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Printed and Distributed by

Associazione La Sinistra Comunista—Casella Postale 1157–50121 Firenze—  
Italia

I.C.P. Editions—c/o 96 Bold Street—Liverpool L1 4HY—UK

C.L. Publishing—PO Box 14344 - Portland, OR 97293 —U.S.A.

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**Texts of the  
Communist Left**

**n. 1**

# **WHAT DISTINGUISHES OUR PARTY**

**International Communist Party**

# What Distinguishes Our Party

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Pamphlet produced by CL Publishers, 2021  
clpublishers.com

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out, at present those organizations appear more as agencies of the bourgeois state within the working class, than as proletarian organs of economic struggle.

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At the present time, every problem relating to Party development exists in the historical context of an unprecedented ideological and practical crisis in the international socialist movement. Whilst this is certainly the case, past experience is nevertheless sufficient to establish a law: the reconstitution of the offensive power of the working class can't be brought about by a revision, by an updating, of Marxism, and certainly not by the "creation" of an allegedly new doctrine. It can only be the fruit of the restoration of the original program; a program which the Bolsheviks held fast to when faced with the deviations of the Second International, and whose continuity the Italian Marxist Left ensured when faced with deviations in the Third. Wherever and whenever communism happens to rise again, and at whatever time, whether sooner or later, the international movement of the future will inevitably be the historical point of arrival of the battle fought by this current, and the likelihood is that physically as well it will carry out a key role. That is why in the present phase the reconstitution of the embryonic international can only take one form: adhesion to the program and activity of the International Communist Party and the creation of such organizational links with it as correspond to the principles of organic centralism, free of any form of democratism.

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For the society of today, communism is an absolute and worldwide necessity. Sooner or later, the proletarian masses will once again assault the fortresses of capitalism in a huge revolutionary wave. The destruction of these fortresses and the victory of the proletariat can happen only if the trend towards the reconstitution of the class party deepens and spreads throughout the entire world. The formation of the world party of the proletariat; this is the aim of all those who want the victory of the communist revolution, and already the united forces of the bourgeois international are fighting against it.

## Foreward

In the few pages that follow are condensed the positions of the Communist Left, which is organized as the International Communist Party, and whose press organ in English speaking countries is *Communist Left*.

The doctrine and the programme that the party embodies are products of historical selection and not the brainchildren of useless geniuses. They have been fused together by history into one steel block over the course of tempestuous and bloody class struggles; which halfway through the nineteenth century introduced a new class, the proletariat.

The party is *a school of thought and a method of action*. Doctrine, programme, tactics, and organization make up the party. The working class exists as such only by virtue of its party; without it the proletariat is a class only in a statistical sense.

The existence of the party does not depend on the will of great chiefs, but rather on generations of its militants jealously guarding and keenly observing its fundamental features, and enforcing them in all their practical consequences; the party's strength, meanwhile, depends on the development of social contradictions. For this reason, at certain points in history, it is reduced to a small number of resolute militants, at others it grows, increases its membership, and becomes a social force that can determine the outcome of the final clash with capital's regime.

For these reasons it is ruled out that the party can once again put itself at the head of the fighting masses, as in the glorious period between 1917–1926, by means of tactical expedients, diplomatic devices, promiscuous associations with other left-wing political groups, or innovations of sibylline significance in the field of the complex intertwining of the party-class relationship.

It is also ruled out that the party can increase its membership by official deployment of a senseless formal discipline, the inevitable counterpart of the restoration of democratic practices, which by now are forever banned not only from the heart of our organization, but from the state and society as well. Such petty subterfuges as these *kill* the party as a class organ, even should its membership rise. They are low tricks that betray the yearning of chiefs and semi-

chiefs to effect a "break through", in the false hope of escaping the ghetto in which the true party is confined, not by its own will but by the pressure of the counterrevolution, which has been victorious on a world scale for almost a century now precisely by distorting the tasks and nature of the party.

The best evidence of the uselessness of such maneuvering, better than deriving it from the critique of ideas, comes from historical experience. Although the relations of power between the social classes have not changed at all, various Trotskyist tendencies, and left-wingers of various hues, have preached everywhere that the party must adapt itself to circumstances, i.e., adopt "realistic" policies, consisting of continuous changes of direction.

If the size of the party today is minimal, and its influence on the proletarian masses virtually non-existent, the reason is to be found in the class struggle, in historical events, and we must be courageous enough to conclude that either Marxism should be discarded, and with it the party, or that Marxism must be kept unchanged. After having anticipated this lesson on the doctrinal level, the Left has also drawn from this materialistic and historical verification a fundamental lesson: nothing to add, nothing to change. Let us remain at our post!

This pamphlet is a text of the International Communist Party, and like all its other texts it confirms and reasserts the traditional positions of the Italian Left. Existing outside the contingent events of organic and historical selection of formal organizations. This unitary body of doctrine and praxis is today vindicated in full by only one organization, whose press organ is *Communist Left* in English, *Comunismo* and *Il Partito Comunista* in Italian, *El Partido Comunista* in Spanish.

Let us state again that we expect the revival of the revolutionary class movement to follow a sharpening and radicalization of social struggle, which will arise as a consequence of the acceleration of contradictions within the capitalist system. The party will grow alongside these developments if, based on its inviolable doctrine and invariant program it knows how, in each proletarian struggle it participates in, to direct them simultaneously against the treacherous opportunism of the false workers parties, against *nationalistic and patriotic* trade unionism, and against the capitalist state and the bourgeois political front.

*In this struggle the Left is alone and knows it will remain alone*, not through its own choice, but because this is the fertile lesson derived from the past defeats of the proletariat. In those defeats a preeminently counter-revolutionary role was played by positions and organizations which, although pretending to be inspired by the proletariat and even by Marxism and revolution,

inveterate supporters of individual and collective freedom will brand as a dictatorship of committees, or even individuals, but which substantially realizes the *sine qua non* condition of the existence of the party as a revolutionary organization: that is *the dictatorship of principles*. With such conditions in force, the discipline of the Base to the decisions of the Centre is obtained with the minimum of friction, whilst an out and out dictatorship of individuals becomes necessary only when the tactics of the party become divorced from the program, giving rise to tension and clashes which can only be settled by means of disciplinary measures; as precisely occurred in the International, even before Stalin's victory.

The historical development of the class party has always been characterized by "the transfer of a proletarian vanguard from the terrain of spontaneous movements, arising from partial and group interests, to that of generalized proletarian action". This outcome is favored not by denying these elementary movements, but, on the contrary, by ensuring that the party organism, however small it may be, actively participates in the physical struggles of the proletariat. The work of ideological propaganda and proselytism, following on naturally from the infra-uterine phase of ideological clarification, cannot therefore be separated from participation in economic movements. While trade-union "conquests" can never be seen as the ultimate aim, participation in them is important for two reasons:

- 1) to make these movements into a means for acquiring the indispensable experience and training needed for real revolutionary preparation, by criticizing unmercifully the predictions, postulates and methods of the unions and the parties of class collaboration that control them, and,

- 2) in a more advanced stage, to bring about their unification and their revolutionary transcendence as a result of living experience, by pushing them towards their full and complete realization.

