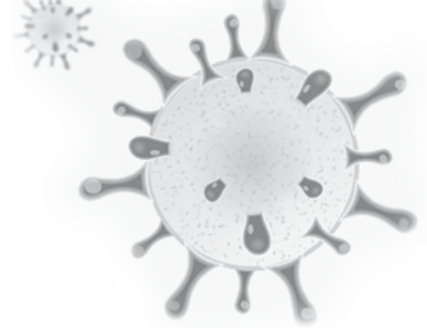
fighting to overturn this condition of subjection and annulment as a premise for their own liberation and the achievement of a full human dimension at a higher, social level.

Today machines pervade every aspect of our existence. The factory system extends everywhere there are machines that generate goods and services, wherever there is production, but also *everywhere there is consumption, because consumption, too, depends increasingly on the widespread use of tools. There are technological products that produce specific needs which can only be satisfied by technology: others satisfy essential needs like health or education... there is no aspect of life that does not imply the human being connecting to a machine. This reality inevitably produces a change in human nature and, since it makes the individual ever more dependent on the machine, renders her or him ever more dependent on Capital, increasingly “an isolated living accessory”.*

For Marx, within the process of capitalist production, work **“is a totality”** which **“offers itself to the service of an alien will and an alien intelligence, and is directed by this, [...] subordinated to the objective unit of the machine, to fixed capital, which like an animated monster objectifies scientific thought and is actually the synthesis of it, since it is not the tool that refers to the individual worker but rather the worker as a single animated point, an isolated living accessory, that exists as a function of it.”** (Marx, *The Fundamental Features of the Criticism of Political Economy*).

This “totality of work” which in Marx’s day was confined to the factory production process is constituted today by the totality of the numerous combinations in which work presents

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itself to society (think of the chain of value) and the interconnection of the networks that make production and consumption into a single generalised system. This system extends to all sorts of services and offers in which work depends on a machine which, even if physically isolated, is interconnected to every other point in the system and is nevertheless an objectified product, a synthesis of scientific thought, of which the operator, the one animated factor, is purely an accessory. If reality now appears to be the generalisation of every aspect of social life - and this might become even truer in the near future - of the dominion of Capital over human work, or even more over human life 'in toto', including work, consumption and needs, then this subordination is no longer produced mainly by a juridical relationship which testifies to the process of expropriation exercised by Capital over work, but becomes practical subordination exercised by means of the production and re-production of social life mediated by scientific thought objectified in machines.¹³ The elevation of the factory system to an overall social system is the objective basis on which it is possible to edify an emergency imposing distancing and isolation. Such wide ranging measures of such dramatic juridic import can only take shape on the basis of the real, objective possibility of consuming and producing as isolated individuals, the reduction of producers to isolated living accessories.

Another aspect to consider is that these machines are becoming increasingly autonomous and human intervention is increasingly reduced to mere support or usage. The autonomy of the machines is an expression of the autonomy of Capital in relation to human needs.

The machines must work, always and despite everything, quite apart from their apparent objective (collateral, secondary...accessory) of satisfying human needs. Indeed, this objective, amplified by the proliferation of fictitious needs, becomes the means that justifies the functioning of the gigantic production machine, which is the system's real goal. Everything is dominated by the gigantic movement of international finance, which has been assigned the objective faculty to decide what is to be produced and where, based on the necessities of profit-fuelled interests. This overall brain of Capital, entirely self-referential, also functions autonomously, depending less and less on the decisions of one power group or another and more and more on algorithms that decide in the place of people.

Nonetheless, this gigantic, impersonal apparatus of dominion is not the expression of technology's dominion over humankind, which created it, as some argue (see: Anders, cit.), but once again and always the rule of man over man, by means of technology, the rule of one class over another by means of technology. As in Marx's day, the machine continues to be the expression of a social relation that is now extended not only formally and juridically, but also in terms of its real implications outside the factory. It pervades the whole fabric of society and individual existence itself is strongly colonised by Capital. But as always reality presents itself dialectically: technological development is also the expression of the development achieved by social forces of production and in this sense it also means that the present mode of production has been outstripped. If, then, technology is used to strengthen the chains that confine humanity within the limits of a class society, it

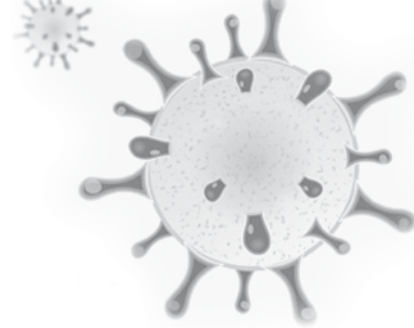
already prefigures the dissolving of them. What today is the overall brain of Capital can turn into the overall brain of the species, the elaboration of knowledge and complex data at the service of humanity. This overall brain is already able to provide possible answers to the momentous problems our species is facing, problems that capitalism has created and is incapable of addressing and solving. We are certain that, when interrogated about the tremendous threats weighing on humanity, the all-powerful computers now at the service of Capital would express in formulas the need for the shift to communism; they would say that the solutions are not to be found in the most up-to-date technological inventions but in the revolutionary leap into the society of the future. Vice-versa, the solutions that the all-powerful machines can give whilst still respecting the narrow limits of the present relations of production can only aim to conserve them, tighten the chains of oppression and perpetrate the preconditions for catastrophe.

Plan for Capital and plan for the species

We do not yet have access to such powerful forecasting machinery, but even limiting ourselves to the ideas of simple human beings, we find interesting confirmation. Faced with the unprecedented proportions of this crisis, but even more so by the quality of it, even amongst Keynesian economists the idea is gaining ground that far more is needed than a limited intervention in public spending to increase incomes and employment, efficiently managing all the contradictions of the present and facing the future challenges that await humanity: instead, general, worldwide planning is required.¹⁴ In our own words, a plan for the species is necessary. This as yet timid deviation from the limits that the system of bourgeois science imposes on its faithful is still a long

13. The subject might be developed by considering the process of real subordination that is going on as the objective, material basis for progressively dissolving the juridical pillars that uphold modern States and the basis for the increasing weight being gained by organisms that are an expression of the science of Capital organised around multinationals.

14. Emiliano Brancaccio, *Catastrofe o rivoluzione*, Il Ponte (cit. in Sinistrainrete).



way off the consolidated tradition of two centuries of revolutionary Marxism, and still regards the attitude of the intellectual who claims or aims to make who-knows-what “discovery” or “rediscovery” and take the merit for it: but *if we ignore these aspects we must see in these statements the effect exerted by the force of events driving increasing numbers of people of different extractions to stumble, without realising it, towards Revolution. Of course, taking a look around, there is something for everyone but the route for reallocating individual forces induced by the violent process of economic popularisation has begun at the theoretical and political level.*

Even more suggestive is the fact that the very class enemy seems to want a general, worldwide plan. Incredibly enough, even the party of Capital seems to have reached the conclusion that a radical change is needed in the physiognomy of the economic and social system, which has no future as it now stands. According to Klaus Schwab, founder and Head of the Executive Committee of the World Economic Forum: “The COVID-19 crisis is affecting all areas of life for people in all corners of the world. But tragedy is not necessarily all it bequeathes us. On the contrary, it represents a rare but narrow window of opportunity for reflecting and re-thinking our world from scratch, to create a healthier, fairer and more prosperous future”.

Cleared of the hypocritical rhetoric of these people, in the end this is about an ambitious plan that foresees radical changes in the political and social balance in order to make it conform to the interests of big concentrations of finance. Well aware of the new and devastating financial crisis looming, Capital’s élites have taken on the gigantic task of reprogramming the world, or carrying out a “Great Reset” to guarantee their own safety, passing it off as the same as humanity’s. Their programme is structured in certain fundamental points:

- 1) A model of “green” development: the abandonment of the development model based on unlimited exploitation of raw materials and mass consumption, replacing it with a “green” model that foresees the generalised use of alternative energy sources and shift to more “sustainable” production. This conversion to the ecological does not stem from the need to “save the environment”, but to renovate the exhausted sources of profit weighed down by over-production, surplus debt and plunging profit/interest rates. The shift to new forms of energy consumption and new sorts of production (the Fourth industrial revolution) will involve enormous destruction of capital and, just as the élites are hoping, new bases for the recovery of the cycle of accumulation, starting out from “green” investments.
- 2) Artificial Intelligence: the “ecological” conversion will not be able to do without the introduction of new technologies in all fields, from production to transport, from education to healthcare. All fields in which production and services will increasingly become “remote” or home-based, reducing transport and movement to a minimum: from mobility of people and goods there will be a shift to mobility of information and data. In the new order, the big change will be brought about by upturning the relationship between human beings and machines, which today finds its most advanced form in Artificial Intelligence: it will no longer be human beings that control the machine/computer and use it to their advantage but the machine/computer that controls the human being, in a general system of tracing, controlling and conditioning.
- 3) Shift from property to renting (Uberisation): individuals belonging to the proletarianised masses will tend to make less use of personal property and pay more

rents, leases and subscriptions to a growing range of goods and services. The consequence of this removal of the right to property is that it will tend to be transformed into capital, a source of profit and income, all that is involved in the needs of human life. The financial system will progressively acquire everything that might be transformed into a source of profit or income. The digitalisation of money takes its place in this same context. The élites themselves foresee that in capitalistically advanced countries the advent of the Fourth industrial revolution will involve *800 million workers being expelled* and replaced by new technologies. This further, drastic reduction in the contribution made to production by human work will mean that a large part of the population, the part not stably integrated into the new technological balance or the part without an income, will be stably placed in a precarious condition, marginalised and managed with new and sophisticated instruments of social control. As well as providing for repression and surveillance, the State will also be given the role of collaborating with “private” agents through the financing of projects proposed by them. We have already seen examples of this “public-private” partnership in the race to finance the purchase of millions of face masks every day produced by FCA and to sign contracts with Big Pharma for the purchase of vaccines even before they had passed all the control procedures. We conclude these few comments on the so-called Great Reset – a subject impossible to deal with here in detail – by emphasising how perfectly coherent it is with what we experienced in 2020, “annus horribilis”, in terms of reduction in consumption, less

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travelling, *smart working*, the depredation of wide sectors of small businesses, dissolution of the premises of parliamentary democracy¹⁵.

The advent of the “pandemic” has marked an acceleration in capitalist development towards new balances in which the management of contradictions will be entrusted to a recurrent or permanent “state of exception”. The “state of exception” allows the international financial bourgeoisie, guided by its élites, to exercise an ever harsher rule, ranging the most advanced scientific and technological tools it has control of. *What is being done here is to adapt the political balance, the balance between classes and social, economic relations to the real conditions of capitalist dominion, enforced through its technical-scientific rule over every aspect of human life.* An Orwellian scenario could be described except that, as Marxists, we know that Capital’s attempts to impose a plan clash with the inevitable contradictions of the system. No stabilisation of capitalism is possible in the long term and nothing can save capitalism from its original flaws: the drop in the profit rate of investments, the anarchy of the market, the clash between bourgeois factions and between States, the class war.

Considering the present strength of Capital and the absence of any movement capable of contrasting its projects, we cannot exclude the possibility (1848 *Manifesto* in hand) that the outcomes of the future upheavals end up in the “ruin of all classes in the conflict”, unless the path of proletarian revolution opens up. The catastrophe could derive from an acceleration in the natural process of extinction sparked off by

the mode of interaction between the class society and the environment - which no “green” transformation will be able to modify while the capitalist régime lasts - or social chaos might prove to be unmanageable and cause an implosion and a regression to previous phases. The upheavals that take shape in developed societies might cause their disaggregation with unforeseeable results. To quote Trotsky at the IIIrd Congress of the Communist International: “... *in theory, the possibility cannot be excluded that the bourgeoisie, armed by its state apparatus and long experience may continue to fight the revolution to the point of depriving modern civilisation of every atom of vitality, until it plunges humanity into catastrophe and lasting decline.*” Today, a century later, we observe that the armour of the bourgeoisie has equipped itself with a vast apparatus of social control and conditioning and a scientific and technological system able to make a profound effect on the species’ conditions of existence. The revolutionary way out depends increasingly on an explosive encounter between the insurgence of a great, spontaneous mass movement and the maturation of the subjective factor, the Class Party, without which contradictions generate chaos and in the chaos - temporarily but effectively - the organised power of Capital.

