

Contributions sent to the promoting committee in preparation for the meeting
“The crisis in the imperialist world order and the response of the proletariat”
to be held in Milan
on July, Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th.

First dispatch

JRCL TANKYU-HA

The Contemporary Tasks of the World Proletariat: Overcoming Bankrupt Stalinism and Defeating Imperialism in the East and the West

1.

Putin's Russia has invaded Ukraine by forcibly mobilising workers and farmers as soldiers and is waging a brutal war of genocide. The Zelensky regime in Ukraine is arming the workers and farmers with NATO-supplied weapons to fight for "territorial defence". The imperialist state powers of the USA and Europe are supplying the Zelensky regime, the rulers of Ukraine, with tanks and other modern weapons to fight against Russia. Finland has joined NATO. And Japan's Kishida flew to Kiev and promised support to Zelensky. Xi Jinping's China is providing economic support to the invading Russia. The war conducted in this way is nothing but *the imperialist war that has taken a new form in the 21st century*.

At the time of the First World War, Lenin demanded: "Turn the imperialist war into a civil war!" It is now time for us to apply this Leninian principle to today's world of the 21st century. We must break the imperialist states' behaviour and end this war on the basis of the international solidarity of the working class in Russia, Ukraine, NATO countries, Japan and China. The Russian proletariat must overthrow the Putin regime and the Ukrainian proletariat must overthrow the Zelensky regime.

Also in East Asia, the US and China are stepping up their military and political actions over Taiwan. There is now a growing risk of war in the region. The Biden-led US administration has escalated military action against China and initiated a series of measures to close in on the Taiwanese government. The Chinese leadership of Xi Jinping does not hide its desire for the "military liberation" of Taiwan. The imperialist state of Japan, which is in a military alliance with the US imperialism, is not only constantly increasing its military forces but has also decided to have the new ability to attack the bases of the countries it considers as enemies in a preventive way.

In order to fight against the schemes of these states, we have to create and strengthen the international class unity of the proletariat in China, USA, Taiwan and Japan.

2.

In the 21st century, countries such as the USA, Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy and Japan form one pole in the mutual confrontation in the world. These countries, which emerged as imperialist states at the beginning of the 20th century, existed in opposition to the Stalinist Soviet regime and its bloc, which was the deformation of revolutionary Russia. The economic form of these imperialist states is state monopoly capitalism, which has collapsed repeatedly and survived each time with temporary solutions until today. These Western states can be called *traditional imperialist states*.

On the other hand, Russia and China, which form the other pole in the world, transformed from Stalinist bureaucratic despotism states to capitalist states at the turning point of the collapse of the Soviet

Union in 1991. Since the beginning of the 2000s, these two countries have been developing their political and economic bases and military capabilities worthy of imperialism in order to compete with the Western imperialist countries. It can be said that the political and economic structure of these two countries is state capitalism, which was formed on the basis of the dissolution of the Stalinist political and economic system, and the essence of the state is none other than the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. In the sense that these two eastern states are imperialist states transformed from Stalinist bureaucratic despotism, they can simply be called *imperialist states of the transformed type*.

The contemporary world consists of a movement made up of the following three opposing poles: the camps of Eastern and Western imperialism, which are in military, political and economic conflict, and the countries of the global South, such as India and Brazil, which are trying to take advantage of both.

In today's world, the revolutionary leaderships of each country must organise their own proletariat as a class and make it firmly unite internationally in the aim of creating a world proletarian party. On this basis, we must successively and permanently overthrow the imperialist powers not only in the West but also in the East and the capitalist powers in all countries and establish a dictatorship of the proletariat. For this, the strategy of the world revolution must be *Anti-Imperialism and Anti-Stalinism*. Because, in order to defeat the existing state power, every revolutionary proletarian must launch an ideological=organisational struggle for the radical overcoming of bankrupt Stalinism and thus create an anti-Stalinist revolutionary vanguard party. And on the basis of this struggle, they must organise the proletariat and other working strata as class, liberating them from various ideologies such as nationalism, social democracy and Stalinism. The guidance for creating the substantial-organizational basis of the proletarian revolution, i.e. for organising the revolutionary subject, can be called *organizing tactics*. We must not only clarify the strategy and tactics for proletarian revolution, but also the organising tactics as a guideline for the organisational struggle that we ourselves practise. The organising tactics that we clarify from the anti-Stalinist standpoint are to apply to our own practice.

3.

We, Tankyu-ha (“Inquiring Faction”) of Japan Revolutionary Communist League, have revealed that Revolutionary Marxist Faction of JRCL, which fell out of the anti-Stalinist movement, and the Trotskyist factions in Japan have been corrupted into national chauvinism on the occasion of the war in Ukraine; we are developing an ideological struggle to overcome this.

The JRCL-RMF condemned Russia for its invasion, which it said was “aimed at the annihilation of the Ukrainian state and nation”, and accused the West of “refraining from supplying the Zelensky regime with a few weapons for fear of being threatened by Putin with his nuclear weapons, although this war is a struggle for the defence of the Ukrainian state, nation and territory”. This represents nothing more than the corruption of the JRCL-RMF into the same position of “defending the fatherland” as the social democrats of the Second International. The JRCL-RMF leaderships demand that the West support the Zelensky regime, even though this Ukrainian government dominates the Ukrainian working class and farmers. In

reality, this Western imperialism is supplying the Zelensky regime with weapons to force the Ukrainian workers and labouring masses to fight against the Russian army. It is obvious that the JRCL-RMF is positioning itself as part of this Western imperialist power.

The party bureaucracy of the JRCL-RMF ignores the contradiction between the ruling and the ruled class in Ukraine and the contradiction between the ruling and the ruled class in Russia. It therefore regards the present war as a war to exterminate the entire Ukrainian nation by the entire Russian nation.

Lotta Comunista criticized this kind of JRCL-RMF as follows; “Comrades, let us reread Lenin in these moments of acute world tension! (...) Regardless of how difficult this is, in the minority, even in extreme isolation, it is decisive for revolutionaries to work in this sense, with this spirit, to point this direction. (...) If one sees only or predominantly the defence war against Russian imperialist aggression, without seeing the revolutionary struggle against world imperialism, one sees the tree but not the forest, and the Ukrainian workers are left to the bourgeois national forces and the manoeuvres of the world imperialism, without the possibility of revolutionary salvation.”

We explicitly consent to this criticism!

The revolutionaries in Ukraine and Russia should organize the proletariat as a class and create a subject to overthrow their own governments, even though this may be extremely difficult. The revolutionary parties of all countries of the world must organize the proletariat of their countries as a class and give revolutionary support to the workers of Ukraine and Russia.

The existing Russian state is an imperialist state, which is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, in which the ruling class, composed of Putin's lackeys and oligarchs, dominates the proletariat. The existing Ukrainian state is a capitalist state, which is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, in which the ruling class, composed of the Ukrainian national supremacists and the Ukrainian oligarchs, dominates the proletariat. This Ukrainian state is supported by the Western imperialist states.

This conflict between Russia and Ukraine is by no means a conflict between nations. There is nothing that could be perceived as a “national question” between the two. It is a confrontation and military conflict between the state of the Russian bourgeoisie, which dominates the Russian proletariat, and the state of the Ukrainian bourgeoisie, which dominates the Ukrainian proletariat. The bourgeois states are in conflict with each other.

Moreover, there is and was no “national bourgeoisie” in Ukraine, nor any who could be called a “comprador bourgeoisie”. Until the Russian invasion, there were two kinds of oligarchs in Ukraine: those who found interests mainly in associating with Western monopoly capitalists, and those who found interests mainly in associating with Russian oligarchs. Furthermore, as evidenced by the fact that China is the largest trading partner of Ukraine, all of them have made their profits from collaborating with Chinese bureaucratic capitalists and emerging capitalists.

The rulers in Ukraine, with these capitalists as their class base, have integrated the workers and farmers as a “nation” into the state by spreading and penetrating the ideology of anti-Russian chauvinism = Ukrainian national supremacism.

It must be said; it is anachronistic to see something like an “national question” between Ukraine and Russia, both ruled by the bourgeoisie.

The problematic lies in the transform of the class struggle in Ukraine.

Before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Ukrainian trade unions had organized mass protests against the attempts of Zelensky's regime to change the law on labour. Shortly after the Russian attack began, the Ukrainian parliament passed a new law on “labour relations under martial law”, which was signed by Zelensky. This law stipulates that under the conditions of martial law, employers can ruthlessly dismiss workers, stop paying wages to workers and even suspend the validity of collective agreements between employers and trade unions.

According to some reports, Mykola Starodub, a leader of the Ukrainian Postal Workers' Union, affiliated to the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine (FPU), said the following; “The workers of the Ukrposhta (Ukraine’s national post) are doing voluntary work in the war, preparing parts for bulletproof vests, sewing them, weaving nets for camouflage, helping each other and delivering humanitarian aid. It is war and the unions believe that the entire population must be united in the goal of winning the war against Russia”.

This statement is a self-justification of the trade union cadres, namely the labour aristocracy, who betrayed the members of the unions, fell into a position of “defence of the fatherland”, transformed the unions into warring units and actively mobilized the workers in the rearguard of the war. With the outbreak of the war with Russia, the Ukrainian trade union cadres fell into the principle of defence of the fatherland and transformed the trade unions into warring units.

Our task is class solidarity with the Ukrainian proletariat to defeat this miserable reality of the class struggle in Ukraine.

4.

If the region in concern is a colony of an imperialist state, the party founded by the revolutionary proletarians there will issue guidelines for "national independence"; the problems of the workers and farmers there should be called "national questions" in relation to the imperialist country.

When there is an independent capitalist state in a particular land, the revolutionary party in that land should not issue directives for “national independence” even if the economy of that land is backward and is subjected to various forms of political, military and economic obstruction by the imperialist states. The reason why is that a state of the bourgeoisie has been established here and the relationship between this state and the imperialist states is the relationship between the backward capitalist states and the imperialist states. Therefore, the problems arising from this relationship between the two cannot be conceived as a “national question”.

In the colonies, the demand for liberation from imperialist rule constitutes a transitional demand of the local revolution as part of the world proletarian revolution. The revolutionary party organizes the proletariat and peasantry as class by proposing a guideline for the carrying out of the proletarian demands

as well as a guideline for “national independence”. At this point, the party must establish a united front that penetrates the hegemony of the proletariat including the national bourgeoisie and other classes; it is necessary to create a soviet of workers and farmers (including the national bourgeoisie) in the colonies based on international class solidarity with the proletariat of the imperialist homeland. This must be the organizational basis. With this soviet as the organizational basis, the party realizes the task of national independence as the establishment of the dictatorial power of the proletariat.

But these guidelines for national liberation struggles are not valid regarding Ukraine. For this country is not a colony of any imperialist state.

The urgent task of revolutionary Marxists in the 21st century is to free the proletariat from the spell of nationalism and organise it as a class. We must strive for this.

Comrades! Let us fight together!

ALTERNATIVA LIBERTARIA/FdCA

AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND ITS WARS

More than 50 conflicts currently cover the world in blood – they stem from the fierce competition between the imperialist powers for control of the world market.

The war in Ukraine triggered by the aggression of Russian imperialism, which is strong militarily but weak economically, confirms that the process of redefining the areas of influence of the major capitalist and military powers has come to maturity. This is a process that inevitably takes place with war.

Russia and the United States clash in the Ukraine conflict through a proxy war to control the Eurasian market into which is also targeted by China – a young, dynamic capitalism that is also now firmly set on an imperialistic dimension, which inevitably involves the arms race that already characterises other powers such as Japan.

In Russia and Ukraine, there are not two peoples fighting each other: instead, there continues to be a proletariat and a bourgeoisie in the two countries; and it is precisely the Russian and Ukrainian bourgeoisie and their states that, having irreconcilable interests, are fighting each other on the battlefield, killing civilians and dragging the workers of their respective countries to slaughter each other for interests that are not their own.

The war in Ukraine is one that the European Union is facing in a condition of strategic inadequacy with respect to the needs of the escalating confrontation between the major imperialist powers. Here its weakness lies. Despite these heightened contradictions and its considerable delay, Europe remains a well-endowed imperialist pole with considerable productive and financial power, a single currency, and an enormous military capacity. These characteristics make European imperialism a reality that certainly cannot be underestimated, and one that is destined to remain in play even within NATO.

In the context of the war in Ukraine, even the UN is giving way to the prominence of military alliances that, just like NATO, stand in the service of dominant US imperialism, in opposition to Russian and Chinese imperialism and also qualifying as anti-European.

Capitalism seems to be willing to gamble everything, moving ever closer to a world war, with unimaginable catastrophic consequences: that is why the war in Ukraine must end immediately.

In any case, the first victim will be Ukraine, destined for decades to be subjected to the winning side's tutelage. This tutelage will provide for the repayment of war debts with poverty and exploitation of the proletariat of that country an everyday occurrence. The proletariat will be forced to submit to the rules that will be imposed on it by the new power relations that have matured in the imperialist clash between the powers.

Not even the subaltern classes of the other capitalist countries will escape from this

situation, as they will pay the war debts imposed by their respective bourgeoisies, which will be eventually busy in dividing up the spoils of war.

The leaders of major Western governments have repeatedly met with Zelensky, the champion of democracies at the head of a corrupt government that has outlawed opposition parties, introduced laws banning strikes and giving the bosses total freedom over the workers (in short, in a similar fashion to what has happened in Russia...). These measures will assure Zelensky total support until victory. Western governments that fill their mouths with the words “freedom and international law”, hypocritically pretending not to see all the other ongoing wars and occupations, such as in Syria, in Yemen (where Saudi planes are bombing civilians), and in Palestine (where the territories conquered by war are de facto annexed by Israel) – and we won’t mention the many previous conflicts unleashed by the powers.

These are the dramatic consequences of conscious choices made by the major capitalist powers in conflict over the partitioning of the world: the immense destruction of the environment and of life itself; the hundreds of thousands of human lives mowed down on the battlefields and as many deaths among the civilian populations of bombed cities; and the exoduses from war zones of huge masses of desperate human beings which have died in scores on the shores of the Mediterranean countries that reject them.

We will not stand for any flags or any nations because we know that wars are not fought between the aggressed and the aggressors. Wars are generated by the capitalist bourgeoisies and their state apparatuses for their interests of domination.

For us libertarian communists, internationalism is and remains the only antidote to the barbarism of the capitalist system.

The war can overwhelm the social movement that opposes it, but it cannot annihilate it. Little by little, the fanfare of illusions broadcasted by the propaganda of this or that government and military headquarters will ease – in Rome but also in Moscow and Kyiv, as well as in Washington and in Berlin.

The capitalist system and its states are geared to accumulating profits by increasing the harsh social reality of growing misery, inequality and unemployment, inflation and deprivation. Throughout the world, the subordinate classes pay for war expenses through their increased exploitation of labour power – especially women – 2,800,000 fatal accidents at work every year, employment precariousness and new inequalities, and consistent cuts in wages, essential social services and pensions. However, the conflict between capital and labour is also growing and asserting itself in the world: in France against pension reform as well as in the UK and Germany mobilisations for contract renewals are growing. It is in this crisis scenario that opposition to war is born and consolidates. It grows due to desertion in Ukraine as in Russia. Throughout Europe an aversion to capitalism's wars takes shape in all those local committees that fight against military installations, military training facilities, the

destruction of territory, the nefarious presence of militarism in television and schools: everywhere opposition to militarism and bosses' wars are brewing.

Entrusting to bourgeois parliaments and institutions the functions and perspectives of mass movements and trade union organisation (albeit considering the latter reformist, as trade unions are in capitalist society), means substituting the dynamics of the clash between the ruling and oppressed classes with the logic of a reconciliation between the two. By means of the moderation of trade union demands and conflict in the perspective of compatibility with the capitalist system and the pursuit of the interests of the respective imperialisms, this reconciliation divides our class unity and hampers the construction of a class consciousness for the evolution of the international proletariat "from a class in itself to a class for itself", towards the ambitious and exciting internationalist perspective.

Working women and men have no interest in participating in the wars of capital, however these wars are depicted. With regard to the war in Ukraine and all wars we say that we do not side with the warring parties and we support military defection.

We fight for open borders to allow soldiers and civilians – who do not want to die and fight a war that is not theirs – to escape.

Every woman and man have the right to flee wars, pain, misery and the dictatorships they impose. We are therefore for the unconditional acceptance of all human beings who flee their countries ravaged by the wars of capital to build a better and fairer life for themselves. They are sisters and brothers of our own class with whom to embark on a common path to liberate us from capitalism.

In these times of war we particularly express solidarity with all deserters and those who rebel against militarism and military spending, in war zones and in the countries in which we live. In Europe, the borders must be open and we want our solidarity networks in support of defection to be respected. Working women and men do not need wars – class internationalism is once again the antidote to militarism and nationalism.

Without overcoming capitalism, the logic of competition, profit and its accumulation, there will be no possibility for human beings to take control of their lives nor for the construction of a society based on peace, freedom and equality.

Against nationalism and Nazi-fascist regurgitations; against all forms of authoritarianism, racism, patriarchy and intolerance – these are instruments that have always been used by the bourgeoisie when it comes to making workers pay the bill for wars – we express our full support for deserters, opponents and those who claim the right not to participate in the imperialist slaughter.

Against wars for internationalism!

No to sending military aid!

*Yes to welcoming and supporting Russian and Ukrainian defectors
and refugees from all wars!
For a libertarian communist society!*

May 2023

*Alternativa Libertaria/Federazione dei Comunisti Anarchici (FdCA)
[Libertarian Alternative/Federation of Anarchist Communists]*

PARTITO COMUNISTA DEI LAVORATORI (INTERNATIONAL TROTSKYIST OPPOSITION) - ITALY

The Russian Revolution of 1917 represented the first consolidated realization of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Nevertheless, the backwardness of the socio-economic situation in Russia, the defeat of the international revolution, the consequences for the working class and its vanguard of the civil war 1918-20, and the related economic difficulties of the new state led to the triumph of a new bureaucratic caste, which had its principal representative in Stalin. Ascending to power the Stalinist bureaucracy had become a parasite on the state created by the revolution and the world revolutionary processes. The sovietic bureaucracy and/or the political forces linked to it directed and controlled some of these processes, in particular, in the period immediately following the Second World War, all the way to the overthrow of capitalism.

This provoked the birth, alongside the original degenerated workers' state of the USSR (and Mongolia) of a series of workers' states bureaucratically deformed from their origin.

The degenerated workers' states and the deformed workers' states (Yugoslavia, Albania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, East Germany, North Korea, China, Vietnam, Cuba, Cambodia, Laos) were characterized by the contradiction between the socialized (proletarian) nature of the relations of production — and therefore of ownership — and the fact that the proletariat had been robbed of political power by a bureaucratic caste which had a petty-bourgeois character. This caste exercised an oppressive dictatorship over the masses and made use of its dominance to maintain and reinforce the material privileges which it enjoyed by virtue of the bourgeois nature of the relations of distribution. The ruling bureaucracy constituted a fundamental obstacle to further socialist development, and its defense of its material privileges and political power made it an element of fundamental instability, a block to the development of the workers' state, and a vehicle for bringing the pressure exerted by world capitalism into the workers' state itself. Thus, the task of the proletariat was to overthrow, by means of political revolution, the ruling Stalinist bureaucratic caste.

The situation described above was profoundly and dramatically changed from the late 1980s. In the Transitional Program of 1938 Trotsky affirmed:

“The political prognosis has an alternative character: either the bureaucracy, becoming ever more the organ of the world bourgeoisie in the workers' state, will overthrow the new forms of property and plunge the country back to capitalism; or the working class will crush the bureaucracy and open the way to socialism”.