Over the last decades the official trade unions have been increasingly impervious to all attempts to unify and generalize the struggles, and resistant to rank-and-file requests and needs. As a consequence, the best and most effective struggles have been those set off and conducted out of the control of the large trade union federations. The organizations born from such struggles are a wealth of experience the party has supported, and still supports, with all means, are a valuable experience for proletarians. While the possibility for the class to redirect official union policy on class grounds (e.g., in moments of widespread workers' unrest and large economic movements) cannot be ruled

The realization of this possibility depends not only on the inevitable outbreak of an open crisis, more or less brief and of whatever form, but also on the objective intensification of social conflicts even during phases of expansion and prosperity. Whoever expresses the slightest doubt about this actually also doubts the historical prospect of the communist revolution. Such an attitude can be explained by the depth of recoil caused by the degeneration of the Third International, the Second Imperialist War, and the world-wide extension and consequent strengthening of capitalism. It is merely a reflection of the temporary triumph of capital in the minds of its "gravediggers". But far from granting eternal life to this regime, its triumph in fact prepares, by having dammed it up, history's most violent revolutionary explosion.

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In order for the party to develop, it can't comply with the type of formal rules that many anti-Stalinist opposition groups have defended in the name of "democratic centralism". This is because such rules rely on the belief that the correct orientation of the party depends on the free expression of thought and the will of the proletarian "base", and a respect for democratic rules and electoral criteria as a way of deciding who will assume which responsibilities and at what level. Although we don't deny that the stifling of the opposition movements and procedural irregularities indeed served to liquidate the revolutionary communist tradition (in Russia and elsewhere), our party has always defined this liquidation as essentially the liquidation of *a program* and *a tactic*. An eventual return to sound organizational norms, as hoped for by the Trotskyists, would have done little to prevent this. In the same way, rather than relying on statutes that involve widespread and regular use of the democratic mechanism, we place our faith in an unequivocal and uncompromising *definition of the means and ends* of the revolutionary struggle.

The party must create its internal organs by selecting those which have given clear evidence that they will enact its "catechism" without hesitation, if it doesn't do so it isn't the party. In any case, it is the process of selection that is the important thing rather than some sort of model representation of internal functioning. Such, then, is the content of the formula "organic centralism", which our party has always set against the opposite formula of democratic centralism. Organic centralism places the accent on the one really essential element: *respect not for the majority but for the program; respect not for individual opinions, but for the historical and ideological tradition of the movement*. Corresponding to this conception, there is an internal structure which

in fact represented the interests of the petty bourgeoisie and the labour aristocracy; and their action has always been that of first obstructing, then dividing, and finally abandoning the proletarian front to the enemy.

It is some time since we settled accounts with all the latter day union leaders, anarchists, and "left-wingers" or rather since history did, which has pitilessly shattered their deeds and doctrines.

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We dedicate this short text above all to the proletarian youth, so that, with its characteristic bravery, abnegation and spirit, it may turn its back forever on the illusory temptations of modern society, on the false myths of democracy and national solidarity, of reformism and gradualism, in order to embrace a program of struggle, of combat, on the anonymous and impersonal revolutionary communist front.

For it will be up to our youth to bring communism to victory.

## The Programme of the Party

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

1. Under the present social regime of capital, the conflict between the productive forces and the relations of production develops at an ever increasing rate, giving rise to antithetical interests and to the class struggle between the proletariat and the ruling bourgeoisie.

2. Production relations today are protected by the power of the bourgeois state: whatever the form of representative system and employment of elective democratic, the bourgeois state remains the organ for the defense of the interests of the capitalist class.

3. The proletariat can neither smash nor modify the system of capitalist relations of production which exploits it without violently overthrowing the bourgeois power.

4. The indispensable organ of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat is the class party. The Communist Party, which contains the most advanced and resolute part of the proletariat, unifies the efforts of the labouring masses and transforms their struggles for particular group interests and immediate gains into the general struggle for the revolutionary emancipation of the prole-

tariat. The party is responsible for propagating the revolutionary theory amongst the masses, for organizing the material means of action, and for leading the working class through the course of its struggles by ensuring the historical continuity and the international unity of the movement.

5. After overthrowing the capitalist power, the proletariat must completely destroy the old state apparatus in order to organize itself as dominant class and install its own dictatorship: that is to say, it will deny all rights to the bourgeois class and individuals within it for as long as they socially survive, and will found the organs of the new regime on the producing class alone. The Communist Party, having set itself this fundamental aim as the distinctive feature of its program, at the same time represents, organizes and directs the proletarian dictatorship.

6. Only by means of force will the proletarian state be able to systematically intervene in the social economy, and adopt those measures with which the collective management of production and distribution will take the place of the capitalist system.

7. This transformation of the economy and consequently of the whole of social life will gradually eliminate the necessity for the political state, whose machinery will gradually give way to the rational administration of human activities.

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With regard to the capitalist world and the workers' movement in the aftermath of the Second World War, the party's position is based on the following points:

8. During the first half of the twentieth century, capitalist economy has seen the introduction of monopolistic trusts amongst the employers. Attempts have been made to control and manage production and exchange by centralized planning, right up to state management of whole sectors of production. In the political field, there has been an increase in the strength of the police and military arms of the state and in government totalitarianism. None of the latter are new types of social organization of a transitional nature between capitalism and socialism, and neither are they revived forms of pre-bourgeois political systems. They are instead particular forms of a more and more direct and exclusive management of power and the state by the most advanced forces of capital.

phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; after labour has become not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!"

This great historical outcome involves not merely the destruction of antagonisms between men, the cause of their restlessness and that "general, particular, and perpetual" insecurity (Babeuf) which is the lot of humanity under capitalist society, it is also the fundamental condition for the real dominion of society over nature which Engels described as "the passage from the reign of necessity to that of freedom", in which the development of human powers as a human activity will become for the first time an end in itself. It is then, also, that social praxis itself will provide the solution to all the antinomies of traditional theoretical thought, "between existence and essence, objectification and self-affirmation, liberty and necessity, individual and species" (Marx), and communism will then finally be deserving of the description applied to it by the founders of scientific socialism as an "enigma finally resolved by history".