There remains the main element that holds open the doors to the future: *Capital cannot eliminate the class war.* The bourgeoisie, as ruling class, is perfectly aware of this and that is why it fights to try and set the conditions for the clash and oblige its historical enemy to *take the defensive* and place it in the condition of not being able to respond. In the light of the great transformations going on in the state of the social

situation and in production, we shall witness a further concentration of the concentration of Capital on the one hand and the expropriation of a large part of society on the other. Tomorrow’s society will be marked by extreme polarisation which will threaten present social relations, and Capital is hastening to manage the new scenario with all the political, ideological, technical, sanitary and economic means it has available. The crisis has reached such a point that, on closer observation, it obliges the bourgeois élites to anticipate some aspects of future society in their “plan”, in the attempt to make these into props for supporting the system. Deindustrialisation and reduction in the consumption of useless transportation and in polluting factors already means placing some limits on the development of Capital, which the system will find it hard to tolerate. The shift from private property and ownership to access to the use of goods is destined to clear the field of the bourgeois prejudice that private property is a person’s absolute right, closely connected to their personal freedom, and not a burden, a limitation of the possibility to live a free and fully social existence. Even more significant is *recognition of the fact that live human work is sidelined in the formation of value and the working hours necessary for the production and re-production of society’s conditions of existence are reduced to a minimum.* This is equivalent to acknowledging the disappearance of the basic condition at the origin of the capitalist mode of production: the appropriation of human work as a source of valorisation. Lastly, the perspective of a transformation of money into something very different from what it is today is the prelude to its *disappearance.* The “*explosive*” aspect of the present trend lies in all these objective “anticipations”: *at the point it has now reached, the capitalist mode of production not only anticipates certain aspects of future society but must force itself to*

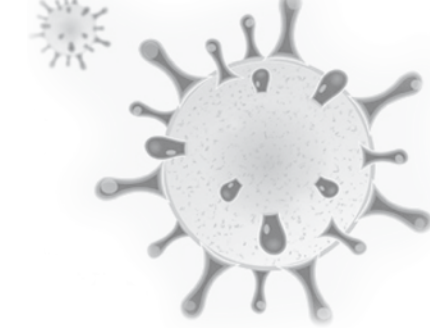
15. <https://www.byoblu.com/2020/11/12/covid-19-i-retroscena-piu-inquietanti-chi-chi-guadagna-sonia-savioli/>. Amongst the many other interventions here, there is also an interview with Guido Salerno Aletta, on Vox Italia youtube. Apart from these interpretations, which might attract accusations of conspiracy theory, there is also the whole of the official documentation that can be consulted on the site of the World Economic Forum: www.weforum.org/great-reset/

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develop them, attempting to contain them within limits of compatibility.

This whole, unrealistic “plan of Capital” converges into the objective of reducing all human society to a source of profit and income to compensate for the main source of profit drying up, i.e. human work, and, if it is successful, it will reveal itself as the triumph of an intolerable anti-humanism with no future prospects,

a mass expropriation leading towards extreme concentration and extreme social polarisation. Revolutions come about – Lenin reminds us in *Left-Wing Communism* (1920) – when “*the upper layers of society cannot do as they did in the past*”, and this condition is declared between the lines in the “Great Reset”. We know that Capital will fight to the end, tooth and nail, to preserve the present relations of production



in the presence of economic and social conditions that have amply outstripped them.

History must therefore prepare for a new, decisive watershed that will inevitably be marked by the recovery of the class war, not for temporary victories, but for life or death.

Ideological preparation for the next war

We are not interested here in entering into controversy “pro/against vaccination”, a pretext exploited exclusively for squalid political ends, (especially in times of elections: and when are we not facing elections in the sacred régime of a democratic mechanism?). On the other hand, we know quite well that bourgeois science in all its variations, including pseudo-sciences, is subject to the laws of profit and competition, in a word to the capitalist economy: the excessive power of the pharmaceutical industry, the fact that research depends wholly on private and public financing, the drastic cuts to non-productive spending (including that on healthcare), total subjection to the conservation of the capitalist mode of production, etc. etc. Don’t let us forget the authentic disaster of the headlong rush towards the use and abuse of antibiotics (with the result of “having to invent” increasingly powerful ones), the now forgotten tragedy of Thalidomide (the sedative that caused serious malformation of the limbs in over ten thousand children), the obscure episode of Cronassial (the “miracle drug” based on bovine brain tissue, amongst the most widely sold in Italy, which before being taken off the market because of suspected severe side effects, partly following the outbreak of the so-called “mad cow” epidemic, counted a celebrated Italian Nobel prize-winner amongst its sponsors), the so-called “opioid crisis” (which accounted for over half

a million deaths in twenty years and because of which the now celebrated Johnson & Johnson along with three other American pharmaceutical companies were obliged to “settle”)... Only a handful of “famous cases”, which should make us reflect and understand that we are far removed from the science of the human race, which is only possible in a classless society, in communism!

We are not even interested in entering into another argument, just as specious and “political” which, on opposing sides, means to set “individual freedom” against “the well-being of the community”: polemics that hypocritically conceal the exemplary fact that on the one hand the much celebrated “bourgeois individual” is entirely dependent on the economic-social dynamics of capitalist economy, like a simple cork caught up in the streaming river of Capital, and, on the other hand, in a society divided into classes there is no homogeneous “community” that does not suffer, day by day, minute by minute, the effects of social and cultural splits running through the whole of bourgeois society characterised by the war of all against all, by different and conflicting interests, by tensions impossible to resolve within the framework of the *status quo*. It is banal to recall that the clandestine “community” of tomato pickers slaving fifteen hours a day and sleeping in tin huts is not

the same one of those who enjoy a steady job and a regular salary; that the “community” of those who from the very beginning of the pandemic were obliged to work in the authentic hotbeds of infection constituted by the factories or logistics warehouses is not the same as the one formed by those who can enjoy a solid pension and afford expensive medical fees...

To sum up, *we are not* “all in the same boat”! What is “individual freedom” then, or “the well-being of the community” under the Iron Heel of Capital and its unavoidable laws, which are expressed and implemented through the State-gendarme?!

What interests us, instead, is to emphasize the increasingly evident dynamics to which we have returned several times in our press and which the “pandemic shock” has accelerated and aggravated: the ideological preparation for future war. To whose who are not completely blinded, deafened and stultified by the drums and bugles of the media, it must be more than evident that in the space of just over a year during which the pandemic roamed the world, one of the main preoccupations of the ruling class by means of its State/s was to impose on its citizens total obedience to any “health” measure (even the most irrational or the most

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approximative or contradictory), using a head-splitting campaign of denunciation and reporting intended to locate the “uncooperative”, “the different”, in the name of a “unity of intention” that does not exist and *cannot exist* in this society.

Right from the start of the establishment and progressive exasperation of the “state of emergency”, which continues to exist, the bourgeois State (in its national variations) has introduced increasingly repressive measures to “fight the virus” (!) and isolate all those who fail to comply with them (interpreted as: the *non-patriots*). An authentic *field drill*, formidable in its capillary nature, since it can count on all the means of communication, persuasion and control the ruling class has at its fingertips: the radio, television, the press, the *social media*, schools, churches of all faiths, the medical profession (as argumentative as ever within its own confines but united in the work of terrorism), the police and the army, day-to-day language, “common opinion”, “good sense”, the neighbours, the “man on the street”... Right up to the invention of the so-called Green Pass, initially conceived by the French government and gradually introduced into various other countries, which has provoked numerous, vociferous reactions of various types. In particular in Italy the Green Pass has been clamoured for by Confindustria, the Italian Manufacturers’ Association (with the establishment unions giving their consensus as long as it all happens according to... a law passed by the State!), which would like to see it strictly applied in all workplaces: i.e. with the threat of demotion, suspension without pay, or even layoff.

Briefly, a little present for the bosses, who recur to it so that they are able to select and cut their labour force as they wish, at the same time causing useful divisions inside it, without having to always resort to “unpopular” shows of strength. What could one possibly fail to do in the name of the ... “community” ... the “civic sense of responsibility”!

What is all this if not an anticipation, a dress rehearsal (not so much planned and/or plotted around a table but *the conditioned reflex of centuries-old experience of dominion*), of what the bourgeois State will do when another “enemy” appears on the horizon and another war will threaten “our dear Fatherland”.

As we are constantly remarking, in all corners of the world there are increasing signs of an accumulation of explosive material destined for a new world conflagration: the persistent economic crisis, the growing inter-imperialist tensions, the constant regional wars in which the leading States are involved either directly or by proxy, the constant increase in military spending in the budgets of all countries. When the breaking point comes, the ideological-patriotic mobilization will be directed and enacted with bloodshed against all those who, instinctively or consciously, for ethical reasons or due to their political orientation, in various ways oppose the umpteenth bloodbath intended to destroy the excess that has been produced and is engulfing the market (human beings included) and thus ensure a new cycle of brutal capitalist accumulation—that is, unless the level of destruction and self-destruction reached by the capitalist machinery

has not caused “the common ruin of the contending classes” (*Manifesto of the Communist Party*, “Chap. I: Bourgeois and proletarians”).

We communists will (as from today) have to fight to spread, and when it becomes possible, to organise *revolutionary defeatism*, the only tool able to block or obstacle the war effort, in the arduous but increasingly necessary prospective of opening up *another path* for the tormented human race: the one finally leading to a classless society – to communism. In fact *revolutionary defeatism* is not generic “pacifism” nor an appeal to individual “conscientious objection”, but the difficult and patient work of reintroducing into the proletarian class a sense of the need and practice of a collective refusal to be subjected to the “superior demands of the Nation” both in the field of economics and work, and in that of military strategy, thus opposing *its own conscious and organized strength* to the power of the ruling class. And we shall be the “plague spreaders”, the “traitors of the Fatherland”, those “in the pay of the enemy”, those who stand “against the community”, the adversaries of the “holy union of all, against the enemy”.

The national States are already taking steps in this direction. It is time to become aware of this and take the other path, starting right away to react in an organised way against the repressive, anti-proletarian measures implicit in the “state of emergency” - but above all working with devotion and passion to strengthen and root the revolutionary party internationally.

July-August 2021

1921. Communist Party of Italy. A Section of the Communist International

The war for revolution and a class dictatorship continues without respite.

Work on organizing the party of the international communist revolution proceeds incessantly

Of that far-off and fatal January 1921 we shall read, see, hear accounts, reconstructions, judgements, every shade of opinion of every sort. They all share the unconfessed and unconfessable fear that on the scenario of contemporary and future events, we may see the reappearance of the economic, social and political conditions that made it necessary to organize our class into that Party of the World Communist Revolution, of which the party founded in Leghorn was the Italian section.

We shall not add our voice to the mummified psalm singers with a nostalgia for heroic past times, made exceptional and therefore collocated forever in collections of opportunities irretrievably lost. We are not interested in commemorating; we are not interested in re-evoking.

Our war, today's war, that is being prepared and prepares to fight the battles of tomorrow, does also pass through the coming up again, in the now century-old history of the proletarian movement, of the decisive role played as an organized, pugnacious force by the comrades who preceded us. And for a detailed knowledge of the struggle of those years, we refer the reader to the volumes of our *Storia della Sinistra Comunista (History of the Communist Left)*. Our, we repeat and insist, because we have learnt, at the cost of the lives of those who fell in the Proletarian Revolution, that if there may exist a "neutral" analytical account of the temporal chain of events or a "hagiography" of the figures who experienced them, the political use made of history for the militant preparation of the cadres of the revolutionary class organ *also* passes through the appropriation of the collective and purposely anonymous experience of those, before and like us, who declared *war (permanent up until victory)* on the horrendous world of Capital.

Our history is not and never will be the hypocritical neutrality of the academic. Instead, it is a vital part of restoring the revolutionary class organ, which comes about through sharing the experiences of those who, by accompanying and guiding our class in the historical battle between revolution and counter-revolution, have managed to profit from the (up to now!) scarce victories and not surrender in the dramatic (but momentary!) defeats.

For us communists working on *the hard job of restoring the doctrine of the revolutionary organ in contact with the working class, outside any personal and electoral politicking*, Leghorn 1921 (just as the organization two

years previously of the Communist International, where those tenacious comrades, then only in their early thirties, were not simple spectators but enthusiastic and keenly aware participants) *is not an anniversary, but a stage in the revolutionary process*.

A point of arrival that verifies and confirms the capacity and validity of historical materialism as a science of the social becoming in which *humanity* is an un/aware protagonist, and at the same time a point of departure for completing and organizing with increasing efficiency the work of directing and developing the social becoming that *weighs on the shoulders of our class*.

As materialists, called upon today to pursue that work *so harshly put to the test by the defeat of the revolutionary wave which, in the early years of the nineteen hundreds seemed about to finally overcome bourgeois order*, we have fully understood that to make the recovery of the revolutionary effort operational, it is necessary to keep well away from the illusion that it is sufficient to memorize, repeat, reproduce pieces of text and programmes as if they were mantras, "surahs of the Qur'an" or spiritual exercises.

Thus, in the following, we suggest once again the *ten points* on the basis of which the Communist Party of Italy – Section of the Communist International was born in Leghorn, as a *weapon and guide* for the battle that our class will be called upon to fight in different, and far more difficult conditions. Conditions and difficulties that will allow the revolutionaries of tomorrow to render operational the full, international communist programme that we have promoted and defended up to now beneath the blows of the counter-revolution.

"1. In the present capitalist régime a growing contrast develops between the productive forces and the relations of production, giving rise to an antithesis of interests and the class war between the proletariat and the ruling bourgeoisie."

