

*Workers of the World, Unite!*

# Unity & Struggle

Journal of the  
International Conference of  
Marxist-Leninist Parties  
and Organizations



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# Unity & Struggle

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## The Partition of India

A unique feature of Indian history is that over thousands of years people of different nationalities had entered India in large numbers. This has not happened anywhere else. These outsiders had attacked India and looted valuables, but they did not return to their home country. They continued to live in India. But there were only three exceptions — Alexander of Greece, Mahmud of Ghazni and Nadir Shah from Iran. Despite a few exceptions, however, it can be said that these foreign attackers did not come with the intention of looting and returning to their countries. They came from Central Asia and other regions to settle permanently in India and remained here in large numbers. In ancient times, the Aryans attacked India and settled here. These outsiders subsequently played a significant role in moulding the culture and civilization of India. One cannot conceive Hindu religion and culture without the Aryans. After the Aryans, the Sakas, Huns, Turkish, Pathans and Moghuls came and stayed in India.

After the discovery of North and South Americas, the Europeans went forth to conquer those countries and began to live there too. But that situation was very different from outsiders who came to attack India and settle here. The Europeans killed numerous Native Americans, threatening to make them extinct and trapping them in forced isolation. They could not contribute in any way to the governance or culture of the New World. Also, the culture of the Europeans was far more developed than theirs. The Aryans came and destroyed the Mohenjo-daro and Harappa civilizations that were far superior to their own. The Aryans were shepherds and gypsies. They were mainly involved in raising animals and their culture mingled with the culture of ancient India. This blend resulted in the Aryan culture transforming the Indian culture. What we now recognize as ancient Indian culture has its roots in the Aryan culture. In a way it can be said that Aryan culture had made pre-Aryan Indian culture its own in many ways. What is known as Indian Hindu culture today was actually created by the foreign Aryans.

After the Aryans, the Sakas, Huns, Arabs, Iranians, Turkish, Pathans and Mughals attacked and conquered India and settled in this

land. In Rabindranath's words, they all merged into one body. These outsiders did not look at the Indians as enemies and did not try to disassociate from them. Rather, they sought to be at one with the Indians and strengthen their own position in this land. They did not try to create divisions, but tried to maintain unity for their own safety and well-being.

The Arabs, Turkish, Pathans and Mughals who came and ruled over India were different from former conquerors in one significant way. They stayed in India and adopted Indian customs, but did not forego their religion like those who had entered India before them. These peoples were followers of Islam and maintained their religious beliefs. However, though Islam and Hinduism remained independent of each other, they influenced each other. This was most strongly evident in the spheres of culture.

Though belonging to a separate religious belief, the Muslim rulers strove to maintain cordial relations between Hindus and Muslims as a way of fortifying their reign. This strategy was pursued throughout the reigns of the Sultans and the Mughals and the Pathans. Alaud-din Khilji and later Akbar distanced themselves from fervent religiosity and tried to unite the Hindus and the Muslims. Even Aurangzeb, who was anti-Hindu and razed some Hindu temples, gave financial aid to many Hindu temples and recruited Hindus to administrative posts and also in his army. Aurangzeb never tried to create a rift between the Muslims and the Hindus. This policy was in place until the end of the Mughal rule,

Since the seventeenth century when European trade began to expand, European traders started coming to India, especially to regions around the Pacific Ocean for business purposes. By the eighteenth century, they had established their strong presence in India. Among them, the English traders were in the majority and to facilitate their commerce, they employed defence troops in southern and eastern parts of India. This need for a security force was also triggered by the competition and hostility among the European countries. The English and French were at the forefront of these measures.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the English fortified their security in Bengal and Madras and continued to expand their business interests. In the process, they collided with the ruling Nawabs of Bengal and their relations deteriorated. There were armed clashes; eventually the English defeated the independent ruling Nawab and put subservient Nawabs in position who would do their

biddings. This resulted in the East India Company taking administrative control in Bengal, and later in some other regions. This control remained steady until the 1857 sepoy mutiny. After the mutiny, the government of England disbanded the company's rule and began to directly rule India.

The outsiders who had attacked India before the British had come with the intention of settling here and had done so. But the Europeans had come to India with a different purpose. They had come for commercial profiteering. When the British usurped power in Bengal, it was the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in England. Soon Bengal and other regions of India became a market for the manufactured goods of England. Thus began a widespread plundering. This resulted in enormous financial gains that made a great contribution to the industrial growth and prosperity of England.

After grabbing power in Bengal in 1757, the British went about administrative reforms within their jurisdiction. They initiated land reform and established a new, permanent structure. This new system not only affected the economy, but had far-reaching consequences in the social and political spheres of the region. In the nineteenth century, a new middle class came into being under this system. Later, becoming more influential, they played a vital role in defining the politics of Bengal and other regions. For purposes of administration, the British modernized the education system. Until 1835, Persian was the administrative language, but by the early nineteenth century,



more importance was being given to the study of the English language.

During the reign of the East India Company, Hindus took full advantage of all facilities like education and other offerings. Muslims, on the other hand, believed that the rule of the Mughals was their own and the British were an alien force, and they were not inclined to accept the opportunities created by the British, not even the chance to learn the English language. Before the British took power, many elite Muslims and others held senior positions in the administration and the army. These jobs became the basis of class divisions. The elimination of these jobs, along with the fact that even during the Mughal and Nawabi periods they could not acquire the status of a landowner or zamindar, threw these Muslims into a financial crisis. Poverty entered the lives of thousands. Their circumstances became dire too because they had refused to learn the English language and avail other opportunities offered by the British. They remained far behind the Hindus in education, and in socio-political and economic status.

After the sepoy mutiny of 1857, the Muslims realized that they had made a big blunder by not availing the resources offered by the British and were thus lagging behind for a hundred years. Now they took the initiative to rectify that mistake. By this time the rule of the East India Company was over and the British monarchy was now ruling directly. The issue of improving education for the Muslims was given attention, and some other benefits were also extended to them. Some job opportunities were also provided for the Muslims.

Until then the Hindus had absolute access to all the services offered by the British authorities. Now that the Muslims had entered the game, they became competitors. The Hindus began to feel that part of what was originally theirs was now being given to the Muslims; they were being forced to enter into a competition and were deprived of their monopoly.

Thus, in the second half of the nineteenth century, a conflict arose between the Hindus and the Muslims. This was the beginning of Hindu nationalism. In the 1860s, under the leadership of Nabagopal Mitra and Rajnarayan Basu, an assembly was arranged where it was proclaimed that the Hindus were a separate nation. This announcement of nationhood was made with the purpose of creating a division between the Hindus and the Muslims. Later Bankim Chandra became a strong spokesperson of this nationhood. At that time,



Abdul Latif and Syed Ameer Ali in Bengal and Sir Syed Ahmed in Uttar Pradesh emerged as leaders of the Muslim community. They initiated various efforts for the development of Muslims and even lobbied with the British government for additional resources. However, they never presented Muslims as a separate nation or made an announcement to that effect. It was not until 1940 when the Muslim League's Lahore Resolution was passed that the concept of a separate nationhood for Muslims came into being.

In the nineteenth century, the word 'communalism' was not in vogue. In the twentieth century, the British were the first to call the Hindu-Muslim conflict as 'communalism.' But even without the idea of communalism, the competition between the Hindus and the Muslims in the latter half of the nineteenth century had sown the seed of communalism. Later in the early twentieth century, this discord and unpleasant competition triggered a hostility that had a powerful effect on the political situation in the 1930s and '40s. Not only that, but it became a decisive factor in the turn of events.

The British government had deliberately contrived to create this situation. When, after the sepoy mutiny in 1857, they offered educational facilities and other opportunities for Muslims, their main purpose was to create tensions and make Hindus and Muslims fellow-contenders and engage in bitterness. They adopted this policy of creating divisiveness in order to secure their own power and ensure a smooth reign for themselves. They also began to influence the study of history. Renowned scholar and historian James Mill in his famous book, *The History of British India*, traced the history of India in three periods — Hindu, Muslim and British. He named the first two periods on the basis of religion, but did not refer to the third period as Christian, rather he called it British. Never before had the pre-British historical periods been referred to on the basis of religions. By doing this, James Mill, an imperialist historian, had pioneered the concept of communalism and laid the foundation for its growth in the future. He was indeed successful in doing this. During the British reign, the history that Indians studied was moulded on the ideas propagated by James Mill and this helped to further disseminate the notion of communalism.

The difference in the status of Hindus and Muslims in the nineteenth century triggered a crisis in the politics of the twentieth century. That is why it is impossible to understand the politics of the twentieth century without a thorough discussion and deliberation

about the situation in the nineteenth century. The strife between Hindus and Muslims vying for secure jobs that occurred in the nineteenth century had escalated in the twentieth century to contest and contention among capitalists seeking power. The consequence of this was the partition of India.

With the growth of capitalism, the interests of different capitalist countries collided. This collision created warlike hostilities and led to war. But within any country the different components of capitalism did not cause any friction. England and France engaged in war for a very long time. The first and second world wars were fought among different capitalist countries. But within one country the different components of capitalism did not cause any friction. In India, however, the capital of Hindus and Muslims became divided. There was an unhealthy contention and discord between them. As a result of this, the battle of capital took the shape of communal riots. Different countries were fighting wars, but within India communal riots took place. The role of communal riots in the politics of India was an important one.

The independence movement in India was delayed. Before 1927, the political parties did not ask for independence. When the movement did start, it did not identify the British as enemies and did not proceed to castigate them. The movement was to put pressure on the British to hand over the reins of the government to the Indians. Their strategy was to request and seek approval from the British. Maulana Mohammad Ali called this a ‘Begging and Praying Politics.’

There was no unity in the Indian struggle for independence. Since the 1930s a divisiveness formed. As a result, the level of Hindu-Muslim hostility was far greater than the opposition towards the British. This animosity, in fact, led to the partition of India. Hindu, Muslim, Congress, League all contributed to the break-up of India.

Because the independence movement was meant to put pressure and leaned towards a compromise, neither the Congress nor Muslim League harboured a strong aversion towards the British. ‘Movement’ and discussions about compromise went hand-in-hand as the independence movement progressed. To avoid direct confrontation, Gandhi promoted non-violence. A non-violent movement was the mainstay of their politics. The Muslim League too had no hostility or armed conflict with the British. In the 1940s, they chanted the slogan ‘we will fight to win Pakistan.’ But their fight was not against the British, it was against the Congress and the Hindus.

It is to be noted that Gandhi's non-violence was applicable only to the Indians. The basic tenet of this philosophy of non-violence was that Indians should not engage in any violence during their independence movement. But there was no mention about violence committed by the British. Gandhi was against (people's) violence in Chauri Chaura. But he was completely silent about the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, and his lack of protest drew a negative reaction even from Rabindranath. Gandhi also criticized the Indian forces who, in demonstrating their patriotic protest to the British, refused to shoot at the public in the Qissa Khwani Bazaar in Peshawar. Gandhi was against the actions of Bhagat Singh and when the British hanged him, Gandhi did not raise a voice and remained mute.

The independence movement against the British was mainly constitutional. Both Jinnah and Gandhi, because of their class, wanted to limit the movement within the framework of the parliament. In fact, the Muslim League was never engaged in any active opposition or agitation against the ruling power. Under Gandhi's leadership, the Congress would lead a non-violent movement and try to keep it within the framework of the constitution. If ever the situation became violent or threatened to become so, Gandhi would intervene and stop its escalation.

During the independence movement, the Congress and Muslim League constantly kept in touch with ruling British in India and held discussions with them. These discussions played a guiding role in the 1940s. Arrangements for the transfer of power ultimately took place after talks with the Viceroy, the dialogue at the Shimla convention, and discussions with the Cabinet Mission and with Mountbatten.

In the 1940s, the Congress-League independence movement focused predominantly on the division of power and apportioning shares. In 1944, the long talks between Jinnah and Gandhi that lasted for several days and ended without any agreement could only be called a scandalous affair. The independence movement did not focus on the actual enemy, the British government in India. The way this movement emphasized the Congress-League relations was very different from freedom movements in other countries and can be called a rare and exceptional event.

In this conflict of dividing and sharing, the main enemy, the British government, played the role of a mediator. The ruling British, the Congress and Muslim League sat at one table and finalized discussions about the handing over of power. This was a conspiracy against

the people of India. They pulled the wool over the eyes of the people, and betrayed them as they partitioned India.

The Hindu-Muslim or Congress-League antagonism would not have resulted in the partition, nor would there be communal riots and clashes and deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent people, had the freedom struggle been allowed to follow its own course and the policy of non-violence not been adopted. Gandhi announced and followed his philosophy of non-violence and Jinnah with his silent support of non-violence did not let the freedom struggle against the British take its momentum. Thus, the passion and turbulence created did not target the British, but actually victimized the Indians. Its extreme form was revealed in communal riot and its atrocities.

In any movement, struggle or war, it is crucial to recognize the real enemy. The independence of India was not possible without the abolition of the British rule in India, but the politicians of India did not pinpoint this truth as they progressed. They did not view the British as an enemy; rather they sought to make compromises with them and it was this perspective that led to the events that followed. In the 1930s, and again in the '40s, instead of zeroing in on the British as their prime enemy, the Hindus and Muslims became each other's foes, and the Congress and Muslim League were at loggerheads. Because of the efficacy of their diplomats in this situation, the British evolved from being an enemy to becoming a mediator. Even the communists did not stand up against the British; rather, within the framework of constitutional politics, they made efforts to unify the Congress and Muslim League and asked them to resolve their differences. In 1944, when the Gandhi-Jinnah talks ended in futility, the Communist leader P.C. Joshi wrote his book titled *They Shall Meet Again*. The communists did not fight for independence on their own, but chose to remain within the orbit of the Congress and League.

Due to the exploitation and oppression of the British, the general public had started to feel a resentment and resistance that grew into a vital force. But because of the ineffective movement, the British never became the prime target of the struggle. There was no consolidated or unified struggle; only the seeds of divisiveness were sown into it.

The middle class that actively took part in the independence movement and provided leadership was the product of the land reforms and job opportunities given by the British. Another important factor was that the capitalists who influenced the Congress and

League had reached that position after being patronized by the British and continued to be dependent on their goodwill. They maintained a compromising relationship with the imperialists. Stalin, in 1925, had commented that India's local capital had surrendered to imperial capital. Because of these class distinctions, those who played a vital role in the Indian struggle for freedom were spineless and deferential.

Those who led the Indian independence movement did not actually represent the masses. They represented landowners, zamindars and capitalists. The far-reaching ambit and command of Birla over Gandhi, Nehru and Patel was not hidden from anyone. In submission to the demands and interests of Birla, Tata, et al, Congress divided India and Bengal. Jinnah liked landowning nawabs, knights, the Adamjees and Ispahanis. The Muslim League represented the weaker sections of Muslim landowners, zamindars, and capitalists and demanded Pakistan for them.

India's compromising political leadership, unlike the leadership in China's war of freedom, did not allow the freedom struggle in India to follow its own pace and reach its potential. A turbulent and persistent resistance against an enemy creates its own solidarity. Otherwise, grounds for differences emerge to the fore. This is what happened in India. The Congress and Muslim League negotiated and compromised with the British, remained within the parliamentary framework, and launched their so-called independence movement. This led to the growth of communalism and gave the British the scope and opportunity to devise the handover of power according to their own terms and conditions. The division of India and Bengal was the inevitable consequence.<sup>1</sup>

*March 2023*

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<sup>1</sup> Translated from Bangla by Parveen K. Elias

## **The Reconstruction of Russia and the Construction of Socialism: The Soundness of the Soviet Economy in the Face of the Crisis of 1929**

The socialist revolution in Russia marked the beginning of a new period in history. For the first time, the workers began to run a state, headed the government, controlled the economy and secured political-military power. This process did not develop without problems and conflicts; revolutionaries took power in a country where the population was experiencing enormous deprivations with a severe supply crisis, cholera and typhus epidemics, and widespread famine. Socialism was being built amid the ruins left by World War I that immediately turned into an imperialist invasion, as the countries that had been in conflict and fighting each other decided to unite, pause the war, invade socialist Russia, as well as to create the White Army<sup>1</sup> and start a civil war.

Between 1918 and 1921, England, Japan, the United States, France and ten other countries invaded Russia. The White Army was supplied by foreign countries: the United States sent cannons, machine guns and 600,000 carbines; England sent 200,000 pieces of military equipment, 2,000 machine guns and 500 million rounds; France sent 30 aircraft, 200 automobiles and 120,000 pieces of military equipment; Japan supplied the White Army with 30 cannons, 70,000 carbines, 100 machine guns and 120,000 pieces of military equipment.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The White Army was the military arm of the White Guards in the Russian Civil War. The White Army was financed by nationalist forces, Russian counterrevolutionaries, anti-communist organizations, monarchists, the Church and the Constitutional Democratic Party (Cadets).

<sup>2</sup> Marie, Jean-Jacques. *História da Guerra Civil Russa (1917-1922)*. São Paulo: Editora Contexto, 2019, p. 104

With the country under invasion, it was necessary to implement *war communism*<sup>3</sup>, a desperate alternative to ensure the supply of the men and women who were fighting the invaders. Under the military leadership of the Bolsheviks, the Red Army and the people's militias were breaking through into the occupied territory. With the victory over the White Army and the routing of the foreign forces, the civil war practically ended in 1921, when only Japan remained on Russian territory and it was expelled in mid-1922.

### **The Economic Situation after the Civil War**

Emerging victorious from the war, the Russian communists did not only need to build socialism, but also to rebuild their country. Together with World War I (1914-1918), foreign intervention and the Civil War (1918-1921), Russia had a shattered economy. Before withdrawing, the invading countries had destroyed much of the railway lines, stations, power plants and refineries. With a lack of fuel and no access to iron, several regions found themselves completely isolated, at the mercy of high prices and hunger. To make matters worse, the country was experiencing an epidemic of Spanish flu and typhus.

In 1920, manufacturing output accounted for only 12.8% of the level in 1913, iron ore production reached 1.7%.<sup>4</sup> In 1920, domestic agricultural production plummeted by 43% compared to the same

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<sup>3</sup> War communism was the economic system that lasted through the civil war (1918-1921). It consisted of collecting taxes in food instead of in cash. The middle and rich peasants were free to cultivate and consume what was necessary for their subsistence and for their family, but they not allowed to freely sell surplus production, being obliged to sell it to the state for a fixed price. At first, the poor peasants were excluded from this obligation to pay, but as the war progressed they also became part of this system of requisition.

<sup>4</sup> Borodín, V.V. and Faminski, I.P. *The National Economy of the USSR in the transition Period (1917-1937)*. Moscow, Progress Publishers. 1983, p. 89.

period.<sup>5</sup> About 40% of the entire railway system was damaged, and 60.8% of the locomotives were inoperable in 1920.<sup>6</sup>

Grigory Grinko, head of the State Planning Committee (GOSPLAN) of Socialist Ukraine and a member of GOSPLAN for the whole USSR, stated in his notes:

“Those were difficult times. The guns of the foreign interventionists had not yet been silenced: the Soviet Republic had not yet rid itself of the White Guards, armed and supported by international capitalism. The productive forces had descended to the lowest level. The industry produced only 20% of the pre-war total, the harvest did not exceed 50%, the coal mines were paralyzed, mineral fuels had completely disappeared from the country, communications were cut off, and the remaining ones were only used for the movement of the army.”<sup>7</sup>

By mobilizing the Red Army during the Civil War, the Soviet power saw the need to call on the workers and peasants to join the armed forces. In addition to the regions seized by foreigners and the White army, enlistment caused the interruption of production in many regions. In 1914, Moscow had 148,000 workers and Petrograd 384,000; In 1920 there were 175,000 workers for the two cities combined.

The effect of migration and the reduction of factory production was the violent reduction of the urban economy. Russia's share of world production of heavy industry fell from 2.6% in 1913 to 0.5% in 1921<sup>8</sup>. Overall, 84.5% of the Russian population lived in the countryside.<sup>9</sup>

Seeking to encourage the return of workers to the city and improve the lives of the people, the state began to create a systematic policy of wage increases. This decision had no real effect, as the value of paper money had plummeted thirteen times compared to the 1913

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Katorguine, I.L. *The Historic Experience of the C.P.S.U. in the Application of the New Economic Policy (1921-1925)*. Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1980, p. 18

<sup>7</sup> Grinko, Grigori Fedorovitch. *The Five-Year Plan*. São Paulo: Lux Publishers, 1931, p. 17

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 18

<sup>9</sup> Katorguine, I.L. *Op cit.* p. 20.



level.<sup>10</sup> Realizing that physical money could not guarantee conditions of subsistence for the workers, who were desperate in some regions of the country, the socialist state replaced paper money wages with wages in the form of products that guaranteed the basic necessities of life.<sup>11</sup>

The war caused Russia to lose not only economic but also human resources. During the years of the imperialist invasion, 14 million men and women fell at the front, and another 17 million 400 thousand people died as victims of diseases, famines and epidemics. If before the war the country had 159 million people, at the end of 1922, it had 134 million.<sup>12</sup>

### **The reconstruction of the economy begins**

In 1920, the 8th Congress of Soviets devoted itself to examining in detail the economic problems that Russia was experiencing and the creation of alternatives to improve the life of the population, meet the demands of the peasantry and create the basis for industrialization. For this reason, the plan for electrification of the country, the so-called GOELRO Plan<sup>13</sup>, was launched. Its goal was to completely electrify Russia in ten to fifteen years, that is: create power plants and the supply system, generate power and distribute electricity to the largest country in the world between 1930 and 1935.

The Plan was built by hundreds of experts, scientists and engineers, guided the next steps of Soviet industrialization and was the first state plan aimed at rationally distributing the country's productive force. For its success, it was necessary to revive the entire system of basic industry, such as steel, mining and petrochemicals. Most of Soviet industrialization would come only in the mid-1920s, the period of greatest development of the GOELRO plan.<sup>14</sup>

Despite the fact that the White Army was beaten and the foreign powers repulsed, acts of boycott and sabotage continued to take place and the electrification project was at the center of this process: “*in the*

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<sup>10</sup> Borodine, V.V. and Faminski, I.P. *Op. cit.* p. 87

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Katorguine, I.L. *Op cit.* p. 20

<sup>13</sup> GOELRO was the acronym for the State Commission for the Electrification of Russia

<sup>14</sup> Borodine; Faminski. *The National economy of the USSR in the Transitory Period (1917-1937)*. Op. Cit. p. 102.

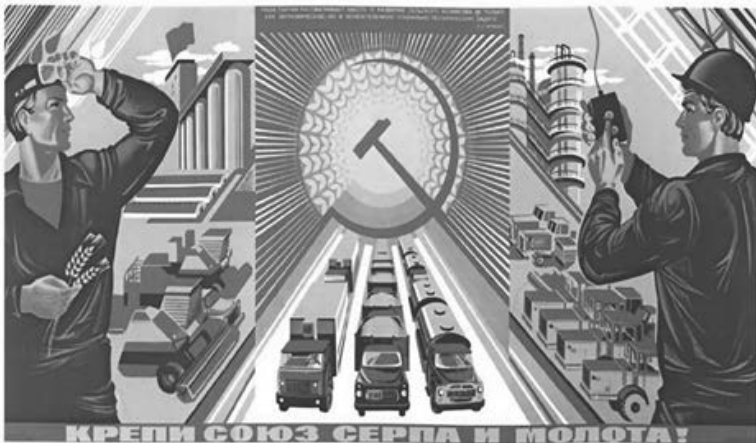
*construction of the Chatura power plant more than 70 arson attacks were recorded.”<sup>15</sup> Despite all the setbacks suffered, the Soviet Union exceeded all the objectives of the GOELRO Plan in just eleven years. After fifteen years of the plan, the USSR became the third largest producer of electricity in the world.<sup>16</sup>*

### The NEP

At the end of the civil war, war communism proved to be an important mechanism of survival for revolutionary Russia, but it was a consensus that this measure would lead to serious damage for the development of the economy. The state did not have the resources to make investments in production. There were no technical cadres available for industry; Russia did not have the training of personnel to promote its development.

The Party had only one immediate alternative: to attract foreign labor, investment and technology, to make the middle peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie invest their capital in production. With this, in 1921 the Tenth Party Congress was held, where the proposal for a New Economic Policy – the NEP – was presented.

The NEP consisted of a set of measures in which the state began to assure the peasants the possibility of free trade, allowing surplus production to become their private affair. If the peasant had the



<sup>15</sup> Borodín, V.V. *Who Benefited from the Industrialization of the U.S.S.R.* Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1981, p. 25.

<sup>16</sup> Grinko, Grigori Fedorovitch. *Op cit.* p. 35.

freedom to produce a surplus, this would stimulate his economic interest, increasing his degree of investment in production. In the city, private investment in industry and manufacturing work was allowed, and the possibility was opened for foreign capital to invest in the country, reviving the productive forces through concessions to the capitalists.

The NEP used capitalist relations of production to develop the productive forces, create investments and improve the production that was shattered. The system combined a number of management models: (1) the concession that allowed foreign entrepreneurs to operate under certain conditions established by the Council of People's Commissars, such as land, subsoil and companies that were out of operation due to lack of resources; (2) A lease that allowed the entrepreneur to operate a particular enterprise; however, the products manufactured would be chosen by the Soviet state. Also goods would be cheaper if the government were the purchaser of the product; (3) Mixed-capital companies. The State, that is, the people's power, could direct the investment of the company to where it considered necessary; large companies in the main branches of manufacturing production were under the management of the Supreme Council of the National Economy (SCNE).

The capitalists' access to Soviet industrial activity was very small, mainly in the service sector or subcontracted activities. Although private enterprises were much more numerous than state-owned enterprises (88.5% belonged to private capital), only 12.4% of workers worked in them, that is. most jobs were offered by the state and gross investment in industrial activity still belonged to the socialist state.<sup>17</sup>

Starting in 1923, with the economy reviving, the State entered the retail trade, imposing lower prices, forcing private initiative to continue reducing prices in order to remain competitive in the market. In addition, the government considerably increased taxes on private capital and forced profits made from production to be applied in investment in factories; otherwise their profits would be taxed. The Soviet state created the conditions for the development of the socialist-type economy and increasingly began to make laws that would benefit the workers and not the bosses.

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<sup>17</sup> Katorguine, I.L. *Op. cit.* p. 124.

*“For a year, we have been retreating - said Lenin. In the name of the Party we must now call a halt. The purpose pursued by the retreat has been achieved. This period is drawing, or has drawn, to a close.”*<sup>18</sup>

**Advance industry to do away with unemployment and  
divide the land to do away with hunger**

At the end of 1925, during the XIV Party Congress, the Bolsheviks decided that there was still minimal technical training and accumulated capital and began the new process of the Soviet economy: industrialization.

Nehru in *The Discovery of India*<sup>19</sup> was categorical in stating that *“a great part of the costs of transition to industrialism in Western Europe were paid for by India, China, and the other colonial countries, whose economy was dominated by the European powers.”* While capitalist countries financed their industrialization with slave labor power, the Soviet Union had to accumulate capital for its industrialization in another way.

It is worth noting that the first capitalist countries to industrialize, England and the United States, ventured in the consumer goods industry, especially textiles. This model did not require large investments in technology and capital circulated faster. After accumulating profits in the consumer goods industry, they gradually moved to the basic industry.

In order to achieve its industrial autonomy and not be at the mercy of the economic boycott of the capitalist countries, Soviet power began on the more difficult but necessary path: heavy industry. This model created the conditions for rapid industrialization of all other areas, even though it had a much higher cost and did not bring immediate economic returns.<sup>20</sup>

There were four factors that made possible the capitalization of resources for Soviet industrialization: (1) the end of the shameful

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<sup>18</sup> Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B), *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevik)*, Red Star Publishers edition, New York, U.S., 2016, p. 285

<sup>19</sup> Available in <http://library.bjp.org:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/277/1/The-Discovery-Of-India-Jawaharlal-Nehru.pdf>, Accessed at 02:40 on March 15, 2023.

<sup>20</sup> Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B.), *Op. cit.* p. 307.

payment of foreign public debt. The Soviet state cancelled all international loans contracted by the Tsar; (2) the nationalization of the land, transportation, and the banking system; (3) the monopoly of foreign trade; (4) the concentration of the credit system in the hands of the State. That is, with the social ownership of the means of production it was possible to channel the necessary percentage for the industrialization of the Soviet Union.<sup>21</sup>

The challenge was to improve technology: there were only obsolete factories, with obsolete machinery; in addition, the focus of industrialization during the NEP was the consumer goods industry, it was necessary to improve steel, metallurgy and petrochemicals. The Soviet Union managed to develop a significant growth of its basic industry and, in the two years 1925-1926, it surpassed the figures of 1913. By 1930 the Soviet economy was already mainly industrial.

The NEP had ended in the city, but in the countryside the remnants of capitalism continued with the Kulaks<sup>22</sup>, who had strengthened their economies in the free market period. However, the incentive for the socialist form of organization with cooperatives and state farms was reinforced by the state through subsidies and tax aid.

The kulaks, who represented only 3.2% of the total number of peasants, owned 21% of agricultural machinery, 16% of the means of production, 75% of the herds and 80% of the mills.<sup>23</sup> It was necessary to expand the socialization of the lands of the large peasants. Initially, the Bolshevik Party sought to promote “spontaneous dekulakization,” subjecting the kulaks to fiscal pressure, further raising taxes and reducing funding. The government also made laws prohibiting the rental of land and the outsourcing of wage labor.

One of the main concerns of the Communist Party was that the process of transition to the socialist economy in the countryside should not take place “by decree”, by an institutional measure. With this, the initiative arose to develop a real mass movement in defense of the socialization of the land. Seeking to strengthen technical work, the Party sent 25,000 workers and 100,000 Red Army soldiers to the countryside, encouraging the development of new agricultural

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308-309

<sup>22</sup> The kulaks were the rich peasants of Russia who hired poor peasants, used animal power and had the largest arable lands.

<sup>23</sup> Bettanin, Fabio. *The Collectivization of the Land in the USSR*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1981, p. 16.

technology and the use of machinery such as tractors and combines. To expand the Party's work in the countryside, the Komsomol (Party Youth) transferred almost 20,000 members to cooperative farms.<sup>24</sup> This action of the Party was a success and, what was the largest country in the world, with the largest concentration of land, became the only country to hand over all its land to its population.

Seeking to organize the national economy as a whole, based on the demand of the population and not on the fluctuation of the market, the Soviet government decided once and for all to abolish the anarchy of production and plan its economy. To this end, it launched the First Five-Year Plan, to be fulfilled between 1928 and 1932, aimed at laying the main foundations of the socialist economy. The GOELRO plan, industrialization and the plan of the collectivization of the land became the stellar elements of the plan.

### **The Superiority of Socialist Economy**

While Soviet industry and agriculture reached astounding numbers during the three years of 1930-1933, growing by 201% from its 1929 level, world capitalism was experiencing its greatest economic crisis of the entire 20th century. On October 24, 1929, the day of the fall of the New York Stock Exchange, the invisible hand of the market shook the economy of the main capitalist countries of the world: The GDP of the United States fell by a third, 25% of the U.S. population and 27% of the German became unemployed. There was a reduction in industrial production of 86% in England, 66% in Germany and 77% in France.<sup>25</sup> Between 1929 and 1932, five thousand banks in the United States closed their doors.

In the Soviet Union, with the measures taken throughout the 1920s, the state monopoly over the economy was consolidated, allowing the country to protect itself from the crisis that was destroying the lives of people in Europe and North America. The Soviet Union not only did not suffer the crisis of the capitalist system, but, on the contrary, benefited profoundly from it: while the capitalist crisis sharpened with more supply than demand, the natural way was to lower the prices of commodities and machinery in order to reduce inventories. At this time, the USSR saw the opportunity to acquire more products with high added value below the market price.

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<sup>24</sup> Central Committee of the CPSU. *Op. cit.* p. 347.

<sup>25</sup> Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(b.). *Op. Cit.*, p. 329

With the closure of factories and industries, a large mass of skilled workers, engineers and agronomists from North America and Europe were put out on the streets. Taking advantage of the possibility once again, the Soviet Union went to these countries and offered the unemployed decent working conditions and high wages, creating a migration of intellectual and production workers.

For comparison, at the end of 1932 the Soviet Union celebrated the end of unemployment in the country and at the same time reduced the working time to 7 hours a day and 5 days a week. The increase in the educational level of Soviet youth also rose: primary education was extended to a total of 7 years and the network of universities increased from 148 in 1927 to 832 in 1932.

*March 2023*

## **The Deepening of the Crisis of the Imperialist Capitalist System**

### **Source of the Reinforcement of the Increasing Aggressiveness of Imperialism**

The crisis of the imperialist capitalist system has escalated in recent times with repercussions in the dominated countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The neo-colonies of West Africa linked to this system are subject to its laws, rules and fluctuations.

This crisis, which exacerbates the fundamental contradictions of our time, makes imperialism increasingly aggressive and ferocious. Its most apparent manifestations at present are the following:

- The open opposition bordering on confrontation between the United States and China for global hegemony;
- The crisis linked to the COVID-19 pandemic with its negative impact on the global economy and social life, the consequences of which will not fade in the short term;
- The debacle of US imperialism and the NATO countries in Afghanistan that has exposed the fragility of this militarist and aggressive group;
- The war of redivision in Ukraine between Russian imperialism on the one hand and US imperialism and its NATO allies and the member countries of the European Union on the other. This reactionary war with dramatic economic and social consequences for the peoples is contributing to the strengthening of the militarization of the imperialist powers;
- The resurgence of military coups in sub-Saharan Africa (Mali, Chad, Guinea-Conakry and Sudan) and institutional coups (Tunisia with the placing of all powers in the hands of President Kais Saied). All these political events reflect the crisis of neocolonialism on the African continent.

In the light of the principles of Marxism-Leninism, we must show the working class and the people of our country the deep significance of these events and their consequences in order to better



arm them in the struggles for their democratic and social rights and for national and social liberation. It also enables us to correctly apply the principles of proletarian internationalism.

### **Recent and current events and their significance**

#### On the international level

Since the temporary defeat of socialism in the world and the break-up of the Eastern bloc, US imperialism has made it its mission to shape the world in its own image. To achieve this objective, the US government has undertaken to establish its hegemony, willingly or by force, by destabilizing countries through its various networks such as those of George Soros, the CIA and its aggression against the peoples as in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria. This crusade, with the support of its NATO allies, aims at broader ambitions. The first is to change the geopolitical map in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and the Balkans. Some illustrative signs of this warlike orientation are: the aggression against Libya and the physical liquidation of Muammar Gaddafi, against the struggles of the peoples in the Arab world, and the various attempts to impose neoliberal and anti-communist values. The pretexts usually mentioned are the fight against terrorism, the “defense of democracy and human rights, etc.” They even invented the “right of interference” to intervene militarily in countries according to their interests of the moment. But events such as the attacks of September 11, 2001, have ruined the view of the invulnerability of the US system. The financial and economic crisis of 2008 and its serious international repercussions have undermined the credibility of the world capitalist system to effectively manage the affairs of humanity. More recently, the COVID-19 crisis and its catastrophic management in the context of the weakening public health systems, including in the developed capitalist countries, has revealed to the world that the imperialist capitalist system has really run out of breath.

#### Some key features of the situation in Africa

The bankruptcy of neocolonialism in Africa has resulted in the resurgence of coups. French imperialism, which is losing ground in the face of new competitors and undermined by popular struggles, has tried to regain control by reconfiguring its back yard by renewing the discredited political class and replacing it with people committed

to its cause. The destabilization of Libya and the occupation of northern Mali by jihadist groups supported by France are part of this strategy of recovery. Hence the establishment of military bases in the Sahel through the Serval and Barkhane Operations, the establishment of the Sahel G5 under the control of the French army, and the Tabuka force to pool this presence on a European scale. Geostrategic issues and the plundering of important mineral resources in the Sahel-Saharan countries are the objectives of this gunboat policy. All the countries of the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Chad) have lost control of a large part of their territory in the fight against terrorism, despite the presence of foreign military forces estimated at more than 20,000 troops and about 80 contributing countries under UN peace missions. All are jostling to position themselves in this war of redivision of territories. Meanwhile, the front of armed terrorist groups is advancing inexorably towards the coastal countries (Ivory Coast, Togo, Benin).

The security and humanitarian crisis is expanding the economic and political crisis, which is a source of political instability with the rivalries between different fractions of the reactionary bourgeoisie for the seizure of neocolonial state power. The resurgence of military coups are the result of the catastrophic situation in these countries (Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Conakry, Chad).

Taking advantage of the decline of French imperialism, Russia is embedding itself and scoring points through ties of military cooperation, particularly with Mali, following the departure of French troops and military bases from Malian territory and their redeployment to Niger, a border country. While it must be recognized that a sovereign country cannot be prevented from cooperating with whom-ever it wants, it is nevertheless necessary to point out that it is dangerous to rely on one imperialism to fight another. The Malian people, like those of the Sahel, must find the means to ensure their own defense and leadership in the fight against terrorism.

Africa is currently coveted by Western powers in competition with newcomers such as China, Russia, Turkey and India. The neocolonies are thus subjected to controlled cuts. Since the beginning of the Covid 19 pandemic, the continent's GDP has fallen by 2.1%, plunging it into recession with the result that 32 million people live in extreme poverty, according to the World Bank. The security crisis has aggravated the situation, with millions of displaced people and famine in some areas of the continent. For decades now, the continent

has not been able to feed its population. One must also note that the multinationals are increasingly taking over what is modestly called Official Development Assistance (ODA) through Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). But these investments are not there to develop the continent. According to the UN (see the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development: Capital Flows and Growth in Africa, 2000), in the 1990s, nearly 40% of net capital inflows to sub-Saharan Africa returned to the creditor countries in the form of interest and repatriated profits.

Africa is dependent on basic products (raw materials). Its exports are composed of 80% primary products (agricultural products, forests, oil, uranium, gold, etc.). Africa's share of world trade fell from 4% in 1980 to 2% in 2000. Illicit capital flight exceeds 75 billion euros (49,200 billion CFA francs) per year. These capital outflows use different methods such as corruption, smuggling, tax evasion, manipulation by multinational firms to take out ill-gotten gains. Such is the case of gold in Burkina Faso disguised under the cover of "fine coal."

It is thus the abundance of raw materials and the ease of their plunder that are the basis of the fierce competition between foreign powers in Africa. The case of France is emblematic of the situation. It uses archaic, brutal, backward methods that amount to looting. Indeed, cooperation agreements, part of which are secret, are used for this plunder. The monetary dominance through the CFA franc is the visible part of this massive scam.



African peoples have come to understand the spirit of French politics and everywhere, in the street demonstrations, they are rejecting neocolonialism and launching slogans “France get out! French army out of Africa!”

According to economic data, the Sahel is a very rich region. It has large reserves of oil, uranium, gas, coltan, copper, manganese, lithium, magnetic ore, rare earths, etc. In 2013, in a report by the French Senate, the parliamentarians already evoked the will of France to ensure “secure access to Africa’s energy and mining resources through Operation Serval, which became Barkhane in 2014”. According to a survey by the French press in Africa, it appears that despite the fall of French exports by half in percentage, French FDI stocks rose from about 5.9 billion euros in 2000 to 52.6 billion euros in 2014, with a peak of 56 billion in 2016 (an increase of 800%). The continent is therefore very attractive for France despite its retreat in the face of the surge of its rivals, especially China. As for imports to France they are mainly uranium, cocoa and tropical fruits.

France is particularly concerned about the penetration of competitors such as China, Russia and Turkey, which, by means of China/Africa, Russia/Africa, Turkey/Africa summits, are snatching substantial market shares from it with the risk of eventually ousting it from the continent. One can then understand Emmanuel Macron’s hysteria at the idea of losing the colossal gains that France draws from Africa and on which its prosperity is based. All means are therefore used to prevent the dominated countries from escaping the grip of the imperialist capitalist system.

But the proletariat, the peoples and the youth in many African countries are on the barricades of the struggle to demand better conditions of life, work and study in the face of the bankruptcy of the neocolonial states. They are increasingly making the connection between their misery and the imperialist domination by foreign powers and their local allies.

Despite the complexity of the situation in the Sahel with attacks by armed jihadist terrorist groups, the peoples are increasingly organizing, resisting and defending themselves against the disregard of the neocolonial powers. This situation can evolve into a cycle of political instability with military coups or towards a revolutionary outcome.

### **Africa is pregnant with a Democratic Revolution**

The African peoples, mainly the popular youth, are rejecting the reactionary sectors of the bourgeoisie and their reactionary and opportunist political parties that are complicit in electoral fraud.

The African peoples must also separate themselves from the putschists, because military coups do not fundamentally challenge the system of neocolonial domination and cannot bring about social transformation in favor of the peoples.

The African peoples, especially the youth, aspire to revolutionary change. They want a break with French imperialism in the countries where it is the dominant imperialism.

The peoples of the Sahel want to defend themselves in the face of adversity, of jihadist groups that occupy whole swathes of the countries concerned. They are obscurantist forces and the people do not want them.

The peoples yearn for a revolutionary change. That is why Africa is pregnant with a democratic revolution. Also our party, the Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta (PCRv), calls on the people to organize with them in a powerful movement of popular unity for revolutionary change in order to drive the bourgeoisie and imperialism, mainly French imperialism, from power and to establish a Modern Democratic Republic (MDR).

*Central Committee, Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta  
March 2023*

## **Marxism vs Anarchism**

At the beginning of the 19th century, the development of capitalist industry began; with this the exploitation and misery of the working masses increased, voices arose that denounced the subhuman situation to which the people were being subjected, proposing utopian solutions to the social question, tending to change this situation. Among those who promoted these ideas were Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen, who appealed to reason, justice and the will of men, and are the so-called “Utopian Socialists”. Later, with the further development of capitalism and the class struggle between the bourgeoisie, owners of the means of production, and the proletariat exploited by it, Karl Marx, founder of scientific socialism, in analyzing the contradictions of capitalist society, determined that it must succumb at the hands of the proletariat, to which he provided a revolutionary theory to fulfill this end.

Another social sector that felt displaced by the development of capitalism was the petty bourgeoisie, which saw that big industry and the large capitalist estates, as well as trade and transport, were condemning it to eventual disappearance, becoming part of the proletariat. That the bourgeois state differs very little from the autocratic states of previous society, that it is there to protect and defend the bourgeoisie, leads the petty bourgeoisie to seek the support of the proletarian masses through social reforms in order to take control of the state, placing it at the service of their class interests. This favoring of small property is what is known as “petty-bourgeois socialism”, which manifests itself today in the popular movement through reformism, revisionism and anarchism.

At the beginning of the industrial revolution, anarchism managed to influence the most backward sectors of the working class, mainly in countries that were just beginning industrial development. At the end of the 19th century, due to the illuminating activity of the Marxists, as well as the victory of the Bolshevik revolution, anarchism began to disappear from the workers’ movement. It remained in the intellectual sectors that continued to spread anarchist ideas, inciting direct action, that is, individual terror since the proletariat did not heed

their calls to revolt. With the fall of the Soviet Union, the international bourgeoisie revived anarchism (as well as Trotskyism and other revisionist currents) in order to encourage ideological, political and organizational division in the popular movement. The sector of the petty bourgeoisie that is most susceptible to anarchist propaganda are the students and the lumpen population. Thus in our country, students taken in by the revolutionary verbiage of anarchist and extreme left groups, behind the backs of the mass movement, act together with the lumpen in acts of vandalism that lead to rejection by the population. This harms the student movement in its struggle for educational reform to put an end to commercialism in education.

It is necessary to denounce before public opinion the irrational actions of anarchism, carried out by these vandal elements, which have nothing to do with the daily struggles of the proletariat against the capitalist regime; this is fundamental to unite the popular movement behind the red flag of Scientific Socialism.