## **Reconstruction of the Communist Party on a World Scale**

The reconstruction on a national and international scale of a proletarian political party, one that is genuinely capable of ensuring the continuity of the political revolution, will be an established historical fact only if the vanguard forces of the proletariat in the advanced and under-developed countries have lined-up on the cardinal positions outlined above. Orthodox communism stands out from all the various shades of more or less left-wing extremism in denying that the evolution of modern society prevents the proletariat from forming itself into a revolutionary party. It holds that in the present substantially fascist phase of capitalist rule, the laws, which have exhausted the political struggles among the bourgeois parties, are not applicable to the proletariat. It asserts, on the contrary, that precisely the disappearance of any real opposition between the old classical Left and Right wings, between liberalism and authoritarianism, and between Fascism and Democracy, provides the best historical basis for the development of a resolutely communist and revolutionary party.

one form he receives back in another. Here obviously the same principle prevails as that which regulates the exchange of commodities, as far as this is exchange of equal values (...) Hence, *equal right* here is still in principle *bourgeois right*, although principle and practice are no longer at loggerheads, while the exchange of equivalents in commodity exchange only exists *on the average* and not in the individual case. In spite of this advance, this *equal right* is still constantly stigmatized by a bourgeois limitation. The right of the producers is *proportional* to the labour they supply". (Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program*). Above all, work still appears as a social constraint, and yet it becomes less and less oppressive as working conditions generally improve.

On the other hand, the fact of the proletarian state having the means of production at its disposal makes possible (after the draconian repression of all useless or anti-social economic sectors, begun already in the transitory phase) an accelerated development of those sectors neglected under capitalism, above all housing and agriculture: moreover, it enables a geographical reorganization of the apparatus of production, leading eventually to the suppression of the antagonism between city and countryside, and to the formation of large production units on a continental scale. The effective monopoly of industrial production held by the proletarian state will also make it in the best interests of the small producers to become ever more integrated into the more evolved and concentrated forms of production.

Finally, all these advances imply the abolition of the general conditions which, on the one hand confine the female sex to an unproductive and menial housework, and, on the other, limit a large number of producers to manual activities alone, making intellectual work, and scientific knowledge, a social privilege for one class alone. Thus along with the abolition of the different class relationships to the means of production, there is the prospect of the disappearance of the fixed attributions of given social duties to particular human groups.

**3) Phase of higher socialism (or communist phase)** Insofar as the state performs these tasks, to which it owes its existence, it transcends its historical function of preventing and repressing attempts at a capitalist restoration, and begins to cease to exist as a state, that is as a rule over men, and starts to become a simple apparatus for administering things. This withering away is bound up with the disappearance of distinct social classes and is therefore achieved when the small producers, peasants and artisans, have finally been transformed into out and out industrial producers. And thus we arrive at the level of higher communism which Marx characterized as follows: "In a higher

This process rules out the pacific, progressivist and evolutionist interpretations of the bourgeois regime's course, and confirms our forecasts about the classes concentrating and marshaling their forces on opposite sides. For the proletariat to match its enemy's strength with rekindled revolutionary energy, it must reject, either as a demand or as a means of agitation, the illusory return to democratic liberalism and constitutional guarantees; the class revolutionary party must take the historic step of liquidating once and for all the practice of making alliances, even for transitory issues, both with the bourgeois and middle-class parties, and with pseudo-workers' parties who have adopted reformist programs.

9. The imperialist wars have shown that the crisis of capitalist disintegration is inevitable by decisively inaugurating a phase in which its expansion no longer signifies a continual growth in the productive forces, but rather an alternation of accumulation and destruction. These wars have been the cause of a series of profound crises in the workers' international organizations, with the dominant classes having managed to impose military and national solidarity on them by getting them to line up on one or other of the war-fronts. There is only one historically viable alternative that can be posed to this situation and that is the rekindling of class struggle within nations, leading to the civil war of the working masses to overthrow the power of bourgeois states everywhere, along with all their international coalitions. The indispensable condition for this lies in the reconstitution of the International Communist Party as an autonomous force independent of any existing political or military power.

10. The apparatus of the proletarian state, insofar as it is a means and arm of struggle in a transitional period between two social systems, does not derive its organizational strength from any existing constitutional canons or schemas that aim to represent all classes. The most complete historical example of a proletarian state up to the present is the Soviets (workers' councils) during the October Revolution of 1917, when the working class armed itself under the leadership of the Bolshevik party, when the conquest of power was accomplished by totalitarian means and the Constituent Assembly dispersed, and when the struggle took place to repel the attacks by foreign bourgeois governments, and stamp out the internal rebellion of the vanquished classes, of the middle classes and opportunist parties—the inevitable allies of the counterrevolution at decisive moments.

11. The full accomplishment of socialism is inconceivable within the borders of one country alone and the socialist transformation cannot be effected

without failures and momentary setbacks. The defense of the proletarian regime against the ever present dangers of degeneration can be ensured only if the running of the proletarian state is continually coordinated with the international struggle of the working class of each country against its own bourgeoisie, state and military apparatus; there can be no let up in this struggle even in wartime. The necessary co-ordination can be ensured only if the World Communist Party controls the politics and program of the states where the working class has attained power.

## Defense of the Great Marxist Tradition

On the basis of this program, outlined above, the International Communist Party reclaims the fundamental doctrinal principles of Marxism in their entirety: dialectical materialism as systematic conception of the world and of human history; the fundamental economic doctrines contained in Marx's *Capital* as the method of interpreting capitalist economy; and the programmatic formulations of the *Communist Manifesto* as historical and political plan for the emancipation of the world working class. We also reclaim the entire system of principles and methods arising from the victory of the Russian Revolution, namely: the theoretical and practical work of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party during the crucial years of taking power and the civil war, and the classic theses of the Second Congress of the Communist International. These represent the confirmation, restoration, and subsequent development of the aforesaid principles, which today are brought into even more prominent relief by the lessons of the tragic revisionist wave which originated around 1926-27 under the appellation "socialism in one country".

It is only as a matter of convention however that we link this calamity to the name of Stalin, preferring instead to ascribe it to the pressure of the objective social forces towering over Russia after the revolutionary blaze of October 1917 had failed to spread worldwide. Too late was it seen that a programmatic and tactical barrier was needed to resist this pressure, a barrier which even if it had been unable to prevent defeat, might yet have made the rebirth of the international communist movement less difficult and tormented.

This latest of counter-revolutionary waves would be far more lethal than the opportunist disease (anarchist deviations) that had troubled the brief existence of the First International, and far more serious even than the damage wrought by the Second International when it sunk into the mire of adhesion to the *Union Sacrée*, and then to the 1914 imperialist war (gradualism, parlia-

the tasks of the revolution to overthrowing the existing state power. Orthodox Marxism holds that the political revolution marks the initiation of a new social epoch, and it is therefore important to redefine its main stages.

**1) Phase of Transition.** Politically this phase is characterized by the Dictatorship of the Proletariat; economically by a survival of forms specifically linked to capitalism, i.e., a mercantile distribution of products, even if on large-scale industry, and, in certain sectors, above all in agriculture, some small production. The proletarian power can overcome these forms only by despotic measures, i.e., the passing under its control of all sectors already of a social and collective nature (large-scale industry, agriculture and trade, transport, etc.) and by setting up a vast distribution network independent from private commerce, but still functioning, at least to begin with, according to mercantile criteria. In this phase, however, the duties of the military struggle take priority over social and economic reorganization, unless, against any reasonable expectation, the class that has been overthrown internally and menaced externally renounces armed resistance.