In the framework of a negative international situation — characterized also by the absence of a consistently revolutionary international leadership, even if a minority one — and also because of the weight of many decades of Stalinist oppression on the working class of the degenerated and deformed workers' states, the first hypothesis was realized.

The bureaucracy, in its large majority, placed itself on the terrain of capitalist restoration.

This provoked the collapse in somewhat different forms of the USSR, the deformed workers' states of Eastern Europe, Mongolia, Cambodia and the constitution of regimes and state apparatuses of a bourgeois character. These have developed the process of capitalist restoration and created new bourgeois states, in general with intermediate capitalist development. With the exception of Russia, which, thanks to its demographic, military and partly economic weight, has been consolidating as an imperialist country.

In other countries (China, Vietnam, Laos) the bureaucracy succeeded in developing a restorationist project, avoiding the negative repercussions that occurred initially in the USSR and Eastern Europe. Thus, it developed this process, while at the same time maintaining bureaucratic state control of the process itself. But this in no way eliminates the capitalist restoration that occurred, which just takes the form of state capitalism — not in the sense of the anti-Marxist theory of various centrist or ultraleft leaders (Cliff, Dunayevskaya, Bordiga) with respect to the previous bureaucratically ruled workers' states, — but in the proper one (used, for example, by Lenin), that is, of a capitalist economy with strong control by and also economic presence of the state and its managerial apparatus.

In fact, the above process has led China to develop in an imperialist sense, becoming the second world power after the USA — indeed, their confrontation constitutes the fundamental aspect of world politics

From a great power standpoint, the confrontation between the US and its allies on one side, and Russia and China on the other, looks much like the Cold War before the Sino-Soviet split in 1961. But then the Soviet Union and China were bureaucratically deformed workers' states, that is, states in which capitalism had been overthrown but the party and state bureaucracy ruled, not the workers. Now the confrontation is among imperialist powers on all sides.

Russia and China are full participants in the imperialist order, with their own monopolies, finance capital, financial oligarchies, capital export, and place in the economic and territorial division of the world.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Chinese Revolution of 1949 overthrew capitalism and established governments that could direct their countries' economic development, despite the hostility of the imperialist powers. By the 1980s both the Soviet Union and China were at an impasse. They had developed to the point where they could no longer grow by extensive means sufficiently fast to satisfy the demands of the bureaucracy, the professional and managerial middle class, and the working class. They had to grow by more intensive means, producing higher quality goods and services, using more efficient techniques.

The Soviet bureaucracy, led by Mikhail Gorbachev, turned to *perestroika* (market restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness) to try to accelerate growth and engage the population. The attempt failed. The Soviet Union collapsed, and the bureaucracy quickly restored capitalism through a process of “shock therapy.”

In the post URSS Russian Federation state enterprises were partially or wholly privatized and handed over to oligarchs emerging from the party and state bureaucracy. The Russian Federation is an imperialist structure, with the Russian population dominating the non-Russian population

China grew quickly as a capitalist power. The decisive role of the party and state bureaucracy in the

economy gives it a big advantage over conventional capitalist countries. China's GDP is now two-thirds that of the US in foreign-exchange terms. It manufactures and exports more than any other country, and is the world's second-biggest importer.

China has monopolies and billionaires aplenty and massive investments around the world. Its "Belt and Road" initiative evokes patriotic images of the former glory days of the Chinese Empire. Its military spending is second only to the US. By any measure, China is imperialist.

Russian imperialism seeks to reassemble as much as possible of the former Russian Empire, nearly all of which was incorporated into the Soviet Union. Its energy and other resources and military might allow it to project power outside that region, acting together with its allies China, North Korea, Iran, Syria, and, more distantly, Cuba and Venezuela. But its immediate territorial ambitions are more limited.

Russia has used both carrot and stick to maintain its hegemony in the region. The carrot is the ties from the Soviet period — not just economic and military ties, but also an intermingling of populations — and Russia's ability to rescue elites losing their grip on power. The stick is invasion or support for secessionists linked to Russia.

The carrot to the elites was on display in January 2022, when Russia sent troops at the request of Kazakh President Tokayev to quell protests and perhaps an attempt by former President Nazarbayev to return to power. At the same moment, the stick was on display with the mobilization of 175,000 Russian troops on three sides of Ukraine, purportedly to block further moves of Ukraine into NATO or of NATO into Ukraine. In February, the threat escalated in a truly war, which still continues after more than a year.

Chinese imperialism seeks to displace the US as the alpha imperialist power. It is growing much faster than its G7 imperialist rivals in North America, Europe and Japan. Its per capita GDP is still only one-sixth of theirs, which limits the surplus it can devote to research and development, investment and the military, but its government can marshal resources more effectively than its rivals can. In the past thirty years US imperialism stupidly wasted \$5 trillion on wars, while China built its economy.

If Chinese imperialism continues on its present course, it will gain on the US enough to challenge it militarily, as well as economically. World War I and World War II show the consequences of past such challenges. World War III would be fought with nuclear weapons, so the consequences would be much worse.

On the other side of the capitalist cold war, the US, Europe and Japan want to contain Russia and China, but they are economically entangled with them, and they compete with each other. They have different interests. For example, until Russia invaded Ukraine, Germany was unhappy about Russian threats against Ukraine, but it was more interested in access to Russian gas than in Ukraine's "right" to join NATO.

Moreover, the cold war lineup may not last. Britain quit the EU. The US defeat in Afghanistan undercut its ability to manage the other imperialist powers.

Analyzing the world is one thing, changing it is another. In a famous passage from his 1915 article The Collapse of the Second International Lenin lists three symptoms of a revolutionary situation, which can

be paraphrased as: 1) the upper classes are in crisis and unable to live in the old way, 2) the lower classes are suffering and unwilling to live in the old way, and 3) as a consequence, the masses are drawn into independent historical action. Lenin continues:

Without these objective changes, which are independent of the will, not only of individual groups and parties but even of individual classes, a revolution, as a general rule, is impossible. The totality of all these objective changes is called a revolutionary situation ... it is not every revolutionary situation that gives rise to a revolution; revolution arises only out of a situation in which the above-mentioned objective changes are accompanied by a subjective change, namely, the ability of the revolutionary *class* to take revolutionary mass action *strong* enough to break (or dislocate) the old government, which never, not even in a period of crisis, “falls”, if it is not toppled over.

A key element in the subjective change needed for a successful revolution is the existence of a mass revolutionary party.

This defines the perspectives of revolutionary Marxists, and from them flow our tasks. The class struggle exists. Workers are fighting their bosses every day.

Despite the unfavorable conditions, sectors of the workers and the oppressed continue to resist. In the past decade — and even in the past few years, despite Covid — there have been strikes and demonstrations for jobs, wages, relief, democracy, abortion rights, LGBTQ+ rights, immigrant rights. And against crackdowns, coups, corruption, inequality, price increases, subsidy eliminations, repressive laws, gendered violence, police repression, racism, xenophobia.

These have occurred in Latin America from Argentina and Chile to Mexico, in the US and Canada, in Africa from Tunisia and Egypt to Sudan to South Africa, in Europe from Ireland and Spain to Poland and Russia, and in Asia from Yemen, Palestine and Turkey to Pakistan and India to China, Myanmar and the Philippines.

Revolutionary Marxists can and should contribute to these struggles, offering our energy, skills, tactical insights, and leadership. We will learn from the struggles and our comrades in the struggle. Our distinctive contribution is to link the ongoing struggles with the perspective of workers’ power, internationally, through a system of transitional demands proposing socialist solutions to the problems of capitalist society.

In order to do this more effectively and to build the leadership the working-class needs, revolutionary Marxists need to overcome the weakness of our own movement. We must clarify our positions, evaluate our differences, and work to build revolutionary parties and a revolutionary International. A component of this is to overcome the disorientation and fragmentation of the heirs of Trotskyism and refound an International on a consistently revolutionary basis.

In the Transitional Program of 1938 Trotsky wrote: *The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership.*

85 years after this concept maintain it total validity.

KAMUNIST KRANTI (INDIA)

Dear Participants in the Milan meeting to be held on 15-16 July, greetings from Majdoor Samachar-Kamunist Kranti, India.

The topic for the meeting, "The crisis in the imperialist world order and the response of the proletariat", is contemporary. We use a different terminology and we hope that it will not be too inconvenient for the participants.

➤ After some close interactions during 1980-81 for some months with composite textile mills workers in Gwalior and Indore, our 18 months interactions with workers of a big factory in Bhopal: 19,000 workers in a state sector factory, Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited were intertwined with readings of Lenin's collected works.

A monthly paper, Majdoor Samachar in Hindi language was started in 1982 on a Leninist basis in Faridabad, a major industrial city in northern India that has been built after 1947.

Interactions with factory workers in these industrial areas: Okhla Industrial Area in Delhi, Udyog Vihar (industrial area) Gurgaon, Industrial Model Town Manesar, Noida industrial conglomerate, and Faridabad over these forty years have engendered reflections, readings and re-readings some of which we are presenting here for your consideration.

★ One aspect of what we have experienced since 1982 amongst factory workers in the industrial areas in the national capital region of India is:

For factory workers, considered and reflected upon stoppages of production, seem to be a routine activity. A lot of mulling seems to be taking place over the appropriate time and for the convenient duration for stopping production. These seem to be routine and everyday happenings in factories.

Even then, many a time, being off the mark do take place. And then, amongst factory workers, changes to minimise the consequences are often visible.

Different facets of hierarchies seem to be under interrogation during visible steps of factory workers. The tendency seems to be the questioning of the wages system. "Why should anyone be a wage worker?"

And, too often, activists/revolutionaries have been characterising the visible expressions of factory workers like stopping production, as spontaneous acts.

★ We would also like to briefly mention the activities of trade unions in factories that we have come across.

The trade unions in India are by and large appendages of political organisations.

The essence of trade unions seems to have been to confine factory workers in the arena of wages & conditions.

In these thirty years in India, it can be said that a very significant re-composition of factory workers has taken place.

The re-composition: the replacement of permanent workers by temporary workers in factories. And this

seems to be premised on the incomparable leaps in productive forces post-1970, associated with the introduction of electronic devices in the production process.

Post-2000, trade unions in factories in India could be said to have become irrelevant as the overwhelming majority of factory workers are temporary workers. And, as per the laws in India, temporary workers cannot become members of factory unions.

➤ Majdoor Samachar-Kamunist Kranti reflections on and re-readings of these two hundred years:

★ First half of the nineteenth century, factory production seems significant in England.

During 1800-1850, factory production does not seem to be significant even in Continental Europe.

And, in the Communist Manifesto (1848): "Workers of the world unite!"

In the Communist Manifesto, it seems that the very being of wage workers seems to have been read as "wage workers are the social subject". "The very interests of wage workers demand the overcoming of hierarchical social formations".

This overcoming, it seemed would dismantle hierarchies in every sphere of social life as the wage system was seen to organise every level of social relationships in Europe.

In the Communist Manifesto, the world was seen as the arena for the emancipation of wage workers.

★ In wage labour based commodity production, continuous increase in productivity of labour seems inherent.

And, technological and scientific development seemed to be "for the sole purpose of supplying capital with weapons against the revolts of the working-class." The very presence of wage workers seemed revolting!

Also inherent seemed to be ever increasing cost to establish and run a factory.

By 1860, emergence of joint stock companies to establish and operate factories seems to have been read as "a negative negation of wage labour based production for the market".

Also, by 1860, the level of automation in steam-coal based machinery seems to have reached a level where the amount of congealed human labour in products for the market was becoming insignificant.

The 1871 Paris Commune seemed to be an expression of the abolition of hierarchy and establishment of the self-operated world community.

By 1880, factory production seems to have become significant in Western Europe.

And, by 1880, the sidelining of "individual owners, of private property" seems to have become significant in Western Europe.

Ownership and management seem separated. "The abolition of the capitalist mode of production within the capitalist mode of production itself, and hence a self-dissolving contradiction". State interference seems indispensable.

★ The drive that led to the establishment and operation of "big factories" seems to have engendered "intellectuals" as the social strata to manage the factories AND expand & maintain wage labour based production for the world market.

The Gotha Programme of 1875 and the Erfurt Programme of 1891... " 'The representatives of labour'

seem to find themselves on even ground with the 'representatives of capital'. The possibility of social corporatism, state power and social management --- the concern of the representative class. The autonomy of the political from the everydayness of wage labour --- war, imperialism, law etc became prime concerns of the representatives --- workers as people and voters to be mobilised and managed to support the representatives. One man, one vote --- labourers, capitalists and others.

Significant portion of the intellectual social strata began constituting management of companies. A major part of the articulate portion of the intellectuals began constituting propaganda machines of wage labour based production for the world market. And, a significant part of the articulate intellectuals began constituting "the revolutionary intellectuals" who seem to have worked for acceleration of STATISATION (nationalisation) of wage labour based production and distribution in the world market.

Social democracy seems to be an expression of the revolutionary intellectuals. They seem to have self-characterised themselves as the vehicle of historic significance whose task was to " inject revolutionary consciousness in wage workers ". And, revolutionary consciousness seems to have been the STATISATION of wage labour based production for the global market.

★ 1871 onwards, the absence of the unfolding of " Paris Communes" seems to have paved the way to the incomparable mass slaughter during 1914-1919.

The best expression of social democracy seems to be the October Revolution in Russia which established statised production and distribution. And, the military-bureaucratic apparatus to oversee its empire.

1880s to the beginning of 1970s seem to be dominated by global companies and statist forces contending for dominance and engendered bloodbaths.

★ The 1970s began with incomparable leaps in productivity of labour engendered by the introduction of electronic devices in the production and other spheres.

With electronic speed, wage workers come to the centre stage all over the world. The era of global wage workers unfolds.

Wage labour based production and distribution expands from the USA and Western Europe & pockets here and there to the whole world.

★ Irrelevance of the intellectual social strata reaches conclusion with the irrelevance of statist projects in Africa, South America, and Asia. The social death-murder of peasant masses has led to the social basis of revolutionary organisations evaporating. The remnants have engendered the Taliban here & there. Maoists throughout the world are with their backs to the wall.

★ The incomparable leaps in labour productivity has already led to the cost of reproduction of goods towards "zero level". Artificial Intelligence is making work in one after another field redundant...

Abolition of wage work, abolition of work has come to the fore.

The possibilities of non-hierarchic social organisations seem to have greatly increased in these fifty years.

The activities of global wage workers that we have come across seem to have made the contemporary

world more vibrant. The times are pregnant!

Looking forward to conversational interactions.

JRCL (RMF)

We the JRCL (RMF) call on the comrades present at the meeting of the internationalist forces!

Today's world is in a great upheaval, pregnant with the danger of a thermo-nuclear war. How should we fight now in order to overturn this crisis and carve out the future of the working class? — On this crucial question, we are putting forward our view here.

(1)

The Group of Seven summit was held in May in Hiroshima, Japan. As shown in their 'Hiroshima Vision for a World without Nuclear Weapons', US, UK, French and other rulers farcically cried out, with their nuclear briefcases kept at their sides, 'Nuclear weapons should prevent war'. Their statement for Ukraine was the one that focused on 'reconstruction aid after a ceasefire'. And, in criticising China by name, their 'opposition to attempts to revise the status quo by force' was expressed in a weak-kneed manner, akin to imploring. — Such a miserable and hypocritical meeting in Hiroshima was dramatically changed by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who intervened in the meeting and said 'I have to be here at a crucial moment for the fate of Ukraine'. In the face of imperialist rulers, who were itching to find business opportunities in post-war procurements, he gave warning and said, 'Before reconstruction, Ukraine must win. We need stronger arms!' Pressed by his earnest, direct appeal, the imperialist rulers had to announce 'further supports' outwardly.

From the beginning, American and European powers have both been taking selfish attitudes based on their calculation that, while supplying arms is needed not to allow Russia to win, it must be limited not to bring an 'excessive' victory to Ukraine. This is because they are fearful that cornered Putin will launch a nuclear attack on them. What they are thinking at heart is that by pressuring Zelenskyy to accept a ceasefire and the status quo, they should shift their aids to those for post-war reconstruction business.

(2)

At this very moment, invader Putin's Russian army are committing massacres and destruction by using drones and raining missiles on Kyiv and other cities in Ukraine. Without flinching at these brutal, atrocious attacks by Putin, twenty-first century Hitler, Ukrainians are combating the invading army on the basis of the firm unity of working people, with the Armed Forces, voluntary soldiers, Territorial Defence Forces and grass root supporters united in one.

It goes without saying that Putin's war is by no means a simple territorial dispute. Remember that Putin said 'We cannot allow the creation of an "anti-Russia" in Ukraine, historical Russian territory'. This is truly an act of brutality to terminate the state of Ukraine and its nation altogether with the aim of incorporating it in the Russian state; it's a world-historic event designed to restore the lost territory of the dismantled USSR.

That is why we the JRCL (RMF) stood up against Russia's aggression right after its army started the

invasion by air and land on February 24th last year, and appealed to working class people in Japan and all over the world to rise up in an antiwar struggle to crush Putin's war. At the same time, we called on Ukrainian working people to 'put up resistance' and on the Russian toiling masses to 'bring down war-crazy Putin's regime'.

(3)

Notwithstanding this, in the face of this historic crime committed by hateful Putin, as brutal as Hitler, so many self-styled leftists' could not denounce it. To this day, they have yet to express any denunciation. Some elements of the German DIE LINKE, for instance, are marching under the slogan, 'Ukraine should lay down the arms' and the like.

But think. If there had not been those people who stood up against the Russian tanks closing in on them in a row and fought with Molotov cocktails at the risk of their lives, 'Ukraine' would have already ceased to exist. Imperialist rulers had made up their minds right from the start that this small country would be conquered instantly, so that they did not have the slightest intention of supporting it at first.

Even though the major military power, with the overwhelming strength of troops and weapons, launched brutal attacks on cities and towns and reduced them into ashes, Ukrainian working people have been withstanding the brutalities and are now even repelling the Russian army and successively driving them into retreat. Based on the unbending resolve not to allow Russia to seize Ukraine, they are united to resist. Those who were workers, farmers, teachers and others engaged in various jobs have voluntarily enrolled in the national army, joined in territorial defence units, and created various military organizations and partisan units, thus carrying out and supporting the combats. Why can those 'leftists' shut their eyes to this fact?!

First and foremost, we must say. When people are dauntlessly fighting despite being exposed to invaders' attacks with heavy weapons, those 'communists' who do not stand by the people do not deserve to be communist. Sharing the hardships and anger of the oppressed toiling people and standing by the side of them — this is the starting point of us, who are determined to be communist and Marxist-Leninist.

We also hear arguments that 'we don't really see any Ukrainian resistance to support'. But, is it not working people in European countries in the Second World War that devoted themselves to partisan battles and put up resistance in varying forms?

Here in Japan, heroic battles of Italian partisans often come up in conversation, where all say, 'We will fight that way if Japan is invaded.' We know that, right after Italy surrendered in the war, the country was occupied by Nazi Germany. Is it not that Italian working people dauntlessly battled against the occupation despite the Nazi's cruel repression that caused numerous sacrifices? Why is it that those 'leftists', whose parents, grandparents and forerunners went through such battles, reject the resistance of Ukrainian people?

We can hardly understand that.