The purpose of this article is to present the central ideas of the main exponents of anarchism and the response to them by the founders of Marxism, for the benefit of the new generation of social fighters.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels carried out a great political and ideological struggle against the founders of anarchism, referring to the first of them, the German Max Stirner (1806-1856) as "... the German petty bourgeois, whose active participation in the bourgeois movement has been merely an ideal one, and who for the rest exposed only himself to risk, sees his own cause simply as the 'good cause', the 'cause of freedom, truth, mankind', etc." (Marx-Engels "The German Ideology"). He was characterized by his individualist anarchism, his defense of individualism and small property. He exalted the intrinsic value of the "unique" individual, who is not like any other, that each one is an all-powerful "I", "our saint decides to enter into competition with 'God' and 'truth' and to base his cause on himself – 'on myself, on the I that is, just as much as God, the nothing of everything else, the I that is everything for me, the I that is the unique.... I am nothing in the sense of void, but the creative nothing, the nothing from which I myself, as creator, create everything'." (ibid.) There is no more freedom than that which the individual wins for himself, I am the only judge who can decide whether or not I am right. The State, society, humanity do not

dominate me; if you want to ask me to be interested in favor of the State, I declare war on the State.

But in the end he recognizes that no “I” can exist by itself, so he promotes the formation of an association of egoists in which each “I” belongs to it that which corresponds to its interests. “We do not aspire to communal life in but to a life apart”... “The people is dead! Good day, Self!...” “The people’s good fortune is my misfortune!”... “If it is right for me, it is right. If it is possible that it is wrong for others, let them take care of themselves!” (Quoted by Daniel Guérin “Anarchism”)

If the reader is an insightful person, he will find Max Stirner’s extreme individualism shocking, because the development of humanity is the product of the associated work of the workers. No matter how much one tries to live outside the existing environment around them, without social relations, without any institutions and without authority, in anarchy, one must have others to satisfy one’s needs. That is, in spite of oneself, one is part of society, specifically, of a capitalist society, in which the bourgeoisie uses its state in defense of individual ownership of the means of production, of its system of exploitation to which it subjects the proletariat, of big bourgeois property to the detriment of the petty property of the petty bourgeoisie.

“This small producer especially must long for a society in which the exchange of products according to their labor value is at last a complete and invariable truth. In other words, he must long for a society in which a single law of commodity production prevails exclusively and in full, but in which the conditions are abolished in which it can prevail at all, viz., the other laws of commodity production and, later, of capitalist production.

“How deeply this utopia has struck roots in the way of thinking of the modern petty bourgeois – real or ideal – is proved by the fact that... it was proclaimed as the latest truth by... Proudhon in France in 1846.” (Engels “Preface to the First German Edition of Marx’s “Poverty of Philosophy”)

Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865), who is considered to be the father of anarchism, endorsed the views of Max Stirner, leaving aside his extreme individualism. He promoted societal anarchism, he also declared himself an enemy of the State, “that democracy is nothing but a constitutional arbitrariness ... without parties, without authorities, absolute freedom of the man of the citizen; here in three words is our profession of political and social faith.” To solve the social



question he promotes class collaboration since men are needed who unite an extreme radical spirit with an extreme conservative spirit. “Workers, give your hand to your bosses and you, bosses, do not refuse to take the hand of those who were your wage-earners”. He opposed trade unions and strikes, “That each worker individually should dispose freely over his person and his hands, this can be tolerated, but that the workers should undertake by combination to do violence to monopoly is something society cannot permit.” To use force against the bosses and landlords, to disorganize the workshops, to paralyze work, to threaten capital, means to conspire to a general ruin.” ... “Every upward movement in wages can have no other effect than a rise in the price of corn, wine, etc., that is, the effect of a dearth... It is impossible, I declare, for strikes followed by an increase in wages not to culminate in a general rise in prices: this is as certain as that two and two make four... A workers’ strike is illegal”... “Therefore it is necessary to put an end to the arbitrariness of prices, to the anomaly of value and, for this, it is necessary to constitute value, that is, to make it that each producer, in exchange for his product, always receive exactly what it costs. Then private property will not only cease to be theft, but will become the most adequate expression of justice. To constitute value is to constitute small property, and once small property is constituted everything will be justice and happiness.” (Quoted by Karl Marx in “The Poverty of Philosophy”).

To which Karl Marx replies:

“The rise and fall of profit and wages expresses merely the proportion in which capitalists and workers share in the product of a day’s work, without influencing in most instances the price of the product. But that ‘strikes followed by an increase in wages culminate in a general rise in prices, in a dearth even’ – those are notions which can blossom only in the brain of a poet who has not been understood.” (K. Marx “The Poverty of Philosophy”).

And with regard to his opposition to trade unions and strikes, Marx answered Proudhon:

“Large-scale industry concentrates in one place a crowd of people unknown to one another. Competition divides their interests. But the maintenance of wages, this common interest which they have against their boss, unites them in a common thought of resistance – *combination*. Thus combination always has a double aim, that of stopping competition among the workers, so that they can carry on general competition with the

capitalist. If the first aim of resistance was merely the maintenance of wages, combinations, at first isolated, constitute themselves into groups as the capitalists in their turn unite for the purpose of repression, and in the face of always united capital, the maintenance of the association becomes more necessary to them than that of wages.... In this struggle – a veritable civil war – all the elements necessary for a coming battle unite and develop. Once it has reached this point, association takes on a political character.... In the struggle, of which we have noted only a few phases, this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself. The interests it defends become class interests. But the struggle of class against class is a political struggle.... a struggle which carried to its highest expression is a total revolution.” (Ibid.)

Finally, Proudhon concludes by condemning the state as “The primary cause of all the disorders afflicting society, of the oppression of citizens and the ruin of nations it consists in the exclusive and hierarchical centralization of public powers... It is necessary to put an end to this enormous parasitism as soon as possible”. He calls for the destruction of the state, promoting in turn the formation of small states which would unite in a federation. This would solve the economic problem on the basis of small property and reciprocal mutualism between labor associations”.

Marx proposed the destruction of the bourgeois state, not because it is “the cause of all the disorders afflicting society”, but because it is the instrument with which the bourgeoisie exercises its dictatorship against the proletariat. Unlike Proudhon, he does not call for the disappearance of the state; on the contrary, he points out that “ Between capitalist and communist society there lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat” and “ so long as the proletariat still makes use of the state, it makes use of it, not for the purpose of freedom, but of keeping down its enemies and, as soon as there can be any question of freedom, the state as such ceases to exist.” (Critique of the Gotha Programme).

Marx said that it is a mistake to confuse the destruction of the state with the centralism that must continue to exist in communist society, that “ The Paris Commune was, of course, to serve as a model to all the great industrial centers of France. The communal regime

once established in Paris and the secondary centers, the old centralized government would in the provinces, too, have to give way to the self-government of the producers.... The rural communities of every district were to administer their common affairs by an assembly of delegates in the central town, and these district assemblies were again to send deputies to the National Delegation in Paris... The few but important functions which would still remain for a central government were not to be suppressed.” (Marx “The Civil War in France”)

In conclusion we will say of Proudhon: “He wants to soar as the man of science above the bourgeois and proletarians; he is merely the petty bourgeois, continually tossed back and forth between capital and labor, political economy and communism.” (“The Poverty of Philosophy”).

Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876) defined anarchism as “Proudhonism widely developed and brought to its extreme consequences”, but without abandoning the individualism of his teacher; he declared himself in favor of collectivist anarchism, revealing the influence exerted by Marx after having translated *Capital* into Russian. Bakunin rejected any kind of state, the political struggle and the trade union and political organization of the proletariat, that is, he opposed the formation of a workers’ party. His followers called themselves libertarian communists; they are anti-communists like their teacher.

“Let us see how they put into practice their ultra-revolutionary phrases about anarchy and autonomy, about the abolition of all authority, especially that of the state, and the immediate and complete emancipation of the workers.... Spain is such a backward country industrially that there can be no question there of immediate complete emancipation of the working class. Spain will first have to pass through various preliminary stages of development and remove quite a number of obstacles from its path. The Republic offered a chance of going through these stages in the shortest possible time and quickly surmounting the obstacles. But this chance could be taken only if the Spanish working class played an active political role. The labor masses felt this; they strove everywhere to participate in events, to take advantage of the opportunity for action... The government announced that elections were to be held to the Constituent Cortes... The leaders of the Bakuninists were in a predicament. Continued political inaction became more ridiculous and impossible with every passing day; the workers wanted ‘to see things done’ The members

of the Alliance (Bakunists) on the other hand had been preaching for years that no part should be taken in a revolution that did not have as its aim the immediate and complete emancipation of the working class, that political action of any kind implied recognition of the State, which was the root of all evil, and that therefore participation in any form of elections was a crime worthy of death. How they got out of this fix is recounted in the already mentioned Madrid report:

“They have worked, not to give political power to the working class -- on the contrary this idea is repugnant to them -- but to help to power a bourgeois faction of adventurers, ambitious men and place-hunters who call themselves Intransigent (irreconcilable) Republicans.”

“That is what Bakunist ‘abstention from politics’ leads to.”  
(Engels “The Bakunists at Work”)

Bakunin fought the state in the name of freedom, as well as the right of inheritance in the name of the economic and social equality of classes and individuals. But he is not opposed to individual property since, according to Bakunin, it is not capital that must be put to an end, since it is not capital that creates the class antagonisms that social development creates between capitalists and wage workers, but the State. Thus it would be a betrayal to take part in politics, especially in elections. “It is necessary to completely suppress, in principle and in fact, all that which they call Political Power; For as long as political power exists, there will be rulers, masters and slaves, exploiters and exploited. Once suppressed, political power should be replaced by the organization of the productive forces and economic service. These policies of the social revolution, which aims at the abolition of the state, and the economy, which totally liberates the organizations of the people, an organization from the bottom up, through a federation... There will be no possibility of the existence of a political government, since this government will be transformed into a simple administration of common affairs.

With regard to the state, Engels says: “Conference and at once began to conspire within it against the General Council. Bakunin has a peculiar theory of his own, a medley of Proudhonism and communism, the chief point of which is in the first place that he does not regard capital, and therefore the class contradiction between capitalists and wage earners which has arisen through social development, as the main evil to be abolished--instead he regards the state as the main evil.... Bakunin maintains that it is the state which has created

capital, that the capitalist has his capital only by favor of the state.... We, on the contrary say: do away with capital, the appropriation of the whole means of production in the hands of the few, and the state will fall away of itself. The difference is an essential one. Without a previous social revolution the abolition of the state is nonsense; the abolition of capital is in itself the social revolution and involves a change in the whole method of production.... In this [future] society there will above all be no authority, for authority = state = an absolute evil. (How these people propose to run a factory, work a railway or steer a ship without having in the last resort one deciding will, without a unified direction, they do not indeed tell us.) The authority of the majority over the minority also ceases. Every individual and every community is autonomous, but as to how a society, even of only two people, is possible unless each gives up some of his autonomy, Bakunin again remains silent.” (Letter from Engels to Theodore Cuno, January 24, 1872)

How did Bakunin come to such a society?

“For this the workers have one means: the Association of Councils. Through the Association they brace themselves up, they mutually improve each other They learn to help and support each other....

“Even the Association of all Workers’ Associations of a single country would not be sufficiently powerful to stand up in conflict with the International combination of all profit-making world capital.... if this alteration is not accomplished, at the same time, at least, in the greatest part of the industrial countries of the world.... Its solution, therefore, is only possible through an International Movement. Is this International Movement a secret idea, a conspiracy? Not in the least....

“The Council of Action is revolutionary in the sense that it will replace a society based upon injustice, exploitation, privilege.

“Is the Council of Action revolutionary in the sense of barricades and of violent uprising or demonstration? No; the Council concerns itself but little with this kind of politics;... [it has] served not the emancipation of the workers, but the tightening of their slavery....

“On the day when the great proportion of the world’s workers have associated themselves through Council of Actions, and so firmly organized through Council of Actions, and so firmly organized through their divisions into one common solidarity of movement, no revolution, in the sense of violent insurrection, will be necessary....

“To the triumph of the social revolution itself violence will be unnecessary.” (Bakunin “The Red Association”)

About Bakunin, says Engels, “Just how he hopes that the present political oppression and the tyranny of capital will be broken, and how he intends to carry out his favorite idea on the abolition of inheritance without ‘acts of authority’, he does not explain.—But when in September 1870 the insurrection in Lyons was put down by force he decreed in the Hôtel de Ville the abolition of the state, without taking any measures against all the bourgeois of the National Guard, who calmly walked into the Hôtel de Ville, kicked Bakunin out and put the state back on its feet, all in less than an hour.” (Letter from Engels to Carlo Cafiero, July 1(-3), 1871)

“Schoolboy stupidity! A radical social revolution depends on certain definite historical conditions of economic development as its precondition. It is also only possible where with capitalist production the industrial proletariat occupies at least an important position among the mass of the people. And if it is to have any chance of victory, it must be able to do immediately as much for the peasants as the French bourgeoisie, *mutatis mutandis*, did in its revolution for the French peasants of that time.... The will, and not the economic conditions, is the foundation of his [Bakunin’s] social revolution.” (Marx – “Conspectus of Bakunin’s *Statism and Anarchy*”)

Bakunin speaks of revolution, but opposes all the violence that the proletariat carries out in defense of its class interests and in opposition to the violence of the armed forces of the bourgeoisie. According to him it must be a “Peaceful Revolution”. As Engels pointed out, it was the National Guard, not even the Army, that was responsible for throwing his petty bourgeois dream to the ground.

Bakunin joined the First International in 1868, which “was founded in order to replace the socialist or semi-socialist sects by a real organization of the working class with a view to struggle”. He joined with the exclusive aim of forming within it a secret organization that he controlled which would take charge of propaganda and impose his program. This program promoted the equality of classes; abolition of the right of inheritance, which would prevent any alliance with the petty bourgeoisie to fight against the bourgeoisie; imposing atheism as an obligatory dogma against the different political tendencies or beliefs existing within the International; and the abstention from the political movement, that participation in elections was treason to the working class because it meant recognizing the State. The

General Council of the International had to fight for years against the sectarian and adventurous policy of Bakunin. He had become strong in Italy and Spain, countries that were characterized by an embryonic capitalist development and therefore a very politically backward working class. Bakunin and his organization were expelled from the First International.

Piotr Kropotkin (1842-1921) said that “if plenty for all is to become a reality, this immense capital... must cease to be regarded as private property... This rich endowment... must become common property, so that the collective interests of men may gain from it the greatest good for all. There must be EXPROPRIATION....”

“If a society... were to guarantee the necessities of life to its inhabitants..., it would be compelled to take possession of what is absolutely needed for production; that is to say – land, machinery, factories, means of transport, etc. Capital in the hands of private owners would be expropriated, to be returned to the community”. “But this problem cannot be solved by means of legislation.... The poor, as well as the rich, understand that neither the existing Governments, nor any which might arise out of possible political changes, would be capable of finding such a solution. They feel the necessity of a social revolution; “ which is “compressed by the minority, that is, by the possessing classes, and not having been able to take shape it is necessary that it remove, by means of force, the obstacles and that it be carried out with violence by means of a revolution ... A revolution that thinks



about the needs of the people before reading them the primers of their duties.”

“This cannot be done by decree, but only by the immediate, effective taking possession of everything necessary for the life of all.”

“Every society that breaks with private property will find itself in the case of organizing itself in Anarchist Communism... But our communism is not that of the Falansterians (note), nor of the German authoritarian theorists; but anarchist communism, the communism without government, that of free men. It is the synthesis of the ends pursued by humanity through the ages: economic freedom and political freedom.”

“Taking anarchy as the ideal of political organization” will not be based on parliamentarism, but on the basis of federation and “through free agreement between individuals and groups pursuing the same ends. The independence of each minimum territorial unit is already a pressing need. Common agreement replaces the law, and crossing borders, regulates particular interests with a view to a general end.”

“We are led to affirm that humanity tends to reduce to nothing the action of governments, that is, to abolish the State, that personification of injustice, oppression and monopoly.” When we find ourselves in a world with a new mode of production, wages cannot be preserved, not even in the form indicated by collectivism, which it understands as the kind of a hybrid or intermediate state between capitalist society and communist society. (P. Kropotkin “The Conquest of Bread”).

Anarcho-communism, contrary to what Proudhon and Bakunin proposed, joins the workers’ unions, which are divided into anarcho-syndicalism and revolutionary syndicalism.

According to the anarchist Daniel Guérin, “Piotr Kropotkin... bent the in a more rigidly utopian and optimistic direction but his ‘scientific’ approach failed to conceal its weaknesses.... is alien to anarchism”, which he accuses of having adopted a warmongering position during the First World War in favor of the Russian Empire against Germany (D. Guérin “Anarchism”).

This criticism of Kropotkin is because, in his opinion, his collectivism would have some similarities to Marxism. But in reality the proposal he makes is far from any scientific response to the needs of future society, since his “socialism” is based, like that of his precursors, on communal dispersion, federalism, and he does not realize



that this requires a great industrial development which exceeds the limits of a commune or several communes based on small production, isolated from each other, which must cover a large territory, a country. It is a development that requires a direction and central planning, otherwise capitalist anarchy would be replicated in the production of goods or we would be talking about returning to the Middle Ages, in which each commune would have a self-sufficient economy separated from each other, with its corresponding economic backwardness.

Kropotkin criticizes the preservation of wages during “a hybrid or intermediate state between capitalist society and communist society”. He proposes to eliminate them, because the triumphant social revolution will resort to a community of provisions. “Everyone has the right to take whatever he wants, without more qualms than the public opinion of his neighbors”. This is a utopia, because even if the social revolution were to triumph through a social explosion, without organization or leadership of the party of the proletariat, immediately establishing a communist society, it would encounter all the aspects of capitalist society, economically, morally and intellectually. That is why an intermediate stage is necessary, which can be none other than the dictatorship of the proletariat, needed to repress the classes possessing the means of production. In that previous stage “...the individual producer receives back from society – after the deductions have been made – exactly what he gives to it.”

“In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished; after labor has become not only a means of life but life’s prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-around development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly – only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!” (Marx “Critique of the Gotha Programme”)

*April 2023*

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## **2023, A Year of Slowdown and Uncertainty for Colombians**

### **Introduction:**

To all readers and analysts who follow international events from this journal, we present these lines that summarize the main considerations of our party in this situation, the challenges and tasks of Marxist-Leninists in Colombia. The opinions raised here have been the result of a great political and ideological effort to maintain the unity and strengthening of our party in the face of the class struggle, a permanent dialogue with the workers and communities, internal functioning, ideological struggle and party-political debate.

We are undoubtedly living in complex political moments that mark important changes in national and international events; deepening this and the whole dynamic of the class struggle in the world will always be an important effort that will contribute to the improving of the strategy and tactics of our Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations.

With these reflections we hope to contribute to this collective effort to maintain the compass and struggle for social transformation, sure that your criticisms and contributions will result in the strengthening of our work.

### **I. The main features of the international situation**

In the examination of the international situation, a first element to be seen includes the acute exacerbation of the social contradictions that characterize the world today. This reflects the deep crisis undergone by the capitalist system, its constant weakening, decomposition and agony. Certainly the world is falling into a perspective of greater clashes and ruptures that make revolution inevitable.

The extreme sharpening of the contradictions in the camp of imperialism, the permanent clashes between the imperialist powers that have given rise to the accumulation of wars being promoted today; the struggle of the peoples against the dictates and subjugation of the imperialist countries; the struggle that arises in the countries dependent on thousands of workers and people from the most varied social

sectors for their well-being, rights and freedoms, threatened in some cases and in others curtailed by bourgeois and imperialists of different kinds, stage a very complex panorama of constant instability and imbalance, in which clashes are aggravated and foretell ruptures in the imperialist chain.

### **The war, multipolarity and the “new world order”**

The inter-imperialist struggle for supremacy and control of countries and the universe is making its way through greater forms of aggression, terror and violence. It is no secret that the war in Ukraine has intensified and that many countries are increasingly involved in this conflict. There are tensions between the U.S. and China over military exercises by both powers in the Pacific Ocean and the U.S. recognition of Taiwan as an independent nation. Other hotbeds of war are being permanently fueled, such as in the Middle East, North and Central Africa, Pakistan, Venezuela, etc. These are all coupled with the commercial, technological and energy disputes that are also increasing, while showing the danger and imminent outbreak of a new world conflagration.

It is also clear the division of the imperialist camp into two large sides or blocs are not homogeneous, of course, insofar as they act according to expedience, but united on both sides in the defense of their particular interests. The opposing imperialist blocs are led, on the one hand, by the US and other Western powers, and on the other by Russia, China and India. Because of their interests of expansion and domination, one cannot say that the acts of one or the other side are in defense of the sovereignty of a certain country or to save humanity, as some claim; on the contrary, they express the voracity and anti-democratic, bloody and criminal character of imperialism.

It is obvious that the danger of world war is growing and fueled permanently as the military confrontation between the blocs escalates, trade wars deepen and spread, as well as there is support for one or the bloc. However, the breakdown in world governance, globalization and multilateralism that is repeatedly preached and defended in the different international scenarios is striking. We are certainly living in times when the struggle for hegemony and world domination increases the number of commercial and political agreements between countries, and with them the assumption and/or defense of certain rules, organizations and institutions. The world order therefore is registering important changes that must continue to be analyzed,

because behind the fragmentation that the markets are experiencing today and the protectionism promoted by each of the blocs, there are the new threads that characterize the governance, domination and subjection of peoples and nations.

Given the dynamics of multipolarity, one can also mention the greater tensions that exist within agencies such as the United Nations and its Security Council, the World Trade Organization and in general the different interstate organizations. It is not uncommon, therefore, that in many of these one can see changes, and some, such as the International Criminal Court, take a direct part in the dispute favoring one or the other bloc.

However, taking into account that the struggle for the control and exploitation of raw materials and natural resources, of ports, seas and strategic areas, will continue to mark the inter-imperialist dispute, we cannot ignore the fact that the interdependence and existence of a global market requires minimum agreements between the imperialists themselves in order to ensure the rate of profit and the hegemony achieved. For example, cryptocurrencies, the role of the central banks, interest rates, the price of raw materials, banking security, the care and maintenance of certain areas of the globe, the mobility of companies, the use of nuclear weapons, to name a few, are issues where the same confrontation calls for the adoption of regulations.

### **Slowdown, inflation and job reduction**

Along this line we highlight the slowdown that marks the world economy due to the increase in interest rates, the growth of inflation, the war in Ukraine and all the inter-monopoly dispute that today exist in the different continents. In consulting the IMF website, we see that the budgets of growth of the world economy will go from 3.4% in 2022 to 2.9% in 2023. Expectations of such growth are underpinned by the growth of productivity, technological advances, lower energy prices, job growth and China's recovery from the lifting of its health restrictions.

As for the inflationary phenomenon that is currently seen in most countries, it is worth mentioning as driving factors the disturbances in supplies that currently exist in the midst of inter-monopoly competition, the increase in energy prices, mainly in Europe, which are today subject to prices and other elements of the oil, gas and energy policy of the United States. They also depend on the increase in State

expenditures in military matters (the rise in the arms race), as well as those caused by climate change, earthquakes, hurricanes, etc.

The phenomenon is so serious that the same IMF statistics<sup>1</sup> show that world inflation reached 8.8% in 2022 (the world average). With the measures taken by central banks, global inflation is expected to decline to 6.6% in 2023 and 4.3% in 2024. In the first months of 2023, global inflation remained at 8%, the slight reduction observed in the so-called developed economies (from 6.7 to 6.6%) with the rise of a similar magnitude in emerging economies (from 9.0 to 9.1%).<sup>2</sup>

The policies adopted by the Fed and most central banks in response to this inflationary phenomenon have only been the increase in interest rates, causing a sharp reduction in consumer spending and business investment, a drop in credit and an economic slowdown (manufacturing and service activity in most countries of Europe and in China has fallen significantly).

Now, the monetary and anti-inflationary policy which the Fed and most central banks are parading in the different scenarios are a lie and a deception for most consumers, because they are agencies that remain silent and hide the real reasons for the inflationary increase that has existed for several years. In our view, they are responsible for the increase in the money supply, and therefore for the depreciation of the value of the circulating currency and indeed for the rise in the prices of goods and services. They certainly manipulate the figures so as not to show that in the context of weak economic growth, stagnation and slowdown, the factor with the highest incidence of inflation lies in the increase in State spending (mainly military and debt service), which as is well known has its greatest backing in the issuance of currency.

In these terms, it is the consumers and never the investors and capitalists who assume the costs of inflation, created mainly by the imperialist states.

In terms of employment, the ILO estimates that global unemployment will increase slightly in 2023, affecting three million people. With this, there would be 208 million people out of work.<sup>3</sup> With

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<sup>1</sup> [www.imf.org/es/Blogs/Articles/2023/02/02/looser-financial-conditions-pose-conundrum-for-central-banks](https://www.imf.org/es/Blogs/Articles/2023/02/02/looser-financial-conditions-pose-conundrum-for-central-banks)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bcrp.gob.pe/politica-monetaria/reporte-de-inflacion.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.france24.com/es/programas/econom%C3%ADa/20230116-oit-reduccion-crecimiento-empleo-2023>

the economic slowdown, there will be very few new jobs, estimates show an increase of only 0.9% for 2023. The flexibilization and outsourcing that characterize the labor market will force many workers to accept jobs of lower skill, with low wages and often with insufficient hours. With incomes reduced in the context of higher inflation, many workers are at risk of increasing the belts of poverty. Reflecting what has been pointed out by the ILO, it is worrying that the scenarios registered in labor matters with the Covid-19 pandemic are maintained and tend to worsen.

This situation is aggravated by the increasing weight of external debt, the increasing fiscal deficits, the disastrous effects of the neoliberal formulas imposed by the IMF on dependent countries, as well as climate change that for several years has been redrawing the economic and social work of the different countries.

In this way, we can state that economic stagnation and slowdown, rising unemployment, inflation (the phenomenon of stagflation is already visible in many countries, including the US) and poverty warn of the proximity of a new cycle of recession, which will strike economies hard and affect the standard of living of thousands of inhabitants of the planet.

### **Financial crisis**

This uncertainty is increasing with the emergence of the crisis of the banking system, seen these days with the bankruptcy of several banks in the US, Switzerland and Germany. According to analysts, this could create a domino effect on the whole financial system, placing the world economy in serious trouble.

Since state intervention is the only alternative currently claimed as a way out of the crisis, the bank bailout has not been long in coming. In the US, the Federal Reserve has come to the rescue, first of Silicon Valley Bank, then of Signature Bank, and now a third, First Republic Bank. The Swiss bailout of the Credit Suisse bank took place by being acquired by the UBS Bank. In Germany, the collapse of Deutsche Bank's share value to 8.53% on the Frankfurt stock exchange, after the sharp increase in the cost of insurance against the risk of default, has been mitigated with an early repayment of \$1,500

million dollars in Tier 2 bonds (fixed-rate Tier 2 subordinated debt) maturing in 2028.<sup>4</sup>

Although the monetary authorities say that there are no vulnerabilities that jeopardize its activity, neither on the profitability side, as in Credit Suisse, nor on the side of subprime loans, as in the case of US regional banks, the health of the system is being called into question.<sup>5</sup> The truth is that the values of the main banks continue to fall<sup>6</sup>. At its close, the Euro Stoxx 600 index for the banking sector registered a fall of 2.53%, with Sydbank leading the decline with a fall of 10.88%, followed by the Scandinavian Nordea, which also fell by 8.4%.

In the United States, one sees the transfer of deposits from small banks, considered to be at risk, to much larger ones, which are potentially safer. The amount transferred in the last week of March was \$50 billion. If we take into account that the guaranteed deposit funds pay the same amount for risk insurance, regardless of the name and size of the entity (100,000 euros in Europe and 250,000 dollars in the US), hypothetically we could ensure that, through the absorption of the smaller banks, the large banks have greater leverage to face the coming financial crisis.<sup>7</sup>

### **The growth of the popular struggle**

In the midst of such a complex context, a light of hope appears in the sky, illuminating the path of thousands of men and women who seek an alternative to war and dying capitalism: social protest, strikes, mobilizations and struggle appear with greater force in different corners of the planet. The banners of democracy, freedom, rights, well-being, work, ecology, the environment and the protection of the planet flutter and wave with vigor, opening the way to processes of

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<sup>4</sup> [www.ambito.com/finanzas/crisis-financiera-las-acciones-del-deutsche-bank-se-derrumbaron-9-N5681809](http://www.ambito.com/finanzas/crisis-financiera-las-acciones-del-deutsche-bank-se-derrumbaron-9-N5681809)

<sup>5</sup> [www.lasexta.com/noticias/economía/desplome-deutsche-bank-arrastra-consigo-banca-europea-semana-crisis-desatada\\_20230324641de71f079ac90001877ee9.html](http://www.lasexta.com/noticias/economía/desplome-deutsche-bank-arrastra-consigo-banca-europea-semana-crisis-desatada_20230324641de71f079ac90001877ee9.html)

<sup>6</sup> [www.lainformación.com/mercados-y-bolsas/como-esta-deutsche-bank-mas-fuerte-que-nunca-talon-de-aquiles-heredado/2883721/](http://www.lainformación.com/mercados-y-bolsas/como-esta-deutsche-bank-mas-fuerte-que-nunca-talon-de-aquiles-heredado/2883721/)

<sup>7</sup> [www.estrategiasdeinversion.com/análisis/bolsa-y-mercados/el-experto-opina/inevitablemente-y-con-toda-seguridad-habra-mas-n-605679](http://www.estrategiasdeinversion.com/análisis/bolsa-y-mercados/el-experto-opina/inevitablemente-y-con-toda-seguridad-habra-mas-n-605679)



unity and struggle that, as in other times, highlight the role of the working class as the historical subject of change.

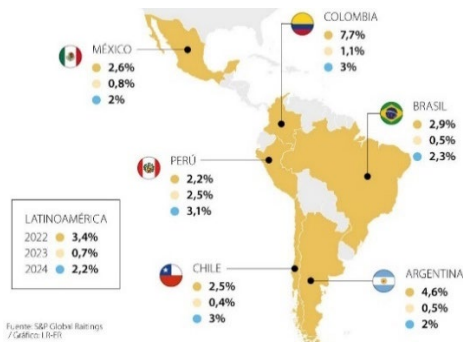
In Latin America, the rise of masses has achieved important victories and spaces; in countries such as Chile, Bolivia, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela, the protests and struggles of the workers and popular masses have made possible the victory and coming to the government of democratic forces. Now, despite the ideological and programmatic limits of each of these experiences, each of them points to the possibility of victory, change and with it the opening of a new dawn for the workers and peoples.

Progressivism has taken the lead in these processes, becoming the main force. The different forces of the left, the revolutionaries and communists have resisted a strong and criminal ideological, political and military offensive that seeks their political isolation and elimination. The results, although they are different in different countries, in general we could point out valuable quantitative and qualitative advances. They mainly highlight an arduous process of reorganization and rooting themselves in society that enhances the unity, role and political protagonism of the different alternative forces.

## II. The details of the national situation

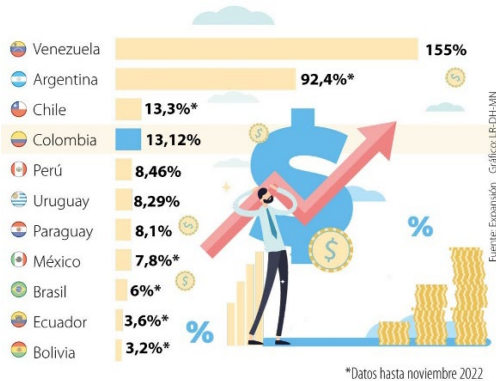
Colombia a reflection of the international trends

In the examination of the country's economic situation, a first element to be noted includes how worrisome for the country and especially for workers are the serious problems of economic decline, galloping inflation, the loss of purchasing power of wages, the growth of informal work, unemployment and the reduction of income.



### Projections of the GDP for Latin America

<https://www.larepublica.co/globoeconomia/pib-de-colombia-solo-creceria-1-1-en-2023-segun-proyecciones-de-s-p-global-ratings-3499247>



### The countries with the highest inflation in Latin America

<https://www.larepublica.co/globoeconomia/colombia-concluye-con-la-cuarta-inflacion-mas-alta-de-america-latina-3518797>

With this perspective of the Colombian economy, the serious problems of the country continue to show the negative results of monitoring and IMF impositions, which make Colombia one of the most unequal countries on the planet and the continent, with the immense challenge of overcoming, in addition to inequality and poverty, the backwardness and dependence that characterizes it.

Also of concern are issues such as the increase in foreign debt, the fiscal deficit and environmental problems that have long been a major issue for Colombians.

**In social matters**, the social crisis suffered by the majority of Colombians is not a small matter; there are many reasons to remain dissatisfied and uncertain, given the increase in taxes, fines and other growing monetary sanctions, high interest rates, currency devaluation, high utility rates, the high cost of food for a family, lack of drinking water, the deterioration of the roads, the constant landslides. In general there are countless problems to be overcome, which show once again the historical state abandonment, the high levels of corruption, the lack of social infrastructure in a country also struck by war and human rights violations.

**In political matters**, the crisis is not something minor and cannot be overcome with the coming of Petro into the government; this situation can clearly be explained by the discontent, social pressure and demand for change by the majority of the Colombian population, even if a democratic candidate has won the presidency.

With nine months of his administration, the level of popularity, acceptance and recognition of the new government is clear and favorable, undermined by the great limitations and difficulties it faces in carrying out the democratic program of government and the democratic reforms for which the majority voted and will not rest in their demands.

Besides not having the majority in Congress, the erratic approach to reconciliation, agreement and national unity without differentiating between the interests and strategies in contention, has reduced the possibility, support and political legitimacy among some of the political and social sectors that supported Petro from the beginning of his candidacy. It seems not to be true, but it is, that the new government has called for consensus, a pact and national agreement among all sectors seeking to promote and support the reforms and policies achieved through consensus or agreement with traditional organizations and parties, so-called because they are traditionally the ones that have led the country in favor of the oligarchy and imperialism.

The growing social demands therefore depend on agreements and alliances that the government can realize in the formulation, presentation and approval of the reforms and policies that it proposed. Now, it is not the first time that this type of formula has been tested in the country; so it is not difficult to point out that any program, policy or reform that is proposed not only risks undermining its content, but also that it is lost, because its approval depends on both arousing and uniting the interests and support of those who are the majority in a given place. in this case the Congress of the Republic.

Therefore, what will be approved by the Congress of the Republic will not be the government program that the citizens voted for, it will not be the democratic reforms. The Congress is composed of a majority representing the economic organizations, multinationals and power groups that have traditionally governed Colombia. Total peace that will not be achieved if the rules (guidelines and norms) imposed by imperialism on these issues are maintained. A reconciliation and national agreement is impossible without a proposal for the country that alleviates the poverty, violence and anti-democracy that we have suffered from for years; anything else would be to renounce change and take up a defense of the status quo, which in our view would be the most serious.

If the government does not correct its focus [of winning the backing of the majority in Congress], the political support of the democratic and leftist sectors for this government will be reduced, by not providing clear and concrete answers to the worsening of the economic crisis, the growth of injustice and social inequality, protected by the neoliberal and fascistic orientation that the bourgeois state has defended for decades.

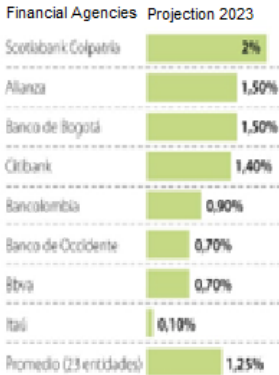
It is worth noting in this regard that all the forces and organizations of our party worked intensely, together with many other democratic forces and organizations, to achieve the Petro's victory. As president of the republic, we support and collaborate with his government to the maximum, but we do not hide his great limitations and weaknesses. Our independence and autonomy, the proletarian and popular interests that we defend, demand that we state what we agree with and what we do not agree with.

We see that there is a growing struggle running through the entire establishment; the oligarchic sectors seek to maintain their rate of profit without any loss, as well as the control and direction of the State and the country in general. They will use any obstacle, coup and closure of spaces to the democratic, alternative and left sectors that exist today in the government and that also work for the victory of reforms that would alleviate the difficult situation that the majority of Colombians are suffering from in regard to rights, freedoms and living conditions.

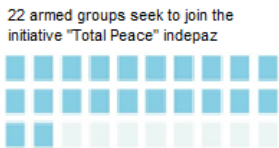
Recognizing the efforts and the ups and downs that it presents, we are fighting to increase the democratic victories, aware that we are not immune from defeat. Therefore, we do not rule out the possibility that, in the midst of it, we may be forced to make a stop along the way, changing our behavior towards the government of Gustavo Petro. We hope that this government will remain within the popular and democratic camp and not allow itself to become aligned with the bourgeois and neoliberal policies that it has criticized so much.

PRICIPAL RISKS FOR COLOMBIA IN 2023

1 Negative Economic Scenarios



2 Insecurity Continues to Affect Public Opinion and the Private Sector



3 Relations between the Executive and Congress

- Projects the Government will present
- Pension reform
- Health reform
- Reform to the mining code
- Political reform

4 Social Unrest Is on a Slow Boil

According to Colombia Risk, although there was no social explosion in 2023 as there was in 2021, unrest will increase due to the recession.

5 Changes in Local Elections

Elections for mayors and governors on October 29 will present a new challenge for the Government.

6 Risks of Climate Change

This year a new winter season, increase in deforestation and a possible El Niño phenomenon are projected.

Source: Colombia Risk Cii Grafico LRAL OII

<https://www.larepublica.co/economia/los-seis-riesgos-a-los-que-se-enfrentara-el-pais-durante-2023-segun-colombia-risk-3520388>

III. Our most important challenges and tasks

We are continuing in the struggle to strengthen the party from a class perspective and in a transformative bet. This means that our main effort in this period continues to be aimed at strengthening the Marxist-Leninist party with a vision for power for the Colombian proletariat and people. We are an organization committed to the economic, social, political and cultural transformations that the national majority raises as its banner; we are fighting for the defense and independence of the homeland, its self-determination and liberation from the imperialist yoke, mainly of US imperialism.

As part of the international communist movement we are working to make the most of the objective conditions and increase the determining subjective factors for social change and the building of the new socialist society. We are working hard for the unity and

centralization of the organizations fighting against imperialism, for self-determination and the socialist future of our peoples.

We are determined fighters for the unity of the workers, peasants and popular sectors, we raise their banners and demands; we are seeking a great political and mass movement for the defense of life, work, the rights and freedoms of the people. We are fighting for a democratic government that, together with the people, works and fights for democracy, and does not hesitate to convene a National Constituent Assembly for the approval of a new constitutional and democratic framework for the republic.

We show our support for the government of Gustavo Petro, his government program, as well as his proposed democratic reforms. We will continue together with the people to promote the mobilization and popular struggle in defense of the government and its proposals, seeking, in addition to a qualitative leap in their content, the achievement of the balance of forces necessary for their approval and materialization.

We will actively participate in the regional elections called for October 27, promoting and supporting candidates committed to the people, their democratic banners and the building of a local power that strengthens sovereignty, participation and popular well-being.

*Central Executive Committee  
Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Colombia  
March 31, 2023.*

## **“The Trotskyist World Movement”**

In the current situation, with the national and international class struggle sharpening, the political and ideological class struggle sharpens as well. In our country we see not only the revisionist currents trying to reinvent themselves, but we also see Trotskyism again being promoted after lying dormant for a period. Even though they are organized in different groups, parties, and political factions within the left-reformist parties, they all have the same political program.

We have been re-studying this document “The Trotskyist World Movement” in our party and bring in excerpts:

Trotskyism is an international political and ideological current that has a history of almost a hundred years. It presents its own policies and program of socialism and “world revolution”, and claims to be the true proponent of Marxism and revolution, especially against “Stalinist” (by which they mean Marxist-Leninist) distortion and manipulation.

International Trotskyism is not a mass movement and has never managed to gain any solid foundation in the working class. Nevertheless, there are Trotskyist groups that spread their ideas and theories in most countries and in all parts of the world. Trotskyism has undergone many changes and modifications in its historical development to the present day, but it has nevertheless retained its basic features and its own special identity through all the different phases.

### **Permanent hopelessness**

A main component of Trotskyism is the theory of the permanent revolution, which appears as the very key to the solution of the problems of world revolution. In reality, it should be called the theory of permanent hopelessness, because it concretely denies the possibility of the victory of the revolution and the construction of socialism in a particular country.

In short, the starting point of the theory of the permanent revolution is the particular Trotskyist analysis of imperialism. This analysis argues that with the outbreak of the First World War, the death knell rang for all national programs: the time for the world revolution has

come and it must be understood as a worldwide process, a global explosion, or rather chain of explosions, in which capitalism is replaced by socialism on a world scale.

According to this theory, imperialism has transcended all national borders and has become a whole that cannot be broken down step by step. This is justified by capitalism's objective tendency towards the globalization of the world economy and the domination of monopolies over all key capitalist positions.

A simultaneous global showdown with capitalism is therefore the necessary form that the transition from capitalism to socialism must take. The task of the revolutionaries is to await and prepare for this situation, having created in advance a revolutionary organization on a world basis to lead the revolution, a "General Staff of the World Revolution". It is this role that the Fourth International has awarded itself.

Consequently, no concrete revolution can prevail, and socialism cannot be built in a single country or group of countries. A revolution in a single country, such as the October Revolution in Russia, can at most be the spark that ignites the world revolution.

The construction of a socialist society over a long period of time in a country or group of countries is therefore, by definition, impossible.

Trotsky described the world revolution as this all-encompassing global explosion, and the Trotskyists have repeatedly proclaimed that the world revolution is "just around the corner", "only a few years" away. Of course, it has not appeared, but Trotskyism acts the same way as the religious prophets of doom who set a date for the end of the world. Every time it turns out that it does not succeed, there will always be a new opportunity sometime in the future.

On the basis of this deeply unscientific and anti-Marxist theory of revolution, Trotskyism must necessarily reject and criticize concrete revolutions and attempts to build socialism that are actually taking place and that the working class and its allies have carried out in a number of countries in this [19th] century. None of them has been the spark that could trigger the chain of explosion of the world revolution.



## **Revolution and the class struggle**

The crucial problem for the Trotskyists is that reality, the revolution and the actual experiences of the international working class do not match their theorizing and formulas.

The working class has carried out the proletarian revolution in a large number of countries and, furthermore, a large number of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist revolutions have been carried out in this [19th] century.

Socialism has been built successfully in one country and later in a number of countries. First of all, in the USSR, which, according to Trotsky’s predictions, had no chance of survival, not even for a few years. Before Hitler’s attack on the Soviet Union, he proclaimed that the country would be crushed by the Nazi war machine.

But socialism proved capable of resisting the fascist war of aggression, the most brutal war the world has ever seen.

Lenin’s theoretical justification for the possibility of the revolution triumphing and socialism being built in one country or group of countries was the uneven development of imperialism. The victory of the revolution in Russia and later elsewhere in the world and the construction of these countries as socialist societies have, of course, in practice disproved the Trotskyists’ theory of the impossibility of socialism. This is true even if these are former socialist societies where capitalism has been resurrected. This is not because of the “impossibility of socialism”, but because the class struggle continues in the socialist countries in conjunction with the pressure and subversion of imperialism and reaction to destroy socialism.

The fact that socialism was concretely frustrated and defeated at a certain point says nothing about the possibility or reality of revolution and socialism in this country or these countries. On the other hand, it tells us something about the sharp class struggle between socialism and capitalism on a world scale. It tells us that the class struggle continues even after the victory of the revolution and that there is still the possibility of counterrevolution in one form or another, and not only through imperialist war or invasion. It was something, for example, that Lenin and Stalin constantly emphasized with great severity, and they carried out the necessary countermeasures against the counterrevolutionary forces.