This is the *incipit* that opens the programme of the Communist Party of Italy – Section of the Communist International, a statement that takes up and defends the basis of the materialistic concept of history: "In the social production of their existence, men enter into determined, necessary relations independent of their will, namely into relations of production which correspond to a determined degree of development of the material productive forces."

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(K.Marx, "Preface to 1859" in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*).

Relations of production. Relations between human beings – *members of a species of mammals, animals ethologically grouped in packs, in which the conditions of survival and reproduction of each are the cause and effect of the capacity of them all to collaborate on the solution of problems that the surrounding world poses for the satisfaction of the needs of each of them.* Relations which, in the framework of the capitalist mode of production, express themselves in the conflict between the two main classes: the *bourgeoisie*, which has a private monopoly of the ownership of the forces of production (including the human labour force) and the product of their use in modern associative, social work, and the *proletariat*, i.e. the immense mass deprived of any factor of production apart from its own psycho-physical individual labour which, precisely because of its associative use in the production process, is the origin of all "wealth."

But what is this conflict? Of course its origin is evident in this age when, with everyone reduced to an individual, the difference between living and dying is *mediated* by money: *the survival of the great majority lies in the elementary need to wrest a price for labour that is increasingly adequate for the purchase of everything needed.*

Yet the modern class struggle expresses another objective that starts out from the need for a fairer division of the wealth produced by associative work in order to break the monopoly on the ownership of the productive forces and their product.

As the "wealth" derives from associative, social production, the objective is a mode of production in which its division, distribution and consumption may also be social and associative: *communism*

"2. The present production relations are protected and defended by the power of the bourgeois State which, founded on the representative system of democracy, constitutes the organ for defending the interests of the capitalist class."

The modern world of capitalist production, as we know it in its fully imperialist phase, is the outcome of a long and violent process, sustained by the bourgeoisie, which, using the progressive power of the productive forces it gradually instigated, invented, applied, upset the relations of production existing up to then (given its European, above all "feudal" origins), replacing them with those that now imprison us: salaried work, the organization of production units into companies, free commerce and the ownership and complete transferability of property by means of money...and all the rest.

To defend them, give them unending guarantees and narrate them as the natural expression and extension of the "human essence", it then set itself up as the ruling class, organizing the contemporary bourgeois State.

As for all States (tools of the classes that have in turn ruled the scene in known history), the main function of

ruling is *the monopoly of violence*, which is exercised by means of a permanent army and police force. The latter is also a tool of *another monopoly, that of justice*, held by the "judiciary power" which takes upon itself the task of ensuring that the laws are applied, of sanctioning any breaches and justifying "equality before the law"... Rule is exercised moreover, and better, by forms and institutions that contrast and try to prevent economic and social conflict, or maintain them within the limits of political clashes compatible with the existing order of things: whilst the police forces oversee and are let loose ferociously and with impunity in the squares and the streets, the bureaucracy of the police headquarters and prefectures, those of local authorities, party officials and (above all) the officially recognized trade unions present themselves as the organs of mediation, arbitrators and guarantors of the respect for rules that is supposed to guarantee the "common good".

To exercise and disguise its *class rule*, the bourgeoisie narrates itself as the source and guarantee of well-being for everyone, as the "general class": significantly, one of its main reference texts is entitled *The Wealth of Nations*. The organization of this class rule is rooted in the constitution of the national State: it mystifies the stratification of (and amongst) the classes by inventing the "citizen", who is an individual undertaking, the owner of that political right and, as such, "free" to take it into the marketplace of democratic representation. But just like the "free market" that Business and Economy graduates fantasize about, it is a mystification of the monopoly of bourgeois ownership of money, land, machines, raw materials, goods and services (that same ownership that imposes the sale of our labour to a single buyer), as democratic representation, too, is a *mystification of the bourgeois monopoly on the exercise of political power*. And just as the "free" worker enjoys the "freedom" to sell his labour to the organization of Capital that will make use of him at its will (otherwise he remains "free" to die of hunger under the stars or live off charity), so in his guise of "free" citizen, he enjoys the freedom to delegate his potential political ability to the institutions of bourgeois representation. In both cases, reduced to an isolated individual, he is bound to lose, to hand over to others, to alienate himself from two of the aptitudes that characterize us as human beings: *work*, or the ability to produce and re-produce by acting on the resources given by the natural world, and sociality, or the possibility to find joint solutions to the problems posed by the natural world and by associative life.

"3. The proletariat cannot break or modify the system of capitalist relations of production that its exploitation derives from, without the violent overthrowing of bourgeois power."

The modern class struggle is not an invention of rowdy good-for-nothings, envious of other people's goods. The antithesis between capital and labour is a proven, scientific

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fact that is also acknowledged precisely by the bourgeois class, which spends 99% of its political and ideological energies (*the structure of rule*, indeed) on maintaining it and containing it within the confines of its own survival. Acknowledging it just means recording the bare fact of what the proletariat is in this society: *a class in itself*, indeed a mass of individuals, a tool of the capitalist mode of production.

But this antagonism is also something else and more powerful, if, beyond being acknowledged, it is analysed and taken to the extreme. It is the cause that obliges and determines our class to free itself from exploitation: to become a *class of its own*, i.e. the army for the violent destruction of bourgeois state power.

This third point announces and reiterates the condemnation of the *enemy*, which, having sown and reaped artfully in the rank and file of our class, rises up every time the most intelligent part of the bourgeoisie cultivates the illusion that it is possible to limit the antagonism between capital and labour with a fairer re-distribution of wealth and an improvement in living and working conditions or cultural advance: *reformism*. Reformism that was raised and fattened in the parties of the “Second” (socialist?) International, on the basis of the *apparent*, unstoppable economic expansion of the passage from Capital’s as yet *liberal/liberist* phase to the fully *monopolist/imperialist* one. The very reformism responsible, in 1914, for the sacrifice of the proletariat on the altar of the Fatherland/Nation, in chains, as a class in itself, in the butchery of the inter-imperialist world war. The very reformism that, when the revolutionary rebellion exploded, proved to be a *perfect tool* of bourgeois reaction and conservatism, of the reinforcement of bourgeois power and the consolidation of the bourgeois State.

“4. The essential organ of the proletariat’s revolutionary struggle is the political class party. The communist party, by uniting within it the most advanced and aware part of the proletariat, unites the efforts of the working-class masses, turning them from the fight for their group interests and contingent results, towards the fight for the revolutionary emancipation of the proletariat. The party has the task of spreading revolutionary consciousness in the masses, of organizing the material means of action and directing the proletariat in carrying forward the fight.”

It is *material conditions* that oblige the proletariat to fight: *objective conditions that are not always the same* but dynamic variables, like any natural phenomenon. Conditions that express relations, the outcome of which depends on the ability to understand and direct them.

Through its experiences of clashes with the ruling class and its apparatus, our class changes from a bunch of individuals to becoming the *subject of political action* when a significant quota organizes itself into a Party.

Not, however, any party, any old apparatus representing the interests of the workers in the framework of the existing

order or a workers’ party which, by acknowledging the relations of Capital as natural and exalting the function of “productive work”, makes the “working class condition” eternal: those cursed reformist parties that exploit and imprison proletarian needs and energies, perpetuating bourgeois rule.

The party that is needed is the revolutionary party. The party that brings together and organizes our class’s best energies. The party founded with the *Communist Party Manifesto* of 1848, whose reason for being will not come to an end until the historical path of our proletarian and communist revolution has been concluded: i.e. the party of those who “fight to achieve the aims and immediate interests of the working class but in the present movement simultaneously represent the future of the movement itself,” and who “distinguish themselves by the fact that, on the one hand, in the various national battles, they bring to the limelight and stress the common interests of the entire proletariat independently of nationality and who, on the other hand, in the various stages of development that the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie goes through, always represent the interests of the movement as a whole.”

What is indicated by Leghorn 1921, confirmed by and in the experience of those years of *international struggle*, is that this party cannot be improvised on the barricades of an *ongoing* proletarian rebellion, precisely because its guiding function is not the fruit of metaphysical mechanics in the inevitable course of history.

Organization into the form of a revolutionary party is necessary because, even in periods when our class passively undergoes bourgeois rule, its function is to *prepare it for revolution*, so that it can then be directed and guided once the revolutionary process has been engaged. *Communists don’t make the revolution, the proletarian class makes the revolution.* The Communist Party can direct the class in the revolutionary process *only if* it has *prepared the class for the revolution* day by day, in the daily contact with and in its struggles, in the years and decades before the revolution, outside and against the demagogic political rot).

Communist militants can’t allow themselves the luxury of waiting for the party to fall out of the heavens or, worse, emerge from the guts of the class struggle. *Communists must struggle, fight, act: work to defend, develop and apply communist theory, the communist principles, the communist programme with tactics and an organization that are as clear and well defined as possible.*

“5. World war, caused by the irremediable inner contradictions of the capitalist system, which have produced modern imperialism, has opened up a crisis of disaggregation of capitalism, in which class war can only be resolved by armed conflict between the working-class masses and the power of the bourgeois States.”

Through its “cultural operators” (from teachers at all

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levels of education to writers of literature, passing through ministers of all cults, technicians, scientists, graduates in Business and Economy, right up to all those working in the world of mass communications), the bourgeoisie narrates its world as being “the only possible world”: perhaps not yet “the best of all possible worlds” in view of the constant effort to “reform it”, but in any case a world where market dynamics generate “overall balance between the needs” (progressively satisfied by the plethora of goods produced) of everyone (money permitting), and the organization of the State guarantees “the good of the national community”.

During periods of economic expansion, as after 1871 or the one experienced between 1945 and the second half of the Nineteen Seventies, this was a plausible mystification: but the very dynamics of the Capital’s functioning and its private way of dividing out and distributing the products of associative work *inexorably unmask it*. The organization of industry, the plethora of goods, state organization generate the need to procure raw materials, place products, win and create markets ... and, naturally, reduce the cost of labour to the minimum.

There is no peaceful equilibrium, but instead a dynamic of trade wars, diplomatic agreements, wars between States. Increasingly ferocious wars which, like the one that broke out in 1914, are even able to unmask the mystification of the national community and reveal its real function as a machine of violent control by the bourgeois State; wars that, before resolving themselves into the mass destruction of people and things, from which the cycle of accumulation of capital can then start again, may set the conditions for a military crisis (defeats and victories paid for by gallons of proletarian blood), which in turn can evolve into a social and political crisis into which the class war penetrates right up to the point where *the proletariat is forced into revolution*.

These are the “historical turning points”, which and for which the Communist Party has been organizing, preparing and fighting for some time. In the awareness that there is no guarantee of victory, since the revolution opens with a day’s uprising but proceeds through battles in a war that goes on for years.

“6. After overthrowing bourgeois power, the proletariat can only organize itself into a ruling class with the destruction of the bourgeois state apparatus and the establishment of its own dictatorship, that is by grounding State representations upon the productive bases and excluding the bourgeois class from any political rights.”

“7. In the proletarian State the form of political representation is the system of workers’ (workers’ and agricultural labourers’) Councils, already formed in the Russian Revolution, the beginning of the world proletarian Revolution and the first stable realization of the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

These two points unequivocally define the objective of the revolutionary process: *the overthrowing of bourgeois*

power. They reaffirm the need to eliminate the political rule of the bourgeoisie without the ambiguity of the parties of the Second International, which “confused” the overthrowing of power with “the winning of power”, i.e. of public powers. This confusion turns into, *first, complicity* with the personal politics of the parties which, in the mediation of representative democracy, represent the interests of various factions of the bourgeoisie, and *then* conservation, the *reactionary replacement* of those political figures in the same institutes (naturally without moving even one official in the whole bureaucratic, administrative, military and judicial “machinery”...) Confusion, ambiguity, complicity that will from then on characterize every enemy of our class, also and above all when they claims to interpret, represent, defend our interests, even in a conflictual manner, in the framework of the national State.

On the contrary, overthrowing the institutions of bourgeois power and setting up the *dictatorship of our class* means eliminating the bourgeoisie and removing any of its “rights”, both as a social class and as a sum of individuals and functions.

The Leghorn programme is extremely clear here. The new “representations” are not to be based on the interests of a generic citizen, but on those of the people who are part of the production base: i.e. *who take part in associative work*. To avoid any misunderstanding or stupid accusations of male chauvinism, we repeat that for us all proletarian women are *a full and integral part of associative work*, also, and particularly, those whom the bourgeois division of labour has forced into domestic work or the work of care.

During this revolutionary moment the party *directs the class*, organizing and giving content to the workers’ Councils, the basic institution for our class rule, *the dictatorship of the proletariat*: an experience matured and modified by the revolution in Russia, acclaimed as the beginning of the *world revolution*.

The lesson of 1921 is quite clear: *the revolution overthrows the institutions that characterize the bourgeois State as a national community and organizes itself into institutions that spark off freedom from national confinement, even if, for the moment, they limit themselves to controlling a particular territory*.