The duration of this phase depends, on the one hand, on the scale of difficulties the capitalist class will create for the revolutionary proletariat, and, on the other hand, on the amount of reorganizational work which will be in inverse proportion to the economic and social level achieved in each sector and in each country, and which is therefore easier in the more advanced countries.

**2) Lower phase of socialism (or socialist phase)** This second stage is derived dialectically from the first, and displays the following characteristics: the proletarian state by now controls the gross exchangeable product, though a small-production sector still exists. These conditions make it possible to move on to a non-monetary distribution which, nevertheless, is still mediated through exchange since the allocation of products to the producers depends on how much work they have performed, and is effected through the labour vouchers that attest to it. Such a system is substantially different from capitalism where the earnings of wage-labourers are linked to their labour-power, with an abyss dug between individual lives and the wealth of society. This is because under socialism no obstacles will exist between needs and their satisfaction, excepting the obligation for all competent individuals to work, and every progress, that in capitalist society becomes a hostile power against the proletariat, will immediately become a means of emancipation for the entire species. Nonetheless, forms directly inherited from bourgeois society still have to be dealt with: "The same amount of labour which the producer has given to society in



borne by millions of proletarians and poor peasants) would be wasted: in countries now become formally independent, corrupt, greedy and parasitic bourgeoisies are in power, and, aware of the menace of the exploited masses of city and country, they are more than willing to forge new alliances with yesterday's "enemy", imperialism. Meanwhile capital in the old imperial centers, after having been ignominiously put to its heels, simply slips back into the ex-colonies by the back door, and by means of "aid", loans, and trade in raw materials and manufactures, it emerges unscathed. At the same time, the result of the paralysis of the proletarian and communist revolutionary movement in the strongholds of imperialism is that an apparently historical rationale is given to the degenerate Maoist, Castroist and Guevaran theories, which indicate phantasmic peasants', popular, and anarchic revolutions as the only way of avoiding the global morass of legalitarian and pacifist reformism. All this was brought about as the inevitable result of abandoning the *via maestra* to internationalism.

But just as Internationalism (disowned by those parties connected to Moscow or Peking) is destined to rise again through being rooted in *the facts* of an increasingly *global* economy and system of exchange, and the national mortgage (which in the colonies bolstered the united front of all classes, and forced industrialization and rapid transformations of political and social structures) expires, so class war and the dictatorship of the proletariat are inevitably and *everywhere* back on the agenda. This serves to demonstrate that henceforth the duty of today's International Communist Party is to assist the emerging working classes of the so-called Third World to separate their destinies from the social strata in power by breaking away from them once and for all, thus enabling them to take up their hard-won place in the world army of the communist revolution.

### **Back to the Communist Programme**

On the programmatic level, our conception of socialism stands out from all others in postulating the need for a preliminary violent revolution, the destruction of all the institutions of the bourgeois state, and the creation of a new state apparatus to be steered in an opposed direction by a single party: that party which had prepared for, consolidated, and led the proletarian attacks on the old regime to a victorious conclusion.

But, just as we reject the notion of a gradual and peaceful passage from capitalism to socialism without political revolution, that is, without the destruction of democracy, so we also reject the anarchist conception that restricts

mentarism, democratism). Today the situation of the workers' movement appears a thousand times worse than after the vertiginous collapse of the Second International at the outbreak of the first World War.

The Third International, formed in 1919, re-established the cardinal points of Marxist doctrine with a program that made a definitive break with the democratic, gradualist, parliamentary and pacifistic illusions of the Second (shipwrecked by the most ignoble chauvinism and warmongering during the war). The Third International was an enormous historical contribution by Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolshevik old guard, but, nevertheless, right from its very inception the Third International was, in a certain sense, on shaky ground, and this was due both to the hurried way it went about forming communist parties, and because of the overly flexible tactics it adopted to "conquer the masses".

But, at least as far as the creators of the Red October were concerned, this approach and these tactics did not signify, nor should they be taken as signifying, an abandonment of the basic principle of the violent conquest of power, of the destruction of the bourgeois parliamentary and democratic state apparatus, or then installation of the proletarian dictatorship directed by the party. In fact, the application of the tactics of the Third International might not have caused so much harm if the revolution, as was hoped, had spread rapidly to the rest of the world; but, as the Left was to warn from the Second Congress in 1920 onwards, there was a risk, if the revolutionary wave subsided, of very negative consequences. This was because the collection of parties adhering to the new International was highly unstable since they had been assembled in a most random way and, as a result, were not sufficiently immunized against the possibility of social-democratic relapse as soon as the revolutionary wave had receded. Unfortunately, precisely that happened, bringing to the surface was not just the people, but rather the cancerous illnesses of an all too recent past.

Between 1920 and 1926, the Left insisted on the necessity of establishing *one single* platform and tactical plan to be adopted by all sections of the International, and warned against the perils of applying "revolutionary parliamentarism" in the West, where democracy had been established for over a hundred years. More importantly still, it would oppose the tactic of the "united political front", and then the tactics of the so-called "Workers (and Worker-Peasant) Governments", since it held that these formulae undermined the clearcut and unambiguous formula of the "proletarian dictatorship". It deplored the policy of allowing the direct adhesion to the International of organizations independent from the local communist party and of accepting sympa-

thizer parties. It rejected the praxis of infiltrating pseudo-workers parties, and especially bourgeois parties (like the Kuomintang). Likewise, it rejected the even worse "blocs", even temporary ones, with alleged kindred parties or those contingently aligned on positions which were only superficially "similar".

The criterion which had inspired the Left and given rise to these positions was, and remains, the following: the strengthening of communist parties depends not on tactical maneuvering or on displays of subjective voluntarism, but on the objective fact of the playing out of a revolutionary process which has no reason to obey the canons of a continuous and linear process. The seizure of power may be near or far, but in both cases, and above all in the former, preparing for it (and preparing a more or less large stratum of the proletariat for it) means heading off any action likely to cause the communist organization to relapse into an opportunism analogous to what occurred in the Second International, that is, a breaking of the inseparable bond between means and ends, tactics and principles, and immediate and ultimate objectives, leading inevitably back to electoralism and democratism in politics, and to reformism in the social field.

From 1926 onwards, the conflict would be transferred directly onto the political plane and end in a split between the International and the Left. The two questions on the table were: "Socialism in one country" and, shortly after, "anti-fascism". "Socialism in one country" is in fact a double negation of Leninism: firstly, it fraudulently passes off as socialism what Lenin clearly defined as "capitalistic development in the European manner in petty-bourgeois and mediaeval Russia", and secondly, it detaches the destinies of the Russian Revolution from that of the World Proletarian Revolution. *It is the doctrine of the counter-revolution.* Inside the U.S.S.R., it would be used to justify the repression against the Marxist and Internationalist old guard, starting with Trotsky, whilst outside its borders it would favor the crushing of the Left currents by centre fractions, often clearly descended from social democracy, and "in total submission to the bourgeoisie" (Trotsky).