### **A revolutionary alternative?**

The Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution encompasses a wide range of aspects beyond the erroneous conception of the world revolutionary process and the rejection of the possibility of the victory of socialism in a single country or group of countries. These other aspects of Trotskyist ideology are also fundamentally opposed to Marxism and the Leninist theory of revolution.

The ideology is based on the lack of faith in the victory of the revolution in a single country or group of countries and in the distrust of the ability of the working class to rally allies around it in the revolution, both in individual countries and on a world scale.

It denies the gradual development of concrete revolutions and of the various elements of the revolutionary world process. It denies the need for a revolutionary strategy and tactics always based on the level of development of each country and on the objective revolutionary tasks facing it.

It therefore underestimates the importance of the general democratic tasks, the importance of the national, anti-imperialist and democratic aspect of the revolutionary development on a world scale. It replaces a complicated formulation of strategy and tactics based on the national and international balance of forces, including the creation of the broadest possible class and popular alliances and a broad, concrete political program for the revolutionary movement in a particular country, with schematic revolutionary formulas which, according to the Trotskyists, are applicable everywhere.

The basic programmatic document expressing Trotskyism's conception of the strategy and tactics of the revolutionary movement is still Trotsky's "Transitional Program" of 1938.

The essence of right-wing opportunism is to separate the day-to-day struggle from the strategy for socialism, from the revolution and the socialist goal. The social democratic parties of all shapes and sizes make the day-to-day struggle everything and socialism nothing. "Left opportunism", on the other hand, places the main emphasis on the perspective, the goal, and denies the importance of the day-to-day struggle and the demands of the day (in the broadest and most comprehensive sense) as the only thing that can prepare the people and develop the mass struggle to the level necessary to overthrow capitalism in a revolutionary situation and replace the state of the bourgeoisie with the new state of the working class.

Trotskyism believes it has found an easy way around these questions: instead of setting a series of day-to-day demands, each of which can be met under capitalism, and which can therefore mobilize and organize broad fighting movements, the Trotskyist “Transitional Program” sets out a number of demands. Of these demands it is stated that *“none of the transitional demands can be fully realized as long as the bourgeois regime continues to exist”*. Thus, the “break with capitalism” can exist as a concrete political possibility in any strike under capitalism, any strike can develop into a “general strike” that leads to “a struggle for power”, to the creation of a so-called “dual power” – in the Trotskyist, not the Leninist sense – with workers’ councils and strike committees. The Trotskyist organizations raise this whole group of formulas in virtually every labor struggle of even moderate importance.

These “radical” demands and methods, which, among many other errors, include the fact that they constantly overestimate the radicalization of the working class, in practice work contrary to their intention: the pseudo-revolutionary ideas are a line of defeat that ultimately give the social democratic reformists free rein. At the same time, the importance of the indispensable leading role of the revolutionary (communist) party is disregarded, both in the day-to-day struggles under capitalism and in a revolutionary situation.

This fundamentally subjective assessment of the class movements and class forces has the consequence that the patient organization of the mass struggles and mass movement is rejected and means that the Trotskyists are constantly tailing the spontaneous struggle. The Trotskyists are always either in the doldrums or in a high state of “revolutionary” exhilaration, helplessly carried away by the alternating ebb and flow of the class struggle.

The most serious flaw in the Trotskyist “Transitional Program” is the bourgeois and reformist view of state power. In reality, it does not at all raise the question of the class character of the bourgeois state and the necessity for the bourgeois state to be overthrown through revolution. The Trotskyists’ conception of the state is parallel to the social democratic one: the bourgeois state can be used to promote socialism, so that more and more socialist elements can be gradually and frictionlessly incorporated into it, for example through nationalization. When Trotskyism adds certain ideas that a “dual power”, factory councils and soviets can be created, even under normal capitalist conditions and not in a concrete exceptional situation

with a strong revolutionary wave, it is just a “left-radical” icing of the old social democratic pie.

### **Between social democracy and communism**

Trotskyism emerged as a centrist, conciliatory current between social democracy and Lenin’s Bolshevism, as a special “left wing” rooted in social-democratic opportunism. This historical origin makes Trotskyism particularly suitable for maneuvering between the two basic lines of the workers’ movement: social democratic reformism and the line of revolutionary class struggle, the communist line, which brings together class-conscious workers at the head of the entire working class and broad popular forces in all the struggles of this great revolutionary century.

Within this field, Trotskyism as an international current has shifted in the various historical periods – from before the October Revolution, in the period as opposition in the CPSU, in the 1930s and during the Second World War in the form of a current in exile that sought an international foothold, and in the different post-war periods.

In the different periods, the Trotskyists have used different tactics to establish a kind of “third way” between the reformist, social democratic line, which advocates preserving capitalism forever, and the communist line of revolution, destroying the capitalist state and building a new socialist society.

The fact that in the post-war period, and especially since the 1960s, Trotskyism has been given greater political scope is due to a number of factors:

The betrayal of the working class and socialism by social democratic reformism has become increasingly apparent and has led social democracy into a strategic crisis. Its obvious role as the main support of capitalist society, which is often preferred by the ruling bourgeois party, naturally leads to disillusionment in the social base of the party, among the members and voters from the working class. This is the main reason for the strategic crisis in, among others, the Western European social democratic parties, a crisis that for many decades has undermined their positions and led to widespread defections of their members and supporters.

It is not least to the ever-renewed current against the left, the break with social democracy and reformism, that Trotskyism is addressed. The so-called “revolutionary alternative” is intended to

prevent the flow from shifting to clearly revolutionary, communist positions.

In reality, there are only two basic directions that are possible for the labor movement: the bourgeois direction, reformism and opportunism, or proletarian Marxism-Leninism. Either the path of class collaboration to maintain capitalism, or the path of scientific socialism to create the new socialist society.

### **The parasitic nature of Trotskyism**

The ideology and political sphere of action of Trotskyism, its historical role and development, are the basis of one of the conspicuous features of the movement and all its organizations: the role of parasites on the main political currents of the labor movement and the mass struggle.

Trotskyism looks right and left at the same time. Trotskyist organizations rarely refer to themselves as Trotskyist, preferring other terms: “revolutionary Marxists”, “revolutionary socialists” or even “democratic socialists” when they look to the Social Democrats, while they present themselves as “Leninists” and “Bolsheviks” when they look in the direction of the communists.

The Trotskyists regard the concrete struggles and movements of the working class both as an opportunity to spread the Trotskyist schemes and formulas, and as a field of activity for recruitment to the Trotskyist organizations. It is the Trotskyist ideology and organizational thinking that allows them not only to support such struggles in



order to develop them to the maximum, but always to introduce extraneous purposes and intentions into the struggle, and it always ends with a call to organize with the Trotskyists.

### **In the service of counterrevolution**

It would take us far too far to review the entire revolutionary history of the [last] century and the role of the Trotskyists in it. On all crucial points, international Trotskyism has chosen a line that would have led to defeat if it had been translated into mass politics. It would not only have been, as it has been, a more or less limited obstacle to the revolution, a source of confusion and division of the revolutionary forces.

Let us take the attitude of Trotskyism to the fight against fascism as an example:

Trotskyism was opposed to support for the democratic countries attacked by fascism. When the Soviet Union was later attacked by Hitler's Germany, and the character of World War II thus changed, the Trotskyists declared that the war was still a war between the imperialist powers, and opposed the alliance between the Soviet Union, the United States and Great Britain, which had a significant impact on the defeat of Hitler and fascism.

In the post-war period, Trotskyism's denial of the possibility of revolution and socialism in one or several countries, the rejection of the anti-fascist popular fronts and of the national and democratic elements of the anti-imperialist struggle, have led the Trotskyists into direct confrontation with national liberation movements led by communist parties. In the Chinese Revolution, in Vietnam, Korea and many other places, the Trotskyist groups and the Fourth International itself stood against the strategies and lines that led to the victory of these revolutions.

The genuine communist parties are systematically slandered as undemocratic, "Stalinist" command centers, as the dictatorship of the leadership over the members, built on the discipline of the dead. It is the Leninist principle of organization, democratic centralism, which is particularly attacked. It is this principle that allows the parties to act uniformly and as a unified force in the class struggle and revolution, which is the prerequisite for their vigor and makes them parties of revolutionary action.

## **The role of Trotskyism in Eastern Europe**

Trotskyist organizations played a particularly active role in the end game surrounding the fall of socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Counterrevolutionary movements such as Solidarity in Poland and Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia were hailed by the Trotskyists as “genuine revolutionary movements”. The Trotskyists combined their energies with those of imperialism and the entire Western reaction in supporting the victory of these “popular movements” – that is, securing imperialism and the key positions of the international monopolies in the economies of these countries as Western-style capitalist systems.

In the past, Tito’s break with international communism in 1948, the counterrevolutionary events in Poland and Hungary in 1956, and Dubcek’s so-called Prague Spring in 1968, his “socialism with a human face”, were hailed by the Trotskyists as genuine revolutionary movements directed against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Trotskyism is an international political current that acts as the foremost spearhead of opportunism, social democracy in the labor and revolutionary movement, with the special historical task of attacking the communist parties and Marxism-Leninism.

As an international political current, it offers its “program of world revolution” to the working class, youth and intellectuals. It has been shown that Trotskyism can, to a certain extent and for a certain period of time, deceive young people without solid revolutionary experience, and petty-bourgeois intellectuals who are attracted by phrase-mongering, the rejection of the fighting discipline of the working class and a petty-bourgeois mixture of radical “visions” and reformist practices – as reflected in the theory and program of Trotskyism.

All the facts show that Trotskyism is not “revolutionary Marxism”, not “Bolshevism”, but petty-bourgeois anti-communism.

*March 2023*

## **This Time It Must Not Be Reelection Much Less Return to the PLD<sup>1</sup> Model of Government**

Notes on the situation. In this political period in the country, leaders of the PLD, former officials of the government of Danilo Medina (2012-2020), have been arrested on charges of corruption by the Attorney General's Office. This is the most relevant political issue. Popular opinions, debates and demonstrations are taking place. Among other things, former President Danilo Medina and at the time of the government of Leonel Fernández and his officials must be included in the investigations. Also the corrupt members of the current government can already be seen. This is happening in a pre-election year. The PCT is participating actively in this process, with particular interest in popular demonstrations, where it must develop a democratic and left-wing political proposal.

### **I.**

Since 1978 the Dominican electoral experience shows that when a party comes to office and does not meet the expectations of its voters, they vote for the one that this government succeeded, the immediately previous one. This is especially the case when there is no new option with significant possibilities of coming to power.

If this is the case, the disaffection towards the current party-government would go to any of the heads of the PLD, and this should not be the case. Thus, it is our historic responsibility to build an electoral political option that contests the power of the current party-government and avoids going backward.

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<sup>1</sup> The Party of Dominican Liberation was founded in 1973. It came to office in 1996 through an alliance with the Social-Christian Reformist Party of Dr. Joaquin Balaguer. For years it claimed to be of the left, and was even a member of the Sao Paulo Forum. It claimed to be part of the same current as Ignacio Lula da Silva, Rafael Correa and Evo Morales.



In this sense, it must be understood that there is an electoral space being contested, between the new option that is being built, and the PLD in either of its two versions, pro-Leonel or pro-Danilo<sup>2</sup>. Although today they are two different parties, it could be said that both formed the model of 20 years of PLD government, so they have in common the corruption protected by the justice system at their service.

Right now, in today's situation, Leonelism can be seen as a corridor through which the masses of the purple party [PLD} can escape from the persecution of the public ministry.

In essence, Leonelism and Daniloism have formed a model of government administration, with essentially the same behavior, and that was built procedurally and continuously in the governments that each presided over.

The distancing of voters from the current government will either lead to a new option, or to the PLD model of government.

That is why, in this electoral contest, the 20-year PLD model of government is the main target. The question is understanding that a new option of power must be built and prevent that model from leading to disenchantment with the current government, recycling and re-administering public affairs.

Who is threatening to take away our space? It is a pertinent question that must be answered much more pertinently, so as not to miss the target.

After the government of the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) led by Dr. Salvador Jorge Blanco (1982-1986), which we confronted with determination and just cause, what happened was something we never foresaw and which in fact we had ruled out since the

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<sup>2</sup> Tendencies of Leonel Fernández and Danilo Medina within the PLD. Both were presidents of the Republic for that party in several periods, and each developed their own forces. Their governments were marked by corruption. They split in 2020, over who would be the leader of the party. The PLD was in the hands of Danilo Medina, although he was not a candidate; and Leonel Fernández formed the Force of the People, and was a candidate. Both claim the tradition of the PLD and Professor Juan Bosch (deceased) as their mentor and guide, and compete to lead the opposition to the current government of the Modern Revolutionary Party (PRM), which is a majority derivation of the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD).

victory of that party in 1978. What was it? The return of the Social Christian Reformist Party (PRSC) of Dr. Joaquín Balaguer to the government (1966-1978 and then 1986-1996).

We fought until that government wore out, but we did not build the political alternative, and Joaquín Balaguer, whom we had helped to oust from power in 1978, returned as the alternative of a large popular majority.

## II.

The Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) of Professor Juan Bosch gained an opening in public life by consistently combating corruption in the governments of that time, mainly those of the PRD; until it won the presidency of the Republic in 1996, with Dr. Leonel Fernández at the head.

From there, he began the growing practice of illicit use of public resources; he also worked on creating a cover of impunity for this, through the elimination in fact of the essential attributes of the Republic.

Little by little, the separation of the powers of the State came to nothing, and more than that, it was also co-opting through petty theft, buying off social leaders with public money, and splitting those organizations that resisted being co-opted. The PLD turned many trade unionists and democratic organizations into supporters of its governments.

This aimed at governing continuously at least until 2044, when the bicentennial of the Republic would be commemorated; this was proposed by Dr. Leonel Fernández in a speech delivered on January 26, Duarte Day<sup>3</sup>, in 2014 on the occasion of the installation of the Central Committee Norge Botello elected at the VIII congress of the PLD.

He would repeat that purpose at a political conference held in Madrid, Spain, in November of that same year.

This was a planned and growing process, under a capricious interpretation of Bosch's thesis of "dictatorship with popular support"<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Refers to the date of birth of Juan Pablo Duarte, founder of the Dominican Republic. It is an official holiday in the country.

<sup>4</sup> Thesis written and promoted by Professor Juan Bosch in 1969; in which he argued that the government of the Dominican Republic which he stated should supersede the system of "representative

In the final years of the government of Danilo Medina (2012-2020), he had already become a Regime. Thus is what you would call a government in which, without officially or formally abrogating the constitution of the Republic, the president, at the head of the Executive Power, puts the justice and the legislative branches under his total control.

The formation of the justice system and its absolute control would be the guarantee that the 20-year model of PLD government would be able to carry out a daring, unscrupulous and scandalous practice of accumulation of wealth by its officials in office through the basis of the public treasury.

“They passed over, their hand went away... they went crazy,” is the popular saying referring to the officials pointed out by Operation Calamar, undertaken by the Attorney General’s Office, according to which they appropriated 19 billion pesos (\$365,384 U.S. at the current exchange rate) of State funds, in just one year.

This was scandalous for the amount, the period and the time in which they did it. 19 billion pesos in an election year in which the possibility of leaving office was at stake, and they did everything unspeakable to retain it, contravening the official electoral regulations.

But the previous ones, in the period of Leonel Fernández, were no less scandalous. The only thing was that in that time the nation’s budget was almost 350 billion pesos in 1997; reaching 430 billion in the years 2004-2012, in which he was also head of the government.

What was diverted to particular purposes would correspond to the size of the national budget. Proportionate to this, what was then the corrupt practice of officials of the time was also “scandalous”.

Moreover, including only those facts reported, during the governments of Leonel Fernández the sum of 36 billion pesos (\$900 million at the rate of 40 to 1 in those times) was considered embezzled. This was about 10% of the national budget in 1997. And it is 8.38% of what the 2012 budget was.

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democracy” and rely on unions, clubs and other social organizations. He always made clear that it had nothing to do with the dictatorship of the proletariat proposed by the communists; nor that it would be the result of a revolution. When the PLD came to power in 1996, it began to dust off that and other theses, and leaders such as Hugo Chávez at times declared that this thesis was their guide.

Not including the “fiscal hole” of 187 billion pesos in 2012, nor the \$137,000 of “Aduanazo II”, nor the bribes in dollars for the Toucan planes purchased from Brazil; nor the accusation of the 35 billion that moved in Public Works in contracts with Odebrecht; etc.

In the administration of Danilo Medina, the budget was multiplied many times over, 108. 1%; it reached 711 billion.

The greater the amount of money managed, the greater the amount diverted to private pockets.

The essence to be considered is the common practice of both Leonel and Danilo, and the use of the justice system to protect them both. That is why we can speak of a PLD model of government administration.

Since he took office in 1996, the enrichment of a broad section of the PLD has been evident. More and more often it was said that part of the PLD leadership had formed its own economic group, competing in the amount of money held with the groups of the traditional families, some of which began to hoard wealth at the end of the 19th century.

That is why he no longer needed those groups from the old oligarchy to finance his electoral campaigns.

The Sun Land cases, the Toucan planes; “Aduanazo I of Santiago” in 2010; the dubious enforcements in OPRET [Office for the Reordering of Transport], in charge of building the Metro in Santo Domingo; the “fiscal hole” made by the government of Leonel Fernández to finance the 2012 electoral campaign in favor of the



candidate Danilo Medina, which came to prominence in 2013 when he was already this president of the Republic. When he was called on by the people to initiate proceedings to punish this act, he freed his comrades from the previous government saying: “I am not going to throw stones backwards.”

Scandals of corruption and abuses appeared in the Office of Supervisory Engineers of State Works (OISOE), brought to light by the protest suicide by the architect David Rodríguez García in 2015, among many other cases.

Over the 12 years of Leonel Fernández’s government (1996-2000 and 2004-2012), there were dozens of accusations of acts of corruption, accusations that continued non-stop in the governments of Danilo Medina (2012-2020).

Almost all the cases reported and investigated by prosecutors’ offices, ended in “definitively shelved”. “There is no merit because of insufficient evidence” or “there was no crime according to the Criminal Code”, according to the decision of the judges appointed for such occasions.

There was no punishment, because the PLD officials created public policies and practice to obtain economic benefits at the expense of the public treasury, and at the same time they arranged the justice system to protect themselves.

Faced with this monstrous reality, in 2014, after an exhaustive investigation into dubious management of resources in the Ministry of Public Works, and the Judge of the Fourth Criminal Chamber of the National District having ordered “the definitive shelving of the case”, Yeni Berenice Reynoso, Prosecutor of the National District at that time, said in the social media a judgement of what that justice system represented. She said with much propriety and responsibility worthy of praise: “18 months of investigation, hundreds of pieces of evidence, but it is judicially forbidden to prosecute corruption.”

Today, the Dominican people, with their struggle seen in Marcha Verde (Green March), have won an independent Attorney General’s Office, whose incumbent, Mrs. Miriam Germán, enjoys a moral authority earned in a long academic, judicial and civic career. From her we can expect a firm attitude in the investigation and bringing to judgement cases of corruption, yesterday and today, about which there are already public demonstrations in one or another area of the current government, and that must be investigated and condemned.

Thus, one can expect that electoral disaffection with the dominant parties and their governments will continue. It is the duty to form a different political option in favor of a new era in the country. It should not be 20 years of the PLD model.

The policy approved by the PCT at its 10th Congress aims toward building this new left-wing political option, and works for that purpose, with important advances.

*March 2023*

### **Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin**

Mikhail Kalinin was one of the Bolshevik leaders most beloved by the Soviet people; the peasants said that you could talk with him as with one of their own. He came from a peasant family and understood their life, their way of thinking and acting very well, and knew how to relate to them. When Lenin recommended him to become the chair of the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, he said that “he is a peasant from the province of Tver, who has close ties with the peasant economy, ... the workers of Petrograd could be ensured that he could approach broad sections of the working masses...” The people’s confidence in him was such that they used to write him letters in which they told him about their problems, the mistakes made by middle and lower-level officials and asked him for help. “Hello, dear grandfather Mikhail Ivanovich,” many of them began. Kalinin responded to them and answered their requests.

During the first three decades of Soviet power, Kalinin had responsibilities of enormous importance and significance. With the victory of the revolution, the workers elected him a member of the Petrograd Duma and this made him mayor of the city. When the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, USSR, was formed, he was elected chair of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR and, from January 1938, he was at the head of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet; from 1926 he was a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party (Bolshevik). This was preceded by intense revolutionary work organizing the working class, leading strikes, organizing the work of the October 1917 insurrection, all of which showed Kalinin to be a model revolutionary. Despite these great responsibilities that he fulfilled in the Soviet state in the period of the most important victories of socialism, and his influence among the workers, youth and people, the figure of Kalinin has been little promoted and he is practically unknown by the current generations. To find his written works or references to his life in Spanish is difficult.

The incorporation of Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin into the ranks of Russia’s revolutionary movement came when he was about 20 years

old. In 1893 he began to work in the Stary Arsenal factory (St. Petersburg) and from 1896 he worked as a turner at the Putilov factory, where he organized a Marxist circle that was part of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class; in 1898 he began his membership in the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party. Shortly after (in 1899) came the first of fourteen arrests that sent him to prison and exile<sup>1</sup> His identification with Lenin's ideas and practical action was early, and he worked alongside Stalin until his death in 1946.

Among the revolutionary leaders of Russia, to find methods for the dissemination of ideas that would inspire the workers and fire up their revolutionary consciousness and struggle was always a main concern. Lenin, in his exemplary work *Where to Begin?* (1901) emphasized that, in order to build a unified party throughout the territory "the first step" was a newspaper: "The first step towards creating the desired organization, or, let us say, the main thread which, if followed, would enable us steadily to develop, deepen and extend that organization, should be the founding of an All-Russian political newspaper. ... Without it we cannot conduct that systematic, all-round propaganda and agitation, consistent in principle, which is the chief and permanent task of Social Democracy..."

Stalin thought the same way. One of the first tasks he proposed in the regions where he carried out his revolutionary activity was to have a newspaper (clandestine or legal) and a printing press for propaganda. Kalinin was an active collaborator on that newspaper to which Lenin referred, *Iskra*,. Before that he wrote articles for the newspaper *Rabochaya Mysl* (a Social Democratic newspaper which took economist positions), in 1902 he set up a clandestine press which printed leaflets, pamphlets and newspapers. In 1912, Kalinin was one of the initiators of the daily *Pravda*, a task entrusted by the Party to Stalin as the main one responsible. The newspaper played an extraordinary role in strengthening the Party and expanding its influence among the masses; in 1922, Stalin said that "in 1912 with *Pravda* the victory of Bolshevism in 1917 was assured."

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<sup>1</sup> After his first arrest he was sent to the Preliminary Detention House in Shpalernaya, where he was allowed to use the prison library. Among the list of books he requested was Karl Marx, *Capital*, Volume 1.



Kalinin was outstanding as a propagandist of ideas, of the principles of Marxism-Leninism. His ability to relate to the workers, peasants and youths is also seen in the simple way he explained the elements of Marxist-Leninist theory, contributing to the education of the people in the values of socialism, proletarian internationalism, socialist morality, collectivism in everyday life, work and study. As a responsible member of the Politburo of the Party of Labor with the Leninist Komsomol (Leninist Communist Union of Youth), he was involved with the communist training of the youths, in whom the Party placed great tasks in the building of socialism and he was involved with their conviction in the ideas of scientific socialism, to form the generations that would lead from socialism to communism.

In the years in which the nascent power of the proletariat confronted the attack of 14 armies of capitalist countries, together with the armed counterrevolutionary action of the overthrown ruling classes, Kalinin – at the head of the propaganda train “October Revolution” – toured large areas of the central regions of Russia, Ukraine, the North Caucasus, Siberia and almost all fronts of the Civil War (1918–1920), developing an intense work of agitation and propaganda among the workers, peasants and soldiers of the Red Army. For 272 days, he and his assistants (people’s commissars, senior members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, military specialists, agronomists, lawyers and cultural workers) travelled throughout the country, along the most important fronts and frontline areas. On two occasions the train was bombed by enemy forces. At a Party meeting discussing work in the countryside (November 1919),



Lenin remarked that “Thanks to Comrade Kalinin, work in the countryside has received a considerable boost. The peasant has undoubtedly had a more direct relationship with Soviet power by addressing himself to Comrade Kalinin, who represents in his person the supreme power of the Soviet Republic.”<sup>2</sup>

Simplicity—without affecting the depth of content—and linking theory with the practical elements of the building of socialism characterize his intellectual production. “Communist education,” he said, “as we conceive it, must always be concrete. In our conditions, it must be subordinated to the tasks that the Party and the government pose to it.” The study of Marxism-Leninism does not mean learning long texts by repeating them by rote. It is studied because it is a method, a tool, by which we determine what our behavior should be in political, social and private life. We consider it to be the most powerful weapon available to man in his practical life.”

He also argued that the mastery of Marxism (of its method and conception) requires study, but also “involvement in the historical march of events,” which places us on the plane of practical action. Thus, Kalinin brought us this axiom: theory and practice must go together.

To be involved in the historical march of events means that the party of the proletariat cannot engage in politics “in the air;” it cannot confine itself to formulating political statements or phrases which “correspond to the canons of Marxism” but are far from concrete reality. “...It is one thing to know Marxism and another to know how to apply it every day, every hour, in the most varied peculiar and unusual situations,” said Kalinin.

Marxism is a living science, not an abstract theory; it develops together with society and various historical events. “The Marxist must constantly advance in tandem with the historical movement” and, for this, he must act with creativity and objectivity, which comes from a close contact with reality, with the working class and the peoples, from the cultivation of a scientific and broad thought. “The Marxist method is used correctly,” said Kalinin, “when, while working with Marx’s theory, we study the phenomenon at hand.”

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<sup>2</sup> *Together with the leaders. Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin.*

<https://www.mngz.ru/russia-world-sensation/1948589-ryadom-s-vozhdyami-mihail-ivanovich-kalinin.html>

In June 1941 the Great Patriotic War began; among the many and varied activities that the Soviet Party and State proposed to face it and emerge victorious, the Central Committee of the Party entrusted Kalinin with carrying out ideological work. He knew how to do it; he had the experience developed with the Propaganda and Agitation Train “October Revolution.” Above all he had all the experience of the years at the head of the Soviet State, the theoretical and political heritage to face this responsibility and he had authority among the population, born of the affection they had for him. Tireless, he could be seen traveling, holding meetings with military units, giving speeches in factories and agricultural cooperatives, with members of the Komsomol, with rural women, writing articles for newspapers on the creation of guerrilla groups to harass the Nazi-fascist army, studying the experience of confronting them since 1939.

On December 6, 1941, the Red Army and the Soviet people halted the enemy offensive near Moscow and launched a counteroffensive. The Soviet Union met the new year 1942 by listening to M. I. Kalinin address them on the radio: “Comrade soldiers, commanders and political workers! Your skill and heroism, admired by the whole world, have stopped the enemy. The German ruling clique has miscalculated. Our forces are growing against the enemy. We are confident of victory. We know that not a single Soviet man will rest as long as one Hitlerite tramples on the sacred Soviet soil, until Hitlerism is scorched by red-hot iron.” During the war, he published hundreds of articles and speeches in the newspapers *Pravda*, *Izvestia*, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, *Trud*, *Literature and Art*, *Gudok*, *Moscow Bolshevik* and *Socialist Farming*, *Leningrad Truth*, in the magazines *Bolshevik*, *New World*, *Young Bolshevik*, *Smena*, *Krasnoarmeets*, *Party Building*, *Agitator Comrade*, *Agitator and Propagandist of the Red Army* and many other newspapers. Thirty collections of his works were published, more than 60 pamphlets were devoted to the problems of the defeat of the fascists.<sup>3</sup>

### **At the head of the world’s first socialist state**

The insurrection of the Petrograd workers, which sealed the victory of the October Revolution of 1917, began on the 24th of that month (November 6 according to the new calendar); on October 25 (November 7) the Red Guards and the revolutionary troops seized

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

key points of the city, buildings and state institutions. The Palace of the Smolny Institute became the center from which the battle orders were issued, where the Petrograd Soviet and the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party functioned. <sup>4</sup>The Central Committee of the Party, meeting on October 10, decided on the formation of a Political Bureau in charge of directing the insurrection. Stalin formed it; on the 16th, an enlarged meeting of the Central Committee decided that Stalin would be head of the Party Center in charge of directing the insurrection, which led the whole struggle in the October days. On the eve of these days, Mikael Kalinin, together with Vyacheslav Molotov, prepared the Bolshevik organization of Petrograd for the decisive battles; he also participated in the historic meeting of October 16, 1917 and, on the night of October 25, he was at the Smolny and took direct part in the insurrection.

On the 25th, the Provisional Government was overthrown, the Bolshevik Party announced it in a manifesto, “To the citizens of Russia”, in which it reported that power had passed into the hands of the Soviets. The Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets was inaugurated that same night and approved the first decrees: on peace and on land. At its second session it decided on the composition of the new government, which was called the Council of People’s Commissars, headed by V. I. Lenin.

The All-Russian Congress of Soviets became the supreme organ of power, composed of representatives of the soviets of workers, peasants, soldiers and governments throughout the country. In January 1918, the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets adopted the “Declaration of the Rights of the Working and Exploited People,” drafted by Lenin, which became the basis for the new Constitution adopted at the Fifth Congress of Soviets in July of that same year.

The Constitution stated that “The supreme power in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, RSFSR, belongs to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets and, in the periods between the Congresses of Soviets, to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets.” Among its powers, the Central Executive Committee was able to set “general guidelines for the activity of the workers’ and peasants’ government and of all the organs of Soviet power in the

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<sup>4</sup> See: *History of the Communist Party of the USSR (Bolshevik)*,  
Chapter VII

country...; to appoint the Council of People's Commissars for the general administration of the RSFSR..."

Yakov Mikhailovich Sverdlov was elected Chair of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, a function he held until his death on March 16, 1919. On Lenin's proposal, Mikhail Kalinin replaced him in office.

In December 1922, the Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets met, which was to be the last. The congress accepted Stalin's proposal to unite all the republics into a single Union. On December 30, the first Congress of the Soviets of the USSR was held, with the participation of delegations from the Russian SFSR, the Byelorussian SSR, the Ukrainian SSR and the Transcaucasian SSR. The Congress elected a new supreme legislative body, the All-Union Central Executive Committee, with Kalinin as its chair; Lenin was elected Chair of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR. The Declaration on the creation of the USSR was signed on December 30, 1922, by Mikhail Kalinin, Joseph Stalin, Mikhail Frunze, Grigory Petrovsky, Musambekov, Sergei Kirov and Aleksandr Cherviakov. Lenin's failing health prevented him from attending.<sup>5</sup>

Until 1938, Kalinin served as chair of the CEC of the Congress of Soviets; from January 17 of that year until his death in 1946, he was Chair of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. The Constitution of the USSR, adopted in 1936, established the Supreme Soviet as the "supreme organ of authority of the USSR."

Every policy of the Bolshevik Communist Party in all areas concerning the development of society in the USSR in the process of building socialism, first passed through the state organs of which Kalinin was at the head.

Only a person absolutely committed to Marxist-Leninist principles, unwavering in his revolutionary conviction, with great initiative and intellectual capacity, with a spirit of sacrifice for work, with an immense love for his people could be entrusted with such a high responsibility as that of the head of the first socialist state in the world. The Bolshevik Communist Party, Lenin and Stalin, found in Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin the communist cadre who met these conditions, and they were not mistaken. Kalinin proved to be one of those special

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<sup>5</sup> In issue No. 45 of *Unity and Struggle* there are two articles, written by the parties of Ecuador and Spain, about the Hundred Years of the USSR.

beings whom the working class and peoples recognize as their heroes and stand out in history.

For all that he did and represents, Kalinin could not escape the campaign of defamation and lies mounted by Trotskyists, revisionists and the international bourgeoisie. They accused him of having a weak personality, without intellectual abilities, accommodating to the circumstances that prevailed within the Party and co-responsible for “the crimes committed by the dictatorship of the proletariat.” A person of few abilities and little character could not have fulfilled the titanic work that he displayed, nor could he have contributed to the understanding of the problems that arose in the building of socialism and with initiatives to move forward, in an unprecedented experience in the world.

They attack Kalinin in order to denigrate what the USSR was, to strike at the image of Lenin and Stalin, to attack the dictatorship of the proletariat, to throw mud on socialism and communism, because when socialism was a reality in the former Soviet Union it clearly showed its superiority to capitalism, becoming a guide for the struggle of the workers, youths and peoples of the whole world.

For obvious reasons of space, there are many, many things that could not be discussed in this article, which would allow us to explain more about his personality, the many-sided nature of his work in the building of socialism, in that first experience that provided lessons to all humanity.

Kalinin died on June 3, 1946. In the official notice, it stated that before the victory of the revolution “he took part in ardent clandestine revolutionary activity in the ranks of the Bolshevik Party, where he occupied one of the leading political positions of the working class... [and] he devoted fifty years of his life to the liberation of the working masses, to the cause of socialism.

“...Side by side with Lenin and Stalin, he built the Bolshevik Party, founded the newspaper Pravda, and actively participated in the preparations for and carrying out of the great Soviet revolution. After the October Revolution in 1917, Mikhail Kalinin was one of the most prominent leaders of the young Soviet state.... He has been the wise and tried leader of the Soviet state and has won the affection of the entire Soviet people and the respect of advanced humanity.

“...During the years of peaceful socialist construction after the victorious end of the civil war, he devoted all his strength and knowledge, all his rich life experience, to the cause of consolidating

the power of the Soviet regime and the Soviet State. Faithful comrade-in-arms of Lenin and Stalin, he fought tirelessly against the enemies of the Party and the people for the triumph of Leninism.

“...Mikhail Kalinin’s activity will always be an example of the wisdom and prudence of statespersons and of his indissoluble relations with the people, an example of heroic service to the cause of communism.”<sup>6</sup>

The communiqué culminated with the phrase “Farewell, dear friend and comrade in arms!” It was signed by J. Stalin, L. Beria, G. Alexandrov, L. Kaganovich, V. Molotov, among other leaders of the Party and the Soviet state of that time.

*March 2023*

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<sup>6</sup> Weekly *Mundo Obrero (Worker’s World)*, Num. 18, June 13, 1946.

## **A Powerful Social Movement Against the Pension Reform**

Since January, a powerful workers' and popular movement of strikes and demonstrations has shaken our country.

The 10th day of mobilization took place on Tuesday, March 28. A new one has been scheduled by the inter-unions for April 6.

How can we explain the deep and very broad rejection of this reform?

### **A movement that started long ago**

Since the end of the Covid epidemic, more precisely since autumn 2021 and the resumption of economic activity, strike movements for wages have developed throughout the country; in large companies such as Stellantis (automobiles, formerly Peugeot), ExxonMobil, TotalEnergies, RATP (Paris transport), Sanofi (pharmaceuticals), in mass distribution, etc. but also in smaller companies and especially in subcontractors. The inflation that has developed since Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the ensuing war has only fueled these strike movements. The long electoral period (of presidential and legislative elections) that lasted from January to June 2022, had no impact on these strikes, which did not pause. But these strikes were carried out in parallel with each other, encouraging each other, but without giving rise to a generalized strike movement. Days of strikes and demonstrations called by the unions have already put many people on the streets to demand wage increases, in particular on September 29, 2022.

At the same time, the government introduced a new reform of unemployment insurance that considerably worsened the conditions of compensation. Its objective was to reduce the share of social wealth allocated to job seekers, and at the same time to force the unemployed to accept any job under the threat of eliminating their benefits and thus ensuring a workforce for the sectors of trades "in difficulty". At the same time, a reform of vocational schools was announced, making young people from working-class backgrounds "fodder for the boss". which has been denounced A reform of housing



rules to strengthen the rights of landlords was also enacted, particularly targeting poor families in greatly precarious conditions.

In short, there was a series of attacks against the working masses in the context of inflation further reducing real wages, and consequently also their purchasing power, while the profits of CAC 40 [a French stock market index] companies were experiencing spectacular increases (more than 52% in 2021).

### **January 2023: announcement by the government of the pension counter-reform**

On January 10, the government presented its reform announced during its 2022 presidential campaign. This was the 8th reform since 1993!

This reform aimed to raise the legal retirement age to 64 (from the current 62). This announcement was followed by one by the unions who called for a day of strikes and demonstrations for January 19.

### **An unprecedented union unity**

All the unions of employees and manager staff (CFDT, CGT, FO, CFE-CGC, CFTC, Unsa, Solidaires, FSU) and youth organizations (Fage, Unef, Voix Lycéenne, FIDL and MNL) have united behind the slogan of rejection of pensions at 64-years and demanded the withdrawal of the reform. How can one explain that a union like the CFDT, which has always or almost always agreed to negotiate and find compromises with the government, agreed to take part in this movement. As it says on its website: “*The CFDT is a union that prefers to find solutions through dialogue and negotiation.*”<sup>1</sup>

If so far they all find themselves in opposition to the reform with the slogan of “No to 64 years” and the demand for the withdrawal of the reform, it is because 90% of the working population are against the postponement of the retirement age to 64 and the extension of the contribution period, as seen in official statistics.

If the very broad union unity that has been formed reflects a massive rejection of the reform, the unity of the trade union federations has in turn had a ripple effect.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2021: the CFDT became the leading union in the private sector with 26.77%, ahead of the CGT with 22.96%.

### **How can one explain such a deep and massive rejection?**

We mentioned above an accumulation of attacks against the workers carried out by successive governments for several years, and more particularly in the last period by Macron, castigated as president of the rich and the bosses. If this reform has been seen as one reform too many, it is because, above all, the living and working conditions of the working masses have deteriorated considerably in recent years. How else can one explain this slogan: “If we work two more years, we will die!” Or this slogan on the placards held by many demonstrators: “You work, travel and die; No to 2 years more!”

Capitalist exploitation has been reinforced by all means, including the intensification of labor. The physical and psychological wear and tear of one’s organisms means that at one point enough becomes too much. The productivity rate in France (although it has fallen since Covid due to various factors) is among the highest in the OECD countries. Work accidents, including fatal ones, are numerous; life expectancy of those in good health has decreased. The gap between the life expectancy of a manager and a manual worker has increased from 7 to 10 years. The Covid epidemic may also have played a role in accentuating the feeling that life can abruptly disappear.

The deterioration of public services (health, education, transport, etc.), in which employees have fewer and fewer resources to carry out their missions, are discredited and badly treated, making them lose the meaning of their work since the service provided to ordinary people is constantly deteriorating. How then can they accept working 2 more years!

To this must be added the fact that in 2017 Macron eliminated 4 of the 10 criteria used for the calculation of arduousness, such as carrying heavy loads, painful postures, exposure to mechanical vibrations as well as exposure to chemical and dangerous agents (dust and fumes).

It is on the basis of this analysis, supported by what the movement showed and being concerned to raise the level of protest against the capitalist system, our party came up with and distributed thousands of copies of a sticker with the slogan: “Capitalism crushes lives; No to 2 more years!”, a sticker that has had a certain success.

### **Fallacious, changing and misleading arguments**

In presenting their counter-reform project, the various government ministers who have succeeded one another on television and radio have used different arguments in turn and especially different lies.

Thus, the Minister of Labor said that with this reform hundreds of thousands of retirees would receive 1200 euros gross in their pensions. Looking for the details of the conditions in order to claim it, it turns out that it is not 1,800,000, as announced at the beginning, or even the 200,000 figure announced later, but only 20,000 people! This was enough to cast doubt and discredit all the other so-called benefits of this reform.

Many economists, sociologists and specialists in the world of work have shown the injustice of this reform, which will primarily penalize the most modest socio-professional categories (25% of the poorest people die before retirement) and especially women. Interrupted careers, imposed part-time jobs, precarious jobs, low wages, etc. Women either never manage to get their annuities and retirement, or when they get them they are worn out and have ridiculously small pensions<sup>23</sup>.

While some people wanted to show that there were other solutions to guarantee the pay-as-you-go pension plan, including increasing employer contributions, the government immediately replied that “we could not increase the cost of labor!”

But for the vast majority of workers, there is no question of trying to show the government that there could be other alternatives to this reform. Immediately, their opponents took a position on the demand for No to 64 years of age and the withdrawal of the reform.

### **Block the economy**

Faced with the government’s refusal to listen to the country’s anger, the inter-union launched the slogan of “block the economy”.

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<sup>2</sup> Due to unemployment, illness or disability, only 19% of working women continued to work until the age of 67 to be able to benefit from a full pension without a reduction.

<sup>3</sup> According to INSEE in 2011, for all European Union countries, the average amount of pensions received by all women aged 65 or over, whether pensioned or not, is 47% lower than that received by their male counterparts.

Since then, strikes have multiplied, not only during the days of national mobilization but over several days and in some sectors for weeks. The energy sector, including nuclear energy but especially refineries and fuel depots, have been blocked by pickets. RTE (the electricity transmission network), which distributes electricity to companies, public administrations as well as households, has multiplied the cuts to certain companies or public administrations while, on the other hand, it has restored power to users who were deprived of it. The railway workers of the SNCF [French National Railway Agency] also undertook strikes lasting several days. The dockers blocked the ports. Garbage collectors in Paris and other provincial towns and workers at waste incineration plants also went on strike for several weeks. These are sectors particularly targeted by the elimination of the special pension systems from which they benefit. While the country has not been blocked, activity has been severely disrupted at times and the government has begun to use forced return to work<sup>4</sup>. It cannot be denied that the level of inflation was a brake on the spreading of the strike even if financial solidarity with the strikers was very important.



<sup>4</sup> Forced return to work: under French law it is possible to force striking employees to return to work when disruptions resulting from a strike create a threat to public order and the return to work is necessary to prevent that threat.

### **The government's passage by force: the use of Article 49.3**

While the reform was under discussion in parliament, the government, wanting to move quickly, used all the measures allowed by the constitution to speed up the debate. But having no assurance that the law would obtain a majority in the National Assembly on March 15, Prime Minister E. Borne committed the government to use Article 49.3 of the constitution<sup>5</sup>, which allows it to pass a law without a vote. This was followed by the tabling of a motion of censure by one of the groups of deputies in the National Assembly. All the opposition, from the left to the extreme right as well as a third of the deputies of the right (LR – The Republicans) voted for censure; only 9 votes were lacking to bring down the government, showing its isolation.

The use of this article to pass the law against the will of the vast majority of working masses aroused immense anger and strengthened the resolve of the opponents of the reform. Spontaneously, on the night of the vote, many rallies took place throughout the country. The youth, present in a limited way until then, massively joined the movement.

### **The characteristics of the movement**

This movement against the pension reform has thus provoked massive opposition in France, starting with the working class.

Very large sectors of workers went on strike, some in a renewable way (the strike is voted on every day on the picket lines) or more specifically on the days called by the inter-unions. The local unions<sup>6</sup> played an important role in helping to hold the picket lines together and organizing solidarity. Blockades of traffic circles with burning pallets and agricultural or other machinery in industrial and commercial areas. To allow those who cannot strike for financial or other

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<sup>5</sup> In order to have a bill adopted without a vote by the National Assembly, the Prime Minister may activate Article 49.3 of the Constitution. The bill is then considered adopted if a motion of censure against the Government is not voted for by the National Assembly. Conversely, if a motion of censure is passed, the Government is dismissed and the bill rejected.

<sup>6</sup> The local unions are the grassroots trade union organizations that bring together trade unions or union branches of enterprises in a given geographical area.

reasons, some demonstrations were organized on Saturdays. Entire families were on the streets of cities on those days.

One of the particular characteristics of this movement is that it was very strong not only in large cities but also in medium-sized cities and even small towns, where sometimes more than a quarter of the inhabitants showed up at the demonstrations.

