

Portugal - The Socialist Party sinks the law against precarious employment - The tragicomic parliamentary comedy of the Stalinist PC - The labor movement paralyzed by opportunism

On November 26, the Portuguese parliament rejected a bill by the Stalinist PCP aimed at limiting precarious work. The social-democratic Socialist Party - in fact the governing party, mediating between the various parliamentary bands - had approved it in vague terms, before joining the right-wingers in sinking it.

The law would have limited the cases allowed for fixed-term contracts, established a maximum number of times they could be renewed and cancelled those of very short duration. It was also planned to repeal the increase of the probationary period to 180 days in the case of first-time job seekers and the long-term unemployed.

The CPP limited itself to reformist parliamentary oratory, not wanting to launch the general proletarian offensive against the increase of exploitation, precarity and misery that the pandemic has unleashed on the working class. This is despite the fact that it is fully within the powers of the PCP, which maintains a stifling grip on the direction of the struggles in Portugal, directing them wherever possible towards national and democratic rather than class objectives, demoralizing the workers and completely failing to protect their livelihoods, a mission it pays lip service to.

The Communist parliamentary leader stressed before the vote that "workers need a solution to their problems; companies should not lay off and hire at will." But for this desperate "need" all the PCP can offer are parliamentary speeches!

Portugal and its labor movement are in a unique position because of how the apparatus of government was set up after the false revolution of 1974. Stalinism has maintained a strong influence in the labor movement, in its historical pseudo-radical role within the institutions, in the service of the bourgeoisie, as an alternative to the official corporatism of the ruling Socialist Party. While the union maneuvered by the PS, the UGT, is openly regime, in the role of wholesale seller of labor in secret negotiations, the CGTP, overwhelmingly controlled by the PCP, presents itself as an

"independent class organ" for the defense of the working class, although the political directives of the PCP make it incapable and unwilling to defend anything in the face of the offensive of the bosses. Thus we have two regime union confederations, giving the workers the illusion that one of them is resisting the statist policy of the other.

In this reluctance and inability to defend the workers the disastrous policy of the CGTP has dispersed the Portuguese movement: in 1978 60.8% of workers were unionized; today only a paltry 15%. To the workers, the CGTP appears useless, as it demonstrated in the port workers' strike of 2019.

The struggle would like to be replaced by parliamentary campaigns, designed to fail and symptomatic of opportunism. By relying on the PCP to defend their interests in parliament, workers have given up the direct struggle against capitalist exploitation, leaving the defense of their conditions to parliament, the very organ of bourgeois political domination! The role of the PCP within the Portuguese state is clear: to disarm the workers.

While the PCP headlines in its newspapers that "the Socialist Party has failed once again with the workers" at the same time it allies itself with the PS, recognized traitor of the proletariat, in parliamentary disputes "against the right!"

Thus the Portuguese workers are left without means of struggle, they are left demoralized and disarmed to the growing exploitation. This is what the parliamentary "workers' parties" are, reformist and opportunist.

Unfortunately, the PCP's campaign still deceives the majority of workers, with great waste of proletarian energies.

In the Stalinist parliamentary theater the PCP has sworn not to give up the struggle, "the struggle continues", of course in parliament, repeating the same mistakes that led to all this disaster! Yes, it is the fault of the PS, but, come on, you can't hate them too much, we need them to beat fascism! That's why we are allying ourselves with them."

What is lacking today is a revolutionary party - our party - that denounces parliament as a counter-revolutionary instrument and proceeds with principled and revolutionary trade union work, the claims of the class, never with national and democratic ones.

The Ukrainian Pretext (con't)

been kept in the dark until the last moment) and the stipulations of the AUKUS pact in the Pacific between the USA, Great Britain and Australia (without the knowledge of France and Germany and the subsequent replacement of French submarines to Australia by US nuclear submarines).

Russia is not the enemy of the USA

In this crisis, the US has been the most decisive among the countries of the Atlantic Alliance in opposing Russia and has demonstrated, once again, to use it as an instrument to defend its economic interests and to reassert its grip on Europe. Washington has sought to monopolize negotiations with Moscow, excluding or overshadowing European allies and Ukraine itself. President Biden has given an almost certain indication of war by imposing the withdrawal of U.S. personnel from the Embassy in Kiev, which was immediately followed by Britain and Australia, to the extent that the governments of major NATO powers have had to reassure public opinion by declaring their unwillingness to send troops to fight in Ukraine in case of Russian invasion. So much so that the Ukrainian president himself had to publicly deny the imminent danger of war.

But Russia is certainly not an existential danger to the United States. It represents today a merely regional imperialism, even if it maintains a formidable military-industrial apparatus and an arsenal, especially nuclear, worthy of fearful respect. In economic potential, Russia can reasonably be compared to Switzerland and, in the annual military expenditure, there is no comparison to the two superpowers of the United States and China. In 2020 Moscow spent about 62 billion dollars in weapons, and the U.S. spent \$778 billion, almost 13 times as much. China spent four times as much as Russia, or \$252 billion.

China is the real strategic enemy of the United States, engaged as it has been for years in an increasingly open clash over Taiwan and the South China Sea. Naturally, Beijing has taken advantage of the Ukrainian crisis to strengthen its ties with Moscow and has not missed the opportunity to turn this diplomatic and military confrontation in the heart of Europe to its advantage, this time by showing solidarity with Russia. During Putin's visit to Beijing on the occasion of the Olympics, the two countries reached new agreements for "trade and military cooperation, investments and understandings from energy to space," and "development of new financial instruments to enhance and protect their respective currencies at the expense of the dollar" (Il Sole 24 Ore, February 4). They have also presented a project for "a new era" in international relations, based on

multilateralism, which translates to unseating the world hegemony of the United States.

In particular, these new agreements explicitly include the two allies' opposition to Ukraine's inclusion in NATO and a reconfirmation that Taiwan is "an integral part" of China. Finally, opposition was expressed to the AUKUS military pact. China is thus proving itself to be a major player in the Ukraine conflict as well.

The imperialist order wavers

The diplomatic whirlwind that in recent weeks has involved not only Russia and the United States, but also the European Union, for what it is worth, Germany and France, Italy itself, and ambivalent Turkey, confirm that a world order, the one that since the fall of the USSR has seen the United States dominate, no longer exists. The great power can no longer maintain order and control, from Central Asia to Africa and the Middle East. Alliances are less and less solid and the frontlines change abruptly. But the bloodthirsty regime of capital finds new balance, even if that means a new and devastating world imperialist slaughter.

A mad arms race in the lead-up to war

This descent from the precipice into war is confirmed by the growing arms race, which does not spare even the smallest of states, despite the monopolization of production, use and trade of weapons and war machinery by merely a fraction of the world's existing states. This race is fueled by air of inevitable war. Evident is the hypocrisy of international diplomacy and its distinction between wars of aggression and defense, between wars which are unjust and just. The former are condemned, while the latter are blessed by States and Churches. This distinction of the current bourgeois regime of rancid imperialism has no correspondence in reality.

In an era of perpetual economic crises, in the reckless drive for ever more resources, energy supplies and raw materials (and even necessities like land and water), war has become a permanent feature, its momento mori. The regime of capital is at permanent war with human life: it allocates most of the planet's resources to the manufacture of useless or harmful goods. It produces weapons of all proportion to prolong itself, for the defense of its social order based on exploitation, misery, and war, all the while decrepit and wracked by convulsions, unable to hear the death-rattle of the capitalist world-system.

The Communist Party

WHAT DISTINGUISHES OUR PARTY - The line running from Marx to Lenin to the foundation of the Third International and the birth of the Communist Party of Italy in Leghorn (Livorno) 1921, and from there to the struggle of the Italian Communist Left against the degeneration in Moscow and to the rejection of popular fronts and coalition of resistance groups - The tough work of restoring the revolutionary doctrine and the party organ, in contact with the working class, outside the realm of personal politics and electoralist manoeuvres

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Capitalism is war To stop it, the working class must bring capitalism down

It had to happen, the clash between capitalisms, between the states sharing the world, is inevitable. Ukraine is only the beginning: the clash is global, between imperialist states, not between "democracies" and "authoritarian regimes" as they want to present it. From the United States to China to Russia, to Great Britain, Japan, Germany, France and Italy, they are all arming themselves to the teeth to divide up territories and spheres of influence all over the world. Relations between states are based on force and not on abstract international law.