Certainly there may be differences in actual conditions between Ukraine today and Italy in the past, such as that the Italian resistance centred on the Communist Party, that the resistance directly put up a

social change as a goal, and therefore that the allied US-UK forces, marching northward, took a cool attitude, and so on. But, at any rate, the fact was that several hundred thousand Italian people joined in the two-year-long battles for the liberation of Italy. If you were in Ukraine now invaded by Russia, how should you fight against this invasion and massacre, as a party that is to fight for the liberation of the working class? Unless you think of this and rouse yourselves immediately, it's hard for you to be proletarian internationalists.

(4)

Incidentally, not a few of self-styled 'leftist' organizations define this Russian aggression against Ukraine as an 'inter-imperialist war' and arrogantly peaches to Ukrainian people that they should raise the slogans proposed by Lenin amid the First World War, such as 'Turn the imperialist war into a civil war' and 'Bring down the government at home'. They say that, since it is an 'inter-imperialist war', it is not important who invades and who is invaded. But that is an act of giving acquittal to Putin the aggressor. Brandishing phrases of Lenin, without grasping the situation that Lenin confronted at that time or concretely analyzing the event that has emerged today, is nothing but the act of disgracing the great revolutionary, which communists-to-be must never do.

(5)

What is the meaning of Putin's war from the standpoint of the proletariat? It is the gravest crime of the century, which Putin committed in order to realize his evil ambition to retake the lost territory of the USSR. He regards the self-destruction of the USSR in 1991 merely as the 'the greatest geographical catastrophe in the twentieth century', and is completely indifferent to the reasons why the 'USSR socialism' became synonymous with 'tyranny, oppression and poverty', a target of the resentment of workers and people, and therefore had to undergo self-destruction. In the first place, he hated Lenin and the Russian revolution as a culprit for dividing and destroying the 'vast territory of the Russian empire', while appreciating Stalin, who betrayed Lenin and forcibly incorporated peripheral nations. This man, hell-bent on retaking the lost territories of the USSR led by Stalin, is a Great Russian chauvinist.

To the Ukrainian people, this brutality of Putin means plunging them again into a tyranny like the former USSR of bureaucratic centralism based on Stalin's Great Russian chauvinism (which Lenin criticized by shortening his life). That is why they are combating at the risk of their lives with the firm resolve to 'drive out the Russian invaders'.

Some people are satisfied with empty interpretations, by saying 'Both NATO and Russia are to blame', 'NATO is worse' and the like. What's lacking in such people is the basic premise that leftists should stand by the oppressed working class.

At the same time, they still neglect to confront Stalinism as fake Marxism-Leninism. — Exactly this is the fundamental problem.

We call on all of you present at the international meeting. As communists, as true internationalists, let us fight together, in solidarity with Ukrainian working people in resistance, to strengthen and spread

struggles to crush Putin's war.

(6)

The war of aggression in Ukraine has drastically revealed the danger of nuclear warfare that lies in today's world convulsed amid the clashes between imperialist America and China with Russia. Today's world has been plunged into an 'age of war'.

Following Ukraine, a fire of war can break out in Asia at any time. Under the leadership of Xi Jinping, neo-Stalinist China is ready to achieve its absorption of Taiwan, which the Communist Party of China regards as its historic duty, and has started to deploy its war vessels and fly its jets constantly around Taiwan. Kim Jon Un of North Korea is hell-bent on developing nuclear missiles in the full support of Russia. In order to contain them, the Biden-led US forces are repeatedly carrying out competitive, threatening actions, with the accompaniment of Japanese and South Korean troops. The declining militarist empire of America, which can no longer contain China with its own strength, is desperate to strengthen the triangular military alliance between the US, Japan and South Korea along with the US-UK- Australian nuclear military alliance (AUKUS) and to function them in a permanent cooperation with NATO, thus building up a nuclear-armed global military alliance. In East Asia, that is being created as one that can be called an Asia-Pacific version of NATO. The Japanese imperialist ruler, Fumio Kishida, is ambitious to build Japan into a country that can wage a war against China in alliance with America, by saying 'Today's Ukraine will be tomorrow's East Asia'. For that evil purpose, he has launched the unprecedented offensives, including a massive military build-up and a reactionary revision of the current Constitution of Japan.

Xi-led China is now rushing towards the goal of the state, of constructing a 'contemporarized, strong socialist state' that will surpass the United States by the middle of the twenty-first century, while imposing poverty and unemployment on workers and peasants, and applying cruel repression to people in Uighur and Hong Kong. This neo-Stalinist state of China, together with Russia led by a scion of Stalin, Putin, are now crashing with the declining imperialist state of America, thus bringing forth the danger of the outbreak of a thermo-nuclear war.

Break though the crisis of nuclear warfare arising from the clashes between the US and China with Russia!

(7)

Comrades. Unless we are based on the standpoint of not only *anti-imperialism* but also *anti-Stalinism*, we cannot overturn this dark world in the twenty-first century, now three decades after the self-destruction of the USSR. The terribly rotten world in the twenty-first century where every kind of evil is arising must be fundamentally overturned by our revolutionary praxis. Exactly for that purpose, it is absolutely imperative for all of us to confront Stalinism here and now.

Comrades. In order to carve out the future of the world working class, let us fight together arm in arm

with the Japan Revolutionary Communist League (Revolutionary Marxist Faction) under the banner of *anti-imperialism, anti-Stalinism!*

LEAGUE FOR THE FIFTH INTERNATIONAL

For a new revolutionary international!

Statement of the League for the Fifth International for the conference in Milan, May 2023

The Ukraine War has opened a new stage in the struggle for the redivision of the world between the big imperialist powers.

The war launched by Russian imperialism on Ukraine, the response by Nato and the G7 imperialists, unprecedented levels of arms supplies, massive economic sanctions, have destabilised global food and fuel supplies, threatening millions with hunger, if not starvation. A new period of multiple crises and wars is well underway, posing once more the alternative: socialism or barbarism.

The deep roots of today's interlinked crises are found in the fundamental laws of capitalist economy, in the massive overaccumulation of capital and falling rates of profit in all the imperialist centres of the world economy. All the major imperialist players, the US, China, the European powers, Russia and Japan, are engaged in a life or death struggle for the re-division of the world.

But forces able to fight this exist, too, above all the working classes and oppressed peoples of the world, providing they can unite their forces and become aware of what their central objective must be; to deprive the capitalist class of ownership and control of the means of production. This means overthrowing those who command the forces of destruction, not just in the imperialist heartlands but in the semi-colonial countries, too, as the horrific suffering in Yemen and Sudan shows. They threaten to plunge humanity into a series of regional wars, leading to a world conflagration.

Over the last decades, capitalism has also developed into a global system of environmental imperialism. The exploitation in the semicolonial countries is systematically intensified without regard to the ecological and social consequences in order to increase the profits in the imperialist centres.

Globally, movements to combat environmental disaster have grown massively over the last two decades. Yet these movements have to move beyond protest, beyond trying to persuade, or even force, capitalist governments to declare states of emergency. Only by taking the power to plan and effect the reversal of the headlong rush to climate catastrophe can this be avoided.

New alliances for war are being launched (AUKUS) and old ones upgraded (Nato, the Quad). We see displays of naval power in the seas around China, the proxy conflict with Putin over Ukraine. The rulers in Washington, Berlin, Paris and London, but equally in Beijing and Moscow, are playing with fire. They have no right to complain if they are imitated by "strong men" in Delhi, Ankara, Jerusalem or Riyadh who seek to solve their internal crises by wars and ethnic cleansing.

Revolutionaries must give practical aid to those fighting back, help them to recover from defeats and to prepare a new wave of international revolution.

The Great Recession of 2008 triggered a wave of "democratic revolutions" in the Middle East, in which workers' strikes, in Egypt and Tunisia, played a decisive role in ousting the old dictators. But, because

these failed to become “permanent” in the sense of working class political leadership breaking the power of the repressive forces, arming the people and installing workers' governments, they failed, even as democratic revolutions, allowing Islamist or military forces to take the power.

Nevertheless, the years since have seen revivals of working class struggles and those of the racially, nationally and sexually oppressed. In the USA, the Black Lives Matter movement saw several waves, sparked by the outrages perpetrated by killer cops, notably the killing of George Floyd. Likewise, we have seen the rise of a new international women's movement.

The demonstrations in China against the lockdowns and social deprivation, the Iranian uprising and the courageous women at its forefront show that even the most despotic regimes can be shaken by mass popular protests. But to overthrow these regimes will require not only mass mobilisation but the building of alternative organs of power, workers' councils and militias, that can win over the rank and file soldiers and break up the existing apparatus of state power.

In the old imperialist heartlands, in Europe and North America, there has been a revival of rank and file militancy after a decade-long downturn in labour struggles and defeats and betrayals by old and new reformist or left-populist parties (Syriza, Podemos, Jeremy Corbyn's Labour, Die Link etc.).

The question is, can resistance become revolution? For that, the workers' movements must be won to class struggle politics and the organisations necessary to pursue them. For revolutionaries, that is summed up in an action program that addresses the strategic and tactical questions of the current period. We need to fight for parties with a clear revolutionary strategy and disciplined organisation prepared, at times of heightened struggle, whether economic or political, to fight for councils of delegates elected in the workplaces and communities. That is the only sound basis on which to build new, revolutionary workers' parties. Such parties, independent of all bourgeois forces and armed with a revolutionary program, are the key not only to workers' struggles but to those of the socially oppressed, too.

No to Imperialist War

Revolutionaries condemn the reactionary attack and invasion of Ukraine by Russian imperialism and support the resistance against this invasion, without giving any political support to the reactionary Zelenski government. At the same time, they must oppose Nato's war aims or a peace imposed by the big powers that will follow it. They must oppose all Nato sanctions, its rearmament drive and its expansion. We must oppose its policy of confrontation with Chinese imperialism, conducted under the false flag of democracy versus autocracy.

It is vital to fight to prevent the labour movements, and anti-imperialist forces around the globe, from joining one or the other imperialist camp. Rather, we must seek links with the workers of Russia and China, as well as the workers and fighters for democratic rights in the many dictatorships allied with the Western camp.

Fight inflation, hunger and poverty!

Already the global recession, which was synchronised by the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, has led to massive impoverishment of the working class and the poor, in particular in the semi-colonial world. Even

before the war in Ukraine, 800 million people suffered from hunger, millions faced starvation.

We need a global movement of the working class and the poor to fight for an emergency program for millions, to guarantee incomes, food, housing, electricity and health care for all. We fight for the cancellation of debt and austerity programs imposed by the IMF or by the old and new imperialist powers.

If we want to combat unemployment, social regression, scarcity and hunger, if we want reorganise society according to human need and to create socially useful work for all, we need to expropriate the owners of big capital, factories, large service companies, banks and finance houses without compensation and under workers' control. Only on such a basis can we free the resources needed for an emergency plan to address the needs of the millions facing hunger and extreme poverty.

Fight environmental catastrophe and environmental imperialism.

The increased global competition and the struggle for the re-division of the world, accelerate capitalism's tendency to destroy the natural foundations of human life. The exploitation of environments and resources of the semi-colonial countries is systematically intensified without regard to the ecological and social consequences in order to increase the profits in the imperialist centres. This faces humanity with unpostponable tasks.

The global environmental movements, which rose in the past years, have time and again exposed the cynicism and hypocrisy of the world's leaders. Millions followed the calls for global climate strikes and marches, by which courageous activists hoped to enforce change by radical direct action.

Revolutionaries need to solidarise with those movements but, at the same time, they need to challenge the reformist, petit-bourgeois and anarchist ideas that dominate them. We need to win the youth for a working class answer to the environmental crisis, i.e. workers' power and a planned economy.

Ultimately, only the socialist revolution will overcome the system of environmental imperialism and enable the planned optimal use of resources under the control of the majority worldwide.

Revolutionary international

The deepening economic crisis, the climate catastrophe, together with the threat of a global war, testify to the fact that capitalism is a doomed system. The decisive question is whether it will be overcome in time by a revolutionary upheaval, or whether humanity will tread the path to barbarism and social regression.

In the emerging global movements of the oppressed, as well as in national upheavals, revolutionaries must always emphasise the need for a new International. In this we advocate a revolutionary program from the beginning, without, however, making this a precondition for taking real steps towards uniting to resist crises and wars in the here and now.

Our principles are class independence, international solidarity and action, anti-capitalism, anti-imperialism, anti-racism and opposition to all forms of social oppression. They must be embodied in a world party of social revolution, preserving all the achievements of the previous four Internationals.

World Revolution, and nothing less, this must be the task of a new, Fifth International.

NOVIY PROMETHEY

For many years – starting with the internationalist opposition to the war in Chechnya – our small communist group conducted propaganda and dissemination of the theoretical and practical principles of scientific Marxism and Leninism, by means of the books published by our *Noviy Prometey* publishing house and then with the newspaper *Proletarskiy Internatsionalizm*. Our aim is to root a revolutionary minority among the workers and youth in the proletarian neighbourhood of St. Petersburg.

Given the situation in Russia, ours has been always an objectively difficult militancy, which has now become effectively impossible under the iron heel of repression imposed by the Putin regime, following the fierce imperialist aggression against Ukraine unleashed since February 24th last year.

Since then, there have been thousands of trials for refusing to obey orders or for desertion in the midst of a state of war – despite official propaganda shamelessly insisting on calling it a “special military operation” – with hundreds being sentenced to heavy prison terms that can reach up to fifteen years in prison following the tightening of laws. While more generally, in the prevailing climate of national-patriotic furore, any form of opposition is harshly suppressed with the infamous accusation of “betrayal of the fatherland”. This ban is not only against political opposition but also against simple wage demands or to improve the cost of living. This is also the case in Ukraine with the special laws imposed by the “patriot” Zelensky: martial law, conscription, strike bans and anti-union laws.

So, we are political exiles today such as others of my comrades. Who have chosen to leave that country so as not to participate in the ongoing massacre, refusing to take up arms against our Ukrainian class siblings, mobilised and sent to the front under the flags of nationalism, to defend the no-less-criminal interests of the Kyiv oligarchs.

For those of us who have directly experienced the course of Russian events in recent decades at first hand, it is not difficult to understand the meaning of this war, let alone the historical confirmations that this conflict also brings to light following the changed conditions of today.

With the collapse of the old Yalta order – which in 1945 had sanctioned the partition of Europe between American and Russian influence – and the implosion of the USSR along with its sphere of influence between 1989 and 1991, a *new partition* has in fact opened up. This new partition has been shaking the old balances for over 30 years and generated many bloodsheds – spanning from the Balkans to Russia's *near abroad*.

After the whole of Eastern Europe joined the European Union and NATO during the 1990s and the early part of the new century, European and Western influence has overlapped in an area that Moscow considers more than ever to be indispensable and vital: in Ukraine, and also in Georgia and Moldova. All of them were former republics until USSR was dissolved in 1991. It is not by chance that Putin himself, in the speech preceding the start of the conflict, referred to it as a goal to “protect people [...] from those who have taken Ukraine hostage and are trying to use it against our country and its people”.

Behind the hypocritic proclamations of “self-defence”, of “historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians”

or, even worse, of the “liberation of Ukraine” from Nazi-fascism, the revanchist frenzy of those who imagined a window of opportunity had opened to recover part of the lost ground and bring Moscow back into the concert of the great powers after a 30-year-long retreat. Russia might have taken advantage of the phase of profound erosion of the incumbent world order, which has been turned upside down by the irruption of the new continental imperialist giants, starting from Beijing.

It is not by chance that the conflict in Ukraine has multiple dimensions. This is undoubtedly a *civil war* within the Ukrainian nation-state, which has pitted the western regions of the country against the predominantly Russian-speaking eastern regions of the Donbas for years. It is at the same time a *regional war* between states, in the face of aggression led by the Russian army. But it is above all, an *imperialist war*, where great powers have clashed. A war of *partition* between robbers – between the Russian and the European robbers. And let’s not forget Washington’s persistent game of intrusion, with the aim to prevent the solution from being a sort of condominium between Moscow and Brussels.

This is a clash conducted both through the instruments of *proxy war*, with an escalation of military supplies to support Kyiv’s army, as well as those of an *economic war*, such as the attempt to exhaust Moscow under the weight of sanctions. Meanwhile, since its inception, a huge mobilisation of ideologies and fanaticisms has been underway – where, on the one hand, the liberal and democratic “values” of the West are being challenged, in defence of the inviolable sovereign rights of the “aggrieved” Ukrainian nation-state; on the other, the nationalist myths of Great Russia, lined up in support of the appetites of the “aggressor” Russian nation-state. In this vast chorus of voices, there is also no shortage of certain self-styled internationalist positions that support sending arms to Ukraine, justifying them as support for self-determination and the defence of oppressed peoples. This is a shameful choice! Which as true internationalists we cannot but condemn.

This new massacre now adds up to tens and tens of thousands of victims among the population of towns and villages and the young soldiers, which have been sent to the trenches like cannon fodder by their respective governments. In this new massacre there can be no doubt as to what the compass should be for those who, like us, have always oriented their action according to the guiding principle of a *class point of view*.

Once again, even in this war, the irreconcilable “principles” of *national sovereignty* and *self-determination of peoples* have been flaunted at different times and contexts by both sides in this fight. Bourgeois international “law” has never managed to bring them together. And even in this case, we know, it will be the force of arms with all its violence that will ultimately determine a verdict.

These certainly cannot be our flags. Nor, even at a lower degree, any reference to so-called national issues, which have never been matters of principle for Marxism. And which Lenin himself wielded against the tsarist empire which he called the *prison of peoples*, advocating the right to self-determination, only as an instrument of the strategy of *revolutionary defeatism* that led to the October 1917 storming of power.

It is no coincidence that Putin, in claiming the historical legacy of Russian imperialism and *Great*

Russian chauvinism, has lashed out precisely against Lenin and his policy on the national questions, when he states that Ukraine “can be rightfully called Vladimir Ilyich Lenin’s Ukraine”, who was its “author and architect” according to Putin.

We are not surprised. Because Putin's policy is, if anything, one in full continuity with the entire history of Russian state capitalism, which developed in the country following the defeat of the Bolshevik revolutionary attempt since the mid-1920s. Putin, in this sense, is an heir of Stalin and his *false socialism*. It is no coincidence that in his criminal policy, as the new robber of imperialism, he firmly held the flag of tsarist-driven *Great Russian* nationalism, after having bloodily trampled on that of proletarian internationalism.

Furthermore, the current Russian brigand was the first to pull out the knife out by invoking the “defence of the fatherland” as the Georgian tyrant had done in the summer of 1939, participating in the carve-up of Poland with the Nazis following the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. Similarly to what Stalin had done, Putin enlisted the popes and patriarchs of the Orthodox Church in Moscow to take his side and bless Russian imperialism. The different churches have indeed grasped as *national churches* by the opposing war fronts – Zelensky has done the same in Kyiv to bless Ukrainian nationalism.

There is a historical lesson that has largely been lost and that needs to be rediscovered, studied and restored – now that war has returned to rage in Europe as well.

“An immediate peace” was the watchword of the Revolution in October 1917. The Bolsheviks were the only ones, in the horrendous slaughter of the First World War, to end the war by turning it into a revolution. They were aware that peace could only be won by turning their weapons against the bourgeoisie and dynasties that had provoked that barbarity.

In a similar fashion to all genuine internationalists in other countries, they were well aware that “the main enemy is at home”. And this is precisely why Lenin, during that imperialist war, declared: “Both sides’ phrases on the defence of the fatherland, resistance to enemy invasion, a war of defence, etc., are nothing but deception of the people.” Moreover, when the Bolsheviks faced the ideological campaigns which involved the masses in 1915 and shaped their collective psychology, Lenin added: “During a reactionary war a revolutionary class cannot but desire the defeat of its government.”

