

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

newspaper of the
International Communist Party

September 2022
Issue 46 | 25¢ 25p 0,50€

Iranian Working Class in Revolt Against Food Crisis

The violent mass protests where proletarians confront the repressive forces of the capitalist regime called the Islamic Republic are no longer episodic in Iran, a country with extremely high inflation rates where most workers already live in poverty.

Most recently, rising prices of medicine, gasoline and especially wheat triggered what have been dubbed "food protests."

Our party has always paid close attention to the unrest and its causes. Especially workers' protests and the struggle movements of recent years, for example: "Communism and the proletariat in Iran have no allies within national borders" (I' Partito Comunista No. 336); "Where the proletariat rebels" (No. 387); "The recent proletarian uprising in Iran" (No. 389); "Iraq-Iran-Jordan may explode post-social war" (No. 390); "Social situation in Iran" (No. 396); "Iraq and Iran riots harshly suppressed" (No. 398); and "Military provocations to deflect Iranian proletarian rebellion" (No. 399).

Workers on the Front Line

The mass movements across Iran in 2018 and 2019 differed from the June-July 2009 movement. 2009 stemmed from alleged electoral fraud and was led by the middle classes, the intelligentsia, students, and the so-called civil society; it had as its main arena the center of Tehran with organizational cores in the universities and mosques. It was not accompanied by strikes, with workers standing by.

These movements still retained a cross-class character – due to the fact that the Iranian proletariat has not yet managed to form for itself class-based trade union organizations, nor is the class linked with its party – but we saw the participation of the proletarian masses from the peripheries of the large urban centers, including many young people.

Decisive participation of the proletariat can be confirmed in these struggles by the given causes for the protests (economic needs); by the theater of the demonstrations (the working class suburbs); by many of these suburbs participating in the

struggles; by numerous strikes; and by which buildings were targeted in the riots – often police stations, as well as the headquarters of the Islamic militias of the Pasdaran and Basiji, and the offices of Islamic foundations.

These characteristics are what kept much of the non-proletarian elements of the 2009 social movement on the sidelines and guaranteed that the current movement would be ignored by the international bourgeois press, which is always so diligent in neglecting any movement that is not an expression of a fraction of the bourgeoisie and in devaluing any expression of economic needs that cannot be traced back to the worn-out bourgeois idealizations.

Autumn of 2019 saw the culmination of those protests with the Iranian capitalist regime's state repression that killed 1,500 protesters.

The summer of 2020 saw several Iranian labor sectors call significant strikes over their working and living conditions. Workers in municipalities, hospitals, oil and gas fields, heavy machinery factories, sugar mills, steel mills, power plants, and mines were among those who participated in these significant strikes.

The largest strike wave in three decades, the movement spread to some 50 factories across Iran; however, it failed to last and achieved only a few small gains in some workplaces, fizzling out with a series of isolated strikes during the fall.

In the summer of 2021, oil and petrochemical workers took to the streets alone, but in much greater numbers than before. In less than a month, the strike had spread to more than 100 plants and fields, while the vast majority of workers in the industry participated. Repression and layoffs were not enough to end the strike.

Refusing to organize in the Islamic Labor Councils (Shora-ye Eslami) and other regime-linked labor organizations, the strikers coordinated their activities with an Organizing Council of Oil Contract Workers, composed of combative workers and union militants. Although they tried to carry on the

strike for months, they were unable to prevent the movement from suffering the same fate as that of the previous year, ultimately failing to achieve any significant results.

Even with their limitations, the 2020 and 2021 struggles were important for Iran's working class and will be remembered for years, if not decades, to come, by combative workers in that country and beyond.

The 2022 Protests

In February, thousands of teachers across the country went on strike for one day after three consecutive days of protests. On May Day, nearly 40 were arrested, many from the coordination leading the mobilization. Railroad workers also went on strike. On the same day, the Iranian government halted subsidy support for several imported commodities, especially essential foods such as cooking oil, eggs and milk.

Despite President Raisi's promise that "grain, medicine and gasoline prices will not increase under any circumstances," in the short term they multiplied by 5, a phenomenon exacerbated by the rise in grain prices caused by the war in Ukraine, while the price of flour rose to 160,000 rials from the average of 27,000 rials.