The principal manifestation of the abandonment of the cardinal programmatic points of the world-wide communist struggle was the substitution of the watchword of the revolutionary conquest of power for the defense of democracy against fascism; as if both regimes would not always respond to their shared objective of defending the capitalist regime when faced with the peril of a new proletarian revolutionary wave, and alternate at the helm of the state according to the pressing demands of the dynamics of class struggle. This phenomenon, after the German bastion had fallen with Hitler's victory in 1933,

taking power, the metropolitan proletariat could then incorporate the economy of the ex-colonies into a "world economic plan" which, though unitary like the one to which capitalism tends already, would differ in that it would have no wish to oppress or conquer, no wish to exterminate and exploit. The colonial peoples, therefore, thanks to "the subordination of the immediate interests of the countries where there had been victorious revolutions to the general interests of the revolution throughout the world", would attain socialism without having to pass through the horrors of a capitalist phase; which would be all the more terrible through having to cut corners in order attain a level comparable with the most evolved countries.

From when the destiny of the Chinese Revolution was played out in 1926-27, not a stone of this mighty edifice has been left standing by opportunism. In the colonies, especially after the Second World War, the so-called communist parties, far from "placing themselves at the head of the exploited masses" *to accelerate the separation* from the shapeless bloc of several classes grouped under the banner of national independence, instead put themselves at the disposal of the indigenous bourgeoisies, and even of "anti-imperialist" feudal classes and potentates; either that, or, on taking power, they defended the political program of constitutional, parliamentary, and multiparty democracy, and "forgot" to "give prominence to the question of property"; or *at the very least* to the confiscation without compensation of the immense landed estates (linked in a fundamental way to industrial and commercial bourgeois property, and through that to imperialism). As to the young, battle hardened and extremely concentrated local proletariat, never once was it presented as the vanguard of the peasant and semi-proletarian masses, who had lived for centuries in abject misery, in order to shake off the yoke of capital *together*.

In the imperialist metropolises, meanwhile, the communist parties abjured the principles of violent revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat. In France, during the latter part of the Algerian War, and in America during the Vietnam War, they would sink even lower than the reformists of the Second International by limiting themselves to invoking "peace and negotiations" and calling for "formal and merely official recognition of the equality and independence" of the newly formed nations from their respective governments; an approach which had been branded by the Third International as the hypocritical slogan of the "democratic bourgeoisie camouflaged as socialists".

The consequence of this complete loss of the Marxist perspective of double revolutions is, and was, that the huge revolutionary potential contained in the big and frequently bloody rebellions (the brunt of which have always been

one party, whose doctrine, principles, programme and practical norms of action must be likewise integrated and unique. The party, rather than embodying a hybrid collection of confusing and conflicting ideas represents "a clear and organic surpassing of all the particular impulses that arise out of the interests of particular proletarian groups, divided into professional categories and belonging to different nations, into a *synthetic force working towards world revolution*" (Party political Platform, 1945).

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The renunciation by the communist movement of its international revolutionary duties is reflected, just as starkly, in the complete and shameful abandonment of the classic Marxist positions on the insurrectional struggles of the colonial peoples against imperialist oppression. Whilst these struggles assumed an increasingly violent character after the Second World War, the proletariat of the imperial metropolises would be harnessed to the chariot of bourgeois "reconstruction" in truly cowardly fashion. In 1920, faced with the *armed* struggles of the colonial peoples, which were already rocking Imperialism in the post-war period, the Second Congress of the Communist International and the First Congress of Eastern Peoples outlined the great perspective of one single world strategy, which would combine the defeatism of the social insurrection in the capitalist metropolises with the national revolt in the colonies and semi-colonies. The latter revolt, directed politically by the young colonial bourgeoisie, would be in pursuit of the bourgeois objective of national unity and independence, and yet the conjunction of political forces nevertheless "put on the agenda the dictatorship of the proletariat throughout the world": on the one hand the active intervention of the young communist parties politically and organizationally independent at the head of the huge masses of workers and peasants, and on the other hand, the offensive of the metropolitan proletariat against the citadels of colonialism, would create the possibility of by-passing the national-revolutionary parties, and transforming the originally bourgeois revolutions into proletarian revolutions. None of this contradicts the scheme of permanent revolution outlined by Marx and put into effect by the Bolsheviks in the semi-feudal Russia of 1917.

The pivotal point of this strategy could only be, and was, the revolutionary proletariat of the "more civilized" countries, that is to say, the more economically advanced, because their victory, *and that alone*, would enable the countries which were more *economically* behind to overcome the historical handicap of their backwardness. Once master of the means of production after

found expression not only in the Third International, but also amongst the "Trotskyist" opposition, which, even if it did talk of democracy as a "stage" or "phase" which had to be traversed before the full demands of the revolutionary proletariat could be acted on, was, nevertheless, using the very same watchword of the defense of democracy against fascism as the Stalinists. In both cases, it brought about the destruction of the working class as a politically distinct force with objectives antithetical to those of all other social strata; the workers of the various countries would be mobilized first in defense of democratic institutions, and then in defense of the "fatherland", prompting the rebirth and exasperation of chauvinistic hatreds. Finally even the Communist International was formally dissolved and any wish to reconstruct it temporarily annihilated.

Since the working class was now hitched to the bloody wagon of the imperialist war of 1939–45, the slender forces of international and internationalist communism, if and where they had survived, were not able to influence the situation in any way: and the call for the "transformation of the imperialist war into civil war", which had first gone up in 1914, and foreshadowed the Russian Revolution of 1917, now fell on deaf ears—scorned and despised. In the post-war period, not only were the "naïve" hopes of an expansion of revolutionary communism at the tips of Russian bayonets not fulfilled, but a neo-ministerialism even worse than that of the right wing of the Second International reigned supreme; worse because exercised in the more difficult period of capitalistic reconstruction: a reconstruction, which favored state authority (disarming of the proletarians in partisan units), saving the national economy (reconstruction loans, acceptance of austerity measures in the name of the "higher interests" of the nation, etc, etc). Later, in the "popular democracies", the re-establishment of an order which would be passed off as "Soviet" (Berlin, Poznan, Budapest) would be favored.

But once their *open* collaboration at the helm of the state was no longer required however, the "communist" parties affiliated to the Kremlin would be pushed to the margins of a merely parliamentary "opposition", driven there by the allies of war and of "peace" in an increasingly steel-bound world of police states and fascism. But, far from rediscovering the *Via maestra* of Lenin (something they couldn't have done even supposing they had wanted to) they sunk deeper and deeper into the pit of total revisionism, finally reaching rock bottom in recent years when they would neither predict nor advocate an end to capitalism, now exalted under the form of international commerce (globalization), or an end to bourgeois parliamentarism, which, on the contrary, was now

to be defended against the attacks of the bourgeoisie, which needed reminding of the its "glorious" past. In the end, even the pretense of a struggle between the "socialist" and "capitalist" camps, the paltry level to which Stalinism had reduced the class struggle, was dropped to make room for the watchword of "coexistence and peaceful competition!" on an international scale.