The distinction between aggressors and aggressed is false, it is an ideological tool to justify imperialist warfare on either side of the front.

All national capitalisms are aggressors and aggressed at the same time.

They are all threatened by the global crisis of the capitalist economy, which is inexorably advancing due to the enormous overproduction of goods and capital, aggravated by the pandemic. They are at each other's throats in order to survive, to share the declining profits.

And because capitalism feels threatened by what it itself has produced in its development: Communism. Communism is the spectre maturing within the modern world itself, looming materially over every aspect of life. Capitalism has formed and magnified its gravedigger, the international proletariat, destined to revolt under the conditions of misery into which the crisis is leading it.

What drives capitalisms to war is not a particular political ideology or culture or national tradition: these are just the lies with which bourgeois regimes try to justify conflicts and absolve capitalism of its infamies.

Russia, which was communist in October, since the Stalinist counterrevolution and the defeat of the Bolshevik old guard, has degenerated to become a capitalist state among others.

What provokes the imperialist war are the immense economic interests of big capital. Every day for these interests billions of proletarians are exploited, laid off and starved, made to work in conditions that cause their death by accident or disease. In order to save costs

and make more profit, the bourgeoisie causes environmental, industrial, infrastructural and health disasters that claim thousands of victims.

The imperialist war is not only a conflict between bourgeoisies to divide up the world market: it is a war of all bourgeoisies united against workers all over the world to keep them divided, subjugated, terrified. The only solution capitalism has to its economic crisis is to oppose life: to destroy not only the surplus goods, but also the living beings themselves, the workforce-commodity, the workers, by the millions.

A few weeks before entering Ukraine, Russian soldiers were sent to Kazakhstan to help the local bourgeois regime smother in blood the proletarian uprising that had broken out over the rising price of gas, a repression that received the unanimous consent of all the bourgeoisies in the world, from the falsely communist Chinese, to the autocratic Turkish, to the Western democracies.

All the interests of capital, and its very survival, are concentrated in the state and military machinery. Their protection leads them inexorably to war.

If the working class does not succeed in overthrowing capitalism first, a vast and devastating conflict will turn the world into a battlefield in which the workers will be called upon to shed blood only for the interests of their respective bourgeoisies and the preservation of their political power.

Eastern Europe is only one of the fronts on which imperialisms are clashing: the same glimmers of war are rising from the Pacific, around Taiwan and China, the main strategic adversary of US imperialism.

The war in Ukraine, like the previous one in Yugoslavia, once again dispels the illusion of a peaceful Europe and confirms what revolutionary Marxism has always denounced: there can be no peace as long as capitalism exists; there can be no peaceful coexistence between national capitalisms.

The war in Ukraine is therefore not only caused by Putin's aggressive policy, as they superficially want you to believe: it is caused by the bourgeois regime, which is Russian and worldwide. It is

provoked by capitalism, all of which is pregnant with war.

In order to stop it, the workers must not follow the indications of either the nationalist, openly bourgeois parties or the opportunist workers' parties, which always tell them to "choose", and side with the "less warmongering", "less anti-proletarian", "more democratic" front than the other. Workers must unite, across borders, against all imperialist fronts and first and foremost against their own bourgeoisie. The first communist watchword of 1848 - Proletarians of all countries unite! - is still valid and relevant today.

The communists' watchword in the war is the one that was Lenin's and the left-wing communists' against the First World War: turn imperialist war into revolution.

Workers from today must separate their orientation and attitude from those of their own bourgeoisie, from today they must fight in defence of their living and working conditions, against their own national capitalism.

There is no commonality of interests between the working class and the bourgeois class. The so-called 'common good of the country' is just an ideological cloak that disguises the defence of the interests of national capitalism.

For workers to support their own bourgeoisie today, accepting sacrifices in terms of living and working conditions in order to make the "country system" more competitive, means tying themselves to the wagon of the ruling class, which will lead them tomorrow to shed blood in defence of the social privilege and political domination that oppresses them.

The way to salvation lies not in the prevalence of their own bourgeoisie in the world arena, but in the international unity of the working class against capitalism.

For this social war we need the weapons of proletarian struggle, we need to rebuild real class trade unions, and to fight under the flag of the International Communist Party.

The Ukrainian Pretext

Looking for the causes of the new crisis on the eastern borders of Ukraine, it is impossible not to take into account the context in which it occurred. The economic crisis affecting the main countries of the world presses divergent political and economic interests on the various actors, making their moves all the more bold and awkward.

In the last months of last year, Russia began to amass a large amount of men and military assets on their border with Ukraine. Western sources speak of more than 100,000 heavily armed soldiers. Military maneuvers are taking place in Belarus, to the north, and Crimea, to the south.

Faced with protests from the government in Kiev and its Western allies, who cry of the danger of an invasion, Russia responded that these are normal exercises within its territories and that there is no plan to descend on the Ukraine.

The improbability of war would be confirmed by the climate within the highest levels of the Russian government in Moscow. Il Manifesto newspaper reported on January 15: "Everyone in Moscow knows the risks of an open war in a country with 45 million inhabitants, and the repercussions it would have, first of all on internal stability. They are aware of the men of the military apparatus as well as those of the political establishment around Putin, interested in defending relationships and even privileges built over time with European countries."

The Italian General Leonardo Tricarico, former Chief of Staff of the Air Force, in a recent interview to RAI said that "it is not the Russians who are encircling NATO but the opposite (...) [Russian troops] are not ready for any invasion. They participate in maneuvers in Belarus, and even in patrols in the Mediterranean, but the Russian troops threatening the Ukrainian border are a pressure, certainly risky, to reiterate that the entry of the country into NATO would be unacceptable".

The Encirclement of Russia

The Kremlin's showdown did not come as a bolt from the blue; there had been thunder for a long time. As Sylwia Zawadzka wrote that, "[b]eginning in 2014, the strategic direction of the Russian military effort shifted decisively from the Caucasus, Turkey, the Near East and Iran to the regions directly bordering Ukraine and Crimea, and this was joined, since about 2016, by the northwest direction, i.e., the Kaliningrad enclave, which was further militarized to counter Allied action in the Baltics" (Strategic Observatory, No. 4, 2020).

This decision was due to the so-called "encirclement syndrome" that arose in Russian leadership circles due to NATO's expansionist policy in the decades following the

disintegration of the USSR.

Back in 2007 Putin had expressed Russia's opposition to the military activism of the United States and its allies in the former Yugoslavia, in the Middle East, etc., but especially to the eastward expansion of NATO. During the Munich Security Conference held that year, the Russian president voiced Moscow's growing concerns. "I think it is obvious that the expansion of NATO has no relation to the modernization of the Alliance itself or to ensuring security in Europe. On the contrary, it represents a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust. And we have the right to ask: against whom is this expansion directed? And what happened to the assurances made by our Western partners after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact? Where have those statements gone today? Does no one remember them anymore?" Rhetorical questions of a president trying to renew Russia's status as a world imperialist power.

These NATO moves were also criticized by US politicians. As early as February 1997, former diplomat George F. Kennan, a theorist of the Soviet Union's post-World War II containment policy, wrote, in a New York Times article entitled "The Fatal Mistake," where he argued that "the expansion of NATO would be the most fatal mistake of American policy in the entire postwar era. Such a decision can be expected to inflame nationalistic, anti-Western and militaristic tendencies in Russian public opinion; to have a negative effect on the development of Russian democracy; to restore the Cold War atmosphere in East-West relations; and to push Russian foreign policy in directions decidedly not to our liking."

The former diplomat highlighted the fact that an aggressive NATO policy, even if it would have weakened Russia from the point of view of military deployments, would, however, have strengthened the regime internally by giving voice and strength to patriotic and nationalist anti-Western positions.