Protests began in the oil-rich province of Khuzestan, where on at least one occasion police fired on protesters and grain stores were looted.

Since May 12, the movement has spread beyond the province. Demonstrations have occurred in major cities, such as Tehran, Tabriz and Isfahan; in total, 19 cities and a dozen of the 31 provinces showed signs of unrest. Casualties of state repression so far are reported to be six.

Bourgeois media outlets were quick to report not only slogans against Ayatollah Khomeini and President Raisi, but especially those in favor of Reza Shah, Iran's brutal pro-Western monarch who was overthrown in 1979. The latter slogans, coupled with the fact that social strata other than the working class are affected by the food crisis in

Iran, suggest that the current protests still have an inter-class character. Both the bourgeois domestic opposition and especially its many exiled and outlawed organizations will undoubtedly try to use this movement to extend their influence in the country.

However, the inter-class character of the malaise should not hide the fact that it is the Iranian proletariat, more than any other sector of society, that is suffering the devastating effects of the country's food crisis.

Iranian workers must seize this opportunity to defend themselves against the food crisis through their trade union struggle actions and by forming for this purpose their own organizations, that is, their own class unions, independent of the influence of the bourgeois parties, and outside and against the regime's existing unions.

In this struggle they will only be able to link up with their party, the International Communist Party, heir to the Communist International to which the first Communist Party of Iran belonged.

UK's Trade Union Congress Struggles to Keep a Lid on Worker Militancy

The strike wave that has engulfed the United Kingdom shows no signs of abating. With inflation now above 10% and workers experiencing a 3% cut in real wages (the biggest drop on record), the regime trade unions affiliated to the Trade Union Congress (TUC) are struggling to contain militancy within. In addition to official strikes, following the slow process of consultations, balloting and then negotiations, there have been a number of wildcat strikes as well.

Rail workers

Rail workers other than train drivers are represented by the Rail, Maritime and Transport union (RMT) and Transport Salaried Staffs Association (TSSA). They have been taking part in a long series of one-day strikes. National rail strikes took place on Thursday, 18 and Saturday, 20 August. London-wide strikes affecting Underground, Overground and bus services took place on Friday, 19 August.

Train drivers, members of the ASLEF union, struck for 24 hours on Saturday, 13 August. The rail employers are seeking to impose wage rises well below the rate of inflation, together with redundancies and changes in working conditions.

Postal and telecom workers

More than 100,000 Royal Mail workers in the Communication Workers Union (CWU) voted to strike on 26 and 31 August and 8 and 9 September. 50,000 CWU workers with the telecommunications giant BT voted to strike on 30 and 31 August.

Port workers

As an island economy, the UK is especially vulnerable to strike action at the ports. Around 1,900 workers at Felixstowe, which accounts for 40% of Britain's container freight, mainly consumer goods and canned food, voted to start eight days of strike action on Sunday, 21 August. The dockers, members of the Unite union, rejected an offer of 7% plus a one-off payment of £500. There has not been a strike at Felixstowe port, which is now

owned by a Hong Kong conglomerate, since 1989. 500 dockworkers in Liverpool also voted to strike.

Barristers

The cost-of-living crisis is also impacting the so-called professional classes, who must take industrial action in the current crisis. As Marx and Engels wrote in the Manifesto, "[t]he bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage laborers".

More than 6,000 court hearings were disrupted by the first 19 days (between 27 June and 5 August) of a strike by members of the Criminal Bar Association (court lawyers). Junior barristers are expected to work long hours for very little pay, and even below the minimum wage in some instances. A second week of strike action commenced 16 August.

Airport workers

There is continuing unrest at airports, where bosses have attempted to use the pandemic to reset pay and conditions. Unite and GMB members at Heathrow, employed by British Airways, voted to strike after a 10% pay cut imposed during the pandemic was not reinstated. The strike was called off at the last minute when the unions recommended an 8% pay offer.

Refueling staff accepted a similar offer. Most UK airports are understaffed, and many are cutting flights.

