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**The "peace" fraud and the proliferation
of destructive wars**

Are we heading towards a Third World War?

Presenting the 26th congress of the ICC

Resolution on the international situation

Report on the class struggle

Report on the economic crisis

Seven months of Trump's presidency

How can we explain the chaos of bourgeois politics?

**Anti-Semitism, Zionism and Anti-Zionism:
all are enemies of the proletariat, Part 2**

**Falling into the trap of the struggle for bourgeois
democracy against populism**

**Contribution to a history of the labour
movement in Egypt**

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Contact the ICC:

[http:// www.internationalism.org](http://www.internationalism.org) uk@internationalism.org
india@internationalism.org international@internationalism.org (rest of world)

Responsible editor: H. Depon-
thiere, PB 102, 2018 Antwerp
Central Station, Antwerp

The “peace” fraud and the proliferation of destructive wars

If we were to believe the speeches delivered when Trump made an appearance in the Israeli Knesset just after the latest “ceasefire” was signed in the Middle East, we are witnessing one of the greatest peace accords in history, opening a new period of peace and prosperity in that hitherto war-ravaged region. Praise for Trump’s achievement knew no bounds: he was even compared to the Persian monarch Cyrus the Great in the ancient world, who freed the Jews from Babylonian captivity and enabled the building of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. Before Trump, Cyrus was the only non-Jew to earn the qualification of Messiah.

Informed bourgeois commentators were more circumspect. While welcoming the ceasefire and the prospect of the resumption of humanitarian aid to ruined, starving Gaza, they pointed out that Trump’s 20-point plan offered very few concrete steps forward towards the disarming of Hamas, the rebuilding of Gaza under a new “technocratic” administration; that it holds out a vague prospect of Palestinian statehood but does not mention Israel’s occupation and virtual annexation of the West Bank or the Israeli government’s intractable opposition to the very idea of a Palestinian state. And indeed, there has been little let up in the violence since the deal was signed. Hamas has been publicly executing opponents to its rule in Gaza City, Israel has - with the justification of “protecting” the ceasefire against Hamas violations - resumed air strikes and is blocking the Rafah crossing that would allow convoys of aid into Gaza. It has also been carrying out raids in Lebanon, with over a hundred fatalities. In other words, even the short-term survival of the ceasefire and the delivery of food, medicine and other necessities is in doubt, let alone any more distant horizon of peace in the Middle East.

Trump’s other ceasefire arrangements, which according to him justify the title “President of Peace”, are no less hollow.

Soon after the signing of the ceasefire in Gaza, the planned meeting in Hungary between Trump and Putin was cancelled. This conflict, which Trump once boasted he could fix in 24 hours once he was president, drags on, with ever more destructive weapons being piled up and unleashed by both sides: the possibility of a viable end to the war in Ukraine also remains remote. The ceasefire in Congo is continually being breached, and tensions between nuclear armed Pakistan and India keep flaring up despite the ceasefire agreement. Pakistan welcomed Trump’s intervention in this conflict and nominated him for the Nobel Peace prize, but India played down Trump’s role, insisting that the deal was essentially

the work of the armies of the two states. Meanwhile, a new round of massacres is taking place in Sudan, and an Islamist group close to Al Qaida is close to seizing control of the capital of Mali.

But the USA’s rhetoric about peace is also exposed as a fraud by the actual military and political stances being adopted by the Trump regime, especially in its backyard: immediately after he returned to the White House, Trump started making menacing noises about taking control of Greenland, Canada and the Panama Canal. Today the US is carrying out murderous raids on boats allegedly involved in drug-running in the Caribbean and ramping up its threats against Colombia and Venezuela in particular, who are denounced as “narco-states” or as adjuncts of Russia and China in Latin America. At the same time Washington bailed out the Trump-friendly Milei regime in Argentina with a package of 20 billion dollars, with the clear understanding that further economic aid would be abandoned if Milei lost the forthcoming mid-term elections: all this certainly played its part in Milei’s large victory.

And of course, the US has never ceased supplying Israel with the weapons it has used to destroy Gaza and mount repeated raids on Lebanon, Syria, and Iran - with the US directly joining the attack on Iran’s nuclear capabilities. But we are not just talking about the US. Every state, and in particular the western European “democracies”, has begun pouring huge amounts of money and resources into building up their arms industries, accompanied by incessant propaganda about the need for the “West” to be ready to defend itself against Russian or Chinese aggression.

The reality is that war and preparations for war are spreading across the planet, that existing military conflicts have become increasingly chaotic, irrational and difficult to resolve, and that capitalism in decomposition is caught up in a spiral of destruction which it tends to escape the control of the ruling class. Capitalism in

terminal decay is war without end. As we wrote in our first orientation text on militarism and decomposition in 1991:

“In reality, if militarism, imperialism, and war are identified to such an extent with the period of decadence, it is because the latter corresponds to the fact that capitalist relations of production have become a barrier to the development of the productive forces: the perfectly irrational nature, on the global economic level, of military spending and war only expresses the aberration of these production relations’ continued existence. In particular, the permanent and increasing self-destruction of capital which results from this mode of life symbolises this system’s death-agony and reveals clearly that it has been condemned by history.”¹

The spiral of destruction and the necessity of internationalism

Another term we have used for this deadly spiral is the “whirlwind effect”, where each of capitalism’s crises - economic, ecological, military, political etc - tends to reinforce each other and push each other onto a new level. Thus the growing political irresponsibility of capitalism’s “political class”, expressed in its purest form in the various populist factions and above all by Trump who declared at the UN that global warming was the biggest hoax in history, can only further undermine the already minimal efforts of the bourgeoisie to mitigate the ecological crisis. At the same time the shift towards a war economy will encourage the growth of the most polluting and carbon-heavy sectors of industry. And wars themselves are ecological disasters: because of the devastation and poisoning of agricultural land, Gaza won’t be able to grow its own food for many years, and rebuilding its ruined homes, schools and hospitals from scratch will emit huge amounts of carbon.

Within this whirlwind, the drive towards war is the most powerful factor, the eye of the storm. And to push the war drive forward, the class that produces most of the world’s wealth, the working class, will be called upon to make the necessary sacri-

1. “Orientation text: Militarism and decomposition“, *International Review* n° 64.

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Are we heading towards a Third World War?

In this article, we will focus on the arguments of the Internationalist Communist Tendency on the prospect of a Third World War. Among the groups of the communist left outside the ICC, the ICT tends to defend the clearest internationalist positions against imperialist war, and this is why they have always been included in our appeals for the groups of the communist left to make common statements against the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East. One of the reasons why the ICT has consistently rejected these appeals is that we have different perspectives on the evolution of the world situation, notably on this issue of a march towards world war. In our view, these differences should not stand in the way of such joint actions as issuing common declarations against war, since we both share the same fundamental internationalist principles.

They are nevertheless important for the following reasons:

- it is absolutely essential for revolutionaries to have a clear grasp of the main tendencies in the world situation and thus what they prepare for in the future. Obviously, the perspectives they put forward are subject to “testing” in the living laboratory of history, but working on a purely day-to-day, immediate basis can be dangerous for their practice, their interpretation of current events, and even their capacity to hold on to basic principles;
- in this context, it is vital not to underestimate the main danger facing the working class, which is the accelerating drift of capitalism towards chaotic and uncontrolled military conflicts as part of a bigger spiral of self-destruction involving ecological collapse, economic crisis, and so on;
- it is essential to understand that the proletariat in the central capitalist countries is not faced with conscription into a world war in the foreseeable future, and that the development of the defensive struggle around mainly economic issues is the essential precondition for mounting an offensive struggle against the system as a whole. This is part of the antidote to falling into immediatist “anti-war” strategies which can easily lead to a weakening of internationalism.

The ICT's position on the alignment of imperialist forces and war preparations

According to the ICT in particular, the world economic crisis resulting from the fall in the rate of profit has reached such a point that only the level of destruction that would result from a Third World War would be sufficient to allow the birth of a

“new cycle of accumulation”. We won't enter into this particular argument here because it is evident that such a level of destruction is far more likely to end in the extinction of humanity than a new period of capitalist prosperity. Rather, we will examine the process that is leading towards such a catastrophic outcome, in order to highlight the most urgent threats to the future of the planet and its inhabitants. And here, the ICC is one of the few revolutionary organisations to argue against the idea that the dominant tendency we are seeing today is the formation of new imperialist blocs and thus a coordinated march towards world war. These two phenomena are inseparably linked, as we wrote in May 2022 in our updated orientation text on militarism and decomposition:

“a world war is the ultimate phase in the constitution of imperialist blocs. More precisely, it is because of the existence of constituted imperialist blocs that a war which, at the outset, concerns only a limited number of countries, degenerates, through the playing out of alliances, into a generalised conflagration.”¹

Our 1991 text on militarism and decomposition² was written in the wake of the collapse of the eastern imperialist bloc dominated by the USSR, an event which marked the definitive opening of decadent capitalism's final phase, the phase of decomposition. It recognised that history had demonstrated that, in the epoch of capitalist decadence, there is a permanent tendency towards the formation of imperialist blocs, and that the disappearance of one imperialist bloc had, hitherto, meant the formation of a new bloc. But having considered the possibility of the emergence of a new bloc

around the most economically powerful countries of the day – Germany and Japan – it concluded that neither power was in a position to carry out this role (and still less the former bloc leader, the USSR, which was itself in a phase of disintegration). It then identified the fundamental elements justifying this conclusion:

“At the beginning of the decadent period, and even until the first years of World War II, there could still exist a certain ‘parity’ between the different partners of an imperialist coalition, although it remained necessary for there to be a bloc leader. For example, in World War I there did not exist any fundamental disparity at the level of operational military capacity between the three ‘victors’: Great Britain, France and the USA. This situation had already changed considerably by World War II, when the ‘victors’ were closely dependent on the US, which was already vastly more powerful than its ‘allies’. It was accentuated during the ‘Cold War’ (which has just ended) where each bloc leader, both USA and USSR, held an absolutely crushing superiority over the other countries in the bloc, in particular thanks to their possession of nuclear weapons.

“This tendency can be explained by the fact that as capitalism plunges further into decadence:

- *the scale of conflicts between the blocs, and what is at stake in them takes on an increasingly world-wide and general character (the more gangsters there are to control, the more powerful must be the ‘godfather’);*
- *weapons systems demand ever more fantastic levels of investment (in particular, only the major powers could devote the necessary resources to the development of a complete nuclear arsenal, and to the research into ever more sophisticated armaments);*
- *and above all, the centrifugal tendencies amongst all the states as a result of the exacerbation of national antagonisms cannot but be accentuated.*

“The same is true of this last factor as of state capitalism: the more the bourgeoisie's different fractions tend to tear each other apart, as the crisis sharpens their mutual competition, so the more the state must be reinforced in order to exercise its author-

1. “Militarism and Decomposition (May 2022)”, *International Review* n° 168.

2. “Orientation text: Militarism and decomposition”, *International Review* n° 64.

ity over them. In the same way, the more the open historic crisis ravages the world economy, so the stronger must be a bloc leader in order to contain and control the tendencies towards the dislocation of its different national components. And it is clear that in the final phase of decadence, the phase of decomposition, this phenomenon cannot but be seriously aggravated.

“For all these reasons, especially the last, the reconstitution of a new pair of imperialist blocs is not only impossible for a number of years to come, but may very well never take place again: either the revolution, or the destruction of humanity will come first”.

In our view, this framework remains valid today, even if the 2022 update on the question of militarism and decomposition recognised that in 1991 we had not foreseen the rise of China, permitted by the break-down of the old bloc system and the development of so-called “globalisation”, which in particular took the form of massive capital investment in China, not least from the USA, resulting in the frenzied growth of China as the new “workshop of the world”. However, for the ICT and others, China today is more or less in a position to form a new bloc capable of waging world war against the “West”. As its affiliate in Britain, the Communist Workers Organisation, argued in a recent article:

“the US-led West, by its repeated use of the ‘economic weapon’ has created an alliance of convenience amongst the sanctioned powers (China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea) which has now taken them into conflict with the West. As the war in Ukraine has already demonstrated, this is not a ‘new Cold War’ as some pundits claimed. The situation is totally different. In the Cold War, both the USSR and US were victorious powers and both had more to lose than gain from outright (and possibly nuclear) war, so conflict was not direct. The nearest they came to blows was in proxy wars and manoeuvres on the global chessboard.

“Today the situation is entirely different. Given the stagnation of the capitalist system, no power is economically assured of its future, and all have intensifying problems of debt and declining capacity to maintain the kinds of society they have hitherto maintained. The rise of nationalism is not just found in the West. As is now well established, the unintended consequence of US capital seeking greater profits abroad in the face of the class war at home in 1980s and 1990s has been to nurture a challenger to its own hegemony in China. Here, Xi Jinping has cultivated a similar narrow nationalism asserting China’s new-found economic strength in contrast

to the humiliation of its past treatment by foreign powers. And this nationalism is not confined to rhetoric about retaking Taiwan. China is already ahead of the US in several areas of technology (processing rare earths for example) and in AI...

“...US military power is still far ahead of the rest of the world, and it is still the only global player in this respect. But cyber-technology and the fact that China has built a more modern fleet, etc., means the gap is closing and there is already a technological arms race between both powers. The rivalry here is not new and not confined to Trump. It was the Obama administration that first recognised the threat when it adopted the ‘pivot to Asia’ in 2011 but the policy then was to get involved with other Asian states (at the time 40% of growth in the world economy was located there) whilst at the same time maintaining direct links with China. Under both Trump and Biden US policy has become more aggressive towards China but whilst Biden sought to build alliances (AUKUS, etc.) in defence of ‘democracy’ against the ‘authoritarian’ states, Trump’s MAGA could be restyled ‘Make America Go it Alone.’”³

There is much that is true in this passage. The spectacular development of China as a world power in the twenty-first century marks a new level of bipolarisation of imperialist rivalries, which is the starting point for the formation of actual military blocs. Furthermore, the understanding that China has become the USA’s principal economic and imperialist challenger is indeed common to all the main factions of the US ruling class, from Obama to Trump. But we don’t agree that this means that China is already in a position to form a bloc around itself, for two main reasons:

- First, the Chinese bourgeoisie has itself clearly recognised that it is not yet able to fulfil one of the criteria mentioned in our 1991 text: a crushing military superiority over its potential “bloc partners” and, by extension, a capacity to directly confront its main imperialist rival, the USA. Hence the Chinese road map towards becoming the world’s leading power by 2050 is based first and foremost on the development of its economic power across the world, as embodied in its hugely ambitious “New Silk Road” project, as well as its very real engagement in the technological race with the US. This does not mean of course that these economic projects don’t have a significant military dimension, nor does it rule out the danger of open military conflicts with the US or its

allies, notably over the issue of Taiwan or control over the South China Sea. Such conflicts would be highly irrational from the point of view of China’s grand plan, but at the same time they are made more likely by the fact that China is more and more sinking into the economic crisis, and threatened by an ever stronger tendency towards fragmentation, factors that will tend to undermine its long-term economic (and thus military) aspirations and push it towards self-destructive, short-term options.

- An “alliance of convenience” is not a bloc, which as we have said requires submission to a single bloc leader, above all given the unleashing of the “every man for himself” tendency in the phase of decomposition. China’s “everlasting friend”, Russia, maybe be happy to receive China’s economic and ideological support for its Ukraine adventure, but there is no indication that it is willing to subordinate itself to China. Even though Russia’s economy is puny in comparison to China’s, and increasingly weakened by the Ukraine war, Russia still sees itself as a leading military power in its own right, and the history of Sino-Russian relations, punctuated by border disputes and moments of open warfare, has in reality made it wary of being too tightly embraced by its everlasting friend. Similarly, while both Russia and China feted Modi’s appearance at the recent Beijing summit, immediately after India’s row with the US over Trump threatening Delhi with new tariffs, there is a long history of military conflict over the borders between China and India, the latest of which exploded in 2024, while China has consistently supported Pakistan in its disputes with India. So, India certainly has no intention of meekly following China’s lead.

These expressions of the disruptive impact of national antagonisms within the “alliance of convenience” are a serious barrier to the formation of a Chinese-led bloc. But even more significant is the fact, noted by the CWO itself, that the US is itself adopting the policy of “Make America Go it Alone” and thus undermining the possibility of a stable alliance between the “democracies”.

In the 1991 text we wrote: “In the new historical period we have entered, and which the Gulf events have confirmed, the world appears as a vast free-for-all, where the tendency of ‘every man for himself’ will operate to the full, and where the alliances between states will be far from having the stability that characterised the imperialist blocs, but will be dominated

3. “Fifty Years of Struggle, Fifty Years of Swimming Against the Tide”, *Revolutionary Perspectives* n° 26.

by the immediate needs of the moment. A world of bloody chaos, where the American policeman will try to maintain a minimum of order by the increasingly massive and brutal use of military force”.

But while it has by no means renounced the use of massive military force – as we saw, for example, in the recent attacks on Iran’s nuclear facilities – the USA’s attempts to “maintain a minimum of order” have ended up with the USA becoming the main factor in the exacerbation of disorder. This was plainly seen in Iraq in 1991 but even more so with the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003. And, as we said in many of our resolutions and articles, in contrast to the past when it was the weaker powers that had the main interest in undermining the imperialist status quo, in the phase of decomposition it is the world’s strongest power which has become the main promoter of chaos across the globe. This has now reached the point where the Trump regime is openly saying it is no longer the world’s policeman and is more and more pitting the interests of the US against the rest of the world.

Thus, we can no longer talk about the “West” or a western bloc. The current divorce between the US and Europe, expressed in the very real threat to the future of the NATO alliance, US support for Europe’s populist and far right factions which oppose the European Union, alongside direct US declarations about the possibility of acquiring Canada, Greenland and the Panama Canal, are the latest stage in the disintegration of the whole “international order” inaugurated in the wake of World War 2. In this context, the US policy of making the European powers pay for the war in Ukraine is not aimed at increasing the latter’s subservience to an American-led order. This traditional goal has taken second place to the self-destructive drive of the US to undermine all its rivals, to sow chaos and division in the ranks of its former “allies”. For their part, as they increasingly see the US not only as an unreliable ally but even as a potential enemy, the commitment of major European powers like Germany to develop their military sector will tend to reinforce their resolve to stand up to American bullying and take their own place in the world imperialist Olympics.

We must add that a precondition for mobilising a state for war is a basic unity between the main factions of the ruling class. This is less and less the case in the US, where divisions within the ruling class – between left and right, Republicans and Democrats, but also between the clan around Trump and other branches of the state machine, and even within the MAGA camp itself, have become so vicious that,

if you add to the mix the proliferation of armed groups motivated by all kinds of bizarre ideologies, the potential for civil war in the USA is emerging from out of the murky realms of science fiction and becoming increasingly concrete.

This growing instability between and within states does not make the world a safer place even if it obstructs the reconstitution of military blocs. On the contrary, the lack of bloc discipline and growing irrationality of governing regimes tends to increase the risk of things getting out of control at the military level. And the menace of militarisation and war is both exacerbated by and further aggravates the danger of ecological breakdown on a planetary scale. Since the beginnings of the 2020s we have been more and more immersed in what the more insightful parts of the bourgeoisie term the “poly crisis” and we have called the “whirlwind effect” – a deadly spiral in which all the different products of a decomposing society act on each other and accelerate the whole drive towards destruction, confirming that the most tangible threat to the survival of human society derives from the process of decomposition in itself.

The two poles in the world situation

But there is another reason why we are moving towards a “world of wars” rather than the reconstitution of blocs in view of a classic world war: the existence of an alternative pole to the spiral of decomposition.

The foundation of decomposition is the stalemate between classes, which means that in last decades of the 20th century, the bourgeoisie, despite the deepening world economic crisis was not able to mobilise the class for a new global war. And in our view the international proletariat has not been subjected to a historic defeat comparable to what it experienced after the crushing of the world revolution from the 1920s on, and which allowed the ruling class to drag it into the Second World War. Certainly, it has been through a long period of retreat and difficulty, but the revival of class movements sparked off by the “Summer of Discontent” in Britain in 2022 was a sign that the working class, following a long period of subterranean maturation, was returning to the open struggle and embarking on the long road towards the recovery of its class identity and, ultimately, the revolutionary perspective which it can put forward as the only alternative to the putrefaction of this society. It’s true that certain parts of the working class, as in Ukraine and the Middle East, have indeed been dragged off

to war, but this does not apply to the central battalions of the working class in Western Europe and North America.

The struggles that began in 2022 were mainly a response to the decline in living conditions brought about by the economic crisis, but it is also significant that they took place despite the outbreak of war on the margins of Europe and despite the intense propaganda campaigns about the need to defend Ukraine and democracy. And as the ruling class commits itself to building up the war economy, and increasingly withdraws financial support from social spending, the connection between the economic crisis and war is becoming increasingly apparent. We can see this, if only indirectly, through the attempts of the left wing of capital to “take charge” of this kind of questioning in the ranks of the proletariat, for example through the popularisation of the slogan “welfare not warfare” in workers’ demonstrations.

On a more spectacular scale, we have seen the very widespread strikes and demonstrations called by the trade unions in Italy, in particular the more radical “base unions”, in response to the genocide in Gaza and the imprisoning of the activists of the “Subud Flotilla” attempting to bring food and other supplies through the Israeli blockade. Unlike the regular pro-Palestine marches in London and many other cities, which are obviously dominated by nationalist ideology, these actions give the appearance of being situated on a working class terrain, but as shown in a recent article in the ICT’s Italian publication *Battaglia Comunista*, they don’t escape the grip of pro-Palestine nationalism and thus the logic of imperialist war:

“Needless to say, the content was marked by humanitarian pacifism and reformism, without a shred of proletarian, i.e., class, internationalism: Palestinian flags dominated unchallenged, accompanied by the usual slogans ‘Free Palestine’, etc. The division of the working class by the unions was clearly visible: on one side were the Si Cobas workers (mostly immigrants), on the other those of the CGIL (mostly Italians), with little discussion. Battaglia Comunista intervened in various cities with a flyer, even though it obviously got lost in the tide of pro-Palestinian nationalism.”⁴

But whether pacifism or nationalism is the main ideology invoked, such mobilisations are ways of recuperating proletarian indignation against capitalist war. In this case *Battaglia* was able to hold the class line, but as we have shown in various articles, an inability to understand the totality of forces behind the massacre in

4. “Italy: On the ‘General Strike’ for Gaza”, leftcom.org.

Gaza has led numerous would-be internationalists into very dangerous confusions. This has been very obvious with anarchist organisations like the Anarchist Communist Group, with its support for Palestine Action and other pro-Palestine activities, but even a current of the communist left – the Bordigists – has not avoided serious ambiguities around the question.⁵ Here we should note that at a recent public meeting of the Bordigist group that publishes *The International Communist Party*, the ICP comrades made it quite clear that had been fully mobilised behind the strike in Italy, mainly through their involvement in various base unions. We have also argued that the ICT's "strategic" response to the war drive – the formation of No War But The Class War groups on a minimum platform – not only obscures the real role of the political organisation of the class but has also exposed them to dubious alliances with groups that are more or less mired in leftism.⁶

5. On the ACG, see "The ACG takes another step towards supporting the nationalist war campaign" and "The ACG's support for Palestine Action: a further step towards abandoning internationalism", ICC Online.

On the Bordigists, see "War in the Middle East: The obsolete theoretical framework of the Bordigist groups", ICC Online

6. "The ICT and the No War But the Class War

The problem of revolutionaries failing to demarcate themselves from "anti-war" actions dominated by pacifism or nationalism is linked to a broader problem as mounting disgust not only at war, but also at capitalist repression and corruption, often mixed in with attacks on basic living conditions, is provoking a wave of revolts around the world: the so-called "Gen-Z" movements in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, Kenya, Madagascar, Morocco and elsewhere, but these are "popular", movements bringing together different classes and strata, which in themselves cannot develop a proletarian perspective and invariably get trapped in demands for democratic change. And here we have also seen the ICT losing its head and tail-ending such movements. The article in this issue of the *International Review*, "Falling into the trap of the struggle for bourgeois democracy against populism", provides us with a number of examples.⁷

initiative: an opportunist bluff which weakens the Communist Left", ICC Online.

7. See also the article published by the ICT: "Statement on the Protests in Nepal" and signed by NWBCW South Asia, in which young Nepalese demonstrators are presented with an immediate perspective that would only be appropriate in the context of a proletarian revolution. They are thus exhorted "*to carry out political and violent struggle and capture factories, food resources, energy resources, transport, and arms.*"

These mobilisations – to which we can add the big "No Kings" demonstrations against Trump in the US, which has even more openly marched millions under the banner of defending bourgeois democracy against authoritarianism – demonstrate the danger in the present situation of the working class being drawn onto false terrain, and the central importance of the defensive struggles of the working class, of reactions to the economic crisis on the proletarian terrain, because such struggles are the indispensable basis for the working class to recognise itself as a distinct social force, as a class for itself. And this in turn is the only starting point for the capacity of the working class to pose the problem of combating the capitalist system as a whole, with its wars, repression, pandemics and ecological devastation. In sum, to develop its own autonomous revolutionary perspective and thus show the only way forward for all the layers of the population oppressed and immiserated by capitalism in decay.

Amos, November 2025

The "peace fraud"...

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and ultimately of their lives. But it's here that a real obstacle to war can be located. Not in the deals and agreements between capitalist criminals, but in the defensive struggles of the working class in the face of a society which can offer them nothing but poverty and destruction. And these struggles are more than a pious hope, because since 2022 we have seen a clear tendency for workers in numerous countries to affirm their class interests against the capitalist's demands to pull in their belts and put up with never-ending attacks on their living standards. In themselves, workers' defensive struggles can only temporarily obstruct the war drive. To end it completely will demand a profound politicisation of the struggle, the recognition that the global system of capitalism must be overturned and replaced with a new and higher form of social life.

The necessity for the struggle to mature politically points to the indispensable role of the political organisations that the working class has given rise to in its historic battle against this system. We are not referring here to the parties of the of-

ficial left who are often the enforcers of austerity against the working class, nor to their "radical left" adjuncts, but to the authentically communist organisations who stand up for the independent struggle of the working class against all factions of the ruling class, and above all who defend the principle of internationalism, opposing all the gangs and states engaged in capitalism's wars: in brief, the organisations of the international communist left. Given that these organisations are still a small minority, swimming against the tide of pro-war, nationalist and pacifist mystifications, the ICC has always advocated the maximum possible discussion and cooperation between these groups.

But it is no less necessary for the discussion between these organisations to clarify their most important differences. While the group of the communist left tend to agree that war has become capitalism's way of life, and on the necessity for workers and revolutionaries to oppose all sides, there are considerable differences of analysis regarding the process through which this "permanent and increasing self-destruction

of capital" is taking place. For the majority of groups, in particular the Internationalist Communist Tendency and the various Bordigist "parties", the deepening of the economic crisis and the proliferation of military conflicts are proof that we are once again heading towards the reconstitution of imperialist blocs and a disciplined march towards a Third World War. For the ICC, this is not on the agenda for the foreseeable future and tends to ignore the far more pressing danger facing the working class: that the whirlwind of destruction will overwhelm it before it is able to raise its struggles to the historic level required to overturn the capitalist mode of production. We aim to develop this argument in another article in this issue of the *Review*: "Are we heading towards a Third World War?"

ICC, November 2025

Presenting the 26th Congress of the ICC

Last spring, the International Communist Current held its 26th Congress.

As our statutes state:

“The International Congress is the sovereign organ of the ICC. As such its tasks are:

- a) To elaborate the general analyses and orientations of the organisation, notably with regard to the international situation;*
- b) To examine, and draw up a balance sheet for, the activities of the organisation since the previous congress;*
- c) To define its perspectives for future work”*

We have already published on our website a number of documents adopted by the 26th Congress concerning the development of the international situation¹ and it is not necessary to go into detail about them in this presentation. However, it is important to emphasise the significance of this Congress.

Firstly, our statutes emphasise the place of the congress in the life of the organisation: it is the “sovereign organ of the ICC”. In this respect, our organisation is faithful to the tradition of the workers’ movement. Thus, the statutes of the Communist League specify that: *“The congress is the legislative power of the entire League.”* (Article 17); *“A Congress is held every year in the month of August. The Central Authority has the right in important cases to call an extraordinary congress.”* (Article 19)²

The same pre-eminence of the congress is found in the statutes of the International Workingmen’s Association (IWA): *“There shall annually meet a General Working Men’s Congress, consisting of delegates of the branches of the Association. The Congress will have to proclaim the common aspirations of the working class, take the measures required for the successful working of the International Association,*

and appoint the General Council of the society.” (Article 3)³

And the same principles are found in the statutes of the Communist International (CI): *“The World Congress of all parties and organisations forming part of the Communist International is the supreme authority of this International. The World Congress meets regularly once a year. The World Congress alone is empowered to change the programme of the Communist International; it discusses and decides the more important questions of programme and tactics connected to the activity of the Communist International.”* (Article 4)⁴

In fact, the regular holding of congresses by a proletarian organisation is both a manifestation and an instrument of its political life, in which all its militants participate through the drafting, discussion and adoption of reports and resolutions.⁵ It is this principle that the ICC has adopted and implemented since its foundation, making its congresses, like those of organisations in the past, fundamental moments in its political life. That said, the 26th ICC Congress was of much greater importance than those that preceded it. There were two fundamental reasons for this.

Firstly, this Congress took place fifty

years after the founding of the ICC in January 1975. This anniversary obliged us to take stock of this half-century, both from the point of view of the evolution of the international situation and of the activity of our own organisation, not out a merely historian’s approach, but in order to try to identify the perspectives that will present themselves to the world in the next half-century and the responsibilities that communist organisations will have to assume. With this in mind, the Congress decided to publish a Manifesto dealing with the fundamental historical issues of the current period, as well as a series of articles addressing the questions that the political organisations of the proletariat have faced, are facing and will face, which will appear in our press in the coming months. For its part, the ICC’s 50th Anniversary Manifesto has begun to be published in different languages on our website. It is entitled “Capitalism threatens humanity: World revolution is the only realistic solution”. This title summarises the other fundamental reason that led the 26th Congress of the ICC to decide to publish such a Manifesto, which is presented in its prologue: *“The 2020s have seen a brutal acceleration in the deterioration of the world situation, with an accumulation of disasters – floods and fires linked to climate change and an acceleration in the destruction of life, with a pandemic that has killed more than 20 million human beings and the outbreak of new and increasingly deadly wars in Ukraine, Gaza and Africa, particularly in Sudan, Congo and Ethiopia. This global chaos reached a new stage in January 2025 with the return to power of a sinister showman, Donald Trump, whose ambition is to play with the world like Charlie Chaplin playing with an Earth-shaped balloon in his film The Great Dictator.”*

“Therefore, this Manifesto is justified not only with our organisation having now existed for a half-century, but also because we are facing an extremely serious historical situation: the capitalist system that dominates the planet is inexorably leading human society towards its destruction. Faced with this unthinkable prospect, it is up to those who are fighting for the revolutionary overthrow of this system, the communists, to put forward historical, political and theoretical arguments in order

1. These are the following texts, from *International Review* n°174: “Resolution on the international situation (May 2025)”; “The historical significance of the impasse of the capitalist economy” and “Report on the class struggle (May 2025)”.

2. Published as an appendix in *Collective Works*, Vol 6, p 635-6 where they are described as rules rather than statutes.

3. Available on Marxists.org.

4. *The Second Congress of the Communist International*, vol. 2; “Tenth session, August 4th 1920”, p.146. New Park Publications 1977.

5. This permanence throughout the history of the workers’ movement of the fundamental place of congresses in the life of its organisations is unfortunately ‘forgotten’ by most organisations of the Communist Left. Thus, the current linked to the Bordigist tradition rejects the very principle of holding congresses, which it considers to be manifestations of ‘democratic itchiness’ (See, among others, the article “Mythe et réalité dans la Gauche communiste en Italie” in *Le Proletaire* n° 512.). As for the current that emerged from the Damen tendency of the Partito Comunista Internazionale, even if it does not reject the principle of holding congresses, it is important to note the particularly low frequency of these events. Thus, the average interval between two PCInt congresses ranges from 4 to 15 years, with an average of almost 10 years (1948, 1952, 1963, 1970, 1982 and 1997). It is worth noting that when the Communist International was an organ of the proletariat, it held a congress every year between 1919 and 1922. The reduction in the frequency of its congresses coincided with its degeneration and death as a proletarian organisation, since its subsequent congresses were held in 1924, 1928 and 1935 before its abolition by Stalin in 1943, intended to win the favour of the Allies during the Second World War.

to arm the only force in society capable of carrying out this revolution: the world proletariat.”

The Manifesto concludes with the following passages:

“This brief overview of decades of workers’ struggles brings out an essential idea: the historic struggle of our class to overthrow capitalism will still be a long one. Along the way, there will be a succession of pitfalls, traps and defeats. To be ultimately victorious, this revolutionary struggle will require a general increase of consciousness and organisation of the entire working class, on a global level. For this general increase to take place, the proletariat will have to confront all the traps set by the bourgeoisie in the struggle and, at the same time, reclaim its past, its experience accumulated over two centuries.

“When the International Workingmen’s Association (IWA) was founded in London on 28 September 1864, this organisation became the embodiment of the global nature of the proletarian struggle, a condition for the triumph of the world revolution. It was the source of inspiration for the poem written in 1871 by the communard Eugène Pottier, which became a revolutionary song passed down from generation to generation of proletarians in struggle, in almost every language on the planet. The lyrics of *The Internationale* emphasise how this solidarity of the global proletariat is not a thing of the past but points to the future: Let us unite, and tomorrow, *The Internationale* will be the human race.

“It is up to organised militant minorities to carry out this international regrouping of revolutionary forces. Indeed, while the masses of the working class engage in this effort of reflection and self-organisation mainly during periods of open struggle, a minority has always been committed, throughout history, to the ongoing struggle for revolution. These minorities embody and defend the perseverance and historical continuity of the revolutionary project of the proletariat, which has produced them for this purpose [...]