United States v. Germany

But evidently the United States had no choice. In the general crisis of the imperialist order that followed the fall of the USSR, a crisis that continues to this day, there was less and less room for a policy of détente or simple containment. In the event that the countries of Eastern Europe were not incorporated into NATO and the European Union, they were destined to end up once again under the influence of either Russia or, even worse for Washington, Germany. The latter was a danger the United States did not want to risk.

NATO has had to physically occupy the space between Berlin and Moscow, with the aim, as "Limes" wrote in November 2019, "The new

Iron Curtain", of NATO having to "deny resurgent German nationalism (...) any future understandings with Russia. Which have been the case between two powers for centuries, forced by proximity and power relations to come to terms (...) The obsession with Germany is, moreover, a characteristic feature of American strategic culture. For one hundred and two years, since the intervention in the First World War against Imperial Germany, it has defined the American approach to Europe".

Germany, one of the major economic powers in the world and the largest in Europe, still lacks an army corresponding in might to its strength in world markets. Even so, with its industrial and technical capabilities, not to mention nuclear power, it could soon become a competitive adversary again. Today it is an ally of the United States, but it could very well become one of its most formidable opponents.

One the surface, the Ukrainian crisis pits the United States and Russia against each other, but, more importantly, it affects Germany and the rest of Europe, from the point of view of trade with Russia and the reliance on Russian energy supplies, which still represent more than 40% of the gas and oil imported by the EU. It is Germany and Italy, who have the largest economic and trade relationships with Russia, who would lose the most if sanctions were taken against it. The negative impact on the U.S. economy would be much less significant; in fact, they stand to benefit.

The United States has made no secret, despite the agreements made with Bonn, that one of its objectives is to block Nord Stream 2, the new pipeline linking Russia to Germany, because they are worried about the EU's growing dependence on Russian gas. "It is very difficult to think that the Nord Stream pipeline will become operational in the event that Russia renews its aggression against Ukraine," U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman warned on January 12.

It was the US obviouslyly that proposed to supplant Russian gas supplies to Europe with liquefied gas from the US and Qatar. According to data provided by The Press on February 5, "[i]n January, natural gas shipments to Europe (at least half of which came from America) exceeded natural gas imports from Russia."

A bold move?

Why did Moscow decide on such a risky step in these uncertain times of global pandemic and economic crisis?

The Russian government wanted to exhibit this show of strength at a time of internal difficulty caused by an economic crisis, which has led to the decrease of wages and pensions, causing widespread discontent among

workers, but also in the petit bourgeois and middle class. Shifting the focus to external threats against the Great Motherland, and perhaps seizing some successes in foreign policy, as happened in 2014 with the occupation of Crimea, would certainly lead to a strengthening of the regime.

In addition to this, it must be considered that in recent years the Ukrainian army has been strengthened thanks to substantial supplies of weapons from the United States and other NATO member nations, including the restless Turkey who has provided UAVs, in addition to sending hundreds of mainly British and American military advisors. Moscow's fear is that this new situation will push the Ukrainian government, which is already implementing a harsh policy against the Russian minority still present in the country, to try to reconquer the Donbass region, where in recent years ceaseless clashes in an endless war have left 14,000 dead on the ground.

Moreover, the possible entry of Ukraine and Georgia into NATO, as foreseen by the Budapest summit in April 2008, would put Russia in an unsustainable situation of weakness that would certainly have negative repercussions on Putin's government as well. In the press conference at the end of the year, Vladimir Putin put it clearly: "A further expansion of NATO towards the East is unacceptable.... The West comes with its missiles to our doorstep,... they keep telling us: 'war, war, war', but there is the impression that, perhaps, they are the ones preparing the third military operation in Ukraine".

A united Europe does not exist

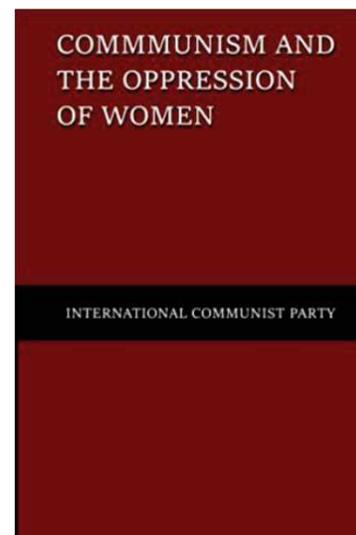
The diplomatic crisis has also highlighted the deep divisions that exist between European countries. On one side is Germany with France and Italy. On the other, Poland and the Baltic countries with the now external support of Great Britain, a bloc that represents the long arms of the United States over the EU. Against this opposition, France has re-proposed its plan for the creation of a "European security system", uncoupled from NATO. In fact, Europe, despite its shared currency, does not exist as a military power because it lacks a unitary political direction and armed forces.

We have repeatedly said that there will never be a real unity of Europe: the conflicts of interest between the different states are too strong, and only the proletariat will be able to give life to a Europe without countries and borders.

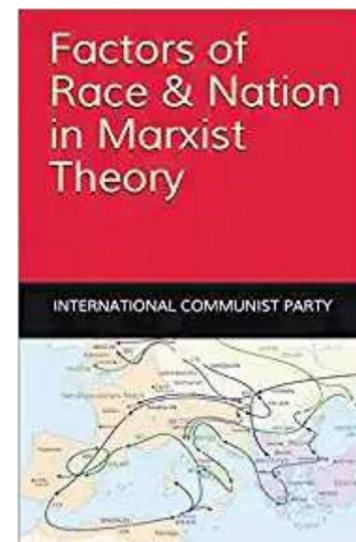
This crisis has also exacerbated the contrasts that had already exploded in the allied field, in France and Germany but also in Italy, illustrated by the US withdrawal from Afghanistan (of which they had



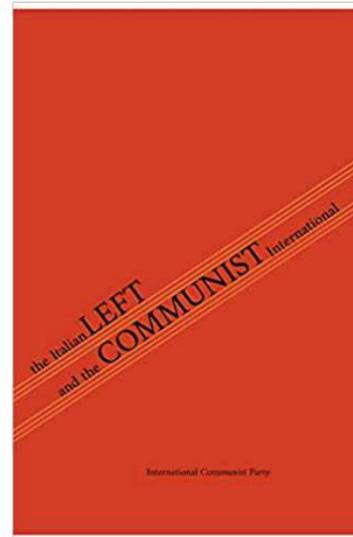
This study on the Paris Commune is part of a wider work on the workers' movement in France undertaken by our International Communist Party, following what had been done in the sixties. Reclaiming our own history, that of our class, is a vital necessity for the objectives we set ourselves, the communist revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the logical outcome of the long tormented journey of humanity. The restoration of the doctrine goes through the study of the proletarian movement, of its defeats as well as its victories, in order to draw all possible lessons from it that will be profitable for the resumption of the class movement on these healthy bases. This work is done in conjunction with the vast research on the History of the Communist Left in the 1920s, work and continuity that we are, here again, alone in pursuing...



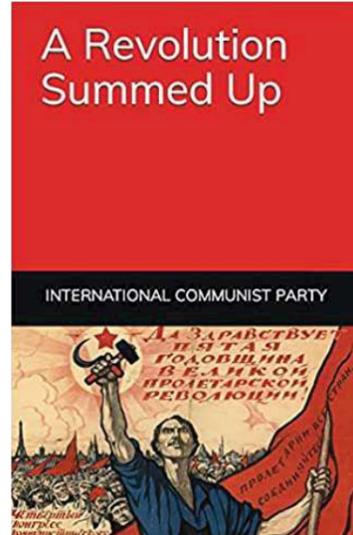
The following text and the title given to it do not call for further comment. One could not propose only an essay on the millennial oppression of women in class societies because the oppression of women can be solved only in classless and stateless society, by communism. This is how we propose to the reader a text written by several authors of different ages who, in the historical arc of more than a century, represents the organic and univocal interpretation of the "woman question" according to the tradition of and the method of revolutionary Marxism, invariant in time and space, until the day when there will no longer be a single woman crushed by the double oppression to which the regime of private property subjects her. It is the demonstration that we have nothing to invent, to discover, to propose on the question, that the general theory of the proletariat class does not already know.