If the working class is the backbone of this movement, the other sectors of the popular masses, including certain sectors of managerial staff and engineers, are also in opposition to this reform. The retirees are aware of the importance of this achievement of retirement at age 60 which was already attacked under Sarkozy in 2010, then by the social democratic minister in the Hollande government in 2014. Teachers have been particularly battered during Macron's first five-year term by his reactionary Minister of Education, J-M Blanquer. Health workers are exhausted by the situation of the underfunded public hospitals. The cultural milieu is always very responsive to social setbacks. Women, who are particularly harmed by this reform, are greatly present in the demonstrations. The youth, of which a militant and organized sector participated in the demonstrations from the beginning, joined the movement in a much more massive way after the government's use of 49.3. Occupying or blocking universities and high schools, it gave energy and dynamism to the demonstrations. The police repression that followed the forced passage of the reform in parliament was another element that pushed the youth to join the movement.

The workers' and popular social movement is not only protesting the reform but is also increasingly challenging the system as shown by the slogans on the placards carried by the demonstrators.

### **The work of our party**

From the beginning of this movement, the Central Committee of our party sent a circular to its base organizations with the following guidelines:

- Work to broaden the union mobilization, starting where we have a base of work in the enterprises, neighborhoods and places of study,
- Strengthen the links with our trade union, women and youth contacts, integrating them into our political and trade union work in order to strengthen the movement.

## FRANCE – A POWERFUL MOVEMENT AGAINST THE PENSION REFORM

- Focus on the slogan that creates unity: No to retirement at age 64, while popularizing slogans that can win the support of the broadest masses because slogans are a means of orienting the movement politically.
- In mass demonstrations, reflect on the visibility of our party's intervention; make the name of the party and its slogans, its newspaper, etc. widely known

The party published a leaflet for each of the major days of demonstrations, which each time were distributed in thousands of copies.

The party's website reported very regularly on the state of the movement by synthesizing, the achievements of the movement and publishing the reports of its organizations after each of its major days.

We have already mentioned above about the sticker to widely popularize our slogan (capitalism crushes lives, etc.) developed in March to capitalize on the political advances of the movement. It was distributed in thousands of copies.

The newspaper for January, February and March was also widely distributed.

Our Party committees and cells have taken up these guidelines and the material provided to develop work in their sector, taking initiatives, with the constant concern of strengthening the Party's links with the advanced elements of the working class and the popular masses in order to win them over to the Party and its mass organizations. Small meetings with the elements that we were able to bring together around the party during this movement began to be organized.

The position of the Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations of Europe, which gave support to the movement and our party, was also widely disseminated. It both showed that solidarity actions being taken in different countries and made the ICMLPO known.

While it is still too early to make an assessment – the movement is still ongoing – it is clear that the party as a whole has gained experience and strengthened its links with the most conscious sectors of the working class and the popular masses.

Thanks to its presence in the movement and the massive dissemination of its propaganda material, it was also able to make itself known much more widely to the workers.

The slogans popularized by the party and taken up by some demonstrators were:

- “The youths are in slavery, the women are in precarious situations, the elderly in misery in this society; we do not want it, we fight it!” and we also add.
- “Money for wages, for pensions, not for shareholders and not to wage war”
- “Capitalism: crusher of lives, No to 2 more years!”

*Central Committee of the Communist Party  
of the Workers of France  
April 2023*



## **A Multipolar World and Freedom Fighters?**

The war in Ukraine has led to heated discussions and widely divergent positions within the left-wing movement in Germany. The extremes: On the one hand, there are calls to support the Ukrainian “freedom struggle,” while on the other hand, there are calls for the defense of a multipolar world and thus a defense of Russia. We reject both positions and take a stand on them.

### **“Freedom fighters”**

In early May 2022, a meeting of the “European Solidarity Network with Ukraine” was held in Lviv, Ukraine. About two dozen anarchists, Trotskyists and other leftists attended from Western Europe. “Akweb”, a so called “anti-German” internet-platform that has long taken a stand disguised as left-wing in favor of Israel’s occupation policies and for the U.S., reported extensively, cloaked in leftist phrases, about this conference (<https://www.akweb.de/2022/05/was-wollen-linke-in-der-ukraine-solidaritaets-delegation-in-lwiw/>).

It begins tantalizingly, *“It should be just as natural to stand with the working class and oppressed who are struggling in a country where it is not easy to be a leftist and which is being invaded by an imperialist state.”*

Solidarity is a big word! But what is meant by it? Solidarity against one’s own bourgeoisie? Solidarity in the struggle against exploitation and oppression? No!

According to “akweb”, some “left” deputies were also present: *“Søren Søndergaard, who is part of the red-green Enhedlisten in the Danish parliament, the Finnish deputy Veronika Honkasalo from the left alliance that is participating in the government there...”*

The fact that these are parties that are now positioning themselves for NATO under leftist slogans is shamefully concealed.

It is openly admitted that the aid does not always reach the people, but ends up on supermarket shelves, that aid money flows into the pockets of corrupt oligarchs and their helpers, and that workers’ rights are being undermined by martial law. Sympathy is expressed for the banning of various organizations and parties. Because:

*“Despite all the criticism of the government: they support it in defense against the Russian invasion.”*

Using this logic, it is then openly declared: *“Personally, one cannot think of anyone from the democratic and socialist left who opposes the armed defense against the Russian war of aggression, says Pilash. All the anarchists he knows are also clearly in favor of military resistance to the Russian aggression,”* he adds. *“About 100 anarchists and other leftists who have joined the Ukrainian Territorial Forces benefit from their support.”*

So one fights together with “Ukrainian territorial forces” such as the fascist Azov regiment! This is real *“defense of the fatherland”!* Against Lenin’s call to use the war to fight against one’s own bourgeoisie, these *“brave revolutionaries”* say: *“Yes, how about starting already in other countries? And then, when the weapons are also turned against the Kremlin in Russia, we’ll be happy to talk again, then we will certainly follow soon.”*

*“Not to stand there again defenseless and powerless, is one of many leftist motives to arm themselves this time as well.”*

So: they are not starting with the overthrow of capital. Please let the others step forward first. Until then, they murder the Russian workers and brothers for “freedom”.

Somewhat hypocritically it is said that Russians should not be declared enemies – they too are cannon fodder. There are “decent” people among them. Great! First shoot them and then shout “friendship between the peoples”! First go into battle together with your own bourgeoisie, then shout “international solidarity” again. There the Russian workers’ families, who had already been victims of Ukrainian “freedom bullets”, will be just as happy as Ukrainian families, who have lost a relative by an allegedly “anti-fascist” Russian bullet.

In his important work “Socialism and War” Lenin stated:

*“But imagine a slaveholder who owns 100 slaves warring against another who owns 200 slaves, for a more ‘just’ redistribution of slaves. The use of the term of a ‘defensive’ war, or a war ‘for the defense of the fatherland,’ would clearly be historically false in such a case and would in practice be sheer deception of the common people, philistines, and the ignorant, by the astute slave-holders. It is in this way that the peoples are being deceived with ‘national’ ideology and the term of ‘defense of the fatherland,’ by the present-day imperialist bourgeoisie, in the war now being waged between slave-*

holders with the purpose of consolidating slavery.” Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 301

Lenin cites the occupation of Belgium by German imperialism in World War I as an example.

*“The Anglo-French bourgeoisie are deceiving the people when they say that they are waging a war for the freedom of nations and of Belgium; in fact they are waging a war for the purpose of retaining the colonies they have grabbed and robbed. The German imperialists would free Belgium, etc., at once if the British and French would agree to ‘fairly’ share their colonies with them.... Germany, however, is fighting, not for liberation of nations, but for their oppression. It is not the business of socialists to help the younger and stronger robber (Germany) to plunder the older and overgorged robbers. Socialists must take advantage of the struggle between the robbers to overthrow all of them. To be able to do this, socialists must first of all tell the people the truth, namely, that this war is, in three respects, a war between slave-holders with the aim of consolidating slavery.”* Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, pp. 303-4

In “Socialism and War” Lenin goes on to say, “*Social chauvinism is advocacy of the idea of ‘defense of the fatherland’ in the present war. This idea logically leads to the abandonment of the class struggle during the war....*” Lenin, *ibid.*, p. 306-307.

And further: “*This task finds correct expression only in the slogan: convert the imperialist war into a civil war; all consistently waged class struggles in wartime and all seriously conducted ‘mass action’ tactics inevitably lead to this. It is impossible to foretell whether a powerful revolutionary movement will flare up in connection with, during or after the first or the second imperialist war of the Great Powers; in any case it is our bounden duty to work systematically and unswervingly in this direction.*” Lenin, *ibid.*, p. 313.

*“The most widespread deception of the people by the bourgeoisie in the present war consists in their using the ideology of ‘national liberation’ to cloak their predatory aims. The British have promised the liberation of Belgium, the Germans – of Poland, etc. Actually, as we have seen, this is a war waged by the oppressors of most of the world’s nations for the purpose of increasing and expanding that oppression.*

*“Socialists cannot achieve their great aim without fighting against all oppression of nations. They must, therefore, unequivocally demand that the Social-Democratic parties of the oppressor*

*countries (especially the so-called “Great” Powers) should recognize and champion the oppressed nation’s right of self-determination, in the specifically political sense of the term, i.e., the right to political secession. The socialist of a ruling or a colonial nation who does not stand for that right is a chauvinist.”* Lenin, *ibid.*, p. 316.

Lenin’s position is clear and a guideline for revolutionary action in the present situation. For the Ukraine war is not taking place in isolation. It is part of the struggle of the Great Powers for the domination of the world. On the one side is the rising capitalist-imperialist power China together with Russia; on the other side is the weakening USA with NATO, EU, etc. The fight between these blocs is not only taking place now but has been going on for about 30 years, with a huge trail of blood throughout the world. Whether in Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Mali and the Sahel, Cuba, Venezuela – in all these more or less violent conflicts and wars these powers are in the background. They like to let others die for them, supply weapons and make enormous profits for their arms monopolies. Human rights and freedom are their slogans to deceive the masses and to draw them to their side. People should willingly go to war and give their lives – for their own exploiters!

### **Should We Defend a Multipolar World?**

On the other side are revisionist and opportunist organizations and media, such as the Red Fox (a revisionist German newspaper), the KPD and the DKP (both revisionist parties), among others, which show more or less understanding and support for Russia’s war or avoid taking a clear stand against the Russian attack on Ukraine.

In this process, the socialist USSR, which freed us from Hitler’s fascism, is mixed up with Putin’s Russia today. Thus, Red Fox writes “We are forever indebted to the country that lost 27 million people in the Second World War. That seems largely forgotten in this country.” Arnold Schölzel in the editorial in the May 2022 issue.

But clearly, today’s capitalist-imperialist Russia has nothing to do with the socialist USSR. Old, revisionist party cadres have now become monopoly capitalists and rule the state against the working class.

On page 2 of the same issue, Hans Schoenefeldt claims that Russia came under “neocolonial control” in the Yeltsin era, which Putin is now shaking off. Putin as an anti-colonial fighter freeing Russia from the yoke of Western imperialism? A curious portrayal.

The “Junge Welt” of April 5 quotes Rudi Hechler: “The invasion of another country cannot be justified by anything. Neither by reference to its own security interests nor by the chain of wars of NATO which are against international law. Imperialism, however, as we have experienced repeatedly in our long lives, is capable of creating circumstances which force the states concerned, on pain of their downfall, to take measures which cannot be justified by anything except the instinct of self-preservation.’ And that’s what this is all about.”

So the invasion of another country is then to be justified after all?!

Further excuses are eagerly made: “*Since their existence, neither the Soviet Union nor Russia ever wanted or want a war. It is NATO which has virtually written and shouted for the present war.*”

Again, the socialist Soviet Union is mixed up with today’s capitalist-imperialist Russia. Yet Russia has not worn kid gloves in the struggle for world domination in recent decades. Russia has intervened militarily in the Middle East, Asia and Africa, supplying weapons, sending mercenaries – just as U.S. imperialism and NATO do. In the process, U.S. imperialism has often failed to achieve its goals or suffered defeat, as in Afghanistan. This is good. Today’s capitalist-imperialist Russia is not the pitiful “victim” it presents itself as, but is acting militarily on a massive scale.

Karin Leukefeld may then claim on page 6 of the Red Fox, May 2022: “*The issue is whether the Western US-led bloc of NATO, the EU and its partners respect other geopolitical centers on earth or whether this “Western bloc” submits to the U.S. plan to rule the earth as the “sole world power”.... Now this war has arrived in Europe and is directed against the Russian Federation. The RF invaded Ukraine on February 24 to demilitarize the country and drive out the Nazi forces from the military and politics.*”

In 1993, Putin, then the second mayor of St. Petersburg, referred to the Chilean murderer and fascist Pinochet as his role model in a lecture to German business representatives. He distinguished between “criminal” violence aimed at eliminating the “market economy” and “necessary” violence if it promoted and protected private capital investment. Incidentally, this was received with friendly applause at the time by German company representatives present and the German deputy consul general. (Source: *Neues Deutschland*, December 31,1993) There was agreement among the capitalists that violence and dictatorship were necessary to protect capital.

Putin repeatedly condemned the just nationality policy of Lenin and Stalin. He attacked them for granting national independence to Ukraine.

In his speech to the nation on February 21, 2022, Putin said:

*“So, I will start with the fact that modern Ukraine was entirely created by Russia or, to be more precise, by Bolshevik, Communist Russia. This process started practically right after the 1917 revolution, and Lenin and his associates did it in a way that was extremely harsh on Russia – by separating, severing what is historically Russian land. ....*

*“When it comes to the historical destiny of Russia and its peoples, Lenin’s principles of state development were not just a mistake; they were worse than a mistake, as the saying goes. This became patently clear after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991....*

*“Lenin... suggested making concessions to the nationalists, whom he called ‘independents’ at that time. Lenin’s ideas of what amounted in essence to a confederative state arrangement and a slogan about the right of nations to self-determination, up to secession, were laid in the foundation of Soviet statehood. Initially they were confirmed in the Declaration on the Formation of the USSR in 1922, and later on, after Lenin’s death, were enshrined in the 1924 Soviet Constitution.”*

Such an anti-communist and supporter of Pinochet is supposed to “demilitarize Ukraine and drive out the Nazi forces from the military and politics”?



The argument that Russia is defending itself and resisting U.S. and NATO domination, that it is important to preserve a multipolar world, is popular with many on the left. In order to preserve such a multipolar world and prevent the unrestricted domination of U.S. imperialism, they argue, one must support Russia and China. This thesis is loudly advocated by the revisionist newspaper Red Fox. However, it is directed against Lenin's analysis of imperialism. For according to this thesis, it is the task of the working class and revolutionaries to look after the welfare of one rival in the struggle for world domination and to support it so that the other one does not win out. The imperialists are already doing this themselves. Because none of them wants to go down. Whoever assumes that the domination by a single imperialism is really possible, obviously adheres to the theory of ultra-imperialism, which Karl Kautsky served up to glorify imperialism. Kautsky concluded that peace was possible when there was only one imperialism. Lenin proved that this was impossible because of the uneven development of the various imperialist powers. Instead, he said, there were always imperialist powers that were declining while others were on the rise. This was precisely what Lenin saw as the source of imperialist wars. Therefore, as long as capitalism and imperialism exist, there will always be wars for the redivision of the world.

Certainly, in particular cases, small states and their bourgeoisie can exploit the contradictions between the existing large imperialist blocs in order to gain a little more space for their own interests. But this is limited and, moreover, only temporary. With the change of power relations, one can also lose the "protection" of an imperialist power. Moreover, the imperialist "protectors" demand their price in the form of raw materials and access to markets. So, exploiting the imperialist contradictions is not a permanent concept for the national and social liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples. The only lasting way is a consistent anti-imperialist struggle and an anti-imperialist revolution.

We have quoted Lenin on this above. His statement is clear and unambiguous: "It is not the business of socialists to help the younger and stronger robber (Germany) to plunder the older and overgorged robbers. Socialists must take advantage of the struggle between the robbers to overthrow all of them."

That is our position! We will not support the "freedom struggle" of Ukraine, nor the "anti-fascist" struggle of Russia. We mobilize in

Germany against rearmament and participation in war. At the same time, we stand in solidarity with all the efforts of the working class and peoples in all countries who oppose this war and their own masters. We have already repeatedly cited the examples of Italian and Greek workers who prevented or obstructed NATO arms shipments. Likewise, we have spread the example of Belorussian workers who prevented and obstructed Russian arms transports. We should follow this example in Germany and spread it in the trade unions and among our colleagues.

The next years will be difficult. The struggle between the USA, NATO, the EU on the one hand and China and Russia on the other for world domination will not end with the war in Ukraine, but will continue worldwide. Thus, the danger of a world war is also growing! There exists the possibility as well that the war in Ukraine will continue for years. No matter how, the pressure on the revolutionary forces will increase. We will be slandered and attacked as “unpatriotic fellows”, as “Putin-supporters”, as “friends of NATO”. They will want to force us to take sides with one predator or another and recognize this war as “justified.” But our choice has already been made: We fight together with the gradually awakening working class against the war and against the imperialist system, for the elimination of capitalism and for another, socialist society!

*March 2023*



## On the Situation in Ukraine

### Introduction

Lenin's theory of imperialism, as the highest stage of the development of capitalism, demonstrated the intrinsic need of capitalism to engage in imperialist wars. In contrast to Kautsky and other defenders of social-chauvinism, Lenin clearly identified the First World War as an imperialist war. He was also very clear as to what should be the Bolshevik position regarding imperialist wars and how these are intrinsically connected with the private ownership of the means of production:

“And this summary proves that imperialist wars are absolutely inevitable under such an economic system, as long as private property in the means of production exists” V.I. Lenin, Preface of the French and German editions of “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism”. Lenin's *Selected Works*, Progress Publishers, 1963, Moscow, Volume 1.

Lenin's theory of imperialism was further developed by Stalin during the era of socialist construction in one country and the post-war period, which saw countries leave the international system of capitalism and establish People's Democracies. Some argued that because of the outcome of the Second World War and the contradictions between the capitalist and socialist camps, the contradictions among capitalist countries would no longer lead to imperialist wars. Stalin demonstrated that capitalist countries will continue to fight for markets with other capitalist countries, including resorting to wars and as such:

“To eliminate the inevitability of war, it is necessary to abolish imperialism” J.V. Stalin, “Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR”. Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1972.

This categorical statement leaves little room to question the inevitability of wars as long as capitalism in its imperialist phase continues to exist. Today, the system of capitalism is undergoing a new wave of economic and political crises that have been exacerbated by the inability of capitalism to fix the core causes of crises. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly aggravated the economic

crisis of capitalism and has extensively affected the position of the toiling masses. With this the growth of inter-imperialist contradictions becomes inevitable, where it appears that the likelihood of open military confrontation among imperialist powers is becoming a reality. The military conflict in Ukraine can be viewed as a de-facto confrontation between imperialist powers, where the toiling masses of Ukraine are on the receiving end of the aggression of imperialist powers.

Many previously argued that with the collapse of the revisionist system in the period of 1989-1991, leading to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991, the rationale for the existence of NATO would no longer exist. Not only did NATO not dissolve, but it has been expanding all over the world, particularly in Eastern Europe. NATO has continued to engage in wars of aggression and has been ramping up its confrontation with the Russian Federation and China. In particular, NATO has been systematically expanding towards the borders of the Russian Federation. The United States and some of its Eastern European allies, including Kyiv's regime, have been ramping up their confrontation with the Russian Federation for years.

### **The imperialist character of Russia's invasion of Ukraine**

It is essential to the Marxist-Leninist forces of the Russian Federation to recognize the imperialist and aggressive character of the so-called special military operation in the Ukraine. The latter is an imperialist act of aggression intended to safeguard the economic interests of Russian capitalism in Ukraine. Putin's regime has no real concern for the suffering of Russian speakers at the hands of Ukrainian right-wing and neo-fascist nationalism. Neither the annexation of Crimea nor the support (in whatever form) of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics in the East have any purpose other than undermining Ukraine as an independent state and securing markets and raw materials for Russian companies in that country. Of particular importance to the Russian Federation is to preserve the dependence of Ukraine and other countries on Russian energy supplies.

Putin's neo-liberal model of capitalism is in severe crisis. This has been aggravated by Western sanctions imposed following the annexation of Crimea and following COVID-19. Putin's economy is in irreversible decline and as such, Russian capitalism needed a war, even if provoked by NATO expansion to the East and Kyiv's

regime's confrontational stand. Following 30 years of devastating reforms, vast layers of the Russian toiling masses are showing sympathy towards the Soviet past. Of particular importance to the modern Russian ethos and national pride is the victory over Nazi Germany and European fascism during the Great Patriotic War. The latter epitomizes the greatness of the Soviet Union as a state of workers and peasants. Despite being a visceral anti-communist, Putin has been forced to adopt subliminal pro-Sovietism in his propaganda. Remembrance of the Soviet victory over fascism has become central to Putinism today.<sup>1</sup> This is a contradiction that emerges because of the weakness of Russian capitalism. However, this subliminal pro-Sovietism and appeals to the prevalent anti-fascist sentiment of the Russian toiling masses are being used to wage an imperialist war. The so-called special operation is allegedly intended to "demilitarize" and "de-nazify" Ukraine. Indeed, as will be seen below, right-wing nationalism and neo-fascist ideology are prevalent in the Ukrainian army; Russian speakers have for years been on the receiving end of Russophobic and fascist aggression. That said, Putin's regime is in no moral, ethical or political position to de-nazify the Ukraine, as his true intentions are to subdue a country and impose its economic rule. As a matter of fact, Putin himself has connections with neo-fascist organizations, such as the Wagner group and Russian right-wing nationalist organizations. Putin is a conscious anti-communist and his ideology is intrinsically anti-Soviet. His liberal attitude towards Soviet symbolism and Soviet history has sparked speculation of a potential U-turn in his ideological views. This is most definitely not the case, as he is using the restoration of pro-Soviet sentiments opportunistically for his own political purposes.

Nonetheless, Putin is waging a war with a subliminal pro-Soviet message as a central element to his war propaganda. As the Russian military gains are painfully slow and it is becoming evident that the Ukrainian campaign has become protracted, Soviet symbolism is emerging more and more often and with greater intensity. The red

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<sup>1</sup>The movement "Бессмертный полк" (immortal regiment) was created in 2012 with the intention of glorifying those fallen in the struggle against fascism during the Great Patriotic War. The movement today holds rallies in commemoration of the victory in every major city of Russia and beyond. It now uses a lot of Soviet symbolism. It is fair to say that millions of people participate in these actions.

flag of victory,<sup>2</sup> which boasts the hammer and sickle, is appearing more often on the ground. The Russian media does not seem to shy away from the fact that the red flag of victory is emerging in cities and population centres where the Ukrainian armed forces have been expelled.<sup>3</sup> Russian cosmonauts at the international space station rolled out the red flag of victory in outer space, which carries strong symbolic value.<sup>4</sup> With this Putin is trying to rally the Russian population around the idea that this war is a just one waged against fascist aggression in Ukraine, which is supported and nourished by the West. Putin is selling himself as the saviour of Russia against the aggression of European fascism. To a certain degree, he is subliminally positioning himself to be revered as much as Stalin is in today's Russia. Here it is of great importance to underline that Putin's ideology and political goals have nothing to do with the glorious past of the Soviet Union of Lenin and Stalin.

Putin's regime has allied itself with the heirs of the revisionist CPSU, which is primarily represented by the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF).<sup>5</sup> The CPRF builds its pro-war rhetoric around the need to uproot fascism and Western aggression in Ukraine,<sup>6</sup> thus openly siding with the war effort. More so, the CPRF

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<sup>2</sup> The flag of victory is the official symbol of the victory of the Soviet Union over Nazi Germany. It was one of the flags hoisted over the Reichstag in May 1945. Under Yeltsin, the hammer and sickle were replaced by a yellow star. Under Putin and according to Russian law the original flag of victory is to be used during victory parades.

<sup>3</sup> Members of the Russian military hoisted the red flag of victory over the memorial of the Great Patriotic War in the city of Kherson, <https://iz.ru/1323340/2022-04-20/nad-memorialom-v-khersonerosgvardeitcy-vodruzili-znamia-pobedy>. Similarly, in Melitopol <https://www.vesti.ru/article/2721070>

<sup>4</sup> <https://ria.ru/20220429/pobeda-1786051011.html>

<sup>5</sup> The official statements of the CPRF in English can be found at <https://cprf.ru>

<sup>6</sup> The CPRF is a staunch supporter of the war. As indicated by its general secretary, Gennady Zyuganov, that war is "is an operation for liberation. Therefore, it cannot be conducted as a military operation. Because in a military operation, troops are surrounded, then liquidated, and that would have been the end of it. But here you need to uproot Nazism with a scalpel, while inviting all citizens to contribute to this operation." <https://www.kp.ru/daily/27370/4562979/>

insists that not concluding the military operation in Ukraine would have severe consequences for Russia.<sup>7</sup> Revisionism is always on the side of capital and ultimately against the interests of the working class, regardless of the historic epoch or stage of development. Today the CPRF is on the side of Russian capital, as much as modern revisionism was against the working class and socialism in the Soviet Union and other countries of the Eastern bloc. It is essential for the Marxist-Leninists in Russia to expose this relationship and the nature of this social-chauvinist position. This act of aggression against Ukraine is not in the interests of the Ukrainian and Russian working classes. This war has led to and continues to inflict massive destruction on infrastructure, livelihood and many deaths among the civilian population and armed forces. The economic impact of the war is being born by the toiling masses, where the sharp increase in inflation has hit the most vulnerable. All these sacrifices are being made for the benefit of the few among the Russian bourgeoisie and not for the benefit of the working class, nor will it bring the restoration of the socialist Soviet Union any closer.

The Marxist-Leninists need to adopt the Bolshevik position vis a vis this war. There should be no ambiguity when it comes to characterizing this war. Appealing to the pro-Soviet and anti-fascist sentiments of the Russian toiling masses is dishonest and duplicitous, and it should be exposed as such. Putin and the revisionists are misappropriating Soviet symbolism and misusing the aspirations of the vast layers of the toiling masses for social justice, peace and brotherhood of nations that the Soviet Union of Lenin and Stalin provided ever so successfully. The Marxist-Leninists need to explain to the working class and the toiling masses that beneath this symbolism are capitalist relations of production and an imperialist war. For as long as the means of production remain in private hands; as long as the state does not nationalize the main means of production and undertake socialist industrialization, the toiling masses will continue to suffer poverty and exclusion.

The Russian Federation and other former republics of the Soviet Union have emerged as some of the weakest links in imperialism today. The need of Putin's regime to resort to Soviet symbolism and Soviet anti-fascism to substantiate the war represents a contradiction within itself. It exemplifies an important shift in the sentiments of the

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<sup>7</sup>[https://www.dp.ru/a/2022/04/06/Zjaganov\\_o\\_posledstviah\\_ne](https://www.dp.ru/a/2022/04/06/Zjaganov_o_posledstviah_ne)

Russian toiling masses. Concurrently, the neo-liberal model of economic development in Russia is failing to meet the aspirations of the Russian people and is under severe strain from sanctions. This represents another pivotal contradiction. The war in Ukraine will only accelerate the demise of capitalism in Russia. The revisionist CPRF will not be in a position to save capitalism, as its vision for Russia does not deviate from the neo-liberal vision. It will reduce itself to the restoration of Soviet symbolism. The Bolshevik forces will offer a different path of development, where the aspirations of the toiling masses will be realized through nationalization of the main means of production and socialist industrialization. That said, first they must get rid of the capitalist regime. Bolshevik forces do not stand on the side of the imperialist war even if this war is using Soviet symbolism. Supporting the war effort is tantamount to supporting the destructive character of imperialist aggression and has nothing to do with the struggle to re-establish the Soviet Union of Lenin and Stalin.

**Right-wing and neo-fascist nationalism of Ukraine’s regime.**

It is important to set the record straight regarding the character of the nationalism that defines the Ukrainian regime and the politics that it pursues. Former President Yanukovich’s decision not to sign the European Union–Ukraine Association Agreement, which would have signified a significant step towards integration with the EU, triggered a revolt. The Euromaidan revolt was driven by right-wing and ultra-nationalist groups and organizations with the support of the US and the EU. The revolt is regarded by Putin as a coup d’état that ousted Yanukovich who had to flee to Russia together with some of



his ministers and was replaced with an interim government. Following elections, Petro Poroshenko took office in June 2014, leading to a significant change against Russia, Russian speakers, and military confrontation in the East of Ukraine.

An important milestone in the evolution of the Ukrainian regime towards right-wing and neo-fascist ideology was the enactment of the so-called decommunization laws in May 2015. The first law pertains to “Condemning the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes and Prohibiting the Propagation of their Symbols”. The second law pertains to the “Legal Status and Honouring of the Memory of the Fighters for the Independence of Ukraine in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century”.<sup>8</sup> These laws represented a turning point in that communist symbolism was criminalised whereas political leaders and organisations based on fascist ideology, who perpetrated atrocities against Poles, Russians and Jews and collaborated with Nazi Germany, were glorified.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> “One of the four bills in the package, On the Legal Status and Honouring of Fighters for Ukraine’s Independence in the Twentieth Century,” covers a long list of individuals and organisations from human rights activists to guerrillas accused of ethnic cleansing. It would allow veterans of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), followers of Bandera, to receive state benefits, and rules that deny or disrespect their role in fighting for Ukrainian independence is an unlawful “desecration of their memory”. In “Ukraine to rewrite Soviet history with controversial ‘decommunization’ laws”, see <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/20/ukraine-decommunisation-law-soviet>

<sup>9</sup> “The problem rather arises from the fact that, at the same time, since 2006 and especially since 2014, Ukrainian official memory policies have been heroizing leading representatives of the two organizations—the OUN(B) and UPA—that are considered most responsible for these mass-killings.... Yet today, the leaders and members of the war-time OUN-UPA are promoted by many Ukrainian governmental institutions, major political commentators, and certain civil society organizations as impeccable ‘fighters for liberation’.” “The issue today is that most of Ukraine’s memory politicians remain in a state of cognitive dissonance regarding the different aspects of the history of Ukrainian nationalism. They dissociate the OUN-UPA’s fight for independence from the organizations’ war crimes during World War II. Not only ultra-nationalist, but also numerous

Kyiv's regime considers anti-communist and right-wing nationalism as the new norm and collaborationist organizations and their leaders as national heroes. In doing so, Kyiv's regime and its Western allies are making every possible effort to re-write history by decoupling right-wing nationalism and its vision of the Ukrainian national idea from its violent, racist and pro-Nazi past. These efforts are intended to confuse those who do not understand the essence of fascist ideology and confuse it with a particular type of symbolism and antisemitism. The West argues that a government that is led by an individual of Jewish descent makes it ok to integrate right-wing Russophobic nationalism and neo-Nazi organizations into the core resistance against Russian aggression. The fact that Zelensky boasts of his Jewish descent while calling the Azov battalion patriots and heroes makes glorifying neo-Nazi organizations the more repulsive.<sup>10</sup>

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pro-Western and otherwise liberal Ukrainian politicians and intellectuals deliberately distinguish between the heroic aspects and the 'dark side' of the OUN-UPA's battle against foreign rule. In support of this imagination, an array of Ukrainian historical publicists offers various apologies, justifications, and moderations for the Ukrainian war-time ultra-nationalists' murderous actions against civilians. Recalling practices of selective national remembrance in other countries around the world, many Ukrainians today ignore, relativize, or downplay the OUN's radical ideas, terrorist methods, and murderous practices. Similarly, to the behaviour of other self-ascribed patriots around the world, Ukrainians who consider themselves 'nationally aware' prefer to focus on the exceptional courage, patriotism, and sad fate of the majority of the UPA's soldiers and the many tragic moments of their extraordinary anti-Moscow insurgency." Andreas Umland, "Why Warsaw should go soft on Kyiv", *Harvard International Review*, Vol. 39, No. 2, Global waters: Oceans of opportunity and strife (Spring 2018), pp. 52-57.

<sup>10</sup> "Also at the request of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine I decided to confer the title of Hero of Ukraine upon: Colonel Baranyuk Volodymyr Anatoliyovych, Commander of the 36th Separate Marine Brigade, and Major Prokopenko Denys Hennadiyovych, Commander of a separate detachment of special purpose 'Azov'. For courage, for effective actions to repel enemy attacks, for the defence of the hero city of Mariupol." <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/zmistovni-peregovori-promir-i-bezpeku-dlya-ukrayini-yediniy-73661>



It is essential to explore the true significance of the so-called decommunization laws. Why are they necessary to the Ukrainian oligarchy? Are these decommunization laws just a question of historical debate and worldviews or do they pursue a much more far-reaching agenda? The fact of the matter is that Ukraine, together with Moldova, is the worst performing economy of Eastern Europe. Neo-liberal reforms have led to the de-industrialisation of Ukraine.<sup>11</sup> The Ukrainian toiling masses face large-scale unemployment, low salaries, declining purchasing power, crumbling social benefits and ailing infrastructure.<sup>12</sup> Under these conditions the working class is being

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<sup>11</sup> “The deindustrialization in Ukraine has been observed for several years in a row. We are talking about the loss of entire sectors of the economy that produce products with high added value. First of all, I would mention mechanical engineering – the rocket and space complex, aircraft building, shipbuilding, and transport engineering. About 72% of Ukraine’s export products today belong to the category of raw materials – raw materials of the agro-industrial complex, mining and metallurgical complex and some semi-finished products.

“The corresponding structure of the economy creates huge threats. First of all, because the raw material-based economy is not capable of creating the required number of modern jobs. There is not a single example of a high quality of life for citizens, a high level of real incomes, wages and, as a result, high solvency in economies of this type.

“Finally, the deepening of deindustrialization leads to the loss of the most important thing in the state – human potential, labour resources. At least 8-9 million Ukrainians today are looking for their livelihood abroad – this is not only a reaction to low wages, but also a manifestation of the degradation of the economy as a whole.

“The deepening of deindustrialization, the transformation of Ukraine into a raw materials appendage of developed economies, an exporter of cheap labour can lead to the fact that no more than 15-17 million people will remain on Ukrainian soil, as predicted by the World Bank and other international experts.” Anatolii Kinakh in “Former Prime Minister of Ukraine on the threatening situation in the Ukrainian economy and industry”, <https://uspp.ua/ru/inicziativi/position/m-teriaem-tsele-otrasly-konomyky>

<sup>12</sup> “Today, with a high degree of probability, we can state that it was the collapse of the planned economy and the neoliberal reforms

exposed to the ideas of right-wing nationalism and neo-fascist views. The so-called decommunization laws are a powerful instrument to expose the toiling masses to these views.

In view of the severity of the economic crisis and the failure of Ukrainian capitalism, the oligarchy is exposing the Ukrainian toiling masses to the Russophobic views of right-wing nationalism. Right-wing Ukrainian nationalism historically originates from the Western regions of Ukraine.<sup>13</sup> The notion is that Russians and Ukrainians are far apart and that Russians and Russian culture are a threat to Ukrainian statehood.<sup>14</sup> That said, one should be very careful not to fuel the

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imposed by the West that led not only to the deindustrialization of the country's economy and the massive impoverishment of the vast majority of the population of Ukraine, but also to an increase in social tension as a result of the activation of the extreme right movements, unleashing civil confrontation and military conflicts that marked the beginning of 2014." V.A. Butkaliuk, "Position and prospects of the working class in the Ukraine in the conditions of the modern crisis of neo-liberalism", <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/polozhenie-i-perspektivy-rabochego-klassa-ukrainy-v-usloviyah-sovremennogo-krizisa-neoliberalizma>

- <sup>13</sup> "Symbolically, he [Stephan Bandera, *our note*] was even posthumously awarded a Hero of Ukraine medal by Viktor Yushchenko at the end of his presidency. On the other hand, eastern and southern parts of the country were widely critical of the rising popularity of Bandera, which was consistent with the Soviet/Russian perception of World War II. Instead, people in Donbass and Crimea usually held a positive attitude towards communism and its impact on contemporary Ukraine, cultivating symbols and traditions of the former USSR. This rupture was even more paradoxical, as nationalist proponents of Bandera typically support integration with the European Union. At the same time, the Russian-speaking minority were much more interested in enhanced collaboration with Moscow." Miron Lakomy, "The game of Ukraine: Conflict in Donbass as an outcome of the multi-layered rivalry", *Politeja*, No. 45 (2016), pp. 279-316.
- <sup>14</sup> "A regional divide exists concerning attitudes toward these historical nationalist organizations in Ukraine. A majority of the respondents in Galicia have positive perceptions of the Bandera faction of the OUN and the UPA (63% and 59%, respectively). A minority of Ukrainians not only in the East, the South, and the Centre but also in the historic Western Ukrainian regions of Volhynia, Bukovyna,

Russian chauvinist view of Ukraine as a lesser culture or nation. Such is the narrative used by Putin's regime to undermine the independence of Ukraine as a separate state. The Marxist-Leninists should expose the national-chauvinist character of the revisionist narrative, as it is concealed by neo-Soviet phraseology.

It is very important to consider the imperialist confrontation in Ukraine in a larger historical context. The armed conflict in Ukraine and the rise of neo-fascism are not coincidental, but rather the result of a concerted effort that has been ultimately instigated by the European Union and the United States. Apart from NATO's expansionism and aggressive attitude, one cannot underestimate the adoption by the European Parliament in April 2009 of a resolution on "totalitarian crimes". Here "Nazism, Stalinism and fascist and Communist regimes" have a "common legacy". This type of analogy comes from the playbook of Goebbel's propaganda and it displays the level of perversity and cynicism that Nazi propaganda was notorious for. This is deeply offensive to the millions of Soviet citizens and those of other nationalities who perished for the liberation of Europe from Nazi oppression and from the physical liquidation of entire nations. The adoption of this resolution coincided with the rise of pro-Soviet and pro-Stalin sentiments, most prominently among the Russian toiling masses, and it is likely be a reaction to this notorious process. Nevertheless and regardless of whether this may or may not be a coincidence, this resolution has further spurred the rise of Russophobic

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and Transcarpathia have positive attitudes toward the OUN-B and the UPA. One-third (36%) of the respondents in Transcarpathia, 25% in Volhynia, 16% in Bukovyna, 19% in Kyiv, and 12% in other Central regions (Cherkasy, Chernihiv, Khmelnytsky, Kyiv region, Kirovohrad, Poltava, Sumy, Vinnytsia, and Zhytomyr Regions) express favourable opinions of the OUN-B. Such views were shared by 0% of the residents of Crimea, 2% in Donbas, and 3% in other regions in the South (Kherson, Mykolaiv, and Odessa Regions) and 3% in the East (Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, and Zaporizhzhia Regions). Views of the UPA are similar." Ivan Katchanovski, "Terrorists or national heroes? Politics and perceptions of the OUN and the UPA in Ukraine", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, June/September 2015, Vol. 48, No. 2/3, pp. 217-228.

and neo-fascist sentiments in the continent, most notoriously in Eastern Europe.<sup>15</sup>

The re-emergence of neo-fascism and anti-communism in Europe is a form of revanchism for the victory of the Socialist Soviet Union over fascism. Right-wing ideology and anti-communism have become commonplace in Europe, where they have become integrated into the spectrum of political sentiments that are tolerated and even insidiously promoted. In fact, the integration of these political tendencies has shifted the political spectrum that the European ruling elites operate in to a different plane of operation. Social-democracy has also adopted variants of this narrative. It is fallacious to argue that neo-fascist sentiments are an issue of a minority of extremist organisations and that these are not influential in the big scheme of things. Their presence in the political spectrum of European politics is an inherent part of the overall imperialist strategy to absorb new markets, displace other imperialist powers, such as Russia, to avert proletarian revolutions by institutionalising anti-communism as the official ideology. Importantly, the ideology prevalent in Europe and the US is suited to manipulating public opinion in favour of waging imperialist wars. Stalin gave a classical characterisation of fascism and its multi-dimensionality that remains valid to this day:

“Firstly, it is not true that fascism is only the fighting organisation of the bourgeoisie. Fascism is not only a military-technical category. Fascism is the bourgeoisie’s fighting organisation that relies on the active support of Social-Democracy. Social-Democracy is objectively the moderate wing of fascism. There is no ground for assuming that the fighting organisation of the bourgeoisie can achieve decisive successes in battles, or in governing the country, without the active support of Social-Democracy. There is just as little ground for

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<sup>15</sup>“Central and Eastern Europe is witnessing another surge in the presence and activities of paramilitary organizations. These can be found not only in Ukraine, where their presence due to the armed conflict is understandable, but also in EU and NATO members like Czechia, Estonia, and Poland, which are enjoying long-term peace. This development can to some extent be explained as a grassroots, civil-society reaction to major changes and developments in the security environment.” Matej Kandrik, “The Challenge of Paramilitarism in Central and Eastern Europe” (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep26757>).

thinking that Social-Democracy can achieve decisive successes in battles, or in governing the country, without the active support of the fighting organisation of the bourgeoisie. These organisations do not negate, but supplement each other. They are not antipodes, they are twins. Fascism is an informal political bloc of these two chief organisations; a bloc, which arose in the circumstances of the post-war crisis of imperialism, and which is intended for combating the proletarian revolution. The bourgeoisie cannot retain power without such a bloc. It would therefore be a mistake to think that ‘pacifism’ signifies the liquidation of fascism. In the present situation, ‘pacifism’ is the strengthening of fascism with its moderate, Social-Democratic wing pushed into the forefront.” Stalin, in “Concerning the International Situation”, *Works*, Vol. 6, January-November, 1924, pp. 293-314.

The Ukrainian armed forces and law enforcement structures engaging in military operations are the only ones in the world that have organically integrated neo-fascist and neo-Nazi armed organizations. These include para-military and military organisations, such as “Dnepr”, “Azov”, the “Right Sector”, “Aydar”, “Kievskaya Rus” and others.<sup>16,17</sup> Following the victorious rise of the Euromaidan movement, these organizations grew in numbers and resources, which include support from the Ukrainian oligarchy and foreign sources. These organizations were integrated into the structures of the armed forces and law enforcement and further grew within them, while they were allowed to retain their idiosyncrasy as organizations.<sup>18</sup> As such,

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<sup>16</sup>A summary of the rise of the so-called “Azov” battalion both militarily and politically can be found in [https://shron1.chtyvo.org.ua/Maltsev\\_Vladislav/Fenomen\\_Azova\\_Kak\\_ukraynskye\\_natsyonalyst\\_staly\\_vlyiatelnoi\\_poltycheskoi\\_syloi\\_ros.pdf?PHPSESSID=sao5649c73uvene-phi9htlhf66](https://shron1.chtyvo.org.ua/Maltsev_Vladislav/Fenomen_Azova_Kak_ukraynskye_natsyonalyst_staly_vlyiatelnoi_poltycheskoi_syloi_ros.pdf?PHPSESSID=sao5649c73uvene-phi9htlhf66)

<sup>17</sup>Alexander Clapp “The Maidan Irregulars” *The National Interest*, No. 143, *Chinese Statecraft* (May/June 2016), pp. 26- 33.

<sup>18</sup> “The data that has been accumulated since the first report by the Foundation for Democracy Studies provides ground to conclude that torture and inhumane treatment inflicted by the Security Forces of Ukraine (SBU), by the Ukrainian armed forces, the National Guard and other formations within the Interior Ministry of Ukraine, as well as by illegal armed groups, such as Right Sector, have not only continued but are gaining in scale and are becoming

these organizations get vast financial support from Kyiv's government and have formalized into formal divisions within the armed forces and law enforcement. They operate as elite forces, similar to the SS battalions within the Wehrmacht in Nazi Germany. They enjoy great ideological influence on the Ukrainian armed forces and other law enforcement agencies.<sup>19</sup> It is very difficult to conceive today's Ukrainian military effort, especially in the Donbass, without these elite forces.<sup>20</sup>

The Ukraine has become the spearhead of neo-fascism and anti-communism in Europe. The rise of neo-fascism in the Ukraine, which includes the systematic desecration of the Soviet past and the victory over fascism, has been instigated and financed by the European Union. Kyiv's government has very little regard for Ukrainians, as it is willing to use all its human resources for a proxy war with Russia on behalf of European and U.S. imperialisms. Kyiv's regime serves the interests of Western Imperialism and has been pivotal in instigating

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systematic." In "War crimes of the armed forces and security forces of Ukraine: torture and inhumane treatment", Second report. OSCE supplementary human dimension meeting, April 2016, PC.SHDM.NGO/17/16.