“It is this minority that bears the primary responsibility for organising, debating, clarifying all issues, learning from past failures and bringing accumulated experience to life. Today, this minority, which is extremely small and fragmented into many small organisations, must come together to confront different positions and analyses, reclaim the lessons bequeathed to us by the fractions of the Communist Left, and prepare for the future.”

Thus, the Manifesto issued by the 26th Congress of the ICC is a call to arms for the communist revolution, a call ad-

ressed to the entire proletariat but more particularly to those elements and groups who are already conscious of the necessity and possibility of overthrowing this horrible capitalist society and establishing “the reign of freedom”, in the words of Engels. As we have seen, this is a very long and terribly difficult path. As early as the mid-19th century, Marx was aware of this difficulty:

“Proletarian revolutions [...] constantly engage in self-criticism, and in repeated interruptions of their own course. They return to what has apparently already been accomplished in order to begin the task again; with merciless thoroughness they mock the inadequate, weak and wretched aspects of their first attempts; they seem to throw their opponent to the ground only to see him draw new strength from the earth and rise again before them, more colossal than ever; they shrink back again and again before the indeterminate immensity of their own goals, until the situation is created in which any retreat is impossible, and the conditions themselves cry out: *Hic Rhodus, hic salta!* Here is the rose, dance here!”⁶

However, it is clear that Marx did not imagine the scale of this difficulty, a difficulty commensurate with the “infinite immensity of the goals” of the proletarian revolution. As we wrote a quarter of a century ago, on the occasion of the year 2000:

“And indeed, one reason for the great difficulty for the vast majority of workers in turning towards the revolution lies in the vertigo that seizes them when they think that the task is so enormous as to be impossible. The task of overthrowing the most powerful class that history has ever known, the system which has allowed humanity to take gigantic steps forward in its material production and mastery of nature does indeed seem to be impossible. But what makes the working class dizzy still is the immensity of the task of building a radically new society, liberated at last from the woes which have crushed human society ever since it existed, from scarcity, exploitation, oppression, and war.”

When prisoners and slaves constantly wore shackles on their feet, they sometimes became used to the constraint to the point where they felt as if they would be unable to walk without their chains, and sometimes even refused to have them removed. What has happened to the proletariat is not dissimilar. It bears within itself the ability to free humanity, and yet it lacks the self-confidence to march consciously towards that goal.

“But the time is coming when ‘the conditions themselves [will] cry out: *Hic Rhodus, hic salta!*’. If it remains in the hands of the bourgeoisie, human society will never reach the next century, other than in shreds, nothing human any longer left in it. As long as this extreme has not been reached, as long as a capitalist system survives, there will necessarily be its exploited class, the proletariat. And there will therefore remain the possibility that the proletariat, spurred on by capitalism’s total economic bankruptcy, will at last overcome its hesitations and take on the enormous task that history has confided to it: the communist revolution.”⁷

Thus, the immensity and difficulty of the task at hand, as well as the extreme gravity of the stakes for humanity, should not be factors of discouragement. On the contrary, it is important that awareness of these stakes be converted into determination to wage the struggle against capitalism. This was the spirit that animated Marx, as evidenced by a letter to Johann Philipp Becker on 9th April 1860: “I have always noted that all those whose natures have been really tempered, once they have embarked upon the revolutionary path, are always able to draw new strength from defeat, and become more and more resolute as the tide of history carries them forwards”.⁸

This is the spirit that animated the militants who were already present at the founding of the ICC or who joined it later and who, decades later, are still present in our organisation despite the difficulties encountered. This generation will obviously only diminish in number, and it is up to them to pass on their experience to younger militants who will have to take over in order to build the bridge to the future party, somewhat in the image of the fractions of the past highlighted by the Italian Communist Left. And among the heritage to be passed on, alongside the principles, analyses and lessons developed through decades of political activity, this militant spirit figures in first place.

ICC, November 2025

7. “Why the proletariat has not yet overthrown capitalism, Part 2”, *International Review* n° 104.

6. Marx, “The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,” 1852, *Collected Works* vol. 11, p.106-7.

8. Marx to Johann Philipp Becker, 9th April 1860, *Collected Works* vol. 41, p.114-5.

Resolution on the international situation

Preamble

This resolution was adopted in early May 2025 by the 26th Congress of the ICC. As such, it can only take into account events and situations prior to that date. This is obviously the case for any position on the international situation, but in the present case it is particularly important to note this because we are currently witnessing a rapid succession of particularly spectacular and unpredictable events of major importance on the three main levels: imperialist tensions, the economic situation of global capitalism and the balance of forces between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Due to the kind of “tsunami” currently affecting the world, the content and some of the positions taken in this resolution may appear outdated by the time it is published. That is why, beyond the facts mentioned in it, which may be overshadowed by new developments in the situation, it is important that it provides a framework for understanding the causes, significance and stakes of the events unfolding before our eyes.

One of the main factors behind the current upheavals is obviously the inauguration of Donald Trump on 20 January 2025, which led to a spectacular divorce between the United States and almost all European NATO member countries. All the “experts” and bourgeois leaders agree that the new international policy of the American bourgeoisie, particularly with regard to the war in Ukraine, is a major event that marks the end of the “Atlantic Alliance” and the “American umbrella”, forcing those formerly under the “protection” of Washington to reorganise their military strategy and embark on a frantic arms race. The other major decision of the Trump administration is obviously the launch of a trade war of an intensity not seen in nearly a century. Very quickly, particularly with the wave of panic that swept through the

stock markets and financial circles, Trump was forced to partially backtrack, but his brutal and contradictory decisions cannot fail to have an impact on the deterioration of the economic situation of global capitalism. These two fundamental decisions by the Trump administration have been a very important factor in the chaotic development of the global situation. But these decisions must also, and above all, be understood as manifestations of a number of deep historical trends currently at work in global society. Even before the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the Soviet Union (1989-1991), the ICC put forward the analysis that capitalism had entered a new phase of its decadence, *“the ultimate phase (...) in which decomposition becomes a decisive factor, if not the decisive factor, in the evolution of society”*. And the

chaotic events of recent months are further confirmation of this reality. The election of Trump, with its catastrophic consequences for the American bourgeoisie itself, is a prime example of the growing inability of the bourgeois class to control its political game, as we predicted 35 years ago. Similarly, the divorce between the United States and its former NATO allies confirms another aspect of our analysis of decomposition: the great difficulty in the current period, if not the impossibility, of forming new imperialist blocs as a prerequisite for a new world war. Finally, another aspect that we have emphasised, particularly since our 22nd Congress in 2017 – the growing impact of the chaos that is increasingly taking hold of the political sphere of the bourgeoisie on its economic sphere – has found further confirmation in the economic upheavals caused by the decisions of the populist Trump.

It is therefore within the framework of our analysis of decomposition that this resolution attempts to examine in greater detail the issues at stake in the current historical period. And this examination must necessarily also consider the consequences for the struggle of the working class of the chaotic events affecting global society.

Resolution

1. “...just as capitalism itself traverses different historic periods – birth, ascendancy, decadence – so each of these periods itself consists of several distinct phases. For example, capitalism’s ascendant period can be divided into the successive phases of the free market, shareholding, monopoly, financial capital, colonial conquest, and the establishment of the world market. In the same way, the decadent period also has its history: imperialism, world wars, state capitalism, permanent crisis, and today, decomposition. These are different and successive aspects of the life of capitalism, each one characteristic of a specific phase...”¹ The same applies to the phase of decomposition itself, which marked a qualitative step in the develop-

ment of decadence; this phase is now in its fourth decade, and since the beginning of the 2020s, with the outbreak of the Covid pandemic and the unleashing of murderous wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, it has reached a level of acceleration which marks a further significant step, in which all its various manifestations are inter-acting with and intensifying each other in what we have called the “whirlwind” effect.

2. This assessment has been fully confirmed since the 25th ICC Congress: economic crisis, imperialist war, ecological breakdown and a growing loss of control over the bourgeoisie’s own political apparatus are combining together and exacerbating each other, carrying the clear threat of the destruction of humanity. This “poly crisis” is already recognised by some

of the most important institutions of the ruling class, as we showed in the report on decomposition adopted by the 25th ICC Congress, but they are powerless to offer any solutions. Instead, the most irrational elements of the ruling class are on the rise, expressed most clearly by Trump’s victory in the US presidential election. Trump is a transparent product of the decomposition of the system, but the “shitstorm” of measures undertaken immediately upon assuming power also demonstrates that the assumption of government office by a populist faction led by a narcissistic adventurer in the most powerful country on the planet will be an active factor in the acceleration of decomposition and the bourgeoisie’s overall loss of control of its own system.

1. “Theses on decomposition”, *International Review* n° 107.

3. The factor of imperialist competition and war is at the very heart of this deadly vortex. But contrary to the arguments of the majority of groups in the proletarian political milieu, the whirlwind effect does not bring with it a disciplined march towards new blocs and a third world war. Rather it intensifies the tendency of “every man for himself” which was already becoming dominant in the wake of the collapse of the Russian imperialist bloc and the definitive onset of the period of decomposition at the beginning of the 1990s. As we predicted in a number of fundamental texts written at that time, the demise of the eastern bloc led to the unravelling of the bloc dominated by the US, despite various efforts of American imperialism to impose its authority over its former allies. And we have insisted that this new world disorder would take the form of spreading, intractable and increasingly destructive wars which are no less dangerous than a course towards world war precisely because of the lack of any bloc discipline. The latest moves by the US under Trump embody a new stage in the mounting chaos that dominates imperialist rivalries in the phase of decomposition. And whereas the global disorder unleashed by the collapse of the Russian bloc in 1989-91 was centred around a weaker economic and military power, the fact that the “new disorder” has the world’s leading power at its very heart presages even more profound plunges into chaos in the period ahead.

4. The central axis of global imperialist conflict remains the antagonism between the USA and China. At this level there is a strong element of continuity with the Obama and Biden administrations in seeing China as the main rival to US dominance. This shift in the central focus of imperialist antagonisms from western Europe, as it was during the Cold War, to the Pacific region, is an important factor in Trump’s willingness to reduce the “defence of Europe” to a much lower place in US strategy. In a general sense, the policy of containing China by encircling it with regional alliances and imposing limits on its economic expansion will continue, even if the tactical and concrete means may differ. However, the unpredictability of Trump’s approach could bring with it wild swings from attempts to placate Beijing to openly provocative actions around Taiwan. In general, this very unpredictability will act as a further factor in the destabilisation of international relations.

5. By contrast, Trump’s policies towards Ukraine represent a real break with the “traditional” foreign policies of the USA, based on vigorous opposition to Russian imperialism. The attempt to come to a deal with Russia over the Ukraine war

which shuts out Europe and Ukraine, accompanied by the public humiliation of Zelensky in the White House, marks an important new level in the division between the US and the main powers of Europe, showing how far we are from the formation of a new “western bloc”. This divorce is not a merely contingent event, but has much deeper roots. Direct conflict between the US and Europe was already apparent in the war in Yugoslavia in the early 90s, with France and Britain backing Serbia, Germany backing Croatia and the US supporting Bosnia. In today’s culmination of this process, which in 2003 also saw European powers like France and Germany refusing to follow the US into the invasion of Iraq, America is more and more seen as a new enemy, symbolised by US voting with Belarus, North Korea and Russia against a UN resolution on February 24th condemning the Russian invasion, and by the open threats to convert Canada, Greenland and Panama into property of the USA, by military force if need be. At the very least, the US is perceived as an unreliable ally, obliging the European powers to come together in a series of emergency conferences to consider how they can ensure their imperialist “defence” without the USA’s military umbrella. However, the real divisions among these powers – for example between governments run by populist or far right parties which lean towards Russia, and most importantly between France and Germany at the very core of the European Union – should not be underestimated as a further obstacle to the formation of a stable European alliance. And the current US regime will certainly do all it can to increase divisions among the countries of the EU, which Trump has explicitly attacked as a formation that was set up to “screw the USA”.

6. At the same time, again in clear discontinuity with the approach of the previous US administration and the main European powers, who have advocated a “two state solution” to the conflict in Israel/Palestine, the Trump regime is openly supporting the annexationist policies of the Israel’s right wing government by removing sanctions against the violent actions of West Bank settlers, appointing Mike Huckabee - who declares that “Judea and Samaria” were given to Israel by God 3,000 years ago – as US ambassador to Israel, and above all by calling for the ethnic cleansing of nearly two million Palestinians from Gaza and transforming the whole area into a heaven for real estate speculation. These policies, despite their strong admixture of fantasy, can only perpetuate and intensify the conflicts which are already being ramped up and spread throughout the Middle East, most clearly in Yemen, Lebanon and

Syria, where the internal war is far from over despite the replacement of the Assad regime, and where Israel has been carrying out more deadly air raids, which are generally perceived as a warning to Turkey. In particular, the blank cheque Trump has handed to the Netanyahu government also contains the likelihood of further direct clashes between Israel and Iran.

7. Meanwhile other imperialist conflicts are brewing or already getting worse, particularly in Africa, where the Congo, Libya and Sudan have become veritable theatres of massacre and famine. Africa is another example of local conflicts being fuelled by a bewildering variety of regional states (such as Rwanda in the Congo) and the larger imperialist players (US, France, China, Russia, Turkey, etc) who may be allies in one conflict and enemies in another.

Even though the hunt for vital raw materials is a key aspect of many of these conflicts, the main characteristic of all these wars is that they bring fewer and fewer benefits either economic or strategic for all their protagonists. Above all they do not point to a solution to the world economic crisis through the devaluation of capital or the reconstruction of ruined economies as it is said by many of the groups of the proletarian political milieu. The economist vision of these groups simply ignores the real direction of capitalism in its final stages – which is towards the destruction of humanity and not a new stage in the cycle of accumulation.

8. The growing inter-action between economic crisis and imperialist rivalry, and of the effects of decomposition on the state of the world economy, are both plainly illustrated by the avalanche of tariffs decreed by the Trump regime. This “declaration of war” on the rest of the world’s economies, aimed at close neighbours and former allies as well as avowed enemies, can be seen as an attempt by the US to demonstrate its power as an imperialist giant capable of standing alone without having to answer to any other state or international body. But it is also based on an economic “strategy” which believes that the USA can prosper best by undermining or ruining all its economic rivals. This is a purely suicidal approach which will immediately backfire on the US economy and consumers through rising prices, shortages, plant closures and redundancies. And of course, a severe slump in the US could not fail to have world-wide implications. In particular, a number of economists have warned of the danger of the US defaulting on its enormous national debt, the bulk of which is “owned” by Japan and its main challenger, China; and it is evident that a US default would not only do incalculable

damage to the world economy, but would inevitably spill over into the sphere of the imperialist rivalry between the US and China. All this shows that the America First policy of the Trump regime is in complete contradiction with the “globalised” character of the world economy in which the USA itself has been the most active force, in particular following the collapse of the eastern bloc in the early 90s; it also marks a return to protectionist measures which the most powerful bourgeoisies have largely abandoned since they demonstrated their utter failure as a way of dealing with the world economic crisis in the 1930s. The USA’s current attempt to dismantle the last political and military vestiges of the world imperialist order established in 1945 is paralleled by measures that clearly threaten all the global institutions set up in the wake of the Great Depression and World War Two to regulate world trade and contain the crisis of overproduction.

9. It thus comes as no surprise that the world’s stock exchanges have reacted to Trump’s tariffs with mounting panic, while numerous economic “experts” have been predicting a world-wide recession, vicious trade wars (which are already taking shape, particularly between the US and China), spiralling inflation and even an “*economic nuclear winter*”.² These reactions obliged Trump to take a step back from some of his economic threats, but there is little confidence that the new US administration can be trusted any longer as a guarantor of economic stability – on the contrary. The fears expressed by the “markets” are well grounded, but revolutionaries must also make it clear that while they are certainly a severely aggravating factor in the deepening economic crisis, they are not its ultimate cause. The underlying disease of the world economy must be traced to the world crisis of overproduction, which has in essence been permanent since 1914 and which also has an evolving history behind the extreme point it is now reaching. Well before the announcement of the Trump tariffs, the world’s leading economies, notably Germany and China, as well as the US, were already sinking into an economic morass, expressed by factory closures in leading industries, unmanageable levels of debt, rising prices in many countries, growing youth unemployment and so on. The end of the Chinese “economic miracle” is particularly significant because, in contrast to the situation created by the financial meltdown of 2008, China will no longer be able to play the role of “world locomotive”.

10. The world crisis of overproduction, as Rosa Luxemburg predicted, results from the shrinking of an “outside” for capitalism to expand into. These areas of pre-capitalist economy were still considerable when Luxemburg advanced her thesis, and they still held some possibilities in the phase of “globalisation”, notably through the capitalising of China and other Far Eastern economies. But today, even if capitalists continue to cast hungry eyes on remaining pre-capitalist economic areas, notably in India and Africa, it will be increasingly difficult to exploit them because of the acceleration of decomposition through local wars and ecological destruction. Other “superstructural” elements also enter into the system’s historic impasse:

- a) The enormous weight of global debt, the medication for overproduction which can only poison the patient, and which, as in 2008, constantly threatens to explode in the form of massive financial instability. And, as the ICC already noted in the 1980s, we are witnessing the growth of a “casino economy”, taking the form of unrestrained speculation and expressing a growing gap between real value and fictional capital. A striking example of this is the spread of bitcoin and similar “cryptocurrencies”, designed to evade centralised control and thus acting as another potentially destabilising factor for the world economy.
- b) The mounting impact of ecological disasters, which have become an increasingly destructive “production cost”.
- c) The exponential growth of the refugee problem, frequently the product of war and ecological catastrophe, and which is confronting the bourgeoisie with an insoluble problem, since on the one hand it cannot afford to integrate this mass of migrants into an ailing economy, while on the other it cannot afford to lose this source of cheap labour and will find that a policy of forced deportations such as the Trump administration has now set in motion will cost billions to carry out.
- d) Above all, as the drive to war intensifies, the world economy is more and more compelled to bear the enormous weight of the growing impact of militarism, which may at some moments give the illusion of “economic growth” but which, as the Gauche Communiste de France already pointed out in the aftermath of World War II, represents a pure loss for global capital. And open warfare itself has a direct impact on the world economy, typified by the increase in shipping costs resulting from direct attacks on ships in the Black Sea and the Red Sea

The inevitable result of the deepening crisis, and in particular the development of a war economy, will be unprecedented attacks on the living conditions of the proletariat and impoverished masses. The bourgeoisie in European countries is already talking openly about the need for more welfare cuts to pay for “defence spending”.

11. At the level of the ecological crisis, the never-ending rounds of international conferences have failed to bring the world any closer towards its carbon reduction commitments, on the contrary: the 1.5 degree target for limiting rising temperatures has already been declared dead by a number of climate scientists. Year upon year solid scientific research provides clear indicators that the climate crisis is already here: each year is declared the “hottest on record”, the melting of the polar ice-caps reaches new and genuinely alarming levels, more and more plants and animal species are disappearing, such as the insects which are indispensable to the food chain and to the process of pollination. Moreover, the crisis is not only evident in the countries of the “periphery”, adding to the global refugee crisis as more and more regions of the planet are rendered uninhabitable by drought or flooding. It is now moving from the peripheries to the centres, as shown by the wildfires in California and floods in Germany and Spain. Trump’s denial of any such thing as the climate crisis has immediately been enshrined in the work of the new administration: the very term climate change is removed from government documents, and funding for research into the problem is drastically cut; restrictions on emissions and fossil fuel extraction projects are removed under the banner of “*drill baby drill*”; the USA pulls out of international agreements on climate. All this will give a new and world-wide impetus to the denialist world-view, a central plank of the populist parties which are everywhere on the rise. The same applies to the USA’s withdrawal from the World Health Organisation and the appointment of Robert Kennedy, a committed anti-vaxer, to the leadership of the US health department at a time when we are facing the threat of new pandemics (such as avian flu). Such pandemics are another product of the breakdown in the relationship between humanity and nature which capitalism has taken to its furthest point in history. These head-in-the-sand measures will only increase the danger. But the populists’ suicidal attitude to the mounting ecological crisis is at root only a reflection of the utter impotence of all factions of the ruling class in the face of the destruction of nature, since none of them can exist without a commitment to endless “growth” (ie, accumulation at

2. “Billionaire Trump backer warns of ‘economic nuclear winter’ over tariffs”, BBC News online, 7/4/25

any cost), even when they pretend that there is no contradiction between capitalist growth and green policies. Neither can the bourgeoisie as a class develop truly global solutions to the ecological crisis, the only ones that make any sense. No faction of the ruling class can transcend the national framework, any more than it can call for an end to the accumulation of capital. Thus, the advance of the ecological crisis can only accelerate the tendency towards chaotic military conflicts as each nation tries to salvage what it can faced with dwindling resources and mounting disasters. And the reverse is also true: war, as has already been measured in the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, is itself a growing factor in the ecological catastrophe, whether through the huge carbon emissions needed to produce and maintain military equipment, or through the poisoning of the air and soil by the use of ever-more destructive weaponry, which in many cases is a deliberate tactic aimed at weakening the enemy's food supplies or other resources. Meanwhile the menace of nuclear disaster – either through the destruction of nuclear power stations or the actual use of tactical nuclear weapons – is always looming in the background. The interaction between war and ecological crisis is another patent illustration of the whirlwind effect.

12. The return of Trump is a classic expression of the political failure of those factions of the ruling class who have a more lucid understanding of the needs of the national capital; it is thus a clear expression of a more general loss of political control by the US bourgeoisie, but this is a world-wide tendency and it is particularly significant that the populist wave is having an impact in other central countries of capitalism: thus we have seen the rise of the AfD in Germany, of Le Pen's RN in France, and Reform in the UK. Populism is the expression of a faction of the bourgeoisie but its incoherent and contradictory policies express a growing nihilism and irrationality which does not serve the overall interests of the national capital. The case of Britain, which has been ruled by one of the most intelligent and experienced bourgeoisies, shooting itself in the foot through Brexit is a clear example. Trump's domestic and foreign policies will be no less damaging for US capitalism: at the level of foreign policy, by fuelling conflicts with its former allies while courting its traditional enemies, but also domestically, through the impact of its self-destructive economic "programme". Above all, the campaign of revenge against the "deep state" and "liberal elites", the targeting of minority groups and the "war on woke" will stir up confrontations between factions of the ruling class which could take on an extremely violent character in

a country where an enormous proportion of the population own weapons; the assault on the Capitol on January 6, 2021, would pale into insignificance in comparison. And we can already see, in embryo, the beginnings of a reaction by parts of the bourgeoisie who have most to lose from Trump's policies (for example, the state of California, Harvard University, etc). Such conflicts carry the threat of dragging in the wider population and represent an extreme danger to the working class, its efforts to defend its class interests and forge its unity against all the divisions inflicted on it by the disintegration of bourgeois society. The recent "Hands Off" demonstrations organised by the left wing of the Democratic Party are a clear example of this danger, since they succeeded in channelling certain working class sectors and demands into an overall defence of democracy against the dictatorship of Trump and consorts. Again, while these internal conflicts may be particularly sharp in the USA, they are the product of a much wider process. Decadent capitalism has long relied on the state apparatus to prevent such antagonisms from tearing society apart, and in the phase of decomposition the capitalist state is equally forced to resort to the most dictatorial measures to maintain its rule. And yet at the same time, when the state machine itself is riven by violent internal conflicts, there is a powerful thrust towards a situation where "the centre cannot hold, mere anarchy is loosed upon the world" as the poet WB Yeats put it. The "failed states" we are seeing most vividly in the Middle East, Africa or the Caribbean present an image of what is already brewing in the most developed centres of the system. In Haiti, for example, the official state machine is increasingly powerless in the face of competing criminal gangs, and in parts of Africa inter-gang competition has risen to the height of "civil war". But in the US itself, the current domination of the state by the Trump clan more and more resembles the rule of a mafia, with its open espousal of the methods of blackmail and threat.

13. The irrationality expressed by populism is at root an expression of the irrationality of a system which has long outlived its usefulness for humanity. It is therefore inevitable that the whole of decomposing bourgeois society will be increasingly gripped by a plague of mental illness which frequently expresses itself in murderous violence. The spread of terrorist atrocities from major war-zones to the capital cities of the West was one of the first signs of the advent of the phase of decomposition, but the coupling of terrorist activity with the most irrational ideologies has become increasingly apparent as this phase has advanced and accelerated.

Thus, the ideologies which most often inspire terrorist acts, whether perpetrated by radical Islamists or neo-Nazis, are only a concentrated expression of beliefs that are much more widespread, notably beliefs in all kinds of conspiracy theories and in an impending apocalypse, all of which offer a dangerously distorted picture of capitalism's real mode of operation and its actual slide towards the abyss. It is also characteristic that some of the most recent acts of mass murder – such as the use of cars as weapons in the cities of Germany, or the horrible murders of children in Southport which sparked off the racist riots in Britain in the summer of 2024 – have been more or less detached from any actual terrorist organisations and even from any justifying ideology, expressing rather the suicidal impulses of profoundly disturbed individuals. Elsewhere such impulses take the form of mounting violence against women, sexual minorities and children. It is evident that the working class is not immune from this plague and that it acts as a direct counter to the needs of the class struggle: the need for solidarity and unity and for coherent thought which can lead to a real understanding of how capitalism works and where it is going.

14. The pole leading towards chaos and collapse is thus becoming increasingly visible. But there is another pole, that of the class struggle, demonstrated by the "rupture" since 2022, which is not a flash in the pan, but has a historical depth founded on the undefeated nature of the proletariat in the main centres of the system and the reality of a long process of subterranean maturation. But it also continues to take a much more overt form, as the example of Belgium shows. In the US, Trump's policies will lead to a rapid increase in inflation, undermining promises made to workers in particular; and the attempt to slash government jobs is already giving rise to some embryonic class resistance. In Europe, the bourgeoisie's demand for sacrifice in the name of boosting the machinery of war will certainly encounter serious resistance from an undefeated working class. The class movements that characterise the rupture re-affirm the centrality of the economic crisis as the main stimulant of the class struggle. But at the same time, the proliferation of war and the increasing cost of the war economy, above all in the main countries of Europe, will be an important factor in the future politicisation of the struggle, in which the working class will be able to make a clear link between the sacrifices demanded by the war economy and the growing attacks on its living standards, and eventually to integrate all the other threats coming from decomposition into a struggle against the

system as a whole.

15. Despite the depth of the new phase in the class struggle, it is vital not to conceive its development as parallel to and independent from the pole of chaos and destruction. This is most evident in the real danger that the working class will be increasingly disoriented by the effects of social atomisation, growing irrationality and nihilism; where it will find it hard to avoid being drawn into the visceral rage and frustration of a general population reacting against disasters, repression, corruption, social insecurity and violence, as we have seen in the recent protests and revolts in the USA, Serbia, Turkey, Israel and elsewhere. The ruling class is fully capable of using the effects of the decomposition of its own system against the working class: exploitation of “cultural” divisions (woke versus anti-woke, etc); partial struggles reacting to the deepening of oppression and discrimination against certain layers of society; anti-migration campaigns, etc. Especially dangerous are the renewed “democratic resistance” campaigns against the “danger of fascism, authoritarianism and oligarchies”, the aim of which is to divert anger against a sinking system towards the Trumps, Musks, Le Pens and the rest of the populists and the far right, who are merely a caricatural expression of capitalism’s putrefaction. The right wing of the bourgeoisie can also make its appeals to democracy in the face of the machinations of the “deep state”, one of Trump’s favourite themes now being echoed in France following the judicial decision to bar Le Pen from standing in the next presidential election. But the “defence of democracy” is the particular speciality of the left and far-left wing of the political apparatus. Moreover, in anticipation of the development of the class struggle, the far-left and the trade unions have radicalised their language and attitude: we are seeing the Trotskyists and official anarchists holding the banner of a fake internationalism vis-à-vis the Ukraine and Gaza wars, and sometimes the left has assumed the leadership of the trade unions as happened in the struggles in the UK. We will also see a renovation of their discourse and activity in the years to come, aimed at channelling the potential for the maturation of proletarian consciousness, which necessarily goes through an uneven process of advances and retreats, onto a bourgeois terrain which can only lead to defeat and demoralisation.

16. The rupture with the passivity of the past few decades also stimulates the process of reflection on an international scale amongst different layers of the class, particularly evident in the form of the

emergence of searching minorities. It is in this area that we most clearly observe the capacity of the working class to pose more far-ranging questions about the future of this system, particularly around the question of war and internationalism. However, the potential of these minorities to evolve towards revolutionary positions remains fragile, due to a number of dangers:

- the radicalisation of a number of leftist tendencies, particular the Trotskyists;
- the influence of parasitism as a destructive force which aims to build a cordon sanitaire against the communist left, appearing to act “from the inside”, and nourished by the ambience of decomposition;
- the persistent influence of opportunism in the real proletarian political milieu, which deforms the role of the organisation and opens the way to tolerating the penetration of alien ideologies into the proletariat.

Revolutionary activity is meaningless without the struggle to construct a political organisation able to struggle against the dominant ideology in all its forms. The period ahead requires the elaboration of a lucid analysis of the evolution of the international situation, an ability to anticipate what will be the central dangers faced by the proletariat, but also to recognise the real development of the struggle and of class consciousness, in particular when the latter evolves in a largely “subterranean” manner which will be missed by those who are fixated on immediate appearances.

Revolutionary organisations must act as a pole of attraction for searching elements and as a lighthouse of programmatic and organisational clarity, based on the historical acquisitions of the communist left. They must understand that the work of building a bridge to the future world party is a combat that will be carried out over a long period and will demand a persistent struggle against the impact of capitalist decomposition in its own ranks through concessions to democratism, localism, each for themselves etc. The persistence of a deep opportunism and sectarianism within the proletarian milieu emphasises the unique responsibility of the ICC in the effort to prepare the conditions for the emergence of the party of the communist revolution.

ICC, 10/5/2025

Report on the class struggle

Below we publish the report on the class struggle presented at the 26th Congress of the ICC. This document, written in December 2024, does not take into account the events that occurred in 2025 (Trump's return to the White House, massive struggles in Belgium, etc.), but the validity of the perspectives outlined remains. This report develops important elements of analysis on what the ICC calls the "rupture" in the dynamic of the class struggle and on the impact of decomposition on the working class. With regard to the analysis of subsequent events that are not covered here, please see the "Resolution on the international situation", May 2025, also adopted at the congress and published in this issue of the *Review*.

The resolution on the international situation adopted at the 25th International Congress analysed the dynamics of the class struggle as follows: *"The revival of workers' combativity in a number of countries is a major historical event which is not the result of local circumstances alone and cannot be explained by purely national conditions. Driven by a new generation of workers, the scale and simultaneity of these movements testify to a real change in the mood of the class and break with the passivity and disorientation that prevailed from the end of the 1980s to the present day"*. The Summer of Discontent in the UK in 2022, the movement against pension reform in France in the winter of 2023, the strikes in the USA, particularly in the car industry, at the end of the summer of 2023, remain the most spectacular manifestations of the historical and international dimension of the development of workers' struggles. The strikes lasting almost 7 weeks by Boeing employees and the unprecedented strike by 45,000 dockworkers in the USA in the middle of the presidential election campaign represent the latest episodes in the real break in the dynamic of the class struggle compared with the situation in previous decades. Moreover, as we write the first lines of this report, the working class of the major economic powers is preparing to undergo unprecedented attacks as a result of the accelerating economic crisis, heralding major reactions by the class in the months ahead. But this movement of renewed combativeness and development of the subterranean maturation of class consciousness is taking place in a context of worsening decomposition, where the simultaneous effects of the economic crisis, the chaos of war and the ecological disaster are fuelling an infernal whirlwind of destruction. Trump's comeback to the White House, signifying a real rise in power of the populist current in American society, is going to constitute an additional

weighty obstacle which the class struggle is going to have to confront not only in the USA but also on an international scale. The aim of this report is to provide a basis for reflection which will enable the ICC to deepen its understanding of the current dynamics of the class struggle and its historical implications. But also to assess in more detail the obstacles facing the proletariat, in particular the impact of the effects and ideological manifestations of decomposition.

I - The reality of a rupture in the dynamic of class struggle

The analysis of the rupture in the dynamic of class struggle from the summer of 2022 has been greeted with scepticism and even sarcasm within the political milieu, in particular by the historic organisations of the Communist Left such as the Internationalist Communist Tendency and the Bordigist groups. Similarly, doubts and disagreements were expressed at the ICC's public meetings, including by fellow travellers accustomed to the ICC's method and framework of analysis. This situation was exploited by the parasitic milieu,¹ such as *Controverses*, which was quick to use our past analytical errors to mock our current analysis (*"you have over-estimated the class struggle in the past, what's different now?"*).

Defending the marxist method of analysis

These reactions to our analysis were in fact the expression of a purely empiricist and

1. We are referring to small groups or individuals, animated by resentment, whose "militant" life consists of casting discredit upon, or trying to destroy, revolutionary organisations. Revolutionary organisations have always had to defend themselves against this real scourge and the Communist Left has not been spared by it. See "The marxist foundations of the notion of political parasitism and the fight against this scourge" on our website.

immediatist approach. On the other hand, if the ICC was able, almost immediately, to recognise a profound change in the series of strikes by the British workers, it was because we were able to draw on our experience, particularly the method which had enabled Mark Chirik to grasp the May 68 movement not as a simple momentary reaction of the working class in France but as the expression of a historical and international movement, whereas the historical groups of the Communist Left totally missed its significance.

As a result, today, as in the late 1960s, the ICC is the only organisation able to understand the historically significant international dynamic of the development of workers' struggles around the world since 2022. This is the result of understanding:

- the framework of analysis of the decadence of capitalism and the emergence from counter-revolution since the end of the 1960s, unlike the Bordigist current or the analysis of the course to a third generalised war defended by the ICT, implying a politically defeated working class;
- that the accentuation of the economic crisis on a world scale forms the most fertile ground for the development of workers' combativity on an international scale;
- that the development and scale of this workers' combativity from the summer of 2022 onwards in the United Kingdom, unprecedented since the 1980s, in the oldest proletariat in history, was necessarily of historic and international significance;
- that this change of mindset within the class is the product of the development of the subterranean maturation that has been taking place within the class since the beginning of the 2000s;
- that the rupture is not limited to the scale and multiplication of struggles throughout the world, but is accompanied by the development of reflection on an international scale in the different layers of the working class and, in particular, by in-depth reflection within politicised minorities;
- that this dynamic is a long-term one, and therefore contains the potential for the recovery of class identity and the

politicisation of struggles (indispensable milestones if the working class is to have the capacity to confront the bourgeois state directly), after decades of a decline in consciousness within the class.