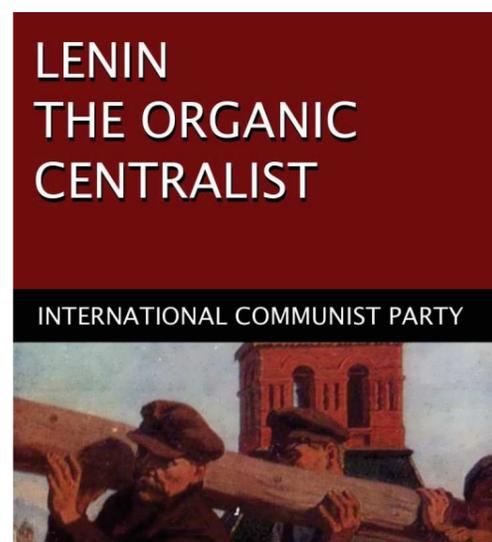
This text is the written report of a meeting on the topic that took place on August 29-30, 1953, in Trieste, and which appeared in issues 16-20 of Il programma comunista ("the communist programme"). At that time the destiny of the "Free Territory" was still uncertain, one of the many political and economic monstrosities of the post-war "settlement" in Europe and the world. The Trieste drama was a small event in the world picture, but nevertheless enormous for those who had to endure it. During the war, Istrian Italians had suffered ethnic cleansing at the hands of Tito's partisans, but this was kept out of mainstream information channels by the Italian Stalinists, who did not want "communism" to be associated with the persecution of ethnic Italians. These sordid contemporary events gave the International Communist Party the opportunity to present fundamental and classical Marxist theses, in a trenchant way, directly antithetical to the deformation operated on them by opportunism; deformations coming either from the Stalinist counter-revolution or from false left groups; all of them unable to appreciate factors such as those of race and nation which, although not belonging to the totality of direct objectives of the communist revolution, are historically present on the path that dialectically leads to it. In this quality, such factors draw the revolution closer



The Italian Communist Left (aka the Promoteo group) has been slandered and misrepresented by the other dissident communist currents making up the so called "Left Opposition." Consisting of a 12 part collection, written over the course of two decades, this work provides a clear history of the creation of the Third Communist International (Comintern), the formation of the Communist Party of Italy, and the genesis of counterrevolution in Russia. Included in this volume is a collection of the many foundational theses by the Communist Left. As the last vestiges of Stalinism fade into history, readers will find the admonitions of the Italian Communist Left about the burgeoning calamity of counterrevolution ring true today.



An assessment of the impact of the Russian revolution, written 50 years later (in 1967-68), reasserting the international nature of the movement that made it possible and refuting the Stalinist doctrine, still prevalent at the time, that socialism can be built in one country. The study unpicks the various false interpretations of the revolution (conservative-liberal, social democratic, anarchist and Trotskyist). In the second half it analyses the evolution of the Soviet economy through war communism, the New Economic Policy, the debates within the Party after the death of Lenin and the triumph of the counter revolution under the influence of Ustryalovism; the horrors of "dekulakization" and forced industrialization, the sham socialism of the "collective farms", followed by the liberalization and steady adjustment to capitalist norms in the Khrushchev era. Already, in 1967, the post-Stalinist reforms and the growth of foreign trade pointed to the so-called "fall of communism" in 1991, made inevitable by the USSR's inability to keep up with the USA. The Communist Left was the only current that made such a thorough materialist analysis of the degeneration of the USSR, starting with its intervention at the Enlarged Executive



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Class Struggle on the Rise in Turkey

With an inflation rate of almost 50%, Turkey has been hit hard by the capitalist economic crisis. Two major events marked the beginning of the response of the working class to its worsening living conditions. The first was the “we can’t make ends meet” demonstrations, organized first by DİSK (Confederation of Progressive Workers’ Unions) for increases in the minimum wage, and then by KESK (Confederation of Public Employees’ Unions) for increases in public workers salaries. The demonstrations organized by the leftist union confederations can be thought to have had an effect in the relatively high raises to the minimum wage (50%) and public workers salaries (30%). The second was the negotiations between the three metal unions, Türk Metal (Turkish Metal Workers’ Union) belonging to Türk İş (Confederation of Turkish Workers’ Unions), the largest confederation of regime unions, Birleşik Metal (United Metal Workers’ Union) belonging to DİSK and Öz Çelik İş (Real Turkish Steel Workers Union) belonging to the Islamist regime union confederation Hak İş (Confederation of Real Turkish Workers’ Unions), and the MESS (Metal Industrialists Union – the bosses’ organization). Türk Metal declared it would strike during the negotiations, and Birleşik Metal actually announced concrete plans for a strike. MESS had offered 12% first and the 17% after the strike was declared and eventually 22%. Türk Metal, Birlesik Metal nd Öz Çelik Is, representing a total of 150,000 metal workers, demanded something around 27-30%. Many metal workers thought the unions' demand was not high enough. The date of the strike was expected to be announced at the tens of thousands strong central Türk Metal demonstration that was held in Kocaeli on the 2nd of January. This didn't happen. However, Birlesik Metal first announced it would go on strike on four factories on January 14th in Mersin, Izmir and Kocaeli, and later declared six other factories in Gebze, Istanbul, Kocaeli, Bilecik and Bursa would start a strike on the 18th. Eventually, however, the three metal workers’ unions signed the contract for 27%. Only the Çimsataş factory in Mersin with over 800 workers, members of Birleşik Metal, went on a wildcat strike on January 12, demanding a total of 62% and occupying the factory. 13 workers were sacked without severance pay, and Birleşik Metal strove to end the strike and the occupation without the sacked workers being rehired or the workers' demands being met. Çimsataş strike seemed to be against the tide, but it was to become the first of a so far small but significant strike wave.

On January 17, 700 iron miners in Sivas Divrik went on a three-day wildcat strike. The company made various threats to the workers and all workers were removed from the mine after representatives of Bağımsız Maden İş (Independent Mine Workers Union), a rank and file union outside the mainstream union confederations, spoke to the strikers. Police and soldiers were then deployed around the mine. The workers, who were paid about 5,250 TL, demanded a 51 percent increase in their wages, as well as improvements in their benefits. They also made demands such as the minimum salary of 8,000 TL, acknowledgment of the night shift, a raise every six months, and the granting of leave and bonuses during the holidays. The three-day strike ended in a compromise as the company made some concessions while refusing to grant all the demands. Nevertheless, the workers experienced first hand that they could improve their situation by striking, and also learned how much of a threat rank and file unions are considered to be in Turkey.

On January 19th, about 2,300 workers at the Farplas Automotive plant in Gebze, Kocaeli, stopped production in protest of the low raise they were offered. Farplas management, which has factories in seven countries and supplies parts to companies such as Ford, Mercedes, Renault, Volvo and Tesla, pledged in a meeting with workers' representatives that wages would be increased and no workers would be laid off. However, about 150 workers who became members of Birleşik Metal during the struggle were laid off. In response, workers occupied the factory. More than 100 workers and trade unionists were beaten and detained in a police operation in the early morning. Workers from the surrounding factories marched to the Farplas factory gates to show solidarity. The Farplas workers continue their struggle. Farplas workers struggle demonstrates that the strike wave of Winter 2022 does not deem unions irrelevant as it has been claimed by some. DİSK, as well as KESK, are confederations on the edge, that is they are not regime unions today, but at certain times, like during the Çimsataş strike, they don’t hesitate to act like a regime union. Nevertheless, it is not for no reason that some of the most militant Farplas workers still joined DİSK at the risk of losing their jobs.

On February 1st, 2,000 workers at the Alpin Socks factory in Istanbul's Beylikdüzü neighborhood launched a wildcat strike demanding an additional increase. Workers at the Alpin Socks factory, which manufactures for brands such as Adidas, Decathlon, Carrefour and H&M, stopped production after the rate of wage increase was announced. After a meeting between the workers' representatives and the company boss, the company accepted demands for a 2,500 TL increase and no layoffs. The strike triggered struggles at other sock factories in Istanbul. The workers of Beks sock factory in Çorlu also went on strike in Çorlu. Alpin and other sock factories the strike spread to are merely the tip of the iceberg that is the textile industry of Turkey.