Finally, no longer able to bear that word "communist", which had weighed them down for so long; these parties changed their name.

The consequence of "coexistence" and economic confrontation could only be the complete liquidation of Stalinism. For our party, therefore, the complete abjuration of Stalinism by the countries of the Eastern bloc comes as no surprise; indeed, we had foreseen it as the inevitable and definitive step needed to overcome, at the economic level, their separation from the world market; and to move beyond that autarchy necessary in backward countries to develop their national capitalist industry to the point they can compete with the industrial production of the old capitalist powers.

Russia now makes no pretense of being "socialist" and has become a fully capitalist country, with all its producers proletarianized and with all the economic, political, social and moral muck of a true capitalist democracy. The Stalinist betrayal of communism and its ensuing collaboration with rotten western capitalism ended up reducing the 1917 communist revolution that shook the world from blazing splendor to cold ashes; but at the same time it wrested Russia from its semi-feudal inertia by carrying out—by fire and sword and all the inevitable atrocities that go with it—its primitive capitalist accumulation. The Russian attempt at disguising as socialism an out and out capitalism has failed. The prevailing of the latter form of production in every corner of the country, far from being evidence of the defeat of communism, is on the contrary the best condition for its future triumph.

But from the depths of the abyss, in anticipation of a future proletarian resurgence, the call goes up: "Workers of the World—Unite!" and "Dictatorship of the Proletariat!". It is *our* call.

## For the Restoration of Revolutionary Marxist Theory

### Back to "Catastrophism"

rope which, though calling themselves socialist, would proclaim, and rabidly defend, their *national* "sovereignty"; even against their allegedly "brother" states, against whom the *frontiers* would be just as jealously guarded. Though defining themselves as members of the "Socialist Camp", the economic conflicts and tensions still dividing them would nevertheless reach a critical point such that nothing remained, apparently, but to resolve them through the employment of brute force (Hungary, Czechoslovakia). On the other hand, where military intervention was not possible, fundamental splits would take place as with Yugoslavia and China. Thus it would happen that parties yet to "achieve power" would end up demanding their own "national road to socialism" (which then became *a unique way* for everyone to abjure the revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and to completely adhere to democratic, parliamentary and reformist ideology). Before long, we witness these "socialists" making a proud defense of their autonomy from the other "brother" parties, thus demonstrating themselves to be the heirs of the purest political and patriotic traditions of their respective bourgeoisies, ready to pick up—to use Stalin's expression—the flag these have dropped.

Internationalism, in these circumstances, becomes a word that is even more rhetorical and devoid of content than "international brotherhood of peoples"; a slogan which in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx violently flung back in the faces of the German Workers' Party as "borrowed from the bourgeois League for Liberty and Peace". No real international solidarity has taken place for a long time not even in highly tense moments (such the miners' strike in Belgium, the dockers' strike in England, revolts by black workers in the American car industry, the French General Strike in 1968, etc.) and no international solidarity is even possible as long as it is declared that every proletarian and "communist" party has to resolve its own *particular* problems on its own, *and that they are the "only ones who can resolve them"*; in short, no international solidarity is possible as long as each party, holed up in its own "private" corner, poses as the champion of its own nation, its own national institutions and traditions, its own national economy, and the defender of the sacred national "boundaries". In any case, what use was a not just verbal but "de facto" internationalism (Lenin), if the message of the "new parties" to the world was peaceful co-existence and a competitive race between capitalism and "socialism"?

A fully revived proletarian movement, with all its distinctive historical features intact, will come about only on condition that it is recognized that in all countries there is only one route to emancipation, and that there can only be

ing at that great end ["the economic emancipation of the working classes"] have hitherto failed from the want of solidarity between the manifold divisions of labour in each country, and from the absence of a fraternal bond of union between the working classes of different countries", and it forcefully proclaimed "that the emancipation of labour is neither a local nor a national, but a social problem, embracing all countries in which modern society exists, and depending for its solution on the concurrence, practical and theoretical, of the most advanced countries". In 1919, the Communist International was born from the long struggle of the world-wide Internationalist Left to transform the imperialist war into civil war; whether in the most democratic of republics, in the most autocratic of empires, or in the most constitutional and parliamentary of monarchies, it immediately made the rules of the First International its own, and proclaimed that "the new workers international is established to organize common action between the workers of different countries, in order to bring down capitalism and install the proletarian dictatorship and an international Soviet republic that will completely eliminate classes and bring about socialism, the first stage of communist society", and it added that "the organizational apparatus of the Communist International must assure the workers of every country the chance of receiving in any given moment the greatest possible help from organized proletarians in other countries".

The thread of this great tradition was broken in the period between the wars by a combination of the theory, and the praxis, of "socialism in one country", along with the replacing of dictatorship of the proletariat by the struggle for democracy against fascism. The first policy broke the link between the destinies of the victorious revolution in Russia and the revolutionary proletarian movement in the rest of the world, and molded the latter's development around the interests of the Russian *state*. The second, by dividing the world into fascist and democratic countries, ordered proletarians living under totalitarian regimes to fight against their own government, not for the revolutionary conquest of power, but for the restoration of democratic and parliamentary institutions, meanwhile proletarians living under democratic regimes were urged *to defend* their own governments and, if necessary, do so by fighting against their brothers on the other side of the border; the result being that the destiny of the working class was bound to their respective "fatherlands" and bourgeois institutions.

The dissolution of the Communist International during the Second World War was the inevitable upshot of this reversal of doctrine, strategy and tactics. From the recent imperialist massacre there would emerge states in eastern Eu-

In terms of the general doctrine of historical and social revolution, the old communist movement has now degenerated to such an extent that it rejects the "catastrophic" vision of Marx: neither opposed class interests, nor clashes between states will lead—they say—to violent struggle, to armed conflicts. Basically, they subscribed to the prospect of an international peace, baptized *peaceful co-existence*, along with a *social peace* guaranteed by the conservative and reactionary watchword of a "new democracy", which would be based on "democratic planning", on "structural reforms", and on the "struggle against monopolies". In reality, Stalinist, and especially post-Stalinist "communism" was just an apologia for progress in its glorification of growth of production and productivity, and an apologia for capitalism in its glorification of the growth of trade.

Today, while "peaceful coexistence" has given way to a fluid international situation, in which looks for new settlements are being sought in view of the next world conflict, the opportunist, pseudo-worker parties are no longer distinguishable, even in a formal sense, from then self-proclaimed "right-wing" parties.