Here lies the strength of the marxist method inherited from the Communist Left: an ability to discern the major changes in the dynamics of capitalist society, well before they have become too obvious to be denied.

The need to overcome confusion on this question

However, it is vital to fully grasp the consequences and implications of our analysis and to fight against superficial approaches which can arise. Among the main ones are:

- a tendency to reduce the rupture to the scale of the expression of combativity and the development of struggles, neglecting the process of subterranean maturation;
- implying that the development of struggles can enable the working class to counter the effects of decomposition, or that populism weakens the bourgeois state's ability to deal with the reaction of the working class;
- a tendency to see the whirlwind effect and the rupture as two parallel dimensions, watertight one from the other.

Fundamentally, these vacillations express a difficulty in analysing the dynamics of class struggle in the historical context of decomposition. The basic reasons for this include:

- a general tendency to underestimate the negative impact of the phase of decomposition on the class struggle;
- a difficulty in assimilating the now inadequate nature of the concept of the historical course. This contributes in particular to distorting the prism through which the class struggle is viewed: *“Thus, 1989 marks a fundamental change in the general dynamics of capitalist society in decadence.”*

“Before that date, the balance of power between the classes was the determining factor in this dynamic: it was on this balance of power that the outcome of the exacerbation of the contradictions of capitalism depended: either the unleashing of the world war, or the development of class struggle with, in perspective, the overthrow of capitalism.”

“After that date, this general dynamic of capitalist decadence is no longer directly determined by the balance of power between classes. Whatever the balance

of power, world war is no longer on the agenda, but capitalism will continue to sink into decay, since social decomposition tends to spiral out of the control of the contending classes.”²

Consequently, the analysis of two opposing and contradictory poles, developing concomitantly, fits into the framework set out above. However, these two seemingly parallel dimensions of the situation are intertwined. It is in a world fuelled by every man for himself, social atomisation, irrationality of thought, nihilism, each against all, war and environmental chaos, and the increasingly incoherent and destructive policies of the national bourgeoisies, that the working class is forced to develop its struggle and mature its reflection and consciousness. Consequently, and as we have often repeated, the period of decomposition is not a necessity for the march towards revolution, and even less is it in favour of the working class.³ However, the considerable dangers that decomposition poses for the working class and humanity as a whole must not lead the working class and its revolutionary minorities to adopt a fatalistic attitude and give up the fight. The historical perspective of proletarian revolution is still open!

Struggles against economic attacks are the road to the recovery of class identity

The repercussions of the crisis will be the deepest and most brutal of the entire period of decadence, under the cumulative effects of inflation, budget cuts,⁴ redundancy plans⁵ (exacerbated in particular by the introduction of artificial intelligence into the production system) and the drastic reduction in wages. This situation means that the bourgeoisie will have less and less room to manoeuvre in its ability to cope with the effects of the economic crisis,

2. “Report on the question of the historic course”, *International Review* n° 164.

3. “During this period, it must aim to resist the noxious effects of decomposition in its own ranks, counting only on its own strength and on its ability to struggle collectively and in solidarity to defend its interests as an exploited class (although revolutionary propaganda must constantly emphasise the dangers of social decomposition). Only in the revolutionary period, when the proletariat is on the offensive, when it has directly and openly taken up arms for its own historic perspective, will it be able to use certain effects of decomposition, in particular of bourgeois ideology and of the forces of capitalist power, for leverage, and turn them against capital”. “Theses on decomposition”, *International Review* n° 107.

4. The French government is planning to save several tens of billions of dollars, while Elon Musk has promised to cut nearly \$2,000 billion from the federal budget.

5. Tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of jobs are under threat in the main countries at the heart of capitalism (France, Germany, the UK, the USA, etc.) in the months and years ahead.

as it has in previous decades, and the planned economic policies of the Trump administration can only have the effect of a further dive into the world economic morass. Consequently, faced with the growing impoverishment and the considerable deterioration in working conditions that the working class will suffer as a result of the intensification of the exploitation of labour power, the conditions will ripen for the working class to fight back. But in this general situation, we must above all take the measure that all these attacks affect simultaneously the three main capitalist countries (USA, China, Germany). Europe is going to see an unprecedented dismantling of the car industry, certainly on the same scale as that of coal and steel in the 70s and 80s. We must therefore prepare for the emergence of large-scale struggles in the years to come, particularly in the main areas of capitalism, and start now to examine the profound implications of this new situation.

To give just few examples: the German proletariat, which until now has been at the rear guard of the class struggle, is going to play a much more central role in the class struggle against capital. In China, the explosion in unemployment, particularly among young people (25%), will increasingly erode the myth of a modern and prosperous China and will lead to reactions from an inexperienced proletariat still largely influenced by the Maoist doctrine, the ideological weapon of state capitalism.

Similarly, the scale of the crisis has not spared the proletariat in Russia, which is bearing the full brunt of the consequences of the war economy. This leads us to expect reactions from this fraction of our class, without however neglecting the profound weaknesses caused by the counter-revolution and aggravated by decomposition.

We also need to pay closer attention to the class struggle in the Indo-Pacific region. The year 2024 was marked by strikes in many sectors (automobile, construction, education...) in several countries in the region (India, China, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia) against falling wages, factory closures and worsening working conditions.

However, if indeed economic attacks form the most favourable terrain for the development of class struggle – not only in the immediate defensive sense (a vital element in the recovery of class identity) but also in the emergence of a conscious understanding that the mode of production as a whole is totally bankrupt and must give way to a new society – we need to assess more precisely which types of attack are most conducive to the development of

solidarity and unity within the class in both the short and long term.

The multiplicity of attacks, for example, company closures and the job cuts that accompany them, are leading to numerous struggles in several central countries at the moment, but they remain largely isolated and lead to a kind of impasse. It is very difficult for workers to fight against factory closures, when strike action alone will not be enough to put pressure on bosses who are already planning to close companies. One example is the difficulty workers at Port Talbot in Wales have had in developing a struggle against the closure of this key steelworks. In fact, more generally, the ICC is going to have to look closely at the impact of mass unemployment on the development of proletarian consciousness. Regarding this direct result of economic crisis *“while in general terms it may help to reveal capitalism’s inability to secure a future for the workers, it is nonetheless today a powerful factor in the ‘lumpenisation’ of certain sectors of the class, especially of young workers, which therefore weakens the class’ present and future political capacities.”*⁶ Consequently, it is only when it has taken a further step in the development of its consciousness, when it is able to conceive of itself as a class with a role to play in the future of society, that the question of mass redundancies and mass unemployment will truly constitute elements enabling the class to mount a united response to the bourgeois state, as well as developing a more in-depth reflection on the bankruptcy of capitalism.

Attacks on wages, on the other hand, can create a more favourable balance of forces. In fact, the struggles that led to the breakthrough in 2022 were essentially about wages. This also seems to have been demonstrated by the latest episode of struggles in the USA over the last few months. Because wage labour forms the basis of the relationship between capital and labour, the question of defending wages is the “common interest” of all workers against their exploiters. This struggle *“unites them in a common thought of resistance – combination. Thus combination always has a double aim, that of stopping competition among the workers, so that they can carry on general competition with the capitalist. If the first aim of resistance was merely the maintenance of wages, combinations, at first isolated, constitute themselves into groups as the capitalists in their turn unite for the purpose of repression, and in the face of always united capital, the maintenance of the association becomes more necessary to them than that of wages.... This mass is thus already a class as against capital,*

⁶ “Theses on decomposition”, *International Review* n° 107.

*but not yet for itself. In the struggle, of which we have noted only a few phases, this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself. The interests it defends become class interests. But the struggle of class against class is a political struggle.”*⁷

III. War, decomposition and class consciousness

In the period of massive workers’ struggles between 1968-75, when the central countries of capitalism had been through a long period of prosperity, there were still strong illusions about the possibility of restoring the “glorious years”, especially by electing governments of the left. Thus although these movements gave rise to a definite politicisation of minorities,⁸ notably with the reanimation of the tradition of the Communist Left, the potential for the struggles themselves to give rise to a more general politicisation in the class was limited; and even in the struggles of the 80s, it was still far less clear that the capitalist system was reaching the end of its tether, and the workers’ struggles, even when massive in scale and capable of acting as a block to the drive towards world war, did not succeed in generalising a political perspective for the overcoming of capitalism.

The fundamental result of the stalemate between the classes in the 1980s was the development of the new phase of decomposition, which became a further obstruction to the capacity of the working class to reconstitute itself as a revolutionary force. But the acceleration of decomposition has also made it much easier to understand that the long decline of capitalism has now reached a terminal phase in which the choice between socialism and barbarism has become increasingly apparent. Even if the feeling that we are heading towards barbarism is much more widespread than the conviction that socialism provides a realistic alternative, the increasing recognition that capitalism has nothing to offer humanity but a spiral of destruction still provides the foundations for a future politicisation of the class struggle.

Along with the economic crisis, which remains the essential basis for the devel-

opment both of the open struggles of the class and the growth of an awareness of the bankruptcy of the system, the two elements which most clearly underline the reality of capitalism’s impasse are the proliferation of and intensification of imperialist wars, and the inexorable advance of the ecological catastrophe, most recently symbolised by the massive floods in Valencia which demonstrate that this catastrophe will no longer be limited to the “peripheral” regions of the system. However, as factors in the emergence of a political awareness in the class, the two elements are not equal.

We have long rejected the idea, still clung to by most of the groups of the proletarian political milieu, that war, in particular world war, offers a favourable terrain for the outbreak of revolutionary struggles. In articles written in the *International Review* of the 1980s,⁹ we showed that while this conception was based on the real experience of past revolutions (1871, 1905, 1917), and while any class struggle in times of mobilisation for war inevitably poses political questions in a very rapid manner, the disadvantages facing revolutionary movements that arise in direct response to war considerably outweigh the “benefits”. Thus,

- The experience of the First World War gave the ruling class a very important lesson, which it was to apply very systematically before, and at the closing stages of, the Second World War: prior to launching a global war, first you must impose a profound physical and ideological defeat on the proletariat, and when the miseries and horrors of war provoke any signs of proletarian reactions, they must be crushed immediately (cf the objective collaboration of Allied and Nazi forces in the annihilation of the workers’ revolts in Italy in 1943, the terror bombing of Germany, etc).
- The old schema of revolutionary defeatism, which held that the defeat of one’s own government is favourable to the development of the revolution, as well as containing an inherent ambiguity about the need to oppose all governments in a situation of war, has been demonstrably refuted by the fact that the division between victorious and defeated nations creates deep divisions in the world proletariat, as was most clearly seen in the wake of the 1914-18 war.
- Capitalism’s military technology has “advanced” to the point where fraternisation across the trenches becomes less and less feasible, and it has also made it far more likely than any future world war would rapidly lead to a nu-

⁷ Karl Marx, *Poverty of Philosophy*, chapter II, Section V. “Workers’ strikes and combinations”.

⁸ See the report on class struggle to the 24th congress for the distinction between the politicisation of minorities and the politicisation of struggles (“Report on the international class struggle to the 24th ICC Congress”, *International Review* n° 167). The article entitled “After the rupture in the class struggle, the necessity for politicisation” in *International Review* n° 171 provides a basis for examining this question in greater depth in order to understand its profound significance in the phase of decomposition.

⁹ “Why the alternative is war or revolution”, *International Review* n° 30, and “The Proletariat and War”, *International Review* n° 65.

clear escalation and “mutually assured destruction”.

The current wars in Ukraine and the Middle East have confirmed that the main obstacles to the capitalist war drive are much less likely to come from revolts in the countries directly engaged in warfare, and more likely to emerge from the central fractions of the proletariat who are only indirectly impacted by imperialist war through the mounting demands of the war economy.

None of this implies, however, that war is no longer a factor in the development of class consciousness and the process of politicisation. On the contrary, we have seen:

- that the omnipresence of war, especially since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, remains a significant factor in the emergence of minorities putting into question the whole capitalist system;
- that the capacity of workers to defend their own class interests in spite of the call for sacrifices in the name of “defending freedom” was a key element in the rupture of 2022. Furthermore, the recognition that workers are being asked to pay for the bloating of the war economy was posed explicitly among some of the more combative workers engaged in the struggles after 2022, notably in France.¹⁰

It’s true that in both examples, we are talking more about the politicisation of minorities than the politicisation of struggles. This is not surprising given the number of ideological traps facing those who begin to draw connections between capitalism and war: on the one hand, we have the example of how the populists in Europe and above all the US have recuperated any embryonic anti-war sentiments in the class, even turning it, in the case of the Ukraine war, into a barely concealed pro-Russian orientation. On the other, we have a host of leftists brandishing a version of internationalism which may even appear to denounce both warring camps in Ukraine but which always amounts, in the end, to an apology for one side or the other. And the same leftists, who are generally much more partisan in their support for the “Axis of Resistance” against Israel, are an important factor in the exacerbation of the religious and ethnic divisions stirred up by the Middle East war. It is hardly surprising

that a genuine internationalist response to the current wars is limited to a searching minority – and even within this minority, even within the groups of the Communist Left, confusions and inconsistencies are only too evident.

In the concluding section of the “Theses of the Decomposition”, we put forward the reasons why the economic crisis remains the principal vector in the capacity of the working class to rediscover its class identity and form itself into a class openly opposed to capitalist society, in contrast to the main phenomena of decomposition:

“while the effects of decomposition (eg pollution, drugs, insecurity) hit the different strata of society in much the same way and form a fertile ground for aclassist campaigns and mystifications (ecology, anti-nuclear movements, anti-racist mobilisations, etc), the economic attacks (falling real wages, layoffs, increasing productivity, etc) resulting directly from the crisis hit the proletariat (ie the class that produces surplus value and confronts capitalism on this terrain) directly and specifically; unlike social decomposition which essentially effects the superstructure, the economic crisis directly attacks the foundations on which this superstructure rests; in this sense, it lays bare all the barbarity that is battenning on society, thus allowing the proletariat to become aware of the need to change the system radically, rather than trying to improve certain aspects of it.”¹¹

These formulations remain essentially valid, even if it’s not strictly true that the destruction of nature is merely an aspect of the superstructure, since it is a direct product of capitalist accumulation and threatens to undermine the very conditions for the survival of human society and the continuation of production. If the worsening ecological crisis can be a potential factor in small minorities¹² calling into question the very foundations of capitalist production, it remains a factor of fear and despair for a large part of the class. The ecological disaster tends to hit all strata in society in much the same way, even if its most devastating effects are generally felt by the working class and the exploited, and thus remains “a fertile ground for aclassist campaigns and mystifications”, and this tends to restrict the ability of elements perturbed by the ecological disaster to understand that the only solution is via the class struggle. Furthermore, the immediate “solutions” put forward by capitalist

states to the deterioration of the natural environment often involve direct attacks on the living standards of a part of the working class, in particular massive layoffs to replace fossil fuel-based production by “cleaner” technologies. In this sense, demands to save the environment are more often a factor of division than of unification in the ranks of the working class, unlike the economic crisis which tends to “level down” the whole proletariat.

The conclusion to the Theses does not include the impact of war on the development of class consciousness, but what we can say is that:

- the question of imperialist war – like the prolonged and irresolvable economic crisis which lies at its root – is not a specific product of capitalist decomposition but is a central element throughout the whole epoch of decadence;
- there is a much closer link between economic crisis and war: in particular, the development of a war economy carries with it a very evident and quite generalised assault on workers’ living standards through inflation, intensification of the pace of work, and so on. Resisting this assault on a class terrain, even when founded on a clear internationalist world outlook only in a tiny minority, cannot fail to raise profoundly political questions about the link between capitalism and war, and about the common international interests of the proletariat. This is the principal reason why the politicisation of minorities in a proletarian sense is showing itself to be based on a reaction to the question of war much more than to the more specific phenomena of decomposition, including the acceleration of the ecological crisis. And further down the line, the growing threat and utter irrationality of war will be a real factor in the future politicisation of struggles. But we must emphasise that it is only at the further point in the development of class identity and class struggle that these steps towards politicisation – whether around the question of war or the more characteristic expressions of decomposition, like the ecological crisis – can shift from the level of small minorities to much broader and more open movements of the working class.

The ability of the bourgeoisie to use its classic weapons against the working class

However much it is fragmented and weakened by the advancing decay of its own mode of production, the bourgeoisie will never lose the capacity to respond to the de-

10. In Iran, which has recently seen a series of strikes and protests among health, education, transport, and oil workers, along with retirees from the steel industry faced with sharply rising prices. Their understanding that the inflationary surge is a product of the war economy was expressed in the slogan raised in the cities of Ahvaz and Shush: “Enough with warmongering, our tables are empty.”

11. “Theses on decomposition”, *International Review* n° 107.

12. The development of such minorities, or rather the objective need to derail them from arriving at a coherent critique of capital, explains the emergence of a radical wing of the ecological protest movement, notably the advocates of “degrowth”.

velopment of the class struggle. In response to the revival of struggles since 2022, and in particular to the development of the subterranean maturation of consciousness, we have thus seen the ruling class make ample use of its “classical” instruments for controlling the proletariat:

- the trade unions, which have radicalised their language in anticipation of or response to the outbreak of workers’ combats. This was a very clear element in the struggles in Britain for example, where the leadership of the trade unions most directly involved in the struggles was assumed by very left-wing elements like Mick Lynch of the railway workers’ union, the RMT;
- the leftist groups, particularly the Trotskyists, some of whom (“Revolutionary Communist Party”, “Révolution Permanente”, etc) have begun once again talking about communism and, as already mentioned, can appear to defend internationalist positions, especially in response to the war in Ukraine. Many of these groups have recruited successfully among the young, a muted echo of what took place after the battles of May-June 68 in France.

the weight of decomposition and the bourgeoisie’s instrumentation of its main manifestations

As we mentioned above, we have recently heard in discussions that the current struggles of the class could make it possible to push back the effects of decomposition, or that decomposition weakens the bourgeoisie in its capacity to fight back against the working class. Such ideas call into question the idea that decomposition does not favour the struggle of the working class. Fear, withdrawal, despair caused by the generalisation of warlike barbarity; nihilism, atomisation, irrationality of thought engendered by the absence of a future and the destruction of social relations, are all obstacles to the development of class solidarity and of a collective, united struggle, and to the maturing of thought.

But we are also seeing how the bourgeoisie is using the products of its own rot against the development of workers’ struggles, in particular:

- through the campaigns against populism and the far right, the most “chemically pure” product of decomposition, reviving the time-honoured ideology of anti-fascism and the defence of democracy. These campaigns, which will undoubtedly intensify in the wake of Trump’s victory in the US election, have the double advantage of persuad-

ing workers to place the defence of the democratic illusion above the fight for their own “selfish” class interests, and of countering the threat of class unity by dragging different sectors of the working class behind the competing capitalist camps;

- this strategy of division is also seen in the different forms of the “culture wars”, which play on the conflict between the “woke” and the “anti-woke” around numerous issues (gender, migration, environment, etc as well as around the increasingly violent disputes between political parties);
- the development of anti-immigration campaigns by right-wing and far-right parties aims to instil a pogrom atmosphere, scapegoating migrants and foreigners and blaming them for the decline in living standards. This kind of ideological poison can only be countered by the ability of the class to forge its unity and solidarity against the material attacks faced by all proletarians;
- the situation will also be marked by revolts by the intermediate classes, which the bourgeoisie will use to distort workers’ struggles and reflection.

The necessity for the proletariat to respond on its own class terrain

Faced with this huge ideological onslaught, the only possible response from the standpoint of the proletariat can be:

- the recovery of the lessons of past combats which can elucidate the sabotaging role of the unions and the left and prepare the ground for the self-organised and unified struggles of a higher phase of the rupture;
- the development, in and around the open struggles, of the proletariat’s sense of itself as a class opposed to capital, indispensable both for the capacity of the class to defend its immediate demands and for the development of an understanding of its historical mission as the gravedigger of capital.

It goes without saying that the revolutionary organisation has an irreplaceable role to play in the evolution of consciousness in this direction. The ability of the ICC to assume its role depends precisely on its ability to take the measure of the immense challenges facing the working class in the decades to come.

ICC, May 2025

26th congress of the ICC

Report on the economic crisis

The historical significance of the impasse of the capitalist economy

The election of Donald Trump as President of the United States has considerably disrupted the world in place since the end of the Second World War, with institutions regulating trade and currencies, and a certain consistency in the orientations of different national capitals. The American shift towards extreme protectionism and its rejection of all international cooperation has not only had an immediate impact on all the central countries of capitalism, but above all, has opened a period of uncertainty linked to the brutal and undoubtedly definitive erasure of all the efforts made until then by the international bourgeoisie to distance the capitalist economy from chaos and every man for himself as much as possible. Such a policy greatly contributes to destabilisation, particularly in economic and political terms, with inevitable consequences for the dynamics of the class struggle, the future scale of which remains difficult to measure today.

Marxism is not a dogmatic theory that provided all the answers 150 years ago. It is above all a method that borrows a fundamental approach from science: constantly verifying the validity of theory against the facts. Taking a step back from the situation does not mean detaching oneself from the facts, quite the contrary. The first question we have to ask ourselves as marxists in the face of these upheavals is whether our overall framework for analysing the historical trends of capitalism should be called into question or whether, on the contrary, current events confirm it. Then, based on this framework of analysis, we have to consider the impact that the combination of various factors – wars, economic crisis, trade destabilisation, climate change – has on capitalism, in order to provide our class with the clearest possible analysis of these upheavals and the challenges they pose for the future.

The extensive excerpts from the report on the economic crisis, ratified by our 26th International Congress in the spring of 2025, which we publish below, demonstrate the validity of our analytical framework and allow us to outline the historical perspectives. However, the process never stops, and in a situation as fluid as the one we are experiencing today, it is more important than ever for revolutionary organisations to continually deepen this framework.

Since the report was written, developments have only further confirmed the perspectives outlined by the Congress. The Trump administration's haphazard, volatile, but ultimately brutal implementation of tariffs has led to a previously unimaginable acceleration of every man for himself in the economic sphere, the evaporation of the 'opportunities' of globalisation and a brutal and chaotic disorganisation of production and supply chains throughout the world. Each national capital is pushed to take charge of strategic sectors of production which, moreover, cannot escape the reality of the saturation of the world market. This exacerbation of every man for himself greatly accentuates the crisis of overproduction.

The crisis of overproduction is therefore only exacerbated by the growing destabilisation of world trade, protectionist policies and, above all, the explosion in military spending. Far from putting an end to the bloody and endless conflicts that are undermining the planet, as Trump constantly boasts, the United States is the first to add fuel to the fire, as illustrated by the situation in Gaza, the conflict with Iran or, more recently, its aggressive policy towards Venezuela, which is increasing the pressure of the war economy on public accounts and on the overall health of capital itself. The historic divorce between the United States and Europe is reflected in particular in America's blackmail of other NATO countries to buy and produce weapons for Ukraine and to increase their arms expenditure and production in order to take charge of their own defence.

All this is happening in a context of national bourgeoisies losing control of their political game, thus affecting their ability to cooperate and attempt a minimal regulation of a devastated global market. In the United States, factions of the ruling class are tearing each other apart over what policy to pursue. In Europe,

states are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain consistency in defending the national capital and maintaining a stable policy for the future.

Such a panorama only confirms the state of decay of capitalism and the fact that the economic sphere, which, through artifices and circumventions of the fundamental laws of the system, had largely escaped this decay, but is now not only falling prey to it, but above all accelerating the infernal vortex that is dragging this system into decomposition.

So how can we continue to defend the idea that capitalism is still capable of launching new cycles of accumulation through the destruction of capital wrought by war, as organisations in the proletarian political milieu continue to argue?¹ The abysmal debt of all capitalist states, the gigantic losses linked to destruction and the war economy, the disorganisation of markets and the reality of chronic overproduction invalidate any idea of the possibility of an eternal development of the system.

How can we still defend the 19th-century vision of technological progress capable of increasing overall productivity? Today, technological progress is certainly incomparable to that of the ascendant period of capitalism. But on the one hand, it is almost exclusively directed towards the military sphere, a trend that began at the start of the decline, while, on the other hand, and above all, the productivity gains evaporate in overproduction due to the impossibility of selling all the goods produced and therefore of realising the total expected surplus value. They are therefore unable to contribute to a "new cycle of accumulation" – even if certain sectors or a number of companies can still do well – since the markets likely to offer the outlets necessary for the realisation of surplus value have long been saturated on a global scale.

Does this mean that the ICC sees the decline of the capitalist mode of production, and even more so its period of decomposition, as an inevitable dynamic

1. See, for example, The Internationalist Communist Tendency, "Refining the concept of Decadence" on the ICT website.

that will pave a natural path towards communism? Not at all! Decomposition paves the way for the collapse of the capitalist system, but this does not open the path to communism, but rather threatens to bring about the destruction of humanity and its environment if the working class fails to impose its perspective. And this perspective of communism will always remain the fruit of a life-and-death struggle against capital. That is why it is up to revolutionaries to be perfectly clear about the historical responsibility of the proletariat, which does not have an eternity before it to overcome its difficulties, to shake off the weight of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologies and rediscover its identity as a revolutionary class bearing the only viable and possible future for humanity, that of communism.

In this context, the purpose of a congress report is to provide the organisation with a solid analytical framework for understanding the situation in the years to come. Taking a long-term view, a report cannot remain stuck in current events and must take a broader perspective, as was the aim of this report, in particular through two central questions for understanding recent economic events:

- the growing interaction between decomposition and economic crisis, which illustrates the turmoil in which bourgeois society finds itself from an economic point of view;
- the increasingly relentless nature of the impasse of overproduction.

The growing vortex of interdependence between decomposition and crisis

The interdependence between the economic crisis and the manifestations of decomposition at different levels is evident in a multitude of phenomena:

- on the one hand, overproduction has continued to shake the global economy: for example, a major crisis has erupted in German industry, particularly in the automobile industry, with Germany's economic problems mirroring those of the EU, while in the United States, a speculative stock market bubble has burst;
- on the other hand, disruption to global trade and production doubled in a matter of months. For example, due to attacks by the Houthis, 95% of ships that should have crossed the Red Sea had to be diverted. In 2023, drought caused delays in the Panama Canal, increasing the cost of goods and raw materials moving between the United

States and China, as well as on other global shipping routes;

- and then, the ravages caused by the interaction of climate change and a capitalist economy suffering from more than 50 years of crisis are being felt around the world. Massive flooding in Pakistan, the effects of drought in Europe and elsewhere, devastating floods in Valencia, Spain's third largest city, have all destroyed or weakened local and regional economies.

The rising cost of living, destruction, transport problems and pollution have had a growing impact on the US economy. The effect of the Los Angeles fires is not limited to the destruction of buildings: *"AccuWeather calculated its economic impact by examining not only losses related to property damage, but also lost wages due to the slowdown or shutdown of economic activity in the affected areas, infrastructure repairs, supply chain issues, and transportation difficulties. Even when homes and businesses are not destroyed, residents may be unable to work due to evacuations; businesses may close due to the dispersal of their customers or the inability of their suppliers to make deliveries. Smoke inhalation can have short-, medium- and long-term health consequences, which weigh heavily on overall economic activity."* These effects may be further amplified by the waves of forest fires that rage throughout most of the year in the United States and Canada.

This economic, imperialist and 'natural' turmoil is accelerated by the political earthquake caused by Trump's election. Even before he came to power, the threat of tariffs and four more years of political chaos was imminent. *"Uncertainty looms over 2025, including the risks of trade tensions and ongoing geopolitical challenges. The trade outlook for 2025 is clouded by potential policy changes, including higher tariffs that could disrupt global value chains and impact key trading partners. Such measures risk triggering retaliation and repercussions, affecting industries and economies throughout supply chains. The mere threat of tariffs creates unpredictability, weakening trade, investment and economic growth."*²

This chaos and unpredictability of a "terra incognita" is shaking up the three main rival capitalist powers.

1.1. The United States

The world's largest economy is still in decline. A recovery was observed after the pandemic, but it was partly due to Biden's vast support plan, which aimed to reverse

2. "UN Global Trade Update", December 2024, on the UN Trade and Development website.

the decline of American industry. Manufacturing jobs, the main source of profits, have fallen by 35% since 1979. In 2023, there were 12.5 million manufacturing jobs, the same number as in 1946 (it should be borne in mind that the US population has more than doubled since then – from 141.4 million in 1946 to 336.4 million in 2023).

To cope with the growing impact of the economic crisis, the American bourgeoisie has borrowed more and more money. The United States has seen its debt-to-GDP ratio rise from 32% in 1980 to 123% in 2024. This means that it is drawing trillions of dollars from the rest of the global economy to repay its debts. Every year, the US government spends as much on debt repayment as it does on defence. In 2023, the gap between US spending and revenue was £1.8 trillion, nearly double the military budget! The new administration's barrage of attacks on federal civil servants is partly a response to their rampant growth. The irresponsible and brutal manner in which they are being carried out will have a chaotic impact on American capitalism. The sudden halt in public funding for essential services such as health care, tax collection, social security contributions, essential medical research, etc., will have increasingly harmful consequences for the economy and society.

Internationally, Trump's upheaval of the rules is generating great uncertainty and instability in the global economy. The imposition of tariffs on all US competitors, and the threat of even more draconian tariffs if governments tax American products "unfairly", is creating tensions not only between the US and its rivals, but also between the rivals themselves.

This scorched earth policy will further plunge capitalism into crisis: *"... Trump's proposed policies will not reduce the overall trade deficit. Reducing the bilateral deficit with China would only increase deficits with other countries. This is inevitable, given the persistent macroeconomic pressures. Furthermore, his discriminatory trade policies, with tariffs of 60% on China and 10-20% on others, are bound to spread. Trump and his acolytes will find that exports from other countries are replacing those from China through transshipments, assembly in other countries or direct competition... there will undoubtedly be retaliation. Such a spread of high tariffs in the United States and around the world is likely to lead to a rapid decline in global trade and production."*³

Furthermore, this economic instability will be exacerbated by the Trump admin-

3. "Why Trump's trade war will cause chaos", *Financial Times*, 19.11.2024

istration's deportation policy. The American Immigration Council has stated that deporting all undocumented immigrants could cost up to \$315 billion and require between 220,000 and 409,000 new civil servants and law enforcement officers. It also indicated that deporting one million people per year would cost £967 billion over ten years. This number of migrants being sent back, combined with the loss of remittances, will also destabilise some regions of Central and Latin America and exacerbate the instability of American capitalism.

China

China is no longer the 'saviour' of the global economy that it was after 2007: its industrial overcapacity has become a runaway train dragging the global economy into an ever-deepening crisis: *"Simply put, in many crucial economic sectors, China is producing far more output than it, or foreign markets, can sustainably absorb. As a result, the Chinese economy runs the risk of getting caught in a doom loop of falling prices, insolvency, factory closures, and, ultimately, job losses. Shrinking profits have forced producers to further increase output and more heavily discount their wares in order to generate cash to service their debts. Moreover, as factories are forced to close and industries consolidate, the firms left standing are not necessarily the most efficient or most profitable. Rather, the survivors tend to be those with the best access to government subsidies and cheap financing...."*

*"For the West, China's overcapacity problem presents a long-term challenge that can't be solved simply by erecting new trade barriers. For one thing, even if the United States and Europe were able to significantly limit the amount of Chinese goods reaching Western markets, it would not unravel the structural inefficiencies that have accumulated in China over decades of privileging industrial investment and production goals. Any course correction could take years of sustained Chinese policy to be successful. For another, Xi's growing emphasis on making China economically self-sufficient—a strategy that is itself a response to perceived efforts by the West to isolate the country economically—has increased, rather than decreased, the pressures leading to overproduction. Moreover, efforts by Washington to prevent Beijing from flooding the United States with cheap goods in key sectors are only likely to create new inefficiencies within the U.S. economy, even as they shift China's overproduction problem to other international markets."*⁴

4. "China's real economic crisis", *Foreign Affairs*, August 2024.

The above quote is an excellent description of the impact of the overproduction crisis on China and the global economy.

The EU, Russia, Israel

The German economic and political giant has been mired in economic and political crisis for the past two years. The political instability of the German bourgeoisie makes it even more difficult to manage the economic crisis that accelerated in 2024. The dramatic worsening of the crisis of overproduction in Germany, with the announcement of a wave of layoffs and company closures in the autumn of 2024, has revealed the fragility of this industrial giant in the face of the worsening global economic crisis. It is particularly affected by the Chinese crisis. This decline is accelerated by the German state's need to increase its defence spending and, as a result, reduce its public spending.

The economic turmoil of German capitalism is fundamentally an expression of the deep problems facing the EU as a whole: *"The EU also benefitted from a favourable global environment. World trade burgeoned under multilateral rules. The safety of the US security umbrella freed up defence budgets to spend on other priorities. In a world of stable geopolitics, we had no reason to be concerned about rising dependencies on countries we expected to remain our friends."*

"But the foundations on which we built are now being shaken."

"The previous global paradigm is fading. The era of rapid world trade growth looks to have passed, with EU companies facing both greater competition from abroad and lower access to overseas markets. Europe has abruptly lost its most important supplier of energy, Russia. All the while, geopolitical stability is waning, and our dependencies have turned out to be vulnerabilities..."

"The EU is entering the first period in its recent history in which growth will not be supported by rising populations. By 2040, the workforce is projected to shrink by close to 2 million workers each year. We will have to lean more on productivity to drive growth. If the EU were to maintain its average productivity growth rate since 2015, it would only be enough to keep GDP constant until 2050 – at a time when the EU is facing a series of new investment needs that will have to be financed through higher growth."