Teachers and healthcare

Anger is reaching boiling point in education and the National Health Service, both grossly underfunded as the government seeks to deal with the debt crisis while promising tax cuts to its supporters. Together, these sectors employ about two million workers, many of whom have voted to strike when given the opportunity. This is being delayed by the trade unions through extended "consultation" processes. At the time of writing, the NASUWT teachers' union

was being balloted on strike action if the employers' offer of 5% is not increased substantially. Other union leaders, quite pathetically, are writing letters to government ministers begging! In the NHS, strikes by junior doctors and nurses are on the cards for later in the year.

Civil servants

On 26 September the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) is scheduled to hold a national strike ballot over pay, pensions, jobs and redundancy terms. This follows a derisory 2% pay offer and the announcement of 91,000 job cuts – a fifth of the Civil Service. And as if that wasn't enough, the government is proposing to cut redundancy packages by an estimated 25.9%.

A couple of years ago the union headed off proposals for a 33% reduction in the work force with a judicial review, and currently the union leadership is focused on talks with the government about "delaying any decision until the new prime minister is in place", etc. The vote for industrial action must be carried to back up any negotiations and extend solidarity to other categories of workers, especially in the public sector, who are under threat of further massive attacks.

Wildcat strikes: refineries, power stations

A series of wildcat actions by both unionized and non-unionized workers has been less well reported in the bourgeois press. But they are evidence that the official union hierarchies are struggling to keep disputes under their control.

At the Grangemouth oil refinery, near Falkirk, an estimated 250 workers blocked roads in early August to prevent any access to the site. Similar actions took place at the Fawley refinery in Hampshire and workers at the Valero refinery in Pembrokeshire are also taking part.

Hundreds of workers, nominally represented by the Unite union, walked out at the Drax Power Station, near Selby in Yorkshire. The plant generates around 6% of UK electrical capacity.

The anger among energy workers is particularly intense because, on the one hand, the companies are making record profits, but, on the other hand, the retail price of gas and electricity has gone through the roof, which is one of the main drivers of the collapse in real wages.

Subcontracted workers in these sectors are covered by an agreement negotiated by the Unite and GMB unions that grants a pay rise of just 2.5% in January 2022 and another 2.5% in January 2023. The Bank of England estimates that inflation will peak at 13.3%, largely due to energy price rises.

Spontaneous walkouts: Amazon

Finally, there has been a series of strikes at Amazon distribution centers, including walkouts in Swindon and Tilbury. Workers were infuriated when the company made a derisory offer of a 35p (40 cents) increase in the hourly rate. A shop-floor worker said, "[i]n reaction to the news that Amazon would only give us a 35p pay rise, many of us stopped working on Wednesday afternoon. We hadn't planned to walk out beforehand, but the news... encouraged many people to do something. I think people in every department joined, with at least 200 workers involved... The next shift – the night shift – joined us with a massive strike".

Amazon imposes inhuman working conditions on staff. At the time of writing, the Amazon workers were continuing to take industrial action by working at their own pace, not the pace dictated by their bosses.

By uniting and generalizing these struggles, British workers would have an opportunity not only to unseat the current government but also to extend the power and self-confidence of the class. But that is the last thing the TUC and its affiliated unions want. Even the more "militant" union leaders, such as Mick Lynch of the RMT, which is affiliated neither to the TUC nor the Labour Party, have brushed aside any talk of a general strike.

Another Look at the Mapuche Conflict in Chile

The Mapuches are the most numerous indigenous people in Chile. With nearly a million people considering themselves members of that culture. The country's history is inseparable from Mapuche history. The Spaniards called them Araucanos and the word became famous in the poem "La Araucana", by the poet Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga.

At the arrival of the Spaniards, they inhabited an enormous territory from the valleys to the north of where is now the capital of Chile, Santiago, to where the southern islands begin, the Chiloé Archipelago. Today, they live in rural communities in southern Chile and to a lesser extent in southern Argentina, and many have migrated to the cities. They are a people with a strong identity that keeps most of its traditions and language alive.

The Mapuche are considered direct descendants of the pre-Hispanic archaeological cultures Pitrén (100-1100 years AD) and El Vergel (1100-1450 years AD), which developed in the region, between the Bío Bío River and the middle of Reloncaví. However, when the Spaniards arrived, their language, Mapudungun, was spread from the Choapa River to Chiloé, which does not mean a cultural homogeneity of the different groups that inhabited this extensive territory.