The system of workers’ Councils during the revolution in Russia was not some strange form of “socialism in *salse tartare*” but the first experiment in the universal form of *transition* to communism (first lower and then higher) by a new humanity freed from the prisons of the bourgeois nations.

“8. The necessary defence of the proletarian State against all counter-revolutionary attempts can only be ensured by taking all means of agitation or political propaganda away from the bourgeoisie and by the armed organization of the proletariat in order to resist internal and external attacks.”

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In order to avoid misunderstandings, at this point the characteristics and function of the proletarian State are established, as it becomes a tool with which the proletariat pursues the *work of destroying bourgeois relations of production*, starting necessarily by reinforcing the new military and political institutions.

Just as, before the insurrection, the party prepares the class for revolutionary uprising and, while the process of insurrection is going on, guides it towards the revolutionary seizing of power; in both cases qualifying itself as the only organ able to constitute it as a class in its own right, in the same way it leads it in the exercising of power; as the only organ to direct the institutes it dominates.

The State of the dictatorship of the proletariat will equip itself with means of political control that will prevent the inevitable resistance of the apparatus spreading bourgeois practices, ideologies and forms of organization. Of course, intuitively the need to eliminate the “remains of the past” can be understood but it is more difficult, especially for those who have not grasped and do not wish to grasp the material basis for human relations, to understand that the dictatorship will have to keep a firm vigil to stop new nuclei from causing the eternal principles of the bourgeois ideology to re-appear in the fabric of the productive forces.

And so strictly controlled means of repression will be needed, re-organized by trustworthy elements, sufficiently well prepared and aware of the necessary action.

The same experience of those years in which, under the direction of the Bolshevik Party in Russia, the ingenuity and uncertainty of the Paris Commune was being overcome, demonstrated the *need for those tools*: from October 1917 right up to 1922, the first State guided by the proletariat found itself attacked and besieged by all the powers that had been at war with one another up until then, while it was still defending itself from the armies of bourgeois and petit-bourgeois Tsarist resistance.

Today, having experienced the drama of the defeat and fighting the backlashes of counter-revolution, we can and must add something more. *The next State guided by the proletariat must be a tool of the international battle of the proletariat.*

The party that directs the institutions, from the workers' Councils to the Red Army, must be an *international class organ*: a World Communist Party which organizes, centralizes, directs every national segment in which the bourgeoisie has always imprisoned our class brothers and sisters.

From a technically military point of view, the Red Army will not limit itself to defending the first proletarian fortresses, but as an *advance unit of the proletarian army*, will and must be able to “leave the fortress” at the right moment and under the most appropriate conditions, to back up the international revolutionary class war.

“9. Only the proletarian State can systematically actuate all the successive measures for intervening

in the relations of social economy through which the capitalist system will be replaced by the collective management of production and distribution.”

“10. As an effect of this economic transformation and the consequent transformations of all activity pertaining to social life, once the class divisions of society have been eliminated, the need for the political State will also start to disappear and its mechanisms will be reduced to the rational administration of human activity.”

These two last points in the Leghorn Programme sum up and point to the tasks of economic transformation of the State institutions in the dictatorship of the proletariat, guided and directed by the World Communist Party.

There is no trace of Utopia in the communist perspective indicated by dialectic materialism. The measures gradually proposed by the party and realized by the proletariat acting in the State institutions of their dictatorship will not “build” communism according to a “plan” conceived and safeguarded by a clique of mystic intellectuals, technicians or scientists.... The proletarian energies and capacities gathered by and in the science of the social revolution in the Communist Party have the sole task of guiding and putting into practice the “guidelines” which, by dismantling the bourgeois relations of production, *may calibrate the forces of production, organizing them in the best possible way for satisfying the material needs and those relating to the associative life of our species.*

Having secured the victory of our class and the control of the proletarian State in a more than significant part of the planet, the time will come to give the first rules of a more political than economic nature in the strict sense of the terms. “The proletariat will use its political dominion to remove all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centre all the tools of production in the hands of the State, i.e. of the proletariat organized as the ruling class, and in order to multiply as quickly as possible the forces of production.” This is what was emphasized by the 1848 *Manifesto*, when the forces of production were still “scarce and scattered” and the dominion of “dead capital” (mechanisation, plethora of goods, exploitation of the land and the subsoil, money “crystalized” as financial capital...) over “live capital” (the workforce and thus the general living conditions of the proletariat) had not yet reached the destructive, planetary dimensions they have today.

Precisely because we are not “the caretakers of Marxism” but the perpetrators of dialectic historical materialism, we know that the day after the next proletarian victory, centralization will be less of an effort and quicker and, instead of multiplying the forces of production, it will be a matter of re-ordering and re-dimensioning them. In fact our Party, in a head-on clash with Stalinism in 1952 (the Forlì Meeting, reported in the first 1953 issue of our Italian journal “Il Programma Comunista”) stated: “But also with respect to what is to be done in the economy after an “effective” political revolution that activates the dictatorship of the proletariat in countries that have

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already exhausted the formation of industrial capitalism, an antithesis is established between the inane agitation of *all* activists and what the newly victorious proletariat must achieve. It is impossible to sum up this somehow new achievement in a few lines, but with a copy of quotations from the Marxist texts, it was famously demonstrated, coherently with party doctrine, that the usual Soviet-style plans for the development of the economy and national production, or those that are in reality capitalist despite being proletarian by name, are countered by an original “plan for the destruction of capitalism in production and distribution,” describing the interventions for modifying capitalist economy that are *not yet* a construction of socialism or communism, since we are still in the first of the *three* stages of society, that of *transition*, to be followed by inferior and later superior communism.”

With this “clarification”, the indication in the *Manifesto* acquires greater vigour: “Of course this may only happen, at first, through despotic intervention in property rights and in the bourgeois relations of production, i.e. through measures that appear to be insufficient and scarcely consistent from an economic point of view; but as movement occurs they reach beyond their own limits and are inevitable as the means for upturning the production system as a whole.

In directing proletarians in the institutions of their dictatorship, the communist Party will have the hard and difficult task of indicating for the first time in the “pre-history” of the class society, the objectives, means and methods that progressively and as swiftly as possible may eliminate any “argument” regarding the social division of “productive and reproductive” work; it will have the task of making class rule by any class useless and superfluous,

since there will no longer be any need for classes to exist. The extinction of the proletariat, the extinction of the State, the extinction of the Party. Once again the *Manifesto*: “When the class differences have disappeared in the course of evolution, and all production is concentrated in the hands of associated individuals, what is public loses its political nature. In a strict sense, political power is the power of one class organized to oppress another. By necessarily uniting as a class in the battle against the bourgeoisie, becoming the ruling class by means of a revolution and, as the ruling class, forcefully abolishing the old relations of production, at the same time it abolishes the conditions for the existence of classes in general and its own dominion as a class. The old bourgeois society with its classes and antagonism between classes is replaced by an association in which the free development of each individual is a condition for the free development of everyone.”

In other words:

“In a higher phase of communist society, after the servile subordination of individuals to the division of labor has disappeared, and therefore also the contrast between intellectual and physical labor; after work has become not only a means of life, but also the first need of life; after the productive forces have also grown with the general development of individuals and all the sources of social wealth flow in all their fullness – only then can the narrow bourgeois juridical horizon be overcome and society can write on its flags: FROM EACH ACCORDING TO HIS ABILITY, TO EACH ACCORDING TO HIS NEEDS” (Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program*, 1875).

January 2021

On the influence of petty-bourgeois false allies on the proletariat

[...]

10. We are conscious of the fact that, ever since Marx’s fight against Bakunin, Proudhon and Lasalle, and in all subsequent phases of opportunist infection, the danger of degeneration has always been tied to the influence of petty-bourgeois false allies on the proletariat.

Our infinite distrust of the contribution of these social strata must not and can not prevent us, following the monumental lessons of history, from utilizing exceptional elements which the party will employ in restoring the theory, without which we would be dead and which must be disseminated in future throughout the revolutionary masses.

11. The high voltage discharges that have leapt from the poles of our dialectic have taught us that the comrade, the communist, revolutionary militant is someone who has been able to forget, renounce, free his spirit and soul from the classification in which the civil state of this putrefying society has placed him. It is someone who sees himself and integrates himself into the millennial perspective that unites our tribal ancestors fighting against wild animals with the members of the future community, living in the fraternity and joyful harmony of social humanity.

12. [...]

From “Considerations on the Party’s Organic Activity When the General Situation is Historically Unfavourable”,
II programma comunista, n. 2/1965

The question of power

■ It is still too soon to tell whether autumn 2021 will indeed bring with it a real return of proletarian struggles that amount to something more than the desperate cry of political impotence and solitude.

The economic crisis, which *precedes* the pandemic and health crisis and, if anything, has been made keener and aggravated by it, continues to strike harsh blows: factories shut down, displacements, layoffs, violent aggression by the bosses and by the State... But around the world there is no lack of episodes of intolerance and even insubordination against institutions and repressive anti-proletarian measures of various sorts and with various objectives, some of which introduced using the pretext of the pandemic.

We have dealt with this topic several times and pointed out the episodes, in Italy and elsewhere, which seem most significant to us, so we shall not repeat them here. What we wish to emphasize is something different.

We are (and shall be for some time) facing intermittent outbreaks, followed by pauses and retreats: whoever is under the illusion or gives the illusion that there may be a gradual, slow but constant return to radical economic and social antagonism at the best creates confusion and at the worst disarms and boycotts any revival of a real, authentic political struggle.

There are many reasons for these stop and start dynamics. The main one, however, is that the iron heel of almost a century of counter-revolution continues to make its weight felt on the world proletariat, i.e. the unchallenged rule of the bourgeoisie, in its intersecting and interchangeable forms (democratic, nazi-fascist and Stalinist) - a counter-revolution which, well beyond the organised presence on the world stage of certain "actors" or others, has spread and cultivated theoretical, political and organisational disaggregation in the working class movement.

As a result, faced with the systemic crisis that has been dragging on since the mid-nineteen-seventies, the international proletariat is still flailing around, mistrustful and disconcerted, in search of reference points other than those that have deluded, betrayed and abandoned it throughout this period.

Secondly, it is dramatically evident from the mass protest movements that have nevertheless occurred over these years (we are thinking mainly of the so-called "Arab springs", clearly arising from the proletariat and then channelled into the various *culs de sac* of democratic-bourgeois politics by vociferous, more or less proletarianised half-classes, eternally terrified by the possibility that our class might return to the path of "self emancipation"), it is evident that the economic struggle of defence against the attack by the bosses and the State

and the claim for better living and working conditions is not sufficient in itself to ripen into a revolutionary political struggle.

During the peaks and dips of social dynamics it is therefore imperative that the content and forms of the struggle should avoid slipping into obtuse demagogic maximalism, into a miserable, radical-style reformism destined to exhaust and disappoint the generous struggles of the proletariat.

In a letter dated 1852 to comrade Joseph Weydemeyer, Marx declared: "As far as I am concerned, the merit of having discovered the existence of classes and their reciprocal struggles in modern society is not mine. Far before my time, bourgeois historians described the historical development of this class war and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of it. The new thing I have done is: 1. to demonstrate that the *existence of classes* is bound purely to *determined historical phases in the development of production*; 2. that the class war necessarily leads to the *dictatorship of the proletariat*; 3. that this same dictatorship merely constitutes a transition towards the abolition of all classes and a *classless society*."

The class war necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, not because this was set down by the *red terror doctor*, but because, when it breaks out, even just locally and for circumscribed and partial reasons, and when it clashes with the obtuse conservatism and limits of the institutions of bourgeois rule, it *obliges* the classes engaged in it to tackle the *question of power*.

For our enemy and for the half classes that live off the wealth produced by the exploitation of salaried work, power is safe and sound and rooted in the consolidated government institutions in their thousand and one forms, in the monopoly of juridical power with the thousand and one nuances of law and above all in the monopoly of the violence exerted by their States. Consequently, it is more difficult for our class, and doubtless more painful, to realise that without the prospect of totally upturning the balance of power, we shall continue to remain a group of poor souls, disunited and competing with one another in order to obtain the charity of a salary that makes it possible for us to survive.

It is difficult if not impossible to understand that *either the working class is revolutionary or it is nothing*. Yet, to carry the fight to the end, the rule of the bourgeoisie must be challenged, its institutions fought against and the fight organised to obtain new institutions, through which *our* class power may be exerted.

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We must be organised in a party: not in any old workers' or labor party, capable merely of playing the part of slaves to the bourgeois institutions, but in the *communist party*, the party of those who distinguish themselves "from other proletarian parties by the mere fact of putting in first place and giving value to the common interests, independently of nationality, of the whole proletariat in the various national proletarian struggles: and on the other hand by the fact that they constantly uphold the interests of the whole movement, through the various phases of development it goes through in the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie" (*Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 1848).

Thus, the party that has managed to maintain revolutionary determination and hatred for any display of bourgeois dominion, with evidence of a constant struggle against *all forms* of counter-revolution; the party which, with its unity of theory, principles, programme, tactics and organisation, does not take the place of the whole body of the proletariat, but constitutes *its militant organ*.