"To digitalise and decarbonise the economy and increase our defence capacity, the investment share in Europe will have to rise by around 5 percentage points of GDP to levels last seen in the 1960s and

*70s. This is unprecedented: for comparison, the additional investments provided by the Marshall Plan between 1948-51 amounted to around 1-2% of GDP annually."*⁵

It is estimated that the development of EU economies to meet this challenge, particularly in terms of armaments, will require €750-800 billion: a heavy investment in armaments of all kinds, offset by an inevitable reduction in social spending.

This increasingly unstable quagmire, composed of fundamental economic contradictions, manifestations of decomposition on various levels and imperialist tensions, as well as the interdependence of all these factors, is clearly wreaking havoc on the global economy. Added to this is the growing impact of the barbarity of war.

Russian capitalism appears to have withstood the impact of war and sanctions. In truth, this illusion is based on increased military spending, rising energy prices, booming investment in the war economy (the Russian capitalist class can only invest in Russia because of the sanctions) and rising public deficits. As we have already said, this situation masks the depth of the weakening of Russian capitalism by the war. The crushing weight of militarism is the most obvious proof of this. The domination of militarism over the economy is plunging Russia back into the instability of the former USSR: *"In short, 40 years after Mikhail Gorbachev came to power, Moscow is facing a resurgence of the problems encountered by Gorbachev and his predecessors. The military will dominate the Russian economy for years to come. Even after a settlement in the current war, the Kremlin will have to rebuild its military stockpiles, maintain the arms race and retrain the army. The military-industrial complex will continue to drain investment, human resources and civilian sector capabilities."*

As for the Israeli bourgeoisie, it faces a similar dynamic. The wars in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon have had a phenomenal impact on the Israeli state's deficit. Before the war began, the Ministry of Finance projected a deficit of 1.1% of GDP in 2024; it is now estimated at 8%. Israel's security budget is the second highest in the world. The wars have had a dramatic impact on economic activity in the south and north of the country. The loss of Palestinian workers in certain sectors and the impact of conscription have had adverse consequences. The credit rating of Israeli capitalism has fallen for the first time in its history. All this has increased its dependence on US support.

5. *The Future of European Competitiveness*, "Part a. Forward", Publications Office of the European Union, 2025.

The idea that Israel and the United States will ethnically cleanse Gaza and build a Mediterranean resort is as illusory as it is revolting. To clear the rubble would require 100 lorries working 24 hours a day for 21 years. There are at least 14,000 bodies still under the rubble and 7,500 tonnes of unexploded ordnance. Military barbarism, economic chaos and the rise to power of populist factions of the bourgeoisie are creating an unprecedented level of instability in the capitalist system.

The agony of a world dominated by capitalist relations

When Stalinism collapsed in 1989, after more than 40 years of the return of the crisis that had begun in the mid-1960s, the ICC pointed out that the contradictions and manifestations of the decadence of moribund capitalism, which had marked the history of this decadence, had not only not disappeared with time, but had persisted. Indeed, they had accumulated and deepened to culminate in the phase of decomposition, which crowns and completes three quarters of a century of agony for a capitalist mode of production condemned by history.

With regard to the crisis of state capitalism expressed by the collapse of the USSR, our organisation then highlighted:

- that the collapse of Stalinist state capitalism demonstrated the impotence of state capitalist measures to permanently bypass the laws of the market and demonstrated the powerlessness of the world bourgeoisie in the face of the crisis of overproduction;
- that the absence of perspective unleashed within the ruling class, and especially within its political apparatus, a growing tendency towards indiscipline and every man for himself;
- that the bankruptcy of Stalinism, after that of the Third World, heralded the bankruptcy of capitalism in its most developed poles.

The ICC also analysed that, in the chaotic context of this new historical phase and in a capitalist world profoundly altered by the effects of decadence, the disappearance of the blocs offered an opportunity to maintain the profitability of capital and to prolong the survival of capitalism through “globalisation”: the extension of capitalist exploitation and capitalist social relations to the furthest corners of the planet, hitherto inaccessible due to the existence of the imperialist blocs.⁶ These

same conditions enabled China’s rapid rise.⁷ However, we have pointed out that “globalisation” was only an interlude allowing the capitalist system to relatively preserve its economy from the effects of decomposition. The worsening of the real state of the economy, the weakening of the dynamics of globalisation undermined the realisation of expanded accumulation, while the weight of military spending and the impasse of overproduction shattered the scaffolding of global finance based on staggering debt. The 2008 crisis, the most serious since 1929, marked a turning point in the history of the capitalist mode of production’s descent into its historical crisis. It confirmed that the capitalist system finds itself even more completely locked into a situation where (due to the exhaustion of the last extra-capitalist markets) the universal hegemony of capitalist class relations makes the realisation of expanded accumulation increasingly difficult.⁸

In these conditions of deadlock and social decomposition, the phenomena already existing in decadence take on a new quality, due to the bourgeoisie’s inability to offer any perspective other than “*resisting, step by step, but without hope of success, the advance of the crisis. That is why the current situation of open crisis presents itself in radically different terms from the previous crisis of the same type, that of the 1930s*”⁹. After 2008, the closure of the “opportunities” of globalisation and the increasingly obvious inability of capitalism to overcome its crisis of overproduction resulted in the explosion of every man for himself, not only in relations between capitalist nations, but also within each nation, while the effects of decomposition took on a new and powerfully destructive scale for the capitalist economy in the early 2020s. They are accelerating and striking at the heart of capitalism as the combined effects of the economic crisis, war and the climate crisis interact and multiply their impact, destabilising the economy and its productive infrastructure. “*While each of the factors fuelling this ‘whirlwind’ effect of decomposition represents in itself a serious risk of collapse for states, their combined effects far exceed the simple sum of each of them taken in isolation.*”¹⁰ Among the various factors contributing to the whirlwind effect, war is accelerating the worsening of the crisis.

Decomposition fuels the headlong rush into militarism

This “epochal change” is bringing about

7. Ibid. p.40.

8. Ibid. pp. 40-41.

9. “Theses on Decomposition”, *International Review* n° 107

10 “This crisis is going to be the most serious in the whole period of decadence”, *ibid.*

the return of high-intensity warfare. It thereby:

- fuels the shockwave of military conflicts on the global economy (Ukraine, Middle East, Red Sea); the prospect of major conflicts (Taiwan) or “regional” conflicts (India/Pakistan, Morocco/Algeria) exposes the economy to incalculable and unpredictable disruptions; war weakens and exhausts national economies (Russia, Ukraine, Israel);
 - produces remarkable unanimity among the different factions of each bourgeoisie in each national capital around the world to prioritise increased military spending: during Trump’s first term, within NATO, three countries (including only one European country, Greece) out of around thirty allocated 2% of GDP to defence; today, only eight countries, including seven European countries, have not reached this target. Since the NATO summit in June 2025, the plan is to allocate 5% of GDP to defence, including 3.5% to the purchase of military equipment. To achieve this, all states are committed to strengthening the war economy and adapting their means of production, which involves rebuilding strategic food and military (ammunition) stocks and making a considerable effort to accelerate military production (e.g. the transition of this entire industry to three 8-hour shifts in France in order to achieve major reductions in production times – for example, it has been halved for Caesar cannons). This also involves seeking to standardise military equipment among allies to enable industry to increase its capacity, and relocating military production capacity (gunpowder in France) within their territory for those where this can be done.
- As industrial power is the basis of military power, each national capital is attempting to reindustrialise, which essentially involves:
- investment in key sectors of military power, such as robotisation, digitalisation and AI. For example, the US has begun repatriating the production of latest-generation semiconductors to its own soil in order to guarantee its monopoly;
 - the integration of other aspects that are essential to the growth of these sectors: efforts to train a skilled workforce and adapt education (which has been a victim of cost-cutting), and the ability to produce abundant and inexpensive electricity;
 - artificially keeping alive strategic sectors such as steel (with overcapacity

6. See “This crisis is going to be the most serious in the whole period of decadence”, *International Review* n°172, 2024, pp. 39-40.

of 25-30% worldwide and up to 60% in France) through state intervention, which irrationally reinforces overproduction.

Even on a strategic level, however, reindustrialisation comes up against the very causes of deindustrialisation: insufficient profitability, which led to the disappearance or relocation of industries, and the burden of debt, which has skyrocketed since 2020 and restricts the room for manoeuvre of each national capital.

The surge in unproductive spending is weighing heavily on national capital and driving inflation.

Furthermore, the general rise of every man for himself and warlike tensions against the backdrop of US-China rivalry:

- is intensifying competition between nations and leading to a global reorganisation of industrial production along imperialist fault lines. The impossibility of decoupling the US and Chinese economies has given way to the ‘risk reduction’ that the United States wants to impose on its allies. This dynamic is accompanied by a trend towards the cartelisation of supply chains for strategic materials or products with a view to ‘securing’ them, which are then used as a means of pressure and blackmail to gain a position of strength. This is particularly the case for rare metals and minerals, given the difficulty of accessing them on a large scale to operate entire value chains – more than half of their refining is under Chinese control – as well as energy sources;
- disrupts global trade through export restrictions and public subsidies to industries deemed vital to national security and sovereignty (this affects 12.7% of G20 countries' imports and 10% globally);
- is driving increased use of digital technologies and additive manufacturing, enabling companies to move their production closer to the point of sale in order to accelerate the pace of supply chain reorientation and reduce the appeal of locating production in China;
- is profoundly changing and destabilising the domestic conditions of national production for each national capital: as summarised by Defence Minister Lecornu for France, for example, regarding the grey area of hybrid warfare that powers are constantly waging: “*without being at war, it is no longer possible to say that we are at peace*”; “*Cyber attacks are on the rise and target a huge number of companies, public institutions and*

even local authorities. The armed forces are deploying capabilities to identify, thwart and resist these attacks within the state, but every business leader, every administrative manager and every local elected representative must also protect their organisation against this threat, which affects everyone.”; “*Technological leaps, the militarisation of space and digital technology, information warfare and the exploitation of economic weaknesses enable competitors to devise and implement new threats that can have extremely serious consequences. One of the risks facing France today is that of being defeated without being invaded.*”¹¹

- leads to a general increase in prices (of between two and six hundred percent), as well as a change in the conditions under which they are set; the lowest cost is no longer the only criterion; added to this are the prices of “scarcity” and “security” as well as the financial capacity of the highest bidder.

Decomposition aggravates the crisis of state capitalism in the central countries

In all the central parts of capitalism, the state, guarantor of the interests of national capital, is the central actor in the economy: in a profoundly changed and changing economic, social and imperialist environment, its intervention remains predominant. However, the seriousness of capitalism’s impasse, as well as the necessities of building a war economy, are fuelling clashes within each national bourgeoisie, in a context where each national capital is deeply weakened:

- by the weight of debt, which severely restricts the ability of states to invest and reduces the room for manoeuvre of each national capital to support the national economy;
- by the disappearance of cooperation between powers to deal with the contradictions and (predictable) convulsions of a system still threatened by financial crises.

Faced with the challenges of “national sovereignty” and the chaotic effects of decomposition, particularly its repercussions on the economy; and faced also with the issue of accumulated debt (exceeding or representing several times GNP), the balance of state budgets and the balance of payments (mostly in deficit) take on a

11. *La voix du Combattant*, n° 19800, December 1024: “We are all concerned by the threats to our country”. An interview with the Army Minister Sébastien Lecornu. This analysis is developed in his book *Vers la guerre? La France face au Réarmement du Monde*, Plan 2024, particularly chapter 6, “we are now defeated without even being invaded”.

new crucial importance for each national capital. With its resilience in the face of its rivals at stake, this represents a new vulnerability and fragility within the context of the worsening of decomposition. The question of budgetary balance arises, as each national economy becomes increasingly locked into the inherent contradictions of the difficulty of accumulating capital, while cheating the law of value has reached historically unprecedented levels since the pandemic.

Debt – or rather its scale – divides the bourgeois factions: in the United States, for the adoption of the budget, Trump demanded an unlimited increase in the government debt ceiling, a proposal that was ultimately rejected, including with the support of some Republicans. In Germany, the issue of special off-budget funds and the need, defended by part of the bourgeoisie, to abandon the “debt brake” (enshrined in the Constitution), seen as a “brake on the future”, was a key cause of the implosion of the governing coalition. In China, the Communist Party is bringing the financial sector back into line, calling on it to serve the economy more effectively and contribute more to national wealth.

The tendency for the ruling class to lose control of its political game due to the effects of decomposition on the bourgeoisie and society, and the resulting instability and chaos, are affecting the coherence, long-term vision and continuity of the defence of the overall interests of national capital:

- the political crisis in France is preventing the adoption of a budget; divisions between bourgeois factions in Germany are affecting the EU’s ability to prepare for the economic consequences of Trump’s arrival in power;
- the coming to power of irresponsible populist factions (with programmes that are unrealistic for national capital) is weakening the economy and the measures imposed by capitalism since 1945 to prevent the uncontrolled spread of the economic crisis. Trump is coming to power with a plan that is diametrically opposed to the policy previously pursued by the US government, aimed at promoting cryptocurrencies and wholesale financial deregulation.

The clique around Trump wants to locate these crypto projects in the United States and make digital assets and other innovations a crucial instrument for “*making America more powerful than ever*.” Speculative products par excellence (which Trump hopes will be a lucrative source of income), backed by major US tech stocks or the dollar and traded on the stock market through new products, cryptocurrencies,

used as an alternative means of payment, can only compete with and weaken the currencies issued and guaranteed by central banks. Due to their inherent volatility (their solidity is equal to that of the company that issues them – far from that of a central bank), by escaping the banking system and without a supervisory mechanism, the widespread use of cryptocurrencies can only affect the financial stability of the capitalist system, weakening the control exercised by countries over exchange rates and the money supply.

Trump's arrival in power and his aggressive economic policy are another factor dividing and destabilising each bourgeoisie in terms of the policy and course of action to be taken to deal with it (see the tensions with Canada and Trudeau's resignation, and also the divisions within the EU). The measures proposed by populism only increase the chaos and uncertainty.

More generally, the tendency to lose sight of the general interests of capital is becoming more pronounced, due to deep divisions within the ruling class over how to manage the economic crisis; a bourgeoisie fragmented by conflicts that go beyond simple competitive relations, where factions are fighting for their survival in the face of the insoluble dilemmas and contradictions facing each national capital, and where each option will generate its share of losers. These conflicts are leading to an increasingly clear trend towards the domination of the state by clans and cliques primarily motivated by the defence of their own interests, where the obsession with controlling their position involves sidelining any potential rivals. They fill decision-making bodies with loyalists, even openly challenging the principles of state functioning, such as the separation of powers, the independence of the judiciary and election results. This trend is particularly marked with the arrival of populism in power: Trump, for example, arrived with a staff of 4,000 loyalists selected to thoroughly clean up the "deep state", and the management of the state took on a distinctly oligarchic character, with tech giants such as Musk and Zuckerberg, among others, financing and supporting Trump with the clear intention of taking advantage of the situation.

In the long run, this can only result in incompetence, mismanagement and a decline in the sense of responsibility and, ultimately, a decline in economic efficiency and effectiveness, not to mention the inevitable conflicts and upheavals resulting from the desire to retain power at all costs through violence and coups, which can only ultimately weaken national capital, as illustrated by Trump's call to march

on the Capitol at the end of his first term, Bolsonaro's coup attempt in Brazil, and that of President Yoon Suk-yeol in South Korea in December 2024.

*"If Western state capitalism has been able to survive its Stalinist rival, it is in the same way that a more robust organism resists the same disease for longer. (...) Capitalism today exhibits tendencies similar to those that caused the demise of Stalinist state capitalism. As for Chinese state capitalism, marked by Stalinist backwardness despite the hybridisation of its economy with the private sector, and riddled with numerous tensions within the ruling class, the hardening of the state apparatus is a sign of weakness and a promise of future instability."*¹²

The impasse of overproduction is becoming increasingly relentless

"The picture presented by the capitalist system confirms Rosa Luxemburg's predictions: capitalism will not experience a purely economic collapse but will sink into chaos and convulsions:

- *"the almost complete absence of extra-capitalist markets is now changing the conditions under which the main capitalist states must achieve expanded accumulation: increasingly, this can only be achieved, as a condition of their own survival, to the direct detriment of rivals of the same rank, by weakening their economies. The ICC's prediction in the 1970s of a capitalist world that can only survive by reducing itself to a small number of powers still capable of achieving a minimum level of accumulation is increasingly coming true. – As an expression of this impasse, due in particular to the growing weight of unproductive military spending, inflation will remain a permanent disruptive factor for economic stability."*¹³
- for these reasons, the entire capitalist system remains highly exposed to the occurrence of large-scale financial crises and currency destabilisation.

The level of overproduction combined with the anarchy inherent in capitalist production, as well as the repercussions of imperialist conflicts and the increasing destruction of ecosystems, are profoundly destabilising capitalist production and increasingly exposing society to risk. The occurrence of shocks that jeopardise the ability to continue production, leading to shortages and supply chain disruptions, bring incalculable social and economic consequences. Further, as is already the case for certain commodities in some areas

– agriculture, pharmaceuticals and other segments of production – it is becoming apparent that the deepening of decomposition means the cessation of the production of such commodities because their continuance is not sufficiently profitable. Thus, overproduction and the resulting difficulty in accumulating wealth paradoxically lead to shortages.

Overproduction is also evident in the serious crisis in the agricultural sector, which has given rise to peasant revolts worldwide, including in the central countries. Weighed down by the crisis (rising energy and input costs), which has been exacerbated in Europe by the historic decline in production due to the climate and the historic increase in epizootic diseases leading to mass slaughter of livestock, many farms are doomed to disappear (e.g. in France, where 84,000 full-time equivalent jobs are expected to be lost by 2050 and 200,000 farms – half of the total! – are expected to disappear). In response, governments (particularly in the EU) are pushing for increased industrialisation of animal and plant production, accompanied by the abandonment of any 'green' objectives. This intensification of agricultural productivism, which global capitalism is rushing headlong into (and which is a major cause of environmental destruction), encourages the development of zoonoses, such as the one incubating in the United States, which could potentially have consequences similar to those of the Spanish flu of 1918.

Finally, the introduction of AI into production is an attempt by capitalism to increase global GDP growth and reverse the general decline in labour productivity over the last two decades: *"Automation will affect a growing proportion of the workforce. Over the past two decades, it has mainly replaced medium-skilled occupations such as machine operators, metalworkers and clerical workers. Automation will now affect high-income occupations such as doctors, lawyers, engineers and university professors. Although new jobs will be created, there will be a mismatch between the jobs lost and the newly created jobs. This mismatch could prolong the period of unemployment for many workers..."*¹⁴ *"Automation could eliminate 9% of existing jobs and radically change about a third of them over the next 15 to 20 years."*¹⁵ Forty per cent of hours worked could disappear in central countries. This *"fourth industrial revolution"*, yet another attempt to temporarily escape the contradictions of overproduction, reduces the size of the solvent market, while the rise in the organic

12. "This crisis is going to be the most serious in the whole period of decadence", *ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Le monde en 2040 selon la CIA*, a book by Laurent Barucq, p. 102

15. *Ibid.*

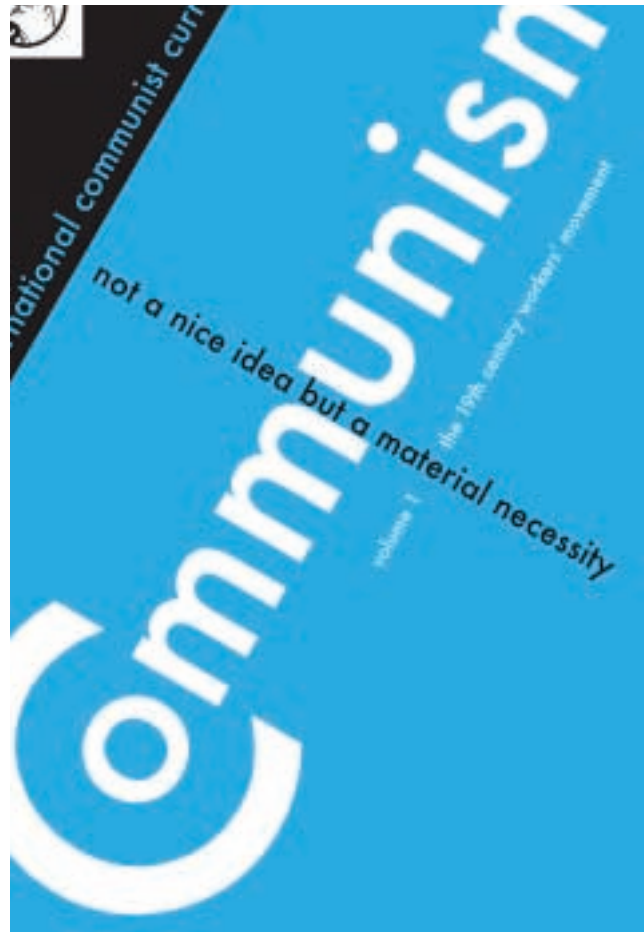
composition of capital, which corresponds to its generalisation, calls for even greater accumulation. Ultimately, AI can only further reinforce the impasse.

Furthermore, the rise of AI, which consumes large amounts of water to cool infrastructure sometimes located in arid areas (!) and electricity (consumption will increase tenfold in the United States by 2026), has enormous environmental repercussions. It stimulates the consumption of fossil fuels, as in the case of the United States, which plans to increase drilling by 18%, or China, where it depends on coal. AI is also expected to cause shortages in certain regions of the United States!

The capitalist economy is therefore increasingly marked by uncertainty, destabilisation and chaos, the fragility and weakening of the system, and the endless growth of its crisis. The disappearance of international coordination to deal with the crisis and the retreat into national isolation also express capitalism's inability to produce new engines capable of reviving the global economy, whereas the United States in the 1980s and China after 2008 were still able to play this role. Due to the general weakening of the capitalist system, all states are sinking into crisis: the absence of sufficient extra-capitalist markets is now changing the conditions under which the main capitalist states must achieve expanded accumulation: increasingly, this can only be achieved, as a condition of their own survival, at the direct expense of rivals of the same rank by weakening their economies.

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Imperialist war, austerity, the threat of civil war

In a speech at the United Nations in September 2025 United States President Donald Trump claimed that, in the first 7 months of his second term as president, he already had ended 7 “unendable” wars: those of Cambodia and Thailand, Kosovo and Serbia, Congo and Rwanda, Pakistan and India, Israel and Iran, Egypt and Ethiopia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

At most these conflicts have seen ceasefires (not all engineered by Trump) but there has been no peaceful resolution of them and they are ready to reignite at any moment. Moreover, the major wars of Trump's tenure that he inherited from President Biden between Russia and Ukraine and Israel and Gaza have in the main worsened despite Trump's intention to end them from day one of his presidency. The current ceasefire in Gaza (10.10.25), allowing the survivors of the massacre to return to the rubble of their homes, will bring at best a pause in the horror of interminable war in the Middle East.

The BBC amongst other media outlets have delighted at poking fun at the obvious untruth of Trump's claim. But there was an intended message behind his bluff: that the United Nations (instigated by the United States in 1945) has been unable to provide the peace that it was set up to maintain (which is true), and now only he and his unilateral policy of America First, also known as “Make America Great Again”, is capable of engineering world peace.

The reality behind this episode only shows that around the world, imperialist conflicts, great and small, are multiplying all the time today, and that not only the transnational institutions of liberal democracy, like the UN, have been incapable of ending them, but neither has the bluff of populist nationalism. A capitalist peace in any form is impossible today and only a class with internationalist interests, the working class, is capable of achieving peace through the overthrow of national states on a world scale.

This uncompromising perspective, the only one that conforms to the long-term reality of the situation, has been the defining difference between the Communist Left and all other supposed revolutionary political tendencies like the Trotskyists or Anarchists that always claim, in the midst of the carnage, support for the “lesser evil” imperialisms whether for Palestine today, North Vietnam in the 1960s or democratic allied imperialism in the Second World War.

US geopolitical hegemony since 1945: into the woodchipper

If we want to make an accurate assessment of Trump's first 7 months of office, we have to go beyond the affirmation that his administration has continued to pursue the wars, austerity and repression of all previous capitalist governments. We have to explain what has been radically different about his presidency in regard to previous ones, even in comparison with his first term of office (2016-2020), in order to understand the particularly serious dangers the US situation holds for the working class.

No other Communist Left group, has been capable of making this analysis, of warning of the threats and traps in store, since they only see “more of the same” in the first months of Trump's presidency.¹

In previous articles on Trump's coming to power at the beginning of this year we pointed out that his policy of America First would not have the desired effect of restoring the United States to greatness on the world stage.²

On the contrary Trump's first months have accelerated, at full speed, the weakening of US geopolitical hegemony – known as the *Pax Americana* – in favour of a growing free-for-all by its former allies and enemies alike.

US imperialism dominated the world from 1945-89 because it was the gendarme of the most powerful imperialist bloc. But its victory after the collapse of the weaker, rival Eastern bloc, turned out to be a Pyrrhic one. The removal of the threat of Russian imperialism loosened the chains that previously held the nations of the Western bloc together in subservience to the US. The period 1989-2025 has consequently seen the fruitless attempt of the US to maintain its previous hegemony despite the massively destructive and bloody display of its military superiority.

1. “Chaos and conflict in US politics: For *Le Prolétaire* there's nothing new!”, *World Revolution* n° 404

2. “Trump 2.0: New steps into capitalist chaos”, *International Review* n° 173.

The radical contribution of Trump has been to turn a vice into a virtue and instead of trying to repair American domination as previous US presidencies have done, he has attempted to break it up altogether, lambasting it as a “con” perpetrated by its allies to “screw” the US. Instead of trying to abate the tendency of “every man for himself” in imperialist relations that has been weakening US power since 1989, the second Trump administration has become its principal advocate on the world stage.

Throwing all the fixtures and fittings of the *Pax Americana* onto the scrap heap has been the Trump presidency's most historic achievement. The first days of his second administration witnessed his appetite for annexing Greenland, Panama, and Canada; all allies of the US. But his most dramatic reversal of previous US policy was in the questioning of US commitment to NATO, the military alliance that has always been the centrepiece of the Western Bloc and provided the model for US alliances in other geopolitical theatres. The US was now ambivalent about its recognition of the crucial article of the NATO charter that in effect provides US support to any European member threatened by Russia. The now haphazard diplomacy of the US toward its defence of Ukraine has encouraged the Kremlin to intensify its military invasion of that country and make threatening actions to Eastern European NATO countries, Poland, Latvia, Rumania, Estonia.

Knowing that its backer of last resort has in effect deserted it, the main powers of Western Europe are now forced to try to become militarily independent of the US and radically increase arms spending, with all the implications that has for the spread of war to Europe, the further bankruptcy of their economies and the pauperisation of a restive working class.

Trump has claimed this divorce with Europe as a victory but in reality it represents, long term, a weakening of the hold of the US over one of the world's most important industrial heartlands.

The same fraying of US hegemony has developed in the Middle East, where foreign policy under Trump has become an adjunct of the regional imperialist ambitions of Israel at the expense of the US's own interests in maintaining the balance of power and its other alliances in the area. In the Far East the disregard of the US for its commitment to its former

allies – Japan, Australia and India – puts in question the policy of containment of its main imperialist rival China, which has benefited from the greater margin of manoeuvre thus permitted.

At least Trump, in his open contempt for the US's former leadership of the Western Bloc, has finally removed the illusion that the parameters of the Cold War remain the same – the polarisation of world imperialism around two major axes – and confirmed the reality that we are now fully in a multi-polar epoch, where the possibility of the formation of blocs is less and less likely, but which makes the proliferation of imperialist conflict in all areas of the world the norm.

Incredibly there are those on the Communist Left who are still living nostalgically in the Cold War and believe that the imperialist conflicts multiplying today are harbingers of World War 3. This would mean that the world's working class was already defeated. Yet it is precisely the undefeated nature of the working class today that helps to define the current period and the improbability of the formation of new imperialist blocs.

These antique groups of the Communist Left are like the Japanese soldier Hiroo Onoda who refused to accept until 1974 that World War 2 had ended 29 years earlier. In fact these groups are even more obtuse, for 36 years after the collapse of the Berlin Wall they are still looking at the world through Cold War glasses.

Goodbye to US soft power

It is not just at the diplomatic/military level that the Trump presidency has undermined US world leadership. All the “transnational”, “soft” institutions that gave a humanist, international, pluralistic veneer to the American bloc – economic, trade, financial, social, environmental, health – that the US has dominated and financially supported since 1945 (the World Trade Organisation, the G7 meetings of industrialised nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, World Health Organisation), all of them have lost the support of the new administration. The United States Agency for International Development, USAID, was, until Trump effectively abolished it in February 2025, the world's largest agency for foreign aid, previously having an average budget \$23 billion a year.

The imposition by Trump of massive trade tariffs on the rest of the world, allies and foes alike, has been the most dramatic illustration of an abrupt economic change in the US policy of globalisation and

free(ish) trade. Other countries, according to the Trumpian justification of this policy, have been cheating the US, such as the EU, when in fact the latter and its antecedents have been the vehicle for the economic integration of Western Europe under the aegis of the United States.

The Trumpian illusion is that the US can use its military and economic superiority to make the rest of the world pay for the crisis. But such a policy will inevitably backfire on the economic level as well, as the Tariff offensive is already beginning to show, destabilising the dollar as the lynchpin of the world economy.

Whether at the ideological, economic or military level the US has, under Trump, abandoned any hegemonic intentions in favour of the dubious benefits of disrupting the existing order. “American First”, and unpredictability, is not a unifying perspective and method. The reverse, in fact.

The US is no longer a bastion of stable government

Hitherto a major pillar of American world power was that it existed internally as a stable bastion of liberal democracy; a moral and political example to its allies and a rallying cry against the despotism of the Eastern Bloc and more recently to “revisionist” powers like Russia, China and Iran.

At the end of his first presidential term Trump already deliberately targeted the holy edicts and places of American liberal democracy by encouraging the armed assault of his supporters on the Washington Capitol in January 2020 to try and overturn the legal vote for Joe Biden. He made the American nation look like a “banana republic” to the rest of the world according to former president George W Bush. Trump has continued along the same track in his second term, breaking convention after convention of liberal democratic norms. He has manipulated the judiciary – supposedly independent of political interference – by forcing the sacking or indictment of his enemies within the state machine, and their potential imprisonment, notably James Comey former director of the FBI. He is trying to pressurise the Federal Reserve Board and its director Jay Powell, also supposedly independent of the short-term needs of the government in power, to lower interest rates. He's even sacked the head of statistics when she announced the “wrong” employment figures.

Recently Trump has fabricated pretexts to use the military to intervene in civil disturbances such as the protests against the deportation of immigrants in Los Angeles,

or crime as in Washington DC, Portland or Chicago thereby corrupting the independence of the armed forces from political interference and using them to discredit and usurp the authority of the Democratic Party-elected regimes in these cities. The militarisation of the operations of ICE – Immigration and Customs Enforcement – is another populist flouting of democratic procedure.

It used to be a liberal, bi-partisan norm that the heads of US government departments – health, defence, environment etc – would either be competent in their fields or respectful of the permanent experts employed in these departments. This has also been given a populist makeover. Most grotesquely the opponent of vaccinations, and believer that circumcision is likely to cause autism, Robert F Kennedy Jr, has been appointed health secretary, while Pete Hegseth, previously employed as a talk show host on Fox News, is put in charge of the defence (now “war”) department. Recently he commanded US generals around the world to come to Washington to hear a lecture on the need to be fit and shave off beards!

When the president declares that climate change is a “con” then it is obvious that the Environmental Protection Agency is not going to bound by scientific advice. The new administrator of the EPA, Lee Zeldin, said “*we are driving a dagger into the heart of the climate change religion.*”

Trump has retained only one criteria for the appointment of the leaders of state bureaucracies – loyalty to himself.

Trump's 7 months have therefore been a full scale attack on all the pillars of US power since 1945, whether military, strategic, economic, political or ideological. These bases were already being undermined by the loss of direction and perspective that developed after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc; the failure of its military attempts to preserve its hegemony; and the fallout from the Great Recession of 2008.

But for the populist Trump the cause of the decline of US imperialism was the result of one of the very factors that were responsible for its previous ascendancy: its liberal democratic ethos. By desecrating this guiding spirit Trump believes he can rejuvenate American capitalism and recover the ascendancy of another era.

However, it would be wrong to see that this reversal has been the result of Trump himself – despite his claims. Trump is only the most dramatic expression of a universal populist political trend that has been gaining ground in the period of decomposition, at the expense of liberal democracy.

Trump, populism and the decay of liberal democracy

Francis Fukuyama, a prominent US political expert, famously declared after the fall of the Berlin Wall: *"What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government."*³

Since then, he has had to change his opinion about the victory of liberal democracy and reject the corresponding illusion of the neoconservatives around president George W Bush that the US was, after 1989, going to lead a unipolar world.

The collapse of Stalinism was merely the precursor of a generalised decay of the political forms of capitalist rule in the period of the decadence – and more recently, decomposition – of the bourgeois order. The one-party state of the Russian bloc developed in particular to satisfy the imperialist military needs of the Second World War and its aftermath. But its economic weakness increasingly undermined the inflexibility of the state in the face of the long world economic crisis beginning in the 1960s, eventually leading to complete collapse.

However, the regimes of the Western Bloc also began to lose their *raison d'être* after the defeat of their main imperialist adversary after 1989. The liberal democratic states and their ideology had cohered around the imperialist perspectives of the Western Bloc. But increasingly, after the removal of its main opponent, this disciplined respect for liberal norms uniting all the bourgeois factions behind the state was removed, and the liberal democratic regimes begin to mimic the endemic corruption and every-man-for-himself mentality typical of the operation of the Stalinist regimes.

This tendency to lose political control was exacerbated by the ineluctable worsening of the economic crisis, especially the consequences of the officially-named 2008 Great Recession that had to be paid in full... by the working class. At the same time the multiplication of "forever wars" around the globe was directly involving the Western liberal democratic regimes and their budgets. The promise of peace and prosperity made by the West after 1989 was given the lie. The tattered credibility of the traditional parties of liberal democracies was revealed in the steady loss of their

percentage of the vote.