2,000 workers from 22 separate firms working on ship breaking at İzmir's Aliğa district went on a wildcat strike at the beginning of February with a number of demands including regular raises, recognition of holiday rights and better job security. The non-unionized workers’ struggle ended in about two weeks without any gains as more and more workers went back to work separately. While non-union workers can struggle without unions and some have even won thanks to their ability to maintain their unity under conditions absolutely necessitating it, it would be a grave mistake to idealize the wildcat strike over the struggles of unionized workers. Indeed, Aliğa ship breaking workers’ struggle is significant for showing the limits of a strike without the experience of union organization.

A number of other strikes, smaller than the ones mentioned for the most part,

took place which deserve mention. Approximately 200 female workers working at the Fruit and Vegetable Market in Tarsus, Mersin, left their jobs demanding a wage increase. Around 200 workers working in the Kızılay beverage factories in Erzincan and Afyon went on strike with demands for a decent salary increase, the return of their usurped personal rights, and the recognition of their union. The boss called the soldiers in front of the factory in Afyon. 80 workers from the packaging department of Polibak, located in the Çiğli district of İzmir and one of Turkey's 500 largest industrial enterprises, stopped production demanding an increase in wages. Approximately 250 construction workers working at the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant in Mersin, being built by the Russian state company Rosatom, went on strike after their salaries were not paid for 2 months. Soldiers were sent to the construction site and many workers were dismissed. This did not prevent the number of striking workers at the construction site to increase to 700 later, protesting the nonpayment of salaries and demanding a raise. At the end of January, 40 miners working in Şırnak went on strike, demanding a wage increase. 800 private security workers working at Istanbul 3rd Airport also stopped work. 250 workers from Migros’ warehouse in Istanbul’s Esenyurt neighborhood, members of DGD-SEN (Warehouse, Port, Dock and Maritime Workers Union), a rank and file union outside the mainstream union confederations, were sacked by the management for striking for higher wages, only to be rehired and have their demands accepted by the company.

The strike, which took place on February 8 under the leadership of TTB (Turkish Doctors’ Association), which has more than 100,000 members, as well as TDB (Turkish Dentists’ Association) and SES (Health and Social Service Workers’ Union) which belongs to KESK, was a result of the government’s decision to reject the wage and social rights demands of health workers that have been voiced for a long time. Announcing that it will go on strike on February 17-18, the doctor’s union named Hekim Sen announced that its members who are members of TTB and TDB will join the strike. This strike action followed the one on December 14 under the leadership of various health workers’ organizations and will be followed by the strike organized by Hekim Sen on January 21. The public health sector in Turkey is in a particularly awful state, pitting the doctors, nurses and other health workers who have to treat an endless amount of patients against the patients who have wait weeks to get an appointment and hours to be treated. This situation often leads to the health workers, especially doctors being dismissive of if not mistreating patients, and patients physically attacking health workers. What is needed is for health workers and proletarian patients to engage in solidarity.

About 900 thousand people work all over Turkey as motorcycle couriers. The number of registered motorcycle couriers is 200 thousand people. 190 motorcycle couriers were victims of work accidents in 2020, and 203 in 2021. A significant part of the motorcycle couriers are employed as "artisan couriers". According to this model, couriers establish individual companies and make an agreement with the actual company and provide services with their own motorcycles or commercial vehicles. On January 25, thousands of car couriers working as independent delivery workers at Trendyol, Turkey's largest e-commerce platform, employing more than 9,000 people, went on strike across the country, rejecting the 11 percent raise offered by the company. Thousands of couriers refused to deliver in cities across the country, such as Istanbul, Izmir, Bursa, Antalya, Samsun, Tekirdag, Eskisehir, Mugla, Diyarbakir and Siirt. The fact that Trendyol employees, who demanded a 50 percent raise, received a 38 percent raise, inspired the employees of other cargo companies to go on strike. Couriers working at Aras Kargo, Hepsijet, Sürat Kargo, Scotty and Yurtiçi Kargo organized strikes and demonstrations. Thousands of couriers working at Yemeksepeti have been continuing their strikes and protests for days, demanding a salary of 5,500 TL, fringe benefits and union recognition. In Yemeksepeti, which has 9000 employees, 2,000 of DİSK’s Nakliyat İş (Progressive Land, Air and Rail Transportation Workers’ Union) member workers were legally excluded from the union as a result of forging official documents to change their employment category last year. The call for a boycott of Yemeksepeti, spearheaded by Nakliyat İş, resulted in a 70% decrease in orders. In general, workers demand increases in their wages and rights, as well as an end to the “artisan courier” model. In addition to Nakliyat İş, TÜMTİS (All Turkish Transport Workers Union), member of Türk-İş is also organized both in Yemeksepeti and in the rest of the sector. There is no doubt that if the bosses of the various companies in this sector end up having to recognize a union, they will prefer TÜMTİS.

The strike wave we are currently witnessing in Turkey is small, but it is nevertheless very significant as it expresses the workers’ anger at their rapidly deteriorating conditions in the face of the capitalist crisis, and moreover carries the potential of expanding and becoming a larger strike wave. If events take such a course, the ongoing struggles will have to link up, bringing together the unions that are capable of struggling together in a united front from below. Only by going through such struggles will the proletariat rediscover its most vital organ of class combat, the communist party.

Life Of The Party: New Publications

Il Partito Comunista, n. 414, February 2021

Party Meetings in the US

Denver First Saturdays at therizo cafe, 2890 Fairfax St Denver, 11am
Minneapolis: First Saturdays at Hard Times, 1821 Riverside Ave, Minneapolis - 3-5pm
Portland, OR: First Saturdays at Neighbors Taproom 1306 E Burnside: 11am. All ages
Pittsburgh First Saturdays at 61C Cafe 1839 Murray Ave. 4PM

Meetings also in: Akron, Charlotte, Raleigh, Tampa, Yakima
to contact email:
icparty@interncommparty.org.

CLASS STRUGGLE ON THE BNSF

In the U.S. the struggle of freight train drivers is trying to make its way through state repression and regime union leaderships

In the United States the road to strike was attempted by the same category of workers who went on strike on February 11 in Italy, the freight train drivers, and they faced similar problems: the anti-strike legislation introduced by the bourgeois regime.

* * *

In the western half of the United States, from the axis connecting the Great Lakes to New Orleans to the west coast, freight rail traffic is dominated by BNSF, the country's largest railroad company. The secret of this success - as is often the case in these cases - lies in the high degree of worker exploitation.

For example, BNSF drivers - but this is the norm throughout the industry - have no assigned days off and must be on call 24/7.

Dissatisfied with the present degree of exploitation, however, management recently announced a new company policy aimed at reducing absences from work through punitive measures and a mechanism for gaining or losing good conduct credits.

Of course, BNSF justifies the measure with the increasing competitiveness of the industry, and everyone knows that at CSX, the railroad company that handles freight traffic in the eastern part of the US, there is an even more oppressive labor regime.

The trade unions present at BNSF - Smart-TD and BLET - found the company's intransigence in the negotiations and called for a strike for the 17 thousand train drivers. As expected, BNSF then turned to the institutions of the bourgeois state which - in the guise of the federal judge - came to the rescue of the company by declaring the strike illegal, concerned not to aggravate the already precarious condition of the supply chain of goods.

The bourgeois regime in the U.S. for a century considers the railways a vital cog in the internal trade and with the Railway Labor Act of 1926 chains to the rails those who make the trains to run. The strike must be preceded by a long series of negotiations, arbitrations and waiting periods designed to dampen the anger and energy of the workers. If the union violates the law, the state can commandeer its funds and even dissolve the organization.