This objective of winning and managing *power*, which is certainly not immediate (it would be crazy and utopian, as well as demagogic to believe this or have it believed!), but which must be translated, starting right away, into a fighting spirit that stops us from running into the blind allies of a vision and practice of pure and

cowardly reformism, demonstrating to our class that any intermediate phase that is not directed towards this aim, but on the contrary rests content with more or less pitiful claims (or more or less arrogant and demagogic ones) addressed to the ruling classes and the bourgeois State, merely represents ominous anti-proletarian reformism, even when presented with the words and posture of menacing fighters.

The militant proletariat must *feel* that the achievement of objectives, however minimal (but *necessary* for survival) can only come as a consequence of a *favourable balance of power* to be established and defended in the course of daily struggles which (outside and against the bourgeois State's organs of mediation) see it opposing the world of capital; and that the (temporary, limited, circumscribed) "power" deriving from this can lead to more drastic and definitive social change *only if* it is inspired by and directed towards a necessary *conquest of real power* that the whole of society is made to *feel* - that *dictatorship of the proletariat* of which Marx writes, the necessary point of arrival of an authentic and widespread class struggle.

Without this, proletarians will continue to pay in blood for the generosity they demonstrate every day, in their smaller and greater fights for survival.

September 2021

On the Party's Activity

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

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

The supreme goal of the party's complex activities is to achieve the subjective conditions of the proletariat's preparation: to enable it to take advantage of the objective revolutionary possibilities provided by history when they appear, in order to be victorious instead of being defeated.

From the "Lyons Theses" Presented by the Left at the 3rd Congress of the Communist Party of Italy (1926)

Back to Basics

Nature, Function and Tactics of the Revolutionary Party of the Working Class (1947)

■ One of the characteristics of the revolutionary communist party's *modus operandi*, while ceaselessly operating in close conjunction with our class's struggles, is its never flagging conviction that the precision and re-affirmation of the analysis of the capitalist mode of production and the projections of theoretical affirmations resultant upon it, are inextricably bound up with the practices of the organization and the line taken in those self-same struggles.

Of course, nothing new here, and nothing invented. Simply the application of what was affirmed in our declaration of war against the capitalist regime (Manifesto of the Communist Party) in that historical turning point in 1848, when the conditions for the development of the revolutionary process and its battles were laid down:

«The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they 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. » (Marx-Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party, Chapter II : «Proletarians and Communists»).

Restoring the organ of the revolutionary class therefore means that while the class is accompanied in its struggles, it is even more necessary to re-affirm, strengthen and re-establish its doctrine. The comrades who, starting from their own experience (that is to say, not only with their rational intelligence but with their emotional one as well), have understood that the party (the outcome and cause of history as well as the temporal and spatial conditions in which each generation of militants is forced to struggle) is an active and fully operative unit when it comes to theory/principles/programme/tactics/action. These comrades cannot – indeed, must not – fall into the trap whereby they believe the work involving the defence and re-affirmation of the theory is distinct from that of subsequent action.

We are an organ of battle (and, therefore, an organ that provides guidance: a role that, deservedly, must be “earned” precisely through struggle) and it is exactly for this reason that in the clash between “revolution” and “counter-revolution”, the theoretical struggle becomes an expression (or rationalisation) of the struggle waged in practice.

Deprived of the oxygen which comes from the ferment of the proletarian revolt, our generations are condemned to fight in one of the darkest moments of bourgeois domination, where the temperature of social confrontation seems close to zero. They must take into due account the ups and downs concomitant upon the painstaking work involved in restoring the revolutionary class organ, and hold them dear. Failure to do so will mean they risk coming up short in their task of projecting it towards future generations.

Hence our re-publication of a ‘practical’ and ‘concrete’ example of this necessary connection with doctrinal reaffirmation during a class struggle. Published in 1947 (but drafted two years earlier), this text accompanied the re-organization of our movement during the unstinting, albeit somewhat confused, struggles with Nazi-Fascist, democratic and national-“communist” enemies at the end of the Second World War and in its immediate aftermath.

The question relating to the tactics of the party is of fundamental importance and will be clarified in relation to the history of the disagreements in tendency and direction which occurred in the II and III Internationals.

We must not regard the question as being secondary or derivative in nature, in the sense that groups who are in agreement on the doctrine and the program may, without affecting those basics, support and apply different directions in action, albeit with respect to transient episodes.

To pose problems relating to the nature and action of the party signifies moving from the field of critical interpretation of social processes to that of the influence that these processes may exert on a force that is actively engaged. The transition is the most important and delicate point of the whole Marxist system and was framed in the youthful sentences of Marx: “The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways. The point, however, is to change it” and “The weapon of criticism cannot, of course, replace criticism by weapons”.

This passage from pure knowledge to active intervention should be understood according to the dialectical materialist method in a manner totally different from that of followers of traditional ideologies. All too often it has been useful to the opponents of communism to exploit the Marxist theoretical background in order to sabotage and disavow the consequences of action and battle, that is, from the opposite perspective, to appear to adhere to

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the practice of the proletarian party while challenging and rejecting its fundamental principles. In all these cases the deviation was the consequence of anti-classist and counter-revolutionary influences, and expressed itself in crises as what we shall call, for the sake of brevity, opportunism.

Principles and doctrines do not exist in themselves as a foundation arisen and established before action; both the former and the latter are formed in a parallel process. It is their opposing material interests that in practice impel social groups to fight, and it is out of the action instigated by material interests that the theory which becomes the party's characteristic inheritance is born. If the balance of interests, the incentives to act and the practical directives for action are changed, then the doctrine of the party is likewise modified and distorted.

To think that this doctrine might have become sacred and inviolable due to its codification in a programmatic text and through a strict organizational and disciplinary arrangement of the party organism, and that therefore one may adopt various policies and have recourse to multiple maneuvers in the area of tactical activity, means having failed to identify, using Marxist criteria, the real problem that needs to be resolved in order to decide how the methods of tactical action may be selected.

We return to the determinist analysis. Do social events unfold through uncontrollable forces, giving rise to diverse ideologies, theories and opinions among men, or can they be modified according to the more or less conscious wish of men themselves? This question is dealt with by the proletarian party's own method, with which it radically brushes aside traditional thinking, which always refers to the isolated individual, claiming to resolve the question for the individual and then to deduce from this the solution for society as a whole; whereas on the contrary, you must move the question from the individual to the collectivity. The "collectivity" is always understood by the other metaphysical abstraction to mean the society of all men, whereas in the Marxist sense we must understand collectivity as the concretely defined group of individuals who, in a given historical situation have, through their social relations, that is to say in relation to their position in production and in the economy, parallel interests; groupings that are in fact called classes.

For the many social classes that human history presents, the problem of their ability to understand exactly the process in which they live, and to exercise a certain degree of influence over it, is not resolved in one and the same generic way. Each historical class has had its own party, its own system of opinions and of propaganda; each one has claimed with the same insistence to interpret the meaning of events precisely, and to be able to direct them towards a more or less vaguely conceived objective. Marxism provides the critique and the explanation for all of these approaches and points of view, showing that the various ideological generalizations were the reflection

of the conditions and the interests of classes in conflict, expressed through opinions.

In this continuous change, whose engines are material interests, whose protagonists are groupings in class parties and governmental organisms, and whose outward appearances are political and philosophical schools, the modern proletarian class, once the social conditions for its formation have matured, presents itself with new and superior capabilities, both in terms of its possession of a non-superficial interpretation of historical movement in its entirety, and in terms of the concrete efficacy of its action in social and political struggle in influencing the general unfolding of this movement.

This other fundamental concept was set out by Marxists with the classic and notable phrases: "With the proletarian revolution human society emerges from its prehistory" and "The socialist revolution constitutes the passage from the world of necessity to the world of freedom".

It is not, therefore, a matter of asking, in banal traditional terms, the question of whether man is free in his will or determined by the external environment, if a class and its party are conscious of their historic mission, and derived from this theoretical consciousness the power to implement it with a view to bringing about a general improvement, or are drawn into the struggle, into success or disaster, by higher or unknown forces. You must first ask what classes and what parties they are, what are their relations in the field of productive forces and state powers, what is the historical path already taken, and what is the path that, according to the results of critical analysis, remains to be taken.

According to the doctrine of religious schools, the cause of events lies outside of man, in God the creator, who has decided everything and who has also decided to concede a degree of liberty of action to the individual, for which he must therefore answer in the afterlife. It is well known that Marxist social analysis has completely abandoned such a resolution of the problem of the will and determinism.

But also the solution offered by bourgeois philosophy, with its claims to enlightenment critique and its illusion of having eliminated all arbitrary and revealed premises, remains equally misleading, because the problem of action is always reduced to the relationship between subject and object, and in the ancient and recent versions of the various idealistic systems the point of departure is sought in the individual subject, in the "I", precisely in which resides the mechanism of his thought and which then translates successively in the interventions of this "I" upon the natural and social environment. From this comes the political and legal lie of the bourgeois system, according to which man is free and, as a citizen, has the right to govern the commonweal according to the opinion born inside his head and therefore also his own interests.

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If it has thus thrown out all transcendent influence and every divine revelation, the Marxist interpretation of history and of human action has with no less decisiveness capsized the bourgeois schema of liberty and individual will, showing that it is the individual's needs and interests that explain his movement and action, and that his opinions and beliefs and what is called his conscience are only determined as the final effect of the most complicated influences.

Indeed, it is when we pass from the metaphysical concept of conscience and the will of the "I" to the real and scientific concept of theoretical conscience and the historical and political action of the class party, that the problem is posed clearly, and we can address the solution.

This solution has an original repercussion for the movement and the party of the modern proletariat, in that for the first time a social class appears which is not only driven to break up old systems and the old political and legal forms that impede the development of productive forces (a revolutionary task which preceding classes also had), but for the first time carries out its struggle not in order to set up a new dominant class, but to establish productive relations which allow the elimination of economic pressure and the exploitation of one class by another.

Therefore the proletariat has at its disposal superior historical clarity, and in directing society, exercises more direct influence over events than the classes that preceded it could exercise.

This historical attitude and new faculty of the class party of the proletariat should be followed through the complex process of its manifestation in the sequence of historical events that the proletarian movement has encountered to date.

The revisionism of the Second International, which gave room for opportunism through the collaboration with bourgeois governments in both war and peace, was the manifestation of the influence that the peaceful and apparently progressive phase of the bourgeois world had on the proletariat towards the end of the 19th Century. At the time it seemed that the expansion of capitalism was not leading, as had been set out in Marx's classic schema, to the inexorable aggravation of class antagonisms and of exploitation and proletarian immiseration. It seemed, when the limits of the capitalist world could still be extended without arousing violent crises, that the standard of living of the working classes could gradually improve within the bourgeois system itself. Theoretically, reformism elaborated a scheme of evolution without clashes from a capitalist to a proletarian economy without conflict; practically, and consistently with the theory, it stated that the proletarian party could exert a positive influence, winning partial advances through the day-to-day trade union, cooperative, administrative and legislative activity, which would in addition expand the number of nuclei of the future socialist system within the body of the current one, which would gradually transform it in its entirety.

The idea of the task of the party was no longer that of a movement that would make everything dependent on the preparation of a final effort to attain the final goals, but was transformed into a substantially voluntarist and pragmatic idea, in the sense that day-to-day work was presented as a solid and definitive fulfillment, and counterposed against the emptiness of the passive expectation of a great future success that should arise from revolutionary struggle.

No less voluntaristic, also for its declared adherence to more recent bourgeois philosophies, was the syndicalist school of thought. Even if it spoke of open class conflict and the removal and abolition of the very bourgeois state mechanism that the reformists wanted to permeate with socialism, in reality, by localizing the struggle and social transformation to individual manufacturing companies, syndicalism also believed that proletarians would be able to successively establish lots of victorious positions within islands of the capitalist world. The theory of factory councils put forward by the Italian movement of Ordine Nuovo [led by Gramsci], in which the international and historical unity of the class movement and of social transformation is fragmented in a series of positional gains within elements of the productive economy, in the name of a concrete and analytical preparation for action, was really a derivation of the syndicalist concept.

Returning to gradualist revisionism, it is clear that, as the maximum programmatic realization of the party's action was relegated to a secondary role, while partial and daily conquests were accorded the primary role, so the well-known tactic came to be publicly advocated of alliances and coalitions with groups and political parties that would from time to time consent to supporting the partial demands and reforms put forward by the proletarian party.

Even then, there was the substantial objection to this approach: that the alliance of the party with others, in a front which the political world divided into two on specific issues arising in the actuality of the moment, consequently distorted the party, clouding its theoretical clarity, weakening its organization and impairing its ability to frame the struggle of the proletarian masses in the revolutionary phase of the conquest of power.

The nature of the political struggle is such that the alliance of forces in two camps separated by opposing solutions to a unique contingent problem, polarizing all the actions of groups around this passing interest and this immediate purpose, and overwhelming any programmatic propaganda and any coherence with traditional principles, will determine orientations within militant groups that directly reflect and translate the demand for which they are fighting in an unrefined manner.