This void was filled by populist political forces, whose general character consisted of castigating only the symptoms of the failures of capitalism and of offering irrational panaceas: the replacement of long-term imperialist diplomacy and alliances with incoherent, nativist nationalism that corresponds more to the free-for-all reigning on the world stage; the blaming of elites – the huge parasitic state bureaucracies, Wall Street, and well-paid experts for the economic crisis – scapegoating immigration and other foreigners for the decline of living standards; replacing the woke ideology of liberalism with common sense traditional values.

Populism is revealed not as an opponent of capitalism, democracy and the democratic state. After all it was President Abraham Lincoln who defined government in a populist way: *"the rule of the people, by the people, for the people."* No, the populist enemy is the traditional liberal practice of the democratic state that has supposedly distorted the meaning of the rule of the people and excluded them from power.

Populism is not a new political phenomenon but an incoherent reaction from fractions of the ruling class to the inevitable contradictions and limitations of the liberal representative form of the bourgeois state.

The pretence of this state to rule in the name of the people is inevitably exposed in practice by the exploitation and repression of the mass of population in the interest of a minoritarian ruling class by the state. The mass of the population is deliberately excluded from direct participation in political power by the representative principle of the state. The popular forms of democracy that arose in the bourgeois revolutions (English, American, French) had to be crushed in order to stabilise the new bourgeois states. The liberal representative democracies of the 19th century – with the exception of the US – excluded the majority of the population from the vote. Universal suffrage only becomes generalised after the First World War, when the workers parties had betrayed and been integrated into the bourgeois state and legislative functions have largely passed into the hands of the Leviathan executive, so the workers vote therefore has minimal effect on the direction of capitalist policy. Hence the regular call of parts of the bourgeoisie to restore the impossibility of "power to the people".

What's new today is that right wing political populism has become more than an oppositional pressure valve for the liberal establishment and, because of the

conditions described above in the period of decomposition, has actually taken political power in what were previously the most politically stable of the capitalist regimes of the world.

The coming to power of populism is a cure that is worse than the disease for the interests of the whole bourgeoisie. Firstly of course populism has no real alternative solutions to war or crisis; it is characterised essentially only by amateurish methods, vandalising policies and the fermenting of chaos and scandals that exacerbates the real problems instead of solving them. Populist leaders, once ensconced in power, prove themselves just as corrupt and depraved as the elitist figures they are replacing. Typically, the repugnant Jeffrey Epstein scandal has implicated Trump as well as Clinton for example. Trump himself has become a multi-billionaire. Instead of creating wealth and jobs for the working class his tariff policy has proved to be a regressive tax on the poorest. As has the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" which will deprive more millions of workers from access to healthcare. Protectionism will hardly expand US manufacturing as it is claimed to do.⁴

Populism in power in effect becomes "populism for plutocrats" as the astute organ of the bourgeoisie, the *Financial Times*, says.

Trump and the working class

Trump was elected partly because of dissatisfaction with falling living standards under Biden. But poverty levels are continuing to rise under Trump, inflation continues to cut into wages, unemployment will rise partly because of savage cuts in federal employment and because of the mirage of the expanding bubble of Artificial Intelligence. The latter is attracting vast investment in the United States precisely because it has the capacity to vastly eliminate more jobs. But the further misery this will inflict on the working class will only accentuate the crisis of overproduction and the financial crashes that are its logical consequence.

We are seeing then, exemplified in the US, not only the crumbling of the liberal democratic political edifice but also the unmasking of its populist alter ego, in the face of a working class which hasn't submitted passively to the further austerity that will continue to be demanded by the irresolvable crisis of capitalism and all factions of the bourgeoisie.

It might appear then that the working class can, in the face of the present politi-

3. Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?", *The National Interest*, n° 16 (Summer 1989).

4. "Trump's tariffs won't deliver many jobs" *Financial Times*.

cal turmoil of the bourgeoisie, put forward its own class demands and ultimately the perspective of its own political power.

But the bourgeoisie is able to use its own political putrefaction and internal conflicts against its principal class enemy to divide the working class, suppress its class identity and steer it into false battles and objectives. The one advantage for the bourgeoisie in the ascension of political populism is that it creates a false debate, a diversionary conflict, that steers the working class away from understanding the real causes of its pauperisation and its own class solution. As the *Financial Times* said of the rise of populism in Britain in 2016: “*let them eat Brexit*”.⁵

In fact, this splitting of the working class is what is happening in the US today: the working class is being asked to actively take sides either for the outrages of populism or for liberal democracy, to choose between different exploiters and executioners. The leftists are particularly active in trying to mobilise workers behind the “lesser evil” of the Left of the Democratic Party in the US.

Unfortunately, parts of the Communist Left, deliberately blind to the reality of the situation, are giving ground opportunistically to the “democratic movements” that are part of the false oppositions proposed by the bourgeoisie, in the false hope of turning them into genuine proletarian struggles.

The working class, in order to defend its interests, will have to fight all factions of the ruling class and not get caught up in a struggle which is not its own. The revolutionary movement has since Marx rejected the mystification of democracy and equality in capitalism – whether of the liberal or populist kind – because the bourgeois order has always been riven by a class exploitation that is cemented by state oppression. Marx’s synonym for “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity” was “Infantry, Cavalry and Artillery”.

Against the dictatorship of capital whatever its guise – liberal democratic, fascist, populist or, Stalinist – the working class will eventually have to oppose its own class dictatorship embodied in the workers councils that were first deployed in the 1905 and 1917 Russian revolutions.

To conclude: the 7 months of President Trump’s second term have been perfectly in keeping with US capitalism’s need for more wars, exploitation and immiseration of the working class and repression.

5. This is a play on the words ascribed to Marie Antoinette during the French Revolution. When she was told that the masses had no bread she replied: “*Let them eat cake*”

Trump’s special contribution has been to irreparably trash the facade of US liberal democracy in every domain and therefore further weaken US imperialist leadership on the world arena and provide a massive stimulus to capitalist chaos both internally and externally.

The present and future danger for the working class is that it will be dragged into the more and more violent conflict between populist and liberal wings of the bourgeoisie.

It must autonomously remain on its own class terrain where it continues to struggle for its own class interests that will inevitably bring it up against the ruling class as a whole, and not one or other of its competing factions.

Como 11.10.2025

Political chaos, populist swamps, contested election results, challenges to international law...

How can we explain the chaos of bourgeois politics?

We are currently witnessing an acceleration of history. Not a day goes by without a new, often unprecedented and largely unpredictable event occurring on the international stage. Let us consider a few recent examples: who could have predicted Trump's re-election after his attempted coup in January 2021? Who could even have imagined that such an attempted coup could take place in the United States? What about the divorce between the United States and Europe, with tariffs and customs duties being used as weapons of blackmail, after decades of close cooperation between these countries? What about the policy of annexation, practised not only by Putin in Ukraine, but also claimed by Netanyahu towards the Palestinian territories and by Trump towards Canada, Greenland and the Panama Canal? And then there are the scenarios of endless and barbaric wars (Ukraine, Gaza, Yemen, Sudan...) that have multiplied, even though Bush Sr. announced in 1989, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the advent of a "new era of peace" and a "new world order"?

We can all agree on the shock caused by the scale and unpredictability of many events that have dominated the news in recent times. We can also all agree about the need to denounce the period of barbarism into which we are increasingly entering. But if we do not want to be mere passive subjects of a rotten system that increasingly calls our future into question, we must make an effort to understand its evolution, its internal dynamics and the origin of these events. To this end, this article aims to show how the phenomena we witness on a daily basis are the expression and result of a process of disintegration of the political apparatus of the bourgeoisie, which operates at the international level and began at the end of the 20th century.

A major expression of this was the collapse of the former "Soviet" bloc, followed by the gradual disintegration of the Western bloc.

The bourgeoisie, a class that has accumulated long experience in governing society

The proletariat, the revolutionary class of our time, if it is to develop a concrete project for the future society in order to advance its historic struggle for communism, has only two tools at its disposal: its unity and its consciousness. On the other hand, the bourgeoisie, the class that currently holds power, did not need to develop a great consciousness and grand projects to seize political power, because the very development of the capitalist economy gave it the material basis to impose itself politically. As the ruling class in society and the exploiting class, the bourgeoisie is incapable

of imagining a future beyond capitalist society, so its conception of the world is fundamentally static and conservative. This has consequences for bourgeois ideology and its inability to understand the course of history, because it does not envisage the present as something ephemeral, in constant evolution. It is therefore incapable of making long-term plans and seeing beyond its own mode of production. The difference between the revolutionary class consciousness of the proletariat and the "false consciousness" of the bourgeoisie is therefore not just a matter of degree; it is a difference in nature.

But this does not mean that the bourgeoisie is incapable of grasping reality and drawing on its past experience to develop tools to ensure its domination. Indeed, unlike the proletariat, which, despite being a historical class, does not continuously assert its political presence in society and is subject to all the political fluctuations of different events, with moments of open struggle and others of retreat, the bourgeoisie has the advantage of being the ruling class that holds power and can therefore dispose of all the means necessary to survive as long as possible.

Some parts of it, such as the English bourgeoisie, have accumulated several centuries of experience in the struggle against the previous feudal power, then against other countries, as well as against the proletariat itself. This experience has been used intelligently by the various bourgeoisies in the management of their political power, particularly since the dawn of the phase of decadence at the beginning of the 20th century, when the historical crisis of capitalism began to call into question

the survival of the system. It is important for the proletariat to understand that the policy of the bourgeoisie in this period of decadence, regardless of the decisions of this or that government, is always to defend the interests of the ruling class as a whole.

The political game of alternating right-wing and left-wing governments Democratic control of society

Since capitalist society is based on the exploitation of one class by another, of the working class by the bourgeoisie, the latter needs, in order to perpetuate its control over society for as long as possible, to hide this truth and present things not as they are, but in a distorted way, basing its ideology on the myth of "equality between citizens", making people believe, for example, that we are all equal, that everyone shapes their own destiny and that if someone has problems, it is because they created them themselves by not making the right choices.

The most effective tool of the bourgeoisie for governing a country and ensuring its class domination is therefore the democratic mystification, a system that gives people the illusion that they play a political role as individuals and that they matter in society, that they can even aspire to leadership positions. If today the bourgeoisie maintains, at great expense, a whole political apparatus for the surveillance and mystification of the proletariat (parliament, parties, trade unions, various associations, etc.) and establishes absolute control over all the media (press, radio, television), it is because propaganda is an essential weapon of the bourgeoisie to ensure its domination. Democratic consultations such as elections, referendums, etc., are the practical tools used by the bourgeoisie to obtain from the so-called "sovereign" people, mystifyingly considered as masters of their own destiny, the mandate to decide the fate of society.

Amadeo Bordiga gives us a brilliant description of this mechanism: "*Our criticism of such a method must be much more severe when it is applied to society as a whole as it is today, or to given nations, than when it is introduced into much*

smaller organisations, such as trade unions and parties. In the first case, it must be rejected without hesitation as unfounded, because it does not take into account the situation of individuals in the economy and presupposes the intrinsic perfection of the system without taking into consideration the historical evolution of the community to which it applies. [...] This is what political democracy officially claims to be, when in reality it is the form that suits the power of the capitalist class, the dictatorship of this particular class, with the aim of preserving its privileges.

"It is therefore not necessary to spend much time refuting the error of attributing the same degree of independence and maturity to the 'vote' of each voter; whether they are a worker exhausted by excessive physical labour or a debauched rich man, a shrewd captain of industry or an unfortunate proletarian ignorant of the causes of his misery and the means of remedying it. From time to time, after long intervals, the opinions of these and others are sought, and it is claimed that the fulfilment of this 'sovereign' duty is sufficient to ensure the calm and obedience of those who feel victimised and mistreated by the policies and administration of the state."¹

The classic left/right bipartisanship and the game of alternation

The bourgeoisie exercised this power of control for a long time, as long as it was able to do so, for example by directing the popular vote in one direction or another according to its wishes, by financing the various channels of political propaganda. This game was played in a particularly sophisticated manner in the last century in countries such as France, Italy, Germany, the United States and others, where there were historically right-wing and left-wing factions, through an alternation of right-wing and left-wing governments.

To fully understand this point, we can refer to what we wrote in a previous article in 1982: *"At the level of organizing to survive, to defend itself -- here, the bourgeoisie has shown an immense capacity to develop techniques for economic and social control way beyond the dreams of the rulers of the nineteenth century. In this sense, the bourgeoisie has become 'intelligent' confronted with the historic crisis of its socio-economic system..."*

"In the context of state capitalism, the differences between the bourgeois parties are nothing compared to what they have in common. All start from an over-riding

premise that the interests of the national capital as a whole are paramount. This premise enables different factions to work together in a very close way -- especially behind the closed doors of parliamentary committees and in the higher echelons of the state apparatus...

"In confronting the proletariat the state can employ many branches of its apparatus in a coherent division of labor; even in a single strike the workers may have to face an array of trade unions, press and television propaganda campaigns of different hues, campaigns by several political parties, the police, the 'welfare' services and, at times, the army. But to see a concerted use made of all of these parts of the state does not imply that they each see the total framework in which they are each carrying out their function."²

As the proletariat is the greatest enemy of the bourgeoisie, the latter resorts to cunning, particularly in phases of heightened class struggle, to ideologically trap the exploited class. A typical and particularly interesting example is that of Italy after the Second World War. Italy at that time had the Italian Communist Party (PCI),³ a Stalinist party linked to the Soviet Union, but which still enjoyed strong support among workers. At the same time, Italy, in accordance with the imperialist blocs established following the 1945 Yalta Conference agreements, found itself within the sphere of influence of the United States. As a result, the Italian bourgeoisie, under strong pressure from the American bourgeoisie, used all its resources for more than 40 years, mainly through the Christian Democracy (DC), to maintain its control over the country and ensure alignment with American foreign policy, which aimed to keep pro-Soviet parties such as the PCI out of government.

However, May 1968 in France and the Hot Autumn of 1969 in Italy made the social climate explosive and forced the bourgeoisie to take measures to contain the social storm. Thus, the left-wing parties and trade unions became more radical, with slogans that tended to rally, but only in words, the demands coming from the grassroots. At the same time, a whole campaign was launched, orchestrated by the left-wing parties and made credible by the reactions of the centre and right-wing parties, according to which it would be possible, through grassroots efforts, to catch up with and overtake the Christian Democrats in

the elections and finally impose a left-wing government that included the PCI. It was in the 1960s, and especially in the 1970s, that this race took place, which served in part to deceive the proletariat, in Italy but not only there, into believing that it was enough to achieve an electoral majority for electoral promises to be fulfilled.

In fact, the PCI never came to power⁴ due to an explicit American veto, but with the varied political composition of Italy at the time, it was possible, depending on the circumstances, to form centre-left governments with the presence of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI), and even governments supported by the PCI. This is how the period of the left "in power" began in many countries, a powerful mystification aimed at channelling the aspirations of the masses of the time into the dead end of bourgeois parliamentarism.

But keeping the left in power, when objective conditions do not allow this left (nor, for that matter, any other faction of the bourgeoisie) to satisfy the needs of the proletariat, is not the best policy to follow, or at least it cannot be applied for too long without discrediting this important faction of the bourgeoisie. That is why, in the 1970s and 1980s, we saw a succession of right-wing and left-wing governments in various countries around the world, depending on the intensity of the workers' struggles underway. The policy of keeping the left in opposition proved particularly effective, as it allowed the various bourgeois left-wing parties and the trade unions to radicalise themselves and denounce government measures without fear of having to implement what they were demanding in demonstrations and in parliament.

The fall of the Berlin Wall - Why this historic event happened and what changed

The process that led to the end of the imperialist blocs and the beginning of an era of chaos was the product of an impasse in

4. In reality, at the end of the war and immediately after the proclamation of the Republic, the PCI had been in power with the DC and other left-wing parties (PSIUP and PRI) from July 1946 to 1 June 1947. The reason for this was that in 1942-1943 there had been major strikes in the north of the country and several proletarian political groups had been formed, including the Internationalist Communist Party, which had quickly gained hundreds of members. The formation of this "national unity" government, which brought together the various forces that had fought in the Resistance, served to convince a proletariat that had been showing signs of awareness that it now had valid representatives even within the government and that it therefore no longer needed to fight. It is no coincidence that, once it was certain that the proletarian uprising had subsided, the bourgeoisie withdrew its support for the PCI and other left-wing parties and formed only centre or right-wing governments until the turbulent years of 1968-1969.

1. Amadeo Bordiga, "The Democratic Principle", 1922, MIA (Marxists Internet Archive).

2. "Notes on the Consciousness of the Decadent Bourgeoisie", *International Review* n° 31, 4th quarter 1982.

3. The Italian Communist Party had lost all its proletarian character as a result of the process of "Bolshevization" (in fact, Stalinization) between the late 1920s and early 1930s.

the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This impasse was due, on the one hand, to the inability of the working class to sufficiently politicise its struggles throughout the 1980s by giving them a revolutionary dynamic; on the other hand, the bourgeoisie itself, faced with the worsening economic crisis, failed to steer society towards a new imperialist war, as had been the case before the Second World War. In the 1930s, thanks to the ideological weapon of anti-fascism, the bourgeoisie had succeeded in enlisting the proletariat behind its warmongering objectives. But at the end of the 1980s, the proletariat was not politically defeated.

It was the deepening of this impasse that exhausted the leader of the weakest imperialist bloc, the “Soviet” Union, in the militarist effort of maintaining the Cold War, thus causing the bloc to implode.⁵ Crushed under the weight of the crisis of the system, to which it was unable to respond with economic and political measures commensurate with the situation, the “Soviet” imperialist bloc collapsed into a thousand pieces. The rival American bloc thus found itself without a common enemy to watch and defend against. This led slowly but surely to a growing tendency among the various Western powers to detach themselves from American protection and embark on an independent path, and even to increasing challenges to the bloc’s “leader”.

Naturally, the United States attempted to counter this drift, which called into question its leadership and role as a superpower, for example by trying to rally the European powers behind it in a showdown with Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, triggering the first Gulf War of 1990-1991.⁶ Under duress, and albeit reluctantly, no fewer than 34 different countries, including the main European powers, the countries of South America, the Middle East, etc., submitted to America’s will by participating in a war provoked by the United States itself.

But when, with the second Gulf War in March 2003, the United States once again sought to demonstrate that it held the keys to controlling the global situation, inventing the story that Saddam Hussein possessed “weapons of mass destruction”, far fewer countries joined the coalition and, significantly, countries with the weight of France and Germany this time around

firmly opposed it from the outset and did not participate.

At the same time, we must remember the wars in the Balkans, which affected the former Yugoslavia, a country bled dry after a bloody separation into seven new nations, and where the diverging interests of the former allies of the Western bloc became even more apparent. In the early 1990s, the government of Chancellor Helmut Kohl, which was pushing for and supporting the independence of Croatia and Slovenia in order to give Germany access to the Mediterranean, directly opposed not only American power but also the interests of France and the United Kingdom. This led to a series of wars in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and finally Kosovo, which continued until the end of the century, passing through a whole series of shifting alliances which demonstrated the increasingly cynical and short-term nature of imperialist relations in this period.

The crisis of social democracy, the collapse of the Communist Parties and the crisis of leftism

The new international scenario created by the break-up of the blocs, which, as already mentioned, marks the beginning of what we call the phase of decomposition, the final phase of the decadence of capitalism, could not fail to have consequences for domestic politics and for the role and relative importance of the various parties.

On the one hand, the disappearance of the blocs meant that it was no longer necessary to maintain the same government alliances as in the past. This sometimes led to the need to dismantle, by any means possible, the old political alliance that had guided the formation of the various governments. Once again, Italy is an excellent example: after having been controlled for a long time, on behalf of the Americans, by a conglomerate of forces including political parties (the DC at the centre), the Sicilian Mafia, Freemasonry (P2) and the secret services, the attempt by the section of the Italian bourgeoisie that aspired to play a more autonomous role and free itself from this control after the fall of the Berlin Wall met with enormous resistance from this alliance, leading to a series of assassinations of politicians and magistrates, bombings, etc.⁷

On the other hand, the significant decline in the militancy and, above all, the consciousness of the working class caused by the fall of the Soviet Union, which until

then had been falsely presented by the media as the epitome of socialism, led to a crisis in the left-wing parties, which were no longer indispensable, or at least didn’t merit the prominence they had acquired, to contain a working-class pressure that had been greatly reduced. This led to profound political change in various countries and the end of the right/left alternation.

The weight of decomposition on the political apparatus of the bourgeoisie

If we consider the essential characteristics of decomposition as it manifests itself today, we see that they all have one thing in common, namely the lack of perspective for society, which is particularly evident in the case of the bourgeoisie on the political and ideological level. This consequently determines the inability of the various political formations to propose long-term, coherent and realistic projects.

This is how we characterised the situation in our “Theses on Decomposition”: *“Amongst the major characteristics of capitalist society’s decomposition, we should emphasise the bourgeoisie’s growing difficulty in controlling the evolution of the political situation. Obviously, this is a result of the ruling class’ increasing loss of control over its economic apparatus, the infrastructure of society. The historic dead-end in which the capitalist mode of production finds itself trapped, the successive failures of the bourgeoisie’s different policies, the permanent flight into debt as a condition for the survival of the world economy, cannot but effect the political apparatus which is itself incapable of imposing on society, and especially on the working class, the “discipline” and acquiescence necessary to mobilise all its strength for a new world war, which is the only historic “response” that the bourgeoisie has to give. The absence of any perspective (other than day-to-day stop-gap measures to prop up the economy) around which it could mobilise as a class, and at the same time the fact that the proletariat does not yet threaten its own survival, creates within the ruling class, and especially within its political apparatus, a growing tendency towards indiscipline and an attitude of “every man for himself”. This phenomenon in particular allows us to explain the collapse of Stalinism and the entire Eastern imperialist bloc. Overall, this collapse is a consequence of the capitalist world economic crisis; nor should we forget to take account in our analyses of the specificities of the Stalinist regimes as a result of their origins (see our ‘Theses on the economic and political crisis in the USSR and the Eastern bloc countries’ in*

5. For an analysis of these events, see our “Theses on the Economic and Political Crisis in the Eastern Countries”, *International Review* n° 60, 1st quarter 1990. For more on the concept of the phase of decomposition, see also the “Theses on Decomposition”, *International Review* n° 107, 4th quarter 2001.

6. “Crisis in the Persian Gulf: Capitalism Means War!” *International Review* n° 63, 4th quarter 1990.

7. For an analysis of this interesting point, see “Mafia Attacks: Settling Accounts Between Capitalists,” *Revolution Internationale* n° 215, September 1992 (in French).

International Review n°60) [...]

“This general tendency for the bourgeoisie to lose control of its own policies was one of the primary factors in the Eastern bloc’s collapse; this collapse can only accentuate the tendency:

- *because of the resulting aggravation of the economic crisis;*
- *because of the disintegration of the Western bloc which is implied by the disappearance of its rival;*
- *because the temporary disappearance of the perspective of world war will exacerbate the rivalries between different bourgeois factions (between national factions especially, but also between cliques within national states).”*⁸

The decline of the traditional bourgeois parties created a certain political vacuum at the international level, both on the right and on the left. Moreover, a context in which there were no longer any directives from above began to favour the entry onto the political scene of adventurers and financial magnates with no political experience, but eager to settle matters in their own way. This marked the beginning of a shift in the national political landscape of various countries, which we will attempt to describe below.

Instability and increasing fragmentation of the political apparatus

This acceleration of the crisis in the system at all levels manifests itself in different ways. The fundamental problem is the bourgeoisie’s loss of control over the country’s political dynamics. This is reflected both in its inability to steer the population’s electoral choices towards the most appropriate government team for the situation, as it did in the past, and in its difficulty in formulating valid strategies to contain (let alone overcome) the crisis in the system. In short, the bourgeoisie increasingly lacks the “thinking head” that in the past had enabled it to mitigate the difficulties in its path.

The first effect of this is a loss of cohesion within the bourgeoisie, which, without a common overall plan, is unable to maintain the unity of its various components. This leads to a tendency towards “every man for himself”, with increasing difficulty in creating stable alliances. This is evident at the level of individual countries, where it is increasingly difficult to form stable governments due to increasingly unpredictable election results.

In France, after the success of Marine Le Pen’s populist coalition in the European elections, Macron surprised everyone by announcing the dissolution of the National Assembly and calling new legislative elections. However, the result was an unmanageable Parliament, divided into three roughly equal blocs: the left (in a very fragile manner, momentarily united by electoral opportunism), the Macronist centre and the far right. After months of institutional deadlock, a centre-right government was formed, only to be torpedoed by a parliamentary vote of no confidence after only three months. Subsequently, Bayrou’s centrist government was formed, a minority government and therefore completely precarious. At the time of writing, Bayrou has been overthrown, and Macron’s very presidency is being questioned by a large part of the electorate.

In Britain, too, bourgeois politics is marked by great instability, with five new governments in seven years. And the prospects for the current Starmer government have dimmed since the Labour Party’s victory in last year’s elections with 34% of the vote, as its support has fallen to 23%, while Reform UK, the populist nationalist party led by Nigel Farage, is the most popular, according to the latest polls, with 29%.

In Germany, following the fall of Olaf Scholz’s government, formed by the SPD, the Greens and the Liberals and described by the Infratest dimap institute⁹ as “*the most unpopular in German history*”,¹⁰ Friedrich Merz’s new government, supported by a coalition between the CDU and the SPD, is already losing ground according to the latest polls, while the populist, nationalist AfD party is gaining ground and is now only 3 points behind the CDU.

Pedro Sánchez’s Spanish government, based on an alliance between the PS and several Catalan and Basque regional parties, was formed and is being maintained thanks to historic concessions, such as the amnesty law for the leaders of the independence movement involved in organising the illegal referendum on Catalan independence held in 2017. This government is therefore supported by political blackmail from one party over another.

We have cited examples from the most powerful countries in Europe (but similar situations also exist in Austria, the Netherlands and Poland, among others) because, compared to the governments that existed in these same countries in the not-so-distant past, the current administrations pale by comparison. For example, Willy Brandt

in Germany, promoter of Ostpolitik and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1971, was Chancellor from 1969 to 1974; Angela Merkel, considered one of the most powerful women in the world, held this position from 2005 to 2021 (a full 15 years!) and Margaret Thatcher, nicknamed the Iron Lady, who left her mark on a long period of political influence, was British Prime Minister from May 1979 to November 1990, a total of 11 years! This comparison makes us realise how fragile, volatile and precarious the current situation is.

But the same fragmentation is evident at the international level, where Brexit,¹¹ decided by the 2016 consultative referendum, and then Trump’s “tariff” operation¹² this year, to name just a few major examples, have marked, one after the other, important moments of rupture in previous international collaborations between states.

The rise and fall of the environmentalists, a product of decay

In a context where communism was considered a failure, when the working class no longer demonstrated in the streets as before, but where economic pressure remained and environmental disasters were multiplying, environmental movements of all kinds began to emerge around the world. The first appeared in the 1970s and 1980s and spread and developed in various countries, advocating not only respect for nature but also the rejection of militarism and war.

Unfortunately, viewing environmental problems in isolation and not as a manifestation of how capitalism destroys nature, especially in its decadent phase, led individuals protesting against these problems to believe that things could be resolved within the existing system and to join new bourgeois offshoots, each with its own leader seeking a political space in which to express themselves.

However, these movements remained very much in the minority, even when they sought to compete in elections, and proved to be short-lived. This can be explained by the fact that these movements often arose and fought for specific environmental causes: opposition to the construction of a dam or nuclear power plant, pollution caused by large industries, etc. Consequently, once attention shifted away from the specific issue, the weight of opinion surrounding it also ceased its support.

8. Excerpts from points 9 and 10 of “Theses on Decomposition”, already cited.

9. “Wissen, was Deutschland denkt” (“Knowing what Germany thinks”).

10. “Scholz trails conservative CDU/CSU in election polls”, In Focus website.

11. “Brexit, Trump: setbacks for the ruling class, nothing good for the proletariat”, *International Review* n° 157, Summer 2016.

12. “Capitalism has no solution to the global economic crisis!”, *World Revolution* n° 403, Spring, 2025.

However, in some countries, such as Germany and Belgium, “green” political parties have managed to “break through” and even enter government. Founded under the impetus of certain personalities, including Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a leader of the 1968 student movement in France, the German Greens have grown steadily since the early 1980s, winning 27 seats (5.6%) in the Bundestag in 1983 and victory in the regional elections in Hesse in 1985, where Joschka Fischer, another leader of the movement, was appointed Minister of the Environment. The discrediting of the other traditional parties naturally favoured the growth of “newcomers” such as the Greens in Germany. But the problem is that, as we have tried to develop above, governing a country is not an easy task. It is true that the bourgeoisie has accumulated a wealth of experience, but this cannot be easily and immediately transferred to a newly formed party. On the other hand, the German Greens immediately proved to be just like any other bourgeois politicians. After presenting a superficial election programme in 1980 that even talked about “dismantling” the German army and initiating the “dissolution” of military alliances such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact, in 1999, for the first time, they had renounced their pacifism, when Joschka Fischer defended the deployment of NATO aircraft to bomb Serbia. The same situation was repeated when the 2021 election manifesto opposed sending weapons to war zones and called for a “new impetus for disarmament”, priorities that were subsequently included in the coalition agreement on which the Scholz government was formed. They then made a U-turn in keeping with their bourgeois nature, thanks to the work of Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Robert Habeck and Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, the two most prominent members of the Green Party in Olaf Scholz’s cabinet. Both succeeded in tugging at the Chancellor’s sleeve to urge him to send heavy weapons to Ukraine. Habeck’s response in Kiel to protesters who called him a “warmonger” was significant: *“In this situation, where people are defending their lives, their democracy and their freedom, Germany and the Greens must be prepared to face reality.”*¹³

The decay of the bourgeois political apparatus. The rise of the far right and the strengthening of populism

A striking phenomenon that has occurred in recent decades is the rapid develop-

ment of populist movements and, in their wake, far-right parties. A quick look at current government formations around the world shows, for example, that in Europe, seven countries, including Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and Finland, have already established a government majority with a significant populist component, while in other cases, such as France, Germany and the United Kingdom, the populist movement has gained considerable political representation or achieved resounding success (Brexit). The phenomenon is continuing to grow, to the point where some of its representatives now hold important ministerial positions, in Italy and the Netherlands for example. In South America, with Bolsonaro in Brazil and Milei in Argentina, and in Asia, with Modi in India, populists have been elected as heads of state. Last but not least, in the United States, the most powerful country in the world, a populist adventurer at the head of the MAGA (Make America Great Again) movement has won a second term as head of the federal state.

The tendency towards the political “vandalism” of these movements, which manifests itself in the rejection of “elites”, the rejection of foreigners, the search for scapegoats, the retreat into the “indigenous community”, conspiracy theories, the belief in a strong and providential leader, etc., is first and foremost the product of the ideological putrefaction conveyed by the lack of perspective in capitalist society,¹⁴ which affects the capitalist class first and foremost.

But the breakthrough and development of populism in the political life of the bourgeoisie has been determined above all by one of the major manifestations of the decomposition of capitalist society: the increasing difficulty of the bourgeoisie to control the evolution of the situation on the political level, through its most “experienced” parties, which have lost not only their credibility but also their ability to manage and control the situation on the political level: *“The return of Trump is a classic expression of the political failure of those factions of the ruling class who have a more lucid understanding of the needs of the national capital; it is thus a clear expression of a more general loss of political control by the US bourgeoisie, but this is a world-wide tendency and it is particularly significant that the populist wave is having an impact in other central countries of capitalism: thus we have seen the rise of the AfD in Germany, of Le Pen’s RN in France, and Reform in the UK. Populism is the expression of a faction of the bourgeoisie but its incoherent and contradictory policies express a growing*

nihilism and irrationality which does not serve the overall interests of the national capital. The case of Britain, which has been ruled by one of the most intelligent and experienced bourgeoisies, shooting itself in the foot through Brexit is a clear example. Trump’s domestic and foreign policies will be no less damaging for US capitalism: at the level of foreign policy, by fuelling conflicts with its former allies while courting its traditional enemies, but also domestically, through the impact of its self-destructive economic ‘programme’. Above all, the campaign of revenge against the ‘deep state’ and ‘liberal elites’, the targeting of minority groups and the ‘war on woke’ will stir up confrontations between factions of the ruling class which could take on an extremely violent character in a country where an enormous proportion of population own weapons; the assault on the Capitol on January 6, 2021, would pale into insignificance in comparison. And we can already see, in embryo, the beginnings of a reaction by parts of the bourgeoisie who have most to lose from Trump’s policies (for example, the state of California, Harvard University, etc). Such conflicts carry the threat of dragging in the wider population and represent an extreme danger to the working class, its efforts to defend its class interests and forge its unity against all the divisions inflicted on it by the disintegration of bourgeois society. The recent ‘Hands Off’ demonstrations organised by the left wing of the Democratic Party are a clear example of this danger, since they succeeded in channelling certain working class sectors and demands into an overall defence of democracy against the dictatorship of Trump and consorts. Again, while these internal conflicts may be particularly sharp in the USA, they are the product of a much wider process. Decadent capitalism has long relied on the state apparatus to prevent such antagonisms from tearing society apart, and in the phase of decomposition the capitalist state is equally forced to resort to the most dictatorial measures to maintain its rule. And yet at the same time, when the state machine itself is riven by violent internal conflicts, there is a powerful thrust towards a situation where ‘the centre cannot hold, mere anarchy is loosed upon the world’ as the poet WB Yeats put it. The ‘failed states’ we are seeing most vividly in the Middle East, Africa or the Caribbean present an image of what is already brewing in the most developed centres of the system. In Haiti, for example, the official state machine is increasingly powerless in the face of competing criminal gangs, and in parts of Africa inter-gang competition has risen to the height of ‘civil war’. But in the US itself, the current domination of the state by the Trump clan more and

13. EUROPATODAY – “Germany sends tanks to Ukraine because pacifists have become interventionists”.

14. See point 8 of the “Theses on Decomposition”.

more resembles the rule of a mafia, with its open espousal of the methods of blackmail and threat."¹⁵

This situation has very significant repercussions on the entire global political and economic scene. Indeed, as long as the various countries, despite competition between them, managed to maintain a policy of cooperation on certain issues, such as economic policy in particular or imperialist policy, the fall into the abyss of decadence and decomposition of the system could be slowed down, at least in part. But today, the blind and irresponsible policies (from a bourgeois point of view) of many countries, including the United States itself, not only fail to slow down the crisis of the system, but in fact accelerate it.