This lesson led a conscious vanguard of our global class to the highest point ever reached by proletarian internationalism. It led the workers’ movement, albeit temporarily, to be truly “a power among powers”.

This experience still applies today and is more relevant than ever. When in such tragic and terrible circumstances, we feel all the weight of the historical delay of the revolutionary working-class party. Nevertheless, this does not detract us from the fact that we must fight an internationalist battle under the given conditions and with the forces that are available – with the aim of at least establishing an internationalist minority wherever possible.

We know that in Ukraine as in Russia, as in all countries, there is a bourgeoisie and a proletariat. We know that the Ukrainian and the Russian oligarchs are cronies, now divided but in reality blood relatives.

And all of them have always been busy in dividing the spoil of USSR's state capitalism after its collapse.

That is why we stand with the Ukrainian proletariat, the Russian proletariat, as well as the European, American and Chinese proletariat, and we are fighting against Russian, European, American and Chinese imperialism, as well as against the Ukrainian bourgeoisie.

This is the only choice against capitalism's barbarism.

PARTIDO OBRERO (PO, ARGENTINA)

SOCIALIST PARTY OF THE WORKERS (SEP, TURKEY)

Workers of the world unite!

Down with the Imperialist War and its genocidal savagery

Down with the attacks against the working class promoted by capitalist bankruptcy

For worker's governments and socialism!

For the founding of revolutionary worker's parties and a revolutionary worker's international

Over a year has passed since the war in Ukraine began and every day it becomes clearer for the working masses of the world that this is an imperialist war between NATO and Russia. That we are witness to a massacre paid for by the lives, blood and sacrifice of the exploited, not only those of Ukraine but also in Russia, and the consequences that are felt by the peoples all over the world.

Led by Yankee imperialism, NATO is trying to present itself as an advocate for the just demand of national independence, democracy against autocratic and authoritarian tyrannies. Those who exploit the world's masses, those who massacre nations (such as Afghanistan, Syria, Irak, Lebanon, etc.), those who invade and oppress nations, those who support and uphold bloody dictators and the reactionary protectors of capital, how could they be the paladins of democracy and national self-determination?

The war in progress isn't an authentic national cause, nor is it in defense of democracy and human rights. The Ukrainian people are being used as cannon fodder by worldwide imperialism to attack Russia. It is a plan that has been prepared over many years in which NATO has been expanding in the east of Europe to accomplish this attack, and it corresponds with the strategic objective of subjugating Russia, and then immediately China, and to advance in the colonization of former nationalized economies.

Putin cannot be considered a hero against fascism either. His invasion of Ukraine had the purpose of expanding the influence and dominium of the bourgeois oligarchy created with the capitalist restoration of the Soviet Union. The Kremlin and the Russian army are not a liberating force nor do they personify the struggle of the peoples against imperialism. Russia's foreign policy has been the extension of its internal policy: the latter characterized by a growing inequality and a rise in social antagonisms, the strengthening of a repressive estate/ police state and a regime based on the oppression of the Russian masses and entire nations still under Moscow's thumb.

The workers of the world can't support either faction. Stopping the war becomes a necessity, especially when it is threatening to expand and even turn into a world or nuclear war. This isn't just a replay of previous conflicts, but a confrontation between the main players of the international arena that's been developing in the old continent, that is, the heart of the capitalist system. We're not witness to a proxy war, but to a direct intervention of NATO. Zelensky is just the arm of the military alliance led by Imperialism.

We call on Ukrainian and Russian workers to end the war, to remove their governments on both sides and to promote a brotherhood between nations, in every possible way and also among the troops of both countries.

All over the world, the left that calls itself revolutionary must put forward the historic slogan “war against war!”. No support for the imperialist attack. End all boycotts and economic sanctions that adversely affect the living conditions of the attacked peoples and humanity as a whole, to favor the profits of capitalist conglomerates. Mobilize against the governing class of your own country. Actively oppose the shipment of weapons and soldiers. Down with the war budgets, the development of the military industry and the rearming of bourgeois and imperialist governments. After a year has passed, it is plain to see that pacifism has unsurmountable limits. Delegating the solution of the conflict on those who promote and incite it cannot be a solution. Not only is it a dead end, but it is also a political crime, at a moment in which we can see that both sides are set on escalating it, which makes an aggravation and extension of the hostilities foreseeable and therefore, a larger bloodbath. We alert that a peace between the promoters of this war will only be a precarious compromise that will give way to new and fiercer clashes. The Minsk treaties celebrated in 2014 and 2015 which were incapable of stopping the current conflict, serve as a lesson.

It is necessary to transform the tendency towards world war into rebellion and socialist revolution. To end the nightmare of war, we must end the governments that promote it.

The war is inseparable from the capitalist crisis that is causing new bankruptcies and continuing the crisis of 2008. The central bank of each bourgeoisie has bailed out capital that is in crisis or under the threat of bankruptcy, injecting copious amounts of money, but they haven't overcome the anemic state that prevails in the world economy. Fifteen years after the financial crisis of 2008, we are witnessing an explosive scenario of recession and inflation where the ghost of default rears its ugly head, not only for banks but for companies and even states. In other words: this is a global crisis, meaning a deeper crisis, a systemic crisis. This will bring more suffering for the working masses: greater prices and inflation, the growth of unemployment, precarious and unregulated contracts, and the increase in the exploitation by employers (the lengthening of working hours, the flexibilization of labor, etc.).

Capitalism intends to survive by unloading the crisis of its own regime of economic dominion through an even greater exploitation of the working masses, destroying their historic gains. This has resulted in a growing resistance and the mobilization of workers in metropolises and the peoples of semicolonial countries. In France, for instance, strikes and political demonstrations have been carried out against Macron's attempts to raise the retirement age from sixty two to sixty four. All over the world we are facing the push from capitalists and their governments to impose counterreforms of pension programs. Their objective is that pensions cease to be a tax on capitalists in concept of paying deferred wages in payment of the exploitation of workers, transforming it into a sort of subsidy or social aid for poverty. Workers in France have retaken the methods of direct action in the class struggle, strikes and mass demonstrations. To triumph, they must move towards a general strike, which would open the possibility of ousting Macron and fighting for a workers' government. That's the reason the bureaucracy of the French union centrals block and resist the development of a revolutionary fight of the French working class and exploited peoples, their intention is to reconcile classes, to have a parliamentary agreement of reach and to protect the survival of the bourgeois state.

Working class and popular mobilization isn't a strictly French phenomenon: it is in play in the powerful strikes in the UK and Germany, in the awakening of union organizing in the United States, in the continuing rebellions in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

To triumph in their demands and to open revolutionary situations that could put forward the possibility of taking the power for the working class it's imperative to recover union and other mass organizations, removing pro bourgeois bureaucracies that every day show their vocation for integration into bourgeois states. It is a necessity to impose total political and organizational independence of the working class and their organizations from the bourgeois state, the employers and their political parties. Also, it is of the utmost importance to support the struggles that arise, promoting their transformation into comprehensive battles against the capitalist regime.

For that purpose it is fundamental to constitute socialist and revolutionary parties of the working class, with complete independence from the bourgeoisie, centered on the strategy of destroying bourgeois states that promote war and exploitation and to impose worker's governments in every country. This can only be achieved with the methods of revolutionary direct action. The task is to found and build combative parties based on democratic centralism, to promote and develop the class struggle to its final consequences, the removal once and for all of the class of capitalist exploiters. It is necessary to avoid the purely verbal character of organizations that think they will bring the revolution solely with forecasts and analysis, while it is also necessary to avoid dissolving class positions in organizations based on identity or of an undefined character.

The capitalist catastrophe must be faced with an iron-clad working class, socialist and revolutionary militancy. This in and of itself is incompatible with "broad parties" and movementism, in which the limits between classes are vague and class conciliation and democratizing parliamentary tendencies prevail. This left's role is limited to acting as a pressure group, completely adapted to the status quo, confined to participating in elections and trying to progress within the parliamentary regime and bourgeois democracy.

Revolutionary socialists fight in every arena, including elections, to develop a complete delimitation from the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties. This includes bourgeois nationalist leaderships and governments in backwards countries. These parties pretend to represent all the masses of the exploited nation, but they do it to defend the national bourgeoisie, who exploit them. In the end, they capitulate and associate themselves with imperialism against the revolutionary movement of the working masses.

Raising the flag of democracy, imperialism develops its reactionary, exploitative and warring intervention. This is a form taken by the state of capitalist oppression: bourgeois democracy, which tries to hide its oppressive character behind empty slogans, while it executes the plans of domination of big capital. We must overcome the conciliatory proposals made by opportunist parties, bourgeois nationalism and popular fronts that seek to reconcile with the dominant classes. These popular fronts end up limiting the independent action of the masses and smother their struggles. Facing and defeating the right and fascism, that have been growing lately, showing the decomposition of bourgeois democracy, will not come from the support and alliance of national bourgeoisies that call themselves democratic. Their impotence

and alignment with the International Monetary Fund's policies that inflict austerity measures on the people have allowed the development of the pseudo-fascist right, giving them space and facilitating their rise to power. Stopping the right is only being possible with worker's mobilizations that can attract all exploited sectors.

We need to develop united front policies to promote the struggle against capital. New steps in that direction in the internationalist mobilization of the masses are fundamental to open up a new horizon. The Belgian workers of Total, a French oil monopoly, have refused to export oil from their refineries in Belgium to France, stopping the sabotage of the French oil worker's strike. They retake the finest revolutionary internationalist traditions, those founded with the First International nearly a hundred and sixty years ago, in 1864, against possible replacement of the workforce with continental workers during a British proletarian strike. Now, more than ever, we need to promote every initiative to organize and to mobilize internationally against the imperialist war and the havoc that unloads the capitalist crisis on the workers and the exploited peoples of the world. We support the reconstitution of a revolutionary socialist International, that in light of historical experience can only be the continuation of the IV International, refounded.

The signatories of this document, the Socialist Party of the Workers from Turkey (SEP) and the Partido Obrero of Argentina (PO), call to discuss this statement among the leftist parties and the socialist and revolutionary militancy across the world.

COREP

First of May: to get rid of rotting capitalism, for workers' power!

The survival of capitalism threatens humanity

All governments in place chatter, each in its own way, over democracy, ecology, and peace, but subsidise capitalist enterprises in extraction, manufacture, and agriculture, which squander resources, uselessly emit greenhouse gases, and pollute durably. Bourgeois States devote increasing budgets to spying and repression of population, as well as to armies. While a significant part of the world population, even in imperialist countries, does not eat correctly, does not have a decent housing, nor access to healthcare and to a quality education, world military spendings exceeded 2 000 billion dollars in 2021, that is, nearly 6% of budgets.

Ethiopia crushed in November 2022 the insurrection of the Tigray with the help of the Eritrean army. Russia wages a colonial and destructive war in Ukraine. The military dictatorship launched in Burma/Myanmar a civil war against its peoples. Criminal organisations took hold of Haiti. The territory of Syria is fought between the torturer regime of the Baas, supported by Russia and Iran, and the Islamist factions, some of which are supported by Turkey. Israel bombs periodically in Syria and sometimes in Lebanon. Turkey occupies part of Syria and bombs in Iraq. China and India regularly engage in skirmishes in the Himalaya. Two fractions of the army fight in Sudan. The two main imperialist powers (United States, China), defy each other militarily in the China Sea.

Global warming continues, absolutely not restrained, despite the international agreements of the COP, because of the logic of profit, the rivalry between States and the competition between firms. It is accompanied by pollution of the environment, loss of biological diversity, growing shortage of freshwater, massive deforestations, and deterioration of cultivable land. Without forgetting the dramatic pandemics caused by pathogen agents of animal origin (Ebola, Covid...), predictable result of the brutal pressure of human capitalist production over natural habitats of other species.

World economic slowdown and inflation

Capitalism functions in a cyclic way, it is inevitably shaken by economic crises that restore temporarily the conditions for expanded accumulation of capital. But, because of subventions by governments that seek to save their own enterprises and of permissive policies of central banks, the destruction of world capital has been limited during the last world recessions, including that of 2020-2021. Therefore, the phases of economic expansion that follow them are of a restricted scope and seem shorter: the world growth should be limited, according to the IMF, to 2,8% in 2023.

To it adds the rise of protectionism in all its forms that leads to some fragmentation of the world market, limits world growth and feeds inflation: international trade of goods and services would rise, according to the WTO, by only 1,7% in 2023.

The last recovery was accompanied by a surge in inflation: a price rise of 8,7% on a world scale in

2022, according to the IMF. In several States, money does not play correctly its role anymore: in 2022, in Turkey, inflation exceeded 64%, and in Argentina 94%. In reality, the rise of prices for food, energy and housing exceeds by far the average rates of rise of prices, and reached a painful level for wage workers in all countries.

Faced with inflation, the restrictive monetary policy of the main central banks tends to raise interest rates in the world at the expense of the weakest national economies, of the most indebted States, of unprofitable “zombies” enterprises, among which the most vulnerable. The rise of bank rates particularly affects indebted working families in States where bank credit is at a variable rate.

Imperialist rivalries unleash a worldwide military escalation

In the period of decline of capitalism (the imperialist phase), the main States, inevitably, defend the ancient division of the world that was advantageous to them, or challenge it to open the way to their capitalist groups against their foreign competitors.

The world situation is marked by the growing rivalry between the United States, which remains the first imperialist power, and China, an ascending imperialist power that calls into question the division of the world. The other imperialist powers (Japan, Germany, Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy ...) are torn between these two poles.

So, the American State attempts to strangle Chinese capitalism by limiting its exports and by depriving it of electronic components necessary to the upgrading of its industry (and of its army). In military terms, the American State has by far the biggest military budget in the world. With the excuse of the imperialist war of Russia against Ukraine, it reinforces NATO. Furthermore, it concluded in 2021 a new military cooperation with Australia and Great Britain (AUKUS), and it multiplies military manoeuvres with its allies, among which the Philippines and Japan, in the China Sea. On its side, the Chinese State rallies Russia and Brazil. With the 2nd military budget in the world, it strengthens its control over Hongkong, militarises islets in the China Sea, and multiplies military manoeuvres in the Taiwan Strait.

The worldwide rise of generalised militarism is done without concern for limiting pollutions or for saving energy. The bourgeois army, its secret services, constitute not only a tax burden for workers, but also a repressive tool against their emancipation.

Reaction all the way through

In the most advanced economies, States go back on previous social achievements. Even the most established bourgeois democracies restrict freedoms: systematic spying of their population, restriction to the right to strike, to move about, to demonstrate, to publish ... Former presidents (Trump, Bolsonaro) question the elections when they are unfavourable to them and unleash fascist gangs to pressure institutions. Everywhere, bourgeois political parties and populist demagogues bet on xenophobia, religion, racism, machismo, and conspiracy theories ... Immigrant workers, working women and ethnic, religious, or sexual minorities are the first victims of the rise of worldwide reaction.

The Indian State persecutes Muslims and occupies militarily Kashmir. Israel, based on the colonisation of Palestine, inevitably pursues it in the West Bank and in Jerusalem, while aggravating the apartheid

against Arabs in its midst. Capitalist Russia can defend itself, facing military and economic pressure from the United States and the European Union, only by denying Ukraine's right to exist and by increasingly repressing its own population. Turkey persecutes Kurds within its borders, its army attacks them in Iraq and in Syria. In Iran, the ayatollahs' regime oppresses ever more women and national minorities. The quasi-feudal regime of the Taliban back in power in 2021 now prohibits urban women from working and girls from studying.

The leadership crisis of the labour movement

Since May the 1st, 2022, the working population led large-scale struggles in all continents, in particular: in Peru, against the impeachment of the elected president and police repression; in Iran, against the compulsory veil; in China, against excessive lockdown; in Great Britain, in Sri Lanka, in Belgium, in Austria, in the Czech Republic, in Germany, in the United States ... against inflation; in France, against raising the retirement age.

But the current leaderships of the world working class do not really serve the interests of workers. The majority trade unions remain in the hands of corrupted bureaucracies, sometimes linked to bourgeois parties, as in the United States, in Argentina, in Algeria ... Therefore, in Great Britain, in Belgium, in France... the trade union chiefs refuse to call for the general strike until victory. In Great Britain, they even suspended strikes when the queen died.

The restoration of capitalism in 1992 in Russia and in China aggravated the crisis of the labour movement. The old bourgeois workers' parties ("Labour", "social-democrats", "communists") obey more than ever their ruling class. The parties created on their model (Brazilian PT, German DL, British Respect, Greek Syriza, Spanish Podemos, French LFI, Belgian PT, Brazilian PSOL ...) are no better.

The British LP, ever more monarchist, is in favour of NATO and refuses to support strikes; the German SPD governs with the Greens and the Liberal Party; the PSOE, the PCE and Podemos form in Spain a social-imperialist government enraptured by the military escalation of NATO; in Brazil, Lula has as vice-president an old bourgeois politician, opposes the right to abortion and kneels in front of the army staff; in Nepal, the PCUN-M is presently member of the bourgeois government; the same for the SACP in South Africa; the Russian KPRF supports the invasion of Ukraine; the DSA of the United States are in the Democratic Party and serve as infantrymen to the imperialist Biden; etc.

Centrism contributes to confusion and dispersal

The leadership of the 4th International, created to replace the Workers' International and the Communist International, revised its programme in 1949-1951. The ensuing and ongoing break-up engendered an abundance of sterile sects and twenty or so rival opportunist currents that have all adapted to "reformism" or to bourgeois nationalism.

The Argentine PTS and PO have voted on September 3, with the bourgeois parties in power, a motion in the regional parliament of Buenos-Aires "for social peace". In recent months, the French LO, NPA-B, CR and RP, the British SWP, SP, AWL, ACR and WF aligned themselves on the trade unions apparatuses that multiplied the "days of action" and scattered strikes. During the covid pandemic, "*Trotskyists*"

(French LO, NPA and RP, US SL, Austrian RKOB ...) supported demonstrations against masks and vaccines led by conspiracy theorists and fascists.

Some organisations embodying “Trotskyism” in their country entered into blocks avec with Islamists: the British SWP with Respect in 2004, the Algerian PT with the Rome platform in 1995. From 2011 onwards, several groups claiming to be Trotskyist (Brazilian CST, Argentine IS, Austrian RKOB, New Zealand CWG ...) have presented jihadists as leading a revolution in Syria, and one of them (Argentine LOI) even provided them with troops.

Several organisations advance the constituent assembly in countries where it can only have a counterrevolutionary function: the PTS, PO and MST in Argentine, the PTU and CST in Peru, the POI and POID in France ... Others present cops as workers like any other: British SP, French LO, Brazilian PSTU, Irish SP ... All refuse to advocate and organise self-defence against the police, the army, and fascists.

Numerous are “*Trotskyist*” currents that refuse to condemn the invasion of Ukraine or that put on the same footing the Zionist oppressor and the Arab people in Palestine/Israel. Some refuse to decide in favour of the opening of borders to refugees, workers, and students.

For the revolutionary workers’ international, for the world socialist revolution

The bourgeoisie, even in dominated countries, cannot any more play a progressive role. The strategy that responds to the imperialist phase is the permanent revolution adopted in the 20th century by the 4th International.

It is possible to bring an end to all this rotten world if, beyond borders, the workers’ vanguard regroups itself in a revolutionary workers’ international based on Marxism. In each State, the international will help building a party of the Bolshevik type to expropriate big capital and destroy the bourgeois State, instore a workers’ government based on armed councils of urban and rural workers.