The Hispanic arrival in the 16th century was apparently the trigger for different populations to group together and strengthen their social and cultural ties, forming the historically known Mapuche identity. In a generic way, Mapuches are all the peoples who spoke or speak the Mapuche or Mapudungun language, expanded to the east of the Andes mountain range, present-day Argentina.

Upon the arrival of the Spanish conquerors in the 16th century, they lived between the Aconcagua Valley and the center of the Big Island of Chiloé, in what is now Chilean territory.

The northern groups, called picunches by historians, were partially under the rule or influence of the Inca Empire. The invasion of the Inca Huáscar to the Mapuche territory in 1480, stopped by the tenacious resistance in the Bío-Bío river, made it possible for the Mapuche people to assimilate cultural traits of the "children of the sun", incorporating, among other elements, garments such as shirts, ponchos, waist bands and headbands. The Incas used the Punchan Paccu, a brownish green poncho, similar to the

one later adopted by the policemen of Chile and which earned them the nickname Pacos.

The picunches were mostly subsumed to the Spanish. But those who lived in the territory south of the Maule River had a military tradition and successfully faced the Incas in the Battle of Maule and then the Spaniards in the Arauco War, where they showed outstanding command of the horse, which was an important factor in the development of their culture. From the middle of the 17th century, borders and periodic peace agreements endorsed in "parliaments" were established.

The economy

The Mapuche economy has varied over time. Until the 16th century, it was focused on hunting and gathering, complemented by the semi-domestication of camelids and non-intensive horticultural production, which consisted mainly of clearing fields by burning forests to alternate arable land (what is known as conuco towards the north of Latin America). Its economy was one of subsistence, that is, with little productive accumulation. Women were in charge of housework and ceramic and textile manufacturing (düwekafe/weaver).

The Arauco War, held during Colonial times, determined an economy typical of war, in which assaults and malocas (surprise assaults on towns and houses) were a source of income. At this same time the incorporation of the horse takes place, without which the traditional Mapuche economy cannot be understood.

The Mapuches made silverware, pottery, leatherwork, and loom work, especially ponchos and matras (wool-based fabric or cloth) for bartering or conventional exchange. From beyond the mountain range, the Ranqueles or Pampas brought salt, rhea feathers, and equine or bovine cattle. A matra was exchanged for a dozen horses and a poncho was worth sixteen.

In the second half of the 16th century, the cotton cloth replaced the coin in the Río de la Plata, Paraguay, Tucumán and Chile. The work of the aborigines and Creole peons, the rental of land, the tasks, the tithes of the Church, the purchase of properties and the salary of the governors were paid with rods of this cloth. Commercial exchange also included dyes, e.g., indigo.

In the Pampas on the Atlantic side of the Andes Mountains, a gigantic mass of cattle and horses had multiplied in the wild. The traffic of animals, cattle and horses from the Argentine Pampas, transformed the Mapuche into merchants not only between Argentina and Chile but also to other parts of the world. They herded thousands of animals to the fairs that had been established on the Bío Bío border. These animals were converted into dried meat, charqui, and were shipped in order to supply the markets of the Pacific and then to California, French Polynesia,

Australia and the rest of the Pacific Ocean.

From this "globalized mercantile" period, belongs the enormous and beautiful "Araucana silverware", an expression of the wealth that this indigenous society reached. Textile work also increased, both for use and for sale, as well as basketry, ceramics and especially silverware, a male occupation (ngutrafe or retrafe/jeweler), which reached its greatest development in the 19th century.

The colonial era

Everything changed radically with the Conquest. The Spanish conquerors demonstrated a vertiginous impetus. In a few decades they crossed from the Caribbean Sea to the Strait of Magellan in the southern Americas. In the south of Chile lived a population close to a million people. In less than forty years the Mapuche population was decimated and reduced to less than two hundred thousand. They would not rise above that figure until the end of the twentieth century.