Irrationality and loss of sight of the interests of the state

These deep divisions within the bourgeoisie express the weight of "every man for himself", which means that the various components no longer feel bound by a higher interest in defending the interests of the state, or that of an "international order", but rather pursue the interests of particular political factions, cliques or specific economic families, at any cost. Furthermore, it is often the case that interest groups that rise in society to the point of winning important government positions have no prior political training. All this means that the politics pursued by the bourgeoisie today are increasingly characterised by a high degree of improvisation and irrationality which, naturally, in a context of growing disorder, only accelerates global chaos. We have already mentioned totally irrational measures such as the decision to hold a referendum on Brexit in Britain and Trump's tariff policy. We will simply add a few details about the composition of the team for the second term of Trump, the leader of the most powerful country in the world: everyone can examine for themselves what is happening in a similar way in other countries.

Here is a judgement that appeared in an Italian newspaper (certainly not a left-wing newspaper!) at the beginning of the year: "*No president has ever recruited such a crowd of criminals, extremists, scoundrels, crooks and undesirable individuals.*"¹⁶ Let's take a closer look at some of the members of the Trump administration. Trump's first choice for Attorney General was Matt Gaetz, but he had to withdraw. The reason? Not because he was his lawyer, the one

who had guided him with diabolical skill through his legal troubles. The real reason was that he was facing charges of sexual harassment and drug use, which is certainly not ideal for a Minister of Justice.

Then there is the sensational case of notorious anti-vaxxer Robert F. Kennedy Jr., appointed to head the Department of Health and Human Services, despite having declared his desire to abolish polio vaccines and being known as a conspiracy theorist. More than 75 Nobel laureates opposed Kennedy Jr.'s appointment as Health Secretary, saying it would "endanger public health". More than 17,000 doctors (out of 20,000), members of the Committee for the Protection of Healthcare, opposed Kennedy Jr.'s appointment, citing the fact that Kennedy has undermined public confidence in vaccines for decades and poses a threat to national health. Epidemiologist Gregg Gonsalves of Yale University, who also opposed Kennedy Jr.'s appointment, said that putting Kennedy in charge of a health agency would be like "*putting a flat-Earther in charge of NASA*".

Pete Hegseth, a notorious homophobe, has been appointed to head the Pentagon (with a budget of \$800 billion and 3 million employees). And, surprise surprise, he is also being sued for sexual harassment.

As for the other members of the government, reports suggest that most of them are extremists, poorly trained or particularly anti-establishment. What unites them is their absolute loyalty to their leader. Trump doesn't care if they swear allegiance to the Constitution; he just needs them to swear allegiance to him and to prove it.

Trump immediately distinguished himself by eliminating thousands of civil servants whom he considered troublesome or who, in his view, performed duties incompatible with his mandate. But he was even more brutal towards those who directly opposed him, using vindictive methods worthy of mafia feuds.

The policy against those whom Trump considers traitors is their direct elimination. Various examples illustrate this:

- on 22 August, the FBI raided the Maryland home of John Bolton, who served as national security adviser in the first Trump administration but later became highly critical of the president;
- a grand jury investigation has been authorised into the origins of the investigation into Trump's ties to Russia;
- another investigation is underway into California Democratic Senator Adam Schiff, who is accused of tax fraud but who had accused Trump of profiting

from stock market fluctuations following various tariff announcements;

- another investigation is underway against New York Attorney General Letitia James, who filed a legal brief to end the arrests of immigrants;
- the dismissal of Fed Governor Lisa Cook, who opposed Trump's demands for lower interest rates and was then accused of falsifying documents in order to obtain more favourable terms for a mortgage...;
- the latest news concerns former FBI director and Trump opponent Comey, who is being prosecuted for "serious crimes".

Gangsterism and vandalism

What was previously considered a characteristic of peripheral, so-called Third World countries, namely gangsterism and vandalism in politics, is now widespread in the world's most advanced countries, including the United States, a country once hailed as the beacon of democracy. Once again, the Trump case is proof of this.

Let's start by saying that Trump inherited both racism and good relations with the Italian-American mafia from his father, Fred Sr.¹⁷ While his father had good relations with the Gambinos, Genoveses and Luccheses, his son has them with the Franzeses and Colombos. The episode that led to the construction of Trump Tower is particularly well known. In 1979, when the first brick was laid, a strike at the cement factories blocked the sale of this material. But Trump circumvented the union blockade by buying it directly from S & A Concrete. The hidden owners of the construction company were Anthony "Fat Tony" Salerno of the Genovese family and Paul Castellano of the Gambino family, two families already close to his father and whose leaders met regularly at Cohn's, Trump's versatile lawyer at the time. But he also made important deals with the Russian mafia: in 2011, Trump emerged from ten years of lawsuits, multiple bankruptcies and £4 billion in debt... and this time he was saved by "Russian money" from Felix Sater, whose father, Michael Sheferovskiy, was a close friend not only of the Genovese family, but also of Semion Yudkovich Moguilevitch, the "boss of bosses" of the Russian mafia.

Numerous women have already claimed that Trump raped them at beauty pageants or other events. We also know that Trump paid a lot of money to silence the two

15. "Resolution on the international situation (May 2025)", *International Review* n° 174, Summer 2025.

16. "Gangs of America alla corte di Trump", *Il Foglio*, 27 January 2025.

17. As a young man, his father was arrested for being one of the most active members of the KKK.

women who accused him of having illicit relationships with him, porn star Stormy Daniels and former *Playboy* playmate Karen McDougall. This accusation led to his conviction, but he was exempted from prosecution. In early 2024, two separate juries found that Trump had defamed writer E. Jean Carroll by denying her allegations of sexual assault. He was ordered to pay a total of \$88 million. Also well-known is his association with Epstein, who was accused of rape, abuse and, most notably, international child trafficking. He appears with Trump in dozens of photos. Finally, Trump was also found guilty of thirty-four counts of falsifying business records, which were revealed during the investigation into payments made to Stormy Daniels.

Will the proletariat be able to take advantage of this loss of control by the bourgeoisie?

All the elements we have reported in this article clearly demonstrate a weakening of the bourgeoisie's ability to manage its political system and therefore an increased difficulty in dealing with the global crisis of the system, economically, environmentally, etc. There is no doubt about that.

But we must be careful not to imagine that this weakness of the bourgeoisie can be converted into an advantage, a strength for the proletariat. There are at least two reasons for this. The first concerns the process that will lead to revolution. The growing weaknesses of the bourgeoisie are by no means assets that enable the working class to develop its strength. Since the project of this class is completely antagonistic to everything that capitalism represents, the weakening of the bourgeoisie does not benefit the proletariat (which has only its unity and consciousness at its disposal). Secondly, while showing clear signs of decline, the bourgeoisie displays considerable vigilance and lucidity in matters of class struggle, the result of two centuries of experience of confrontation with the working class. This experience leads it not only to be vigilant, but above all to prevent any working class action by exploiting the very effects of decomposition against the proletariat itself.

For example, all populist propaganda, which often resonates with some of the most vulnerable and least class-conscious sections of the working class, is constructed by exploiting people's fears of competition for jobs or housing from immigrants or those who are "different". Secondly, and more importantly, it exploits populist hype to draw workers into anti-populist campaigns in defence of the democratic state.

However, the manifestations of decom-

position (through ecological crises, increasingly frequent environmental disasters, but above all the spread and intensification of wars, naturally accompanied by the worsening of the economic crisis) are increasingly forcing certain elements to seek an alternative to the current barbarism, even if they are still very much in the minority. The economic attacks that the bourgeoisie is already forced to wage against the workers will be the best stimulus for the class struggle and will allow for the future political maturation of the struggles. This alone will enable workers not only to defend themselves against the mystifications of the bourgeoisie, but also to regain an understanding of the deep-rooted causes of the current crisis of the system and turn it into a source of strength in their struggle.

Ezechiele, 27 August 2025

Anti-Semitism, Zionism, Anti-Zionism: all are enemies of the proletariat (Part 2)

In the first part of this article we argued that the Zionist movement was a false solution to the revival of anti-Semitism in the late 19th century. False because, in contrast to the proletarian riposte to anti-Semitism and all forms of racism as advocated by revolutionaries like Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg, it was a bourgeois nationalist movement that arose at a moment in which world capitalism was heading rapidly towards the epoch of decadence in which the nation state, in Trotsky's words in 1916, had "*outgrown itself as a framework for the development of the productive forces...*"¹ And as Rosa Luxemburg explained in her *Junius Pamphlet* (1915), the concrete outcome of this historic change was that, in the new period, the nation had become "*but a cloak that covers imperialist desires*": new nations could only come into being as pawns of bigger imperialist powers, while they themselves were compelled to develop their own imperialist ambitions and to oppress those national groupings that stood in the way. We showed that, from the beginning, Zionism could only become a serious political force by hitching its wagon to whichever imperialist power saw a benefit to themselves in the formation of a "Jewish national home" in Palestine, while Zionism's colonial attitudes to the population already living there already opened the door to the policy of exclusion and ethnic cleansing which came to fruition in 1948 and is reaching its terrible climax in Gaza today. In this second article we will trace the main stages in this process, but in doing so we will show that, just as Zionism has clearly revealed itself as a cloak for imperialist desires, the Arab nationalist response to Zionism, whether in its secular or religious forms, is no less caught up in the deadly trap of inter-imperialist competition.

In the wake of the Balfour Declaration

Prior to the First World War the question of which imperialist power would be most interested in promoting the Zionist project remained open: Theodore Herzl's initial search for a sponsor took him to the German Kaiser and his Ottoman allies. But the battle lines drawn up for the war made it clear that it would be Britain that had most to gain from the formation of a "little loyal Jewish Ulster" in the Middle East, even if the British were simultaneously making all kinds of promises about future independent statehood to the Arab leaders they needed to recruit in their struggle against the decaying Ottoman Empire, which had thrown in its lot with Germany and the Central Powers. The Zionist leader and accomplished diplomat Chaim Weizmann had become increasingly influential in the highest echelons of British government and his labours were rewarded by the publication of the (in)famous Balfour Declaration in November 1917. The Declaration stated that "*His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate*

the achievement of this object" while at the same time insisting that "*it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine*".

The Balfour Declaration seemed to be a vindication of the methods of the mainstream of the Zionist movement, essentially supported by the Zionist left, which considered it necessary to follow this mainstream until the achievement of a Jewish homeland had "normalised" class relations among the Jewish population.² For these currents, the agreement with British imperialism confirmed the necessity for developing diplomatic and political relations with the dominant powers of the region, while the gathering of the Jews in Palestine would be achieved largely with the financial support of Jewish capitalists in the Diaspora and of institutions such as the Jewish National Fund, the Palestine Jewish Colonisation Association, and the Jewish Colonial Trust. Land would be obtained through the piecemeal purchase of land from the absentee Arab landlords – a "peaceful" and "legal" way of expropriating the poor fellahin and paving the

way to setting up Jewish towns and agricultural enterprises as nuclei of the future Jewish state.

But the war had also stimulated the growth of Arab nationalism, and by 1920 the first violent reactions to increased Jewish immigration and Britain's announcement of its plan for a Jewish national home took shape in the so-called "Nabi Musa riots"³ – essentially a pogrom against Jews in Jerusalem. These events in turn gave rise to a new "Revisionist" Zionism led by Vladimir Jabotinsky, who had taken up arms alongside the British forces in suppressing the riots.

In our article "More than a century of conflict in Israel/Palestine"⁴ we pointed out that Jabotinsky represented a right-wing shift in Zionism which didn't hesitate to align itself with the extremely anti-Semitic regime in Poland (one of a number of examples of collaboration between the anti-Semitic project of expelling the Jews from Europe and the Zionist willingness to channel these policies towards emigration to Palestine). Although Jabotinsky himself often derided Mussolini's fascism, his movement undoubtedly sprang from a common root – the development of a particularly decadent and totalitarian form of nationalism whose growth was accelerated by the defeat of the proletarian revolution. This was illustrated by the emergence within Revisionism of the openly fascist Birionim faction and later on the Lehi group around Abraham Stern, who at the beginning of World War Two was prepared to enter into talks with the Nazi regime about forming an anti-British alliance.⁵ Jabotinsky himself increasingly

3. Nabi Musa is a Muslim festival which at that moment (20 April 1920) drew large crowds in Jerusalem. The riots took up a "Muslim" slogan such as "The religion of Mohamed was founded by the sword" alongside the one favoured by pogromists of many faiths: "Slaughter the Jews", now mirrored in the favourite rallying cry of the Jewish pogromists in Israel: "Death to the Arabs". (See Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Jerusalem: The Biography*, 2011, p516).

4. *International Review* n° 172.

5. The ideology of the Stern group was in fact a strange mixture of fascism and leftist anti-imperialism, a sort of "National Bolshevism" that happily described itself as "terrorist" and was prepared to move from an alliance with Nazi Germany to one with Stalinist Russia, all in the cause of chasing the British out of Palestine.

1. *Nashe Slovo* 4 February 1916.

2. See the first part of this article in *International Review* n° 173, section headed "Workers of Zion: the impossible fusion of marxism and Zionism".

saw the British occupiers of Palestine after World War One as the main obstacle to the formation of a Jewish state.

Although Jabotinsky always maintained that the Arab population would be guaranteed equal rights in his plan for a Jewish state, it was the experience of the 1920 anti-Jewish riots which led him to abandon the Herzl/Weizmann dream of a peaceful process of Jewish immigration. Jabotinsky had always been opposed to the ideas of class struggle and socialism, and thus to the alternative dream of the Zionist left: a new kind of colonisation process that would somehow involve the development of a fraternal alliance between Jewish and Arab workers. In 1923, Jabotinsky published his essay *The Iron Wall*, which demanded a Jewish state not only on the West Bank of the Jordan, but also on the East Bank, which the British prohibited. In his view, such a state could only be formed through military struggle: “Zionist colonisation must either stop, or else proceed regardless of the native population. Which means that it can proceed and develop only under the protection of a power that is independent of the native population – behind an iron wall, which the native population cannot breach”.

Although the left and centre Zionists strongly criticised Jabotinsky’s position, denouncing him as a fascist, what is so striking about *The Iron Wall* is that it precisely anticipates the real evolution of the entire Zionist movement, from the liberal and left factions which dominated it in the first few decades after 1917 to the right which has tightened its grip over the state of Israel from the 1970s on: the recognition that a Jewish state could only be formed and maintained through the use of military force. The Zionist left, including its “marxist” wing around Hashomer Hazair and Mapam, would in fact become the most essential component of the military apparatus of the pre-state Jewish Yishuv, the Haganah; the “socialist” kibbutzim in particular would play a key role as military outposts and suppliers of elite troops for the Haganah. Even the term “Iron Wall” has a prescient ring about it with the building of the Security Wall (also known as the Apartheid Wall...) around Israel’s post-1967 borders in the early 2000s. And of course, even if Jabotinsky can sound like a liberal in comparison to his contemporary heirs on the Israeli far right, the advocates of a Greater Israel “from the river to the sea”, and the unapologetic resort to unrestrained military force, now openly combined with the call for the “relocation” of the Palestinian Arab population of Gaza and the West Bank, have more and more moved to the mainstream in Zionist politics. This is testimony to Jabotinsky’s harsh realism

but above all to the inevitably imperialist and militaristic character, not only of Zionism, but of all national movements in this epoch.

1936: The dead-end of “anti-imperialist revolt” and the internationalist response

The defeat of the revolutionary wave in Russia and Europe spawned a new surge in anti-Semitism, especially in Germany with the infamous theory of the “stab in the back” by a cabal of communists and Jews, supposedly to blame for Germany’s military collapse. A number of European countries began to adopt anti-Semitic legislation, prefiguring the racial laws in Germany under the Nazis. Feeling increasingly threatened, there was a steady exodus of Jews from Europe, which accelerated considerably after the Nazi seizure of power in 1933. By no means all of the exiles went to Palestine, but there was a significant increase in Jewish immigration to the Yishuv. In turn, this exacerbated tensions between Jews and Arabs. The increased purchase of land from the Arab landlords or “effendi” by the Zionist institutions resulted in the dispossession of the already impoverished Arab peasants or fellahin; the impact of the world economic crisis in Palestine in the early 30s could only increase their economic woes. All these ingredients were to explode in 1929 in a new and more widespread outbreak of inter-communal violence, sparked off by disputes over access to the principal religious sites in Jerusalem, and taking the form of bloody anti-Jewish pogroms in Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed and elsewhere, but also of equally brutal counter-attacks by Jewish mobs. There were hundreds of murders on both sides. But these developments were merely a preface to the “Great Arab Revolt” of 1936.

Once again, events began with an outbreak of pogromist violence, this time sparked off by the murder of two Jews by an Islamic fundamentalist group, the Qassemmites, and followed by indiscriminate reprisals against Arabs, including the bombing of public places by Jabotinsky’s Irgun, which had split off from the Haganah in 1931. These bloody terrorist actions were described by the Irgun as the policy of “active defence” of the Jewish population. But this time the Arab uprising was much more widespread than in 1929, taking the form of a general strike in Jerusalem and other urban centres and, later on, of guerrilla warfare in the rural areas. However, even if profound economic and social misery fuelled the anger of the Arab masses, at no point did the general strike assume a proletarian character. This was not simply

because it mobilised workers alongside shopkeepers and other small property owners, but above all because its demands were entirely framed by nationalism, calling for a halt to Jewish immigration and independence from the British. From the start, the leadership of the movement was in the hands of bourgeois nationalist parties, even though these parties, largely based on old clan rivalries, often clashed violently with each other over who should direct the movement (while other Palestinian factions sided with the British). The reaction of the British authorities was extremely brutal, inflicting murderous forms of collective punishment on villages suspected of participating in the movement. The Haganah and specially appointed Jewish police squads acted alongside the British military in suppressing the revolt. By the end of the uprising in March 1939, more than 5,000 Arabs, 400 Jews and 200 British had lost their lives.

The UK-based Socialist Workers Party describes the revolt as the “First Intifada” and claims it as an example of resistance against British imperialism, with a strong social-revolutionary element:

*“The revolt shifted to the countryside where through the winter of 1937 and into 1938 the rebels proceeded to take control, driving the British out. With the countryside in their hands, the rebels began moving into the towns and cities. By October 1938, they had control of Jaffa, Gaza, Bethlehem, Ramallah and the Old City of Jerusalem. This was a massive popular movement with local committees taking control of much of the country and ruling in the interests, not of the Palestinian rich, but of the ordinary people.”*⁶

But let’s not forget that the SWP, like many other Trotskyists, also saw the Hamas slaughter of October 7 as part of the “resistance” against the oppression of the Palestinians.⁷ In marked contrast to the SWP’s presentation of the 1936 movement, Nathan Weinstock, in his authoritative book *Zionism: False Messiah*, expressed the view that in the end “the anti-imperialist struggle had been diverted into an inter-communal conflict and deformed with a venture in support of fascism. (The Mufti had grown closer and closer to the Nazis)”.⁸ At this point Weinstock was a member of the Trotskyist 4th International.

Weinstock concludes from this that the “the evolution of the Arab revolt appears as a negative confirmation of the theory of permanent revolution”. In other words,

6. “The first intifada: when Palestine rose against the British,” 21/5/21.

7. “The SWP justifies Hamas slaughter”, ICC online

8. *Zionism: False Messiah*, London, 1979, p178.

in semi-colonial countries, “democratic” tasks such as national independence could no longer be led by a very feeble bourgeoisie but could only be implemented by the proletariat once it had established its own dictatorship. This theory, whose essential components were developed by Trotsky in the early 1900s, was in its origins a genuine attempt to resolve the dilemmas posed in a period in which the ascendant phase of capitalism was coming to an end but without it being totally clear that capitalism as a world system was about to enter its epoch of decline, thus rendering obsolete all the “democratic” tasks of the previous period. Thus, the primary task of the victorious proletariat in any one part of the world is not to push through the vestiges of a bourgeois revolution within its own borders but to help spread the revolution across the world as quickly as possible, or else face isolation and death.

The corollary of this is that, in the decadent period, in which the entire globe is dominated by imperialism, there are no more “anti-imperialist” movements, but only shifting alliances on an overarching inter-imperialist chessboard. Weinstock’s remark about the Mufti – the title of a high-ranking cleric in charge of the Muslim holy places in Jerusalem, in this case Amin Al Husseini, who was notoriously friendly with Hitler and his regime – points to a wider reality: that in opposing British imperialism Palestinian nationalism in the 1930s was compelled to ally itself with Britain’s main rivals, Germany and Italy. The Italian Fraction of the Communist Left, in an article written in response to the 1936 general strike, already pointed to the inter-imperialist rivalries at work in the region: “*Nobody can deny that fascism has a great interest in fanning the flames. Italian imperialism has never hidden its designs towards the Near-East, that’s to say its desire to substitute itself for the mandatory powers in Palestine and Syria*”.⁹ This pattern could only repeat itself in subsequent history. As our introduction to the *Bilan* article points out “*Bilan shows that when Arab nationalism entered into open conflict with the British, this merely opened the door to the ambitions of Italian (and also German) imperialism; and from our vantage point, we can see that the Palestinian bourgeoisie would later turn to the Russian bloc, and then France and other European powers, in its conflicts with the USA*”.

In 1936, faced with the capitulation of former internationalists to the pressure of anti-fascist ideology, the comrades of *Bilan* acknowledged the “isolation of our Fraction” that had been seriously intensified by

the war in Spain. This isolation can also be applied to the problems posed by the conflicts in Palestine: the *Bilan* article is one of the very few contemporary internationalist statements about the situation there. However, it is worth mentioning the articles written by Walter Auerbach, who had been involved in a left communist circle in Germany which included Karl Korsch.¹⁰ Auerbach fled Germany in 1934 and lived for a few years in Palestine before settling in the USA, where he worked with the council communist group around Paul Mattick. Auerbach’s articles are of interest in showing how the Zionist colonisation of Palestine, by introducing or developing capitalist relations of production, had resulted in the dispossession of the fellahin and thus in the intensification of their social discontent. They also insist that the ultra-nationalist and even fascist elements within Zionism were bound to become an increasingly dominant element within it. But above all the articles remain on a clear internationalist terrain. In response to the events of 1936, the article entitled “The land of promise: report from Palestine” says:

“The sharpening of the Arab-Jewish relations, beginning in April 1936, which led to guerrilla warfare and to an Arab strike, covered over the social unrest of the working class with a lively and warlike national sentiment. On both sides the masses were organised for ‘self-protection and defence’. This self-protection was participated in, on the Jewish side, by the members of all the organisations. The various parties in their appeals laid the blame for the clashes either upon the Arabs or else on the competing parties. It is only to be observed that in this situation not a single organisation sought to conduct the struggle against its own bourgeoisie”.

Bordiga is credited with the motto “The worst product of fascism in anti-fascism”: the extremely brutal nature of fascism, itself preaching the unity of all truly “national” classes, tends to give rise to an opposition which in turn aims to subordinate working class interests to those of a broad Popular Front, as happened in France and Spain in the 1930s. In either case, the working class is pushed into abandoning its class identity and independence in favour of this or that faction of the bourgeoisie. Ultimately, fascism and anti-fascism are ideologies for dragooning the proletariat into imperialist war.

We can equally say that the worst product of Zionism is anti-Zionism. The starting point of Zionism is that Jewish workers can only fight anti-Semitism by allying themselves with the Jewish bourgeoisie

or surrendering their class interests in the name of national construction. Anti-Zionism, produced by the harsh consequences of this national construction in Palestine, also starts with an all-class alliance of “Arabs”, “Palestinians” or “Muslims”, which in practice can only mean the domination of the indigenous bourgeoisie and, behind that, the hegemony of world imperialism. The deadly cycle of inter-communal violence we saw in 1929 and 1936 was utterly inimical to the development of class solidarity between Jewish and Arab proletarians and this has remained true ever since.

From Shoah...

*“...the mere tendency towards imperialism of itself takes forms which make the final phase of capitalism a period of catastrophe.”*¹¹

The war in Spain, which unfolded at the same time as the revolt in Palestine, was a much clearer indication of the essential drama of the time. The crushing of the Spanish proletariat by the forces of fascism and the “democratic Republic” completed the world-wide defeat of the working class and opened the door to a new world war which – as the Communist International had predicted in its early proclamations – would far exceed the first in plumbing the depths of barbarity, above all in the far greater toll it took of civilian life. Already the forced population transfers and gulags implemented by the Stalinist regime in Russia gave a foretaste of the deadly revenge of the counter-revolution against a defeated working class, while the war itself illustrated the determination of capital to maintain its obsolete system even at the cost of spreading destruction and mass murder across the planet. The Nazi regime’s systematic programme of extermination of Jews and other minorities such as Gypsies or the disabled was certainly the product of a qualitatively new level of calculated and yet utterly irrational inhumanity; but this Shoah, this catastrophe which fell on the Jews of Europe, can only be understood as part of a greater catastrophe, a wider Holocaust which was the war itself. Auschwitz and Dachau cannot be separated from the razing of Warsaw after the uprisings of 1943 and 1944, or the millions of Russian corpses left in the wake of Germany’s invasion of the USSR; but neither can these crimes of Nazism be disconnected from the Allied terror bombing of Hamburg, Dresden, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, or the deadly famine imposed on the masses of Bengal by the British under Churchill’s direction in 1943.

9. “Bilan & the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine”, *International Review* n° 110.

10. <https://endnotes.org.uk/posts/auerbach-and-mattick-on-palestine>.

11. Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital*, chapter 31.

Furthermore, no matter how much the democracies used the evident savagery of Nazism as an alibi for their own crimes, they were largely complicit in the capacity of the Hitler regime to carry through its “Final Solution” to the Jewish question. In an article based on a review of the film *The Pianist*,¹² we gave several examples of this complicity: the Bermuda conference on the refugee question organised by the USA and Britain in April 1943, which took place at the exact same moment as the Warsaw ghetto uprising, decided that there would be no opening of the doors to the huge mass of desperate people facing starvation and annihilation in Europe. The same article also refers to the story of the Hungarian Joel Brandt who came to the Allies with an offer to exchange a million Jews for 10,000 trucks: “as the PCI’s pamphlet¹³ puts it, ‘Not only the Jews but the SS as well were taken in by the humanitarian propaganda of the Allies! The Allies didn’t want this 1 million Jews. Not for 10,000 lorries, not for 5,000, not even for nothing!’ Similar offers from Romania and Bulgaria were also rejected. In Roosevelt’s words ‘transporting so many people would disorganise the war effort’”

The official Zionist movement also played its part in this complicity, because they systematically opposed “refugeeism”, ie projects aimed at saving European Jews by allowing them to pass through the borders of countries other than Palestine. The keynote for this policy had already been sounded by Ben Gurion, the “Labour” leader of the Yishuv, before the war:

*“If the Jews are faced with a choice between the refugee problem and rescuing Jews from concentration camps on the one hand, and aid for the national museum in Palestine on the other, the Jewish sense of pity will prevail and our people’s entire strength will be directed at aid for the refugees in the various countries. Zionism will vanish from the agenda and indeed not only world public opinion in England and America but also from Jewish public opinion. We are risking Zionism’s very existence if we allow the refugee problem to be separated from the Palestine problem.”*¹⁴ Ben-Gurion’s true indifference to the suffering of the European Jews was even more explicit when he said on 7 December 1938 that “If I knew that it was possible to save all the children of Germany by transporting them to England, but only half of them by transporting them to Palestine, I

would choose the second - because we face not only the reckoning of those children, but the historical reckoning of the Jewish people”.

Any idea of direct collaboration between Zionism and the Nazis is treated as an “anti-Semitic trope” in numerous western countries, although there are certainly well-documented cases, notably the Havara agreement in Germany in the early days of the Nazi regime, which enabled Jews who were prepared to emigrate to Palestine to retain a sizeable portion of their funds; in parallel to this, Zionist organisations were allowed to operate legally under the Nazis, since both had a common interest in achieving a “Jew-free” Germany as long as Jewish emigrants went to Palestine.

This doesn’t contradict the fact that there have indeed been presentations of this kind of agreement which enter the realm of actual anti-Jewish conspiracy theory. The President of the present “Palestine Authority”, Mohamed Abbas, wrote a PhD thesis in the early 80s which can certainly be included in this category, since it makes the claim that the Zionists had exaggerated the number of Jews murdered by the Nazis in order to win sympathy for their cause, while at the same time Abbas casts doubt on the reality of the gas chambers.¹⁵

However, collaboration between factions of the ruling class – even when they are nominally at war with each other – is a basic reality of capitalism and can take many forms. The willingness of warring nations to suspend hostilities and combine forces to crush the common enemy, the working class, when the misery of war provokes it to come out in defence of its own interests, was demonstrated during the Paris Commune of 1871 and again at the end of the First World War. And Winston Churchill, whose reputation as the greatest anti-Nazi of all time is more or less the officially recognised truth in Britain and elsewhere, did not hesitate to apply this policy in Italy in 1943 when he ordered a pause in the Allied invasion from the south to let the “Italians stew in their own juice” – a euphemism for allowing the Nazi power to crush the mass strikes of the workers in the industrial north.

What is certainly true is that the Zionist movement, and above all the state of Israel, have constantly used the experience of the Shoah, the spectre of the extermination of the Jews, to justify the most ruthless and destructive military and police actions against the Arab population of Palestine, and at the same time to assimilate all criticism of the Israeli state with anti-Semitism. But we will

return, towards the end of this article, to the maze of ideological justifications and distortions developed by both (or all) sides in the current conflicts in Palestine.

To go back to the course of events set in motion by the war, the massacre of the Jews in Europe sped up immigration into Palestine, despite the desperate attempts of the British to keep it to a minimum, carrying out an extremely repressive policy which resulted in Jewish refugees being deported back to camps in Germany and to the tragedy of the Struma, a boat full of Jewish survivors which was denied entry to Palestine and, after being abandoned by the Turkish authorities, eventually sank in the Black Sea with nearly all on board. British repression provoked an outright war between the Mandate power and the Zionist militias, with the Irgun in particular leading the way in the use of terrorist tactics, such as the blowing up of the King David Hotel and the assassination of Swedish diplomatic mediator Count Bernadotte. The proposal to end the British mandate and partition Palestine between Arabs and Jews had already been made by the British Peel Commission in 1937, since the “Arab revolt” and Zionist discontent had made it clear that the British Mandate was on its last legs; and now the two main powers emerging from the world war, the USA and USSR, saw it in the interest of their own future expansion to eliminate older colonial powers like Britain from the strategically vital Middle East region. In 1947 both voted in the newly-formed UN for partition, while the USSR supplied the Yishuv with a large number of weapons via the Stalinist regime in Czechoslovakia. Having been largely suppressed by the Allies during the war itself, the truth about the Nazi concentration camps was now emerging and no doubt aroused much sympathy towards the plight of the millions of Jewish victims and survivors, and strengthened the determination of the Zionists to use all means at their disposal to achieve statehood. But the underlying dynamic towards the formation of the state of Israel derived from the post-war imperialist realignment and in particular the relegation of British imperialism to a purely secondary role in the new order.

...to Naqba

As with the question of the relations between the Nazis and the Zionists, the causes of the Naqba (which like Shoah, means catastrophe) are a historical and above all an ideological minefield. The “War of Independence” in 1948 ended with the flight of 750,000 Palestinian refugees from their homes and the expansion of the borders of the new state of Israel beyond

12. “Nazism and democracy share the guilt for the massacre of the Jews”, *International Review* n° 113.

13. “Auschwitz – the big alibi”, available on Sinistra.net

14. Memo to the Zionist Executive, 17.12.1938, cited in Greenstein *Zionism During the Holocaust*, p. 297.

15. *The other side: The secret relationship between Nazism and Zionism*. See entry on Wikipedia for details.

the areas originally designated by the UN partition plan. According to the official Zionist version, the refugees fled because the Arab military alliance which launched its offensive against the fledgling Jewish state called on Palestinians to flee areas affected by the fighting in order to return once the Zionist project had been crushed. It's no doubt true that the Arab forces, which were in reality poorly equipped and coordinated, made all kinds of grandiose claims about an impending victory and thus the possibility of the refugees returning rapidly to their homes. But subsequent research, including that of dissident Israeli historians like Ilan Pappé, has amassed a vast amount of evidence pointing to a systematic policy of terror by the new Israeli state against the Palestinian population, of mass expulsions and destruction of villages which justify the title of Pappé's best-known work: *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2006).

The massacre at Deir Yassin, a village not far from Jerusalem, in April 1948 carried out principally by the Irgun and Lehi, and involving the cold-blooded killing of over 100 villagers, including women and children, is the most infamous atrocity of the 1948 conflict. It was actually condemned by the Jewish Agency for Palestine and the Haganah, who blamed it on the "dissident" armed groups. Although some Israeli historians continue to deny that this was a massacre rather than a simple battle,¹⁶ it is generally presented as an exception which did not conform to the "high moral standards" of the Israeli defence forces (an excuse we hear again and again over the current assault on Gaza). In fact, Pappé's book demonstrates convincingly that Deir Yassin was the rule rather than the exception, since many other Palestinian villages and neighbourhoods – Dawayima, Lydda, Safsaf, Sasa, entire districts of Haifa and Jaffa, to name a few – suffered from similar acts of terror and destruction, even if the number of victims in each one was not usually so high. The Irgun and Lehi were explicit about their motivation in attacking Deir Yassin: not only to gain control of a strategically important site, but above all to create feelings of panic in the entire Palestinian population and convince them that they had no future in the Jewish state.