The task of the party, which was apparently a peaceful one to the socialists of the classical epoch, should have been to reconcile its intervention on specific issues and contingent victories with the conservation of its programmatic physiognomy and its ability to move on

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the terrain of its own struggle towards the general and final goal of the proletarian class. In effect, reformist practice not only made proletarians forget their class and revolutionary preparation, but led the very leaders and theoreticians of the movement to get rid of it, proclaiming that there was now no longer the need to worry about maximum objectives, that the final revolutionary crisis predicted by Marxism was also itself reducing to utopia, and that what mattered was daily conquests. The common currency of reformists and syndicalists was: "the goal is nothing, the movement is everything".

The crisis in this method presented itself powerfully with the war [i.e., WWI]. This destroyed the historical assumption of an increasing tolerability of capitalist rule, since the accumulated collective resources of the bourgeoisie, in small part handed over to the apparent improvement of the standard of economic life of the masses, were thrown into the furnace of war, so that not only all of the end-effects of reformist improvements vanished in the economic crisis, but the very lives of millions of proletarians were sacrificed. At the same time, while the still healthy section of the socialist movement deceived itself into thinking that such a violent representation of capitalist barbarism would have elicited the return of proletarian groups from a position of collaboration to one of open general struggle on the central question of the destruction of the bourgeois system, on the contrary, it was the crisis and failure of all, or nearly all, international proletarian organization.

The deferment of the agitational front and of immediate action that occurred in the years of reformist practice revealed itself as a fatal weakness, seeing as the class's maximum objectives ended up being forgotten and incomprehensible for proletarians. The tactical method of accepting the array of parties in two opposing coalitions according to country and contingency employing the most diverse variety of slogans (for a greater freedom of organization, for the extension of the right to vote, for the nationalization of some economic sectors, etc. etc.) was amply exploited by the ruling class to ill-fated effect, encouraging those political formations within the leadership of the proletariat, which represented social-patriotic degeneration.

Cleverly using the popularity accorded to the non-classist propaganda postulates of the Second International's large parties with their powerful mass organizations, it proved easy to throw their political preparation off course, demonstrating that it was in the interest of the proletariat, and even its road to socialism, to defend other outcomes at the same time, such as German civilization against feudal and theocratic Tsarism, or Western democracy against Teutonic militarism.

The labor movement's riposte to the betrayal of the Second International was the formation of the Third International, through the Russian Revolution. It must be said, however, that if the new International's

restoration of revolutionary values as regards doctrinal principles, theoretical approach and the central question of State power was magnificent and all-encompassing, its organizational arrangements and its approach to its own tactics and to those of its member parties were not so comprehensive.

Its critique of the Second International opportunists was however comprehensive and unambiguous, not only as regards the latter's complete abandonment of Marxist principles, but also their tactic of coalition and collaboration with bourgeois governments and parties.

It was made very clear that the particularistic and contingent line adopted by the old socialist parties had not led to workers being guaranteed minor benefits and material improvements in exchange for them having renounced their preparations for a wholesale attack on bourgeois institutions and power, but had led, by compromising both the minimum as well as the maximum outcomes, to a situation which was even worse : namely, one in which proletarian organizations, energy and combativeness, and proletarian individuals and lives, were being used not to achieve the political and social aims of their own class, but to reinforce capitalist imperialism. By means of the war the latter thus managed to overcome, for an entire historical period at least, the innate menace of the contradictions within its productive mechanism, and overcome the political crisis caused by the war and its repercussions by bending the political and trade union formations of its class adversary to its own will by embarking on a policy of national coalitions.

This, according to the Leninist critique, was tantamount to having completely perverted the role and the function of the proletarian class party, which isn't to protect the bourgeois fatherland or institutions of so-called bourgeois liberty from danger, but to keep the workers' forces drawn up on the movement's general historical line, the inevitable culminating point of which is the complete conquest of political power by overthrowing the bourgeois state.

It was a matter, in the immediate post-war period, when the so-called subjective conditions for revolution seemed unfavorable (i.e., the efficiency of the proletariat's organizations and political parties) but the objective conditions appeared favorable, due to the manifestation of a full-blown crisis in the bourgeois world, of redressing the main shortcoming with a speedy reorganization of the revolutionary international.

The process was dominated, and it could not have been otherwise, by the magnificent historical accomplishment of the first workers' revolutionary victory in Russia, which had allowed the great communist directives to re-emerge back into the light once more. But they wanted the tactics of the communist parties, which in other countries were a fusion of the socialist groups opposed to war opportunism, to be shaped in direct imitation of the tactics victoriously applied in Russia by the Bolshevik

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party, during its seizure of power in the historic struggle of February to November 1917.

Implementing this policy immediately prompted important debates about the International's tactical methods, and especially about the one known as the United Front, which consisted of frequently issued invitations to other proletarian and socialist parties for joint agitation and action with the aim of demonstrating the inadequacy of those parties' methods, in order to shift their traditional influence among the masses to the advantage of the communists.

Yet, despite the frank warnings of the Italian Left and other opposition groups, the leaders of the International didn't take account of the fact that this tactic of the United Front, by forcing revolutionary organizations alongside the very social-democratic, social-patriotic and opportunistic ones from which they had just separated in implacable opposition, would not only disorientate the masses by making impossible the advantages this tactic was supposed to confer, but also – more seriously still – it would contaminate the revolutionary parties themselves. It is true that the revolutionary party is history's best and least restricted factor, but equally it never ceases to be its product, being subjected to transformation and change every time there is any modification of the social forces. The question of tactics shouldn't be thought of as being like the deliberate wielding of a weapon, which, wherever you aim it, stays the same; the party's tactics influence and modify the party itself. If it is true that no tactic should be condemned in the name of a priori dogmas, equally every tactic should be analyzed and discussed in the light of a question something like this: *in possibly gaining for the party greater influence over the masses, might it not risk compromising the party's character and its capacity to lead these masses toward the final objective?*

The adoption of the tactic of the United Front by the Third International showed, in fact, that the Communist International was also on the same road to opportunism that had led the Second International to liquidation and defeat. Characteristic of the tactics of opportunism had been the sacrifice of the final, total victory to partial and contingent successes; the United Front tactic revealed itself to be opportunist too, precisely insofar as it also sacrificed the primary, indispensable guarantee of final, total victory (the revolutionary capacity of the class party) in favor of contingent actions which would supposedly ensure the proletariat certain momentary and partial advantages (growth of the party's influence over the masses and greater proletarian cohesion in the struggle to gradually improve its material conditions and to maintain any advantages won).

In the circumstances of the post-First World War period, which seemed objectively revolutionary, the International's leadership was prompted by their concern – not entirely groundless – that they might be caught unawares and with scant support among the masses when

a general European movement, with the potential to take power in some of the great capitalist countries, broke out. So important was the possibility of a rapid breakdown of the capitalist world to the Leninist International that today we can understand how, in the hope of leading ever greater masses into the struggle for the European revolution, they relaxed the admission criteria to admit movements which weren't genuine communist parties; and how they tried, with the flexible tactics of the United Front, to retain contact with the masses who were behind the hierarchies of parties which were oscillating between revolution and conservatism.

If the favorable eventuality had actually occurred, its impact on the politics and economy of the first proletarian power in Russia would have been so great it would have allowed an extremely rapid recovery of the communist movement's national and international organizations. But as it was the less favorable outcome which came about instead, that of capitalism's relative recovery, the revolutionary proletariat had to take up the struggle again and go forward with a movement that had sacrificed its clear political approach and structural and organizational homogeneity, and was now exposed to new opportunistic degenerations.

Yet the error that opened the doors of the Third International to the new, more deadly opportunist wave wasn't just a miscalculation about the likelihood of the proletariat becoming revolutionary; it was an error of historical approach and interpretation consistent with wanting to generalize the experiences and methods of Russian Bolshevism, by applying them in countries where bourgeois, capitalist civilization had progressed much, much further. Russia before February 1917 was still a feudal country in which capitalist productive forces were fettered by antiquated relations of production. In this situation, analogous to France in 1789 and Germany in 1848, it was obvious that the proletarian party needed to fight against Tsarism, even if the establishment of a bourgeois capitalist regime, once Tsarism had been overthrown, seemed impossible to avoid; and it was consequently just as obvious that the Bolshevik party needed to enter into contact with other political groupings, contacts rendered necessary by the struggle against Tsarism. Between February and October 1917 the Bolshevik party encountered objective conditions which favored a much more ambitious scheme: that of grafting onto the overthrow of Tsarism a subsequent proletarian revolutionary victory. As a consequence, its tactical positions became more rigid, and it adopted a stance of open and ruthless struggle against all the other political formations, ranging from the reactionary supporters of a Tsarist feudal restoration to the Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. And yet the fact that a real possibility of a restoration of absolutist and theocratic absolutism was still to be feared, and the fact that in an extremely fluid and unstable situation the political and state formations

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controlled or influenced by the bourgeoisie still lacked any solidity or capacity to attract and absorb the autonomous proletarian forces; this put the Bolshevik party in a position where it could accept the need for provisional contacts and agreements with other organizations which had a proletarian following, as happened during the Kornilov episode.

By realizing the united front against Kornilov, the Bolshevik party was actually struggling against a feudal reactionary restoration; what is more, the Bolsheviks didn't have to worry about the Menshevik and Socialist Revolutionary organizations being better organized, which might have enabled them to exert influence on the party, nor was it worried that the level of solidity and consistency of the state power was such as to have allowed the latter to derive any advantage from the contingent alliance with the Bolsheviks, by turning it against them later on.

The circumstances and relations of forces in countries where bourgeois civilization was more advanced were, however, completely different. In these countries there was no longer any prospect of a reactionary restoration of feudalism (and even more so today! [1947 !]), and therefore the *raison d'être* for possible joint actions with other parties was entirely lacking. What is more, in these countries state power and bourgeois groupings were so entrenched in power and so used to wielding it that one could reasonably predict that the proletariat's autonomous organizations, if pushed into frequent and close contact with them via the tactic of the United Front, would almost inevitably be influenced and progressively absorbed by them.

Once it had ignored this profound difference of circumstances, and chosen to apply the Bolsheviks' tactical methods to the advanced countries, tactics which were adapted to the situation of the nascent bourgeois regime in Russia, the Communist International would lurch from one disaster to another, leading eventually to its inglorious liquidation.

The tactic of the United Front was extended to the point of launching slogans which diverged from the party's programmatic ones on the question of the State by supporting the installation of workers' governments – that is: governments composed of a mixture of communist and social-democrat representatives, able to attain power by the normal parliamentary means, without having to violently destroy the bourgeois state machine. This "Workers' Government" slogan would be presented at the Fifth Congress of the Communist International as the natural and logical corollary of the United Front tactic; and it would go on to be applied in Germany, resulting in a grave defeat for the German proletariat and its communist party.

With the open and progressive degeneration of the International after the Fourth Congress, the watchword of the United Front served to introduce the perverse tactic of forming electoral blocs with parties that were not

only non-communist, but even non-proletarian, creating popular fronts, supporting bourgeois governments, in other words – and this is where the most recent issue arises – of proclaiming that in situations where the bourgeois fascist counter-offensive had obtained the monopoly of power, the workers' party, suppressing the struggle for its own specific ends, had to form the left wing of an anti-fascist coalition no longer embracing proletarian parties alone, but also bourgeois and liberal parties with the objective of combating bourgeois totalitarian regimes and putting in place coalition governments of all the bourgeois and proletarian parties opposed to fascism. Starting with the United Front of the proletarian class, we thus arrive at national unity of all the classes, bourgeois and proletarian, dominant and dominated, exploiting and exploited. That is to say, starting from a debatable and contingent tactical movement, having the absolute autonomy of the communist and revolutionary organizations as its declared precondition, we arrive at the effective liquidation of this autonomy and the negation not just of Bolshevik revolutionary intransigence, but also of Marxist class concept itself.

This progressive development on the one hand results in a gratuitous contrast with the tactical theses of the first congresses of the International themselves and the classical solutions supported by Lenin in *Left-wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*, and on the other hand, after the experience of 20-plus years of life of the International, authorizes the assertion that the enormous deviation from the first aim resulted, in parallel with the adverse sequence of events of the anti-capitalist revolutionary struggle, from the initially inadequate formulation of the tactical tasks of the party.

Today it is possible to conclude, without recalling the totality of the key arguments from the texts of the contemporary discussions, that the balance-sheet of over-elastic and over-manipulated tactics not only had negative results; it was absolutely ruinous.