Then, the working class will be able to take power at the head of struggles against exploitation and oppression, for democratic freedoms and the right of oppressed nations, for the equality of women and for the defence of environment. The dictatorship of proletariat will open the way to world socialism-communism rid of the state, a mode of production based on equality and solidarity, where workers will consciously manage resources, production and distribution for the benefit of present and future humanity.

May the 1st, 2023

CoReP (Argentina, Austria, France, Spain, Turkey)

LOTTA COMUNISTA

Crisis of the world order and revolution

The great powers are heading towards the third World War or a chain of agreements and partial wars which will bring bloodshed to continents before plummeting into the catastrophic breakdown of the world order.

These *two paths* are now dictating the *tempos* of our *second century of imperialism*, which was born under the sign of the Asian giants. The rise of Chinese imperialism has shaken the old setup of the world order, while the economic, political and military rearmament of all the powers has openly exposed its crisis, without however deciding the prognosis about the acute or chronic character of this crisis of the order. In both cases, the fierce contention among the ruling classes will draw the proletarians into the struggle, now suddenly and now gradually or in successive waves, triggering clashes which can be seized in a revolutionary way only if a communist party has been working for years to entrench the struggling practice of internationalism in the vast masses – in the factories, working-class districts, the wide and deep strata of the proletariat, and the younger generation.

The twentieth century was the *first century of imperialism*, during which capitalism became so reactionary that the decay of its habits and the mass-scale of its atrocities were hardly offset by its advancements. Two world wars were needed to start the long counter-revolutionary phase of *imperialist development* which is now coming to an end.

The imperialists carved up the earth with military and political means, but their rule cannot maintain the world order. On the one hand, it regularly develops in the new powers the uneven dynamics which will break up the balance, originating crises and conflicts which are at the same time the openings for the revolutionary strategy of the proletariat; on the other hand, it is bound to develop its historical antagonist precisely in the working class, to generalize and link the latter's class struggles beyond any localist attitudes and national peculiarities.

As a Low Empire of capitalism, imperialism is dragging on, waiting for the kick which will throw it into history's grave together with the slave and feudal societies which preceded it in the succession of class systems. The communists are those who organize themselves to deliver this kick. They have no homeland because the whole world is now ripe for the overcoming of bourgeois rule. Three billion wage workers are the real power destined to revolutionize the world. Our communist Manifesto sounds more relevant than ever today: "Proletarians of all countries, unite!"

From China to India and Brazil, imperialist development has given rise to new powers. They are now demanding a new partition of the world, markets and spheres of influence, energy sources and raw materials; even if they are the promoters of open market hunting, they are actually shaking the old free-trade setup. Globalization is slowing down and fragmenting in the contention between unprecedented industrial and financial monopolies. All the powers are brushing up the never-abandoned tools of state

capitalism and are updating them to the modern protectionist mixes of industrial policy, economic war and – tomorrow – war economy.

History wears out ideologies with tragic irony. The imperialist maturation of Chinese state capitalism derides the old Maoist and Stalinist myths of national communism, but a liberal-democratic order stormed by the Asian authoritarian regimes is already replacing the Cold War conflicts with mass propaganda against the new “yellow peril” with brutal ease. To the old powers, *imperialist democracy* is a bulwark against China’s one-party pluralism; for Marxism, democracy is the best political shell of capitalism and indeed, in the imperialist phase, it becomes reactionary across the board, besides being plagued by the irremediable crisis of parliamentarianism. Democracy and communism are enemies.

The power confrontation is highly exacerbated by the forced size of the leading actors: America’s continental dimensions were decisive in two world wars but today they are no longer sufficient to avoid the country’s relative decline; bourgeois Europe derived from its self-destructions and the Yalta partition an unprecedented process of state integration which is today even more urged by the confrontation with the continental scale of the Asian giants.

This new imperialist continental pole, the Union of European states, the federation and confederation of the ruling classes, is already in its evolution “our main enemy at home” because it can only generate another bourgeois Leviathan armed with sceptre, money and sword. If the European capitals renounce waging war on one another, it is only to bring it multiplied outside in the name of a new deadly European patriotism.

European imperialism crossed the threshold of the Euro, the monetary weapon to struggle for the world partition as well as a crucial leap forward in the process of state federation, but it is still slow in finding a synthesis for its foreign and military policy. This is shown by the proxy war between the imperialist robbers in Ukraine, i.e. by the American slap in the face of the doctrines of European *strategic autonomy* within NATO and in East Europe. And yet, laws, currency and borders – and now even the purchase of weapons – have been variously pooled for years.

The war at the gates of Europe, in the midst of nuclear threats and against the backdrop of China’s colossal rearmament, is giving a new impetus, allowing Berlin and Tokyo to rearm with the blessing of Washington, which had defeated them in 1945. It is a double European and Asian *Zeitenwende* (epoch-making turning point), which also Paris and Seoul are coupled with. No power is renouncing imperialist liberalism yet, but all of them are charging their guns under the poker table of the contention.

The breakthrough is caused by the Chinese Dragon, whose economic concentrations are now spilling over into capital export and the conquest of new markets, the spheres of influence of the Silk Road, diplomatic activity in the petro-states of the Persian Gulf, the fleet reviews along the energy routes – in a word, the *imperialist projection* of the new challenger. Its aircraft carriers Liaoning, Shandong, and Fujian have given the global rearmament cycle new tempos and impetus; new toponyms are going to appear in the political and military reports of the 2020s and 2030s – the Spratly and Paracel islands in the South China Sea have been weaponized, the Straits of Malacca, Sunda, and Luzon are focal points in the crosshairs of

nuclear Asia-missiles. The Chinese drills simulating the air and sea blockade of Taiwan have opened a “*decisive decade*” fraught with colossal tensions, even in Washington’s forecasts. Asia will be a test bench for proletarian internationalism!

Military verification of a change in power relations among the imperialist robbers is inherent in the very nature of imperialism when the unitary side of robbing from the oppressed classes turns into scission in the “den of thieves” who want to share in the booty.

Regional and global powers are increasingly meddling in dozens of local conflicts, away from the intermittent focus of social media. In Ukraine, too, a local war dominated by several powers is under way. It is a war of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat, a war between pro-European and pro-Russian Ukrainian capitalists, a national war of the Ukrainian state against the Russian imperialist aggressor, but it is *primarily an imperialist war* involving the main powers. It is a clash between the US, Russia, the EU, and China *through* Ukraine; it is a proxy war with military, financial and even diplomatic means (wouldn’t the first Chinese mediation in old Europe be considered as such?); and it is a war for the partition of the buffer zone between imperialist Europe and imperialist Russia.

It is a partial war in a *crisis in the world order*, a link in the chain of slaughters which leads to the *breakdown of order*.

The world has witnessed a major breakthrough. A new strategic phase has begun! In front of the current imperialist escalation, it is our duty as internationalists of all countries to unite and – in the necessary theoretical and political clarity – to call the world sections of our class to the international struggle against incipient barbarism. European Leninism will do its part. There is full evidence that the *Bolshevik model party* can be rooted in the metropolises and be exported. To bring consciousness of global connections to our class is possible, of the need to act as “a power among the powers” in international politics and to oppose the whole ideological arsenal of imperialism, from pacifist and religious wishful thinking to small-minded nationalist and xenophobic attitudes, and to social-democratic and leftist fallacies. Theoretical, political and organizational rearmament is needed!

In front of the present war in Europe, Lenin’s standpoint on the Balkan wars should be developed: it was a local conflict dominated by the great powers – hence, Lenin’s watchwords of “war against war” and “revolutionary defeatism” in the first world war.

The “Problem of Ukraine” as denounced by Trotsky in April, 1939 should also be returned to – against “those ‘nationalists’ who propose to solve the Ukrainian question by entering the service of one imperialism against another” – taking the transformation of the *national question* “in the epoch of imperialism” in due consideration.

The communists supported bourgeois national claims when these developed the working class and exacerbated the contradictions in its enemy field; the proletariat, however, is today a truly international class and there is no “national question” which can escape the games of the huge conflicting powers, from East Europe to the Middle East, from Taiwan Strait to Donbas, and to Crimea.

The point is not that a national question is nonexistent in Ukraine. On the contrary, there is more than one, but they are all subordinate to the internationalist struggle against all the bourgeois robbers, on pain of losing class strategic autonomy. There is no Ukrainian national resistance to be supported. Our main road is class internationalism, the unity of East and West Ukrainian workers, of Russian, European, and world workers, all against their own bourgeoisie.

It is the road of *mass revolutionaty defeatism* against your own chauvinistic government, of illegal propaganda among the army and militias, of betrayal of your bourgeois homeland, and tomorrow of open class struggle in the legitimate footsteps of the *civil wars* of the oppressed classes against the oppressors – slaves against masters, serfs against lords, and today billions of wage workers against the global bourgeoisie. In the glorious footsteps of October – against war, revolution!

LEAGUE FOR THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL AND THE INTERNATIONALIST NUCLEUS OF ITALY (LFI-NIdI)

The League for the Fourth International and the Internationalist Nucleus of Italy, its Italian section, fight for international socialist revolution, the conquest of power by the working class led by its Leninist party championing the cause of all the oppressed.

With mass unemployment, poverty and hunger ravaging the planet, the question of socialism, revolution or barbarism arises. As in the past, the key question is that of forging a vanguard to lead the struggle of the workers and the oppressed.

Following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and the bureaucratically deformed workers states of East Europe in the early 1990s a mounting *disorder* of imperialist rivalries and nationalist bloodletting has emerged. As decaying capitalism rips up social programs and workers' gains worldwide, it has unleashed all-sided social reaction, including racist terror, attacks on immigrants and a rollback of women's rights. At the same time, from Greece to the Latin America, there have been (and there are today, as the France of nowadays mobilized against the pension "reform") repeated outbreaks of sharp class struggle. To intervene in such actions, on the base of the *Transitional Program*, projected to the construction of actions and or building organizational bodies of the proletariat it is fundamental.

After a decade and a half in which the ruling class trumpeted the supposed "*death of communism*," the imperialists are bogged down in losing wars of colonial occupation, from the Near East to northern Africa, producing the tragic displacement of millions of people living in desperate conditions in refugee or prison camps in Libya, Lebanon, Turkey, Greece (etc.). Migrants and refugees on tragic journeys in search of a place to live and work if they do not perish in the Mediterranean Graveyard are hindered in their escape, even by our own governments who are the real instigators who finance the governments of those countries and their detention camps and rage against those who try to rescue them at sea. This movement has changed the face and composition of the working class itself in European capitalist countries by quickly internationalizing it. Against the racism, precarity and lawlessness in which the bourgeoisie would like to ghettoize this stratum of the working class, it is central to claim: "*Ports open to people's rescues! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No to Detention and Repatriation Centers! Housing, jobs and unions for all!*"

At the same time, economic crisis, unavailability of energy resources and climate change rage on a global scale and shake the foundations of the capitalist order. It is the war between Russia and Ukraine that has dominated world politics and economics for more than a year. By fomenting and arming this war, the U.S., NATO and the EU are leading the world toward a Third World War. The imperialists would like with it to resurrect the U.S.-led unipolar "New World Order"; they have now ruinously lost it. Triumphantly proclaimed at the time of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, they hope to enjoy it as they did before the humiliating defeat and flight from Afghanistan. Therefore, they have fomented the nationalist and fascist forces of Ukraine, at the same time provoking and demonizing Russia, which in

defending the Russian-speaking population of the Donbass, and in opposing NATO expansion, stands in the way of their intent to trigger counterrevolution in China and the other deformed workers' states of Cuba and North Korea. Imperialism wants to permanently erase the word "communism" from the face of the earth. The costs of this ambitious program are being poured on the living standards of the oppressed classes, hit hard first by the pandemic and then by continuous attacks and cuts to their welfare state that are part of the austerity that the European bourgeoisies want to prepare for future conflicts. The LQI appeals for: *Ports closed to weapons! Worker actions to boycott arms supplies to Ukraine! Defeat the imperialists' rush to war against Russia and China* (which is a bureaucratically deformed workers' state that communists must defend); *For the defeat of the proxy-acting regime of the U.S. and NATO in Ukraine; for the military defense of Russia* (which is a regional capitalist power), *without offering its rulers any political support, but urging workers to fight against Putin's reactionary bourgeois nationalist government.*

To realize this, *an international leadership of the proletariat is, not only necessary, but indispensable.* Internationally, the demise of the Soviet Union threw the socialist left into a profound crisis. Many militants dropped out, some tendencies simply closed up shop, others moved further to the right, or ostentatiously distanced themselves from the class struggle. Stalinist parties became thoroughly social-democratic or even bourgeois. Of those currents that identified with Trotskyism, most today no longer even pretend to build Trotskyist parties and a Trotskyist Fourth International. Some talk of a (non-Trotskyist) "Fifth International," others want to roll back history and reincarnate an all-inclusive First International. But one and all, they seek to bury themselves in "broad," "anti-capitalist" or "anti-neoliberal" parties and popular front coalitions with sections of the bourgeoisie.

Against this despair, and to reach this goal, we invite all to take in consideration the program in the *League for the Fourth International Declaration of Principles.*

We say *that communism lives* in the struggles of the working class and the program of its vanguard. What is dead is not communism, but Stalinism. Stalin's anti-Marxist dogma of "socialism in one country" was the ideology of a conservative nationalist bureaucracy that grew out of the isolation of the Soviet workers state. Stalinism betrayed the October Revolution, undermining its historic achievements and ultimately preparing the way for capitalist counterrevolution under the relentless pressure of imperialism. We stand on the fight of the Russian and International Left Opposition leading to the founding of the Fourth International in 1938. Trotsky's theory and program of permanent revolution summed up the experience of the three Russian revolutions and constitutes the program for new Octobers in the countries of belated capitalist development.

For years many of these pseudo-Trotskyists sided with imperialism rather than defend the Soviet Union (notably over Poland and Afghanistan in the 1980s). At the decisive turning point in the USSR, they sided with Yeltsin's counterrevolution. In recent years the International Bureau of the Fourth International (IBFI), [former United Secretariat, USec], which falsely claims to be the Fourth International, has participated as ministers in a bourgeois government (Brazil) and been part of a bourgeois coalition

government (Italy) waging imperialist war on Afghanistan. Trotsky and Lenin have become no more than historical “references” for them, the Bolshevik program of world socialist revolution is no longer considered relevant. Such opportunist currents are incapable of providing revolutionary leadership.

From Venezuela to China, which is facing deep inroads of capitalism within and imperialist pressure from without, the need for a Leninist-Trotskyist leadership to lead the struggles against the ravages of the global capitalist economic crisis is as acute as ever. Forging such a vanguard requires study of Marxism and the history of working-class struggle combined with intervention in the class struggle.

The League for the Fourth International (LFI) was founded in 1998 by Internationalist Group (IG), by longtime leading cadres expelled by the International Communist League (ICL – the Spartacist Tendency) in the U.S. in 1996; by expelled comrades coming from the ICL sections in Mexico and France; and by the *Liga Quarta - Internacionalista do Brasil* (LQB). After three decades of upholding the banner of revolutionary Trotskyism, and intervening to fight counterrevolution in East Germany and the Soviet Union, the ICL became demoralized by the defeat and retreated into passive propagandism, blaming the backward consciousness of the working class while abandoning key Trotskyist positions. The LFI seeks to reforge an authentically Trotskyist Fourth International whose deeds match its words.

In the 27 years of building of the League for the Fourth International, we have concretely fought for working-class opposition to popular front coalitions with the bourgeoisie in Mexico and Brazil. The LFI has uniquely upheld the Leninist program of fighting on a proletarian program for the *defeat* of “one’s own” capitalist rulers in imperialist war. The national sections of the LFI have led a number of important struggles, including to oust the police from the unions in Brazil as well as the first-ever strike action, a state-wide work stoppage by teachers in Rio de Janeiro, demanding freedom for former Black Panther and world-renowned radical journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal.

In Mexico, our section, the *Grupo Internacionalista*, sparked the formation of *worker-student defense guards* that contributed greatly to staving off army repression of the 1999-2000 National University strike, which despite the arrest of over 1,000 strikers (including several of our comrades) was able to defeat the attempt to do away with free public higher education. The GI also played an important role intervening from the capital in the convulsive 2006 struggle by teachers, workers and the indigenous population in the southern state of [Oaxaca](#). In the heart of the dominant global superpower, the Internationalist Group’s fight for working-class action to defeat U.S. imperialist war abroad and the capitalist war on working people, oppressed minorities and civil liberties “at home” has a particular importance.

Within weeks of the 11 September 2001 attack on the World Trade Center, the IG initiated a struggle against the “anti-immigrant war purge” at the City University of New York. And the IG’s years-long fight for *workers strikes against the war* contributed importantly to the May Day 2008 West Coast port shutdown to stop the war in Iraq and Afghanistan – the first-ever such action by U.S. workers against an imperialist war – overcoming the union bureaucracy’s efforts to prevent it, and then to deform it with social-patriotism.

While reformists and centrists of all stripes blame defeats on the working class, claiming it has

undergone a qualitative regression in consciousness, the Trotskyists of the LFI insist that the class struggle continues uninterrupted and the fight for revolutionary *leadership* remains key. (See our article on “*In Defense of the Transitional Program*.”) As the combination of losing imperialist wars and deep economic crisis puts sharp class battles on the order of the day, the cohering of a reforged Fourth International will require revolutionary regroupment, through a process of splits and fusions, not by episodic combinations and recombinations but in fighting to uphold and extend the Trotskyist program. ■

“All talk to the effect that historical conditions have not yet 'ripened' for socialism is the product of ignorance or conscious deception. The objective prerequisites for proletarian revolution have not only 'ripened,' they have begun to get somewhat rotten.... The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership.”

—Leon Trotsky, *The Transitional Program* (1938)

RIVOLUZIONE COMUNISTA

Four points to characterise the world situation and the revolutionary tasks under the banner of proletarian internationalism

First

Stagnation-inflation to drive the world economy

In 2021 the general crisis is stagnation-inflation. Contemporary stagnation-inflation is the result of a double push, economic and political, namely the disruption of the world market and public and private financial speculation. Its main effect is production stagnation at rising prices (financial profiteering). Seen in the light of its concrete course, the phenomenon shows us the following developments and trends between 2022 and the first two months of 2023.

On 21 December 2021, the price of gas reaches the ceiling of EUR 182 per Mwh in Amsterdam. The Italian government rushes to set new electricity and gas tariffs by raising them, as the third increase of the year, by 30%. The increase is partly supported by the State for the benefit of businesses and households. At the end of August 2022, the retail price index shows an average increase of 8.4 per cent. Coefficients of the leap are food and alcoholic beverages with a jump of 10.6% and transport with 10.3%. The *'shopping trolley'* experiences an increase of up to 10%. Electricity rises on the free market by more than 20 points in a single month and increases the purchase price by 4 billion euros per month. And so at the end of August, the overall inflation rate rises to 9.1 per cent.

After August, inflation leapt by 3.5% in a single month. And in October, the increase in gas and food prices goes up to 11.9%. Based on this October figure alone, the inflation process takes on a value of 8% for the whole of 2022. Prices go up in Germany (11.6%), France (7.1%) and Spain (7.3%). Only at the pass of 2022- 2023 does the inflationary index hint at receding. But it has been two full years that millions, billions of workers, have been robbed of their wages and any other support in life; hands down, by employers, traders, householders, businessmen. And all the heavier the more precarious and poorer are their respective positions. According to a study by the research office of the CGIA of Mestre (Venice) between 2022 and January and part of February 2023, the total amount of the inflationary burden on the shoulders of workers reached the figure of 163 billion euro, or 6,338 euro per household. And to get a better cognizance of the phenomenon, it must be said before we close on the point that the biggest game is in the hands of the financial *'vultures'*, who shift wealth into the hands of the biggest groups by manipulating the interest rate.