<sup>19</sup> "Kyiv officials walk a thin line of outwardly condemning illegal armed groups in Ukraine and passively supporting pro-Ukrainian militias that wield significant power and fighting forces. The Ukrainian government continues to work to unify these groups under either the Ministry of Defence or Interior, despite recent confrontations and lack of desire to integrate. In April 2015, the Right Sector's leader, Dmytro Yarosh, was appointed as an advisor to the Ministry of Defence in a move to consolidate the group within the ministry by giving it a seat at the table. Ultimately, officials hope that integrating all militias under the command and control of the government will achieve unity of effort against a common enemy – Russia. These groups are credited with seeing EuroMaidan through to the end and defending Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression; however, as the war goes on they represent a glaring threat to the central government". Joshua P. Mulford, "Non-State Actors in the Russo-Ukrainian War", *Connections*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Spring 2016), pp. 89-107

<sup>20</sup> According to different sources, the "Azov" battalion accounted for up to 50% of servicemen in arms defending Mariupol during the siege that ended in May 2022.

the armed conflict. So much for the European values of “freedom” and “democracy”. European fascism has raised its ugly and duplicitous face one more time.

### **The tasks of the Marxist-Leninists and the progressive forces.**

Marxist-Leninist forces should never forget the attitude of the Bolsheviks towards the imperialist war, and how Lenin exposed the positions of social-patriotism. In 2015 Lenin wrote:

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

“This is axiomatic, and disputed only by conscious partisans or helpless satellites of the social-chauvinists. Among the former, for instance, is Semkovsky of the Organising Committee (No. 2 of its *Izvestia*), and among the latter, Trotsky and Bukvoyed, and Kautsky in Germany.”

“The phrase-banding Trotsky has completely lost his bearings on a simple issue. It seems to him that to desire Russia’s defeat means desiring the victory of Germany.

“A revolution in wartime means civil war; the conversion of a war between governments into a civil war is, on the one hand, facilitated by military reverses (‘defeats’) of governments; on the other hand, one cannot actually strive for such a conversion without thereby facilitating defeat.” Lenin *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, [1974], Moscow, Volume 21, pages 275-280.

Today’s revisionists have allied themselves with Putin’s regime in waging an imperialist war that is killing Russians and Ukrainians in the tens of thousands and inflicting irreparable damage to the livelihoods of tens of millions of people. All this unspeakable suffering is in the name of the narrow economic interest of Russian imperialism in the area. Despite the sprawling Soviet symbolism, such as the Soviet flag of victory, this war has nothing to do with the war waged by the Soviet Union against Nazi Germany. By contrast, Marxist-Leninist forces should relentlessly uphold Bolshevik positions with respect to the imperialist war by openly calling the conflict imperialist. Marxist-Leninists should not be afraid of exposing the treacherous role of revisionism, the heirs of the revisionist CPSU, and how these work hand in hand with the Russian oligarchy against the interests of the toiling masses. The restoration of the Soviet Union of Lenin and Stalin will not emerge because of a victorious imperialist war. Much to the contrary, the restoration of the Soviet Union of Lenin and Stalin

will only follow from the consistent implementation of Bolshevik slogans. In a similar way that the First World War accelerated the advent of the social revolution, the imperialist war in Ukraine will accelerate the social revolution in Russia and other former republics of the Soviet Union. The re-emergence of pro-Soviet sentiments among the Russian toiling masses is a great victory in its own right, but it is not a sufficient condition for the restoration of the Soviet Union of Lenin and Stalin. Most certainly, waging an imperialist war with Soviet symbolism will not bring about the Soviet Union; it only strengthens Russian capitalism. Marxist-Leninist forces in Russia and other former Soviet republics need to connect the slogan of the restoration of the Soviet Union with the anti-capitalist struggle of the working class. The latter inevitably goes through exposing the war in the Ukraine as an imperialist war. This needs to be done unambiguously. The Marxist-Leninist forces are on the side of the toiling masses, not on the side of social-chauvinism in its many variants.

Progressive forces in Western imperialist countries need to make every possible effort to stop the war effort. The cost of the war will always be borne by the toiling masses. The war is nothing but a means to enhance corporate super-profits at the expense of the toiling masses, whose purchasing power continues to drop. Progressive forces need to expose the true nature of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism. These constitute the core of neo-fascist ideology. Being tolerant towards this type of ideology opens the door to imperialist wars. The toiling masses of Western imperialist countries have nothing to profit from imperialist wars. Progressive forces need to strive for the dissolution of NATO. NATO is the biggest threat to security in the world.

**Down with the imperialist war in Ukraine!**  
**Long live the Soviet Union of Lenin and Stalin!**

*March 2023*



## **Let Us Fight for the Unity of the Working Class of Iran!**

Class governments and capitalists are afraid of workers' strikes. We saw an example of this during the revolution of 1979 in Iran. We saw the changes that were created by the potential power of the workers' guild. They were able to send the Shah's regime to the dustbin of history with their nationwide strike over their demands for better living conditions and job security, the right to strike, and the right to establish trade unions. The governments that came to power after the revolution under the guise of supporting the oppressed and poor were aware of this power. They considered the organisational power of the working class as a means to shake the country's economic foundations and political pillars. With their class perspective, they were afraid of the danger of the unity of Iran's labouring society and sought to prevent it by using underhanded methods to create division among the working class. At the beginning of the revolution, Iran's Labour Law had to consider many workers' rights. The working class, through its struggle and its decisive role in the revolution, imposed its demands on the post-revolutionary governments. But at the end of the eight-year Iran-Iraq war, President Rafsanjani's mafia government, under the pretext of Iran's reconstruction and undoing the war damage, adopted the destructive and anti-Iranian policy of neoliberalism. Rafsanjani followed the economic orders of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to loot the Iranian economy through privatisation and by suppressing the struggles of workers and violating their legal rights. This destructive policy is still being implemented in Iran.

It was customary for the government and employers to enter into formal or permanent contracts with workers for permanent jobs. However, the number of these contracts decreased due to the weakness of the labour movement to such an extent that today, this type of contract includes only a third of all contracts signed with the workers in Iran. Besides that, there is another type of contract called direct temporary contracts. These are negotiated only for a short period of

time or for the realisation of certain projects. Such contracts comprise approximately 14% of all contracts. And finally, there are also contracts called “temporary agreements.” Such contracts make up 57% of contracts. In practice, there are one-year, three-month, and even one-month contracts that include jobs where the nature of work is continuous and permanent. By implementing these types of contracts for a limited employment period, which can be extended after their expiration, the employers use modern slavery with the support of the government and its labour laws.

After the eight-year war and under the presidency of Rafsanjani, in order to establish the law of modern slavery and serve the neoliberal policy of the World Bank, a new interpretation of the labour law against the working class was announced. According to this interpretation, if a time clause is included in the contracts for jobs that even have the nature of continuous work, the contract will no longer be permanent. This insidious interpretation legalised the use of temporary contracts for jobs of a permanent nature. This interpretation was continued during the presidency of the reformist Khatami. And from then on, the employers transfer the hiring process to the private companies. Now the private companies conclude contracts with the workers and then rent them to employers. The same method is also applied in big capitalist countries as Germany. With the effort of the chancellor Gerhard Schröder from the “leftist” social democratic faction, the Ministry of Labour was dissolved and replaced with organisations or job searching centres that mediate between workers and capitalist employers. Through such a sinister plot, they have absolved the capitalists of any kind of responsibility. They have created private companies that are responsible for providing manpower to and signing contractual agreements with employers and the government.

The first concern of the workers in Iran is the lack of job security because at the end of each year, the private employer can fire the employees. This arbitrary firing is used by the government of the Islamic Republic in its assumed capacity as an employer. In this way, the lives and livelihoods of workers are in the hands of private companies and of the capitalist government. We are facing the silence of the Iranian bourgeois opposition, even in cyberspace, on these violations of rights. These violations are not just crimes against a person or a violation of the human rights of a few political prisoners; rather, they are a violation of the human rights of millions of people who are forced by economic necessity to do very hard work as de facto slaves. The

bourgeois opposition of Iran has closed its eyes to all these crimes against the working class. Even during its protests for “the realisation of human rights or the defence of political prisoners”, the bourgeois opposition is silent on the situation of the labourers and does not even mention the struggles of imprisoned workers and activists. The protests of the bourgeois forces that have taken place under the demagogic and populist mottos of “All together” and “Women, Life, Freedom” are alien to the fate of Iran and its working class. The workers should never trust these hypocritical bourgeois forces and should seek to consolidate and organise their fragile forces so that they can achieve their legal rights.

There are no independent labour unions in Iran. This is the weakness of the working class. The struggle for the formation of independent trade unions is the first promising field of struggle for this class. Essentially, a trade union is an organisation in which workers unite as a class to express their solidarity. The working class establishes trade unions to create a bulwark against the class that owns the means of production. In this way, the working class not only defends itself against the constant attacks of the capitalists, but it also directly attacks the exploiting class. Through trade unions, the labourers try to realise general rights and improve the most basic working and living conditions such as wages, working hours, continuous and permanent contracts, work safety, work leave, elimination of temporary contracts, the right of assembly, the right to strike, etc. Trade unions are born out of the objective needs of the labourers in the class struggle. They represent the most basic level of worker-organisations based on their strength and class consciousness.

Trade union activism has a much longer history than working class party activism, because the daily realisation of economic awareness is much easier to achieve than gaining political awareness in the spectrum of the working class. A long time is still needed for the working class not only to wage its independent economic struggle but also to end its political role as the fifth wheel of bourgeois politics and emerge as an independent political organisation of the workers that has political and class goals. For this reason, from the very beginning of labour unions, this dialectical difference was evident in the two fields of struggle of the working class. These two struggles should not be put into one pot and stirred as this would distort their different levels and distinctions.

### **Why is working in unions necessary?**

Work in mass organisation is one of the most important areas of a revolutionary's activities. This practical struggle provides a means to know how close the world view and political action of an involved individual are to the objective reality of the life of the working class. This participation in the real struggle of the working class will distance the revolutionary and communist person from subjectivity and revolutionism and will keep him grounded in reality. Work in a mass organisation also forms the necessary foundation for any revolutionary development. Without the energetic support of a large section of society and without the sympathy—or at least the benevolent neutrality—of the rest of the masses, no revolutionary insurrection can establish a stable, surviving government. To gain this sympathy and popular support, especially from the working class, revolutionaries must actively communicate and transfer their worldview to the working masses and demonstrate the validity and application of it in the daily lives of the labourers. Revolutionaries must work where the masses are, but above all, they must work where the working class is.

Anyone who wants to work among the working masses should not shy away from union activities. The necessity of trade unions for the revolutionary struggle relates even more to their actual position in the working class than to their proletarian essence. But working in a trade union does not mean that a trade union is the party of the working class, nor that it should take on the party duties. Activities in trade unions are undertaken to realise the rights of workers against the capitalists, to give the members experience and knowledge, to raise the level of their class consciousness in practice, to strengthen their self-confidence and belief in union power, to strengthen the understanding of democratic work, and to create a material basis for social transformation in society as a whole.

As Lenin stated in “Left-Wing” Communism, An Infantile Disorder:

“To refuse to work in the reactionary trade unions means leaving the insufficiently developed or backward masses of workers under the influence of the reactionary leaders, the agents of the bourgeoisie, the labour aristocrats, or the ‘workers who have become completely bourgeois’ (Engels’s letter to Marx in 1858 about the British workers).”

The experience of all labour struggles around the world shows the importance of the social roles of independent trade unions. Unfortunately in Iran, the working class is deprived of the right to have an independent labour union. In the first place, the labourers of Iran must fight for the recognition of this natural right, which has a social and historical background and will certainly be supported by the vast majority of the working class. When the working class engages in the trade union struggle, then the workers will benefit from educational facilities, labour education at universities, permanent strike funds and legal support from prominent labour lawyers, press activities, support from intellectuals and academics, and many other sources. We have to fight to achieve the aforementioned labour rights in Iran. This fight has the support of the nation. Even among the authorities of the Islamic Republic, after the protests against the mandatory hijab and the Guidance Patrol, there are whispers that if the ruling class does not listen to the demands of the labourers and protesters, then they will have to face widespread violent consequences.

Society is made up of different classes, and it is impossible to manage society with the theory of “insiders and outsiders”, “believers and infidels”. Every individual in the country is a member of the nation, and the wealth of Iran belongs to the entire society. The assets of the country cannot be confiscated for the benefit of “insiders”. The rhetoric of “insider, outsider” and “believers, infidels” from the beginning of Iran’s revolutionary period are dead today. An opinion is forming among government officials that it is necessary to create opportunities for dialogue with various sections of the society, including teachers, women, retirees, workers, etc., so that the government does not lose power as a result of resorting to violence. This current situation, which has been one of the achievements of recent events, has created a favourable environment to emphasise the desire to establish independent labour unions even more so than before. The condition for the success of this demand is to avoid mixing the tasks of the working class party and of gaining political power with the tasks and capacity of a labour union. If the deviant and anarcho-sindicalist ideas of the “left” organisations dominate the trade unions activities, and if there are adventurers who try to promote the idea of gaining political power through the creation of workers’ councils (soviets) and mislead the struggle of working masses, the opportunity for the creation of independent trade unions will not be used optimally.

The first barrier that stands in the way of Iran's labour struggles is the lack of a labour union, whose task is primarily to try to improve the living conditions of workers. There are some petty bourgeois subjectivists who think that the "bolder" and more extreme slogans they put forward, the more revolutionary they are! They support the "one-day revolution" theory. This shows their lack of trust in the masses and lack of understanding of the revolutionary process. They do not grasp that it takes some time for the struggle of the masses to grow and to gain strength in both economic and political fields and to educate the workers to join their own independent party. They are regularly engaged in misleading propaganda among the working class and want to turn every justified and just strike into a "social revolution". These mindless leftists do not understand that, in the end, the result of a successful strike is a compromise with the employer, not the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Those engaged in the sabotage of the labour movement destroy the unity and integrity of the working class. They fail to understand that social struggles have different levels, and therefore, people should be organised in various organisations according to the interest of their strata. The struggle of the working class in trade unions is a struggle in the economic field. The specific demands of the trade unions are not separate from the general demands of the people. Therefore, the workers in the trade unions also defend the most general demands of the people. But this kind of support does not change the nature of the trade union into a political party. The struggle of the working class against the inhumane sanctions on Iran is a general democratic struggle, which is not contrary to the trade union demands of the workers. The attempt at the confiscation and management of a factory, which will be a failure from the very beginning, is a destructive and deviant action. The call to the workers by some political groups to seize political power and to establish councils (soviets) in the factories, instead of a call for the establishment of independent trade unions, is a deviant and destructive call that hurts the organisations of the working masses. Such calls are approved by the agents of the capitalist regime of the Islamic Republic who seek to disrupt the unity of the working class.

Trade unions in Iran should not be formed on the basis of ethnic affiliation. Ethnic national chauvinists in Iran want trade unions to be formed based on ethnicity or nationality. Their intention is to destroy the unity and integrity of the working class of Iran. Naturally, even if

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they are not suspicious, their approach is deeply reactionary and anti-labour. It should be fought against as the slogans of the psychic “lefts” for the establishment of worker councils (soviets) instead of labour unions. Iranian workers must fight for the establishment of a unified and independent labour union which is widely accepted by the people. Our Party supports this class and democratic demand that serves to democratise Iran’s political environment.

*www.Toufan.org*  
*March 2023*



## **The Rise of the Extreme Right in Italy and the Struggle of the Working Class**

### **The crisis of the Draghi government**

On July, 2022, Mario Draghi, a representative of the financial oligarchy, presented his resignation as leader of the Italian bourgeoisie government, since three parties of the “national unity” coalition (M5S, Lega and Forza Italia [ Five Star Movement, League, formerly Northern League, and Forward Italy – translator’s note]) did not vote on the motion of confidence that he requested.

At the root of the crisis of the Draghi government was the current conflict between the financial oligarchy and sectors of the middle classes crushed by the crisis, which have a significant economic and political weight in Italy.

The contradictions between bourgeois parties escalated in a situation of impending recession, with inflation over 8%, increasing misery and decline in the purchasing power of the masses, the resumption of the pandemic, supply crisis, runaway public debt, drought and the consequences of the inter-imperialist war that aggravate the contradictions of the fictitious “national unity”.

The political crisis of the Draghi government was a manifestation of the difficulty for the Italian big bourgeoisie to impose its own political, economic and ideological program over the whole society. During the crisis, the will of big monopolies emerged to have greater stability and firmness in the government’s action, with a clear political majority in the parliament.

In this scenario, an electoral summer campaign began that sees the anti-worker, racist and chauvinist right-wing parties on the offensive, while the reformist ones that supported the Draghi government were completely passive.

### **A mass rejection of the electoral process**

The most relevant figures of the elections of September 25, 2022 showed the fall in the popular participation in the vote, to only 63.9%, a record low.



The phenomenon of abstention is becoming structural and growing, currently affecting more than a third of the electorate (36.1%, about approximately 16.6 million citizens).

To this number should be added the null (about 817,000) and blank (about 492,000) ballots, for a total of almost 18 million citizens who rejected the electoral face.

The abstention had a clear class and popular character: there are fewer and fewer votes in the polling stations of the working-class towns, industrial districts, suburbs of metropolises, cities and southern countryside, among young people and women of the popular strata.

The level reached by the abstention shows the growing mistrust, estrangement and hostility of large sectors of the working masses and the younger generations towards the bourgeois parliament, institutions and parties, which were largely delegitimized during this round of the elections.

In other words, the electoral process was a clear expression of the breakdown of bourgeois democracy.

Our position was to actively boycott the election in order to strengthen the links with the section of working class that refused to vote, against all bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties.

“No electoral truce, no collaboration with the capitalists, the rich, the warmongers”, “No vote for the right-wing parties and no illusions about the reformists and opportunists”, “No alternative except the overthrow of capitalist barbarism and the construction of socialism!

These slogans, shared by the revolutionary proletarians, had a good political response.

### **The electoral advance of the extreme right**

Fratelli d’Italia (FDI [Brothers of Italy]), the extreme-right party headed by Giorgia Meloni, which was a result of political metamorphosis of neofascism, was the leading party in the September elections with about 26% of the vote (according to the bourgeois percentage method), that is to say a real consensus of about 16% of the voting-age population.

The right-wing coalition had about 43.8% of the votes (i.e., with a real consensus of less than 27%).

The number of votes obtained by this coalition was about 12.3 million, slightly more than those in 2018. The effective electoral weight of the right has not increased since 2008. The success of the

FDI is directly related to the loss of votes of Lega and Forza Italia, its right-wing allies.

Meloni's party capitalized on its formal opposition to the oligarchic Draghi government (the FDI is a pro-NATO party, supportive of EU rules), which managed to win over the conservative and reactionary votes on its lists.

Sectors of small entrepreneurs, artisans and merchants, medium and rich farmers, professionals, self-employed workers, the working-class aristocracy, public officials, housewives etc. voted for the FDI. They are anxious about the prolonged economic stagnation, they suffer the consequences of the pressure of big capital, and are grappling with debts and the consequences of the pandemic, the war and the climate crisis.

An unprincipled protest that the party of pro-fascist demagoguery had won over, echoing the sentiments of sections of the exploited masses, uses them without scruples in its illusory and demagogic "program" in order to hide its real intentions.

### **The big bourgeoisie and reformism paved the way for Meloni's premiership**

The abrupt shift to the right in the Italian political axis was favored and made possible by two main factors.

First, the support of the most reactionary sectors of the bourgeoisie. With the start of the war in Ukraine, the energy crisis and the approaching recession, the interests of the military-industrial and energy monopolies, of the industrialists grappling with fierce competition, old and new financial cliques, landowners, the great construction companies that devastate the environment, the obscurantist Catholic circles and the mafia, have become even more aggressive.

These forces that have "pragmatically" handed over the country to Meloni in order to secure a stable government that continues in a more aggressive way the same anti-worker policy of the Draghi government: to squeeze more surplus value out of wage workers rights and deny them their rights, to save profits and super-profits, to receive more and more state support to compete on international markets.

Secondly, the electoral victory of the FDI is the rotten fruit of the collaborationist and pro-oligarchic politics of the Democratic Party (DP) and the trade union bureaucracy linked to this party.

The social democratic and reformist leaders have paved the way for the far right with years of blatant collaborationist, pro-oligarchic policies, with privatizations, “Jobs Act” and other laws in favor of the bosses, dismantling workers’ rights, with the rehabilitation of fascism, the equation of communism with fascism, etc. The division and paralysis of the working class, tenaciously pursued by the DP leaders and the trade union bureaucracy, favored the reactionary forces of the bourgeoisie.

### **A far-right government, the expression of the big monopolies**

In October Parliament drafted and approved an anti-worker, war-mongering, authoritarian government headed by Giorgia Meloni, the leader of the FDI.

It is the most reactionary government since the end of World War II, a government of restoration and fascistization of the State, of rearmament, assault on the rights of workers, migrants, women, young people, political, trade union and civil freedoms, of anticommunism.

It is the government of an exploiting, reactionary, chauvinist minority, which dominates the working majority who want work, bread and peace.

It is a government of the monopolies, the bosses, the economic power of the Catholic Church, completely subservient to the USA and NATO.

The Meloni government has a large parliamentary majority, but it is a minority in the country itself; it does not have solid popular foundations or a strong presence in the working-class organizations. This is its Achilles heel, despite the bourgeoisie’s attempt to ensure stability and the firmness of its power.

The far-right government relies on a part of the deceived, bitter and frustrated middle classes, but it is not a government of the petty bourgeoisie. Instead, it is a government of big capital.

Meloni slogan “God, country, family” serves to relaunch the role of the Italian monopolies in the area of the “enlarged Mediterranean”. The policy and leadership of the Meloni government are characterized by these forces, not by the petty-bourgeois sectors that voted for it.

The shift to the right of the Italian political axis is a manifestation of the difficulties and decline of Italian financial monopoly capital, which needs to immobilize and disorganize the working class by

exploiting the desire for revenge of the petty bourgeoisie crushed by the crises.

This is made possible by the fact that, in the context of the temporary defeat of socialism, the consequences of which have not yet been overcome, the working class is not in a position to lead the oppressed and exploited middle strata.

### **The ties of the extreme right with the military industrial complex**

There is an obvious link between the far-right FDI and militarism, which develops within the aggressive and warmongering NATO bloc.

Meloni's party has direct relations with the companies of the military-industrial complex and with those top hierarchies that promote the activities of the neo-fascists in the armed forces and the police.

Indicative of this link is the case of Crosetto, a co-founder of the FDI, a former undersecretary of defense in the last Berlusconi government and since October 21 the defense (that is war) minister, president of the Federation of Italian companies for aerospace, defense and security of "Confindustria" and since April 2020 president of "Orizzonte Sistemi Navali", a joint venture between Fincantieri and Leonardo specialized in high-tech systems.

Undoubtedly the war industry is behind the leaders of the FDI, and the current war in Ukraine strengthens the relationship between the extreme right, the warmongering sector of the bourgeoisie and the army.

The FDI's chauvinism is a mask behind which are the interests of the most warmongering and anti-democratic monopoly circles, such as those of the military-industrial complex, aeronautical and space companies, military shipbuilding, energy monopolies, etc.

These powerful forces, in the conditions of fierce imperialist rivalry, use the ideology of aggressive and fanatical nationalism as a means of struggle in the competition for market outlets, natural resources, the exploitation of the proletariat, supporting and financing the parties which support their interests by pursuing "power politics" and the arms race.

One of the priorities of the Meloni government is the sale of arms, means of warfare and weapon systems to reactionary countries. It is no coincidence that one of Meloni's first trips abroad was to

Egypt led by the despot Al Sisi, who is negotiating for the purchase of 24 Eurofighters, worth 3 billion euros.

But the far-right government’s militaristic policy is not limited to arms sales. Its plans require new warfare systems, greater recruitment into the armed forces, improvement of infrastructure, new lines of communications, control of the territory and patrolling of the seas, defense of the “European borders”, more and more military maneuvers in the theaters of war, support to the counter-revolutionary and putschist forces of other countries, etc.

### **The anti-working-class and warmongering politics of the Meloni government**

The first steps of the government headed by Meloni in domestic and foreign policy show that it is the heir of the anti-working class and anti-popular line established by previous bourgeois governments, making it even more ferocious and chauvinist. Its political objectives are clear: to continue the capitalist offensive against the working class; to delay as much as possible the recovery of the proletariat and the popular masses, blocking their action and limiting the freedom of demonstration and participation in protests; to favor some sectors of the middle strata in order to create an anti-worker bloc under the leadership of the big bourgeoisie; to fully follow the war policy decided by US imperialism, involving our country more and more in the armed conflict in Ukraine, increasing military spending at the expense of social spending; to recover energy sources in North Africa and the lost influence in the Western Balkans.

The government’s first act was a decree limiting the right to demonstrate. It immediately stood out for its attack on migrants and



the revival of inhuman and racist attitudes, its proposals for constitutional amendments aiming at authoritarian presidentialism and “differentiated autonomy” which would increase the existing inequalities between rich and poor regions of our country, undermining the unity of workers’ basic rights.

At the same time, bills were presented in Parliament which explicitly aim to weaken the fundamental tool of the national employment contract and the right to abortion.

Meloni’s government refuses negotiations with the trade union leaders; it has no intention of restarting a “social dialogue” but is adopting new anti-worker measures. In the workplaces, the despotism of the capitalists has become even more aggressive, encouraged by the new government, which has declared that it “does not disturb those who produce”, that is, those who exploit the workers.

To deepen the existing divisions in the class the Meloni government’s maneuver went in two directions: attacking new immigrants and attacking beneficiaries of the “income of citizenship” (unemployed and poor people).

The 2023 budget law was agreed to by the government with the EU, in line with the “suggestions” of the IMF and the credit rating agencies. It was set up to defend the interests of big capital, the rich, the mafia and the wealthy strata of the petty bourgeoisie.

The policy of Meloni’s government will not stop inflation, but will help to increase the prices of the necessary goods and the super-profits of the monopolies.

The workers, the unemployed, the poor people are being attacked by this policy. The demagogic electoral promises vanished in a month: the policy of the Meloni government increases mass poverty, while a small minority is being enriched dramatically.

This neoliberal policy is accompanied by the intensification of repression and state violence, because the ruling class is aware that social antagonism will become harsher and more acute.

While the government continue to cut social services, health care and social security costs, military spending continues to increase.

In foreign policy, the Meloni government juggles between participation in the EU and vassalage to the USA in an anti-Russian and anti-Chinese manner.

The current government, following the same pro-US/NATO policy as the previous ones, has decided to send more weapons, missiles, tanks and financial aid to the Ukrainian regime for all of 2023, while

renewing sanctions against Russia that affect the Italian economy. This is accompanied by the financing of all the other military missions abroad and by arms sales to reactionary regimes.

Meanwhile, an intense war activity is being deployed from the military bases on the national territory (others are being built with public funds), tied to the chariot of the USA and NATO. And new atomic bombs operated by the *Yankees* are accepted in our country.

### **Perspectives of struggle and the tasks of the communists**

In this scenario, the will of large working-class and popular strata to resist the bosses and the government offensive, for stable and safe work, for large wage increases, against the consequences of the war, is clearly expressed in the workplaces and the streets.

During the autumn of 2022, the trade union CGIL and other grassroots unions carried out provincial, regional and national strikes and demonstrations. The mobilizations against dismissals, to raise wages and to improve health and workers' safety have not stopped, even if they are divided by the trade union bureaucracy. Also, the students are struggling against reactionary measures and fascist attacks.

Despite the militaristic propaganda, the majority of the popular masses are against Italy's participation in the war against Russia; they are against the country's submission to and dependence on NATO and the EU, against the ferocious and inhuman migration policy of the Meloni government.

This resistance shows the way to oust Meloni's ultra-reactionary government and all those responsible for the policy of sacrifice and war: the struggle and unity of the exploited and oppressed in the workplaces and the streets, not the parliamentary chatter of reformist, populist and opportunist political non-entities.

The serious economic situation, the energy, environmental and health crisis, the weight of war and debt, the international disputes, and above all the discontent and resumption of the class struggle will undermine Meloni government.

The working class cannot live without a radical improvement in its living and working conditions. Therefore, the development of the mass struggle against the capitalists and their "new" government is inevitable. Its center of gravity will be outside Parliament, and it will be increasingly difficult for reformists and opportunists to hold back the development of this movement.

In the current situation, it is necessary to work daily and systematically in the working class for the unity of struggle of the workers and trade union movement, to build organizations (committees, councils, etc.) that embody the will to struggle of the working class, the popular and youth masses, coordinating with each other.

It is necessary to reject any policy of passivity, immobility, of waiting, of “moral” opposition, the delaying and dividing maneuvers by reformists and opportunists, immediately moving on to action, study and struggle for work, bread and peace, for workers’ freedom and rights, against the reactionary government and rising fascism.

Class unity must be achieved on the basis of struggle, giving impetus to the participation and mobilization of the workers, linking their urgent demands with the struggle against the imperialist war, for the withdrawal from NATO, the EU and every other imperialist alliance.

Our aim is to give impetus to a united proletarian front and, and on this basis, to a popular front against imperialism and fascism.

Hard times await us, which require a multiplied effort for the realization of a systematic work of propaganda, agitation and organization to transform the quality of the workers’ movement, to bring within it the idea-force of the revolutionary break with the capitalist-imperialist system, against opportunist and revisionist positions.

What the situation confirms is the urgent need for the working class, in order to fight victoriously against the bourgeoisie and reaction, to re-build its independent and revolutionary party based on Marxist-Leninist theory and proletarian internationalism.

The bourgeoisie is leading our country to ruin. Only the proletariat can save it with socialist revolution!

*February, 2023*



## **The Militarization in Mexico, Part of Fascistization and Fascism**

In recent years, Mexico has experienced a process of militarization unprecedented in its recent history. The federal government has increasingly turned to the armed forces to combat organized crime and maintain public security throughout the country.

Militarization in Mexico has its roots in the consolidation of the bourgeois democratic state, with the need to impose and safeguard the interests of the national and international oligarchy. In our country, the monopolization of state power by the capitalists has allowed an authoritarian and centralized political system in which the federal government exercises almost absolute control over the armed forces and other security agencies. In this context, political violence and repression are a constant in national life.

In the 1920s, Mexican President Plutarco Elías Calles created the Secret Police, which became the Federal Investigation Agency in 1939. Over the following decades, Mexican governments continued to strengthen the role of the police and armed forces in fighting crime and violence, and in the 1960s, the federal police and military began collaborating on joint operations.

Militarization has been presented as necessary to combat crime and the predatory violence created by the system itself and its decomposition. In fact, it is enough to recall the Dirty War in Mexico to put the class character of the use of force under capitalism into context.

The Dirty War began in the 1960s and continued during the '70s and '80s, although it intensified in the 1980s as a result of the economic crisis that Mexico was going through at that time. During that time, the Mexican government used a number of tactics to repress the working masses and democratic and revolutionary organizations, including enforced disappearance, torture, assassinations, illegal detention and the use of torture to extract false confessions. It is estimated that, during the Dirty War, some 30,000 people disappeared in Mexico.

In 1988, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which had ruled Mexico since the 1920s, won the presidential election amid allegations of electoral fraud. This provoked great outrage in Mexican

society and led to an increase in protests and civil resistance. Despite the fact that the Dirty War in Mexico officially ended in the 1990s, human rights violations and impunity are still present.

Militarization in Mexico has also been influenced by pressure from the international oligarchy, such as the US-led “War on Drugs,” beginning in the 1970s. In 2006, then Mexican President Felipe Calderón launched a military offensive against the drug cartels, which continued under Enrique Peña Nieto (EPN) and now Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO). This was the pretext for the first two to govern in the face of growing popular discontent and led to the rejection by the working masses of the imposition of their position through electoral fraud and today with the latter to cleanse the decomposition of the bourgeois institutions and guarantee the continuity of State Monopoly Capitalism.

In essence, AMLO’s government has maintained the strategy of the financial oligarchy developed by Felipe Calderón and EPN with some nuances. AMLO initially presented himself with his policy of “Hugs, not bullets”. This was supposed to prevent crime and violence through social and economic programs that were meant to improve people’s living conditions, rather than simply increasing the use of force and repression. On the contrary, the National Guard has been created, a security force made up mostly of the military and federal police, which is responsible for public security throughout the country. It fulfilled its class role by contributing to the development of the process of fascistization, which consists of the use of open or covert violence by the army, to prevent or eliminate by action of rejection the mobilization of the people to the policies of the financial oligarchy. This leaves the paramilitary or criminal organizations, which are also the executive arm of the ruling class, active and with force.

The militarization of Mexico through the creation of the National Guard shows their fear of popular self-defense, popular militias or community police, any popular formation that arises out of the control of the State. These organizations seek to preserve life and defend the natural resources from the ongoing and long-term megaprojects. The latter, of course, seek to eliminate the process of democratization and revolutionary change in the country, as a violation of the fundamental human rights of the population. This is the solution imposed by the oligarchy and imperialism to preserve and secure their interests, under the economic and political conditions of the general crisis of capitalism and of recurrent cyclical crises. These are increasingly

## MEXICO – MILITARIZATION, PART OF FASCISTIZATION AND FASCISM

acute amid the growing struggle of the proletarians. As history has shown, social democracy serves capitalism and fascism, and the regime of the so-called Fourth Transformation is no exception.

The militarization of public security in Mexico has serious consequences for the population. Militarization leads to an increase in institutional and non-institutional violence (of the paramilitaries with whom there are no agreements under which they operate); in fact it creates a state of exception and of undeclared siege. It justifies itself through public security and the political “fight against crime” that follows the designs of US imperialism in its fight against drugs. This even gives them the power to intervene in our country under conditions that they determine. The presence of the armed forces in the streets creates fear and distrust among the population, and has led to human rights violations. On the other hand, its naturalization is worrying; together with corporatization, it can create conditions for the open rise of fascism pushed by the rightward shift of MORENA [AMLO’s party] or with the return of extreme right-wing positions as an alternative.

On the other hand, during the EPN government in Mexico, an Internal Security Law was proposed, which sought to regulate the participation of the Armed Forces in the public security of the country, providing a legal framework for their intervention in emergency situations. The same criticisms are now being made against the National Guard. The Internal Security Law was approved by the Congress of the Union in December 2017. However, the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation declared some articles of the law to be



unconstitutional in November 2018, arguing that they violated human rights and the separation of powers. In February 2021, AMLO presented a bill to reform the National Security Law and create a new Internal Security Law that sought, in the same way as the law by EPN, to regulate the participation of the Armed Forces in public security and the fight against organized crime in the country. The only difference is that it was now intended to provide clarity and transparency as to how the military forces can be used in internal security situations, and to establish limits and controls to ensure respect for human rights.

In itself, militarization is part of the trend of the process of fascistization in the country, it can be seen by the increase in the military budget. In recent years, the Mexican government has allocated an increasing amount of resources to national security and the militarization of society (its participation in the construction of the Maya Train, the Dos Bocas Refinery, the administration of ports and airports, the customs administration, etc.). This year alone it has increased a little more than 20%, well above other basic sectors such as education or health care.

But not only that, there is also the rise of right-wing and ultra-right positions, and the constant violation of human rights. The disappearance of social leaders is also an alarming factor that has been taking place in Mexico in recent years. It is enough to recall the disappearance of the 43 students from Ayotzinapa, the massacre of Tlatlaya, as well as the assassination of journalists: Mexico is one of the most dangerous countries for journalists. Since 2000, more than 130 journalists have been killed in the country for political reasons by paramilitarism or also by so-called organized crime.

Finally, the continuation of neoliberal programs shows the tendency to fascistization. The focus on the free market and the privatization of public services in response to the crisis has created conditions leading to increased exploitation of the working class. This has necessitated the emergence of a more reactionary policy of the financial oligarchy to create fear and intimidate the organization of the masses.

Fascistic expressions have been found in Peru against Pedro Castillo, in Bolivia against Evo Morales; in Brazil against Lula and Dilma; in Paraguay against Fernando Lugo and in Honduras against Manuel Zelaya, who were overthrown by “soft coups”; through openly violent actions by the use of the army, paramilitaries

(organized crime) or Islamic State terrorists (Al Qaeda, etc.). These are the arms that carry out the policies of imperialism, as they do in Haiti, Burkina Faso, Tigray, etc.

We must not lose sight of the fact that fascism is the most open form of the power of finance capital itself; it is the organization of terrorist actions against the working class, with the sole objective of maintaining its survival. In the words of G. Dimitrov (1935):

“The accession to power of fascism is not *an ordinary succession* of one bourgeois government by another, but a *substitution* of one state form of class domination of the bourgeoisie – bourgeois democracy – by another form – open terrorist dictatorship.... Before the establishment of a fascist dictatorship, bourgeois governments usually pass through a number of preliminary stages and adopt a number of reactionary measures which directly facilitate the accession of fascism to power. Whoever does not fight the reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie and the growth of fascism *is not in a position to prevent the victory of fascism, but, on the contrary, facilitates that victory.*”

We communists have the duty to unmask the process of fascistization before the masses and call upon them to fight against the reactionary measures that seek to formalize and normalize it in the name of peace, thus revealing its class content.

*Communist Party of Mexico (Marxist-Leninist)  
Member of the International Conference of  
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March 2023*

## **Popular Uprising in Peru, December 2022 to April 2023**

The recent struggle in Peru is the result of several historical factors that have led to a massive popular uprising.

The struggle from the regions to enforce their right to elect, against the usurpation of Dina Boluarte, against centralism from Lima, the constant imposition of projects of [mineral] extraction in the territories of peasant and native communities, the struggles against reductions in workers' rights, the struggle against racism and fascism, took on dimensions that had not been seen, in the regions and for a few weeks in the capital, since the popular uprising to overthrow the neoliberal dictatorship of Fujimori.

The conspiracy of the groups in power, making use of their whole state apparatus: the armed forces and police, Congress, the Judiciary and the Executive Power, have created the framework for the consolidation of a civilian-military dictatorship. This is now in power; it is carrying out repression against the popular movement, has political perks and there is a tremendous campaign from the press that daily strikes against the positions of the workers and peoples. They are also covering up the links to drug trafficking by the main institutions of the State and political parties, such as that of Fujimori. It is also demonizing the popular struggle in order to frustrate the possibility of achieving justice for the murder of more than 78 Peruvians killed by the armed forces and police while exercising their right to protest. These deaths are the responsibility of the politicians and instigators, members of parliament and journalists, as follows:

1. Dina Ercilia Boluarte Zegarra, who usurped the office of President of the Republic; for having command responsibility for crimes against humanity.
2. Pedro Angulo Arana, President of the Council of Ministers; for having command responsibility for crimes against humanity.
3. Luis Alberto Otárola Peñaranda, Minister of Defence; for having command responsibility for crimes against humanity.
4. Retired General José Williams Zapata, President of the Congress of the Republic; for having command responsibility for crimes against humanity.

(5) César Augusto Cervantes Cárdenas, Minister of the Interior; for having command responsibility for crimes against humanity.

6. General Antero Mejía Escajadillo, Chief of the Ayacucho Police Macro Region; for having command responsibility for crimes against humanity.

7. General Jesús Amarildo Vera Ipenza, General Commander of the 2nd Military Infantry Brigade of Ayacucho; Captain in the Peruvian Army, Víctor Grados Rivas (patrol No. 1), for having command responsibility for crimes against humanity.

8. General of the Peruvian National Police (PNP) Carlos Omar Bravo Cáceres, head of the 10th Macro Police Region Puno, who was in charge of the general command, and PNP Colonel Julio Santos Mauricio Contreras, head of the Puno Police Region, the head of the regional operational command, for having command responsibility for crimes against humanity.

9. General Mario Moreno Alvarado, Chief of the Apurímac Police Front, who was awarded by the dictatorship in January 2023 with the appointment as the new head of the General Directorate of Intelligence – Digimin, for having command responsibility for crimes against humanity.

10. Retired Admiral Jorge Carlos Montoya Manrique, Member of Congress of the Republic; for being an instigator of the crimes denounced.

11. Retired Admiral José Ernesto Cueto Aservi; Member of Congress of the Republic; for being an instigator of the crimes denounced.

12. Retired General Roberto Enrique Chiabra Leon, Member of Congress of the Republic, for being an instigator of the crimes denounced.

13. Patricia Rosa Chirinos Venegas; Member of Congress of the Republic, for being an instigator of the crimes denounced.

14. José Augusto Barba Caballero; opinionologist [market researcher], apprentice journalist, for being an instigator of the crimes denounced.

15. Fernando Miguel Rospigliosi Capurro; former Minister of the Interior of the corrupt government of Alejandro Toledo, for being the instigator of the crimes denounced.

16. Edward Phillip Alexander Butters Rivadeneira; supposed journalist, for being an instigator of the crimes denounced.

Among others.

## **I. Background and characterization of Peruvian society**

The semi-feudal society led by the landowning oligarchy entered into crisis in the middle of the 20th century; on the one hand, due to the recovery or take-over of land by the peasant communities and the migration from the countryside to the city by those fleeing the abuses, backwardness and exploitation in the countryside because of the semi-feudal relations. These conditions weakened the two sources of wealth of the feudal society, as they did not have sufficient labor as the means of production used to accumulate wealth and power.

On the other hand, the structural adjustment prescriptions dictated by the United States under the “Alliance for Progress” called for the elimination of feudal remnants in Latin American countries to avoid repeating the experience of another communist Cuba on the continent. This is the phenomenon predicted by Mariátegui in 1929, on imperialism’s interest to also want to sweep away feudalism. However, due to the obstacles imposed by the feudal-bourgeois parliament in the 1960s, with the coup of 1968 the Armed Forces were in charge of striking a blow of preventative effect, that is, to protect the ruling classes, formerly leaders of semi-feudalism, to supposedly strengthen national capital and give way to its bourgeois conversion. This would create a “more democratic” political scenario and avoid a “communist” revolution, while destroying the entire fabric of popular resistance, through a demagogic discourse that put many intellectuals at the tail of Russian and U.S. imperialist interests on the continent.

The reforms undertaken by the military dictatorship (1968-1980) displaced the landowning oligarchy as the hegemonic class in order for the (intermediary) financial bourgeoisie to take its place and promoted the strengthening of an industrial bourgeoisie that controls the national market from the capital. But the working and peasant class, organized and fighting for both political and economic demands, were an obstacle, which they tried to partially channel through the Constitution of 1979. They had to resort to other methods, such as political violence (1980-2000) with state terrorism and the anti-people terrorism of “Shining Path”. In concert with the ruling classes, they took all their actions against the popular movement. They meant the crowning of the plan to be the forced displacement of surplus labor from the countryside to the big cities so that the so-called industrial bourgeoisie could use cheap labor and continue its process of



accumulation. Thus, the population increase in Lima was created with massive new waves of migrations that formed the populous districts. This also depopulated the Andes, where the most valuable mineral resources are found, in order to promote the looting by the transnationals without the slightest organized resistance.