What is certain is that the leadership of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) has gone above and beyond in recommending that railroaders discipline themselves to the court order. We read from a message sent to members: the union's Executive Committee is "instructing all its members not to engage in any act against the company. This means that members must not engage in strikes, work stoppages, picketing, slowdowns, sick leave, or any other activity intended to disrupt rail operations in response to the attendance policy called Hi Viz... any member who continues to encourage other employees on social media, or in any other forum, to engage in a strike, work stoppages, picketing, slowdowns, sick leave, or any other activity intended to disrupt rail operations must immediately stop doing so. Members who continue to do so risk fines, suspensions, or other sanctions from the union."

It is therefore understandable how, for many combative workers, the difficulties posed to the struggle by the oppression of the bourgeois regime are not worth justifying the action of the union leaderships. These leaders - good citizens and faithful servants of capital - are perfectly comfortable limiting themselves to writing motions of complaint. They choose to represent the most docile tendencies and narrow interests among the working masses instead of giving voice to the most combative elements, uniting the working class around its most universal interests.

In support of a strike action by BNSF train drivers and railroaders, on the other hand, was the National Grassroots Coordination Railroad Workers United (RWU), which pointed out several elements that would make a successful strike more favorable, including:

- the difficulties in finding personnel for various jobs in the industry, a general problem that is occurring in the U.S., but not only, as a result of the pandemic;
- the difficulties in supply chains, which would make the effects of a strike even more pronounced;
- the high profits made by companies in the sector in the last period.

Our party considers these assessments of the RWU to be correct and adds the following:

- the abolition of laws that limit the freedom to strike must be a claim present in every strike;

- In order to strengthen their strike and protect it from the repression of the bourgeois regime, the BNSF railroaders should build the strike together with the dockers who, in the West Coast of the United States, have also announced through the union that they are ready to go on strike, and try to involve the other workers in the logistics chain, such as truckers, porters of the logistics warehouses, postal workers;

- railroaders, dockers, truckers, porters, postal workers: the workers in these categories, however combative they may be, if they go on strike in isolation can be crushed by boss and state repression; united instead they have a force that may be able to break bourgeois repression.

Notes on the question of party "logo"

HAMMER AND SICKLE

Obviously it is not a matter of principle: we certainly cannot exclude a priori any form of expression. Banners, standard and insignia are weapons, tools of war. A horn, a tam-tam, a totem, to comfort friends and threaten enemies, in given circumstances, are indeed useful.

But now we are not at war. We are at war, but with words, with printed paper, where theses, interpretations and lessons of past wars are compared. For this war of today, symbols do more harm than good. To the point of being able to turn against us. Symbols, images, can be even more lying and deceitful than words.

The Second International hid its betrayal behind sweet images of radiant dawns, over ears of corn and anvils. Many proletarians were deceived by that rhetoric and, believing that they were going towards the rising red sun of socialism, found themselves slaughtered in the trenches of the First World War.

Stalinism, too, drowned communism in a flood of red paint, with scythes and hammers wielded by muscular workers, against the backdrop of the founding saints, from Marx to... Enver Hoxha. Today we would find ourselves contending for those symbols in one of the greatest States of world capitalism.

When the party reorganized in the last years of the Second World War, there was a widespread illusion that the second post-war period would be as fertile for revolution as the first. Many comrades acted accordingly, preparing for it in every way. Among them they showed themselves to the class adorned with the traditional symbols that had been of communism and the Third International.

All this was the result of a too optimistic evaluation of that historical situation. The Party was fully convinced only in 1952. Those who did not want to accept that the revolution had been postponed for the moment abandoned the party.

They gave in, we said, to "activism". This does not mean doing activity, an intense propaganda activity of penetration into the workers' ranks, but the pretension of changing the course of history through organizational tools and, lacking principles, going to school of the “movement”.

Since then we have – temporarily – put aside even any iconography. Not because we want to distance the party from the living working class and make it a circle of study and publications. But to present ourselves behind a symbol – that the first to be seen – would have only made confusion, would have to some extent brought us closer to others and made the task of defining doctrine more difficult.

The titles of our periodicals were The Soviet, the form of proletarian power in Russia, Prometeo, the man who stole fire from the gods, and Spartaco, the rebel slave. But we wanted to call them then, without a doubt, Il Programma Comunista, then Comunismo and Il Partito Comunista.

After many decades of Stalinist and post-Stalinist counter-revolution, it is necessary that the program of the Party be identified in the most precise way through its original ancient tactical and principled positions.

The revolution will be the product of the return to the social scene of real historical forces, not of a particularly willing and visible form of organization. The organizational fact, which does have its importance, must not overpower or overshadow the disruptive content of our

program. We want to be recognized as the party of communism, not only and not so much as an organization, in competition with the others. It is necessary not to distract the attention of comrades from a rigorous programmatic delimitation, before that of organization.

The party has an organization but it is not an organization.

The case of the trade union is different; first of all, it is an organization: in it, a fundamental element is the numerical strength, of workers only. An army wearing red shirts seems more numerous than it is. The working class organizes itself to go out of the factories, to seen itself and to be seen, and to occupy the squares, with every useful tool: flags, shouts, slogans, music, anthems, t-shirts, badges, etc. etc.

How do communists recognize themselves

We call ourselves “International Communist Party”. Three words which say almost everything. And for the moment it's a bigger name than we are! We have nothing to invent. Tomorrow, when the need arises, symbols and flags will come into their own.

And today our comrades are not afraid, in any situation, to declare themselves, simply, "internationalists", individually and as groups.

How in the crowd do we recognize ourselves among communists? We answer that the communists must be so well framed (even in the demonstrations in the squares), supportive and trained, in attitudes, in language, in the battle and in common work, that they know each other very well for a long time, or that they can "smell" each other even at the first meeting. It is too naive to rely on an easily falsifiable little mark on a hat or jacket lapel.

But how will the ignorant masses, who know nothing about Marxism and history and have no time to read the communist press, recognize us?

The time will come when they will follow our flags. But this will happen when, through the development of the practical struggle between classes, they will have been able to recognize them, to associate them with a given battle direction, which they have searched for, experimented and accepted.

For the moment, in the media abuse of symbols and images, we can only be recognized by our words and our characteristic attitude of seriousness and consistency.

Clothes, in class societies, are important, because those are seen. It is no accident that priests wear cassocks and judges wear ermines. We communists, who are not idealists, know this. Communists, on the other hand, have never worn uniforms.

But the revolution is not the product of a well-organized advertising campaign, better than that of the bourgeoisie. Otherwise we would be lost! It will be the practical experience of the working class, in social warfare against the bourgeoisie and its State, during which it will have been able to prove the rightness of the party's direction, that will make possible the reunion of the party with the class.

ON THE COLLAPSE OF PITTSBURGH'S FERN HOLLOW BRIDGE

On the 28th of January, while we were preoccupied with our tri-annual international Riunione Generale, President Joe Biden came to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to give a speech about the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in his typical incoherent presentational style. A few hours before he was to give his speech, however, a major arterial bridge in the city, the Fern Hollow Bridge, which transports more than 14,000 cars per day, collapsed into Frick Park. 10 people were injured, but fortunately nobody had died (dare we say because it happened during the Winter, in the early morning, before rush hour? The park underneath generally is very active; had it collapsed during any other season of the year, well...).

The spectacle made both national and local news, which used the event as pretense for drumming up support for Biden's infrastructure programme and measures for the strengthening of and improvement of government organs related to infrastructure presented by city council representative Corey O'Connor. (We should briefly mention that both O'Connor and the city mayor, Ed Gainey, have received thousands of dollars worth of election campaign donations from construction companies, most notably general contractors, alongside utility companies - the bridge collapse also disrupted a gas line - and city developers.)

Nobody can deny that the collapse of the bridge was neither an isolated incident nor a freak accident. The bridge had been considered in poor condition since at least 2011 and it existed in the broader context of a Pennsylvania-wide bridge infrastructure crisis. But - and surely, this is one of the ways in which we differ from both the Republicans and the Democrats - we acknowledge that the bridge collapse was, like a large number of disasters under this wretched and decrepit mode of production - from nuclear disasters (see Communist Left, no. 31-32) to train derailments (see The Communist Party, no. 27) - ultimately a result of the general social tendencies deriving from the capitalist relations of production. In this case, it was a result of the tendency (resultant from the division of society into classes) of all bourgeois States towards an ever greater bloating of their repressive apparatus: the military, and, in this case specifically, the police.