In opposition to this kaleidoscope of positions, the Marxist position remains the same: under capitalism, the growth of production and productivity involves increasing exploitation of labour by capital, a growth measured in the part of work which is unpaid, of surplus-value. Workers' consumption, the "reserve fund" which the working class gives rise to in both an individual, and social form (insurance against sickness and old-age, family legislation, etc.) may increase, but at the same time the subjection of the producers to capital increases also, and their conditions of life become even more insecure due to the ups and downs of the market economy. Rather than class antagonisms getting less, they are pushed, in fact, to their maximum extent.

Extension of trade signifies the extension of the dominion of the developed countries over the under-developed countries, plus increasing aggravation of the natural competition between developed countries. By drawing the different peoples and different continents together in the meshes of an increasingly global economy—a genuine, if unwitting conquest—international commerce presents, dialectically, a "negative" aspect which its apologizers feign to ignore: that is, it prepares the ground for the commercial, and therefore financial and industrial crises whose only outcome can be, today as yesterday, an imperialist war. Moreover, an increasing part of the productive forces is nowadays wasted, not just in producing the "goods and services", which "mutually beneficial" and "honest trade" (so dear to the hearts of opportunists of East and

West) if keen to "bestow" on the whole of humanity, but in the production of destructive weapons whose main function is actually economic (accumulating by absorbing over-production) than military.

Capitalism is endless reproduction of capital; of capitalist production's purpose is capital itself. The increase of commodity production beyond any natural limit, at a breakneck speed, does not generate better welfare for mankind, but rather a series of catastrophic crises of overproduction that ravage social life over the entire planet. Of such crises—denied for decades by bourgeois theorists, and believed unavoidable by authentic Marxism—the working class is the first victim, bearing the weight of unemployment, reduction of wages, and intensification of work loads.

For capitalism war is the necessary consequence of its periodical overproduction crises. Capitalist war is therefore unavoidable. Only the enormous destructions provoked by the modern world wars allow capitalism to start anew its infernal cycle of reconstruction-accumulation. Our era's imperialist world wars—although invariably hidden behind "humanitarian", "democratic", "pacifistic", "defensive", "antiterrorist" screens—are badly needed by the various capitalisms to share out the exhausted markets, to divide up the continents among themselves. They are therefore wars for the conservation of capitalism; both on the economic plane and insofar as they provide, during the crises, for the elimination of the part of labor force that exceeds the reduced capacity of the system of production to employ it. As a matter of fact, they are immense slaughters of slaves that capital is not at that moment able to support. It's either war or revolution, there's no alternative route.

The revolutionary communist attitude towards war is to denounce the idea of peace being compatible with capitalism as a tragic illusion, and to affirm that only the overthrowing of bourgeois power and the destruction of production relations founded on capital will free mankind from such a recurrent tragedy. On the line of Marx and Lenin, the party proclaims the tactics of *class antimilitarism*, of *fraternization at the fronts*, of *revolutionary defeatism* at the front and the rear; which aim to turn the war among states into a war between classes.

Due to the fundamental contradiction that invalidates all legalitarian and inter-classist pacifist movements, which condemn war but within the boundaries of the present regime, communism expects, owing to their bourgeois origin, that whenever they are forced to choose between war and revolution they will invariably opt for the former. With Lenin we consider them as a factor of confusion, detrimental to the sound battle orientation of the proletariat, and as

businesses, each with its own plan arrived at by "decisions from below" (Yugoslavian theory of self-management). Thus the petty-bourgeois theoreticians completely negate the possibility of the "*social production regulated by social prevision*" which Marx showed to be "the political economy of the laboring class", and which is made possible only by transcending the basic productive cells of the capitalist economy and the "blind rule" of the market in which they find the only, chaotic and unpredictable connective element.

Before and after the taking of power, in politics as in economy, the revolutionary proletariat does not and cannot make any concessions to anti-totalitarianism; a new version of that idealistic and utopian anti-authoritarianism denounced by Marx and Engels in their long polemic with the anarchists, and which Lenin, in *State and Revolution*, showed to converge with gradualist and democratic reformism. However, *the small producers* will receive a very different treatment from the socialist proletariat than that meted out to them under capitalism, which throughout its history has treated this class with the utmost ferocity. But *towards small production itself, and its political, ideological and religious reflex*, its action will be infinitely more decisive, rapid and, in short, totalitarian. The proletarian dictatorship will spare humanity the infinite amount of violence and misery which under capitalism constitutes its "daily bread". This it will be able to do precisely inasmuch as it doesn't hesitate to use force, intimidation and, if necessary, the most decided repression against any social group, big or small, which seeks to obstruct the fulfillment of its historical mission.

To conclude: whoever combines the notion of *socialism* with any form of liberalism, democratism, factory councilism, localism, pluripartyism, or worse, anti-partyism places himself outside history, and off the road that leads to *the reconstitution of the party and the International on a totalitarian communist basis*.

## Back to Internationalism

Since the appearance of the *Communist Party Manifesto* in 1848, whose title purposely omits national specifications, communism and the struggle for the revolutionary transformation of society have been by definition international and internationalist: "The workers have no country"; "United action at least in the civilized countries, is one of the first conditions of the emancipation of the proletariat".

From its very inception in 1864, the International Workingmen's Association inscribed in its *Provisional Rules of the Association* that "all efforts aim-

same time the totalitarian rule of the ex-oppressed class, as embodied in its party, over the ex-dominant class.

Anti-totalitarianism is a revindication of classes which are situated on the same social basis as the capitalist class (private appropriation of the means of production and the products themselves) but which are nevertheless invariably crushed by it. It is the ideology—common to the multifarious movements of "intellectuals" and "students" which infest the current political scene—of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie and middle classes, a desperate attempt to cling to the historically condemned myths of small production, of the sovereignty of the individual and "direct democracy". It is therefore both bourgeois and anti-historical and thus doubly anti-proletarian. The ruin of the petty-bourgeoisie under the hammer blows of big capital is historically inevitable, and constitutes in a social sense—in the capitalist manner, brutal and drawn-out at the same time—a step towards the socialist revolution in that it brings about the one and only real historical contribution of capitalism: centralization of production, and socialization of productive activity.

For the proletariat, the return to less concentrated forms of production (even were it possible) could only mean turning aside from its historical aim of *achieving a completely social production and distribution*. It therefore recognizes as its duty neither the defense of the petty-bourgeoisie against "big business" (both equally enemies of socialism) nor the adoption of pluralism and "polycentrism" in politics, which it has no reason to accept on either the *economic* or *social* level.