16. See for example Eliezer Tauber, *Deir Yassin: the Massacre that Never Was*. Menachim Begin, former Irgun terrorist and later Prime Minister of Israel, also presented Deir Yassin as an entirely legitimate military conquest. He denied it was a massacre but did admit that, following the attack, "Panic overwhelmed the Arabs of Eretz Israel. Kolonia village, which had previously repulsed every attack of the Haganah, was evacuated overnight and fell without further fighting. Beit-Iksa was also evacuated. [...] In the rest of the country, too, the Arabs began to flee in terror; even before they clashed with Jewish forces. [...] The legend of Deir Yassin helped us in particular in the saving of Tiberias and the conquest of Haifa," Begin, *The Revolt*, 1977, page 227

This and similar "exemplary" attacks on Palestinian villages certainly fulfilled this aim, accelerating the massive exodus of refugees who understandably feared that they were facing the same fate as the villagers of Deir Yassin. Israeli historian Benny Morris wrote in *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* (1988) that Deir Yassin "probably had the most lasting effect of any single event of the war in precipitating the flight of Arab villagers from Palestine." Neither can responsibility for the massacre be laid at the feet of the right-wing gangs alone. The Haganah, including elite units from what is known as the Palmach, provided support for the action and did nothing to stop the slaughter of civilians.¹⁷ And away from the front, Ben Gurion and the leadership of the new state were coordinating all the military actions aimed at "neutralising" the areas inhabited by Arabs and of widening the boundaries of the Jewish state.

There has been much argument about the degree to which there was a coordinated plan to expel as many Arabs as possible beyond these boundaries, often centred around the so-called "Plan Dalet" which presented itself as a strategy for the defence of the Jewish state but which certainly involved precisely the kind of "offensive" actions against areas inhabited by Palestinian Arabs that took place before and during the invasion by the Arab armies. But the fact that the mass exodus of Palestinian Arabs in 1948 coincided exactly with the interests of the Zionist state is surely verified by the fact that so many of the destroyed villages (including Deir Yassin itself) immediately became Jewish settlements or disappeared under the trees of newly planted forests, and that the former residents have never been allowed to return.

It is not accidental that the mass expulsion of the Palestinians coincided with the fearful inter-communal massacres that took place in India and Pakistan following another partition in the British empire, or that the war in ex-Yugoslavia in the first half of the 90s made the term "ethnic cleansing" a commonplace. The whole period of capitalist decadence, as Rosa Luxemburg predicted, has meant that nationalism – even, and perhaps especially, when it is the nationalism of a group that has suffered the most horrific persecution – can only

17. We should point out that a key factor in stopping the killing was the intervention of the neighbouring village of Givat Shaul, home to a group of Haredi (ultra-orthodox) Jews who had been living on good terms with the residents of Deir Yassin. When the Haredim heard what was going on in Deir Yassin, they rushed over to the Arab village, denouncing the Zionist gunmen as thieves and murderers, and demanded – and seem to have achieved – an immediate end to the slaughter. There is a vast moral gulf between this intervention and the activities of the "religious Zionists" in the present Israeli government.

achieve its ends by the further oppression of other ethnic groups or minorities.

The Zionist state in the service of imperialism

The state of Israel was thus born into the original sin of the expulsion of a huge proportion of the Arab population of Palestine. Its claims to be "the only democracy in the Middle East" has always been contradicted by this simple reality: despite the fact that it granted the right to vote to those Arabs who remained in the original boundaries of the state of Israel, the "Jewish character of the state" can only be maintained as long as Arab citizens remain in a minority; and, in the same logic, since 1967 Israel has reigned over the Arab population of the West Bank with no intention of ever making them Israeli citizens. But this aside, the existence even of the purest bourgeois democracy has never meant an end to the exploitation and repression of the working class, and in Israel this also applies not only to Arab proletarians, but also to the Israeli Jewish workers, whose struggles for class demands always come up against the "iron wall" of the state trade union, the Histadrut (see below). Externally, Israel's declared commitment to democracy and even "socialism", which were the preferred ideological justifications of the Zionist state up until the late 1980s, never prevented Israel from maintaining very close links, including the supply of military aid, to the most obviously "undemocratic" and openly racist regimes like South Africa under apartheid and the murderous – but also anti-Semitic – Argentine junta after 1976. Above all, Israel was ever willing to further its own imperialist appetites in close collaboration with the dominant imperialism of the post-war period, the USA. Israel participated in the 1956 Suez adventure of the older imperialist powers Britain and France, but after that it knuckled down to being the gendarme of the US in the Middle East, notably in the wars of 1967 and 1973, which were in essence proxy wars between the US and USSR for domination of the region.

Since the 1980s, Israel has more and more come under the sway of right-wing governments which have largely abandoned the old democratic and socialist verbiage of the Zionist left. Under Begin, Sharon and above all Netanyahu, the justification for maintaining Israel as a militarist and expansionist power in its own right tends to rely almost exclusively on references to the Holocaust and the fight for Jewish survival in a sea of anti-Semitism and terrorism. And there has been a lot to justify, from facilitating the massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in

Lebanon by Falange militias in 1982 to the repeated reprisal bombings of Gaza (2008-2009, 2012, 2014, 2021) which were the predecessors of today's all-out destruction. The irrational barbarism unfolding in front of our eyes in Gaza today retains its imperialist character, even if in the global atmosphere of "every man for himself" Israel is no longer the reliable servant of US interests that it once was.

"The Anti-Zionist Resistance": apologies for a rival imperialist camp

The crimes of the Israeli state are widely chronicled in the publications of the left and far left of capital. Not so much with the repressive and reactionary policies of the Arab regimes and the guerrilla gangs sponsored by them and by more global imperialist powers. In the 1948 conflict, the inter-communal massacres that had featured so strongly in 1929 and 1936 also made their appearance. In reprisal for Deir Yassin, a convoy heading towards the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem, guarded by the Haganah but mainly carrying doctors, nurses and medical supplies, was ambushed. Medical staff and patients were slaughtered as well as Haganah fighters. Such actions reveal the murderous intent of the Arab armies aiming to crush the new Zionist state. Meanwhile the Hashemite monarchy in Transjordan, following a backroom deal with the British, showed their deep concern for Palestinian statehood by annexing the West Bank and renaming itself simply as Jordan. As in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and elsewhere, the majority of Palestinian refugees who had fled to the West Bank were crammed into camps, kept in poverty, and used as an excuse for their conflict with Israel. Unsurprisingly, the misery inflicted on the refugee population not only by the Zionist regime that expelled them but also by their Arab hosts made them a highly volatile element. In the absence of a proletarian alternative, the Palestinian masses became the prey of armed nationalist gangs which tended to form a state within the state in the Arab countries, often linked to other regional powers as a proxy force: the case of Hezbollah in Lebanon being an obvious example. In the 1970s and 80s, the growing power of the Palestine Liberation Organisation in Jordan and Lebanon led to bloody clashes between the state forces and guerrilla gangs – the best-known examples being Black September in Jordan in 1970 and the mass murders in Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon in 1982 (carried out by the Lebanese Falange with the active support of the Israeli army).

The left wing of capital is quite capa-

ble of denouncing the "reactionary Arab regimes" in the Middle East, of exposing their frequent repressive actions against the Palestinians, but this has not prevented Trotskyists, Maoists and even some anarchists from supporting the same regimes in their wars against Israel or the USA, whether by calling for the victory of Egypt and Syria in the 1973 war¹⁸ or rallying to the defence of the "anti-imperialist" Saddam Hussein against the US in 1991 or 2003. But the speciality of the far left is support for the "Palestinian resistance", and this has remained constant from the days when the PLO proposed replacing the Zionist regime with a "secular democratic state where Arabs and Jews enjoy equal rights" and the more leftist Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine talked about the Hebrew nation's right to self-determination, to today's jihadist organisations like Hamas and Hezbollah which make no secret of their desire to "throw the Jews into the sea" as the Hezbollah leader Nasrallah once put it. And in fact the "marxist" Palestinian Resistance in the 70s and 80s did not flinch from carrying out indiscriminate bombings in Israel and the murder of civilians, as in 1972 when the Black September group killed the 11 Israeli athletes they had taken hostage, or the Lod Airport massacre perpetrated in the same year by the Japanese Red Army on behalf of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The use of such methods has never troubled the Trotskyists, often with the excuse used by the SWP after the Hamas raid of October 7 2023: *"the Palestinian people have every right to respond in any way they choose to the violence that the Israeli state metes out to them every day."*¹⁹

Neither has the left wing of capital been troubled by the fact that the "anti-imperialism" of the Palestinian nationalist movements has from the very beginning meant the search for alliances with other imperialist powers whose sordid interests conflict with those of Israel or the USA. From the Mufti's efforts to gain support from Italian and German imperialism in the 30s, to Yasser Arafat courting the USSR or the PFLP's George Habash looking to

18. The "orthodox" Trotskyists who published *Red Weekly* (12 October 1973) argued that in this war *"the aims of the Arab ruling classes are not the same as ours"*, but that *"support for the Egyptian-Syrian war effort is obligatory for all socialists"*; the forerunners of the SWP, the less orthodox Trotskyists of *International Socialism* (n° 63) insisted that since Israel was the gendarme of the US, *"the fight of the Arab armies against Israel is a fight against western imperialism"*. See *"The Arab-Israeli war and the social-barbarians of the 'left'" in World Revolution* n° 1.

19. "The SWP justifies Hamas slaughter", ICC online, quoting <https://socialistworker.co.uk/news/arm-yourself-with-the-arguments-about-why-it-s-right-to-oppose-israel/>

Mao's China, and the "Axis of Resistance" that links Hamas and Hezbollah to Iran and the Houthis, not forgetting further "liberation" groups directly set up by regimes like Syria and Iraq, Palestinian nationalism has never been an exception to the rule that makes national liberation impossible in the epoch of capitalist decadence, offering no more than the replacement of one imperialist master with another.

But within this continuity, there has also been an evolution, or rather, a further degeneration that corresponds to the advent of the final phase of capitalist decadence, the phase of decomposition, marked by a clear increase in irrationality both at the ideological and the military levels. The replacement of democratic and "socialist" mystifications in the ideology of Palestinian nationalism by Islamic fundamentalism and overt anti-Semitism – the Hamas Charter makes extensive and direct use of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a pamphlet about the Jewish plot for global domination fabricated by the Tsarist secret police – reflects this irrationality at the level of thought and ideas. At the same time, the October 7 action, genocidal in its readiness to kill all Jews that came into its sights, but also suicidal in that it could only provoke a much more devastating genocide of Gaza itself, reveals the self-destructive, scorched Earth logic of all of today's inter-imperialist conflicts.

And of course, the rise of Jihadism is exactly paralleled by the growing domination of Israeli politics by the ultra-religious Zionist right, which claims a God-given right to reduce Gaza to ruins, sends its goons to block the trickle of food supplies to Gaza, and aims to replace the entire Palestinian Arab population of Gaza and "Judea and Samaria" (the West Bank) with Jewish settlements. The religious right in Israel is the death's head face of Zionism's long-standing manipulation of the dreams of the Biblical prophets. But for marxists like Max Beer the best of the prophets were a product of the class struggle in the ancient world, and although their hopes for the future were rooted in a nostalgia for an earlier form of communism, they nevertheless looked forward to a world without Pharaohs and kings, and even to the unification of humanity beyond tribal divisions.²⁰ The call by the religious Zionists for the annihilation of Arab Gaza and the state enforcement of religious/ethnic divisions only shows how far these ancient dreams have been trampled in the mud under the reign of capital.

20. "Studies in historic materialism". See in particular the section first published in *Social Democrat*, Vol. XII, No. 6, June, 1908, pp.249-255 and available on the marxists.org website.

Finding the exit to the ideological maze

The weaponisation of the Holocaust and of anti-Semitism by the present government of Israel is increasingly overt. Any criticism of Israel's policies in Gaza or the West Bank, even when it comes from respectable figures like Emmanuel Macron or Keir Starmer, is immediately assimilated with support for Hamas. The Trump regime in the US also sells itself as an intransigent opponent of anti-Semitism and uses this fable to push through its repressive policies against students and academics who have taken part in protests against the destruction of Gaza. Trump's opposition to anti-Semitism is of course the purest hypocrisy. The "MAGA movement" has numerous links to a number of openly anti-Semitic, fascist-type groups, while its "pro-Israel" stance is largely fuelled by the evangelical Christian right, whose belief system "needs" the return of the Jews to Zion as a prelude to the return of Christ and Armageddon. What the evangelicals are usually less vocal about is their conviction that in the course of these Last Days the Jews will be offered the choice between acknowledging Christ – or death and the fires of hell.

And at the same time, the anti-Zionist left, despite its insistence that anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism are totally separate and the fact that many Jewish groups, both "socialist" and ultra-religious, have taken part in demonstrations for "Free Palestine", adds further grist to the right-wing mill by its congenital inability to denounce support for Hamas and thus for the outright Jew-hatred which is part of its DNA. Furthermore, when the right harps on about the increase of anti-Semitism since October 7, they don't have to invent anything, because there has indeed been a growing number of attacks on Jews in Europe and the USA, including the murders and attempted murders that took place in America in May (Washington DC) and June (Boulder, Colorado) of 2025. The right and the Zionist establishment then exploit these events to the hilt, using them to justify more ruthless action by the Israeli state. And this in turn contributes to the further spread of anti-Semitism. In 1938, Trotsky warned that Jewish emigration to Palestine was no solution to the tide of anti-Semitism sweeping Europe and could indeed become a "*bloody trap for several hundred thousand Jews*".²¹ Today Israel has the potential of being a bloody trap for several million Jews; and at the same time the increasingly murderous policies carried out in its "defence" has created a new variety of anti-Semitism

which blames all Jews for the actions of the Israeli state.

This is a true ideological maze and no exit can be found by following the mystifications of the pro-Zionist right or the anti-Zionist left. The only way out of the maze is the uncompromising defence of the internationalist proletarian outlook, founded on the rejection of all forms of nationalism and all imperialist camps.

We have no illusions about how weak this tradition is in the Middle East. The international communist left, the only consistently internationalist political current, has never had any organised presence in Palestine, Israel or other parts of the region. Within Israel, for example, the best-known example of a political tendency opposed to the founding principles of the state, the Trotskyist Matzpen and its various offshoots, saw their internationalist duty in supporting one or another of the different Palestinian nationalist organisations, in particular the more leftist versions like the PDFLP. We have made it clear that supporting an "opposing" form of nationalism has nothing in common with a real internationalist policy, which can only be based on the necessity for the unification of the class struggle across all national divisions.

Nevertheless, the class divide exists in Israel and Palestine and the rest of the Middle East just as in all other countries. Against the leftists who see the Israeli workers as no more than colons, as a privileged elite who benefit from the oppression of the Palestinians, we can point out that Israeli workers have launched numerous strikes in defence of their living standards – which are continually being eroded by the demands of the hugely bloated war economy – and frequently in open defiance of the Histadrut. The Israeli working class announced its participation in the international revival of struggles after 1968: in the strikes that erupted in 1969, they began to form action committees outside the official union. The strikes were spearheaded by the Ashdod dockworkers who were denounced as Al Fatah agents in the press. In 1972, in response to the devaluation of the Israeli pound, and rejecting the Histadrut's calls for sacrifices in the name of national defence, workers demonstrated for wage rises outside the union's headquarters and fought pitched battles against the police. In the same year, in Egypt, especially Helwan, Port Said and Choubra, a wave of strikes and demonstrations broke out in reaction to price rises and shortages; as in Israel, this quickly led to confrontations with the police and many arrests. As in Israel, the workers began to form their own strike committees in opposition to the official unions. At the

same time, the leftist students and Palestinian nationalists who began to participate in the workers' demonstrations calling for the release of imprisoned strikers made "*declarations of support for the Palestinian guerrilla movement, with demands for the setting up of a war economy (including a wage freeze), and for the formation of a 'popular militia' to defend the 'homeland' against Zionist aggression...the complete antimony between class struggles and 'national liberation wars' in the imperialist epoch is highlighted by these events.*"²² In 2011, in the street demonstrations and occupations against welfare cuts and the high cost of living, slogans targeting Netanyahu, Mubarak and Assad as part of the common enemy were raised, while others pointed out that Arabs and Jews both suffered from the lack of decent housing. There were also efforts to develop discussions that went across the divide between Jews, Arabs and African refugees.²³ In 2006, thousands of state employees in Gaza came out on strike against the non-payment of wages by Hamas.

All these movements implicitly reveal the international essence of the class struggle, even if its expressions in this region have long been profoundly hampered by the hatreds fuelled by endless rounds of terrorism and massacre, and by the readiness of the different bourgeoisies to divert and stifle the slightest hint of opposition to inter-communal violence and war between states. In Gaza recently we have seen some street demonstrations calling for Hamas to step down and for an end to the war. Very soon afterwards it emerged that the Israeli government has been supporting and even arming certain clans and factions within Gaza to take control of these anti-Hamas sentiments. In Israel, a growing number of military reservists are not showing up for duty and a few of these have issued an appeal explaining why they are no longer willing to serve in the army. For the first time, small minorities are questioning the aims of the continuing war against Hamas – not only because it will inevitably reduce the possibility of any of the surviving hostages being released, but also because of the terrible suffering it is inflicting on the Palestinian population, which has been a taboo subject in the atmosphere of mass trauma created by October 7 and its deliberate manipulation by the Israeli state. But the pacifist ideology that dominates the Israeli dissident movement will act as a further block on the emergence of any authentically revolutionary opposition to the war.

21. See "On the Jewish problem" published on the marxists.org website.

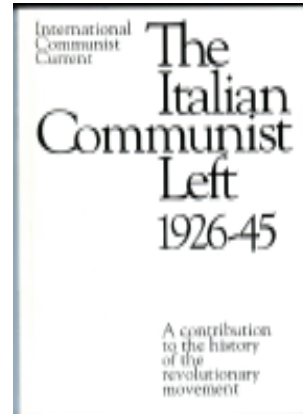
22. "Class struggle in the Middle East", *World Revolution* n°3.

23. "Israel protests: 'Mubarak, Assad, Netanyahu!'", ICC Online.

Nonetheless, this incipient asking of questions on both sides of the conflict shows that there is work to be done by internationalists to encourage it to break out of its pacifist and patriotic envelope. Certainly, we can only hope to reach very small minorities at the moment, and we understand that, given the level of ideological intoxication in Israel and Palestine, the most important steps towards a real break with nationalism will require the example, the inspiration, of new levels of class struggle in the central countries of capitalism.

Amos, August 2025

ICC Publications



This history of the Italian Left is not neutral, looking down on the social battlefield. In today's world of decomposing capitalism, the alternative posed more than sixty years ago by the Communist Left is more valid than ever: "communist revolution or the destruction of humanity".

Of course, according to the ruling classes everywhere today, communism, the revolutionary perspective of the working class, has died with the collapse of Stalinism. But this is a monstrous lie. Stalinism was the gravedigger of the 1917 October Revolution, and therefore the deadliest enemy of the communist perspective. Stalinism was the main vehicle for the greatest counter-revolution in history.

In the midst of this defeat the Italian Communist Left remained faithful to the internationalist principles of the working class, and tried to draw the lessons of a counter-revolution which terminally infected even the Trotskyist Opposition.

The aim of this brief history of the struggle of the Italian Communist Left is to help all those who have thrown in their lot with the revolutionary working class to bridge the gap between their past and their present.

Now available online from the ICC website.

Polemic with the proletarian political milieu

Falling into the trap of the struggle for bourgeois democracy against populism

In August 2024, even before the election of Donald Trump to a second term as US president, the ICC proposed to other groups of the Communist Left a common Appeal¹ against the growing attempts by the whole of the bourgeois class to mobilise the population behind the false choice: being downtrodden by liberal democratic or right wing populist governments. The Appeal was designed to strengthen the anti-bourgeois democratic position that only the Communist Left is capable of defending consistently and intransigently in the working class.

Unfortunately this ICC Appeal was rejected by nearly all of its recipients just as a similar ICC appeal for a common internationalist statement against the imperialist war in Ukraine in February 2022 was rejected by most of the Communist Left groups.

Today, a year later, the ICC Appeal on the democratic campaigns has lost none of its relevance for the policy of the Communist Left. On the contrary it is even more relevant.

Six months after Trump's return to power, attacks on the working class have continued to intensify: mass militarised deportations and detentions of immigrant workers, massive cuts in welfare and health benefits, over 150,000 job losses for federal workers. A large-scale campaign was launched by both the "liberal" wing of the bourgeoisie and the self-proclaimed "socialists" (Sanders, Ocasio-Cortez, etc.) – all those who align themselves with the Democratic Party – to mobilise the population against these measures. Not of course in order to create a working class struggle against these attacks; but to prevent such a struggle from developing. The propaganda of the liberals and the left is presenting the attacks of the populist right not as the fruit of the capitalist system as a whole for which they are also responsible, but of the populist flouting of democratic rules, the result of Trump's contempt for the "rule of law", a lack of respect for the independence of the bourgeois judiciary and for the sanctity of the US constitution and for all the other innumerable liberal humanitarian facades hiding the dictatorship of capital over labour.

The goal has been to orchestrate massive protest movements that propose not a working class response, on the terrain of its own class interests against all wings of the bourgeoisie, but to contain and divert revolt into an amorphous defence of the tradition of the democratic state against its populist deviations. And this has borne fruit.

The resistance to Trump's regime in the US has been characterised by the patriotic protests of many federal workers against the mass layoffs engineered by Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), the revolt on the terrain of the "democracy" and bourgeois "law" against the mass deportations of immigrant workers by Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE), and the humanitarian defence of Palestine nationalism against Trump's support for the Israeli massacre of innocents in Gaza.

And these democratic protest actions have tended to be mirrored in other countries because the election of Trump has tended to increase the polarisation within the bourgeoisies of other countries between populist and liberal democratic factions during 2025.

In South Korea the democratic factions mobilised huge demonstrations against the attempted coup of President Yoon Suk Yeol. In Turkey massive numbers came out into the streets "defending Turkish democracy" in support of the leader of the opposition against the autocratic dictates of President Erdogan. In Serbia there were also mass democratic protests against the corruption of President Vucic.

There have been similar movements of greater or lesser extent but reflecting the same motivation in most other countries.

What must be the policy of the working class, which is the only force objectively interested in and capable of overthrowing the present moribund social system, towards these often mass movements of the population? And therefore, what is the role

of the most advanced section of the working class whose task is to formulate the general line of march for the whole class?

Communists clearly must denounce both the democratic and populist attacks of the bourgeoisie and warn the working class of the danger of becoming mobilised behind what are in reality fights between different wings of the ruling class and call on workers to struggle on their own ground of the defence of their own interests against the ruling class as a whole. But which political tendency today fulfils this need?

We asked the same question in our Appeal:

"Who are the political forces which actually defend the real interests of the working class against the increasing attacks coming from the capitalist class? Not the inheritors of the Social Democratic parties who sold their souls to the bourgeoisie in the First World War, and along with the trade unions mobilised the working class for the multi-million slaughter of the trenches. Nor the remaining apologists for the Stalinist 'Communist' regime which sacrificed tens of millions of workers for the imperialist interests of the Russian nation in the Second World War. Nor Trotskyism or the official Anarchist current, which, despite a few exceptions, provided critical support for one or other side in that imperialist carnage. Today the descendants of the latter political forces are lining up, in a 'critical' way behind liberal and left-wing bourgeois democracy against the populist right to help demobilise the working class.

"Only the Communist Left, presently few in number, has remained true to the independent struggle of the working class over the past hundred years. In the workers' revolutionary wave of 1917-23 the political current led by Amadeo Bordiga, which dominated the Italian Communist Party at the time, rejected the false choice between the fascist and anti-fascist parties which had jointly worked to violently crush the revolutionary upsurge of the working class. In his text 'The Democratic Principle' of 1922 Bordiga exposed the nature of the democratic myth in the service of capitalist exploitation and murder.

"In the 1930s the Communist Left denounced both the left and right, fascist and

1. "For an Appeal of the Communist Left to the

anti-fascist factions of the bourgeoisie as the latter prepared the imperialist blood-bath to come. When the Second World War did come it was therefore only this current which was able to hold to an internationalist position, calling for the turning of the imperialist war into civil war by the working class against the whole of the capitalist class in every nation. The Communist Left refused the ghoulis choice between the democratic or fascist mass carnage, between the atrocities of Auschwitz or of Hiroshima."

Today the Left Communist current is still minoritarian and "against the stream" of all this political debris left over from the counter revolutionary period that lasted some 50 years after the defeat of the October Revolution. But the perspective of a renewed assault on world capitalism by the working class re-emerged after the renewal of the open capitalist economic crisis and the massive reawakening of international working-class struggle at the end of the 1960s. The reconstitution of the communist party on the basis of the positions of the Communist Left was thus posed.

The rejection of these ICC appeals by most groups of the Communist Left suggests that the majority of the groups in this political tradition are in a state of sclerosis and degeneration, unable to recognise that their own micro-parties are part of a broader tradition, nor to recognise the importance, for the working class today and in the future, of the intransigence on this position against democracy that the Italian faction of the Communist Left developed in the 1930s.

Consequently, most of these groups are unable to defend it consistently within the working class today and in the future, and in practice fall opportunistically into the dominant leftist discourse.

These groups have produced some articles and leaflets in their press in response to the current democratic campaigns and movements that reflect this confusion. One in particular stands out as typifying their response and so we will use it to highlight a more general illusion.

International Communist Tendency: Blurring the distinction between proletarian movements and movements in defence of bourgeois democracy.

A 22 July 2025 article "In the Wake of the Capitalist Crisis: Protests and Riots – And the Need for an Independent Class Expression" on the ICT website, takes stock of the widespread development of social struggles we have mentioned above. The article then

regrets that the working class has not been able to "assert itself as an independent political force in these demonstrations" and proposes as a solution that the working class resume its struggle at a higher level and form an international communist party to link this struggle to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. In addition an internationalist struggle against imperialist war is required. So far, so good.

However, in the article's account of the large protests against the attacks of the populist right in various countries over the past year there is no awareness that the counterpart to these attacks, and therefore the inspiration for these demonstrations, has been the democratic campaign of the rest of the bourgeoisie in the main capitalist countries – not over the attacks of the populist right themselves, but over their undemocratic form. And the bourgeoisie has been doing this for at least the past decade since populism became a dominant political trend within the bourgeois states.

Moreover, the article seems completely unaware that the bourgeoisie has long used its political divisions as a democratic weapon against its proletarian class adversary in order to pacify it and derail it if possible and drown its revolutionary struggle in blood, as the Social Democratic led counter revolution in Germany in 1919 brutally showed. Yet the ICT is supposed, as part of the tradition of the Communist Left, to have drawn the lesson of the threat of democracy to the proletariat. We will look at this historic tradition of the Communist Left's intransigent rejection of democracy a bit later on.

But, for now, we note the connected fact that the article is unable to identify the class nature of these democratic protests and skates over the vital distinction that revolutionaries must make between democratic protests and genuinely proletarian movements.

"This past year we have experienced some of the largest protests in decades in several countries. These struggles have not had a clear class character and have varied greatly in terms of main issues and triggering factors. But even if the working class has not dominated these protests, large parts of the class (and to some extent workers' organisations and strike activity) have clearly been on the move, and no part of the living conditions of proletarians is left untouched by the accelerating crisis of capitalism. Below we will briefly describe some of these protests, what we see as their limitations, and what we believe is the necessary way forward."

The article then recounts the struggles in South Korea, Greece, Turkey, the US and

elsewhere which in fact show that far from not having a "clear class character" they are clearly, despite the presence of many workers within them, on the terrain of the defence of bourgeois democratic values against the authoritarianism and corruption linked to the growth of political populism, and nothing to do with the defence of the workers' own interests as a class against the whole bourgeois class.²

The article therefore omits a warning to the class about involvement in these protests. On the contrary the article suggests that it is possible to take the protest movements "forward" (to where?) by overcoming their supposed limitations.

The article confirms this error by concluding: *"In summary, these struggles can be said to be directed against corruption and an increasingly authoritarian development, and against a state that is no longer delivering its basic services in the face of deepening capitalist crisis. These are not purely proletarian struggles, but it is clear that there are extensive elements of the working class involved. They are expressions of a general dissatisfaction and frustration that is steaming under the surface, and sometimes must explode."*

The recent democratic struggles in various countries show that they are very far from being even "impure" proletarian struggles. They show on the contrary that the general dissatisfaction and frustration of the population with their oppression are still pre-empted or recuperated by the bourgeoisie and drowned in movements to revive democracy and prevent a class struggle, despite the presence of extensive elements of the working class within them.

To be fair to the ICT, it should be pointed out that the article does draw the lessons of the Arab Spring of 2011 in Egypt, and points out that this mass movement of a decade and half ago, despite involving massive strikes in the textile industry, was drowned in the polluted ocean of the struggle for democracy. But the article fails to apply this lesson to the democratic struggles of 2025.

Given the failure of the ICT article to warn against the danger of confusing proletarian struggle with the struggle for democracy today, or warn against the danger of acting as though it's possible to convert the latter into the former, it's more understandable why this group should have refused the proposed ICC Appeal on democracy which anticipated and adopted

2. For a full account, read the following two articles: "The bourgeoisie is trying to lure the working class into the trap of anti-fascism" and "Workers must not let themselves be drawn into demonstrations for the defence of democracy", *World Revolution* n° 403.

a clear position against the democratic campaigns and struggles. This ICC Appeal effectively eliminates the possibility that such campaigns can be turned into class movements.

The rejection of the Appeal by the other groups was not because they disagreed with the letter of the Appeal but its spirit: because the Appeal highlights a gulf between the Communist Left and all other political tendencies (from the extreme right to the extreme left) and prevents any opportunist concessions to the latter.

Similarly, the ICT rejected the ICC's Internationalist Appeal of 2022 not because it disagreed with this Appeals' main arguments in theory but because in practice the ICT wanted to pretend that it was possible to create an internationalist movement against war beyond the intransigence of the tradition of the Communist Left: a pretence that gave rise to the bluff of the "No War but the Class War" initiative.

Democratic movements can't be turned into proletarian movements

The idea that the present-day bourgeois democratic movements are ambiguous or fluid in their class nature would mean that they can, potentially, be turned into authentically proletarian movements. And the ICT hasn't hesitated to assume this ill-founded logic even though the two types of movement are completely antagonistic and incompatible with each other.

The article illustrates this illusion perfectly with a subhead slogan: "From Street war to class war".

Another example is in a leaflet (11.06.2025) of their US affiliate, the Internationalist Workers Group, against the ICE offensive in America. While pointing out that the Democratic Party presidency of Barack Obama had deported more immigrants than Trump, the leaflet says that:

*"Workers everywhere must be prepared to defend themselves, their neighbours, and their co-workers against ICE's raids. From neighbourhood action committees and workplace struggles to mass protests, the struggle must be fought by the working class using its immense strength."*³

But the leaflet neglects to mention that a class response in the neighbourhoods to the raids of ICE had already been sabotaged long in advance by the Democratic Party as these quotes in support of the struggle from its representatives indicate:

"He [Trump] has declared a war. Democracy is under assault before our

eyes." (Gavin Newsome, Governor of California). *"We are in a war for the soul of our country, for our democracy."* (Dolores Huerta, ex-labour official and civil rights activist). *"Protest, carried out peacefully, is the bedrock of our democracy."* (Mayor Andrew Ginther, Columbus, Ohio). *"We are advocating for the defence of democracy, the pursuit of justice, and the rule of law."* (Jewish Democratic Council of America).

The desperate struggle of immigrant workers against the militarised actions of ICE today (an agency that has existed since the attack on the Twin Towers in 2001) had already been railroaded along the track of defending US democracy against Trumpian illegality, against the latter's disregard for democratic laws and procedures. The same laws that previously concealed the brutality of the Democrats' deportations of illegal immigrants. In other words, the protests against ICE today are not a class struggle against the attacks of the capitalist state on immigrant workers but a campaign for the democratic lawful restriction and brutalisation of immigrant workers.

Yet the ICT leaflet calls for the working class to take charge of the struggle against ICE, to turn it into a class movement. This would mean though, if it were possible, a rejection of all national divisions and borders and the confrontation not only of the militarised face of the state in ICE but its democratic alternative face as well. In other words, it would mean a completely different movement on a different class terrain. This would only be possible if the working class had already developed its own class struggle for its own interests to this political level. But as the leaflet and the article mentioned admit, this is as yet far from a reality.

However, neither article nor leaflet draw attention to the workers' wage struggles on an international scale over the past year and since 2022 (including in the US) that have been developing on a class terrain and are clearly distinguishable from the democratic campaigns and movements, and are the only basis for a completely different future political struggle of the proletariat as an autonomous movement.

A repetition of other opportunist mistakes such as in the Black Lives Matter movement

Unfortunately, the leaflet and article are not an isolated mistake but a repetition of other major errors of the groups of the Communist Left like the one the ICT made in imagining that the BLM riots and protests against the police murder of George Floyd, which erupted in 2020 during

Trump's first presidency, was a working class movement:

"In 1965, just like in 2020, the police kill, and the class responds in defiance to the crooked social order they murder for. The struggle continues".⁴

The ICT added the qualification that the movement "doesn't go far enough" and shouldn't support the Democratic Party. But this doesn't make sense if the movement is already going in the wrong direction to begin with.⁵ It makes even less sense when you consider that the experts in pretending that the mobilisations of democratic opposition can be "taken further" – the leftists – already completely occupy this political terrain and don't need the assistance of misguided Communist Left groups.

Like the article on today's democratic struggles, the ICT then declared categorically, without concern for the actual situation of the working class, that "The urban rebellion needs to be transformed into world revolution".

The origins and history of this opportunist wishful thinking on democratic struggles

The ICC Appeal against the democratic campaigns refers to the major acquisition of the Italian Left fraction *Bilan* in the 1930s, for which "democratic struggles" and "proletarian struggle" are antagonistic, any confusion on this issue proving fatal.