The communist parties under the leadership of the Comintern tried repeatedly and in all countries to use the situations in a revolutionary way with United Front maneuvers, and then oppose the so-called triumph of the bourgeois right with the tactic of left-wing blocs. This tactic only provoked resounding defeats. From Germany to France, to China and Spain, the attempted coalitions not only failed to move the masses away from opportunist parties and from bourgeois or petty-bourgeois influence to revolutionary and communist influence : they favored the success of the inverse game, in the interest of anti-communists. The communist parties either became the object, when the coalitions broke down, of ruthless reactionary attacks by their former allies, bringing them the heaviest defeats in their attempt to struggle alone, or, absorbed into coalitions, degenerated totally, to the extent that they became practically indistinguishable from the opportunist parties.

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It is true that, between 1928 and 1934, a phase took place in which the Comintern went back to the slogan of autonomous positions and independent struggle, returning all of a sudden to the polemical and oppositional front against bourgeois leftist and social-democratic currents. But this brusque tactical volte face only produced the most absolute disorientation in the communist parties, and did not offer a single historical success in the annihilation of either the fascist counter-offensive or the joint actions of bourgeois coalitions against the proletariat.

The cause of these failures must be traced back to the fact that successive tactical slogans have rained down on the parties and their structures appearing as unexpected surprises, with the communist organization caught totally unprepared for the various eventualities. The tactical plans of the party, on the contrary, even if they do predict a variety of situations and conduct, cannot and must not become the esoteric monopoly of leadership circles; they must be strictly coordinated with and consistent with theory, with the political consciousness of the militants, with the movement's traditions, and they must permeate the organization such that it is always prepared in advance and able to predict how the party's unitary structure will respond towards favorable and unfavorable events in the course of the struggle. To expect more, and different, things from the party, and to believe that it won't be wrecked by unforeseen blows to its tactical rudder, does not amount to having a fuller and more revolutionary concept of the party, but clearly constitutes, as proven by historical facts, the classical process defined by the term *opportunism*, which either leads the revolutionary party to dissolution and ruin under the defeatist influence of bourgeois politics, or to find itself more vulnerable and disarmed in the face of repression.

When the level of development in society and the course of events lead the proletariat to serve ends that are not its own, consisting of the false revolutions which the bourgeoisie now and again apparently needs, it is opportunism that wins; the class party falls into crisis, its direction passes over to bourgeois influences, and the recovery of the proletarian path cannot happen except with the split away from the old parties, the formation of new nuclei and the national and international reconstruction of the proletarian political organization.

In conclusion, the tactic that the international proletarian party will apply, attaining its reconstruction in all countries, will have to be based on the *following directives*.

The practical experience of opportunist crises and of the struggles led by left-wing Marxists against the revisionists of the Second International and against the progressive deviations of the Third International has shown that you cannot keep the party's program, political tradition and solidity of organization intact if the party applies a tactic which, even if only formally, entails attitudes and slogans that are acceptable to opportunist political movements. Similarly, every uncertainty and ideological indulgence has its reflection in an opportunist tactic and action.

The party, therefore, differentiates itself from all the others, whether declared enemies or alleged kindred spirits, and even from those who claim to recruit their followers from the ranks of the working class, because its political praxis rejects the maneuvers, alliances and blocs that are traditionally formed on the basis of postulates and slogans common to several parties.

This party position has an essentially historical value, which distinguishes it in the tactical domain from all the others, exactly as does its original vision of the period that capitalist society is currently going through.

The revolutionary class party is the only one to understand that the economic, social and political postulates of liberalism and democracy are today anti-historical, illusory and reactionary, and that the world is now in the phase in which, in the large countries, liberal organization is disappearing and giving way to a *more modern, fascist system*.

By contrast, in the period in which the capitalist class had not yet initiated its liberal cycle, had still to overthrow the old feudal power, or even in some important countries had to go through notable stages and phases of expansion, still laissez-faire as regards economic processes and democratic as regards the State; in these cases a transitory alliance of the communists with these parties was comprehensible and acceptable: in the first case, with parties that were openly revolutionary, anti-legalist and organized for the armed struggle, and in the second, with parties that still played a role assuring useful and genuinely "progressive" conditions, allowing the capitalist regime to speed up the cycle which must lead to its downfall.

This change in communist tactics, which corresponds with the passage from one historical period to another, cannot be reduced to a local and national case study, nor become dissipated in the analysis of the complex uncertainties which the historic evolution of capitalism undoubtedly presents, without resulting in the practice deplored by Lenin in *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*.

The politics of the proletarian party has, above all, been international (and this distinguishes it from all others) ever since its program was formulated for the first time and since the historic need for its effective organization first arose. As the 1848 *Manifesto* states, the communists, who support every revolutionary movement everywhere against the existing social and political order, put forward and assert, alongside the question of property, the common interests of the entire proletariat, who are independent of any nationality.

And the revolutionary strategy of the communists, until it was corrupted by Stalinism, has inspired an international tactic looking to achieve the breakthrough in the bourgeois front in the country where the best opportunities appear, mobilizing all of the resources of the movement to this end.

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Consequently the tactic of insurrectionary alliances against the old regimes ends historically with the great event of the Russian revolution, which eliminated the last great state and military apparatus of a non-capitalist character.

After this phase, the possibility, even theoretical, of tactical blocs must be formally and centrally denounced by the international revolutionary movement.

The excessive importance given, during the first years in the life of the Third International, to the application of the Russian tactic in countries with a stable bourgeois regime, as well as to extra-European and colonial countries, was the first manifestation of the re-emergence of the revisionist peril.

The second imperialist war, and its already evident consequences, are characterized by the preponderant influence, extended to all regions of the world, even those where the most backward forms of indigenous society survive, not so much of powerful capitalist economic forms as the inexorable political and military control exercised by the great imperial center of capitalism, for now brought together in a gigantic coalition, which includes the Russian State.

Consequently local tactics can only be aspects of the general revolutionary strategy, which above all must be to restore the programmatic clarity of the global proletarian party, and then to rebuild the network of its organization in each country.

This struggle unfolds within a framework in which the illusions and the seductions of opportunism hold sway to the maximum extent: propaganda in favor of the crusade

for liberty against fascism in the ideological domain, and in the practical politics of coalitions, blocs, fusions and illusory demands presented in concert by the leaderships of innumerable parties, groups and movements.

In only one way will it be possible for the proletarian masses to understand the need for the reconstruction of the revolutionary party, substantially different from all others: that is, by proclaiming the historically irrevocable repudiation of the practice of agreements between parties not as a contingent reaction to the opportunistic saturnalia and the acrobatic combinations of politicians, but rather as a fundamental and central directive.

Even in transitory phases, none of the movements that the party participates alongside must be directed by a super-party or by a higher movement standing above a group of affiliated parties.

In the modern historical phase of global politics, the proletarian masses will only be able to mobilize for revolutionary goals by achieving their class unity around a single party that is solid in its theory, in its action, in the preparation for the insurrectionary assault, and in the management of power.

This historical solution must, in any manifestation of the party, even limited, appear to the masses as the only possible alternative to oppose the consolidation of the international economic and political domination of the bourgeoisie and its formidable capacity – not definitive, but today growing ever stronger – to control the contradictions and the convulsions that threaten the existence of its regime.

From «Prometeo», no. 7, May-June 1947

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

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

Where We Come From

(from our text «What Is the International Communist Party»)

At this point our imaginary skeptic will ask if per chance we are not one of the groupies or groupies born in '68 or so, and somehow survived the internal squabbling and the years of terrorism characteristic of the era of student movements. And again we have to disabuse him or her.

The fact is the International Communist Party comes down from afar and has nothing to do with '68, the youth movements, the infantile reaction to Stalinism that calls itself "extremist," "spontaneist," "movement-oriented," "worker-centered," etc. Let us add that this is a matter of radical, even genetic, difference. No matter how small today, with little influence and of limited membership, our party represented and represents, through the highs and lows of a tremendously counterrevolutionary period, the uninterrupted continuation of the grand tradition of the international communist movement dating from the beginning of the century. It's comparable – if our skeptic will allow us a bit of proud rhetoric – to an underground stream that had (or was able) to course below the rocks and sand and through the mire and landslides. Let us retrace this long march by means of a simplified outline.

1892 - The Italian Socialist Party (PSI) was born. Arising from the conjoining of various currents, not all revolutionary and internationalist, the party was led by reformists (although, in contrast to those who followed in the so-called "left" particularly after the Second World War, the former were, so to speak, at the very least... possessed of dignity!). Those turn-of-the-century years witnessed huge workingclass struggles in Italy, Central Europe, and in the U. S.A., and the reformist leaderships of the PSI and of the large labor confederations often found themselves in conflict with the more militant masses.

1910 - A clearly left current, the Sinistra, emerged at the PSI's Congress of Milan in opposition to the reformist leadership of the party and the trade unions, and soon took a leading position in labor struggles. This Sinistra made clear its internationalism by strongly opposing the Libyan War (1911) and organized itself nationally as the Intransigent Revolutionary Faction at the Reggio Emilia Congress of 1912. A similar conflict broke out in the Socialist Youth Federation against those who wanted the body to become largely a culture-dispensing organization. By the Sinistra, both party and Young Federation were seen as *organs of struggle*. The militant youth were to receive their revolutionary inspiration and stamina from the whole life and experience of the party as it guided the working class on the road to revolution, and not

from some banal "party school" education. Amadeo Bordiga (1889-1970) and the "Revolutionary Socialist Club Carlo Marx" of Naples were decisive influences amongst the Intransigent Revolutionaries, and have remained fundamental references points in the history of the Sinistra.

1914 - With World War I the Sinistra proclaimed the need for revolutionary defeatism, which was in full agreement with Lenin's theses, hardly known at the time in Italy. With a background tragically highlighted by the failure to oppose the war when most Socialist parties voted war credits and solidified with their respective national bourgeoisie, the PSI, notwithstanding the efforts by the Sinistra, approved an ambiguous slogan, "neither support nor sabotage," which meant no support for the war, but no fight against it either. With Mussolini at their head, the interventionists had earlier abandoned the party.

1917 - At the outbreak of the October Revolution, the Sinistra aligned itself unhesitatingly with Lenin and Trotsky, greeting the event as the opening phase of an international revolution. "Bolshevism, A Plant for Every Clime" was the piece written by Bordiga which warmly greeted the revolution. Antonio Gramsci and Palmiro Togliatti, who would form the group publishing « L'Ordine Nuovo » in 1919, were initially under the influence of a non-Marxist idealism and displayed a somewhat confused and ambiguous understanding of the event. In the article "The Revolution Against 'Capital'," Gramsci erroneously asserted that the October Revolution negated Marxist materialism. In Italy, the Sinistra, the only faction in the PSI with a national network, was able to convoke the party to a meeting in Florence in 1917 that led to the reaffirmation of intransigent opposition to the war. Beginning in 1918, with the nation seized by mounting social tensions resulting from the war and indicated by the increasing strikes and malcontent, the Sinistra, in possession of its own organ, « Il Soviet » from December of that year, took the lead in getting the PSI to support revolutionary Russia and openly recognize the international significance of Lenin's strategy.

1919 - This was the crucial year for all of Europe: the year of the great strikes in Italy and revolutionary attempts in Germany and Hungary, the year Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were massacred, and the year of the birth of the Third International as the

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party of the world revolution. In Italy, a polemic broke out between the Sinistra – pressing for the creation of an authentic communist party able to apply the experience of the Russian Revolution to the West and stressing the social and political novelty of the soviet as an organ of sovereign power in the revolutionary process – and Gramsci's « L'Ordine Nuovo », that insisted in identifying the factory council as the equivalent of the soviet, portraying the council – normatively a subsidiary organ operating within the social and political functions of capitalism – as “the embryo of the future society.” Still in 1919, thanks to the theoretical and practical actions of the Sinistra, a Communist Abstentionist Faction was founded in the PSI, the nucleus of the future Communist Party of Italy (Partito Comunista d'Italia). One of the views characterizing the Faction was the belief that in the nations of established democratic rule – Western/Central Europe and the US – the parliament was no longer the site where important political and economic decisions were taken, an axiom drawn from the classical texts of Marxism. It had ceased to be a usable tribune from which to make known communist views, and for the longest period served to lead astray and dissipate revolutionary forces. Hence the parliament was to be opposed: with a democratic government, opposition to the bourgeois system was rendered most dramatically by boycotting political elections. A second tactic advanced by the Sinistra was the concept of “united front from below”: this meant avoiding the confusing political convergence of parties and organizations having disparate if not conflicting programs, while drawing all workers of whatever political, ideological or religious conviction into a common struggle for clear economic and social objectives and in defense of their conditions of life and work.

1920 - At the Second Congress of the Third international, the Sinistra played a determinant role in stiffening the conditions of admission. In so doing, at a time of continued and considerable social ferment, it hoped to bar admission to groups and parties whose acceptance of a revolutionary program and discipline would prove rhetorical and their actions detrimental, particularly if the postwar verve and revolutionary conditions receded, as was soon the case. In seeing the International as a true, authentic world party rather than a formal arithmetic summation of national parties, which later would be free to go on and “make politics” as each saw fit, of all the European communist groups the Sinistra was the clearest on the question of internationalism. Even as it was involved in founding a communist party in Italy, the Sinistra in the International stood for the reaffirmation of Marxism's integrity and for an internationalism strategically and tactically binding the working classes of the West with the rebellious people of the East. It believed that a revolutionary communist party must seek the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie leading to the establishment of the class dictatorship as a bridge to a classless society. Strongly favoring internal discipline, it maintained that, within both the

national parties and the International, obedience must rest on the voluntary acceptance and understanding of the revolutionary program by each and every adherent, and not on bossy compulsion.