O'Connor has said the city was unable to properly repair the bridge due to lack of funds. Fair enough; in 2019, there were minor repairs to the bridge, costing \$100,000, so it's not like the government put in no effort. But well, Mr. O'Connor, you see, it was discovered that, between 2012 and 2019, 4.25 billion dollars worth of funds had been siphoned off from bridge and road repairs and towards the Pennsylvania state police.

Pennsylvania's auditor general at the time, Eugene DePasquale, had the following choice remark: "More than 2,800 state-maintained bridges across

Pennsylvania are structurally deficient and our bridges average over 50 years in age – beyond what they were designed to last. That \$4.25 billion could have cut that list in half and if PennDOT could use all of the gas tax money for roads and bridges we could get that number to zero in about 5 years."

But enough about the causes. Anyone on our side of the fence has heard these conclusions plenty of times from our favorite gentleman, Monseieur Captain Obvious. It does not require a so-called "expert" to draw the necessary connections. It interests us much more how the government representatives of construction capital and of the national bourgeoisie in general, most notably our beloved and luminous Joe Biden, are exploiting the spectacle of the collapse - and the particular interests of the "American" proletariat - for the sake of prettifying the exploitation of construction and manufacturing proletarians and whitewashing preparation for a future military conflict with China.

See, currently the American national bourgeoisie, with its government, is attempting to throw off its economic dependence on Chinese imperialism. Part of this effort is an attempt towards building up the manufacturing and industrial sector in the United States as a counterweight to especially Chinese manufacturing. Notably, during his speech, Joe Biden stated that he aims to bring manufacturing jobs back to Pittsburgh, 'somerberly' (we should say: cynically) recalling the near total disintegration of Pittsburgh industry. This, he says, will create more jobs for Americans. Fair enough; this is correct. But, we should remember exactly what waged labor is:

"Capital can multiply itself only by exchanging itself for labour-power, by calling wage-labour into life. The labour-power of the wage-labourer can exchange itself for capital only by increasing capital, by strengthening that very power whose slave it is. Increase of capital, therefore, is increase of the proletariat, i.e., of the working class.

"And so, the bourgeoisie and its economists maintain that the interest of the capitalist and of the labourer is the same. And in fact, so they are! The worker perishes if capital does not keep him busy. Capital perishes if it does not exploit labour-power, which, in order to exploit, it must buy. ... To say that the interests of capital and the interests of the workers are identical, signifies only this: that capital and wage-labour are two sides of one and the same relation. The one conditions the other in the same way that the usurer and the borrower condition each other." (Karl Marx, Wage Labor and Capital, ch. 6)

One could imagine - and we dare to imagine it - a society under which labor is solely done for satisfying the wants and needs of the species, not for profit; under which everyone is guaranteed work; and under which every advance in technology, or any loss

of demand for labor in general, results not in unemployment but in a shortening of the working day and an easing, not intensification, of the burden of toil. And so we must remind our "friends" in office (though we doubt they will actually read this) of the ridiculousness of a mode of production which requires that the worker perish if capital does not keep them busy. And they know this, but they don't dare even mutter it because - believe it or not - they represent the interests, not of the proletariat (whether Chinese or American), but of the bourgeoisie.

And more jobs for Americans! One could just as easily remark that importing manufacturing products creates more jobs abroad. Likewise, a cessation of imports means fewer jobs abroad. So we see that Joe Biden is attempting to exploit the immediate interests of a particular section of the international proletariat - at the expense of other sections - for the sake of glorifying preparation for an impending war for a redivision of the world among imperialist powers, a war which would kill billions of proletarians, again, regardless of nationality. And so, yes, you, future industrial worker: you will be tasked with producing vital resources for military armaments and, consequently, your workplace will become a military target for foreign powers; you and your coworkers will be collateral. This is the real content of Biden's speech: you, your friends, your family will be sacrificed before the altar of profit, and the world bourgeoisie, those bastards, won't even remember your names.

Naturally, we haven't fallen for Biden's facade because, as we said all the way back in 1848, "In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, [the Communists] point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality." (The Manifesto of the Communist Party) We are an international party, we represent an international class, and consequently our politics have an international character.

You know another way to "create" new jobs? A general shortening of the working day and regulations on the intensity of work and upon minimum employment: measures which the bourgeoisie as a whole and its government would not dare to implement - because it would increase the demand for labor, and thus an increase in wages - unless compelled by force by the collective might of a militant and unified world proletariat.

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The rise of the right in Quebec

On January 13, new data on voting intentions in Quebec and analyzed it in an article published in l'Actualité. The projected number of seats for the Coalition Avenir Québec would be 93: an increase of 19 seats (when it needs only 63 to get a majority). As for Québec solidaire, the same poll projects eight seats, that is, two fewer than in the 2018 election. So we are quite far from an orange wave, and even further from taking power. The same goes for the Liberal Party, which would drop from 31 seats to 21 and the Parti Québécois from 10 to 3. The CAQ would be the big winner, stealing seats from all the other parties, which is not surprising with an approval rating of 57%.

Conservative Party a new force?

Voting intentions for the governing party - the CAQ - are estimated to have declined by about 4 points between December 9, 2021 and January 13, 2022. It would appear that the announcement of the curfew - a widely denounced and very unpopular measure among the population - has affected the popularity of the party in power. During this same period, the Conservative Party of Quebec's (PCQ) voting intentions rose from 5.1% to 8.5%. One could therefore hypothesize here that there has been a shift in the electorate from the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) to the PCQ, and thus a shift from the right, to the right. The Conservative Party's demagogic opposition to the curfew seems to have allowed it to swell its ranks to 40,000 members by December 31, 2021, and to pass the 45,000 mark on January 15, 2021 - a spectacular increase. By comparison, the Parti Québécois currently has 43,000 members, while the Liberal Party and Québec solidaire are close to 20,000 members. While everything is still up in the air, it seems clear that the Conservative Party will be a new political force in the years to come, and that it is in fact this party that has the "wind in its sails.

Upcoming Elections

Quebec has officially begun its election year. This October, the people of Quebec will be called to the polls. Looking at the data available to us, we do not believe that the election will cause a general surprise and that a Caquist majority government remains the most likely scenario at this time. In any case, what is not in doubt is the dominance of "the right" in the province's political landscape. The "left" has effectively failed to present a credible opposition to the government's failed measures. So the forces opposing this right-wing government have coalesced... even further to the right, and this is evident in the growing membership of the Conservative Party. Mired in debates about the national question and petty issues, Québec Solidaire is still unable to convince Quebec of its relevance as a party. This should serve as a wake-up call to the more advanced elements of the working class and the population at large that this electoral charade and parliamentary antics ultimately always serve reaction and that it is through a revival of the class struggle that real progress can be made.

Situation of the American Workers

By American Fraction of the Left Communist International (1947/1948)

American Imperialism is seeking to perpetuate world capitalism. It is implementing the Truman doctrine and the Marshall plan for that purpose. We cannot help but recall the Dawes Plan after World War I, initiated by the U.S., and the result [sic] defeat of the proletarian revolution in Europe following upon the workers victory in Russia of October, 1917. Then, the U.S. imperialists came into conflict with revolutionary soviets. Today, the conflict is between Imperialist America and Imperialist Russia, foreshadowing World War III.

The Truman doctrine and Marshall plan disguise their anti-working class character under the cloak of freedom of small nations under democracy. Democracy and freedom, of course, is any state that, regardless of its form of rule, becomes a buffer for U.S. against the Imperialist expansion of Russia.

The present foreign policy of American imperialism cannot be understood unless the workers understand that the domestic policies of American capitalism are part and parcel of the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan. The national significance of these plans are lost sight of in the glare of international imperialist power politics. It is important to establish the fact that along with its plans for Imperialist domination abroad, U.S. capitalism has its domestic plans for lowering the standard of living of the American workers by weakening and paralyzing their struggle for existence.