The decapitation of the popular organizations and the razing of peasant communities in order to facilitate the imposition of neoliberalism by the civilian-military government of the corrupt Alberto Fujimori, fulfilled the prescriptions of “State reduction” by the Washington Consensus (1989). This was done through the privatization of public companies, the opening to private capital in areas of basic rights (education, health care, pensions) and privileges for international capital that were embodied in the Constitution of 1993, and the earlier coup d'état of April 5, 1992.

In the last decade of the 20th century the big financial bourgeoisie was consolidated as a hegemonic class with the Romero, Brescia, Rodríguez Pastor (Intercorp) and Benavides groups at the head. This destroyed the illusions that the industrial bourgeoisie would become the national bourgeoisie; instead, it gave rise to a middle bourgeoisie, mainly in the area of services: education, health care and transport with Acuña, Luna Gálvez, Ramírez and Huancaruna.

All this while the working class was deprived of rights, without organization to defend itself, and exploited through capitalist social relations of production. Its natural resources were destined to supply foreign industry and only with the promise of becoming an individual petty entrepreneur or petty bourgeoisie. This ended up with **Peru becoming a backward capitalist society dependent on imperialism within the framework of neocolonialism, leaving our country as a semi-colony in the scenario of inter-imperialist contention.**

The following decades after the fall of Fujimori's regime have led to greater consolidation of the neoliberal model, in which plunder, exploitation and corruption have prevailed over the general welfare. Alejandro Toledo, Alan García and Ollanta Humala continued the policies of privatization and privileged opening to transnational capital. But the phony nationalist Ollanta Humala entered the government with a reformist plan that he threw away in order to surrender himself to the arms of the financial bourgeoisie and the NGO technocrats. Under his government and that of Kuczynski-Vizcarra, there were more attempts to reorder the different sectors of the economy in education, transport and health care, so that the big financial

bourgeoisie could concentrate more wealth and displace the middle bourgeoisie that emerged during the 1990s.

The struggles within the bourgeoisie for better conditions for plundering the country and leading the State have led to the sharpening of the recent political crises and gain better positions according to their ability to drag the people into the struggles that most favored their group. In this way, the different right-wing parties were represented in Parliament: Fuerza Popular, Apra, Perú Podemos, Acción Popular, etc. against Peruanos por el Cambio, Partido Morado, Nuevo Perú, Juntos por el Perú, etc. They have had no other reason than to contest economic interests in state institutions affecting the working people. They sometimes try to use the just struggles of the working class, youth and peoples to strike a blow another bourgeois sector, as in the cases of the University Law, New Youth Labor Regime (Pulpín Law), Teachers' Strike of 2017, Marches against Merino, among others.

It has been the contradictions of the capitalist system, the barbarism of the neoliberal economic model and disputes within the bourgeoisie that have left the State unworkable. It was totally incapable of confronting, first, the disastrous consequences of the Coastal El Niño phenomenon, the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and recently the consequences of Cyclone Yaku, which left thousands of people affected in the northern part of the country. It was the working people who suffered the most and at the same time mainly aided themselves in surviving the different climatic and health crises that occurred. This exposed all the precariousness of health care, education and work that neoliberalism has bequeathed us.

These events led the Peruvian people, mainly in the regions, to raise their political consciousness, so as not to follow at the tail of any bourgeois sector and demand a change of the economic model with reforms in the Constitution, through a Democratic and Popular Constituent Assembly, in which not only the parties registered for elections would intervene in the discussion of a new constitution but also the organized people. In this sense, in the 2021 elections the people voted for the candidate who in his discourse was closest to offering that change; this was the reason why Professor Pedro Castillo Terrones capitalized on all the accumulated popular discontent and was elected president of Peru.

## **II. The character and limitations of Pedro Castillo's government**

The struggles within the bourgeoisie led to the discrediting of the right-wing parties, but mainly to their fragmentation for the 2021 elections. This was moderately taken advantage of by the left-wing parties that were registered for the elections: Peru Libre [Free Peru] (18%) and Juntos por el Perú [Together for Peru] (8%). The latter's hesitation to raise the banner of the Constituent Assembly was due to the fact that there are many intellectuals in its ranks from NGOs linked to large-scale mining and the financial bourgeoisie, that aim to prettify extractivism in order to continue living at the expense of the destruction of the country and displacement of peoples.

Finally, the electorate most dissatisfied with the economic model leant towards Perú Libre in the 2021 elections, having to compete in the second round with the most rancid party linked to drug trafficking and bourgeois mafia: Fuerza Popular [Popular Force] (13%).

In the second round, despite the whole defamation campaign carried out by the mass media, which had some effect in Lima, the coast and the northern forest, it could not prevent the victory of Pedro Castillo, who came to the presidency with overwhelming support in the Andean regions, mainly those in the south of the country.

Pedro Castillo and Peru Libre picked up on popular demands such as the Constituent Assembly, nationalization of our natural resources, protection of national production, free entry to universities, etc. They extolled the ideological dichotomy between left and right, the geographical dichotomy between Lima and the regions, criticized the monopolies and the dominance of U.S. imperialism in our economy. However, their ideology, drawn up by Vladimir Cerrón, did not deal with the class struggle and had as its goal only to create a “popular capitalism” that would replace neoliberalism.

The victory of Pedro Castillo was never accepted by the majority of right-wing parliamentary blocs, mainly those that represent the most conservative and affluent section of the middle bourgeoisie: Fuerza Popular, Avanza País, Renovación Popular. The formation of Castillo's first cabinet, led by Guido Bellido, tried to be a broad coalition among the leftist groups: FENATEP, Juntos por el Perú and Perú Libre, which showed its most extreme sectarianism, always trying to place itself as the “left” of the caviar sector linked to NGOs. This broke the unity of the popular camp and led them closer and

closer to reaction. Phrases such as “the main enemy were the caviars” took the focus off the political project of consolidating a popular democratic alternative for the people, in order to focus on a small war of interests in which the Ministries would be distributed according to the strength of each sector and their contribution to Castillo’s campaign during the elections.

The first cabinet was constantly attacked by the right, the vacancy<sup>1</sup> was the main theme of the demonstrations of the parties of reaction. They persecuted every force that was considered progressive or democratic in order to provide the new government no basis or possibility of a better orientation. The first to be censored and abandoned by the Castillo government was Foreign Minister Héctor Béjar. Despite having served the interests of the military in the coup of Juan Velasco Alvarado, he had denounced the fact that the Peruvian Navy was always linked to terrorist acts and that the Shining Path was an invention of the CIA to destroy the popular movement in Peru and pave the way for neoliberalism. The censure of this foreign minister made clearer the attempt of the Executive to achieve a coexistence with Congress, giving its first sign of weakness in the face of future coup attempts.

**What followed that cabinet were cabinets serving at the convenience of the bourgeoisie, mainly with members of the financial bourgeoisie who kept the neoliberal model going;** such as the ministers of economy Oscar Graham and Kurt Burneo.

The loss of direction of the new government and the desperate race of the leftist members of congress to secure resources from Parliament and accommodate themselves to their new privileges, led to the fragmentation of the democratic and leftist force in Congress. They were all trying to influence their parties in order to gain more positions in the ministries that even allowed Congress, with a reactionary majority, to modify the Constitution in order to avoid a call for a referendum and limit the use of motions of confidence. This was a weapon that, if the Executive did not use it from the beginning to defend its ministers, Congress ended up seizing.

**Promises such as for a Constituent Assembly, free admission to the university, a second agrarian reform, etc. were dismissed**

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<sup>1</sup> Article 113 of the Peruvian Constitution allows the Congress to remove the President by a declaration of permanent moral incapacity – *translator’s note*.

**or distorted so that the [neoliberal] model would not be disrupted in any sector of the economy. They were only raised demagogically when the executive felt cornered.** Despite accommodating himself to the schemes of the financial bourgeoisie, Pedro Castillo always faced a hostile Congress; a corporate press that sought to discredit him for the smallest thing; a Prosecutor's Office and Constitutional Court subservient to the Legislature; and Armed Forces and National Police that had no qualms about showing their political interference, which had not been seen since the time of Fujimori but this time in opposition to the Executive.

Added to this was the fragmentation of the left-wing blocs. Perú Libre proved to have no cadres and to be a hodgepodge of atomized interests of the provincial petty bourgeoisie; it did not have the slightest ideological unity and party discipline. Not only could it not keep the teachers' sector within its caucus, but it had desertions within its own ranks. It was unable to lead the government and even worse to maintain a single position among its parliamentary representatives regarding it. Castillo could only maintain the support of his parliamentary blocs based on his returning them favors in the public administration. This modus operandi was repeated for all those who provided their support during the electoral campaign: relatives, compatriots, small and medium provincial business owners. These were the ones who end up providing arguments to reaction for them to unify around making him look like the most corrupt political figure of all time and in pressing harder for the vacancy.

All this led to the deterioration of popular support for the government, and the enormous mobilization that had led to his victory had dissipated. On the other hand, the hostility he posed to Congress despite the change of course of the government was due to the fact that most of its members were representatives of the most affluent sector of the middle bourgeoisie, who since before Castillo were in conflict with the big financial bourgeoisie for control of different sectors of the economy: Education, Health Care and Transport.

Castillo upheld the laws that sought to rearrange the board of directors of the Superintendence of University Education (SUNEDU). Although this did not mean major change in the commodified higher education system, it did provide greater participation for the middle bourgeoisie to license their universities, which in many cases could not meet the minimum operating conditions. The case of the Attorney General's Office and the Judiciary was similar; their control by the

APRA and pro-Fujimori forces was more in the interest of sectors of the middle bourgeoisie. This was an interest that would later be repeated with the Constitutional Court.

The opposition of the corporate press to the government was due to the withdrawal of direct state funding to provide this to the provincial and alternative media, that somehow tried to inform about the minimal advances of the new government. This allowed all the leading stories of the radio, television and newspapers to focus on the presidential vacancy. This would allow them to regain their State subsidies and not go bankrupt, since their precarious level of information did not allow them to be an alternative of consultation for the people in general.

The Armed Forces and the National Police were always on the side of drug trafficking, the most rancid sector of Peruvian reaction. They biased by their traditional anti-communism and anti-leftism instilled by officers from U.S. military schools and the narrative that it was these institutions that ended terrorism in Peru, when in fact they were part of the same plan and acted in concert.

The continuous hostility of Congress to the Castillo government, with the search to declare his vacancy due to moral incapacity, added to the worsening of the economic situation. This was due to the variation of the exchange rate with respect to the dollar, the rise in fuel prices, the speculation unleashed by the financial bourgeoisie, which affected the increase in prices of the basic cost of food. This made the Executive look cornered. He vacillated between supporting the neoliberal plundering practices recommended by the technocrats of the financial bourgeoisie and trying to regain popular support.

The last decrees on extending unionization, prohibiting labor outsourcing in basic areas of enterprises, his refusal to assume the social cost of opening the mining-energy projects that had been rejected by the population and the motions of confidence to try to move forward with the Constituent Assembly, show that the Executive was late in coming to the second option. That is why the big financial bourgeoisie ended up withdrawing its support and the demobilized working class could not defend the program that brought Castillo to the government and be the counterweight to stop the coup attempt by Congress. This was even more the case with the accusations of corruption that the corporate press publicized that were decisive in causing the fall of Pedro Castillo.

All the twists and turns, vacillations and attempts to govern in favor of all social classes show that the **government of Pedro Castillo had a social-democratic, petty-bourgeois character that tried to consolidate a semi-Bonapartism. This, due to lack of experience, was a time bomb which most affected the working people.** Although he pointed out democratic demands that could have achieved a better distribution of wealth; instead, he avoided a confrontation of social classes only by trying to carry out mild reforms under capitalism that did not even seek to replace the scaffolding of the exhausted neo-liberal system.

### **III. The Crisis and the Legislative Coup**

Our economy, which had not yet recovered from the ravages of Covid-19, is once again suffering the ravages of the war that NATO and Russia are waging in Ukraine. The international inflationary phenomenon has affected Peru, fundamentally the purchasing power of the Peruvian working class more than 80% of which subsists by informal work. This means that it earns its income in the marginal sector of the economy and does not have labor rights, so that it is completely abandoned by the state.

The increase in the prices of fertilizer and the absence of rain in the first productive stage of the 2023 campaign hit the small and medium farmers, who in many cases have been ruined and will ultimately be impacted by a decrease of more than 25% in the food supply for this year.

**The imperialist contention of the United States, the European Union and Japan with the China-Russia bloc made our country another arena of contention for the provision of natural resources, especially lithium and mining resources.** The government of Pedro Castillo maintained relations of dependence with both imperialist blocs, never distanced itself from US imperialism and received the OAS missions as a way of showing the support it had from US imperialism; thus, it did not get closer to the BRICS forces until the last stage of its government. **This ended up reinforcing the alliance between the two bourgeois sectors that had been in conflict for almost ten years: the big financial bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie which, with the backing of the US embassy, were more emboldened to carry out a coup d'état that would allow the country to align itself more closely with US domination.**

The coup was pre-planned. It showed the previous coordination of the parties of reaction with Dina Boluarte to accept the position [of president] and maintain Congress until 2026 in exchange for putting aside their investigations in the subcommittee on constitutional affairs and take advantage of the entire period to renew the 46 energy mining projects that have to renew concession contracts with the State this year, 2023. One can also see the displacement of the mining concentration of the Chinese and their allies, which reached more than 45%, to new mining concentration in the hands of the U.S. side.

The motion of early vacancy was presented by Edgar Málaga of the Partido Morado (the main party of the financial bourgeoisie), and there was the paranoid persecution by the Prosecutor of the Nation, Patricia Benavides. She is known for covering up for her sister in drug trafficking cases and not having the academic merits required for the position. They also show that the coup plotters were strengthening ties in the different economic, political, judicial and international spheres. However, by December 7, they had not achieved the votes necessary for the vacancy. Castillo had to provide the pretext by giving a pseudo coup speech without mobilizing the population in his favor, much less having the support of the Armed Forces. Either he was politically naive in the face of a trap by the Joint Command of the Armed Forces (led by the US side) or he wanted to become a martyr exiled in Mexico; what happened ended up favoring the Legislative Coup in the face of a rapid and irregular vacancy that even had some votes from the leftist parliamentary groups. We now see





that the latter were more concerned with their pockets than with “defending democracy” and the workers’ program.

The political crisis provoked by sectors of the bourgeoisie and the increasingly meager popular support for the Castillo government, created the conditions for the latter to believe in all the tricks that US imperialism devised. Therefore he ventured to give a speech seeking to close the Congress of the Republic and received as a measure backed by all the institutions administered by reaction with a presidential vacancy. This failed to comply with all the measures specified in the Constitution and ended up as a Legislative Coup that was followed by the current civilian-military dictatorship headed by Dina Boluarte, Alberto Otarola and José Williams Zapata.

Dina Boluarte took office without any sign of wanting to resign; the Congress and the Constitutional Court overturned the few progressive decrees issued by the previous government and a death cabinet was formed chaired by Alberto Otárola. This put in place all the repressive machinery with the full support of the financial and middle bourgeoisie and its de facto powers (the corporate press) and the US Embassy.

The response of the population was not long in coming.

#### **IV. The popular uprising and the repressive response**

The vacancy of Pedro Castillo on December 7 led to the breaking out of the discontent of the classes and populations abandoned by the economic model, which had been his main electoral support in 2021. His improper departure eliminated any hope of changing the model and led to the socio-political explosion in southern Peru. The first region to revolt was Apurímac, followed by Cusco, Puno, Ayacucho, Huancavelica, Madre de Dios, Moquegua, Ica and Tacna. Then follow La Libertad, Cajamarca, Junín and other parts of the country. The main demands were the convocation of a Sovereign and Popular Constituent Assembly, the resignation of Dina Boluarte, the closing of the Congress and also in the southern regions the reinstatement of Castillo for having been illegally deposed and arrested when he was still President of the Republic.

Immediately the Armed Forces and the PNP assumed their repressive role, claiming their first victims in Apurímac and perpetrating real massacres in Huamanga and Juliaca. The continuous human rights violations were applauded by the government, the Joint Command of the Armed Forces and CONFIEP [National Confederation

of Private Business Institutions] through their corporate press that once again had ample state financing. So far they have left about 78 dead, thousands injured and hundreds of illegally detained. The judicial system was also joined in organizing repression by serving as a weapon of persecution against demonstrators.

The civilian-military dictatorship formed through the political interference of the Armed Forces was clear, not only with the retired henchmen who led and made up the legislature (José Williams Zapata, Jorge Montoya, Roberto Chiabra Leon and José Cueto), but with the continuous statements and threats by the military from the platforms offered by the Executive, to the point of putting under its rule areas declared to be in emergency in order to lead the indiscriminate repression.

All this repression, as a way of containing the class struggle, led to profits by opening up the mining-energy projects to the big financial bourgeoisie and a new rearrangement of the educational market in favor of the middle bourgeoisie through changing the board of directors of SUNEDU. It is the **financial bourgeoisie that obtains the greatest profits, seeking to quickly hand over our resources to imperialist capital led by the United States and its armed wing NATO, as has been happening with the planned delivery of lithium to the Canadians.**

The outbreak of the conflict brought to the surface all the defects of Peruvian society. **In addition to the class nature of the State, racism and discrimination were used to justify the repression and intimidation of the demonstrators.** Even so, the people were not deterred from going out and mobilizing, blocking roads and peacefully taking over public institutions. Many sectors, from traders to peasants, the agricultural and urban proletariat, students and progressive intellectuals, went out to fight, in many cases going beyond their own organizations.

**One of the limitations of the uprising was the lack of initial coordination through a unified command or committee.** This was used by reaction to brutally suppress the uprisings that were erupting spontaneously in each region and mobilizing in each place where the situation was most acute. This could be possible, but also difficult to suffocate, showing that if the uprising had been simultaneous it would have quickly brought down the dictatorship.

**The other limitation of the movement was that metropolitan Lima did not wake up massively, as it had in 2020.** The trade union

federations, led by the revisionist and treacherous “Communist” Party-Unity and Patria Roja did not let the working class fulfil its vanguard role. Thus, for the entire month of December 2022, the provinces burned with protests, mainly in the south, and the capital only demonstrated in a mild form of vigils or walks through the District of Miraflores (the financial center). This made the provinces decide to postpone the “Taking of Lima” for the following month.

### **V. The process of the “Taking of Lima” and the awakening of the zones of the capital.**

Although the government did everything possible to prevent the struggle in the interior from reaching Lima, it did not achieve its objective. The delegations were breaking through every obstacle on the roads imposed by the dictatorship. It was the people themselves who financed their mobilization. All the denunciation and defamation by the press that the delegations were financed by drug trafficking, illegal mining or Bolivians did not help. One after another their lies were exposed and the zones of Lima prepared to receive their class brothers.

Their reception in the capital, although it was improvised at first, still became massive. Students from universities such as San Marcos and the National University of Engineering made the facilities of their study centers available to accommodate many delegations, and others accepted donations to accommodate them. In the same way, the districts in the zones of the city mobilized to provide accommodations and collect donations for the provincial comrades and maintain the struggle that was now developing mainly in the capital.

Although the first mobilizations did not have the hoped-for effect, due to the lack of a central organization and the deviations of the leadership of the General Federation of the Workers of Peru (CGTP), this showed that the largest trade union federation took a totally conciliatory attitude toward the dictatorship.

The violent attack on the campus of San Marcos University left more than 200 detained and multiple humiliations that made the population and students more indignant. These acts violated the university autonomy and human rights, orchestrated by the Rector, the Executive Power, the PNP, the Prosecutor’s Office, SUNEDU, as well as some Armed Forces, while they were intimidated from a possible attack on the National University of Engineering. However, this only

ended up unmasking the true dictatorial character of the regime before the majority of the people of Lima.

In this way the mobilizations and measures of struggle gained more strength. There were many sacrificial marches through the main roads of the city, mainly in the northern zone, and there were massive demonstrations of support.

Thus, on January 28 a forceful mobilization was carried out in which the repressive forces, not having complete control of the situation, resorted to indiscriminate repression, assassinating Víctor Santiesteban, leaving dozens injured and detained without respecting International Humanitarian Law. It reached the point of intimidating the health brigades and the alternative press. For this reason, international organizations currently admit that during the repressions there were human rights violations for which Dina Boluarte, Alberto Otarola and company will have to face charges.

These events caused the dictatorship to lose allies and isolate itself further internationally. Not only did the social democratic governments of Latin America not recognize it, but even countries of the European Union and the United States itself hesitated to continue giving it their confidence. Faced with this, the regime only chose to continue the repression. With the help of the Mayor of Lima Rafael López Aliaga, plazas were closed and then the entire historic center of Lima to prevent demonstrations. He forbade the slightest gathering and violently dispersed any demonstration.

The problem for the popular movement was the lack of a central organization. There was an attempt to remedy this with a descent to the plain by the provincial delegations to demand that the two committees of struggle existing so far be unified into one. The National Unified Committee of Struggle of Peru (CONULP) was formed to try to organize the “Second Taking of Lima”. This also did not fulfill its objective because the movement was in a moment of ebb, but it revealed the lack of respect that the armed forces and police have, not only for the lives of the demonstrators, but also for their own troops. This was seen by the disastrous fact that six army soldiers drowned in the Ilave River in Puno, because of the order given by Captain Josué Frisancho Lazo, who has a history of crimes of rape and is now being investigated for giving an unnecessary instruction to his troops.

The creation of CONULP is a success because it makes it possible to better centralize the struggle against the dictatorship and achieve the Popular Constituent Assembly. But it has to overcome

many limitations, ranging from understanding that the struggle in the regions has a different dynamic than in the capital; **overcoming the ethnocentric discourse that only limits the struggle to a dichotomy between native peoples and creoles or between the regions and the centralism of Lima, without understanding that the main contradiction is class.** This in turn would allow uniting the democratic unions that are willing to confront the dictatorship contrary to the compromising of the trade union federations.

**Without the raising of the class consciousness of the workers so that they assume their historical role and without the organizational participation of the working class in CONULP, it will not be possible to achieve the maximum objective of the Constituent Assembly that would put an end to this plundering model imposed on us by the dictatorship of capital.**

## VI. Political Platform and Joining of Forces

The struggle that began on December 7, 2022, although it has not yet fulfilled its main objectives, is far from over. There have been defeats in the direct confrontation with the forces of reaction, which were the result of the initial dispersal of the popular movement. However, this does not take away from the fact that it has served to unmask liberal democracy, which is nothing more than the purest bourgeois dictatorship that becomes fascist when this class sees its interests threatened.

It is possible for the popular movement to win a psychological and ideological victory over the bourgeoisie, because now 69% of Peruvians agree with the convening of the Constituent Assembly. Even more, they demand that both the Executive and Legislative Power immediately call elections to cease their functions.

Both the alternative media and the agitation of the social, cultural and popular organizations have managed to allow a discourse that takes into account the problems of the population. This makes worthless the false narratives of the corporate press and the government's henchmen. It is now necessary to raise consciousness and further explain the need to achieve the CONULP's platform:

- 1° Resignation of Dina Boluarte.
- 2° The closing of the coup Congress.
- 3° New elections in 2023.
- 4° Convocation of the Sovereign and Popular Constituent Assembly.

- 5° Freedom for those unjustly and illegally detained and imprisoned.
- 6° Criminal trials and punishment of the direct and indirect culprits of the 78 people assassinated and for human rights violations.
- 7° No to Contracts Law<sup>2</sup>, [for] nationalization of the natural resources given as concessions to the transnationals.

In achieving these objectives, we must continue to join forces. Lima already has a position similar to that of the province, but it must be willing to express itself to the same degree that the brothers of the interior have. Here is where the establishment of the greatest number of networks is needed with the various spaces that spread and explain the platform as well as the call to mobilize throughout the capital.

The recent struggle has shown the need for all kinds of organizations to come together, from the alternative press, health brigades or volunteer legal teams. They contribute to better resistance against the onslaught of reaction. Strengthening ties and including them within the popular bodies of the districts and zones will further strengthen Lima's combative level.

### **VII. The work in Lima, the capital of Peru**

The demagogy of the ultraconservative and fascist Rafael López Aliaga and his Popular Renewal party is now being seen by their inability to face the impact of Cyclone Yaku. The Metropolitan Municipality of Lima cannot provide public cleanliness, contribute to protecting the health of the people, or bring water and drainage to the neighborhoods. López Aliaga also cannot put mass transit in order and has had one of the most disastrous first 100 days of municipal government in history.

### **VIII. Appeal of the PCP (M-L)**

- We call on all democratic forces and the consistent left to advance to the centralization of the national-popular struggle so that the established objectives of overthrowing the dictatorship

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<sup>2</sup> According to article 62 of the Constitution of 1993, contracts cannot be modified by laws and disputes over the terms can only be settled by the courts – *translator's note*.

can be quickly fulfilled and to open a new scenario of discussion on the Peru we want, through a new constitutional basis.

- We call for the raising of the class discourse that will help to have a clearer understanding of the character of the State and the balance of forces in struggle. Continuing the ethnocentric discourse will limit our inability to win over the proletariat that mainly feels the oppression of capital over any discrimination of race or gender.
- We call for joining Lima to the struggle, which is crucial since one third of the population of the whole country lives in the capital. We appeal to the class solidarity of the Lima worker and the cultural brotherhood that will bring greater successes than the chauvinist speeches that try to break off the south of Peru.
- Popular referendums can provide the first reason for the organs of popular power that aspire to replace bourgeois power in every area of the city and the country. Trying to bring them about can provide a resource to the working class so that in the not-so-distant future it no longer fights just for a Popular Constituent Assembly that modifies the normative basis of the State but for the complete seizure of political power.

***Long live the struggles to overthrow the civilian-military dictatorship!***

***For a new Political Constitution, Sovereign and Popular Constituent Assembly!***

***Only the people can save the people!***

***Long live the struggles of the working people and the worker-peasant alliance for national and social liberation!***

*Nilo Candela*  
*For the Political Bureau of the PCP (m-l)*  
*April 2023*

## Drawing Lessons from the Past to Build the Future

March 5, 2023, marked the 70th anniversary of the death of Comrade Stalin. The attacks of the class enemies are concentrated on his historical figure: libels are written using the technique of the pro-Nazi tycoon and father of Yankee yellow journalism, W. R. Hearst<sup>1</sup>, to falsify that rich historical process. To this sinister task of concealing the Soviet experience, the various currents of revisionism and opportunism are applied in our country: Trotskyism, the “progressive” bourgeoisie which shares the government with one of the forces most committed to the liberal monarchist state, with a servile attitude toward Yankee and European imperialism; and even forces which, by deliberately comparing Putin’s sinister regime with glorious Soviet Russia, contribute to confusing and hiding the lessons of that historical period whose knowledge is so important for the proletariat.

Why so much interest in slinging mud on a State that was the standard bearer of the defeat of Nazi fascism? Why the interest in permanently sully an experience that marked history by opening a new era: that of the proletarian revolutions?

We communists consider that the current technological development, the degree of formal socialization of production, which implies the coordination of enterprises and industrial plants scattered in dozens of countries, facilitates the research and development of new methods of production; it allows the rapid adaptation of the production of goods and services and their distribution to the needs of each moment, the needs of the capitalists, of course. This degree of

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<sup>1</sup> His slogan “I make news” illustrates his lying and fallacious technique; like that of the cynical and criminal Nazi propaganda minister, Goebbels, who wrote: *“All propaganda must be popular, adapting its level to the least intelligent of the individuals to whom it is addressed. The larger the mass to be convinced, the smaller the mental effort to be made. The receptive capacity of the masses is limited and their understanding is poor; In addition, they have great ability to forget.”*



socialization of production in the power of the proletariat, however, could be used for the satisfaction of the needs of society as a whole and, objectively, would help the implementation of social control of the economy, and in that sense bring us closer to socialism.

To this extent it is this true that, in fact, socialism is the only way out of the present contradiction between the socialization of production and the private character of the appropriation of the social product, which is concentrated in a handful of capitalists with personal incomes that equal or exceed the total income of some countries. A handful of capitalists dominate the state structures and place them at their service, foment wars, curtail rights, ruin nations and the living condition of the social majority; this is a contradiction that generates hunger, misery and wars. Never has the slogan “socialism or barbarism” been more true than today.

Marx’s prophetic words about the consequences of the triumph of free trade (which today we call globalization)<sup>2</sup> are felt in their lives by workers all over the world. That is why imperialist capital is so keen to conceal the experience of the Soviet Union, to lie and misrepresent its achievements, to vilify and tarnish the memory of its leaders.

The existence of the Soviet Union provides transcendental lessons for all communists in orienting the struggle of the proletariat for its emancipation. Many and the most important political struggles that the Bolsheviks waged against the opportunist degeneration at that time (on the role of the State, the character of the revolution, the role of the Party of the proletariat, etc.) are still fully valid today. This is especially true when many of the detachments that claim to be followers of Leninism have gone over with arms and baggage to the camp of revisionism and deny in practice what they affirm in their

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<sup>2</sup> “You cannot escape fate; in other words, you cannot escape the necessary consequences of your own actions.... If these wages began by making the man work to live, they end by making him live the life of a machine. His existence has no other value than that of a simple productive force, and the capitalist treats him accordingly... So long as you let the relation of wage labor to capital exist, it does not matter how favorable the conditions under which the exchange of commodities takes place, there will always be a class which will exploit and a class which will be exploited.” Karl Marx: *On the Question of Free Trade*.

preaching on internationalism, the character of the revolutionary State and the role of the party. But, above all, it proves that, even in the worst objective conditions, in the face of all kinds of threats and pressures, the proletariat can triumph if it acts in a united way, with firmness and clarity of ideas.

That is why, today, when so many people, even in the name of “communism”, trample on the example of the communists who led the construction of the first proletarian state in history, it is more important than ever to draw the lessons of that magnificent experience. Today, when the bourgeoisie tries to prevent its repetition, we must expose its lessons even more clearly before the proletariat, to make it clear that we communists do not fight for a chimera, to recall that the working class took power and created a state, the Soviet State, whose victories terrified the bourgeoisie and filled the international proletariat with hope.

The communists had to face barely imaginable challenges: to build an industrial economy on the basis of an almost totally agrarian one, to establish a state structure that grouped different nationalities, avoiding inefficiency but also bureaucratism and the creation of a caste of bourgeois officials; and at the same time to guarantee control of the State and the coordination between the organizations of the State and of the proletariat, to advance in the consolidation of the cultural changes and to assure from the beginning social rights and benefits in all orders, etc., etc.

It had to do so, moreover, under conditions of permanent aggression by the main imperialist powers of the period and in record time, since it was evident that with the rapid evolution of imperialism towards terrorist forms of the capitalist State, one of its first objectives would be to put an end to the communist danger. This would liquidate the living example that the very existence of the USSR meant for the international proletariat, which put capitalism at risk.

For the communists, it is not a question of copying the steps taken by the Bolsheviks; it is not a question of making a limited and stultified use of Marxism, as did the revisionists whom Lenin criticized, without taking into account the changes in the situation since then: From the enormous development that imperialist capitalism and “globalization” have reached, to the triumph of revisionism in the USSR itself and the degeneration of most of the communist detachments, their causes, their current positions that cause great confusion

and discredit the role of Marxism in the analysis and determination of alternatives, etc.

It is a question of drawing the lessons of its action that are still valid, insofar as they are based on decisive aspects relative to the attitude that today's communists must have to face the new challenges, to achieve the objective of advancing towards socialism. These are some of the main lessons of that experience:

**1) The decisive importance of a rigorously class-based and revolutionary Party that groups together the clearest elements of the working class.**

*“The German social democrats who came to power in 1918 had ceased to be revolutionaries a long time ago, in spite of the fact that they continued to regularly use revolutionary ‘clichés’. Now that they had to prove who they were, they revealed that in reality they had been counter-revolutionaries.” Failure of a Revolution, Germany 1918-1919 by Sebastian Haffner (translated from the Spanish).*

In Germany there was also a revolution, a revolution that was drowned in blood by the leaders of revisionist social democracy themselves, who murdered Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg to prevent the German communists from being able to guide the steps of the revolutionary proletariat. And, to prevent the proletariat from seizing power, they did not hesitate to help themselves with the shadiest elements of reaction.

This is how the writer Sebastian Haffner refers to it: *“From January to May 1919, with off-shoots reaching into the height of summer, a bloody civil war was waged in Germany, leaving in its wake thousands of dead, and unspeakable bitterness. This civil war set the points for the unhappy history of the Weimar Republic to which it gave birth, and the rise of the Third Reich which it spawned.... The victors [of this civil war] ... formed a strange coalition: a coalition of Social Democrats and — Nazis.... One can no more describe in detail the five or six months of civil war in 1919 than one can do it for their counterpart, the five or six days of revolution in November 1918.... then the unresisted victory of the Revolution, now the triumphal march, not unresisted but irresistible, of the counter-Revolution.... what had then been consummated with lightning speed, now proceeded with tortuous, methodical slowness; then little blood had been spilt, now it poured in rivers... Of this there can be no doubt: the initiative for the civil war, the decision to fight it and therefore*

*also — if we want to apply such concepts — the ‘blame’ for the civil war rested unquestionably with the Social Democrat leadership”* *ibid*, English edition.

Those who, violating their commitment to reject war credits, by voting unanimously in favor of them in the bourgeois Parliament, had betrayed the European proletariat and threw it into the carnage of the First World War in the interests of big monopoly capital, proved once again their reactionary character. They were ultimately responsible for the defeat of the revolution in Germany, relying for its defeat on the forces that would nourish the Nazi regime.

As Lenin had rightly predicted, a centralized Party was necessary, one that was rigorously class-based, made up of the best cadres of the working class and capable of an application of Marxism that was not stultified and formal, but rich and capable of analyzing the changes in the objective situation, without forgetting the ultimate goal. This had to be a party closely linked to the masses, able to translate their needs into political action, capable of rejecting the blandishments of the class enemy and its blackmail. In short, the existence of a revolutionary party like the Bolsheviks was decisive for the victory of the proletariat in Russia; while the strongest, most organized and most theoretically trained party of the international proletariat was vilely betrayed by a leadership sold out to capital many years earlier.

Hence, we communists must defend above all the revolutionary character of the Party; we must relentlessly fight hesitation and ideological confusion; we must strengthen our organization as much as the link with our class. Particularly in times like the present, in which the acute crisis of imperialism is transferred with all its forcefulness to the working class and the popular sectors, when unemployment, social degradation and the threat of war has spread and confusion dominates, this teaching is essential.

**2) We must not conceive of Marxist materialism as a dogma, but as a guide for action, which allows us to determine the main aspects at each moment, to establish priorities without losing sight of the ultimate goal of our struggle. This is not to carry out a more ethical and efficient management of the bourgeois state, but to destroy it, to overcome it in order to build a new proletarian state.**

*“... A socialist revolution in Russia... could only be a kind of fore-taste, an advance guard; if it was not immediately overtaken and*

*absorbed by the world revolution, it could not in the long run persist; at that time they were all still convinced of this...*" *The Pact with the Devil*. S. Haffner

The revolution, the formation and consolidation of the first proletarian state in history did not take place in an advanced country, as anticipated by a mechanical reading of Marxism which ignored the changes produced with the rise of imperialism. It was not in Germany, where Marxism had taken root earlier and with greater force, where the proletariat had the most powerful organizations and the most experienced leaders; but in backward, semi-feudal and peasant Russia, where for the first time a proletarian state was formed which was able to consolidate itself and carry out a process of economic, political and social development without parallel in the history of mankind.

The traitorous leaders of German social democracy, after the Soviet revolution, continued to deny the possibility that Soviet Russia could even consolidate itself as a state capable of defending itself; they continued to support imperialist terrorism against the young proletarian republic; they were, in fact, one of its bitterest enemies.

And yet it was possible. In the face of the mad childish impulsiveness of Trotskyism and the fear of not a few of its leaders; in the face of the "wise" advice of academic Marxists, who denied the historical possibility that socialism could develop in a single country, especially in one as backward as Russia; the audacity, political intelligence, tactical flexibility, combined with strategic firmness and a profound link with the masses, achieved victory in the face of the encirclement of imperialism in the civil war provoked by the intervention of 200,000 foreign military personnel from a dozen countries.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "... *Between the spring and summer of 1918, the Entente formed a very heterogeneous but terribly broad civil war coalition in Russia.: the ultra-conservative generals and admirals of the Tsar, the liberal bourgeoisie with its parties; the Mensheviks—the Russian equivalent of Social Democracy—and the Socialist-Revolutionary Left, that is, 'anarchists' and 'nihilists.'* Before 1917, all these groups and parties had fought to the death against each other, but now they had only one enemy: the Bolsheviks..." "The Pact with the Devil", S. Haffner

After the loss of its main leader, Lenin, the titanic task of industrialization began; again in the face of the criminal hatred of Trotsky and his clique and the threats of imperialism. Overcoming all kinds of hardships, with the energy of the class that makes the machinery of the world work, the Soviet Union was placed at the head of the group of the most advanced economies, being a pioneer in social development. It recognized political, economic and social rights that capitalism has always denied to the proletariat; it helped the communists of the world to advance, to defend themselves from the blows of the enemy and to attack, always attack, with audacity. It helped to recover hope in the victory of socialism throughout the world, being the living example that it is not only necessary, but possible, to defeat capital.

**3) The revolution was not the fruit of a pact, nor of a “natural” evolution of the tsarist regime or of the participation of socialists in the government. It was possible only insofar as the masses, led by the Bolshevik Party, destroyed the bourgeois State and began the building of a new proletarian State.**

*“Even in the most democratic bourgeois state the oppressed masses at every step encounter the crying contradiction between the formal equality proclaimed by the ‘democracy’ of the capitalists and the thousands of real limitations and subterfuges which turn the proletarians into wage slaves.” V.I. Lenin *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*.*

Against the revisionist theses of Kautsky and Co., who renounced the destruction of the bourgeois state and considered that its own evolution would lead it to socialism<sup>4</sup> Lenin stated: *“...The point is whether the old state machine (bound by thousands of threads to the bourgeoisie and permeated through and through with routine and inertia) shall remain. or be destroyed and replaced by a new one. Revolution consists not in the new class commanding, governing with the aid of the old State machine, but in this class smashing this machine and commanding, governing with the aid of a new machine”.* [*The State and Revolution*]

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<sup>4</sup> “...The aim of our political struggle remains, as hitherto, the conquest of state power by winning a majority in parliament and by converting parliament into the master of the government.” Kautsky, taken from Lenin’s *The State and Revolution*.

The revisionists (those of yesterday and today) have justified their treacherous defeatism in a supposed inability of the proletariat to lead its own state and, therefore, with different excuses, have renounced the destruction of the bourgeois state. The capitalist bourgeoisie, however, has always been clear that this dispute centers precisely on who controls the state. It has always been ready to make temporary concessions when the organized pressure of the proletariat forces it to do so, recovering the terrain afterwards, but it has never renounced control of the state, the administrative, cultural and military machinery that executes the real power of the class that controls it.

General Maercker, reactionary and ultra-conservative commander of the Landesjägerkorps [State Fighting Corps], one of those in charge of crushing the German revolutionaries, expressed it clearly: “The fight of the Reich government against the left-wing radicals was **exclusively concerned with the maintenance of political power. The soldiers were sent into action with this purely political aim:** as an element of force in the strengthening of internal politics.... My presence means war on the council rule you are aiming at and on the despotism of the armed proletariat...”<sup>5</sup> *Failure of a Revolution...* op. cit.



<sup>5</sup> At the end of the operations there were 68 known Freikorps, with a total, according to Noske's data, of almost 400,000 men, each of

In the capitalist states, the workers see daily how the rights that they wrested by a fierce struggle of decades and that on paper the Constitution recognizes: for housing, work, health care, education, pensions, etc., are negated by a bureaucratic tangle that turns them into nothing; how the state spends everybody's money to support big capital, to save its ass when the crises that its greed provokes worsen, to arm it against the people, to feed the machinery of disinformation and religious fanaticism that numbs the consciousness of the masses, etc.

The Constitution of the Soviet Union from the beginning recognized the broadest social rights and began a rapid economic growth that placed it among the most advanced economies. The prodigious process of cultural and technical literacy of the Soviet people, its social and military progress, allowed it to defeat criminal Nazi fascism. It showed that the living and creative application of the teachings of the classic leaders of the proletariat allowed it to advance by decades in the toughest conditions; that with the creativity of the proletariat, of the slaves of the world, with its organization, there are no insurmountable obstacles.

**4) Never forget that contradictions are both the expression and the motive force of historical processes. The construction of a new model of society must start on the bases of the previous one and must necessarily count on people and leaders who have not completely detached themselves from the conditioning factors under which their political personality, their ideology, was formed. There are no "pure" people, free from the influence of the dominant ideas of the time when their ideology was formed.**

**Above all, the revolution is a collective process, whose organization can make the proletariat invincible; and, although there are figures who stand out in the historical processes, the control must always be collective and one must never lower one's guard.**

*"Between capitalist society and communist society lies the period of revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the*

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whom swore allegiance to his own leader. A few years later they would be the shock force of Nazism.



*state can be nothing other than the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.” Critique of the Gotha Programme, K. Marx*

To mystify the role of the State as a neutral agency, alien to the class conflict, is typical of the bourgeoisie. Engels [in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*], applying dialectical analysis, unraveled the class character of the state in these terms: “[*The state*] is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable opposites which it is powerless to exorcise. But in order that these opposites, classes with conflicting economic interests, shall not consume themselves and society in a fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power seemingly standing above society that would moderate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of ‘order’...” Quoted in: *Contribution to the Balance Sheet of the Socialist Experience in the USSR*. Communist Party of the Workers of France.

Now, there is a fundamental difference between the socialist state and the state in capitalist or pre-capitalist societies, which Lenin stated in these terms: “*The exploiting classes need political rule in order to maintain exploitation, i.e., in the selfish interests of an insignificant minority against the vast majority of the people. The exploited classes need political rule in order completely to abolish all exploitation....*”. V.I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.

The class character of the State was not lessened in the Soviet Union, a transitional society which, in order to advance in the formation of a new economic, political and social model, started from the conditions inherited from the capitalist period. Nor were the classes and the conflict between them lessened. For this reason, there continued to exist the danger of the formation of a “new bourgeoisie” that would impose its interests on the collective.

The State is not neutral; it is not a power that stands outside and above classes. It is also not in socialism, when: “*The proletariat needs state Power, the centralized organization of force, the organization of violence, both to crush the resistance of the exploiters and to lead the enormous mass of the population - the peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, the semi-proletarians - in the work of organizing socialist economy.*” Ibid.

The ideological struggle in the ranks of the Party was a constant during Comrade Stalin’s life. He pointed out at a Plenum of the Central Committee, in 1937: “*We must smash and cast aside the rotten*

*theory that with every advance we make the class struggle here must subside, the more successes we achieve the tamer will the class enemy become.... On the contrary, the further forward we advance, the greater the successes we achieve, the greater will be the fury of the remnants of the defeated exploiting classes, the more ready will they be to resort to sharper forms of struggle, the more will they seek to harm the Soviet state, and the more they clutch at the most desperate means of struggle.”*

History has proven Comrade Stalin right: it was from within that the destruction of that historic project started. After his death, and in particular after the 20th Congress of the CPSU, an accelerated process of degeneration and degradation of the glorious Communist Party of the Soviet Union began, which dragged the majority of Communist Parties into the swamp of revisionism, leading to the liquidation of the Soviet state and the distribution among a handful of degenerates of the enormous collective heritage created by the Soviet proletariat.

The changes that took place in the historical processes have an objective basis, which makes it possible to explain why they happen, to prevent and correct errors. The in-depth study of the causes that led to the emergence of modern revisionism is still to be done, and should play an important role in the analysis of the Marxist-Leninist parties. In the “contribution to the summary of the socialist experience in the USSR,” drawn up by the fraternal Ecuadorian Party (PCMLE) in 1995<sup>6</sup>, it is recalled how, for example, in the report to the 19th Congress of the CPSU, the leaders were denounced who placed: *“their local interests above those of the state and, under the pretext of worrying about the enterprises under their responsibility, hide from the state the material resources at their disposal.... they conceal the results (...) of the requests for raw materials, which are consciously exaggerated...”*.