Second

The Russian invasion of Ukraine transforms inter-imperialist tension into Russian-Ukrainian-NATO armed warfare

There are a few premises that must be recalled for the historical understanding of the events. First: the

break-up of the USSR and the disintegration of the Eastern bloc took place at the turn of the 1980s-1990s. And the formation of the new '*independent States*' in the Balkans took place not along internal lines, but by virtue of the combined relations between the powers concerned (Germany, Italy, France, the USA, Great Britain). The USA continues its power politics in the area, while NATO assumes a position of unchallenged and threatening strength. Second: in 2014, the neo-Nazi uprising in Maidan Square causes the pro-Russian government to flee and resist in the south. An armed civil war ensues, which has since claimed many lives until 24 February 2022 without ever finding a solution. Third and final premise: in mid-November 2021, the head of the CIA, Burns, travelled to Moscow to warn the Russian government that a new violation of the Ukrainian borders would trigger a united and decisive response from NATO members; adding that Poland and Lithuania were forced to deal with the refugee emergency (which he said had been violently rejected by Belarus); as well as to point out that the energy supply crisis was making the situation difficult.

On 24 February 2022, the Russian army, equipped with 175,000 men, thousands of tanks, planes, drones and other weaponry invaded Ukrainian territory, giving place to what was called a '*special operation*', the objective of which only the Russian commanders knew. On Saturday 26th the siege of Kiev begins. Zelenskyi distributes 18,000 rifles to civilians and goes into resistance, while the Atlantic Alliance implements measures to strengthen the defence by mobilising the Rapid Intervention Force. In a recorded message to the nation, surrounded by high state officials, he declares: '*We will defend our independence. Glory to Ukraine!*'. From the Kremlin, Putin also showed up on TV calling the Ukrainian government a '*junta of terrorists*' and a '*gang of drug-addicted neo-Nazis*', calling on the Ukrainian military leadership to mutiny '*between us we understand each other better*' '*do not allow neo-Nazis to use your children, wives and the elderly as human shields*'. Lavrov was quick to point out '*we are ready to negotiate at any time as soon as the Ukrainian armed forces respond to our president's call by ending resistance and laying down their arms*', but neither Zelenskyi nor Kiev intend to surrender or accept a pro-Russian regime. At the Kiev airport, the Russian air force suffers an exemplary defeat under crossfire from the Ukrainian-NATO anti-aircraft fire, forcing the occupying army to beat a retreat and change strategy. Thus, a destructive war is underway that exhumes the most horrendous images from the Second World War, which expands in armed men and is reinforced with new instruments of destruction.

As for the tasks, we can briefly recall the objectives given to the Balkan proletarians in the 1999 Nato "*Allied Force Operation*" (see our pamphlet - '*The Balkan powder keg*' pages 64-65-66 ed. 5/7/2001), emphasising: 1) that the starting point of any correct position is the principle that *the enemy is at home*; 2) that the Russian-Ukrainian war is a war of capitalist overwhelm and exploitation of the masses; 3) that our task is the equipment of the proletarian active forces with the instruments of struggle to withstand the clash against the state apparatus and strengthen the party organisation.

Third

The sources of workers' insurgency

in the state of emergency war and the workers' objectives

The proletarian movement in Italy, considered in the dynamic maintained during 2022 and up to 1 May 2023, gave rise to four paths of action-mobilisation and struggle.

The first path consisted of resistance to redundancies and demobilisations, which entered into a tense climate of confrontation. Several conflicts cost bitter struggles and bitter clashes. The second flow has animated a growing opposition to the elasticisation of labour in the humiliating and predatory forms it takes in practice (fixed-term contracts, contracts on command, disposable, of minimum duration and minimum remuneration). A third flow has channelled, in chain agitations, workers women precarious tenants in public demonstrations against the high cost of rent and inflationary cuts. The fourth stream gathered and channelled public and private employees and large swathes of youth into agitations and protests against the police and autocratic nature of government behaviour. The young people in particular set examples of steadiness by exposing themselves to risk with great determination.

These are the goals and demands that formed the basis of our workers' activity:

1) Open a front for a general increase in the basic wage to at least EUR 2,000 per month in order to quickly cope with the rapid increase in the cost of living.

2) Flank this objective with the demand for a guaranteed minimum wage of €1,500 per month for the underemployed, the unemployed and those on the waiting list.

3°) Demand the reduction of the working week to 33 hours in 5 days, and where possible to 30, with the abolition of overtime.

4°) Reunite the various professional categories through the practice of common platforms.

5°) Abandon the central trade unions and organise into combative unions with workers' interests at the centre of the struggles.

6°) Pursue common demands platforms at the cross-sectoral, general and international levels.

7°) Abolition of Income Tax on wages and pensions as well as VAT on consumer goods.

8°) Autonomy of action against any limitation of workers' initiative, preceptions, anti-strike blackmail; the strike is an absolute right of the workers and it is up to them to decide when and how to strike.

The following demands must also be pursued to protect the physical integrity and practice of struggle:

A - Form workers' inspection committees with the task of halting activity in cases of danger; preventing young labour forces without adequate experience from being exposed to risk in jeopardy; set up territorial inspection bodies to ensure control over small companies.

B - Set up resistance funds to support prolonged struggles and against repression.

C - Respond to employers' and state violence by adopting appropriate forms of self-defence and attack, pre-establishing the necessary relations of force to repulse every attack and every employer-state coup.

D - Reject the expulsion orders against workers and young people, in any place of work; and any other preventive measures and special surveillance, issued by police and judges.

E - Oppose denunciations, threats to withdraw residence permits, any limitation of the right to strike.

Fourth

On political perspectives and tasks

The outbreak of the general crisis in stagflation opens a more tense and generalised phase of social conflicts and inter-state rivalries on the continental and global level. The rise in inflation, which tends to remain high in this phase, is accompanied by the production downturn with its sequence of asphyxiating repercussions on employment, consumption, services and the entire social sphere.

The *social crisis*, with its intertwined and sectorial dynamics of movement, has outlined and will increasingly outline the dividing line of the classes and the new generations, as well as their practical alignment; and, in many respects, their ideological disguises. Woe to think about the notion that one should recompose the split and opposing '*social body*'. The vanguard's task is to deepen the divisions and recompose the unity of movement and class struggle of the proletariat. And to always count on and arouse class solidarity, which is not a mechanical fact, germinating from the height of the chimneys, but from the common proletarian condition imposed by wages, dependency, and state domination.

A large segment of the very young, who have clashed with the forces of law and order, have stored up a deep social hatred and are not afraid of state repression. There is a need to establish a concrete connection with the more advanced subjects to increase political capacity, both practical and theoretical, which can only grow and occur through organisation. Reject the punitive reaction of power against the young and the very young, and stigmatise the hanging pedagogy of *educators*. Young people must look forward with the experience, albeit brief, of the past. And take up the task of overturning capitalist society in order to free the oppressed masses and the whole of humanity from hunger and exploitation, from crises and wars, from all the horrors and atrocities, which, with the relentless stem rot of the capitalist system, is stinking up the whole world and beyond.

As for the wars in progress and in preparation, we reiterate that salvation and escape from the slaughters and destructions lies first and foremost in the action of the soldiers on the opposing sides, who instead of slaughtering each other must turn their weapons against their commands, fraternise, rise up against their national power machine and impose proletarian power. And this applies to the workers of the world who are the real world power.

- Fight to overthrow all bands of bourgeois power; proletarian power.
- Wield the flag of proletarian internationalism.
- Equip the revolutionary party.
- Nothing must stand of the exhausted capitalist world.
- Use power to build a society of the free and equal.

CONTROCORRENTE

The reasons of this discussion and why starting from internationalism?

“Chinese society must have real courage to engage calmly in a war that aims to protect core interests, and be prepared to bear the cost”, wrote Hu Xijin, editor-in-chief of Global Times in 2020. James Stavridis, former NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe, confirmed that a war between the US and China “within 15 years” is a likely scenario, as they “stand on opposing fronts and the distance between them will remain the same on many crucial issues, such as the status of Taiwan, ships in South China Sea, cyber and tariff wars, human rights violations. They will continue to increase their military capacities and could get to a point of no return”.

While inflation, bank defaults, pandemics and the return of a conflict between blocks and a conventional war among states amid Europe reflect a mighty “return of History” (in spite of who had summoned its “end”), the political environment which refers to internationalism appears not just minoritarian, but also affected by splits, sometimes dating back over 100 years, concerning analysis, strategy, tactics and even language, and incapable to assert an internationalist vision in social struggles, like the current strikes in Europe.

In the history of the labour movement internationalism is still one of the main dividing lines between the proletarian and the bourgeois fields, as it poses an unavoidable question: the approach to the bourgeois State and its apparatuses, mainly consisting – as Engels and Lenin taught us – in “special bodies of armed men” with the task of protecting it from its internal and external enemies. Today these special bodies are fighting each other furiously and, by doing so, put internationalism under scrutiny. This is in itself a good reason to discuss. On the other hand, war in the era of imperialism is not only the natural outlet for competition between capitals, but for workers it represents also an opportunity to test their autonomy by emancipating themselves from bourgeois protection, which is the norm in times of peace.

It is not just about reasserting a principled, historical position vis-à-vis an ongoing conflict: after all the young 21st century inherited from the 20th many wars on all continents and added new ones. Therefore, the dispute between Russia and Ukraine, in itself, is nothing new. It’s rather about looking at a future, where we will face an unprecedented situation, with a rapid escalation of inter-imperialist tensions. The decline of US hegemony and the even more rapid and catastrophic decline of Russian imperialism, along with the problems which affect the European unification and the rise of China and India, undermine the balance of power set up after the end of the “Cold War”, which had ensured a period of capitalistic development under the banner of open market economy. The balance of power is made even more precarious by the hectic jostling of regional powers – Turkey, Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Korea South Korea, Japan – aimed to get their “spot in the sun” or expand it.

At stake are not just the considerable resources of Ukraine and the investments attracted by these resources, but the reshaping of the balance of power in view of new clashes – first of all the dispute on Taiwan – between the US, their allies and China. This happens in a world context where imperialism is

“the highest stage of capitalism” all over the planet, with national governments, economic alliances and supranational institutions being its expression, regardless of whether a single nation-State in itself meets the five conditions which Lenin listed in his famous essay. Today the hopes in for national liberation and the creation of happy little fatherlands are just the reactionary utopia of petty-bourgeois sectors, crushed by international big capital in many countries, who dream to run their stall in the immense global souk and provide raw materials, cheap labour, tax exemptions to the same capital which oppress them, in a competition with the neighbour stalls. It does not mean that we don't have national issues on the table anymore, but rather that those issues cannot be solved in the frame of capitalism, through a coalition between the proletarians and their national bourgeoisie.

The Ukrainian State is fully inserted in this context, and the political struggle that has taken place within it since 1989 is a reflection of the pushes, towards this or that imperialist bloc, of each fraction of domestic capital supported by external sponsors, that use nationalism as a club to fight each other. This has as an inevitable corollary phenomena of national oppression, which, as always, affect especially the poorest sectors of the population, mostly proletarian. However, the real object of the dispute is not the existence or otherwise of Ukrainian or Russian nationality, but rather the adhesion of Ukraine to the Western imperialist bloc and of the Donbass republics to the Russian one. While the war is still ongoing, the real winners are the business groups which dominate both the countries and hide behind the mask of nationalism their profits, made both in peace and war times, as well as, in the rest of the world, arms companies, subcontractors waiting for Ukraine's reconstruction and those who will grab lands and subsoil resources. Instead, the losers will be the Ukrainian and Russian proletarians, bound to die in the meat grinder of the front line or incur in further wage cuts and suppression of their rights, as well as, in the rest of the world, the masses starved by the rising prices of wheat, the declining wages and the slashing of social benefits in exchange of purchasing arms.

Today we are facing the paradox of an undeclared war, where officially only Russian and Ukrainian troops fight, but the intervention of NATO and other countries, providing arms, technology, logistics and operational support and fueling a dramatic increase of world military expenditure, proved to be crucial since the beginning.

Indeed, for the labor movement the ongoing war and the changes connected to it put back on the agenda a fundamental problem, overlooked for decades: the military question. War is a mirror of society, in which it takes place and within a globalized, intertwined world, with a high degree of capital concentration, both must share the same features. Arms, even the individual ones, have become very expensive and complex and their production requires advanced technology, concentrated in a bunch of countries, as well as the channels for funds, supplies and intelligence collection and management. In addition, the military bodies of the State are forced to integrate with private capital, both at the operational and data/collection management level, so that the thin line between military and civilian gets increasingly blurred (consider the role played by Wagner PMC in Ukraine and Africa and the valuable services provided to Kyiv by Elon Musk's Starlink). Alliances like NATO and AUKUS are much more than mutual military assistance

agreements and involve industrial complexes, technology development, standardisation schemes, investments, etc. The war is interimperialist for all those reasons too, that is, because at this stage it cannot be otherwise. And, as such, it has to be dealt with, considering the following points:

we find ourselves in a very long period of lack of revolutionary crisis. Those proletarians who are currently politically active have been forged through a period marked by the overwhelming dominance of capital and its ideologies and, therefore, have interiorised and absorbed their contents. This puts the focus on the need of an all-out battle against every expression of the capitalist domain, and war is one of the most important;

workers have crossed over three decades of attacks and productive restructuring that have impaired the balance of power with capital and undermined their political consciousness;

the balance of power resulting from WWII has been finally broken, we are facing a period which will be characterized by heavy international turmoils and it will be decisive to keep the bar straight on the working class independence. The Russo-Ukrainian war is not yet over, but the workers feel already the pressure of a propaganda aimed at recruit them against China, as well as somebody would recruit Chinese workers against the West.

war will have (and already has) an heavy impact on workers' living standards, even in countries not directly involved in it (all are indirectly involved). This causes social unrest, we should already cope with. Our opponents have already dug up the historic alternative between butter and cannons, where butter is understood as health, schools, wages, pensions, etc. It is an alternative that requires a clear answer, without grasping at straws or expecting to have their cake and eat it too.

we are facing an unprecedented crisis of leadership of the bourgeoisie. Its political apparatuses are by now devoided of credibility in the eyes of the workers and also of large sectors of the bourgeoisie itself. Its institutions, idealized and defended to the bitter end by a "left" at the end of its rope, are overwhelmed by the rising tide of abstensionism which, although not in itself a symptom of class consciousness, is nevertheless the sign of the lack of confidence of large sectors of the population – especially proletarians – in the magnificent progressive destiny of bourgeois democracy;

war is inherent in the system we live and not an "accident" that we can avoid through an exercise of the will. Instead we can – and must – move and act on the basis of the new conditions the war determines, starting from the "here and now", that is, from our material social condition as militants and workers of an imperialist country that is involved in war. It is not a question of claiming a Pontius Pilate-like equidistance between the contenders, as if the conflict did not concern us, but, on the contrary, of starting from the point of class independence to undersand what are the interests of the workers who are involved in the war.

For all these reasons we think it is central to focus our intervention on a denunciation of the imperialist character of the war in Ukraine. No ambiguity about the counter-revolutionary character of the Russian ruling group and the bourgeois and imperialist nature of its state, but equally no ambiguity about the imperialist character of the bloc which opposes Russia, of which the Kiev government is only the

spearhead. We do not underestimate the horrors of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but they are the horrors of every war, even those to which the imperialist media caravanserai does not pay the same attention or, worse, hides under the carpet.

It is difficult today to say that the enemy is in our house, even though he has always been here, in 1914 as in 1939. Yet it is profoundly true and therefore absolutely necessary if we want to keep alive at least a glimmer of a revolutionary perspective and for this we must say it, even today: the enemy is not on the Donbass front, but in our house.

Some have evoked the need for a “new Zimmerwald”. The formula may seem pretentious. Nonetheless, we think that today this discussion must be undertaken, all the more so as, with rising inflation and the question of debt back on the table, an adjustment to our own imperialism, albeit with criticism, will inevitably push us to take a similar posture on its social policies.

Our aim is to delimit a field of forces which share an internationalist approach based on the political independence of workers. The divergences that have emerged in the face of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, even among forces that come from the same tradition, do not represent, in our opinion, simple differences of analysis on an issue as important as war, but rather the result of alternative world views which reflect different social points of view and therefore also different long-term political perspectives, not just on the international stage.

INTERNATIONALIST STANDPOINT

“The crisis in the imperialist world order and the response of the proletariat”

Crisis

Capitalism is faced with a deep, long term, multileveled, global, organic crisis: economic, social, political, geopolitical, environmental. There is no optimism among the strategists of capital not only for the present conjuncture or decade but for the whole historical epoch. Continuous attacks on living standards and rights; rising inequality, poverty and hunger; rise of authoritarian and far-right forces; anger, particularly among the youth, in relation to the environmental catastrophe and the suppression of women’s and lgbtqi+ rights; all of these are creating conditions for explosive class struggles.

Class struggle

The last few years have seen mighty movements in tens of countries. In a whole number of neo-colonial (–“developing”) countries we saw eruptions with revolutionary characteristics. In the beginning of the 2010s we had revolutions in a number of Arab countries and huge waves of struggle in southern Europe. 2019 was a year in which the dimensions of social upheavals were probably greater than 1968. In the recent months we saw important strike waves in a whole number of European countries: Britain, France, Greece, Belgium, Germany, Portugal etc. Even China faced important mobilizations around the pandemic lockdowns.

The system is rotten and reactionary to the core but the subjective factor –i.e., the working class and its organisations, political and social– is not in a position to fulfil the task of overthrowing capitalism.

The parties of the Left, traditional or “new”, have capitulated to the ruling class. The anticapitalist Left, with very few exceptions is itself in deep crisis – it has failed to take advantage of the crisis of capitalism and, also, of the crisis of reformism.

As a result, the far right is rising, reaching levels unprecedented in the post WWII decades – it represents a grave danger for the future.

The contradiction between the objective situation and the subjective factor, leads to a protracted epoch of instability and social convulsions.

Geopolitics

US and Western imperialism have entered an epoch of historical decline. China, Russia, BRICs and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation are growing and expanding, challenging US hegemony. Processes like the setting up a New Development Bank to challenge the IMF, of a new currency based on a basket of currencies, of agreements to trade on the basis of national currencies instead of the dollar, are under way.

These are long term processes, not to be expected to mature or be concluded in the course of the next few years. They will be creating massive instability and collisions in the capitalist system, on the one hand

pushing class struggles forward and on the other presenting new dangers and challenges for the popular masses.

There will be no straight forward passage from a “US century” to a “China century”. The US will fight by all means to maintain its hegemony, but it is actually fighting against the “law of combined and uneven development”, i.e., against time. The US can, undoubtedly, delay China’s rise but it cannot freeze it indefinitely. There are contradictions between the US and the EU in relation to the approach on China, but the strong bonds between the two cannot be expected to break – similarly the bonds between China and Russia cannot be expected to break either.

Developments will move in the direction of two main but also other poles in the global system, in severe antagonism between them for domination and spheres of influence – unless interrupted by the socialist revolution. Each one of the two main blocks, around the US and around China, will have its own internal contradictions.

There is nothing positive in this from the point of view of the working class, and there is no basis for supporting any side in this inter-imperialist conflict. On the other hand, if and where possible, it is correct to take advantage of the inter-imperialist contradictions to advance working class interests.