Bilan's position can be summarised as follows: The "democratic" experiments since 1918 have shown that defending democracy negates class struggle, stifles proletarian consciousness and leads its vanguard to treachery:

*"The proletariat finds the reason for its historic mission by denouncing the lie of the democratic principle in its own nature and in the need to suppress the differences of classes and the classes themselves."*⁶

The majority of *Bilan* later defended this anti-democratic principle at the expense of a split with a minority of the fraction which abandoned this principle and went to fight in the war in Spain in 1936 with the illusion that the military conflict of the democratic republican wing against the fascist wing of the bourgeoisie was the precursor to a proletarian revolution rather

3. "Against Deportation and Imperialism: No War but the Class War" on the ICT website.

4. "On Minneapolis: Police Brutality & Class Struggle", on the ICT website.

5. For a full report, read: "The groups of the communist left faced with the Black Lives Matters protests: a failure to identify the terrain of the working class" on the ICC website.

6. "Fascism? Democracy? Communism". Vercesi, *Bilan* n° 13, December 1934

than, as reality proved, the preparation of the slaughter of the working class in inter-imperialist war. The minority of *Bilan* thus confirmed in practice Vercesi's statement that the defence of democracy leads the proletarian vanguard to treachery.

In the 1930s, rejection of anti-fascism, i.e. rejection of the defence of bourgeois democracy, was the litmus test of a communist tendency.⁷

It should be noted that – without having to renounce their intervention alongside the Republicans in Spain – members of this minority of *Bilan* were later integrated into the Internationalist Communist Party (PCInt), which is the ancestor of all the groups of the Communist Left that rejected the ICC's Appeal against the democratic campaigns.

The PCInt was founded in Italy in 1943 as an internationalist party of the Italian left, but it was very heterogeneous politically. Many militants who had not broken with the positions of the Front and anti-fascism flocked to this new party. The very foundations on which the party was created contained all kinds of ambiguities, which meant that the party constituted a political regression from the positions of the Fraction before the war, the positions of *Bilan*. While remaining in the proletarian camp in a general sense, the PCInt failed to distance itself from the erroneous positions of the Communist International, for example on the trade union question and the question of participation in electoral campaigns.

Only the Gauche Communiste de France group was able, during this period, to maintain an uncompromising position against bourgeois democracy and to continue the political work of *Bilan* after the Second World War.⁸

At the end of the Second World War, the PCInt developed an ambiguous attitude towards anti-fascist partisan groups in Italy – fully aligned with the imperialist war alongside the Allies – which it believed, due to the presence of workers among them, could somehow be rallied to the proletarian revolution thanks to the PCInt's participation in their ranks.⁹

When the PCInt split in 1952, this initial confusion surrounding its formation was

not subsequently clarified, including by Battaglia Comunista (now the ICT), despite its criticism of Bordigism at the time of the split. It was therefore inevitable that this same conciliatory attitude towards democratic struggles would continue to manifest itself.

In 1989, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Eastern Bloc regimes, Battaglia misinterpreted the population's anger against Nicolae Ceausescu's hated regime in Romania as a "genuine popular uprising", when in reality the population was mobilising behind the more democratic opposition to replace him. Regarding the democratic demands of the workers' struggles of the time in Russia itself, Battaglia, while admitting that these demands could be used by a wing of the bourgeoisie, stated: "...For these masses imbued with anti-Stalinism and the ideology of western capitalism, the first possible and necessary demands are those for the overthrow of the 'Communist' regime, for a liberalisation of the productive apparatus, and for the conquest of 'democratic freedoms'."¹⁰

Clearly the ambiguity of these groups on the rejection of democracy has a long history. But the class intransigence on this principle must be strengthened by the Communist Left, not only for the class struggle today, but for the revolutionary struggle of the future, and for the formation of its class party, which will depend to a large degree on the rejection of all conciliation to one or other of the political formations of the ruling class whose divisions are used to derail this objective.

Como, 8.9.25

7. See the pamphlet of the ICC: *The Italian Communist Left 1926-1945*, in particular Chapter 4: "1933-39 *Bilan* - Milestones on the road to defeat: The Weight of the Counter-Revolution."

8. For information about this group, from which the ICC originated, read: "The Italian Fraction and the French Communist Left", *International Review* n° 90.

9. "The ambiguities of the Internationalist Communist Party over the "partisans" in Italy in 1943", *International Review* n° 8.

10. "Polemic: The wind from the East and the response of revolutionaries", *International Review* n° 61.

Contribution to a history of the labour movement in Egypt

After Senegal and South Africa, in a new series, we present a history of the workers' movement in Egypt. This new contribution pursues the same main aim as the previous ones: to provide evidence of the living reality of the history of the African labour movement through its struggles against the bourgeoisie.¹

The emergence of the working class in Egypt

As capitalism began to develop in Egypt, the proletariat made its presence felt in the country's first industrial concentrations. As author Jacques Couland points out:

"We know that Egypt was one of the first (in the region) to embrace capitalism. This, at least, is the general assessment of Muhammad Ali's experience in the first part of the 19th century. There would seem to have been a gap between the earliness of the first attempts to create new relations of production and the access to forms of organisation that reflected an awareness of the new social relations that ensued. Some authors trace the emergence of the Egyptian working class back to the state industrial monopolies created by Muhammad Ali. Arsenals, shipyards, spinning mills and weaving mills brought together some 30,000 workers in an Egypt that was already one of the most industrialised countries in the world, whose population was then estimated at less than three million. (...) Estimates are often contradictory, let us retain the most accurate one which marks the end of a phase. The urban workforce was estimated at 728,000 workers or 32% of the urban population (2,300,000 inhabitants); to this should be added 334,000 non-agricultural jobs in the countryside. Industry, crafts and construction employ 212,000 urban workers (29% of urban jobs) and 23,000 in the countryside. According to another estimate, the largest concentration is in the railroads, with some 20,000 workers, a quarter of whom are foreigners".²

The process that led to the emergence, then development, of the productive forces in Egypt in the second half of the 19th

century saw the working class make up as much as a third of the urban population, notably as a consequence of the transfer of part of the cotton production from the United States to Egypt, at a time when the Civil War was disrupting the American economy. It seems that the formation of part of the working class in this country can be traced back to the state industrial monopolies under the former semi-feudal regime of Muhammad Ali.

The large workforce in construction (ports, railways, wharves, etc) and tobacco manufacturing included a significant proportion of European foreigners recruited directly by European industrial employers. This was later confirmed by the chronology of class confrontations between the bourgeoisie and the working class, in which a minority of workers of European origin, whether anarchists or socialists, played an important role in the politicisation and development of consciousness within the Egyptian working class.

Elements of precursors to the Egyptian labour movement

These were the result of the spread of capitalism, as the following quote indicates:

"Presenting a picture of the history of radicalism in early twentieth-century Egypt requires not limiting oneself to Arab networks or expressing oneself only in Arabic. Cairo and Alexandria were cosmopolitan, multi-ethnic and multilingual cities, and socialism and anarchism found many sympathisers among immigrant Mediterranean communities. One of the most active groups was a network of anarchists composed mainly (but not exclusively) of Italian workers and intellectuals, whose 'HQ' was Alexandria, but which had contacts and members in Cairo and elsewhere".³

In Egypt, there were also other non-anarchist currents in the workers' movement:

3. Ilham Khuri-Makdisi: "Intellectuals, militants et travailleurs: La construction de la gauche en Égypte, 1870-1914", *Cahiers d'histoire, Revue d'histoire critique*, 105-106, 2008.

"For the record, since the turn of the century, there have been Armenian, Italian and Greek socialist groups, albeit isolated, with the appearance of Bolshevik tendencies in their midst around 1905. We know that it was in 1913 that Salamah Musa published a pamphlet entitled 'Al-Ishtirakiya' (Socialism), which, despite theoretical hesitations, was similar to Fabianism. But Marxism also reached these shores. Research has brought to light an anonymous reader's article published in 1890 in 'Al-Mu'ayyid' under the title 'The Political Economy' which shows a good knowledge of Marx's work. But if this milestone is worth mentioning only as a curiosity, the same cannot be said of the book by a young schoolteacher from Mansurah, Mustafa Hasanayni: 'Tarikh al-Madhahib al-Ishtirakiyah' (History of Socialist Principles), also published in 1913 (though only found in 1965); the documentation is more extensive and more precise (tables of the influence of the various socialist parties); the assimilation of Marxism more evident, as can be seen from the long-term programme proposed for Egypt"

So, alongside the anarchist currents, there were other currents or individuals on the marxist left, some of whom were influenced by the Bolshevik Party. Many of them may well have been among those who decided to leave the SPE (Socialist Party of Egypt) to form the ECP (Egyptian Communist Party) and join the Third International in 1922. Thus, in Egypt, the conditions were ripe for the participation of the Egyptian proletariat in the wave of revolutionary struggles of 1917-23.

It was in this context that Egyptian and immigrant workers of European origin took an active part in the first movements of struggle under the era of European-dominated industrial capitalism in Egypt.

First protest movements (1882-1914)

The first expression of struggle took place in a context where the particularly arduous working conditions of the emerging working class were conducive to the development of combativeness.

Wages were very low, and working hours

1. See "Contribution to a history of the workers' movement in Africa (part 1): Pre-1914", *International Review*, n° 145, 2nd quarter 2011.

2. Jacques Couland, "Regards sur l'histoire syndicale et ouvrière égyptienne (1899-1952)", in René Gallissot, *Mouvement ouvrier, communisme et nationalismes dans le monde arabe*, Éditions ouvrières, Paris 1978.

could be as long as 17 hours a day. It was the dockworkers who first set the example, striking frequently between 1882 and 1900 for higher wages and improved living conditions, gradually followed by workers in other industries, so that strikes were a permanent feature of the 15 years leading up to the First World War. In addition to wages and working conditions, the workers fought for reforms in their favour, including the possibility of forming associations or unions to defend themselves.

In 1911, Cairo's railway workers were able, among other benefits, to set up their own union, the "Association of the Railway Depot Workers in Cairo". Through its struggle, the Egyptian proletariat was able to wrest real reforms. Between 1882 and 1914, they had to learn the art of class struggle in the face of harsh working and living conditions imposed by the European capitalists who owned the means of production in Egypt and were also responsible for recruiting labour and organising work in the companies. This led to a practice of segregating Egyptian and European workers by granting "advantages" to the latter and not to the former, a deliberate strategic choice by the bosses to divide the struggles. Thus, the first strikes (in 1882 and 1896) were instigated by Egyptian workers. In 1899 and 1900, Italian workers also went on strike alone (without the Egyptians). However, the Egyptian proletariat, aware that it was being exploited, soon demonstrated its fighting spirit and, at times, its solidarity with workers of all nationalities, notably during the famous strike by cigarette factory workers, which brought together Egyptians and Europeans.

The first expression of open working-class struggle occurred in the same year (1882) as the occupation of Egypt by British imperialism. Some historians have seen it as an expression of resistance to English colonialism, in other words, a form of defense of the "Egyptian nation" as a whole, uniting exploiting and exploited classes, with the working class allying itself with its (Egyptian) "progressive bourgeoisie" against colonialism and reactionary forces to create a new nation. History has shown the limits of such a theory with the definitive entry of capitalism into decadence. In fact, the continuation of strike action has amply demonstrated that the working class is seeking above all to defend itself against the attacks of the capitalists who own the means of production, whatever their nationality. Nevertheless, as subsequent struggles illustrated, the Egyptian proletariat was unable to prevent the penetration of nationalist ideologies, particularly following the founding in 1907 of the Egyptian Watani (national) party, which clearly stated its determination to rely on the labour move-

ment to strengthen its influence.

However, it was during this struggle that the Egyptian working class was able to develop its own identity, that of a class associated with exploited producers, whether or not they came from the same country, or from different cultures, including Italians, Greeks and others. In fact, the trajectory of the working class in Egypt is no different, in essence, from that of other fractions of the world proletariat, forced to sell their labour power in order to live, and to enter into collective struggle against the exploiting class.

British imperialism takes advantage of the 1914-18 war to break workers' strikes

The outbreak of war upset relations within the ruling class, in this case British imperialism and sections of the Egyptian bourgeoisie. As a colonial power, Great Britain decided to establish a protectorate in Egypt at the end of 1914, thereby imposing its authority and imperialist options on the fractions of the Egyptian national bourgeoisie. It thus decided to place parties and other social organisations (trade unions) under its strict control, notably the Watani Party, which had a strong presence in working-class circles and was particularly targeted by repression, eventually being dissolved and its main representatives imprisoned. This nationalist party had been created in 1907 in the wake of the major strike movements preceding the outbreak of the First World War, when the Egyptian proletariat fought hard against the rates of production imposed by companies, particularly those owned by European bosses.

This party, along with another nationalist current, the Wafd ("Delegation"), played a central role in diverting proletarian struggles towards nationalist demands and perspectives, and in organising the workers. In other words, the party managed to disorientate many inexperienced workers with little class consciousness. In order to better attract workers, who were more or less influenced by socialist ideas, the party's leader did not hesitate to claim to be a "Labourist", thus moving closer to the right-wing of the Second International.

The working class took up the struggle once the slaughter of 1914-18 was over, but came up against the political apparatuses of the bourgeoisie.

The introduction of the state of war, with all its repressive measures, was designed to prevent or repress struggles. The Egyptian proletariat, like others around the world, was paralysed and dispersed. In spite of this, certain sectors of the workforce dem-

onstrated their discontent in the midst of the war, notably cigarette factory workers in Alexandria who went on strike between August and October 1917, and those in Cairo in 1918. Of course, they were unsuccessful in the face of a particularly repressive environment. However, as soon as the war was over, the struggles began again. Between December 1918 and March 1919, numerous strikes took place in the railroads, cigarette factories, printing works and elsewhere. These strikes were organised by the fringes of the Watani Party.

But despite their desire for autonomy, the workers came up against both the repression of the colonial power and the undermining work of the nationalist parties, Watani and Wafd, which were very influential within the working class, and whose control they vied for. In fact, the working class was obliged, on the one hand, to fight to defend its own interests against British imperialism, which dominated the whole of society, and on the other hand, could not avoid "allying" with the nationalists, themselves victims of the repression of the colonial power. This is illustrated by the following quote:

"The announcement of the arrest (on March 8) of the delegation (Wafd) set up to negotiate with the British led to a generalisation of workers' strikes and their participation with other sections of society in the major demonstrations that marked the last three weeks of March. The transport strike, backed-up by the actions of sabotage by the peasants, played an important role in hindering the movement of British troops. In the months that followed, the protest movement and the formation of unions continued. On August 18, 1919, a Conciliation and Arbitration Commission was set up, which encouraged the first collective labour contracts, but which once again insisted on the recourse to legal advisors. The preoccupation of the Watani Party (whose influence was waning) was to ensure that workers' interventions, through the Syndicate of Manual Industries, were limited to national demands, the installation of purchasing cooperatives being likely, in its view, to alleviate many difficulties. But the Wafd, which was asserting itself as a political force, had gauged the importance of the unions and was endeavouring to control them: 'They are a powerful weapon not to be neglected, thanks to their rapid capacity to mobilise in response to the call of the national movement(...)' But if these competing forces are to be noted, what prevailed at the time are the trends in favour of organising workers on an autonomous basis. The centre of this movement was in Alexandria, at the initiative of a mixed leadership of foreign and Egyptian socialists (Arab or naturalised,

like Rosenthal) who had perceived the echo of the October 1917 Revolution.”⁴ As we shall see later.

The echo and influence of the October 1917 Revolution on the Egyptian working class

The 1917 revolution undoubtedly had an impact on the Egyptian workers' movement, particularly among the most consciously politicised elements, who embarked on a process of rapprochement with the Communist International. This was against a backdrop of repeated strikes in the factories and struggles for control of the unions, pitting the genuinely proletarian fractions against Watani and Wafd.

“In February 1921, a General Confederation of Labour (GCL) with 3,000 members was finally formed around a federation of cigarette, tailor and printing unions, which had been in existence since 1920, and not without a few setbacks (followed in the same year by the founding of the Socialist Party of Egypt (SPE)). The GCL asserted itself as a member of the Red Trade Union International, while the SPE itself decided to join the Communist International in July 1922 and transformed itself into the Egyptian Communist Party (ECP) in January 1923. The split of a group of intellectuals, including Salamah Mussa, who contested this development, did not detract from the nationally Egyptian character of the CPE, whose membership was estimated at 1,500 in 1924.”⁵

The transformation of the SPE into the ECP and the GCL's accession to the Red International of Labour Unions were elements of clarification and decantation within the Egyptian labour movement. This led, on the one hand, to the installation of a majority of workers at the head of the GCL and ECP leadership and, on the other, to the reaffirmation of the right-wing fraction of the SPE, which took up reformist and nationalist positions in opposition to the Communist International. From then on, the battle was waged between internationalist revolutionary forces and reformist forces in the company of Egyptian national capital. Moreover, during the period of decantation, the nationalist Watani/Wafd parties decided to create their own trade unions in order to compete with and oppose head-on the unions affiliated to the Red International of Labour Unions. To the same end, they waged violent campaigns against Communist workers' organisations, as illustrated by Fahmi's statement to a group of workers: “We must beware of Communism, whose ‘principle’ is the ruin (and) chaos of the

world”. The Wafd party, in its brief presence in power in 1924, immediately went to war with the CPE and the GCL:

“The CGL, which is abandoning parliamentary reformism, is very active. It led dozens of strikes, but not only in foreign plants; Egyptian plants were not spared. Factory occupations, which streetcar and railway workers had exemplified before the war, were frequent. Egyptian capitalists could not remain indifferent to this movement, whose organisation became even more clearly defined with the creation of Misr Bank in 1920 and the Federation of Industries in 1922. Neither could the Wafd, triumphantly swept to power by the electorate and installed in government on January 28, 1924, ignore these developments. The first step was to forcibly ban the congress convened for February 23 and 24, 1924 in Alexandria by the CPE. The second was to use factory occupations to try to break up both the GCL and the CPE. The evacuation of factories was achieved on February 25 at the Egoline oil company in Alexandria, and again, but with greater difficulty, on March 3 and 4 at the Abu Sheib factories in Alexandria. Nonetheless, from the beginning of March, this was the pretext for a wave of arrests of communist and trade union leaders, all Egyptian, as well as searches and seizures of documents. Between October 10, 1923 and March 1, 1924, the militants were accused of disseminating revolutionary ideas contrary to the Constitution, inciting crime and aggression against the bosses. Their trial took place in September 1924, and several of them received heavy sentences.”⁶

This repressive episode marked a turning point in the balance of power between the working class and the bourgeoisie, in favour of the latter, both inside and outside the country. In fact, in Egypt itself, the Egyptian proletariat's combativeness in reaction to the deterioration of its living conditions led it to unite against Watani/Wafd, on the one hand, and the entire Egyptian and British bourgeoisie, on the other, who were under attack from strikes during this period. Outside the country, the counter-revolution was already underway by 1924. From then on, the Egyptian working class was unable to rely on truly proletarian organisations, or on the Third International, and thus suffered defeat after defeat throughout the counter-revolutionary period, both under British colonial rule and under the Egyptian bourgeoisie, which became “independent” in 1922.

The Third International and the Egyptian workers' movement in the 1920s

As we have seen, the emerging vanguard of the Egyptian working class, struggling in the face of very difficult living conditions, eventually drew closer to the international labour movement by joining the Communist International, breaking with the reformist and nationalist elements of the old party (SPE). At a time when the working class, faced with very difficult living conditions, was beginning to forge a class identity, the Third International was taking an opportunist course, particularly in its policy towards the new communist parties of the East and Middle East. The Baku Congress was a tragic illustration of this, marking a clear retreat from the spirit of proletarian internationalism and, as a result, a blatant advance in opportunism, as the following quotation illustrates:

“The fine speeches of the congress and the declarations of solidarity between the European proletariat and the peasants of the East, despite much that was correct about the need for soviets and revolution, were not enough to hide the opportunist course towards indiscriminate support for nationalist movements: ‘We appeal, comrades, to the warlike sentiments that animated the peoples of the East in the past, when these peoples, led by their great conquerors, advanced on Europe. We know, Comrades, that our enemies will say that we are appealing to the memory of Genghis Khan and the great conquering caliphs of Islam. But we are convinced that yesterday (at the congress) you pulled out your knives and revolvers, not to conquer, not to turn Europe into a graveyard. You brandished them, together with workers from all over the world, with the aim of creating a new civilisation, that of the free worker’ (Radek's words). The congress manifesto concludes with an injunction to the peoples of the East to join ‘the first real holy war, under the red banner of the Communist International.’”⁷

This call from Baku for the whole of the East to “stand up as one” under the banner of the International brought pan-Islamism, which had been thrown out the door at the Second Congress of the International, back in through the window, preceded by the “Treaty of Friendship and Fraternity” signed in 1921 between the USSR and Turkey, while Mustapha Kemal's government was massacring Turkish communists.

The consequences were dramatic: “The results of all this opportunism were

4. J. Couland, *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. “Communists and the National Question, Part 3: The Debate during the Revolutionary Wave and the Lessons for Today”, *International Review* n° 42.

fatal for the workers' movement. With the world revolution sinking into deeper and deeper defeat, and the proletariat in Russia exhausted and decimated by famine and civil war, the Communist International more and more became the foreign policy instrument of the Bolsheviks, who found themselves in the role of managers of Russian capital. From being a serious error within the workers' movement, the policy of support for national liberation struggles was transformed by the late 1920s into the imperialist strategy of a capitalist power."⁸

Indeed, in the years following the Baku Congress and throughout the 1930s, the Third International applied harmful and contradictory orientations towards the colonies, always inspired by the defense of the strategic interests of Russian imperialism. Clearly, following this congress, the general orientation was: *"In the colonies and semi-colonies, the communist parties must orient themselves towards the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, which is transformed into the dictatorship of the working class. Communist parties must by all means inculcate in the masses the idea of organising peasant soviets."*⁹

*"In view of the fact that the USSR is the only fatherland of the international proletariat, the principal bulwark of its achievements and the most important factor for its international emancipation, the international proletariat must on its part facilitate the success of the work of socialist construction in the USSR, and defend it against the attacks of the capitalist Powers by all the means in its power."*¹⁰

"In various Arab countries, the working class has played and is already playing an ever-increasing role in the struggle for national liberation (Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, Algeria, Tunisia, etc.). In various countries, working-class trade union organisations are already being formed or are re-establishing themselves after their destruction, although for the most part they are in the hands of national-reformists. Workers' strikes and demonstrations, the active participation of the working masses in the struggle against imperialism, certain layers of the working class distancing themselves from the national-reformists, all this signals that the young Arab working class has entered the path of struggle to fulfil its historic role in the anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution, in the struggle for

*national unity."*¹¹

This opportunist course was none other than the Stalinist counter-revolution on the march in the East. It was in this context, in the aftermath of the Baku Congress, that the working class in Egypt had to fight to defend its class interests, its vanguard being massacred by the ruling nationalists of Wafd, without any reaction from the CI, which was already trapped by its policy of support for Eastern and Arab nationalist movements.

But Stalin was forced to change his line as many Arab nationalist parties escaped his control, turning increasingly towards rival imperialist powers (England, France). From then on, the CI denounced "national-reformism" in the ranks of the Arab bourgeoisie, embodied in particular by the Wafd party. The latter was then denounced by the CI for "treason", for having suppressed the slogan "(national) independence"!

In fact, this "directive" from the Third International was addressed to the Egyptian CP and the "Red Syndicate", ordering them to implement this "umpteenth new orientation" in order to wrest control of the Egyptian unions from the "national" traitors allied with "English imperialism".

The intersecting impact of the nationalism relayed by the degenerating Communist International

This situation also confirms that the unions had become veritable instruments for the control of the working class, in the service of the bourgeoisie. In other words, between the Baku Congress and the end of the Second World War, the Egyptian working class, though combative, was literally disoriented, tossed about and framed by the counter-revolutionary forces of Stalinism and Egyptian nationalism.

The degenerating C.I. now placed itself exclusively at the service of Russian imperialism, supporting and disseminating its imperialist projects and policies and slogans such as "class against class", "four-class front" and so on. The consequences of this orientation, and of Stalinist counter-revolution in general, weighed deeply and durably on the working class, in Egypt and throughout the world, adding to the poison of the nationalism of "national liberation" struggles which infected work-

ing-class struggles for years. The Egyptian proletariat is highly illustrative of such a situation, its ranks having been infested since the mid-1920s by a large number of Stalinist agents charged with applying counter-revolutionary orientations. This same "doctrine" was applied to the letter by the Egyptian Stalinists, who systematically described every strike movement of any size in a "foreign" (European-run) company during the colonial period as a "national liberation" (or "anti-imperialist") struggle.

For their part, from the 1920s/1930s, Wafd and Watani, with their strategy of winning power, encouraged workers to strike above all against foreign companies established in Egypt, while trying to spare national companies, with varying degrees of success depending on the episode. More significant is the fact that some historians have not hesitated to equate the strike movements that took place at the same time as the nationalist uprisings against British occupation (1882, 1919 and 1922) with "national liberation" struggles. In fact, the workers were first and foremost fighting against the deterioration of their working and living conditions, before their struggle was immediately diverted towards nationalist demands, not without resistance from some of them.

Since the creation of the first (recognised) trade union by railway workers in 1911, the bourgeoisie has always sought to (and often succeeded in) effectively controlling the working class to divert it from its terrain as an exploited and revolutionary class. Thus, in the immediate aftermath of its creation in 1907, the Watani party penetrated the ranks of the working class, gaining acceptance as a nationalist and "labour" party by relying on the trade unions, before being joined in this endeavour by other bourgeois organisations (liberal, Islamist, Stalinist). Yet, despite the bourgeoisie's determination to prevent it from struggling on its own class terrain, the working class continued to fight, albeit with enormous difficulty. This is what we will see in the next part of this article.

Lassou (January 2025)

8. Ibid.

9. "Theses of the VIth Congress of the Comintern 1928", quoted by René Gallissot in "Les Tâches des communistes dans le Mouvement national", in *La Correspondance internationale*, n° 1, January 4, 1933.

10. The programme of the Communist International, Comintern Sixth Congress 1928)

11. "Les Tâches des communistes dans le Mouvement national", dans *La Correspondance internationale*, n°1, 4 January 1933, published by René Gallissot, Ibid. Also published, under the name *Annexe*, on page 49, in René Gallissot, *Mouvement ouvrier, communisme et nationalismes dans le monde arabe*, Éditions ouvrières, Paris 1978.

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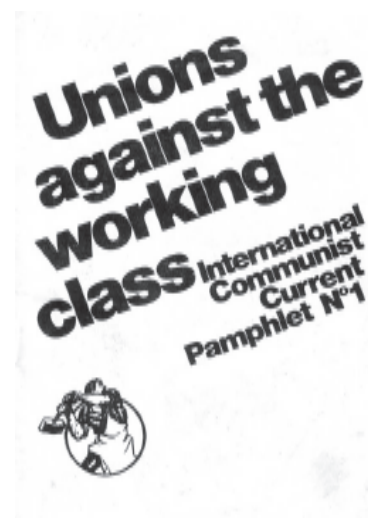
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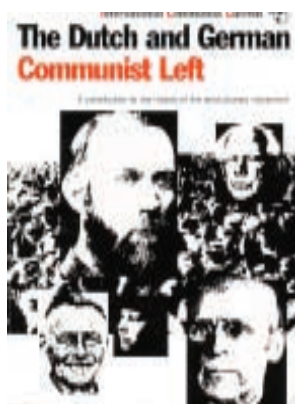
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ICC Publication



Why trade unions can no longer be used as the organisational form for working class struggle. How the unions consistently sabotage independent class action.



The Dutch communist left is one of the major components of the revolutionary current which broke away from the degenerating Communist International in the 1920s. Well before Trotsky's Left Opposition, and in a more profound way, the communist left had been able

to expose the opportunist dangers which threatened the International and its parties and which eventually led to their demise. In the struggle for the intransigent defence of revolutionary principles, this current, represented in particular by the KAPD in Germany, the KAPN in Holland, and the left of the Communist Party of Italy animated by Bordiga, came out against the International's policies on questions like participation in elections and trade unions, the formation of 'united fronts' with social democracy, and support for national liberation struggles. It was against the positions of the communist left that Lenin wrote his pamphlet *Left Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder*; and this text drew a response in *Reply to Lenin*, written by one of the main figures of the Dutch left, Herman Gorter.

In fact, the Dutch left, like the Italian left, had been formed well before the first world war, as part of the same struggle waged by Luxemburg and Lenin against the opportunism and reformism which was gaining hold of the parties of the Second International. It was no accident that Lenin himself, before reverting to centrist positions at the head of the Communist International, had, in his book *State and Revolution*, leaned heavily on the analyses of Anton Pannekoek, who was the main theoretician of the Dutch left. This document is an indispensable complement to *The Italian Communist Left*, already published by the ICC, for all those who want to know the real history of the communist movement behind all the falsifications which Stalinism and Trotskyism have erected around it.

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BASIC POSITIONS OF THE ICC

The International Communist Current defends the following political positions:

* Since the first world war, capitalism has been a decadent social system. It has twice plunged humanity into a barbaric cycle of crisis, world war, reconstruction and new crisis. In the 1980s, it entered into the final phase of this decadence, the phase of decomposition. There is only one alternative offered by this irreversible historical decline: socialism or barbarism, world communist revolution or the destruction of humanity.

* The Paris Commune of 1871 was the first attempt by the proletariat to carry out this revolution, in a period when the conditions for it were not yet ripe. Once these conditions had been provided by the onset of capitalist decadence, the October revolution of 1917 in Russia was the first step towards an authentic world communist revolution in an international revolutionary wave which put an end to the imperialist war and went on for several years after that. The failure of this revolutionary wave, particularly in Germany in 1919-23, condemned the revolution in Russia to isolation and to a rapid degeneration. Stalinism was not the product of the Russian revolution, but its gravedigger.

* The statified regimes which arose in the USSR, eastern Europe, China, Cuba etc and were called 'socialist' or 'communist' were just a particularly brutal form of the universal tendency towards state capitalism, itself a major characteristic of the period of decadence.

* Since the beginning of the 20th century, all wars are imperialist wars, part of the deadly struggle between states large and small to conquer or retain a place in the international arena. These wars bring nothing to humanity but death and destruction on an ever-increasing scale. The working class can only respond to them through its international solidarity and by struggling against the bourgeoisie in all countries.

* All the nationalist ideologies - 'national independence', 'the right of nations to self-determination' etc - whatever their pretext, ethnic, historical or religious, are a real poison for the workers. By calling on them to take the side of one or another faction of the bourgeoisie, they divide workers and lead them to massacre each other in the interests and wars of their exploiters.

* In decadent capitalism, parliament and elections are nothing but a masquerade. Any call to participate in the parliamentary circus can only reinforce the lie that presents these elections as a real choice for the exploited. 'Democracy', a particularly hypocritical form of the domination of the bourgeoisie, does not differ at root from other forms of capitalist dictatorship, such as Stalinism and fascism.

* All factions of the bourgeoisie are equally

reactionary. All the so-called 'workers', 'Socialist' and 'Communist' parties (now ex-'Communists'), the leftist organisations (Trotskyists, Maoists and ex-Maoists, official anarchists) constitute the left of capitalism's political apparatus. All the tactics of 'popular fronts', 'anti-fascist fronts' and 'united fronts', which mix up the interests of the proletariat with those of a faction of the bourgeoisie, serve only to smother and derail the struggle of the proletariat.

* With the decadence of capitalism, the unions everywhere have been transformed into organs of capitalist order within the proletariat. The various forms of union organisation, whether 'official' or 'rank and file', serve only to discipline the working class and sabotage its struggles.

* In order to advance its combat, the working class has to unify its struggles, taking charge of their extension and organisation through sovereign general assemblies and committees of delegates elected and revocable at any time by these assemblies.

* Terrorism is in no way a method of struggle for the working class. The expression of social strata with no historic future and of the decomposition of the petty bourgeoisie, when it's not the direct expression of the permanent war between capitalist states, terrorism has always been a fertile soil for manipulation by the bourgeoisie. Advocating secret action by small minorities, it is in complete opposition to class violence, which derives from conscious and organised mass action by the proletariat.

* The working class is the only class which can carry out the communist revolution. Its revolutionary struggle will inevitably lead the working class towards a confrontation with the capitalist state. In order to destroy capitalism, the working class will have to overthrow all existing states and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale: the international power of the workers' councils, regrouping the entire proletariat.

* The communist transformation of society by the workers' councils does not mean 'self-management' or the nationalisation of the economy. Communism requires the conscious abolition by the working class of capitalist social relations: wage labour, commodity production, national frontiers. It means the creation of a world community in which all activity is oriented towards the full satisfaction of human needs.

* The revolutionary political organisation constitutes the vanguard of the working class and is an active factor in the generalisation of class consciousness within the proletariat. Its role is neither to 'organise the working class' nor to 'take power' in its name, but to participate actively in the movement towards the unification of struggles, towards workers taking control of them for themselves, and at the same time to draw out the revolutionary political

goals of the proletariat's combat.

OUR ACTIVITY

Political and theoretical clarification of the goals and methods of the proletarian struggle, of its historic and its immediate conditions.

Organised intervention, united and centralised on an international scale, in order to contribute to the process which leads to the revolutionary action of the proletariat.

The regroupment of revolutionaries with the aim of constituting a real world communist party, which is indispensable to the working class for the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a communist society.

OUR ORIGINS

The positions and activity of revolutionary organisations are the product of the past experiences of the working class and of the lessons that its political organisations have drawn throughout its history. The ICC thus traces its origins to the successive contributions of the *Communist League* of Marx and Engels (1847-52), the three Internationals (the *International Workingmen's Association*, 1864-72, the *Socialist International*, 1889-1914, the *Communist International*, 1919-28), the left fractions which detached themselves from the degenerating Third International in the years 1920-30, in particular the *German, Dutch and Italian Lefts*.

ICC postal addresses

Write to the following addresses without mentioning the name:

Spain, France, Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador
Revue Internationale
BP 30605
F-31006 Toulouse Cedex 6
France

Belgium
BP 102, 2018, Antwerp Central Station,
Belgium

Great Britain, Australia, United States
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