In the same text, our fraternal party states: *“.... The bureaucracy existed in the USSR from the first years of socialist power and had a material basis: the insufficient development of the productive forces,*

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<sup>6</sup> This and other quotations from this last section come from the contributions made in 1995 by the comrades of the PCOF and the PCMLE, to the assessment of the socialist period in the USSR, one of the first collective discussions carried out by the Marxist-Leninist organizations of the ICMLPO.

*the continuation until communism of the division between manual and mental labor; the need for an important centralization which required a large number of officials and administrators dedicated to the task of management or direction of the economy, etc.”*

In their study, the comrades point out: “... *The men who would form the future exploiting class are the same ones who made use of their position in the political apparatus to achieve personal material advantages, improve their position, enrich themselves.... They did not show themselves as an organized opposition to socialism, with a program different from that of the CPSU. At the beginning their aims were not to overthrow socialism, but to take advantage of their position. They were concerned with seeking support, accomplices and silence. Nepotism became the norm; they formed fiefdoms on the basis of the family, friendships, national origins.... Political officials, leaders of enterprises, military, economic leaders... formed a common objective interest, very different from the interest of the Soviet people... In this way, a part of the social wealth could be diverted for the benefit of individuals or groups of individuals. These limitations are characteristic of the socialist mode of production, a transitional period of production.... Undoubtedly, the organization of production and the destruction of an important part of the productive forces during the war of 1941-1945 favored these negative phenomena.”*

In any case, the march backward initiated by the traitor Khrushchev, modern revisionism eliminated one by one the main ideological bases of Leninism: In the first place, it renounced the revolutionary character of the party and the revolution: it was no longer a question, as Lenin said and the Bolsheviks put into practice, of overthrowing the bourgeois state and creating a new proletarian state. Instead it theorized about the possibility of the gradual passage to socialism by means of reforms that did not touch the bourgeois state machinery; the peaceful overcoming of the bourgeois state by fighting under its rules, as the traitor Kautsky had said in his day.

Those were the times of the “national roads to socialism” that gave rise to the dead ends of people such as Tito (the Yugoslav “Marshal” who, just between 1948 and 1952, expelled 200,000 Party militants and imprisoned or assassinated more than 30,000 communists and revolutionary activists) and to “experiments” such as Eurocommunism that liquidated the glorious history of parties such as the Italian, French and Spanish ones, leading them to be a caricature of Marxism. In the relations between the socialist and capitalist camps,

the slogan of “peaceful coexistence” was inaugurated, understood as the renunciation of the ideological and political combat against capitalist imperialism; it became a slogan taken up by the socialist countries with the exception of Albania<sup>7</sup>.

Proletarian internationalism was abandoned; the interests of the different parties had to adapt to the needs of a state which was beginning to behave like a new social-imperialist power in its disputes with the USA for areas of influence. Internally, the control of the proletariat and the proletarian organizations over the state was gradually eliminated, giving way to a bureaucratized caste of leaders. With the excuse of greater “flexibility,” a variety of objectives was favored, giving more power over the state plans to the large enterprises and their managers. “Original” measures were adopted which put the harmonious development of the Soviet economy out of balance, without collective debate or control. The successive revisionist leaders advanced along the same liquidationist line, leading to the final destruction of the USSR and the distribution of the immense wealth created by the Soviet people among a handful of scoundrels who formed a caste that ended up becoming the gangster oligarchy that today controls capitalist Russia, headed by Putin, a perfect representative of the degenerate leadership that controlled the revisionist USSR.

**Epilogue:** As we have pointed out more than once, historical processes are not linear. The Russian revolution of 1917 opened the era of proletarian revolutions; but already then, Lenin, the main leader of the revolution, reminded his comrades: “The great honor of beginning the revolution has fallen to the Russian proletariat. But the Russian proletariat must not forget that its movement and revolution are only part of a world revolutionary proletarian movement.” [The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), 1917]

Mistakes were made; how could one not make them in such a complex process: the building of a new state and economy, without previous experience, in the harshest conditions, facing all kinds of

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<sup>7</sup> As our comrade Elena Odena pointed out: *“As for Carrillo and other former leaders of the Communist Party of Spain, they remained silent for a long time and then chanted and approved without reservation the insults and lies about Stalin, saying ‘amen’ to the peaceful and collaborationist theses expounded by Khrushchev, and adapted this ‘general line’ to the concrete conditions of Spain under the name of ‘national reconciliation’.*”

aggressions, confronting two brutal wars imposed by imperialism, constantly fighting against all kinds of inertia and ideological enemies that pushed the Soviet state and Party towards surrender, apathy, bureaucratism.... All in all, the Soviet experience is a magnificent example that proves the possibility of overcoming the bourgeois state and advancing towards communism, towards a classless society. It is this evidence that continues to terrify the bourgeoisie and pushes it to denigrate or hide its example in a thousand ways. It is this evidence that encourages us communists to continue fighting for liberation from the capitalist yoke.

*“They bark hard...  
The dogs of the paddock would  
Forever accompany us  
But their strident barks  
Are only a sign that we ride.”*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

*Madrid, March 2023*

## The Repression of the Left-Wing Movements in Tunisia

### 1. A brief history of the left in Tunisia

Almost two years ago, Tunisians celebrated the birth of Tunisia's first communist cell. This was in 1920 when the country was under colonial rule. Indeed, in the aftermath of the famous Congress of Tours of the SFIO,<sup>1</sup> which saw the birth of the French Communist Party, the communists of Tunisia (French, Italians and Tunisians) left the socialist party to form a communist cell. It was very active first through its press, published in Arabic and French, and especially through the links that were very quickly woven with the nascent workers' movement. As soon as Mhamed Ali el Hammi, fresh back from Germany, began the formation of the first Tunisian trade union (the Tunisian General Confederation of Labor), communist militants supported him and took an active part in this work. The colonial authorities did not allow this, and **this saw the first wave of repression against left-wing activists in Tunisia**. Besides the dissolution of the young union, heavy sentences were handed down against its leaders, most of whom were sentenced to banishment and prohibited from living anywhere in the French colonial empire. Most died in exile.<sup>2</sup>

The 1930s saw the birth of the Communist Party of Tunisia which, despite a confused and wavering position on the national question, saw a number of its militants repressed in the same way as those of the Destourian party,<sup>3</sup> spearhead of the national liberation

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<sup>1</sup> French Section of the Workers' International, which later took the name of the French Socialist Party.

<sup>2</sup> See Tahar Haddad: *Tunisian workers and the Emergence of the Labor Movement*. Tunis, Al Arab Press, 1927 (French translation by Abderrazak Halioui, published by Beit Al Hikma, Tunis 1985; or by Mohamed Ben Larbi, published by l'Harmattan, Paris 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Destourian Party: from its real name: Constitutional Liberal Party (Constitution = destour in Arabic), founded in 1920 by Abdelaziz Thaalbi. It was renewed and radicalized by Bourguiba in 1934 and

movement. Thus communist leaders Georges Adda and Ali Jad shared with the leaders of the national movement, Bourguiba and his comrades, the same imprisonment in the sad detention camp of Borj-le-Bœuf between 1934 and 1936, for example.

The birth of the UGTT (Tunisian General Labor Union) in 1946 began the entry of the working class onto the social and political scene: the trade union struggle could no longer be separated from the struggle for national independence and the colonial regime used harsh means to repress it: assassinations multiplied in the ranks of the Destourian militants; Farhat Hached, founder and first leader of the UGTT, was assassinated on December 5, 1952.

## **2. The left and repression in the postcolonial period**

### **2.1 The new regime is built on blood**

Tunisia was granted internal autonomy on June 3, 1955, and became an independent country on March 20, 1956. Between the two dates, a lot of blood was shed in the country, first among friendly enemies: members of the same Destourian party who accepted or rejected the agreements on internal autonomy, who accepted or rejected ending the fighting and handing over arms to the colonial authorities. This did not bode well. Indeed, the young postcolonial state would forever be tainted by this drift towards violence. Very soon, the country would be held in an iron fist and no form of opposition would be tolerated.

In August 1961, President Bourguiba ordered the assassination of his last rival: Salah Ben Youssef, Secretary General of the same Destourian party, who was exiled in Germany. The regime in office took on a completely different look: the Communist Party was banned and then forced to go underground. As we will see, little by little, there was a stranglehold by the authorities on all mass organizations: trade unions, farmers' unions, unions of employers and the national organization of women of Tunisia. Their leaders were henceforth appointed from among those loyal to the authorities.

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took the name Neo-Destour; it led the national liberation movement, and then the independent state from 1956 to 2011.

## 2.2 The UGET and the birth of the New Left:

Only the General Union of Tunisian Students (UGET) rejected this situation and, as a result, became the main focus of opposition to this regime, which was rapidly moving towards a dictatorship.

It is therefore within this organization that in the 1960s the new left would be born; it would develop a critical attitude toward the authorities, but also toward the communist party whose passivity and even compromise with the authorities it would denounce.

The Group of Students and Socialist Action de Tunisia (GEAST) became the spearhead of this new left. Composed mainly of young students pursuing their studies in France as well as some left-wing intellectuals (academics, lawyers, artists, etc.), the GEAST, better known as the group “Perspectives,”<sup>4</sup> would become the vanguard of the struggles of the Tunisian youth for democratic freedoms, social justice and of the anti-imperialist struggle. Thus on many occasions it managed to mobilize some hundreds of students at the young university of Tunis, and even high school students, to denounce the visit of US officials to the country in the middle of the Vietnam War, to rise up against Zionist aggression against the Palestinian territories and against sovereign Arab countries, as in the Six Day War? and to support the beginning workers’ struggles, etc.

## 2.3 Repression of the New Left

This did not please the authorities, who unleashed a blind repression against these young lovers of freedom. Trials followed one another and the sentences were very heavy. Brought before a military court, the student Mohamed Ben Jannet<sup>5</sup>, arrested on June 5, 1967, after a demonstration in front of the British Embassy, was sentenced after an unjust trial to 20 years in prison, then in 1968 to 2 additional years in prison.

In 1968, the entire leadership and cadres of the “Perspectives” group (94 members in total), as well as 7 students belonging to the Tunisian Communist Party, were tried before a special court, the State Security Court, and given heavy sentences. Their arrest led to

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<sup>4</sup> This refers to the newspaper published in French which bore the name of “Tunisian Perspectives”: in total 25 issues were published between 1967 and 1970.

<sup>5</sup> He died on February 11, 2012.



unspeakable abuses and torture, which were condemned by the foreign press and human rights organizations. Ahmed Ben Othman Raddaoui, one of the main detainees, was able to escape through the bars of his cell; his testimony on the tortures that he and his comrades suffered was published by the philosopher Jean Paul Sartre in the columns of the magazine he edited: “Modern Times”.<sup>6</sup>

Bourguiba thought that he had dealt a fatal blow to the nascent New Left movement. This was a mistaken calculation, because this repression gave rise to great sympathy for these young people and their ideals. Support committees for political prisoners multiplied and the desire to join the ranks of the organization intensified. With the arrival at the university of hundreds of young people from distant areas, most of them from poor families, the student movement became more and more radical, as did the “Perspectives” group. Very quickly, it changed from a study group to an action group, the adoption of Marxism-Leninism helped. “Let us unblock the junction!” one of its famous texts said, that is, let us go to the people, the working class in the lead. The slogans of May 1968 found a wide echo among these young people, as did those of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the People’s Republic of China. Two very active committees were set up: the Vietnam Committee and the Palestine Committee, which organized many activities in support of these peoples in struggle. The authorities finally gave way: In October 1970, a presidential pardon allowed these young people to regain their freedom and resume their studies or their previous work.

## 2.4 Repression of the student movement

The following year (1971) saw the victory of the left in the 18th congress of the General Union of Tunisian Students; this was a first, since it was the first time that the leadership of this organization was wrested from the hands of the students of the ruling party. The latter rejected the verdict of the ballot box and ordered its henchmen to organize a coup and did not admit defeat. This plunged the organization into an endless crisis and gave rise to an atrocious repression of the student movement. From that date until 2011, the Tunisian students have experienced great misfortunes! All forms of repression were used:

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<sup>6</sup> Ahmed Ben Othman Raddaoui: “Repression in Tunisia”. *Les Temps Modernes*, April 1969.

- Mass expulsion of students from the university after each protest movement.
- Forced enlistment of students and their removal to camps in the middle of the desert (several died in their attempts to run away)
- Regimentation of the university through the creation of a special police force located in all university institutions
- Unjust trials and heavy prison sentences
- Deprivation of access to civil service positions.

The years 1974 and 1975 saw the two largest trials of the left, in which respectively 202 and 101 members of the Marxist-Leninist organization “The Tunisian Worker”<sup>7</sup> were brought before the infamous State Security Court. In these two trials, which lasted more than a month each, the systematic practice of torture both during interrogations and in prisons was denounced. The testimonies of these prisoners gave rise to the birth of a veritable high-level prison literature, written in both Arabic and French, in prison or after liberation.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> This organization was the radicalized extension of the “Perspectives” group. By deciding to break with elitism, it stopped publishing its texts and pamphlets in French and published its newspaper “The Tunisian Worker” in the Arabic dialect that could be understood by everyone: In total 80 issues were published between 1970 and 1975 and widely distributed in the country, with a particular effort in the working-class areas.

<sup>8</sup> We will limit ourselves to citing these few titles published in French:

- Gilbert Naccache: *Crystal* (Salambo 1982, Chama 2000); *The Sky Is Over the Roof* (Le Cerf Paris 2005); *What did you do with your youth?* followed by *Prison Stories* (Mots passants 2009); *Towards Democracy?* (Mots passants 2011); *Understanding Has Always Seemed Essential to Me: interviews with Mohamed Chagraoui* (Chama 2015)
- Hamma Hammami: *The Paths of Dignity*. Paris, Association Horrya/Liberté edition, 2002
- -Mohamed Charfi: *My Fight for the Lights*. Paris, Zellig edition, 2009
- Mohamed Lamine Nasraoui: *The Dictatorship Also Killed My Mother*, Perspectives edition, Tunis 2013
- Mohamed Chérif Frejani: *Prison and Freedom: The Journey of a Left-Wing Opponent in Independent Tunisia* (Mots passants, 2014)

### **Repression of trade unionists**

The end of Bourguiba's reign saw two major trials of trade union activists: in 1978 and 1985. Indeed, after many years of subjugation of the single trade union federation (UGTT) and with the coming onto the labor market of the first waves of graduates from the young university of Tunis, the trade union movement experienced a new life. Very quickly, two demands were expressed more and more massively: democracy within the organization and independence from the party in power. This was seen especially in the sector of intellectuals: higher education, secondary education, banking, finance, etc. As for the purely working-class sectors, they also saw an increase in their material demands following the continuous deterioration of their purchasing power due to the neoliberal policy initiated in the early 1970s. This increasingly tense social climate led the trade union federation to decide to launch the first General Strike in independent Tunisia on January 26, 1978. The government's response was bloody: more than 200 were killed (only 51 according to official figures), 1000 were wounded throughout the country and a large number of union cadres (more than 500) were arrested, tried and given very heavy sentences: 10 years of forced labor for the old general secretary of the UGTT, Habib Achour, 65 years old. Some months after the trial, Saïd Gagui, a trade union leader in the tourism sector, died as a result of the deterioration of his health caused by the torture he suffered during his arrest.

The resistance of the trade unionists at the national level and the pressure exerted at the international level prevailed and a compromise was reached between the new government and the recently freed trade union leadership. But this only lasted four years before a new wave of repression struck the federation, followed by another major trial. Hundreds of convicted trade unionists were not released until after Ben Ali's coup d'état on November 7, 1987.

### **3. Under the reign of Ben Ali: the left in the crosshairs**

#### **3.1 Nabil Barakati: martyr for freedom**

Bourguiba's reign, begun with the blood of his own comrades-in-arms, also ended in blood. A few months before his dismissal, a young teacher from the Gaafour region (Northwest), Nabil Barakati, a member of the Communist Party of the Workers of Tunisia founded

only a few months before, died under torture on May 8, 1987,<sup>9</sup> in the local police station for the simple reason that he was suspected of having distributed a leaflet.

### 3.2 Repression of PCOT activists

Ben Ali would be worse. The lies he told in his first speeches were very quickly shown to be false. After two years of a “fake opening,” repression was very quickly reestablished as a system of government. No one was spared. If today the Islamists try to pass themselves off as the “only” victims of his regime, the left-wing militants did not cease to be the target of the repressive apparatus of the state. It was the militants of the PCOT who paid the most dearly: between 1987 and the beginning of 2011, 53 lawsuits were brought against the militants of this party, which saw 231 young and old activists of the party or its youth organization, the Union of Communist Youth of Tunisia (UJCT)<sup>10</sup>, paraded before the courts in all regions of the country.



<sup>9</sup> This day is celebrated today in Tunisia as the national day of struggle against torture.

<sup>10</sup> See Arfaoui (Khemaies): *Radical Opposition and Power in the Time of Bourguiba and Ben Ali (1986–2010)*. Thakafia Edition, Tunis, 2016

#### **4. After 2011**

Under the reign of the Islamists (2012 <sup>6</sup> 2013), repression took another turn, moving from unjust trials and incarceration to extreme violence, that of political assassination. The left-wing political organizations, grouped under the banner of the Popular Front, saw two of their leaders assassinated in one year: Chokri Belaid, assassinated in cold blood in front of his house on February 6, 2013, and Mohamed Brahmi, assassinated in the same way on July 25.

As for the social movements that have not stopped developing since 2011, they are constantly being criminalized by successive governments, and their essentially left-wing leaders are constantly denigrated by the media in the pay of the government and repressed by the institutional or parallel police.

#### **Conclusion**

The brief history we have just traced of the new left in Tunisia shows that it cannot be separated from the history of repression. This observation could be instructive in terms of the current state of this left. If, at one time, repression had opposite effects and instead of weakening the left, it rather strengthened it, at other times, repression contributed to its disruption, to its crumbling so that all attempts at reassembling or restructuring it have remained futile or very difficult to achieve.

*March 2023*

## The Earthquakes in Turkey: A Fundamental Fracture: “Where Is the State?”

On February 6, two successive earthquakes, of 7.7 and 7.6 magnitude, occurred in the south-eastern city of Kahramanmaras, Turkey, affecting a large area and turning many cities, towns and villages into rubble. In provinces such as Hatay and Adiyaman and districts such as Elbistan, Nurdagi, Islahiye, Samandagi and Defne, almost nothing was left intact. The loss of life has officially passed 50,000, but it is thought to be 4-5 times higher.

The catastrophe, with its magnitude and impact, not only fractured fault lines, but also caused a political fissure with a social basis.

With its devastating results, the disaster affected the whole country, not only because of kinship ties, but also due to the common sympathy emerging from the consciousness of solidarity and a shared concern as the country sits on earthquake zones. Those who were old enough and in good health got mobilised to collect and deliver aid, and everybody donated what they could.

The relief effort and people-to-people solidarity crossed borders and spread to all continents. The people of Turkey embraced the relief and rescue teams from all over the world, especially from Greece and Armenia which have been historically presented as “*enemies*”, with feelings of friendship and fraternity. On behalf of our working class and our people, we convey our gratitude to the working class and peoples of the world and progressive, revolutionary organisations, especially our sister organisations, for their support.

While the people from all over Turkey and the world rushed to the aid of the earthquake victims, it was hoped that the state would also come to their aid, but it did not. After the earthquake, the state institutions did not show up and left them alone with the destruction, so the earthquake-stricken people themselves ran to the rubble with their bare hands, with cries of help coming from all sides, hoping to rescue their desperate relatives, neighbours and strangers. From the morning of 6 February onwards, volunteers from all over the country tried to reach the region for help. Central Anatolia, like most of the earthquake region, was under snow and people were stranded on the roads. From the second day onwards, those who could reach the

region, in their increasing numbers and organisation, took over the rescue work and the sheltering and feeding of the survivors.

The social and political fracture began at this point. However, the formation of the conditions for that has been going on long before.

### **Before the earthquake: The state, what it did and did not do, and the people**

It is impossible to avoid an earthquake but the statements of scientists and the ongoing debates since the 1999 Marmara Earthquake have taught everyone that the damage and loss of life can be prevented, or minimised at least.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was apparently aware of this, and two and a half months before the earthquake, at a drill he said “*It is in our hands to prevent loss of life and property in earthquakes,*” and continued:

*“Thanks to the preparations we have made in the light of the lessons we have learnt from the painful experiences of the past, we no longer hear the cries of our citizens in any disaster asking ‘Where is the state?’.”*

However, after the recent earthquakes everyone asked precisely that question, as nothing has been done to minimise the loss of life and damage to property, always taking refuge in the religious belief that “*earthquake is fate, we cannot escape from it*” or “*God takes the life He gives*”. Yet, it is obvious that it has nothing to do with faith and piety; the state must take precautions. It is no coincidence that Japan escapes more severe earthquakes with no harm, and the only explanation for the loss of tens of thousands of lives in Turkey is the failure of the state to do its part.

It is common knowledge in Turkey that when cities, houses and workplaces are built, the danger of earthquakes is overlooked. The director of the Istanbul Observatory said after the earthquake that “*the decision makers were not to blame*”. Yet it is not the individuals who build their own houses who are to blame, as implied by this director, but the construction companies and contractors, the municipalities and the state with its central power.

Construction is mostly done by monopolised construction companies and contractors. As construction amnesties are frequently issued, it is possible to start construction even without a permit. Areas that are not suitable for construction can also be opened to development by “*paying the price*”. For this reason, one building after

another was erected on undeveloped areas such as the seaside, stream beds, swampy areas, etc. Construction companies and contractors do not want to employ civil engineers or geological engineers to cut costs; instead they resort to using the signatures from their diplomas to make everything look official. They bypass the municipality's inspection with bribes, and obtain occupancy permits in the same way. Regardless of which party is in power, municipalities and development departments –with some exceptions– are happy with this arrangement and this is how “*business*” is done. These methods are used not only by private construction companies and contractors, but also by the public institution, TOKİ, which was set up to build social housing.

Moreover, those who have seen the rubble, especially the earthquake victims, do not believe that the construction was done properly or the foundations were laid strongly, with buildings lying on their sides or collapsed as they are, with walls torn like paper. The ruins reveal that proper iron and concrete mix was not used.

When the state fails to prevent the wrongdoing and becomes part of it, the authorities' “*defence*” for what had happened as “*fate*” and blaming “*fate*” instead of taking precautions no longer fools anyone.

There were times when this worked in the past. Deaths in the mines were called “*fate*”... So were the forest fires that could not be extinguished because of lack of equipment as well as the high-speed train “*accidents*” when the tracks were not maintained and signalling was not completed... The “*saturation point*” was reached with the loss of life in the pandemic, floods and earthquakes. Especially the earthquake victims who lost their relatives cannot be consoled or convinced anymore by blaming “*fate*” as they see properly constructed





buildings remained intact in the earthquake while others turned into rubble.

Here, the state is not only directly involved in the crime but it is also the conductor of the orchestra of the people who were involved in the wrongdoing.

Greedy, corrupt construction companies and contractors and corrupt municipalities, regardless of the party in power, who grant construction licences for unsuitable ground and give occupancy permits without inspection are all to blame. And it was not possible this time for the state to get away with blaming a few contractors.

Starting in 1984, construction amnesties were granted 9 times, most of them during the Erdoğan-AKP (Justice and Development Party) governments, and unauthorised and unsupervised buildings were deemed “*habitable*” by granting licences. The amnesties were not issued by the contractors or municipalities, but by the state, with official announcements and the signatures of the Council of Ministers and the President. That is, the state has blatantly led the people to live in buildings that would become their graves. The total number of buildings that had been given the “*green light*” with amnesties but collapsed in the earthquake is 294,000. The people, especially the earthquake victims, are not fools; they know that these amnesties were issued for money (as there is a down-payment for the licence) and vote.

Moreover, some risky areas have been declared risk-free by the state. For example, in Iskenderun, in February 2022, one year before the earthquake, some areas were taken off the list of “*risk areas*” by a presidential decree. There was no explanation as to why, but the areas that were declared “*risk-free*” are now categorised as “*rubble*” with hundreds of people trapped under it. The President has taken many lives with one decree.

There is also the issue of what the state did not do.

An example that proves the state’s role in the disaster is the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Report published by the Hatay Governorate in 2021. The report stated that in the event of a 7.5-magnitude earthquake in the region from Maras to Hatay, many buildings built on soft grounds would collapse, and that state institutions were not ready for this disaster scenario. Due to the precautions not taken until 6 February, the earthquake has been screaming “*I am coming to get you*” for a long time.

Another example is the report released by AFAD, Disaster and Emergency Management, two months ago. The organisation had predicted “*a scenario of two consecutive earthquakes*” in Maras. Scientists have also been warning about the stress accumulated in the region, and predicting an earthquake. However, the state did not take the slightest precaution in the region. On the contrary, we later learnt that the budget of AFAD, which was supposedly established to combat disasters, was reduced from 12.1 billion TL in 2022 to 8 billion in 2023. It is unclear where this money was spent, apart from the salaries, travel allowances and subsistence payments of AFAD executives.

After the 1999 earthquake, an earthquake tax was imposed and the AKP government made this tax permanent. To date, 37 billion dollars have been collected but no “*preparations*” have been financed with the “*earthquake tax*” although Erdoğan talked about them 2.5 months ago. The public knows that. Moreover, in 2011 Mehmet Simsek, Erdoğan’s former finance minister, had confessed saying “*The money collected as earthquake tax goes to the health service, roads, railways, airlines, farmers and education.*”

After the earthquake, the Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation announced that there were more than 50,000 buildings with severe damage that needed to be demolished immediately, in addition to tens of thousands of buildings that had turned into rubble. The state has not lifted a finger to renovate or reinforce these buildings, which are now clearly not earthquake-resistant. Yet with only a fraction of the money collected through the earthquake tax, it would have been possible to completely renovate the damaged buildings. With 37 billion dollars, all damaged or unstable buildings not only in the earthquake zone but all over Turkey could have been renovated and 300,000 earthquake resistant buildings could have been constructed. Even if they could not calculate the details, everyone knows that the state could have done this but it has not. People also see that palaces were built with dual roads, thousands of executive cars and dozens of aeroplanes were bought, but their houses had not been reinforced.

The state did not take precautions and was not organised against possible earthquakes. After the 1999 earthquake, some regions and roads were declared as “*Earthquake Recovery Zones*” where no buildings could be built, but all of them were sacrificed later to profit and greed. In the rescue and relief operations organised in the provinces hit by the earthquake, it was seen that the places marked as

“*Earthquake Assembly Points*” were not big enough for the earthquake victims. As a result of the greed for rent and profit, it is now almost impossible to find green areas in cities. Moreover, there are no tents, logistics or the required equipment in the designated areas. While most of the victims trapped under the rubble died from hypothermia, those who survived the quake were also left exposed to the freezing cold at minus 8-10 degrees at night.

### **The cry of earthquake victims: ‘Where is the state?’**

The earthquake was a disaster for AFAD, Disaster and Emergency Management, as an institution. The AKP, on ideological grounds, disbanded the old rescue organisation and replaced it with AFAD and, as with other state institutions, filled it with people close to them, who were not even remotely involved in earthquake preparedness and rescue work. People in general and especially the earthquake victims have experienced the uselessness of AFAD, the lack of coordination and organisation skills and poor capacity to produce solutions. AFAD was not present in the earthquake zone for the first three days.

The problem is not, as the bourgeois opposition argues, just the incompetence of AFAD and its lack of initiative, waiting for orders from the “*one man*”; the state’s indifference, inadequacy, unpreparedness, lack of coordination and organisation, and inability or incompetence in the face of earthquakes do not only stem from lack of skills and the one-man mentality.

The main reason behind these problems is class-based: accumulated state revenues, including the earthquake tax and the unemployment fund, have been put at the service of capital, especially monopoly capital. The problems and demands of monopoly capital, not the people, have always been at the centre of the state’s attention. The state, with all its resources, has directed all its material and moral endeavours towards the growth of the monopolies, and the people’s problems have always been ignored with reckless indifference. The state is not simply insensitive to issues such as workplace safety, forest fires, pandemics or earthquakes, where the people are the direct victims; it is a bourgeois dictatorship organised to safeguard the continuation of the conditions of exploitation and to meet the needs of capital from the very beginning. For this reason, it was unprepared and did not stand by the people or rush to their aid.

The AKP government and the state did not trust the people and their initiatives, fearing that popular initiatives and solidarity could potentially lead to a political rift; thus, it tried to prevent them. People died under the rubble because the heavy equipment operators who rushed to help could not find the machinery needed. This equipment could have been taken out of Organised Industrial Zones, integrated plants, factories and ports and put into the service of the people, but they were not. Planes and ships that should have been directed to the earthquake area were kept waiting in fleets. So were the military units, because no orders were given.

The roads blocked by snow could not be opened in two days, delaying the aid to the region. Those who rushed to help were stranded on the roads. The transportation problem went on much longer in the earthquake zone, and some inner-city side roads were still closed on the tenth day. Hatay Airport was also inoperable due to the destruction of the runways. Yet scientists and professional organisations had objected earlier to the location of the airport on the grounds that the land was unsuitable in case of possible disasters. Search and rescue teams and relief supplies could not be transported by air. “*Golden hours*” after the earthquake were wasted due to these problems.

The problem of roads and transport, which is the responsibility of the state, was the beginning of the political rift. Since the privatisation of road construction, roads became unusable after a short while due to incompetence and theft of materials in pursuit of profit, while the State Highways Administration has been downsized to the point where it could no longer keep up with the work. AFAD, Disaster and Emergency Management, on the other hand, was not prepared to intervene in times of disaster!

Thus, the earthquake zone could only be reached at the end of the second day. For the first three days, and in some places on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> days, there was still no trace of AFAD, and only volunteers and voluntary aid organisations were present in the whole region. It was they who tried to respond to the earthquake victims’ cry for help and especially for heavy machinery. In almost all collapsed buildings, these cries could be heard from under the rubble, tearing the hearts of those who did hear them, but the volunteers could not intervene and were overwhelmed for the lack of machinery to lift large concrete blocks. So the “*golden hours*”, the first three days, were spent without AFAD and tens of thousands of people could not be rescued. This

was witnessed by all the people of the region and the cry of “*where is the state?*” was uttered by everyone.

The areas that AFAD was able to reach after the first three days, it was another disaster of disorganisation and lack of coordination. Yet no other state institution undertook this task either: the state had not made the slightest preparation, did not coordinate and organise earthquake response and rescue work with any of its institutions.

Even on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the earthquake, there was still no phone reception in many parts of the region, and the state also blocked social media by narrowing the bandwidth in order to prevent criticism on social media. This happened at a time when communication was of vital importance for the coordination and rescue efforts. There was an outcry against the telecom companies with high subscription payments. As the state did not supervise these companies and make it compulsory to ensure communication, it also received its share of the reactions. Even worse was that these companies sent invoices on the second day of the earthquake despite the lack of reception.

AFAD, in addition to not engaging properly in relief and rescue activities itself, tried to take control of the ongoing effort by preventing the work of volunteers, blocking roads and confiscating aid supplies sent by cars and trucks. It created obstacles for the volunteer rescue teams rushing to the region from other parts of the country and abroad. Some international rescue teams which were told that they did not have “*permission*” had to go back. With this attitude, AFAD did not support the earthquake victims but hindered the existing rescue efforts.

The “*sole authority*” and centralisation of decision-making, organisation and work was considered to be a task of the state; thus, starting with the President at the top, AFAD and other state institutions insisted on AFAD being at the helm, with no toleration of voluntary organisations or the municipalities under the management of the opposition. The relief work of revolutionary parties and organisations was not only obstructed but was also subjected to police persecution. Efforts to provide temporary shelter and tents were blocked, with AFAD declaring that no other organisation could deliver tents to those in need and that it alone would provide and distribute tents. Weeks after the earthquake, there are still tens of thousands of earthquake victims who do not even have a tent for shelter.

Not only the opposition-led institutions, but also the institutions and facilities that the state could easily mobilise and involve in rescue

work, such as miners, were not mobilised. Yet the miners from Soma, Uşak and Zonguldak reached the disaster zone by their own means and saved many lives, and many more could have been saved if the miners had not been kept waiting at the airports for a long time due to permission problems or lack of coordination.

The disempowered and corporatized Red Crescent, which used to stock tents and tried to deliver aid to the disaster area quickly, was caught red-handed selling tents to voluntary organisations and donating clothing and foodstuffs to export companies.

The army, which was heavily involved in the rescue operation after the Marmara earthquake in 1999, and was known to be skilled, trained, prepared and organised, this time was not dispatched for the first few days. During the so-called “*fight against the coup plotters*” following the 2016 coup attempt, its organisation for disaster response and rescue operations was disbanded. Nevertheless, with its training and organisational skills, it could have saved many lives, but it was not mobilised.

The Defence Minister responded to criticism with the following questions: “*Who will guard the border, who will stay in Syria? Are we going to evacuate Syria or Iraq?*” This was a confession of how the AKP’s Neo-Ottomanist proactive foreign policy approach left the people defenceless in the face of disasters. This recklessness has also led to questioning why the multiplying resources allocated to armaments are not used for the fight against disasters. The importance of a policy of peace towards neighbours was proved once again but at the cost of thousands of lives. And the reaction of the people of the region and across Turkey to the fact that the military was not there for them in time of need was an important factor deepening the crack that appeared with the question “*Where is the state?*”

The military was kept out of the rescue operations, but on the second day of the earthquake, a state of emergency was declared in 10 cities in the earthquake zone, with effects felt throughout the country. The state, which was invisible in the region especially in the first three days of the earthquake, said “*here I am*” with the state of emergency, followed by its usual prohibitions, police violence and tyranny. Detentions and arrests of people labelled as “*looters*” began. One of the accused was a woman over 70 years old. Another was Ahmet Guresci, who was detained by the gendarmerie in Hatay’s Buyukburc neighbourhood and tortured to death at the police station because he objected to the detention of his brother, who was accused

of “looting”. It was claimed that he killed himself by “*banging his head against the wall*”.

Erdoğan’s coalition partner, the fascist Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) leader Devlet Bahçeli, did not set foot in the earthquake zone for 15 days but he declared those who asked the question “*Where is the state?*” as “*dishonourable*” and “*traitors*”. However, it was the people of the region who asked that question, who mostly supported the AKP-MHP partnership in the 2018 elections. They tried to overcome the problem by provoking racism and targeting “*Syrians*”, blaming them for the looting. Thus, they tried to deflect the people’s anger against the state by fuelling the division between the Turkish people and the Syrian refugees. Yet, the earthquake also hit Syria and the Syrian refugees in Turkey were among the earthquake victims trapped under the rubble.

Those who lived in the earthquake region saw that the state, with its military and police, had come to the region not for search and rescue operations, but to “*restore order*” with its powers, strengthened by the State of Emergency, to shoot, arrest, and most of all silence and suppress the earthquake victims who cried out “*Where is the state?*”

From the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> day onwards, when it was able to organise itself, another element of the state’s negative presence and image in the region had become clear: its effort to “*exonerate*” itself. On the 11<sup>th</sup> night after the earthquake, Orhan Tatar, AFAD’s General Director for Earthquake and Risk Reduction, said the following on a TV broadcast, which enraged those watching the rescue operations on TV, especially the earthquake victims: “*There is no such thing as being late. Whatever the response to a disaster should be, this was done from the first moment. Within 5 minutes, all institutions of the state were present here.*” Defence Minister Hulusi Akar stated the same thing, saying “*The Armed Forces were there from the first minutes*”. However, everyone knows that these claims are blatant lies. So much so that when collecting aid abroad for the earthquake victims, many Turkish people and people from other nations asked where the aid was going to and donated only when they learnt that “*it would not be sent to the state institutions such as AFAD*”.

The same man, Tatar, again on TV on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the earthquake, shamelessly said, “*There is no more rubble that contain live victims underneath. The removal of the dead and the debris has started*”. Ongoing search and rescue operations soon proved him

wrong and many more people were rescued, even on the 13<sup>th</sup> day. In many places, the people waiting by the rubble where their relatives were still underneath were preventing the “*clean up*” operations with construction machinery.

AFAD embarked on the “*clean-up*” work regardless of whether there were any survivors underneath or not. Even the rubble removal was contracted out to companies favoured by Erdoğan, and tens of thousands of people, dead or alive, were left at the mercy of the diggers.

Another negative action of the state was to launch a terrible donation campaign for the earthquake victims. The campaign was organised in a joint broadcast of TV channels and donors participated by phone and pompously advertised themselves and their companies with promises of donations. In contrast was the extraordinary sensitivity of the children who donated their pocket money or the content of their piggy banks, and the working people who made small donations by cutting down on their food, which was an exemplary people-to-people solidarity. However, the campaign organised by the state was a show of banks, monopolies and favoured construction companies.

The big donors were state institutions and especially publicly-owned banks. For example, the Central Bank donated 30 billion Turkish Lira (TL) and its president shamelessly announced that this money would be deducted from the profit balance sheet for 2022.

As a state institution, the Central Bank was already transferring its profits to the Treasury. Now the money was going to the Treasury again, but this time it was called a “*donation*”. Other publicly-owned banks such as Ziraat, Halk, Vakıflar also “*donated*” billions of dollars to the campaign. Their status was similar to that of the Central Bank. Moreover, Article 54 of the Banking Law stipulates that “*the amount of donations that can be made by banks in a financial year cannot exceed 4 per thousand of the bank’s equity*” and sets a limit. However, the so-called donations of these banks were far above this limit, and this was remedied by a decree of Erdoğan changing the provision of the law.

Another abomination was that one day after M. Cengiz, one of the monopolist crony contractors known as the “*Gang of 5*”, made a “*donation*” of 3 billion TL, he received an even larger amount in “*incentives*” for the investment to be made by one of his companies, Eti Aluminium, by presidential decree dated 16 February. The incentives



included a 100% tax reduction and a payment of 50% of the electricity costs for 10 years. In addition to all this, it is common knowledge that Cengiz's tax debt of 300 million dollars from 2005-2009 had been cancelled and that he had received 19.7 billion TL worth of state tenders in the last 11 years.

Yet the earthquake victims who are trying to survive under extraordinarily difficult conditions and the people in general who are condemned to semi-starvation could not even imagine how those people and companies donating billions were able to make such huge amounts of money. And this “*donation show*” fuelled their anger. They were devastated once again, seeing the enormous gap between themselves and those who ostentatiously donated billions. With the obvious answer to the question of how all this money was made and on whose backs, the comparison between the fortified houses of those that could withstand the strongest earthquakes and their own houses, which turned into the graves of their family members, hit their hearts.

The monopolies that put on a donation show on the TV channels were given tax relief. The “*Short-Time Working Allowance*” which came to the aid of the bosses during the pandemic is being implemented again after the earthquake. The ban on dismissal of workers in the earthquake region is bypassed by the Short-Time Work Allowance. Workers who participated in the rubble removal are threatened with dismissal or wage cuts on the grounds that they had exceeded three days absence. Representatives of the bosses' organisations even told employers in other regions not to employ workers from the earthquake zone. Loss of labour was intolerable to them and the workers were not more valuable than machines!

### **Political fracture must not fall victim to spontaneity**

There is no doubt that the recent earthquakes have caused a political fracture, especially for the people of the earthquake-stricken region, but also for the entire population. The state has been exposed and in the perception of the people it has also been buried under the rubble. Although this state of things still needs to be studied further, one can say that regardless of their ideological inclination people have seen and recognised the state in its clarity, with all that it has and has not done, and the question “*Where is the state?*” has become the decisive question of the post-earthquake period.

The state-glorifying consciousness or the average perception of the people, which the rulers feed with nationalism and pump the

rhetoric of “*the father state*”, “*our state*”, constantly in the mosques, barracks, schools and the media, has been etched into their subconscious, but it has been shaken by the absence of the state and the loss of lives caused by this. The state left the people on their own and all alone in the face of grave destruction. The earthquake victims witnessed their loved ones’ cries for help from under the rubble gradually fading away, and while they could do nothing, they put the state which did not extend a helping hand to the test. The people cursed the capitalist order, which allows everything to be bought and sold with money, the order that gave way to the houses that have become graves for their families, with unsupervised contractors, construction permits and amnesties for irregularities. They also cursed the state, which was not present in time of need, before and after the earthquake. Moreover, the state was put to the test not only with its absence but also with its presence, when it first came to the region in the form of a state of emergency and appeared to attack the people of the region on the grounds of looting. The AFAD, hindered the aid and rescue efforts of volunteer individuals and organisations, including our party, but also even a month later, it did not provide earthquake victims with the most basic necessities such as temporary shelters, toilets, etc.

The working people, who were brutally abandoned to “*herd immunity*” during the pandemic, were pushed into the arms of hunger, poverty and death after the earthquake.

The fracture was first seen in emotions: it was not just lamentation but included political connotations linked with those responsible for the deaths in the earthquakes. It was not abstract but concrete – especially in perception; everything is concrete and is shaped by the concrete. This was also the case with the rupture and it was only natural that the fissure had primarily to do with the team currently running the state. So the initial reactions focused on a reckless Erdoğan/AKP government, with no interest in the people and their problems, which paved the way for the massive destruction by fueling greed for profit. It always sided with capital, and transformed the state into a one-man regime, with incompetent institutions as a result of cronyism. In the eyes of the people the Erdoğan government was clearly responsible for what had happened, and the bourgeois opposition with its municipalities went to the earthquake zone and extended a helping hand to the people.

However, the reactions did not only target the Erdoğan/AKP government; the fracture had an impact beyond that. For example, the fact that the army did not help the earthquake victims, even though the government blocked its path to doing so by changing the law, was considered a minus point for the state. Moreover, contractor companies were left unregulated not only by the AKP municipalities but by all. It was not just the AKP issuing construction permits or just the AKP deputies voting for construction amnesties in parliament. Also, through their day-to-day relations with a central or local governing body, everybody is aware of the unequal relation between the rulers and the ruled, and how they are ignored. People have come to this conclusion through their own experiences, though it is still “*raw*” and needs to be processed.

However, just as one cannot imagine any spontaneous development, it is possible that emotions and attitudes may calm as the heat of the devastating earthquake is absorbed. When everyone is left to its own devices, one can expect a certain cooling down and a quiet enduring.

Moreover, the state and its ardent defenders will not be idle. Some of them, like Erdoğan and Bahçeli, will try to heal the wounds of the state, not of the people, by military and police power, threats, bans and fear, while others will try to heal those wounds under the guise of benevolence.

The government is trying to block all opposition from politics and criticism by trying to make the earthquake disaster “*above politics*”. Shouting the slogan “*the Government should resign*”, one of the most democratic rights, was subjected to investigations for terrorism. The protests organised by tens of thousands of fans in the stadiums during the football matches of the most popular teams were used as justification for mass detentions. Press statements were banned in cities including Istanbul, blockades and police detentions became routine. While this was happening, Omer Celik, the AKP spokesperson, shamelessly said, “*We are on ground zero as the Cumhuriyet (People) Alliance. Both the AK Party headquarters and the MHP headquarters sent deputies to the concerned regions*”.

The government and its supporters initially tried to respond to the reactions by focusing on those who were rescued alive from the rubble; when this was not enough they added the rhetoric of “*fate*” and tried to whitewash themselves with the propaganda that the country had faced the “*Disaster of the Century*” and a massive

devastation; thus the inadequacies in the official rescue and relief work. Considering what the people have been going through, it is very hard for these efforts to succeed but the appeasement trials will not be completely ineffective. As part of this, some religious sects have been using AFAD tents in certain regions with their own logos, to distribute food and make propaganda.