In previous epochs this contradiction would have been (partially) resolved through a world war, but this time this is not taking place (in the real meaning of “world war”) because all main belligerents are in possession of nuclear arms. So, apart from trade wars like the present one between China and the US, proxy wars can be expected to be more vicious and bloodier than in the recent past.

The new cold war, between the US and China, can be as fierce as the first cold war between the West and the Soviet Union, but it is of a different character – it has no ideological characteristics, it is a struggle between different capitalist/imperialist powers for domination, profit and spheres of influence. Despite China’s powerful state intervention and the decisive role of the CCP, the system as a whole works fundamentally for capitalist interests and not for the nationalized economy.

The War

The Ukraine war is a manifestation of the clash of interests between Western imperialism and Russia, China’s most important ally today.

There are other parameters in this war, as well. The invasion of Russia into Ukraine is clearly imperialist and, as such, it ought to be severely condemned – the demand for the Russian army to withdraw is imperative. But this does not mean a support to the Ukrainian ruling class or Zelensky – on the contrary revolutionary socialists should aim to convince the working class *in both Russia and Ukraine* to fight against their ruling class’s corrupt, reactionary, nationalist, anti-working-class regimes. There is also the 2014 war by the Ukrainian regime against the Russophone populations in Eastern Ukraine in the Donbass region claiming their right to self-determination – this is a demand that revolutionary Marxists must support.

All these elements do exist, but the central, dominant characteristic of the war is a clash between

different imperialist forces. The West are supplying massively arms, intelligence, know how, training, experts, volunteers, etc., to the Ukrainian regime in order to defeat Putin. For this reason, it is wrong for Marxists to support one or other imperialist camp in this war. They should stand for the interests of the Russian workers against Putin and for the interests of the Ukrainian workers against Zelensky and NATO; for the exit of the Russian army from the occupied lands, and for the right of self-determination of the Russophone populations of the Donbass.

Marxism

One thing is clear, the fundamental premises of Marxism have been brilliantly vindicated by history.

But this is obviously not enough for Marxism to become a mighty force on the planet, as was in previous historical conjunctures, particularly after the victory of the Russian revolution. The forces that speak in the name of Marxism today are faced with a deep crisis.

The past decade has seen serious splits or divisions in all the well-known Trotskyist organisations: the USFI, the CWI, the IMT, the IST, etc. The only area where some positive steps are taking place is Argentina but it remains to be seen if these will stand the test of time.

The anticapitalist Left has not been able to overcome the repercussions of the capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union in the 1990s. The implications are still with us.

The reasons for the failure of the revolutionary Left to build sizable forces internationally cannot be entirely explained by the objective situation. Rather, it is the inability of the anticapitalist Left to take advantage of the objective possibilities that opened up, which explains its crisis. Large sections of the anticapitalist Left are “suffering” from various illnesses: unbalanced perspectives; overoptimism or its opposite, pessimism; no proper contact with the working masses; no proper understanding of the transitional programme; opportunist deviations; sectarianism; and tragically also, messianism i.e., the perception that they are the only revolutionaries on the planet. There is a problem with the internal regime in many organizations: secondary differences can lead to huge polarization, different opinions are treated with huge hostility, internal “wars” take place over secondary differences, splits follow most debates over differences.

We think that in order for Marxists to be successful in their historical task, the lessons from the failures of the previous historical period must be drawn. Such, are:

The need to intervene in the changing situation and the rise in class struggles with the primary aim of building the revolutionary forces, coupled with efforts to build broader political and other formations which can help to advance class struggle and working-class interests.

The understanding that a future *mass* International will not be built on the basis of the ideas and methods of just one revolutionary current, but will represent an amalgamation of different revolutionary Marxist currents and organizations.

Those who aim at building a future mass revolutionary International, should come together to discuss how this can come about. This effort needs to be based on a number of principles without demanding full

agreement on all political issues.

Such principles are: a consistent defense of the method of the United Front, i.e., a clear anti-sectarian stand; a defense of the transitional programme and method; a clear rejection of entry into any kind of bourgeois government or of a “popular front” kind in the name of fighting the far right or for “tactical reasons”; a clear aim of orientating, intervening and building inside the working class and against the dominance of academics and intellectuals; a clear aim of building *mass* revolutionary forces, against the microcosm of small groups; last but not least, democratic discussion and debate must be uninhibited, open and comradely.

These principles can provide the basis for a coming together and for a fusion of different revolutionary currents and organisations and within this context different political positions can be handled in an open, public and comradely manner.

OCCHIO DI CLASSE

The crisis of the world imperialist order and the impossibility of a peaceful solution

The crisis of capitalism and the consequent collapse of the system of international relations opened the doors of History to a new imperialist world war. This war is looking out on a global scenario that is characterised by the crisis of American imperialism's hegemony and the processes of capitalism restoration in Russia and China.

The conflict in Ukraine is an integral part of this context, which was progressively aggravated first by the crisis of 2008 and the subsequent recession of 2009/2012, then by the crisis triggered by the global pandemic of 2020.

A new phase

The bankruptcy of 2008 historically marked the exhaustion of neo-liberalism as capitalism's response to its crisis, leaving the world bourgeoisie orphaned of a strategic initiative and highlighting the limitations and contradictions of the major economies. These set the stage for crises of power and democracy in the historical imperialisms and increased political repression in the states of the emerging economies (BRICS). On the one hand, the tendency towards war and Bonapartism has strengthened, on the other hand, a marked popular intolerance increased, as evidenced by continuous popular uprisings in various parts of the globe.

In the United States, the crisis immediately resulted in the fall back to the 'nation-state' to rescue failing banks and national enterprises, which materialized in the Trump's protectionism and economic nationalism. The latter were expressions of the last stage of exhaustion of so-called globalisation, exploded with the global crisis and the trend towards international economic depression. The failure of Trump's policies showed how global capitalist integration had reached a level that could not be dismantled by any supposed 'protectionism'. Contemporaneously, it led to a worldwide trade war offensive, while preparing for a military confrontation through a rearmament race.

The dollar's overwhelming power in international reserves and transactions clashes with the declining US share of foreign production and trade. This gap makes the dollar currency a weapon of economic warfare and as the US trade deficit trend deepens, the increase in public debt is used as a factor of 'international balance'. The crisis of the 'stars and stripes' democracy is confronted – as it is the case in all imperialist states – with an increasingly divided bourgeoisie, and in this context the tendency towards radicalisation, polarisation and Bonapartism is accentuated, as the attempted assault on Capitol Hill showed.

The European Union is rotting in the impasse dictated by two factors:

the impossible progress towards greater political and institutional integration, which is due to the economic crisis and the tendency of the large 'national' capitalist groups to use nation-states as a shield.

the impossibility of being able to go back to before the common market, which is caused by the high level of integration of the respective economies and the vital need to operate in a market that makes sustainable large investments and production on a larger than national scale.

The collapse of the price of raw materials has shown the limits of the Russian economy, which is dependent to a large extent on their exportation. It has also led to the falling apart of the attempts to form a middle class through oil revenue and from underground resources (especially gas), which in turns led to a crisis in public finance. The economic weakness is reflected in that of the regime, which has increased its level of repression to address both the discontent of the working class – e.g. with the rise of the trade union struggle following the 2018 pension system reform – and that of a substantial section of oligarchs, who were demanding greater integration into the world market. The latter circumstance fuels Putin's fear that these oligarchs might follow the path of the Ukrainian ones who in 2014 endorsed the coup d'état, shrugging off both Russian and Ukrainian bureaucracy, and gave birth to a regime dominated far and wide by Nato imperialism.

After decades of astounding growth, even the integration of the Chinese economy into the global one has abruptly slowed down due to the reduction of consumption in Western countries. The huge internal market proved to be incapable of replacing the foreign one. The state's need to control the most important branches of the economy and industry, the non-international convertibility of the yuan, the dependence of its capitalists on foreign investment and consumption, and the impossibility of building an economic model based on high wages represent serious limitations to the development of an autonomous industrial bourgeoisie in competition with the others. The inevitable development of the working class as a consequence of the industrial development has already led to a substantial increase in strikes in recent years despite the failure to develop independent trade union organisations. The pressure of capital for greater freedom of movement is countered by the regime's fear of such 'liberalisation' as a trigger for a gigantic upsurge in the organisation of the Chinese proletariat.

From trade war to military conflict

US foreign policy has abandoned the global war against terrorism in favour of a – not without contradictions – world trade war against China, Russia and the EU, which was accompanied by military operations and increased investment in armaments. At present, there are no 'internal' conditions for an open war, as the yankee bourgeoisie is going through all kinds of divisions. The war challenge is therefore not conducted by direct attack, but by trying to create in the 'enemy' society the internal political conditions for its military annihilation.

Against China, the Pentagon's declared goal is an overthrow of the current regime in favour of a democratic-liberal one.

The offensive has been carried out by means of sanctions, concerning for instance the technology industry. On the economic-military side, however, in violation of the Nixon agreements, Taiwan has been transformed from a source of Chinese international investment into a base for economic and also military

operations. At the same time, the US navy has turned the South China Sea, on which China is significantly dependent for oil imports, into a war zone, with a huge deployment of its navy, drawing up offensive military agreements with Australia and Japan.

Against Russian, the capitalist expansion in the countries of the former Soviet bloc (Poland, the Baltic States, the Czech Republic, Romania, Hungary) developed in both economic (integration into the EU) and military (NATO bases and armaments) terms and was aimed at encircling the Russian Federation until its capitulation into the Western bloc. Thanks to the Baltic gas route, Putin had attracted German and European capital to Russia on a larger scale, with the aim of putting an end to a dangerous economic decline. The US opposed any type of economic alliance between Russia and Western countries to keep the EU under the strict control of the Atlantic Alliance – increased during the conflict in Ukraine – and to create the conditions for the overthrow of Putin, in favour of a 'friendly' liberal regime or a break-up of the Russian Federation.

The US has played a direct role in the destabilisation of the EU, favouring an un-negotiated Brexit, opposing Macron's ambitions to build a European army, instigating and directing the coup in Ukraine and the subsequent training-arming of the Ukrainian army turning that space into international conflict territory in the boycott and subsequent sabotage of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline.

The current conflict in Ukraine – a direct consequence of the EuroMaidan uprisings and the overthrow of Yanukovich's pro-Russian government in 2014 – is an integral part of a much wider imperialist war that already sees the direct or indirect participation of all world powers. It is an imperialist war on both sides, a response to the existential crises of imperialism in the NATO countries and Russia. Putin's war is a reactionary war against the entire working class of the former Soviet space, which the revolution had united, and it is an imperialist war, because it is intended to gain its own space in the world imperialist camp. Nato's war cannot be dissociated from its goals in Russia and China.

The development of the conflict has accelerated the entry of Sweden and Finland into NATO and the trend towards new 'alliances' such as Russia with Saudi Arabia, the trend towards an Asian IMF and the liberation of Russia, China and even Brazil from the dollar as a currency. All these are measures of economic warfare.

War and revolution

The current war scenarios do not target the peripheral countries where Russia and China pour out their imperialist ambitions, but they directly target Russia and China themselves. This is instructive of how the international reintegration of nationalised economies cannot, in the end, be 'peaceful' and how the exploitation of their economic space, as configured by capitalist restoration, is relatively problematic. This requires a global restructuring of international relations, which the current war has already begun to undertake.

The entry of the proletariat into history after World War I marked the beginning of an era of wars and revolutions, and every war that arises is not limited to inter-imperialist conflict but is an international class

conflict against the proletariat.

The harsh attacks in the warring countries on the masses subjected to economic regimes useful to sustain the war effort have been followed by an awakening of struggles in the EU as well. In France, Macron carried out pension reform in the context of a huge increase in military spending. His recent openness to peace talks is not unrelated to the protests that have developed in his own country. It is not the ultra-destructive nature of modern weapons that is the absolute barrier to war, but the conditions of class struggle. Only an uprising in countries at war can end the imperialist conflict, not 'mediations', 'cease-fires' or 'peace agreements'.

Attention must be paid to the rise of workers' struggles and the formation of independent class organisations in China, as these can reshape the entire international workers' movement.

If on one hand we have seen an awakening of struggles, on the other hand we saw a huge crisis in the leadership of the proletariat.

Much of the world left limits itself to the 'local' characterisation of the Ukrainian conflict by capitulating to imperialism and supporting a phantom Ukrainian resistance, hence NATO. On the contrary, to reorganise the proletariat – crushed by 100 years of counter-revolution – what is necessary is an international campaign against the imperialist war and for the defeat of the governments that support it, with a set of demands that places at the center the need to build a proletarian internationalism capable of uniting Ukrainian and Russian workers against the respective national regimes that oppress them. This would involve building a revolutionary leadership within the working class that moves towards an autonomous perspective of struggle and liberation from the dominant parasitic bourgeois blocs. The historical setting of the current war sets off the inexorable decadence of capitalism and its tendency to generate wars whose destruction level in economic, health, and environmental terms is incalculable. The annihilation of human society can only be avoided by the destruction of capital's domination on an international scale.

NOUVEAU PARTI ANTICAPITALISTE (NPA)

Shocks within the Imperialist System and the Tasks of Revolutionary Communists

The transformations of the imperialist system since the collapse of the USSR and the emergence of China, the wars in the Balkans, then in Iraq, Libya, and Syria, the civil wars and sometimes genocidal wars as in Rwanda, the major world economic crises which occur almost every ten years, then the pandemic and its consequences, all reveal a profound reorganization of the economic structures of capitalism as well as a reconfiguration of social classes and inter-imperialist relations of power on an international scale. The reactions, uprisings, and sometimes insurrections have mobilized significant sectors of the proletariat, whole sections of the working classes, even if these protests, which have overthrown both civilian governments and military dictatorships, - including during the Arab Spring sequence - have not been able to go beyond forms of counter-power. These objective factors of instability in the system could converge and lead to real social revolutions. This makes it essential to strengthen the "subjective" factor in the working class, by building leaderships and revolutionary parties capable of understanding, linking up with, and intervening in these political and social disputes, with the aim of seizing opportunities and transforming revolts into social revolutions. These social revolutions would not only overthrow a dictator or a regime but also put an end to the dictatorship of capital and establish a situation of dual power leading to a government of the workers.

This upsurge in the fighting spirit of the working class is, for the moment, a response to the proletariat's delay in warding off both the social collapse of its material conditions and the sometimes irreversible devastation of ecosystems. The bloody reorganization of capitalism and imperialism, of which the Russian imperialist aggression in Ukraine is one manifestation, opens up the possibility of a new cycle of direct confrontation between the leading imperialist power, the United States, and its rivals, such as China. It is this possibility, in our opinion, that makes this conference so important: at a time when the drumbeat of war is becoming more insistent and military budgets are furiously swelling, and at a time when revolts of the working classes are erupting all over the world, it is important that revolutionary and internationalist groups, despite the modesty of their forces, seek the means for the independent intervention by the working class.

Determining Social Camp or Social Class: An Important Choice but Just a Precondition

Denouncing the Russian aggression, demanding the withdrawal of its troops, and recognizing Ukraine are prerequisites for defining a class position in this war. But they are not enough to build a class perspective. The denunciation of U.S. maneuvers, of the escalation of Western financial and military support for the Zelensky regime, of the growing presence of NATO troops, of the militarization of national budgets, and our opposition to the propaganda which opposes a supposedly "democratic" camp to a

dictatorial one, are part of the necessary positions required to outline a proletarian camp, that is not aligned with any of the imperialist camps present. However, we need to turn our attention beyond this. An independent class policy, perceptible on an international scale, is certainly insufficient today. Yet this is the only way forward, for the best way to end a war is to mobilize the working class to overthrow its exploiters in Russia, Ukraine, and internationally. These remarks - and the discussions to be held between us - are not yet a program for the working class and youth, but they could help to lay the foundation for a regroupment against this situation of war and its possible extensions. Here too, more than a year after the start of the war in Ukraine, it has to be said that the international initiatives of revolutionary communists are still only at the stage of projects.

Rebuilding Internationalism

The difficulty of having an accurate understanding of the social and political reactions of the workers in Ukraine and Russia prevents us, for now, from having a definite policy, let alone one for intervention. This raises all the more emphatically the need for a coordination of the revolutionary movement for exchanges, as well as collaboration and joint elaboration. And it is in this area that we could take concrete and useful steps for our class, not just by working within the contradictions of a situation but by creating opportunities.

The social awakening observed in part in Europe - in Britain, France, and even Germany - with significant movements, was triggered by inter-imperialist competition, inflation, and restrictions in the public sector. It gave rise to unprecedented social experiments which could make it possible for revolutionary groups to pursue a common policy. In Latin America, particularly in Argentina, with its sizable revolutionary minorities and likely forthcoming economic collapse, it is possible to imagine a political intervention by the working class on a larger scale. The underground movements in China and elsewhere underline the difficulties but also the potential of the situation. But this necessary combativeness will not be enough, and of this, we are all convinced: spontaneous movements, however large and deep they may be, cannot lead to revolutionary transformations of society without the intervention of political organizations which clearly pose the question not only of a revolution or political solutions that remain within the terrain of bourgeois institutions but of a social revolution by means of working class organs of power. Of course, revolutionary organizations are far from being in a position to propose such a policy, even where the spontaneous movement has gone very far, as in Iran. But that's no reason to give up, and that's what makes it necessary to exchange experiences and discuss different understandings of the situation, with all the groups around the same table, without any claim to hegemony, simply because developing a policy and, even more so, implementing it, requires both a global and a precise knowledge of the situation, which no single group or international grouping has on its own.

The risks of a generalization of the war initiated in Ukraine and the question of the political intervention by the working class give the theme of the conference real relevance and the possibility of being fruitful. The profound transformations of the world market, of the system of production, of classes,

of the flow of labor power, of the balance of power between imperialist nations, of the decline of some and the emergence of new ones, often give rise to different assessments among us - hence the need and even the necessity to discuss them. It seems to us important to tackle, in a second phase, the question of the first steps to engage towards a common framework for exchanging information and militant experience, a necessary condition for establishing the bonds of trust that are indispensable to the construction, tomorrow, of a new International.

Regrouping the Revolutionaries

The working class has never been so numerous in the world, with the emergence of a large proletariat in China, India, and the so-called emerging countries. Questions relating to the forms of bourgeois democracy - the need for a constituent assembly, for example - should no longer be automatically put forward as a "political outlet" as soon as a profound social movement puts an autonomous intervention of the working class in the political field on the agenda. The question of the Workers' United Front, which ranges from activity within the trade union – its simplest form – to the attitude to adopt towards the declining reformist organizations, will certainly have to be a subject of discussion. Not to mention the open question of how to assess the conditions which may make it possible for the national liberation and anti-colonial struggles to open up revolutionary prospects for workers.

All this should be part of the discussions between us, but it is important to put in place a framework that will enable us to emerge from the relative ignorance in which we all find ourselves about the precise situation in a great many countries.

The challenge before us is to build militant relationships, based on concrete exchanges and the trust built up between groups that are sometimes "competitors" at the national level. Without denying our differences and our divergences, but rather by acknowledging them, it is possible to present our debates and our joint or separate projects in a responsible way to workers who are aware of them. A campaign against imperialist militarism, which is not just propaganda, is difficult to put in place. Yet it is urgently required. We could consider the establishment of an annual conference, where we would exchange our militant experiences (our modest victories but also our failures), where we would submit our respective elaborations to the criticism of our comrades, and where little by little we could begin to contemplate collaboration, on the basis of verified experiences. It is a modest prospect, but with the time we have left running out, it would still be a great leap forward.