The losses on the Hispanic side were not few and among them was the Governor and Conqueror of Chile himself, Pedro de Valdivia, who succumbed to his defeat. The young warrior, known as Lautaro, defeated him in Tucapel, in the south of the territory. The history of battles and wars is endless. A century passed and a new governor rode to the Quilín plains in 1641 and for the first time signed a peace treaty, in which the King of Spain agreed to recognize the borders and respect the independent life of the indigenous society. The Spanish colony was unable to penetrate the territories occupied by the Mapuche peoples with either the cross or the sword.

The peace endorsed in Parliament meant a very long period of independence for the Mapuche. From 1598 to 1881 they lived without being dominated by an external government and would be governed by their own rules and laws. Their territory extended from the Bío Bío River in the north to the Chiloé Islands in the south and, crossing the mountain range through the Argentine Pampas, they dominated a territory that extended to the Atlantic Ocean.

The republican era

The Mapuche, ranchers and merchants, had been generally very wealthy until the emergence and consolidation of the republican states of Chile and Argentina. Between 1881 and 1927 indigenous lands were expropriated and "reductions" were created, equivalent to reservations for indigenous people in North America.

The 1950s saw the most important Mapuche movement

towards integration into Chilean society. Venancio Coñeopán, an indigenous leader, became a minister to President Carlos Ibáñez del Campo and numerous Mapuche leaders were elected to the National Congress. This movement would join the Chilean political right. Not much would be accomplished; nor would it be able to stop the dispossession of land, the so-called "usurpations", or the impoverishment of their communities.

At the end of the 1960s and in the years of President Salvador Allende's Unidad Popular government, there was a massive occupation of large estates by Mapuche communities, lands that had been taken from them forty years earlier. At that time, especially in 1971, there was an insurrection of the Mapuche communities in southern Chile, who saw an ally in the so-called "left" and in the Allende government a possibility of realizing their historic territorial claims.

The military coup of 1973 was extremely hard for the Mapuche world, many were detained, disappeared or exiled. After a period of brutal repression, in 1978 the dictatorship proceeded to distribute common goods to the indigenous peoples. All communal lands were divided up and assigned to families with a "private property" certificate. It was thought that with the liquidation of the communities and the introduction of private property, Mapuche society would weaken and lose its energy and combativeness. But exactly the opposite happened. In the 1980s, in the midst of the dictatorship, new organizations and political currents were born that affirmed the Mapuche identity on the basis of their ethnicity and culture, separate from the Chilean.

The transition to democracy in the indigenous sector took place within the political framework of the Agreement between the Coalition of Parties for Democracy and the representative organizations of indigenous peoples, solemnly signed in 1989 in Nueva Imperial, a small town in the middle of Mapuche territory, by then presidential candidate Patricio Aylwin, the first president of the post-Pinochet period. With the Agreement, the indigenous peoples accepted submission to the rites of democracy, which was being "rebuilt", that is, to channel their demands through institutional channels, and not de facto, such as the occupation of lands. The new government promised to reform the Constitution of the Republic to recognize the existence of the Indigenous Peoples of Chile and pass new legislation.

As of 1990 there were many expectations among the Mapuche that the return of democratic governments to Chile would open a space for indigenous claims and for a new relationship between the Mapuche

and the State. In 1993 the new indigenous law was approved, but constitutional reform was rejected by the National Congress.

A bitter battle ensued over the construction of a hydroelectric dam in Ralco for which hundreds of Mapuche families were evicted from their land. The expansion of the forestry companies in the territories inhabited by the Mapuche communities opened another conflict that led in 1997 to a drastic break in the "institutional route" agreed upon in Nueva Imperial. Numerous new indigenous organizations left the institutional framework provided for by the Agreement and began a period of mobilizations, confrontations and state repression.

This is the current state of the Mapuche conflict.

Transformations of Mapuche society

Social relationships within Mapuche society were based on the family, on a preferably endogenous kinship system with marriage between cousins.

In the 19th century, marital unions between families had given rise to the rich (ulmenes), caciques (loncos) and captains (nidol-loncos) who constituted territorial identities that played on their political balance. The more extensive the kinship network and the greater the number of relationships that were formed within it, the more it was possible to maintain warriors (conas) who defended the territory and formed armies following the different tribal chiefs. Thus, patrilineage (a group of unilineal affiliations in which all members are considered descendants, exclusively through the male line, of the same ancestor, real or mythical) and patriarchy formed social groups that responded to external aggression and ensured control and domination of the territory and its livestock resources.