What is the connection between this anti-working class drive at home and American Imperialist policy abroad?

The basic contradictions of capitalism are decisive in driving U.S. Imperialism to organize the world for the benefit of its own ruling class. To be successful it must weaken the workers' position in capitalist society at home. The contradiction between socialized production and capitalist appropriation is the root of the class struggle in U.S. The U.S. capitalists are trying a variation on their old strategy to destroy the workers' weapons of economic and political defense. This is the basic class drive of the capitalists to abolish the class struggle for the benefit of their dictatorship, masked by bourgeois democratic forms.

The American worker faces the problem of providing food, shelter and clothing, in a sharply rising tide of price and profit. Prices on food are up 29%. Clothing has risen 17.5%. All other items up 17.5%. Wages and salaries have gone down from 70.2% to 62.4% of national income in 4th quarter of 1946. Corporate profits after taxes of the Iron and Steel Industry is almost 500%, Machinery 275%, Automotive 399%, Non-

Ferrous Metals and products 175%, Food, Beverages, Tobacco over 400%, Oil producing and refining over 350%, Industrial Chemicals over 350%. The average weekly take-home pay of the workers in 1947 averages \$48.86. His weekly buying power averages \$30.16 (From "Economic Outlook", C.I.O.). The value of sales rose sharply in 1947 with a fluctuation downward recorded in April, 1947; but the total volume of goods has sharply declined. Obviously, higher prices as an inducement for capitalism to expand has not resulted in increased production of goods, but has created artificial restraints on production in order to keep price and profit up. The admonition to the workers by the capitalist spokesman that; the workers must work harder; work longer hours in order to keep up volume production of goods is so much fakery.

Charles Van Devander in his column Washington Memo in Hew York Post of Friday September 5th, 1947 reports of meetings between leaders of basic industry and moulders of government policy. At these meetings, it is reported a leading spokesman for the steel industry admitted the recent coal wage and price boost could have been absorbed without raising steel prices. He also admitted that steel could make ample profits and expand besides at 90% of present capacity. But, he said, steel had to prepare for the "bust" ahead. Similar statements were made by a leading capitalist of the auto industry. These are the straws in the wind. American Capitalism is "planning" for a certain depression. Lay-offs of workers are another indication of the coming crisis. As of March to May 1947, 251,000 were unemployed in manufacturing; Textile and apparel, 143,000; electrical goods 60,000; Rubber products, 16,000; a total of 394,000 idle. Of course, to bourgeois cynics, if unemployment is under 2,000,000, the workers are prosperous. On Sept. 5th, 1947 the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported for June 1947 net spendable weekly earnings of single workers without dependents averaged \$41.09 or \$26.50 in terms of 1939. The worker with 3 dependents, spendable earnings averaged \$47.37, or \$29.97 in terms of 1939. Evidently the workers are not prosperous.

Housing under capitalism was always wretched, but now is even more critical. Just as artificial scarcities of commodities under capitalism are utilized to jack up prices and profits, so the picture is repeated in the field of real estate. The recent rent law passed by congress to increase rents has been echoed by a host of local rent increase laws all over the nation. The workers are now faced with the problem of increased rents or

evictions. Increased friction between landlord and worker to the point of shooting is reported nationally.

The American worker is getting the short end of the stick in every phase of his life from the cradle to the grave. The Taft-Hartley slave labor act was designed to outlaw any expression of resentment by the workers thru strikes, boycotts or political action.

In face of this ruthless drive by the capitalists and their government in Washington to paralyze the workers struggle for existence what is the picture regarding the democratic rights of workers?

The American Civil Liberties Union in an 89 page report entitled "In Times of Challenge," states "apparently justified scepticism as to the immediate future of our democratic liberties as instruments of progress." The report observes a "general retreat to nationalism, militarism and defense of status-quo, with liberal and minority forces everywhere on the defensive." The report was corroborated by a poll of 125 correspondents in all 48 states showing a "trend to greater restrictions on dissenters and minorities, particularly on any movement associated with the Communists." In its report the Union included among unfavorable developments 4 lynchings, the acquittal in South Carolina of 28 "confessed lynchrs," the enactment of the Taft-Hartley law and a U.S. Supreme Court decision approving use of public funds to transport pupils to Catholic parochial schools. Also a decision to extending the legality of search without warrant; the Presidents order for "dangerously vague tests" of the loyalty of federal employees and the "continued witch hunting crusade" of the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

Sporadic strikes in industry are increasing despite the political and economic pressure against the American workers. This is the real answer at present to the plutocrats of Wall Street and their stooges of both parties, Democrats and Republicans in Washington. This is the guerilla activity resulting from the failure of the C.I.O., A.F.L. and R.R. Brotherhood leaders to call a general strike in protest against the continuing anti-working class campaign of U.S. capitalism. The class struggle picture is one of retreat and kow-towing to capitalism by the workers leadership.

The labor day messages of both C.I.O. and A.F.L. leaders was in essence acceptance of the Taft-Hartley Slave Act. Wasting the dues of the A.F.L. and C.I.O. workers in court actions while discouraging action thru the workers main weapon at present, the strike, is the collaborationist policy of the trade union leadership. Soft assurances to management of their cooperation with the boss class is the C.I.O. A.F.L., and R.R. Brotherhood answer to the Taft-Hartley slave act. Workers cannot expect any solution to their problems from the traitors at the head of their so-called unions.

Most insidious of all are the voices of the pseudo-lefts from the Communists (Stalinists) to the Trotskyites who in one voice advocate a labor party or a third party (if the democratic party cannot be reformed [Wallace]). The Stalinists have travelled from a program of "Socialism in one country" to a program for capitalism in all

countries. The Trotskyites have travelled from "Permanent Revolution" to "Permanent Reform." Labor Parties and or Populist third Parties will repeat with mathematical exactness the record of defeat and demoralization inflicted upon the downtrodden of Europe by the labor Parties of the 2nd International, such as the British labor Party with its record of colonial oppression in the middle east and the orient, and reduction of its own working class at home to a coolie standard of living.

The pseudo-left has nothing to offer the workers of America either. They are nothing but safety-valves to shoot off steam enabling the boss class to continue its dictatorship over the workers.

What is the course that has the best guarantee of smashing the oppressive rule of capitalism?

The most pressing need is for militants in the workers mass organizations to form fighting fractions against the labor-management line of their leadership; for a general strike against the Taft-Hartley slave act, for a 6 hour day 30 hour week, for \$60 a week. We know that no matter what is achieved thru immediate demands, wages and prices and profits cannot be adjusted to one another under capitalism. The need for a workers state as the prelude to Socialism must be told to the class by our class-conscious militants, openly and without any wavelord words. They must learn the need for a party that is not corrupted by patriotism for capitalist Russia or capitalist America, a party of revolutionary Marxism.

The road to this party is not a simple one.

The essential task is to turn the present retreat from the onslaught of the capitalists and their government into its opposite. An offensive all along the line against capitalism, its wars and recurring depression.

Labor is the "law". Labor is society. Without labor there is neither law nor society. Labor produces our food, fuel, shelter and clothing. Labor produces our economic and cultural values. Without labor there is no life. Labor is the dynamic giant. It is greater than the atomic bomb, for without labor there is no bomb. Therefore the workers, the living labor power has the potential to turn defeat today into victory to-morrow.

We must gird our loins for the continuing class struggle and take measures to increase the fighting power of workers to-day and tomorrow in the crisis of war and depression. This can be done by forging a revolutionary marxist party of the workers in the U.S.

In this period such a party would strengthen and guide the fighting fractions in the unions and mass organizations, uniting tenants and consumers groups with the workers at the point of production. The party would arouse the farmworkers to the need for unity with the city workers on a program of revolutionary Socialism.

This is the road upon which the American workers can free themselves from the four fears; unemployment, war, depression and Fascism.

The above is a historic document from our current's New York based magazine International Bulletin which published from 1947 - 1955. pdf copies are available at <https://archive.org/search.php?query=subject%3A%22Left+Communist%22>