The slogan "struggle against the monopolies" in defense of small-scale production is therefore reactionary, as is the erroneous petty-bourgeois response to the degeneration of the Russian Revolution which is connected to it. For us, the cause of the degeneration was the failure to spread and extend the proletarian revolution, and the abandonment of communist internationalism, whilst for the petty bourgeoisie, the revolution was a failure from the start because it was anti-democratic, because it installed a proletarian dictatorship. All the equally reactionary movements of the middle-classes see the revolutionary process as consisting of the gradual conquests of little islands of peripheral "power" by proletarian organisms organized in the workplace (and condemned to it); this is the fantastical "direct democracy" (as in the Gramscist and *Ordinivist* theory of the factory councils). What these theories ignore is the central problem of the conquest of political power, the destruction of the capitalist state, and the need for the party as *centralizing* organ of the working class. For others, all that is needed to realize "socialism" is a network of "self-managed"

an auxiliary instrument of militarism used to drag workers into war. As a matter of fact it is the pacifists—after ascribing to the "aggressor" of the hour those atrocities against civilians that imperialist wars always and invariably cause—who end up going to the bourgeois states and asking them "to put a stop to it by any means", and who ask proletarians to slaughter each other in the name of the phony ideals of "peace", "democracy", "civilization", etc.

When dealing with the even more classically reformist arguments of post-Stalinism, the positions of revolutionary Marxism remain as they were back in the heyday of social democracy: modern capitalism is not at all characterized by "lack of planning" (Engels had already seen that!), and in any case "planning" alone, of whatever sort, isn't nearly adequate to characterize socialism. Not even the disappearance (more or less true as the case may be) of the social personality of the capitalist, which supposedly distinguished Russian society, is sufficient to demonstrate that capitalism itself has been abolished (and Marx had already seen that!). Capitalism is, after all, nothing other than the reduction of the modern worker to the position of wage-earner; and where you find wage-earners you find capitalism.

The combination of apologia of capitalism with reformism of the old-fashioned social-democratic type, which distinguishes Russian- and Chinese-type "communism" (worse even than classical reformism), is linked to a defeatism that, insofar as it is a psychological and ideological reflection of the disintegration of the revolutionary strength of the proletariat, sterilizes even the revolt which it itself has stirred up in certain workers' strata. This new, more dangerous reformism consists, in the first place, in denying that the working class can overcome the heightened competition that divides it in the present day; that it can rebel against the despotism of the needs created by capitalist prosperity; that it can escape from the cretinization generated by the bourgeois organization of welfare, of leisure, of "culture"; that it can form its own revolutionary party. In the second place, it implies, explicitly, or implicitly, that the new weapons possessed by the ruling class have somehow rendered them more invincible than before. We, meanwhile, are convinced that capitalism's power is merely a transitory phase in history; and therefore all these positions, which are tantamount to the abdication of every revolutionary hope before an omnipotent capitalism, are rejected by us.

The same defeatist positions we find in all epochs of political and social reaction (i.e. superstitious respect for the military power of the enemy, already combated by Engels back in the days of "conventional" guns and cannons; philistine scorn and contempt for the "obtosity", "ignorance", and "lack of ide-

alism" of the workers, already combated by Lenin and by all revolutionary militants); but each age creates its own pressing reasons for believing them (the atom and hydrogen bombs or, as in Marcusean elucubrations, the incurably corrupting power of "the consumer society"!).

A central instrument of this moral intimidation are today's powerful mass media, which obsessively repeat that the present society is the "lesser evil".

The Marxist positions, on these issues as well, remain the same as ever: capitalism may divide, but at the same time it concentrates and organizes the proletariat—and in the end the concentration gains the upper hand over the division. Capitalism may corrupt and weaken the proletariat, but nevertheless, despite itself, it provides a revolutionary education whether it likes it or not—and in the end such education gains the upper hand on the corruption. Indeed, all the sophisticated products of the "pleasure industries" are equally powerless to soothe the increasing malaise of social life (whether rural or urban), as indeed are all the tranquilizers of modern medicine when it comes to restoring to capitalist man harmonious relations with himself, and with others, which "modern life"—capitalist life—destroys.

Nevertheless, much more than in these kinds of corruption, the strength of capital resides, today as yesterday, in crushing the producer by the length of the working day, working week, working year, working life. But capital *must*, by force of circumstances, historically limit this length; it does so slowly, grudgingly, with continuous steps backward, but *it can't avoid doing so*, and the effects of this, as Marx and Engels saw, will necessarily be revolutionary, especially considering it is compelled at the same time *to instruct* (at the same time as it stupefies) its future "gravediggers". There are two main outlooks for the future:

1) another 1929-type crisis will break out and reduce today's "embourgeoisified worker" to a proletarian condition (for us the most likely), and

2) a long historical phase of expansion and "prosperity"; and yet you have to be an open practitioner of defeatism (as are Maoists, Castroists, Guevarists etc, in their respective ways) to deduce, from the present disorganization of the proletariat, a definitive historical condemnation, a sociologically determined "inability" to reconstruct the party and the class International, and, from that, the necessity of other social strata and sociological categories (peasants, students and so on) to take its place as the vanguard of the social revolution.

Even more absurd is this belief: that because of the greater social power that the development of capitalism itself gives to the wage-earning class, the latter is rendered impotent and unable to achieve the prior duty of any histori-

cal social revolution: disarming the class enemy through the *totalitarian* appropriation of its military potential.

## Return to Revolutionary "Totalitarianism"

On the social and political plane, the final victory of democratism over the revolutionary doctrine of the old communist movement is reached when "resistance to totalitarianism" is presented as the task of the proletariat and of all social strata oppressed by capital.

This tendency, whose first historical manifestation was anti-fascism (both the war and pre-war varieties) affected all of the parties linked to Moscow (and ones like China which broke away) and ended up denying *the one party* (a form indubitably Leninist and communist in origin) as the necessary revolutionary guide and leader of the proletarian dictatorship. In the "people's democracies" of the so-called "socialist camp", power lay in the hands of popular and national "fronts", or of parties or "leagues" which explicitly embodied a bloc of several classes. Meanwhile, the "communist" parties operating in the "bourgeois camp" have solemnly abjured the doctrine that revolutionary class violence is the *sole way* of attaining power, and denied the fact that the *sole means* of maintaining the class dictatorship is through the communist party alone. Instead they flattered other parties, socialists, Catholics etc., by engaging in "dialogues" with them, and promising a "socialism" which would be jointly managed by several parties representing "the people". This tendency, which is warmly welcomed by all enemies of the proletarian revolution (Stalinist "communism" rejects anything that reminds them of the glories of the Red October) is not only defeatist but it is an illusion.

Just as the proletariat stakes no claim to any *liberty* for itself under the despotic regime of capital, and therefore doesn't rally around the banner of either "formal" or "genuine" democracy, it will, on having established its own *despotic regime* proceed to *suppress all the liberties* of the social groups linked to capital, and this will be an integral part of its programme. For the bourgeoisie, struggles in the political arena take place not between classes, but as "debates" between free and equal individuals; the struggle is one of opinions rather than of physical and social forces divided by incurable contradictions. But whilst the bourgeoisie disguises its own dictatorship under the cloak of democracy, communists, who since the time of the *Manifesto* have "disdained to conceal their views and aims", proclaim openly that the revolutionary conquest of power, as necessary prelude to the social palingenesis, signifies at the