June 5, 2023

COMMITTEE FOR A WORKERS INTERNATIONAL (CWI)

Comments on “The crisis in the imperialist world order and the response of the proletariat”

Note: The following text is made up of excerpts from a International Executive Committee of the CWI document (‘Capitalist society convulsed and in turmoil: new challenges and tasks for Marxists and the working class’), which was published on 30 January 2023.

Capitalist society is convulsed and in turmoil. Marxists and the working class face one of the most challenging periods in history.

Capitalist equilibrium is broken in all its aspects: economic, geo-political, social and class relations. Convulsions and turmoil are consequent on this and are reflected in sharp polarisation on all continents. There is an upturn in the class struggle in some countries, but also national and ethnic conflicts, wars (both military and tariff) and, in some, strong features of social disintegration and even collapse.

The optimism and hope held out by capitalism in the middle of the 20th century, and then promised again following the collapse of the former Stalinist states in 1990/1, has been shattered. Any prospect of a return to those eras of relative capitalist stability is a utopian dream. Features of revolution and counter-revolution are now locked together in a drawn-out struggle. The challenge facing the working class and Marxists is to find a way forward through a revolutionary socialist alternative.

As the CWI has argued in previous theses, capitalism faces a series of multiple and inter-related crises.

The nature of this phase of capitalism is underpinned by the relative decline of US imperialism, which still remains the strongest power and the rise of Chinese state capitalism, together with a prolonged crisis in the world economy.

The economic and financial crisis which hit in 2007/8 marked a turning point in the history of capitalism. Despite some short, shallow upturns a new period of protracted crisis began. All of the dominant trends and indications point towards a protracted, drawn-out series of deeper crises, interspersed with short, shallow, feeble upturns. This means higher levels of exploitation and misery for the working class and middle class globally.

A protracted death agony of capitalism does not mean that short periods of GDP growth cannot take place. The threat of recession or depression is posed alongside an explosion of debt in the main imperialist countries.

The spike in inflation, caused not by rising wages, but by previous monetary policies and fuelled by rocketing government expenditure/debt during the pandemic, supply chain problems, the Ukraine war, and other factors, will not be a short-term problem for the capitalist class. As living standards have plunged or fallen for the mass of the global population, corporate profits and the wealth of the super-rich have exploded.

There is a rapid acceleration and development, alongside intense competition, in new areas such as AI,

robotics, quantum computing, and nanotechnology for example. The consequences of these developments, if applied, will have explosive consequences as millions of jobs, including in middle class sectors of employment, are replaced by new technology. The technical and scientific advances being made can come into collision with the capacity of capitalism to apply them on a generalised basis.

It will not provide the basis for a 4th Industrial revolution opening an escape route for global capitalism. Yet, even where they are applied they will not be able to overcome the fundamental contradictions of the system. Rather, they will add to the problems faced by capitalism. The massive job losses, disruption and dislocation that flow from introducing technology will provoke explosive and potentially revolutionary developments. It will also pose crucial questions for building and organising the trade unions and labour movement.

The scientific and technological advances which have taken place potentially can have an enormously beneficial effect for humankind. Yet capitalism will not be able to apply it for the benefit of the mass of the population. A democratic world socialist plan would be tremendously enhanced and benefit from the potential developments in science and technique.

These global machines, in an era of increasing protectionism and national regulation, will not be inclined to accept restrictions and limitations imposed on them by national governments or states. It is an extreme indication of how the development of capitalism has come into contradiction with the limitations imposed by the nation-state. This does not mean a new “super imperialism” is taking shape but it can lead to new twists in the situation.

The ruling classes have not had a coherent policy or programme to find a way out of the crisis. Through massive state intervention and expenditure, especially during the pandemic, they took measures to prevent a collapse in the economy, and, in effect, adopted a policy of ‘kicking the can down the road’. However, this has its limits and is not preventing the crisis hitting now. Even with increased state expenditure and intervention they cannot ultimately overcome the contradiction of falling living standards and the need to create a huge additional market to prepare the way for an economic boom which they cannot do.

The process of “deglobalisation” continues with the increase in trade and tariff conflicts. The US economy is increasingly protectionist. How far “deglobalisation” goes is uncertain given the interdependence that exists in the world economy. However, there is a pronounced tendency in this direction at work. A trend towards the Balkanisation of the world economy is present. Unstable blocs and realignments are formed geo-politically as a consequence of the end of a unipolar world. Yet these can also collapse as internal tensions and divisions develop.

The depth and protracted nature of the systemic crisis that capitalism now finds itself in means that the working class and Marxists need to be prepared for major shocks and upheavals.

A crisis of political leadership exists globally for the working class. There is also a crisis of leadership of the capitalist class.

The decline of US imperialism and the rise of China, and the clash between them, dominates the world geo-political situation.

One character of the era is reflected in the war in Ukraine which is a product of the new world situation. The longer the war continues, with no end in sight, and increasing Russian casualties, the more certain mounting opposition to it, and the Putin regime, becomes. At a certain stage it may pose an existential threat to Putin's mafia bonapartist regime. The most vocal opposition at this stage is from extreme nationalist pro-war elements. The fear of many western leaders is that should Putin fall, at this stage, his replacement would not be more pro-western but more Russian nationalist. Should a peace agreement of some sort be reached it will not only be Putin who faces a crisis. Zelensky will also face growing opposition in Ukraine at a certain stage.

Opposition to Putin will grow should the war drag on for lengthier period of time and the body bags continue to mount. As both sides gear up for a spring offensive in 2023 a new bloodier phase of the conflict is now possible. It is not excluded in a scenario where Putin is confronted with further setbacks and a desperate situation that Putin he may still strike-out and use a tactical nuclear weapon or other weapon of mass destruction. Should he do so, it would provoke mass protests and a mass anti-war movement internationally. That Putin has put this issue on the table is a reflection of the new era. It cannot be ruled out that such a weapon will be deployed by another, or even more despotic regime, such as North Korea, or other 'rogue' regimes which may come to power in the coming period.

The prolonging of the war is already resulting in a certain "war weariness" setting-in in some countries. Bourgeois western leaders will increase the pressure on Zelensky to negotiate a "deal". This will not be easy and is not the most likely short-term prospect. However, even if a deal is eventually formally signed in practice, on the ground, a bloody conflict in some form will continue, especially in the east.

The war and its evolution have impacted on geo-political relations. US imperialism has used it to try and reassert itself internationally. However, tensions and divisions between the western imperialist powers have also opened and will become greater the longer the war drags on. The US's reasserted international role during the crisis is, however, relatively limited, and does not signal a return to the unipolar world of the past.

Russian set-backs on the battlefield have led China, India and other states to adopt a more cautious approach to giving full backing to Putin in the war. However, neither have they condemned him. Economically the ties between Russia and China have been strengthened

The Congress of the Chinese Communist Party marked the culmination of Xi Jinping's concentration of power into his hands. China has established a special form of state capitalism. However, this has brought with it its own contradictions. The growth of a capitalist elite but where the state could still intervene and take control of ailing companies to safeguard its own interests, inevitably resulted in a clash of interests in some sectors. The degree of state intervention can, and will, oscillate, depending on the situation.

The unfolding of the domestic crisis in China can have major consequences internationally, especially in relation to the rising tensions in the South China Sea. A major military build-up has been taking place by both US and western imperialism and China. Japan is also vastly increasing its military capacity. The

heightened global tensions, combined with a domestic crisis in China, can drive Xi to intervene and try and take Taiwan back into mainland China, whipping-up Chinese nationalism and provoking a military collision with the US and western imperialism.

The Biden presidency has been marked by very low approval ratings as he has failed to take measures to alleviate the consequences of the social and economic crisis. The mid-term elections, despite delivering a small majority to the Republicans in the House of Representatives, in effect resulted in a draw between the Democrats and the Republicans. Biden was dubbed as the most pro-labour President since Roosevelt. Yet the imposition of the contract on the railways and the outlawing of a rail strike shows how hollow such a claim was. The so-called “left” in the Democrats, like AOC, Sanders and others, capitulated and supported this attack on workers’ rights revealing their real cowardly character.

The increase in strikes and significant victories in winning union-recognition ballots, including at the EV General Motors car plant, are a pointer to the beginning of a new chapter in re-building the labour movement and an upturn in the class struggle.

Areas of the neo-colonial world are facing carnage. Wars continue in Ethiopia, Syria and elsewhere. Nigeria faces ethnic clashes and a rising tendency towards social disintegration.

Crucially, there have been extremely powerful features of revolution in the multiple mass uprisings which have taken place, especially since 2019. The movements in Ecuador, Chile, Colombia and across Latin America were accompanied by uprisings in Iraq, Sudan, Lebanon and elsewhere.

These have now been joined by the mass uprisings, unprecedented in their scale, in Sri Lanka and then in Iran. In Sri Lanka, the calling of a general strike marked a crucial step forward, as did the strikes that have taken place in Iran.

However, they have all also revealed the obstacles that need to be overcome in organisation, party, and political consciousness. They all assumed a spontaneous, or semi-spontaneous, character and lacked a rounded-out political objective. The spontaneous elements initially had a positive effect, in that the old organisations and leaders could not hold the movement back. However, dialectically, this turned into its opposite as the limits of spontaneity allowed the ruling class to retain control and themselves in power.

However, none of the underlying social and economic causes of the crises that provoked these movements have been resolved. At a certain stage the movements can re-erupt on an even higher level.

The absence of revolutionary socialist leadership and socialist organisation, and the role of those leaders which did emerge, is one decisive factor. However, the character of these movements also reflected the throwing back of political consciousness in general which has taken place. They were on a far lower political level than the revolutionary movements which have taken place historically in, for example, the 1920s, 1930s or the 1970s. Political consciousness is not fixed or static and will pass through many ebbs and flows depending on the situation.

The masses learn through the experience of struggle, assisted by the intervention of the revolutionary party. The ideological and programmatic cowardliness of the so-called “left” in this period is stark. They have offered no challenge to capitalism and have capitulated to it, often in the form of lesser-evilmism.

This is most graphically seen in Latin America, which has many lessons for the international situation. The mass uprisings which swept the continent have given way to a second “pink wave” with the election of a series of ‘left’ governments in Chile, Peru, Colombia and now Lula in Brazil. The election victories were a by-product of the revolutionary uprisings which preceded them. However, without exception, the new ‘left’ governments are less radical than those during the first “pink wave”. This is despite the crisis being deeper and more severe. Further disillusionment with these new ‘left’ governments brings with it a warning that the right and far-right can bounce back or make further gains which the workers’ movement needs to be prepared for.

These betrayals by the ‘left’ in Latin America are a repetition of those of the so-called “new left” in Europe but on a broader scale. This was clearly seen by SYRIZA in Greece in 2015 and then the capitulation of PODEMOS in Spain, Left Bloc in Portugal and elsewhere. It led to the demise of these parties, and, in Britain, a routing of the Corbynistas in the Labour Party due to their retreat and failure to carry through a struggle to the end and seeking to compromise with the righting of the party.

The need for new mass workers parties and the dual task of building them, and at the same time building revolutionary parties, is more relevant than ever given the depth of the crisis. However, this has been an extremely protracted process so far and may continue to be so reflecting the ideological collapse of the left which has taken place. When the “new parties” failed – like Greece or Spain – it can make the idea of building another new party more complicated. The refusal of the “left” to want to do this – Corbyn in Britain, Mélenchon in France, Sanders in the US – also complicates the process. Yet a layer can learn from these experiences and help prepare the ground for new parties to develop at a certain stage.

Yet building a revolutionary party is not dependent on this taking place. We must not wait for new mass parties to develop. A layer during this crisis can be won straight to the programme and ideas of revolutionary socialism. Ultimately the fate of humankind now rests on the socialist revolution being carried through. It is the only road to avoid the barbarism which capitalism will offer in the coming decades.

AMR CONTROVENTO, ITALY

The new phase of friction imperialism, the need for a revolutionary strategy, the relationship between the party and workers' council

The invasion of Ukraine marked a historical step. Die globale Zeitenwende [the epochal turning point], as is also recognized by the imperialist bourgeoisie (Chancellor Scholz, Foreign Affairs, 5.12.22). A turning point is the outcome of processes that mature over time. This war is a product of the Great Crises that started in 2006/08, propelled by the tendencies of late capitalism (the fall of international and national profit rates, the overproduction of capital). The 2009 recession marks the arrival point of the neoliberal season, unable to relaunch an expansive wave despite the collapse of the USSR and Chinese capitalist development. It marks the low point of a long downward phase [Trotsky, Report on the international situation, 1921; The curve of capitalist development, 1923], in which barbarism unfolds. The capitalist management of this crisis has therefore pushed the inter-imperialist competition, which today focuses on the Pacific: the USA has outlined the TTIP (TransAtlantic Free Trade Area, stranded in 2016), the TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership, 2015) and the IPEF (Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, 2022); China has outlined the RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, 2022) and the new silk roads (Belt and Road Initiative). In this framework, new military alliances are created: the QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue: USA, Australia, Japan, India; 2017), the AUKUS (Australia, UK and USA; 2021), and the RussiaChina exercises (Vostok) which involved Iran (2019 and 2022), India (2022) and Central Asian countries. This competition also restructures the production chains, as made explicit by the strategies of Alliedshoring (B. Glick, May 2020) or Friendshoring (J. Yellen, April 2022). The war in Ukraine is overdetermined by these inter-imperialist conflicts, even in the interweaving of opposing rights of self-determination. Ukraine is in fact a lime (a border) between two weak imperialisms. On the one hand, Russian ragged capitalism, which has developed since the early 2000s (\$210 billion of GDP in 1999, 26th in the world; 2,100 in 2022, 8th; IMF data) on a rentier core (gas and oil) and the residues of the Soviet military-industrial complex. On the other hand, there is manifold European imperialism, which in an incomplete Union sees a confrontation between a German nucleus seeking oriental expansion (with the engagement of the Chinese pole) and an Atlantic strategy of NATO expansion and Eurasian fragmentation, to contain the Chinese imperialism. That is, Ukraine is a contested space, at the heart of pluralist imperialist strategies, as evidenced by the transformations in its trade and capital flows after 2014. The Russian invasion is a turning point precisely because it is not a linear conflict between an imperialism and an oppressed nation. It is the improvised way out of a will to power gripped by the polarization between the USA and China, disconcerted by the multiplicity of Europe, threatened by the fragility of its capitalism (which needs a reference area for its exports), and pushed towards China by Euromaidan (2014 agreements). However, this military move has accelerated the inter-imperialist conflict. It is evident in the deepening of the war, the NATO involvement, the destruction of Nord Stream, the escalation of weapon

systems, and its spillover into Russia. There would have been no war in Ukraine without US decline, its financial downsizing, its militaristic curvature, its Middle Eastern defeats, and the marginalization of the Washington consensus. It would not have existed without the EU divisions, the continental productive restructuring driven by the euro, the incompleteness of the capital market, its unstructured federalism, and its centrifugal forces (Brexit to the west, Visegrad to the east). It would not have existed without the new Chinese imperialism and its economic, political, and military depth. In fact, the incredible Chinese expansion characterizes these times, with a fully deployed capitalist development having emerged in the world from the first 2000s, now spreading in a worldwide expansion. Since 2019 it has the largest number of companies among the top 500. The Great Crisis has focused growth on investments (for years close to 50% of GDP), with an expansive accumulation strategy (since 2015 its foreign investments have been higher than incoming ones, second in the world for flows, even if stock is still 6%). Precisely because of this, the PRC has begun an expansionist policy, supported by significant rearmament and nationalist policies. In other words, China has gone from a deformed worker's state to an expanding imperialist power in the last thirty years with regime continuity. One should wonder how this was possible. The unequal and combined dynamics. The imperialism of Bukharin and Lenin (monopolies, financial capital, capital exports, international associations, division of the world) must then be read in the light of the tendencies underlined by Trotsky (The Third International after Lenin, 1928): the continuous development of divergences between different social formations and their interdependence in the international division of labour. If capitalism is a single economic and political organism, its structure is fragmented into states, each of which, under the whip of external necessity and the privilege of backwardness, is led by a particular combination of fractions of the ruling classes (Trotsky: History of Russian Revolution, 1932; Unequal and Combined Development and the Role of American Imperialism, 1933). Imperialism, then, is not a policy, but a relationship between social formations. A relationship that also explains the continuity of the regime in China: a passive revolution in which the CPC bureaucracy has become a capitalist Bonapartism from a worker Bonapartism, seamless. So, this Bonapartism was able and is able to control labour and manage the fractions of capital in its tumultuous development. The imperialism of attrition. In Ukraine we are not faced with the first movement of a world war, but with our entry into its event horizon. The imperialist poles are structuring themselves on that possibility. In other words, a different capitalist management of the crisis is emerging, based on the rationalization of world trade and the continentalization of production chains, with the weaving of international alliances, the nationalization of economies, and the militarization of society. The ongoing dynamic is in preparation for the clash, with unpredictable movements internationally, such as a policy of sanctions on Russia only on an Atlantic axis (not involving India, Africa, South America, Arab countries and even Israel) and a Tehran/Riyadh agreement signed in Beijing which is reshaping the balance in the Middle East and North Africa. In several countries, we are watching the development and even the seizure of power of reactionary movements, with incipient processes of nationalization of the masses and even possible fascist drifts, not driven by a revolutionary threat, but by the friction between opposed blocks (Trotsky, Nationalism and economic life, 1934; The

Fourth International and the war, 1934). The workers' movement is broken down, and the revolutionary components marginal. In late capitalism countries, the long neoliberal season has stratified the proletariat, with divisions in the cycles of struggle and identities, and a retreat of political consciousness. In the new Asian poles and in its semi-periphery, large concentrations of workers are developing, with recent immigration and poor organization. In the periphery, agricultural industrialization and globalization have led to enormous migrations, unprecedented megalopolises in these social formations, and a polarization between globalized petty bourgeoisies and dispossessed masses, with only a thin working class. On a general level, the degeneration and the collapse of the USSR still weighs heavily, with a disintegration of the political expressions of class. The great socialdemocratic movements have broken down or evolved in a social-liberal direction, and the large centrist formations (with a Stalinist or new left matrix) have packed themselves into class collaboration in the popular fronts (often imploding). These political dynamics have opened space for democratic-radical movements, sometimes with nationalist or even reactionary undertones (Podemos, France Insoumise, 5stelle). The Asian working class sees economistic tendencies prevail, within the framework of authoritarian regimes (sometimes nominally communist) and political backwardness. In the countries on the periphery and semi-periphery, great social explosions followed one another, revolts led by communitarian, religious, nationalist, radical movements, often hesitating in authoritarian reactions. The precipitation of inter-imperialist conflict makes it necessary today to re-weave the threads of a revolutionary subjectivity divided into national dynamics, vanguard practices, and international fractions. The legacy of the implosion of the Fourth International and the disruption of the communist Left is heavy, both on the side of codism and sectarianism. In other words, there is no reference around which to aggregate an internationalist, classist, communist and revolutionary left. However, it is necessary to gear up for this new season, prepare for the new barbarities, and therefore for nationalist and imperialist collapses. We need an international circuit, also to counter social-imperialist tendencies, but above all we need a revolutionary strategy capable of grasping the current organization of capital, recomposing the class, and trigger a revolutionary and transitional process. Today the world political situation is characterized not only by the historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat, but also (and perhaps primarily) by the disorganization of the class. We need a renewed reflection on the relationship between the party and the workers' councils, the revolutionary program and workers' self-organization, both to reconstruct a general identity of the multitude of workers and to avoid new Bonapartisms. In other words, it is necessary to restart methodologically from the results and prospects to define a program and a transitional strategy for today and for tomorrow.

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