With the expansion of capitalist productive relations, especially in the postcolonial and republican era, the Mapuche population became peasants or were proletarianized, as a concrete expression of their "inclusion" in Chilean society, while maintaining their own ethnic and cultural identity. It was a forced change that collided with Mapuche culture: a culture closely associated with the control of a specific territory, land now lost and passed into the hands of landowners.

The process of peasantization led to the transformation of the peasant domestic economic unit into a nuclear family system, unable to maintain its former size within the reduced territorial space.

Additionally, as families lost their influence as an economic and political unit, patriarchal authority, unable to fulfill its political and social functions, weakened. This has caused the impoverishment, migration and aging of the communities, accentuated by the subdivision of the ownership of communal Mapuche lands under the military government's Decree Law 2,568.

As a further consequence, men who did not have a patrimony of land

on which to settle their families were forced to migrate to cities to join the work force, or to remain in the community depending on the family and in celibacy for life. In effect, male domination over Mapuche society and the family has been strongly weakened. Poverty makes it impossible to fulfill the roles assigned to the Mapuche men normally required by tradition and customs. The family unit is also altered by the migration of women from communal land to cities, producing instability in communities where elderly and unmarried men are unable to feed their families.

The Mapuche political movement

Young intellectuals began to take up old ideas with new words, such as self-government, autonomy and self-determination for indigenous peoples. The conflicts of the land and the territorial claims are confusedly mixed with proposals for autonomy that arise from the most diverse sources, both from the past and from other experiences now present everywhere.

A confrontation began with the Chilean bourgeois state based on the defense and vindication of its territories, linked to the recovery of a lost social and family structure, and with it the political and hierarchical role of the lonco and men in general, in nostalgia for its pre-Republican wealth.

The political movements that rose up against the Chilean State, whether by peaceful and legal or armed and illegal means, clung to their ethnic and cultural conditions, to remain integrated in and be vindicated over the rest of Chilean society.

The "Mapuche question" is the term used to indicate the ethnic conflict between the Chilean state and the Mapuche community, coalescing around the effects of the aforementioned Decree 2568 on the Mapuche and their ability to integrate within bourgeois Chilean society.

Therefore, the struggle of the Mapuche movement, which emerged in the first decades of the 20th century, as an expression of an organized action of that ethnic group within Chile, is a political struggle. It is part of the so-called "social movements", a movement that has its own identity of ideas, which brings together peasants, proletarians and petty bourgeois, mostly impoverished, who claim a past that no longer corresponds to the historical development of capitalist society, in Chile and beyond.

The clash of the Mapuches with the Chilean bourgeois state does not arise from the capital-work contradiction or from the class struggle of the proletariat.

Within this movement various organizations coexist, an assemblage or association of an ethnic and peasant nature, grouped by community. Some of the organizations that make it up were born as a response to a specific problem and do not last over time. Generally, the Mapuche organizations maintain their autonomy, some even

opposing each other; some act without asking for the support of the others, while others have only a local scope; and some are, by constitution, in open conflict with others.

As a whole, the movement seeks to resolve the material misery and social marginalization of the Mapuche people in Chile by obtaining special political rights for their minority ethnicity. For the most part, the various organizations have limited themselves to acting as pressure groups, seeking the mediation of state institutions, parties and churches to intercede with governments in order to obtain legislation to protect indigenous people.

Among the objectives pursued we list: 1. The right to self-determination, an autonomous legislation on the property regime of the land, the territory and its resources; 2. The constitutional recognition of the pre-existence of the Mapuche "nation" at the creation of the State and its right to self-determination, to land and territory (including the use of land and subsoil); 3. The right to democratic participation, positive discrimination in Congress that guarantees two Mapuche parliamentarians per chamber; 4. Recognition of an autonomous Mapuche parliament made up of representatives elected according to their own culture; 5. Restitution of lands, reserve and ancestral; 6. Ratification of international conventions applicable to indigenous peoples, in particular ILO Convention 169; 7. Respect for the Mapuche legal system through a reform of the criminal procedure code that includes substantial aspects of Mapuche culture. 8. Recognition of Mapuche sovereignty and cultural structures.