1921 - At the PSI's 1921 Congress of Leighorn (Livorno), the Communist Sinistra broke away from the old reformist party and founded the Communist Party of Italy (CPI), a Section of the Communist International. Regardless of the subsequent assertions of a Stalinist historiography, the leading offices of the party were staffed entirely by Sinistra representatives and by Bordiga. At this time, Gramsci and Togliatti were in total agreement with this leadership. For two years, in a Western Europe where revolutionary elements were seeking a road to revolution to provide decisive aid to the USSR, the Sinistra-led CPI was the foremost edge of the politics of “Bolshevism, A Plant for Every Clime.” Amongst the trade unions, it carried out a strenuous campaign to construct a real united front – not of parties – of the working masses whatever their political loyalties; it fought no less strenuously against social-democratic reformism that misled the workers with its illusory pacifism and legalism; it openly confronted fascism, which it described as the reaction of industrial and agrarian capital to a worldwide economic crisis and the militancy of the proletariat, and not a feudal phenomenon as would be averred later by Stalinists; it built a defensive military apparatus against reaction and did not have to rely on such organizations as the “Arditi del Popolo,” a formation of spurious and uncertain nature; and during all those years marked by the reflux of the postwar revolutionary wave, the party maintained an international and internationalist stance, criticizing from the outset the rise of localism or autonomous actions and, above all else, the moves subordinating the International itself to Russian national needs.

1923-24 - After the arrest of Bordiga and a good many of the party's leaders in early 1923 – although they would be released by year's end following a successful defense leading to acquittal – leadership passed to a secondary group more open to manipulation by the International. Despite a national conference of the party held in Como in May, 1924, at which the delegates voted overwhelmingly for the Sinistra, the party leadership was given by Moscow to a new Centrist grouping formed under Gramsci and Togliatti. The Sinistra was thus barred from leadership. Employing means, methods and language correctly identified with Stalinism, in the course of the next two years the Sinistra was crushed and its influence eradicated: « Prometeo », a journal speaking for the Sinistra, was suppressed after a few issues, party sections with Sinistra majorities were dissolved, Sinistra spokesmen were removed, their articles and views censured or not published, and the party put under a regimen of intimidation, suspicion, and discipline that was ever bossier and bureaucratic.

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1926 - Archival evidence has shown that the III Party Congress held outside Italy at Lyons, France, met before an assembly stacked by the Centrist leadership; two examples of the methods used will suffice here: 1) in the pre-congressional congresses, the votes of absentee Sinistra followers were automatically given to the Gramscian Center; 2) at a final meeting in Milan, delegates to Lyons were winnowed to eliminate Sinistra representation. At that congress, the Sinistra was completely marginalized and no longer able to act or have its views known. At the VII meeting of the Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International held in Moscow between February-March of that year, Bordiga opposed "Bolshevization," that is, the reorganization of the party on the basis of the factory cell that, under the pretense of increasing the workers' influence, had the effect of enclosing the base within the narrowness of the factory or shop, to which the person of the functionary-bureaucrat became an indispensable source of "the line to be followed" and the embodiment of leadership. At that incandescently dramatic session of the VII Enlarged Executive Committee, Bordiga, who openly confronted and questioned Stalin, was the only delegate amongst all present to ask that the grave internal crisis extant within the Bolshevik Party – the prelude to the emergence of the faux and lying theory of "socialism in one country" – be posted as the order of the day for the next world congress. To quote his words: "the Russian Revolution is our revolution also, its problems our problems, and [therefore] every member of the revolutionary International has not only the right but also the duty to labor in its resolution." Meanwhile, the Fascist authorities saw to it that Bordiga and the entire Italian Communist leadership were arrested long before the next world congress. In the USSR, Stalin isolated the United Opposition. Between 1926 and 1930, the Sinistra followers were expelled from the party, and thus given over to Fascist repression or forced to emigrate. The campaign against the Sinistra was undertaken in parallel with the persecution of Trotsky and his supporters, although between the two currents there were dissimilarities of views – mwhich did not prevent the Sinistra from defending Trotsky in the crucial years of 1927-1928. Bordiga himself was expelled in 1930 on the charge of "Trotskyism." Meanwhile, first with the betrayal of the English General Strike in 1926 and then with the subordination of the Chinese Communist Party to the Kwomingtang during the Chinese revolutionary year of 1927 resulting in the massacre of the Canton and Shangai Communards by the Nationalists, Stalinism, a degenerative manifestation indicative of the rise of a bourgeois force within a USSR isolated by the absence of supportive workingclass revolution in the West, undertook the complete reversal of the principles of the communist program.

1930-1940 - With Bordiga under continuous police surveillance and isolated in Naples, the Sinistra suppressed and hounded by Fascism and Stalinism,

its members dispersed through emigration to the West where they had also to fight and oppose the growing illusions cast by bourgeois democracy, there began a phase of our history best described as heroic. The Sinistra reorganized in France and Belgium under the name of the Faction Abroad (*Frazione all'Estero*) and published the periodicals « *Prometeo* » and « *Bilan* », thus returning to the political battle. The situation was very difficult for this handful of scattered comrades. Theirs was a battle waged on three fronts: against Fascism, Stalinism, and bourgeois democracy. They continued the criticism of Moscow's policies – the "united fronts," the illusion about the efficacy of democracy, the continuous political somersaults that bewildered the working class, the Nazi-Soviet Pact, and Togliatti's appeal to "the brothers in black shirts." They worked vainly during the Spanish War to get the uncertain left groups to orient themselves on a class basis. They carried on the struggle against Fascists and Nazis in occupied France, even spreading defeatism amongst German troops. With the myths of democracy penetrating ever deeper in the international workers movement, the Sinistra responded with critical analyses. At the onset of war in 1939, they pointed out its imperialistic character. It was already clear to them that Stalinism represented the worst of counterrevolutionary waves. With insufficient forces due to their isolation, they began the analysis of what happened in the USSR. It was this tenacious resistance, this determination to not allow a break in the "red thread" that led to the rebirth of the party in 1943.

1943-1952 - Thanks to the repatriation to Italy of a number of comrades, the work to reweave a real and viable organization was begun. At the end of 1943, the first issue of « *Prometeo* » appeared clandestinely. Contacts were made with Bordiga; the first political work was undertaken among proletarian elements deluded by the Resistance movement. The effort was made to give a class basis to the strike wave in the last years of the war. By working in contact with the proletarians, significant gains were made in the North, and often internationalists were elected shop stewards in the factories. At last, the Internationalist Communist Party was born having as its journal « *Battaglia Comunista* ». The clash with the Stalinists emerged into the open. While Togliatti as Minister of Justice decreed a general amnesty of fascist leaders and rank-and-file members amidst paeans to "the new man" and "the reborn democracy," his party denounced the Internationalists as "fascists," inciting a policy calling for their physical elimination. The culmination of this defamatory campaign was the assassination of two comrades, Mario Acquaviva and Fausto Atti, and others massacred by Stalinists but whose fate has remained shrouded in anonymity. In this initial period, party life was still characterized by theoretical uncertainties and doubts brought home by repatriates from the Faction Abroad. Matters came to a head in

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1952 with the need to reestablish the party solidly on the corpus of a Marxism cleansed of all Stalinist distortions and freed from the imperative of an immediate activism. This led to a first split. The periodical « Il programma comunista » began publication in 1952. Until his death in 1970, Bordiga devoted himself to the enormous task of reconstructing the theoretical and political basis of the party, which became truly international in fact as well as name in the 1960s. The “Fundamental Theses of the Party” (1951), “Considerations on the Organic Activity of the Party in a Situation which is Generally and Historically Unfavorable” (1965), “Theses on the Historic Duty, the Action and Structure of the World Communist Party” (1965), and “Supplementary Theses” (1966) gave the party its theoretical, political, and organizational structure.

1952-today - The following decades saw the Internationalist Communist Party (later, from the mid-sixties onwards, the International Communist Party), gathered around « il programma comunista » and gradually other titles in other languages, engaged in the harsh political battle to continue and rigorously develop the analysis of capitalist reality under all its aspects (economic, social, ideological), including here that of Russia’s so-called “real socialism”; also accompanying and, within the limits of the forces available, attempting to guide the proletarian battles sparked off in all parts of the world by the capitalist mode of production – as always theory and practice interweaving dialectically, firmly defended, despite the difficulties deriving from the lasting (and for some aspects worsening) counter-revolution in its democratic and Stalinist (or post-Stalinist) version. These very difficulties (this could not help being the case) lay at the basis of a path that was extremely obstinate in maintaining a straight, though equally arduous, line. The

Party, which in the ‘60s and ‘70s developed a considerable international network, was forced to navigate between Scylla and Charybdis, to make use of a literary image: i.e. between the drive, at times generous but always a herald of political-organizational disaster, to abbreviate the time needed to reconnect with a proletarian class still crushed beneath the weight of counter-revolution (*activism*), and the temptation to remain closed in pure, theoretical analysis, whilst awaiting a class recovery which, almost instinctively and above all mechanically, would lead the class to recognize its “own” party (*academicism*). It was (and always will be, as the history of the Bolshevik party and the work of Marx, Engels and Lenin teaches us) a difficult and stormy path to navigate and the many splits that occurred in the decades after 1952 were due to this and gave rise to other formations more or less taking the Communist Left as their reference point, but from which points of principle and party practices separate us, although there is insufficient time to go into them here – right up to the very serious crisis of 1981-83, which dispersed sections and comrades in Italy and abroad and from which the Party only managed to emerge with effort in the following years, thanks to a lot of hard work on defining various issues. What has always characterised us has been the will to proceed on our path, analysing and clarifying political tangles and mistakes made along the way, but individual trial and judgement, which is utterly outside the tradition of the Communist Left. We thus continue to do our work “in contact with the working class, outside personal or electoral political wheeling and dealing”, in the serene conviction that we shall have the future we have managed to win.

(You can read the whole text
«What Is the International Communist Party»
on our website www.internationalcommunistparty.org)

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- No to the Military Adventures of “Our” Bourgeoisie!
- The “Black Panther” Movement
- Residues and Cankers of the So-Called “National Issues”
- Class War
- Long Live the French Workers’ Struggle!
- The Enemy Is At Home. But “Our Home” Is the World
- Territorial Organisms for the Proletarian Struggle
- Against All Imperialist Wars
- Why We Are Not “Bordigists”

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- The Ghost of the European Unity
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- USA: Racism, Class Struggle and the Need for the Revolutionary Party
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- The Bourgeois State is a Tool of Oppression and Repression
- Don't let us forget what May Day is!
- What distinguishes our Party
- What Is Communism?
- Day by day the need for communism grows dramatically
- Why we are not "bordigists"

Kommunistisches Programm

Organ der Internationalen Kommunistischen Partei

Nr. 5 • Sommer 2021

Preis: 1.50 Euro

Was unsere Partei kennzeichnet:

Die politische Kontinuität von Marx zu Lenin bis zur Gründung der Kommunistischen Internationale und der Kommunistischen Partei Italiens (Livorno 1921); der Kampf der Kommunistischen Linken gegen die Degeneration der Kommunistischen Internationale, gegen die Theorie des „Sozialismus in einem Land“ und die stalinistische Konterrevolution; die Ablehnung von Volksfronten und des bürgerlichen Widerstandes gegen den Faschismus; die schwierige Arbeit der Wiederherstellung der revolutionären Theorie und Organisation in Verbindung mit der Arbeiterklasse, gegen jede personenbezogene und parlamentarische Politik.



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il programma comunista

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 - Tuesday - 10:00 AM
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Un altro passo verso un nuovo macello mondiale

Sarà un po' di tempo che non si vedeva più il volto di Giorgio Napolitano, ma il presidente della Repubblica non è affatto scomparso dalla scena politica italiana. In questi giorni, infatti, il capo dello Stato ha fatto il suo debutto in televisione, in un'intervista a "L'Espresso" che ha fatto parlare di lui in termini di "uomo di governo".

La Dsina come in tutto il mondo, di fronte alla guerra imperialista la parola d'ordine proletaria non è: «essere», «distacco rivoluzionario contro tutte le borghesie e i loro Stati».

[illegible][illegible]

La prima volta, infatti, si è presentata in un'aula di una scuola elementare di un paese di 100 abitanti, dove ha cominciato a insegnare la prima classe. «L'idea di insegnare in una scuola elementare mi è venuta quando ho visto un video di una scuola di un paese di 100 abitanti», dice. «L'idea di insegnare in una scuola elementare mi è venuta quando ho visto un video di una scuola di un paese di 100 abitanti».

[illegible][illegible]