The bourgeois opposition rushed to help the earthquake victims but the state's ranking is at the top of their list, too. They do not want to see the state harmed in any way; they try to limit the blame to the ruling AKP, and justify the state by pointing to this bad team as the source of all evil. They try to get away with it by blaming the “*incompetence*” of AFAD, the failure of the military to participate in rescue operations, and the issuing of the construction permits and amnesties on the AKP and Erdoğan, as if they did not support it themselves.

Moreover, we did not face earthquakes only under the AFAD or the one-man regime of the religious AKP. In 1999 and before, we experienced the Erzincan, Varto, Bingöl, Adana earthquakes. This country was not ready for any of them. It is true that the AKP has “*raised the bar*” with its religiousness and one-man regime, but in the capitalist order, the people and their problems have never been taken care of; all workers' deaths, massacres in the shape of mining accidents, forest fires and earthquakes have always come unprepared. In every period which created incompetence, there has been insensitivity and a hostile attitude of excluding and ignoring towards the people and their problems. An example of this same attitude is the so-called “*Consensus Text on Common Policies*”, the programme of the bourgeois opposition, which is based on meeting the demands of capital, but not of the people, especially the workers. The defence of the state propaganda, which asserts that there is nothing wrong with the state or its order, that the blame lies solely with Erdoğan and the one-man mentality that has ruled the state for some time—even if it is true that the recklessness of those who hold the reins of power today has multiplied the destructive consequences of the earthquake—is surely expected to have a certain calming effect.

All major and effective social, natural, political and military upheavals create the ground for political fractures. Great crises and wars are like this. The world wars, for example, caused serious upheavals with serious consequences. In addition to the bloodshed on the fronts, it is known that the destruction, hunger and devastation caused by

wars lead to revolutions. However, in order to make use of the fracture created or will be created by the crisis or war, one needs the presence of those who are ready to take the walk and wage an effective struggle. The earthquake caused a political rupture. Even if it is still open to interpretation and distortion, the assumption that the state is not “*our father*” or “*our state*” has been widely perceived by the public. But there is a great need for the organisation of the struggle and for those who can systematise it and use it to pave the way for the people and their power.

The fact that the people have taken a significant step in this direction by trying to heal their own wounds with rescue and relief work and that there has been a great show of people-to-people solidarity shows that a step has been taken. However, it will not be enough if this remains the only step. It is not easy, but what needs to be done is to continue walking on this path, to work for the lesson “*this state is useless for anything positive*”, which has left its mark on the hearts of the people, to become permanent and to work for it to become conscious and organised.

*March 2023*

## **Changes in the Forms of Imperialism over Stages of Capitalist Development**

### **1. Introduction**

As Engels noted: “Everything moves, changes, comes into being and passes away.”

Imperialism has changed in *form* over the years. For example, the form may vary by the relative positions of the great powers. Even though the *content* of the exploitation of the colonial, or dependent, parts of the world has not changed, the leading metropolitan imperialists that extract their super-profits may differ, exploitation remains the fulcrum of the relationship between imperialist and dependent nations.

Marxist-Leninists recognized the changing nature of imperialism. Lenin pointed out that the top-dog dominant nations of imperialism would inevitably change as powers jostled against each other. Stalin rejected the notion that inter-capitalist wars had ended after the end of the Second World War.

This article aims to outline some key changes that imperialism has undergone. The most recent moves of these involve a reshaping of world alliances such as BRICS. Understanding these changes enables Marxist-Leninists to gauge the relevance to their own struggle of the conflicts between the international capitalist rivals.

The first anniversary of the Russian annexationist attack on Ukraine was on Sunday, February 26, 2023. So far this war has already had dire consequences for the toilers of both Ukraine and Russia. It is still too early to see clearly how it will end. However in the short term – after all the posturing stops – it is very likely that there will be a series of negotiated peace.

This will probably result in the Crimea staying within Russian national control, but it is unlikely to involve further territorial concessions, as for example in the Donbass. Most probably the accession of Ukraine to the European Union and NATO will be enshrined there; while the Crimea, following de facto presence on the ground, will remain with Russia. However we await events.

Regardless of those details, already some outlines of an emerging, renewed inter-imperialist struggle are becoming evident. Whatever the fate of Ukraine and Crimea, the current war is only the start of ongoing heightened confrontations between two major blocs of nations.

That move towards a new world war of re-division is no longer in a distant future. We should rather view it as having already begun. Russia's intervention in Syria was a harbinger, and it is even more obvious in Ukraine. The renewed "Scramble for Africa" – and every other part of the world – is in hot progress. As wars of words erupted over Taiwan, the US General Minihan wrote in a Memo on January 29, 2023:

"We will fight in 2025... Xi secured his third term and set his war council in October 2022... Taiwan's presidential elections are in 2024 and will offer Xi a reason. United States' presidential elections are in 2024 and will offer Xi a distracted America. Xi's team, reason, and opportunity are all aligned for 2025."

The cacophony of war rhetoric and incessant drums emphasizes the sliding nature of capitalist fortunes. Who is the "top dog" will change, and the relative positions of the capitalists is a rivalry only finally sealed in war.

"Half a century ago Germany was a miserable, insignificant country, if her capitalist strength is compared with that of the Britain of that time; Japan compared with Russia in the same way. Is it "conceivable" that in ten or twenty years' time the relative strength of the imperialist powers will have remained unchanged? It is out of the question." Lenin, V. I. (1917/1977). *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (Collected Works, Vol. 22, p. 295).

"Capitalism is growing with the greatest rapidity in the colonies and in overseas countries. Among the latter, new imperialist powers are emerging (e.g., Japan)." *Ibid.*, p. 274.

## **2. The first phase of exploitation of the less developed countries by the more developed capitalist countries – open colonialism**

The earliest forms of colonial occupation and extraction were the unabashed, naked forces in the colonies. This was how capitalism developed in its early stages and completed its development out of feudalism. It also fueled the "industrial revolution" in the European countries. Capitalism, in short, expanded its sway worldwide into countries by way of colonialism.

The first colonies began with the early capitalist states of Tudor England and Bourbon Spain. Those ventures ended with formal colonies. A colony is defined as “a country which is industrially underdeveloped and is dominated economically, and perhaps also politically, by a greater power.”

While this in its early stages usually included an armed invasion, leaving a physical presence of the imperialist country within the colonial country, this was not necessarily a permanent feature.

Already in the 1848 *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels had noted the development of a world market and the development of a colonial world:

“The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonisation of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development... Modern industry has established the world market.”

Later Marx showed the vital role colonies played as capitalists were bursting the seams of a still feudal structure. They avidly sucked-out colonial riches, the profits of which pushed the metropolitan countries into a fully developed capitalism growth. This is described in *Capital*, Volume I, Chapter 31, in 1867:

“The different momenta of primitive accumulation distribute themselves now, more or less in chronological order, particularly over Spain, Portugal, Holland, France, and England. In England at the end of the 17th century, they arrive at a systematical combination, embracing the colonies, the national debt, the modern mode of taxation, and the protectionist system. These methods depend in part on brute force, *e.g.*, the colonial system. But, they all employ the power of the State, the concentrated and organised force of society, to hasten, hot-house fashion, the process of transformation of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode, and to shorten the transition. Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one.”

Other rival countries developed their own thirst for colonies. This sparked an intense rivalry that was foreseen by Marx and Engels. Here, for example, is Engels in a letter to August Bebel on January 18, 1884:



“The ten-year cycle seems to have been broken down now that, since 1870, American and German competition have been putting an end to English monopoly in the world market. In the main branches of industry a depressed state of business has prevailed since 1868, while production has been slowly increasing, and now we seem both here and in America to be standing on the verge of a new crisis which in England has not been preceded by a period of prosperity.”

As colonial exploitation became intertwined with the growth of profits for the metropolitan industries, the latter developed new forms of growth and exploitation. This led to the fusion of finance and industrial capital, and to imperialism proper.

### **3. The phase of imperialism: Merging of finance capital with industrial capital**

As capitalism in various countries developed further, it developed into imperialism. When did imperialism “begin”? Lenin dates it clearly:

“(By) the boom at the end of the 19th Century and the crisis of 1900-03. Cartels become one of the foundations of the whole of economic life. Capitalism has been transformed into imperialism...”

“The 20th century marks the turning point from the old capitalism to the new, from the domination of capitalism in general to the domination of finance capital...”

“The year 1876... is precisely the time that the pre-monopolist stage of development of West-European capitalism can be said to have been, in the main, completed.” Lenin, V. I. *“Imperialism, ...” op. cit.*, p. 203, 257, 226.

“Imperialism, as the highest stage of capitalism in America and Europe, and later in Asia, took final shape in the period 1898-1914. The Spanish-American War (1898), the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05) and the economic crisis in Europe in 1900 are the chief historical landmarks in the new era of world history.” Lenin, V. I. (1916/1977). *“Imperialism and the Split in Socialism”* (Collected Works, Vol. 23, p. 106).

“Marx and Engels did not live to see the period of imperialism. The system now is a handful of imperialist ‘Great Powers’ (five or six in number) each oppressing other nations...” Lenin, V. I. (1916/1977). *“The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up”* (Collected Works, Vol. 22, p. 342).

In order to follow changes in it, we should consider how Lenin summarized imperialism.

For example, in “Letters From Afar”:

“Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun; in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed...”

“The whole thing hinges on the fact that capital has grown to huge dimensions. Associations of a small number of the biggest capitalists (cartels, syndicates, trusts) manipulate *billions* and divide the whole world among themselves. The world has been *completely* divided up. The war was brought on by the clash of the two most powerful groups of multimillionaires, Anglo-French and German, for the *redivision* of the world.”

These points formed Lenin’s definition:

“If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism...”

“We must give a definition of imperialism that will include the following five of its basic features:

“1) The concentration of production and capital has developed to such a stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life;

“2) The merging of bank capital with industrial capital and the creation on the basis of this ‘finance capital’, of a financial oligarchy;

“3) the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance;

“4) the formation of international monopolist capital associations which share the world among themselves, and

“5) The territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed.” Lenin, V. I. (1917/1977). “*Imperialism, ...*” *op. cit.*, p. 267.

In the confines of this article, we will assume as given that the process of monopoly and growth of capital has continued apace. In contrast, we discuss below some data to suggest that the feature of the export of capital was reversed at the turn of the 20th century into the 21st. This points to the divisions between finance and industrial capital.

#### 4. Colonial state forms

To reiterate, the *form* of imperialism can change despite the essential *content* — of exploitative relationship and extraction of monies and/or commodities — remaining the same. Changes in the form of colonies also change.

The initial form of exploitation of foreign countries — a colony — is defined as “a subject territory occupied by a settlement from the ruling state” (*Collins English Dictionary*, 1995, p. 311).

The early forms of a colony often, if not usually, involved a physical occupation of the imperialist forces inside a colony. But this changed over time.

Usually change was driven by the political will towards “independence” of the masses in the colonial type countries. Varying in size and strength, a fraction of the bourgeoisie also strained to develop its own hold on the colony, in order to impose its own class rule and retain all profits.

The colonial forms largely changed away from a physical occupation of the colony by the troops of the imperialist nation. Instead the colonial economy became dominated by the imperialist export of commodities. Therefore this was a domination by trading and financial means. Later the imperial export of commodities was replaced by the export of capital.

Hence the rise of the semi-colony and the neo-colony. Such forms attenuated the direct colonial relationship, and rendered it more “palatable.” These forms made it appear that there was a nominal “independence” of the colony from the imperial power. The semi-colony can be defined as “nominally independent, but in reality dominated by a greater power for the benefit of the latter’s ruling class, e.g. Colombia, Saudi Arabia.” Or the alternative mask is also adopted, that of a neo-colony – defined as “a former colony which has become a semi-colony, continuing to be dominated by a greater power for the benefit of the latter’s ruling class, e.g., Tunisia, Jamaica” (*Principles of Marxism-Leninism: A Study Course, Class Six, The National Question*); and characterized by the “retention of influence over... one’s former colonies... by economic or political measures” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. 10, 1987, p. 317).

In addition, the “white” former colonies of the British Empire were granted a higher role, amounting to a “junior partnership.” Initially this was institutionalized as being made into “dominions.” For

example, Canada: Dominion Home Rule was granted to Canada in July 1867. The term, derived from the Latin meaning “under rule,” was “introduced for the first time by Great Britain, 1867, in the constitution given to Canada to define its autonomous status.” (Osmanczyk, “*The Encyclopedia of the United Nations and International Relations*,” 1990, p. 241. Cited by Bland in “*Neo-Imperialism*,” 2001.)

Lenin recognized that such variations of colonial forms did not empower the colony, but rather that they strengthened imperialism itself:

“Sometimes the creation of ‘independent’ states leads to a strengthening of imperialism.” Lenin, V. I. (1920/1929). “*Randbemerkungen zu Nikolai Bucharins, Ökonomik der Transformationsperiode*,” p. 31. English: Lenin, V. I. (1920/1929). “*Notes on Nikolai Bukharin’s Economics of the Transformation Period*,” as cited in Probsting, Michael. (2013). “*The Great Robbery of the South: Continuity and Changes in the Super-Exploitation of the Semi-Colonial World by Monopoly Capital: Consequences for the Marxist Theory of Imperialism*.”

The economic and political changes of the imperialist states had even by 1916 given rise to several colonial forms. The semi-colony was only “*one form of dependence*” among many noted by Lenin as “diverse forms of dependent countries”:

“The struggle of the great powers for the economic and political division of the world, give rise to a number of *transitional* forms of state dependence. Not only are there two main groups of countries, those owning colonies and the colonies themselves, but also the diverse forms of dependent countries which, politically, are formally independent, but in fact, are enmeshed in the net of financial and diplomatic dependence, typical of this epoch... (is) the semi-colony.” “*Imperialism, ...*” *op. cit.*, p. 263.

Since then there have been even more diverse forms.

## 5. National liberation movements

As discussed above, in a colonial-type country, developments towards enslavement and subjugation are resisted by some fractions of the colonized people. Other social classes are exploiters, but depend for that privilege upon the dominating foreign imperialists.

Stalin pointed out in May 1925 to the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, that the native bourgeoisie in some colonial-type countries:

“[is] splitting up into two parts, a revolutionary part... and a compromising part... of which the first is continuing the revolutionary struggle, whereas the second is entering into a bloc with imperialism.” Stalin, J. V. (1925/1954). *“The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East”* (Works, Vol. 7, p. 147).

The first part is the national bourgeoisie. There are other classes whose interests lie in freeing the colony from imperialism. These are the working class and large portions of the peasantry. But at some stage the national bourgeoisie “turns away” from the national liberation movement:

“At first the indigenous bourgeoisie and intelligentsia are the champions of the colonial revolutionary movements, but as the proletarian and semi-proletarian peasants masses are drawn in, the bourgeois and bourgeois-agrarian elements begin to turn away from the movement in proportion as the social interests of the lower classes of the people come to the forefront.” Lenin, V. I. (1922/1971). *“Theses on the Eastern Question Adopted by the 4th Comintern Congress”* (as cited in Degras, J. (1971). *“The Communist International: 1919-1943: Documents”* Vol. 1, p. 388).

The second part of the native bourgeoisie discussed by Stalin are the comprador bourgeoisie and landlord classes, who ally with imperialism. The Comintern termed these latter elements as the “social support” of imperialism.

“Where the ruling imperialism is in need of a social support in the colonies, it first allies itself with the ruling strata of the previous social structure, the feudal lords and the trading and money-lending bourgeoisie, against the majority of the people.” Sixth Congress, Communist International. (1928) *“Theses on the Revolutionary Movement in Colonial and Semi-Colonial Countries”* (as cited in *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 533).

Colonial powers learned quickly the strategy of warding off genuine liberation movements by:

- 1) seeking to weaken such movements by splitting them along religious or ethnic lines;
- 2) negotiating with pro-imperialist political forces within the colonies — landlords and comprador capitalists — to transform the

colonies into neo-colonies, which are nominally independent but in reality dependent.

Moreover the colonial powers used super-profits from colonies as crumbs, whereby to bribe the labor aristocracy to blunt the progressive movement in the metropolitan home countries. This term was introduced by Lenin, built on observations by Engels of the English trade union leaders. The term was distorted by leftists including George Padmore in 1944, and later on Maoists, to being equivalent to the whole of the proletariat. Bland showed convincingly that only a small fraction of an elite receives any meaningful portion of colonial super-profits.

To summarize, nationalist pressures from below prompted changes in the forms of colonial exploitation. Some countries – for example North Vietnam and subsequently the consolidated state of Vietnam – won their national liberation struggle (*Ho Chi Minh*).

As these various national bourgeoisie struggled for “their place,” they swung the national liberation struggles in these countries firmly towards state capitalist forms. The state form enabled them — to some limited extent — to develop a state-based industrial base.

More often such national liberation struggles were stalled. In addition, over the ensuing decades, that pressure from below was less effective. This was more so as opportunist-led working class and peasant communist parties sank into revisionism. The net resistance to imperialism became less effective. Even when the differing national bourgeoisie of the world gained state power, they were less able to challenge imperialism. Ultimately they were forced into compromises or often, in effect, they lapsed into roles as comprador agents. This was so in both Asia and Latin America.

We have described this process in detail previously: in Afghanistan; in India (M.N. Roy 1993); in Pakistan; in Kurdistan; in Rwanda; in South Africa; in Syria; etc.

Here we cite one example, that of Peru. Juan Carlos Mariategui estimated that Peru had “lagged behind” without developing “the elements of a liberal bourgeoisie,” so that “power remained in the hands of the military caudillos.”

The old Peruvian landlord compradors — or “latifundistas” — served as “intermediaries” of foreign capital in producing sugar and cotton. Mining, commerce, and transport remained in the hands of foreign capital. This economic system was a “semi-feudal”

organization. After the second world war, the U.S. flooded Peru with a rapid imperial financial capital influx.

The U.S. ensured the coup of General Manuel Odria in 1948, who moved the 1950 *Coidgo de Minería* (Mining Laws). These favored the United States’ stripping of Peruvian raw material and assets.

The exceptionally weak national bourgeoisie was unable to resist the U.S. General Alvarado Velasco tried to circumvent U.S. pressure in 1968, but he could not, saying:

“The government doesn’t have any money... The Peruvian economy is in large part paralyzed... The country needs capital for its development.. Latin American development requires foreign capital.”

Under the guise of “Peruvianization,” the Velasco government tried to court other imperialists. But Peru had to join the U.S.-sponsored Andean Pact.

And so to the current era in 2021, when the weak national bourgeois Castillo was elected. He promised in his “Message to the Nation” on assuming the presidency in Congress:

“We do not even remotely intend to nationalize our economy or make an exchange control policy.”

And at the 2021 Organization of American States (OAS) meeting, Castillo soothingly said:

“We are not communists. We have not come to expropriate anyone. We have not come to scare away investments. On the contrary, [we] call [upon] large investors, businessmen, to go to Peru.”

And even so, Castillo was deposed by a parliamentary and civic coup by stooges of the United States in 2022.

## **6. False flag “progressive nationalism”**

The analysis of nationalist movements is complex. This is because spurious left-posturing “nationalism” finds leftist demagoguery a convenient mask. Various national bourgeoisie have portrayed themselves as “revolutionary” or “Marxist” currents. As the communist parties in the colonial type countries fell into various forms of revisionism, the leading role in the revolutionary processes in those countries was snatched by the nationalists.

Such expressions ranged from Maoism in Chinese revisionism; to Castroism and Guevarism in Cuban revisionism; to Russian revisionism (Khrushchev 1997); to left national forms such as the APRA-ism of Torres in Peru (Mariategui).

Even until recently there has continued to be a small — even if dwindling — progressive role for the national bourgeoisie. This was evidenced for example in Venezuela under Hugo Chavez.

But this progressive space becomes ever smaller and smaller.

In recent years new organizations emerged, formed to try to achieve some semblance of economic independence from predatory imperialists. These have revived past efforts as in the Bandung coalitions (see below). Modern day bourgeois nationalists have also sought alternative united fronts of their own weaker capitals. Just as the Bandung nationalists sought the sinews of revisionist USSR and China, their modern-day equivalents seek strength in conglomerates such as BRICS. These rely on China and Russia (see below).

But there have also been changes of form of colonial type countries, prompted by developments within capitalism itself. In more recent times, since the end of the 20th and the start of the 21st century, a new form of imperialism is seen. This is marked by a qualitative switch in the direction of capital flows — where instead of the export of capital into the colony, there was an import of capital into the metropolitan countries (see below).





This occurred coincident with the development of new forms of money, and the overflow of tensions between the two wings of capital: finance capital and industrial capital. These two wings of capital had merged in Lenin's observations but have been, to some extent, ruptured. We described this process previously (*Alliance* 1992 and *ML Currents* 2019). It led to the formation of neo-imperialism (Bland *MLRB*, 2001).

What have been the evident further phases of imperialism leading up to today?

### **7. Imperialism countered by the USSR immediately post-Second World War**

Because the USSR had successfully defeated the German state fascist attack, it was able to continue to build socialism. The form of Western imperialism took the shape of the "Cold War" aimed at erecting a bulwark against the USSR and its allies of the People's Democracies. Most of Europe was devastated during the war.

To further its control, the U.S. launched the Marshall Plan which loaned enormous sums of monies to the war-devastated Europe not occupied by the USSR forces. The People's Democracies entered into negotiation for monies from the Marshall Plan. However they rejected it as the demands made were an evident subservience.

While Stalin was alive, the USSR remained an effective opposition to the otherwise untrammelled hegemony of the U.S. over the capitalist states. While attempts were made to undermine the People's Democracies, the existence of socialism in the USSR countered these. During this period inter-capitalist contradictions were not extinguished, but were bound to grow:

"It would be mistaken to think that things can continue to 'go well' [for the U.S. – *Editor*] for 'all eternity,' that the countries will tolerate the domination and oppression of the United States endlessly, that they will not endeavor to tear loose from American bondage... Consequently the struggle of the capitalist countries for markets and their desire to crush their competitors proved in practice to be stronger than the contradictions between the capitalist camp and the socialist camp... But it follows from this that the inevitability of wars between capitalist countries remains in force." Stalin, J. V. (1951). "*Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*," pp. 37-41.

## 8. The Bandung era

After the restoration of capitalism in the USSR following Stalin's death in 1953, world imperialism took a radically new shape. After an initial phase where the Khrushchevites worked together with, and on behalf of, the United States, the former Soviet state was seized by the Brezhnevites (*Sakharov*). These representatives of heavy industry in the formerly socialist USSR moved to assert their "own" pseudo-socialist, social-imperialist hegemony against that of the U.S.

This rivalry developed into two major blocs — one led by the U.S., and the other led by the social-imperialism of the revisionist USSR.

For a period the nationalist bourgeoisie of various nation-states tried to play off one imperialist against the other in order to attempt to navigate an independent pathway. Essentially they tried to buy the best deal. Moreover, for a short period, a weak but potential third force arose in the form of Chinese revisionism.

It was in fact Chinese revisionism that attempted to organize the weak struggling nationalist bourgeoisie of the colonial type countries into a stronger coalition. They urged on the Bandung Conference. Bandung took its final shape after initial meetings between India's Jawaharlal Nehru and China's Chou En Lai, when they signed the Sino-Indian Agreement of April 29, 1954, over the issue of Tibet, and announced a program called *Pancha Shilla* (Five Principles). These were:

“Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; peaceful co-existence.”

At Bandung the bourgeois nationalists expressed strong desires to industrialize their nations. The Soviet revisionists did not attend. The only two outwardly “Communist Parties” to attend were China and North Vietnam. It is notable that China was under partial — and North Vietnam under full — control of the national bourgeoisie. The themes of the conference revolved around anti-imperialism. At the conference, some delegates charged the USSR with a colonial relationship towards the former People's Democracies, using the phrase “New Colonialism.”

Nonetheless, Bandung marked the recognition by the new Soviet revisionists that these countries were searching for alternative sponsors to the traditional imperialists.

The Soviet revisionists took the hints requesting “help” from the various national bourgeoisies. Very soon, they initiated collaborations with industrialists in these countries. The first was with Birla, a steel mill industrialist in India. The transformation of these former colonies of the West into the neo-colonies of the newly dominant and rampant Soviet imperialists began.

Ultimately the Bandung Conference became a sterile and failed route for the former colonial countries. Almost all these states never moved beyond either semi-colonial or neo-colonial relations. Instead they largely remained under domination of either the U.S.-led bloc or USSR social-imperialism.

### **9. The new instruments of U.S. imperialist control of the world economy**

In the post-war, post-Stalin era, the Western capitalist world had been locked into servility to the U.S. by several new instruments (*Alliance* 1993). One of these was the Marshall Plan which, as we saw, loaned enormous sums of monies to that part of war-devastated Europe which was not occupied by the USSR forces.

These monies were linked to other new instruments of financial control. While these had already been created in 1944 during the war, again the USSR refused to be tied to them.

These instruments included the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) – later the World Bank. But more importantly the Bretton Woods Agreement was a means by which to ensure that all monetary equivalents of currency were pegged to the U.S. dollar. At that stage the U.S. controlled about two-thirds of the world’s resources of gold. Bretton Woods made debts to the U.S. payable only in gold or in U.S. Dollars (“as good as gold” — see *Alliance* 1993).

Up till 1971 the currency exchanges still rested on the Gold Standard; however exchange was increasingly tied to the U.S. dollar. In 1972 the U.S. terminated the Gold Standard, making the dollar the so-called “fiat” currency. It essentially took the role of gold previously, but was based only on the authority and power of the United States Treasury. This meant that the U.S. guaranteed all currencies – so long as they were pegged within a fixed rate set by the Treasury. This prevented nations from devaluing their currency to gain a competitive advantage for their own exports.

This took aim at the power of the British “Sterling Area,” behind which a faltering colonial Britain sheltered itself with unrealistic trade advantages. France and its empire were also brought to heel by the U.S. in the Bretton Woods Agreement.

Meanwhile, in the largely Western capitalist countries of Europe, gradually the hegemony of the U.S. was increasingly challenged by nations that went on to form the European Union. But the U.S. dollar debt was difficult to challenge.

However even up to this stage towards the 1970s, the essential tenets of Lenin’s definitions of imperialism (listed above) were largely still as described in “*Imperialism*.”

### **10. Finance capital gains a predominance over industrial capital imperialism**

In 1999 we evaluated some of the features of Lenin’s definition of imperialism, deeming them largely unchanged. (*Alliance* 1999)

However in *Alliance* 1993, and since, we began remarking the tensions between the two wings of capital (finance vs. industry):

“There have been several changes in the nature of the alliance between the wings of capital within one nation. For an interim period the Banks were not the prime source of finance for capitalist industry. In Britain for example, banks (mainly merchant banks) own only 0.3%... of company shares.”

Banks in Britain provide only 6% of the external funding of industry in the form of loans and these have been traditionally short-term loans to provide “working (as opposed to investment) capital.”

Industry itself began to finance much of its own investments. The huge multi-nationals had such currency reserves that they eroded the power of the banks to some extent.

“The corporate sector is driving the U.S. economy to a degree unthinkable in the old economy. Conventional wisdom that the economy is driven by consumer spending is no longer as true as it once was.”

These divisions between the wings of capital are recognized overtly by the business community. Thus when the U.S. Democrats were resistant to a monetary policy... the needs of the financial sector [were met when] “Wall Street shoved Volcker down Carter’s throat.”

“In fact the relation between the profits of the financial capitalist class and the industrial capitalist class are inversely related.” *Alliance* 1999

Bretton Woods had forced the non-U.S. nations to hold U.S. dollars. Especially so after the U.S. pushed the world to come off the Gold Standard in 1971. All payments made by the U.S. to other nations – including for a huge U.S. military presence overseas — were made in U.S. dollars. Meanwhile as United States industry grew fat, its capitalist rates of profit actually fell. To enable better functioning the U.S. Treasury simply printed more treasury bonds, knowing that any inflation would be off-set to the overseas holders of U.S. dollar bonds.

These events became coupled to an exponential rise in dollar holdings outside of the U.S. As these funds rose — in the form of “Petrodollars” and in the dramatic surge of the “Eurodollars” — a huge surge in the money supply occurred. Added to the rapidity of money trades through electronic new technology, this “hot money” led to a period of soaring inflation. The surge of new shaky financial instruments (Marx called this type of speculation “fictitious money” — *Alliance* 1993) spurred massive inflation world-wide.

### **11. The drive to “neoliberalism”**

This then ushered in the “austerity” regimes by which most governments of the world ratcheted back reformist welfare gains. Those gains had been won in the post-war years firstly by a militant working class. But secondly — because post Second World War, capitalist governments were aware of the pull of even revisionist “socialist” states — they granted reforms. However by the era of Mrs. Thatcher, President Reagan, and General Pinochet, revisionism in the USSR and China had eroded such influences. Moreover reformist labor aristocrats in Western economics had done their job and disabled the progressive strands in the working class.

In the 1980s, the dominance of finance capital and the falling rates of profit combined to ensure the sway of so called “neoliberalism.” David Harvey’s definition is:

“Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee... the quality and integrity of money.” (See

*Trump and Finance Capital*) Harvey, David. (2005). “*A Brief History of Neoliberalism*,” p. 2.

In practice this meant that states were free to “deregulate” public spheres of function – especially any constraints on finance capital. After 1980, these deregulations effected an increasing domination by finance capital. Currency transactions flowed like never before:

“The strong wave of financialization that set in after 1980 has been marked by its speculative and predatory style. The total daily turnover of financial transactions in international markets, which stood at \$2.3 billion in 1983, had risen to \$130 billion by 2001. The \$40 trillion annual turnover in 2001 compares to the estimated \$800 billion that would be required to support international trade and productive investment flows.” *Ibid.*, p. 161.

## 12. How these developments affected the development of “neo-imperialism”

The export of capital from Britain continued to grow in the 20th century, as is shown by the following official figures. However, by 1996, so much British capital had been invested abroad that the income from these investments exceeded the amount of new capital being exported (see table\*).

	1982	1986	1996
British Export of Capital <sup>a, b</sup>	£11.6 thousand million	£33.9 thousand million	£89.3 thousand million
British Import of Capital <sup>c, d</sup>	£44.4 thousand million	£47.3 thousand million	£96.1 thousand million

\* Bland, W. B. (2001). “*British Neo-imperialism*.” The Marxist-Leninist Research Bureau (Report 3).

<sup>a</sup> Central Statistical Office. (1994). “Annual Abstract of Statistics: 1994.” p. 234.

<sup>b</sup> Central Statistical Office. (1998). “Annual Abstract of Statistics: 1998.” p. 275.

<sup>c</sup> Office for National Statistics. (1993). United Kingdom Balance of Payments: 1993. p. 42.

<sup>d</sup> Office for National Statistics. (1997). United Kingdom Balance of Payments: 1997. p. 43.

In other words, the *export* of capital had given way to the *import* of capital. Bland cites Theresa Hayter who put it as follows:

“Capital is now flowing out of the Third World, mainly to service debt, on an increasing scale.” Hayter, Teresa. (1989). *“Exploited Earth: Britain’s Aid and the Environment,”* p. 10.

Such a dramatic turn-around justifies the term **“neo-imperialism.”**

### **13. The emergence of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa)**

The term “BRICs” was coined in 2001 as an acronym by an economist Jim O’Neil, working for investment bankers Goldman Sachs. In 2014 the “S” was added for South Africa, making the acronym “BRICS.” O’Neill had been searching for advice for investors, and identified BRIC as a large and growing portion of the world GDP. In 2007 he looked back:

“In 2001... we argued that the BRIC economies would make up more than 10% of world GDP by the end of this decade. As we near the end of 2007, their combined weight is already 15% of the global economy. China is poised to overtake Germany this year to become the third-largest economy in the world. Our ‘BRICs dream’ that these countries together could overtake the combined GDP of the G7 by 2035... remains a worthy dream.” O’Neill, J. (2007, Nov. 23). *“BRICs and Beyond,”* Goldman Sachs.

In 2009, the BRIC countries began to make formal political links between themselves. Their first formal meeting was in 2009. In 2018 they had:

“a combined nominal GDP of US \$26.6 trillion (about 26.2% of the gross world product), a total GDP Purchasing Power Parity of around US \$51.99 trillion (32.1% of global GDP PPP), and an estimated US \$4.46 trillion in combined foreign reserves.” (*Report for Selected Countries and Subjects, IMF.*)

“The group accounts for 40% of the world’s population and just over a quarter of global GDP. To put this in context, the G7 countries with a far smaller population base constitute just over 30% of global GDP on purchasing power parity.” Doshi, T. (2022, July 21). *“BRICS In The New World Energy Order: Hedging In Oil Geopolitics.”* Forbes.

Numerous other countries of recent years have come closer to the grouping, and want to formally join BRICS.

“BRICS International Forum president Purnima Anand reported... that three more countries — which included Egypt and Turkey along with Saudi Arabia — could join the BRICS group “very soon.” This followed earlier announcements that Iran and Argentina had formally applied for membership with Chinese support.” *Ibid.*

As long ago as 2014 the BRICS grouping agreed to establish alternative banking systems:

“An agreement to establish a “New Development Bank” (NDB) and a “Contingent Reserve Arrangement” (CRA) was a public-relations coup... reiterate(s) their dissatisfaction with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the role of the dollar in the global monetary system. The BRICS possess just 11% of the votes in the IMF, despite accounting for more than 20% of global economic activity. The US Congress refuses to ratify the agreement reached in 2010 to correct this skewed state of affairs. And the United States has displayed no willingness to renounce its anachronistic privilege of nominating the World Bank’s president. Meanwhile, the share of the dollar in global foreign-exchange reserves remains more than 60%, while 85% of global foreign-exchange transactions involve dollars. Given the reluctance of under-represented countries to sign up for the IMF’s precautionary credit lines, central banks desperate for dollars can obtain them only from the Federal Reserve. The Fed was reasonably forthcoming in providing dollar swaps in the last crisis in 2008; but there is no guarantee that it will behave similarly in the future.” Eichengreen, B. (2014 Aug. 14). “*Do the Brics need their own development bank?*” *Guardian*.

Naturally obstructions were placed in their path. For example, the U.S.-engineered downfall of Dilma Rousseff, the president of Brazil, and the trial of her predecessor, Luiz Inácio da Silva (Lula), set the stage to try to derail Brazil’s leadership. (*Guardian* 2016). However since the release of Lula from prison and his recent re-election as President, there has been a favorable wind for Brazil again taking on a driving force in the BRICS.

Even so, some progressives initially saw the BRICS movement as a progressive step eroding the power of the bigger imperialist nations, especially the United States. But this hope is completely illusory. As a student of BRICS, Patrick Bond writes:

“the BRICS are ‘collaborating actively with imperialist expansion, assuming in this expansion the position of a key’ bloc, whose own interests also rest in sub-imperialist stabilisation of international



financial power relations, for the advancement of their own regional domination strategies.” Bond, P. (2016). “*BRICS Banking and the Debate Over Sub-imperialism*” (*Third World Quarterly* Vol. 37, No. 4, pp. 611–629).

Elsewhere Bond calls the BRICS by the term “junior partners in imperialism.” Bond considers the differing labels that have been given of the various fractions of nationalist bourgeoisie as only of “semantic” difference.

However since the terms historically carry strategic implications, they require a longer discussion. For these reasons the full discussion of the term “sub-imperialism,” which was coined by Ruy Mauro Marini, will be dealt with separately.

The more important dimension of the BRICS is, of course, that this grouping includes both Russia and China. Both are imperialist nations and anxiously wish to exploit a heavier burden on the world than they do currently. Hence, the BRICS is another imperialist formation, just as is the European Union, and the nations led by the U.S. which — in Europe at least – revolve around the forces of NATO.

### **Conclusion: A new imminent subdivision of the world through war**

As the United States makes new alliances around the Chinese seas (such as Taiwan, Indonesia, Philippines, Australia), China continues to push on its sea borders against states such as South Korea and Japan. While Russia invaded the state of Ukraine, it attempted to ensure its Europe-facing flank was broadened. However it miscalculated and fell into a trap, whereby NATO is now being enlarged to include the Scandinavian countries at minimum. The tinder is dry. There will be war. And how well prepared are the communists of the world? There is no large-scale unified movement that can be discerned. We have about 3-5 years.

*March 2023*

## **The Policy of the Marxist-Leninists in the Current Situation in Venezuela**

We Venezuelan Marxist-Leninists are working to consolidate our Party and its organizations, to increase our participation in politics and to expand our influence among the masses. For these tasks we value the experiences of the various organizations at the national and international level, especially the guidance of the classics, the Communist International and the ICMLPO. At this stage, we need to continue activities that allow the revival and expansion of political work in various arenas: local, sectoral, territorial, national and international, in order to bring the Marxist-Leninist program to the exploited. We must overcome our weaknesses, the negative consequences of the pandemic and the deep global economic crisis, which has had stronger impacts in our country than in others in the region, due to the strong aggression of the imperialist bloc of the U.S.-U.E. and the weaknesses of social democracy.

Recently we have focused on reviving our own activity and our relations with other revolutionary groups through the Party and its mass organizations, advancing the unification of the Marxist-Leninists of Venezuela. We must do this in a way that differs ideologically and politically, from the opposition to the Bolivarian process and rapprochement with the pro-imperialist right carried out by Bandera Roja and the PCV, as well as the policy of unconditional support by some organizations that considered themselves Marxist as a tendency submerging themselves within the PSUV and losing their ideological independence and their own organizational capacity.

The policy of critical support with demands has been gaining forces and expanding its influence in Venezuelan society in the face of a confusing reality in which many sectors have been left without a reference point and must be found in one of these three options for the development of political action.

It is important to understand that in the midst of the crisis of capitalism, which threatens a depression, with profound changes at the international level, and great manipulation of information, confusion can be created. This is an expression of the accelerated sharpening of the fundamental contradictions; in the face of this reality, our Party

has proposed an option that focuses on resistance and struggle against imperialist aggression. We apply the ideas of the common enemy and main danger as defined by Stalin, supporting, the policy of national sovereignty posed by the Bolivarian process in its development in the face of Yankee imperialism, while making criticisms and demands for the vacillating position of the government in some of its actions. This internal struggle of petty-bourgeois tendencies cannot create a unified strategy of construction and advances between reforms and counter-reforms, adapting to whatever is coming in order to survive. However, it still respects democratic freedoms and popular organizations, which allows revolutionaries to continue educating and organizing the masses without open repression.

For us, the critique of this ambiguity characteristic of social democracy cannot focus on one person but on politics and its class character. We promote among the truly revolutionary organizations the need to join forces to try to advance in the next stages, consolidating their own references, without making concessions to imperialism or the local bourgeoisie. We seek to instill among the masses the conception of popular democracy and socialism.

The demands for improvement in the living conditions of the popular majority, wage increases and indexation to inflation, as well as the proposal of a worker, peasant and communal government, have allowed the agreement with other sectors and an advance of these proposals.

### **Internal Challenges.**

In the process of accumulation of forces we started with the holding of our V Congress in 2022 and the redistribution of cadres to promote the revival, after a pandemic and economic crisis that left negative consequences.

One of the greatest challenges of the stage is to consolidate our influence as Venezuelan Marxist-Leninists in other sectors of the masses. Thus we have been expanding the policy of the Popular Front and the United Front of the proletariat with several organizations in various regions, which seek to converge in a unifying effort at the national level.

From the programmatic point of view, the proposal of a Worker, Peasant and Communal government, based on territorial work and broader mass organizations, has allowed us to coordinate with other social sectors, having reference points of struggle and popular

mobilization on the basis of the idea of building revolutionary popular power and a form of government of its own.

In this action we are working with mass organizations that can add to the work among women, intellectuals, artists, athletes, militia members, young people, older adults, ethnic groups, with a theoretical and practical anti-imperialist and class base. We are using tactical and strategic approaches in order to contribute to the deepening of the processes of training, organization and mobilization. This must be sustained, on the one hand, by the study and application of Marxist-Leninist science and the contributions of the classics, Marxist political economy, and on the other hand, in the struggle for the improvement of the living conditions of the majority through the demand for wage increases and indexation and improvement of living conditions, promoting popular organization and mobilization on a revolutionary basis.

### **Towards the Meeting of Venezuelan Marxist-Leninists**

To continue advancing in the positioning of Marxist-Leninist politics we must study the conditions in today's agitated world and not be trapped in sectarianism, or localism, contemplating at our navel. This forces us to make an important effort to achieve the understanding of what the work for the unification of revolutionary struggles on an ideological basis means. This is why we convened the First Meeting of Venezuelan Marxist-Leninists in March, with the participation of our members and activists from various regions and organizations that define themselves as Marxist-Leninists, We were able to join in the work for a broader and more widespread reference point, in order to improve the national influence of Marxist-Leninists.

The reasons for promoting the Meeting of Venezuelan Marxist-Leninists can be explained from the most elementary; the defense against a common enemy or threat, the participation in daily activities of the masses, to the identity of class objectives in pursuit of the building of a new society, or the ideological base, in struggle against other views that claim to be communist, with a history of inconsistencies. All this requires continuing to work on the program, common tactics and strategy that can find the route for joint advancement.

### **Where Are We Going?**

In that meeting for the Unity of Venezuelan Marxist-Leninists, we opened the doors to the possibility of new activities that would

allow us to join forces and build a reference point for those of us who define ourselves as Marxist-Leninists, with profound differences with Bandera Roja that has just expressed support for the imperialist agent Guaidó and the PCV that it has gone into opposition behind the traditional union opposition and the most degenerate Trotskyism, fighting with the government for electoral votes. This necessitates a clarification to demarcate from these positions, also making it clear that we consider that the State institutions must respect the decisions of these organizations, even if they are incorrect, because they represent the opportunist essence of them.

The Meeting of Venezuelan Marxist-Leninists is a space for gathering together to develop activities in a coordinated manner. It aims to provide the exploited of our country and the world with a point of reference that allows for overcoming the levels of confusion and dispersion that the revolutionary left is experiencing thanks to the deviations and campaigns that reformism, revisionism and social democracy, even the agents of imperialism have unleashed. They do this in order to confuse, discredit and weaken the international communist movement in relation to what is happening in Venezuela.

We agree that for revolutionaries, especially for us, it is vital to evaluate the responses to concrete events. Thus, when evaluating events such as February 27-28, 1989 or the participation of BR and the PCV for years in the history of Venezuela, we can only say that they marked the bankruptcy of that left. This was mainly because, in the face of a convulsive reality, there were no organizational or political conditions to place themselves at the head of some masses, who had expectations about that supposed vanguard that claimed to be determined to fight.



These organizations, which at that time were not able to guide the people in their struggle, today continue to call themselves Marxist-Leninists. They turn their backs on the needs of the political moment, passing in a convulsive and visceral way from the surrender to projects as conservative as the opportunism of Caldera, to the opposition to a democratic process that is confronted with a dangerous aggression of the most violent imperialist country on the planet.

These turns and inconsistent political expressions bring confusion to the popular majority and the international communist movement. They call into question the strategic and tactical solidity of those organizations that pass from one side of politics to the other with an ease and passion. This is in addition to attacking the unity of the people, destroying the possibilities of unity of the vanguard in the camp of the left. leading them to pragmatic alliances with the right, as Bandera Roja has just done and the PCV could follow.

In order to try to overcome these weaknesses, which show a lack of understanding of the political moment, of the approaches of Marxism-Leninism and a lack of spirit of unity with the people and other revolutionary forces, we have decided to travel, together with other cadres and organizations, the path of building a broad possibility, of a United Front type, and to take up the baton abandoned by the traditional “communist” organizations. to try to give a new impetus to the ideas that can allow, going forward, to building socialism, based on the history of struggle of the proletariat, taking as references scientific socialism, the Paris commune, the Communist International, the revolutionary struggles that have been waged throughout the world.

*Political Bureau of the PCMLV  
March 2023.*