The background of this organization dates back to 1996, when, in the midst of territorial struggles, Mapuche from various communities from the Arauco area formed the Lafkenche Territorial Coordinator as an alternative to the existing organizations.

For the first time, the traditional request for land restitution, abandoning the criterion of Merced Titles, is made from the memory of the elderly, from what they remembered as belonging to this or that family.

In addition, from this moment on, "the elaboration of the territorial demand and the struggle around it will go beyond the existing legality, not only because of the demand that was made there or because of the political content expressed, it will also imply a higher quality mobilization and decision, more confrontational" (Wefun 2001).

The rupture with the institutional order materialized with the burning of the trucks of a forestry company on December 1, 1997.

At the Tranakepe meeting in February 1998, the first agreements were reached between all the Mapuche organizations. In the second meeting, also in 1998, two visions for the future came in confrontation: one

more "autonomous", led by the Lafkenche Coordination Committee, and another more "official", led by the mayor of Tirua, Adolfo Millabur, giving rise to a fracture within the movement.

From a new meeting in Tranakepe with only the Mapuche communities in conflict, the Mapuche Coordinator of the Arauco-Malleco Conflict Communities (CAM) was formed, with the support of the two organizations in the capital, Meli Wixan Mapu and the Mapuche Coordinator of Santiago. At the time of its constitution, a commitment was assumed to support all the communities in conflict and incorporate them into the CAM if the community and its lonco so wished. The first work meeting of the Coordinator was held in 1999 in the forest workers' union in the city of Concepción.

One of the initial actions of the CAM was to seek a unified approach within the Mapuche movement. To this end, the communities were invited to attend meetings.

The CAM tried to spread the concept of a "Mapuche nation." "That is where our goal points, so that in a year or two we practice and develop this concept of Nation... which will lead at some point to the stage that we call rebellion, once we have massified the concept. That is why we claim our ancestral forms of organization, where the authorities have the capacity to act and think autonomously, exercising real power in their own territories" (Antileo 1999).

Along with all this, the CAM exposes its utopian vision: "The restructuring of all the aspects of the Mapuche People is sought, from a philosophical-religious order, ideology, values, until it is reconstructed ideologically and politically...to sustain our own way of life. As the Mapuche Nation People" which "...involves the exercise of community, ceremonial and organizational practices such as the mingako, guillanmawun, guillatun, machitun, palin, trawun, kamarikun, nutram, among others, and above all the Mapudungun as a concrete expression of our own identity and life project." They also get into the details of the society they are trying to build. "At the same time, rescuing and strengthening our traditional organizational structure and the roles played by certain people within the Mapuche world, such as the lonco, werken, machi, weupive, cona, dugumachife, genpin, among others" (Arauco-Malleco Coordinator, 2000).

They define their struggle as "national liberation", "anti-colonial" and claim the so-called self-determination of peoples. This conflict occurs through two paths: the institutional one, which seeks to achieve reforms in the Chilean Constitution and laws favorable to the Mapuche people, which is represented by participation in the Constituent Assembly underway in Chile; and that of some organizations

that have formed armed groups who aim to recover Mapuche lands and their territorial autonomy from the Chilean State.

Within the framework of the armed struggle undertaken by a sector of the Mapuche movement, recently, on April 3, 2022, the CAM issued a statement in which it rejects “the new assimilationist and indigenist tactics of the elites and of Chilean President Gabriel Boric” and condemned the indigenous presence in the Constituent Assembly. “What the government is looking for is not to advance in the resolution of the conflict, but to legitimize its assimilationist apparatus at all costs, mainly with co-opted and servile Mapuche sectors.” He calls for a struggle for “Mapuche national liberation”. “It is for a reason that we have defined ourselves as revolutionary Mapuche and we have fought for years the territorial expressions of the capitalist and colonial State. It is for the same reason that our actions will continue to strike at the reproduction of capital that operates with blood and fire in our Wallmapu and we will strengthen territorial control as the basic and only platform to transform the reality created by genocidal extractivism. As CAM, we are not going to have a dialogue with those whose ultimate goal is the annihilation of our people, like Monsanto and company.”

“In the midst of so much confusion, we reaffirm our weychan’s political-military path, just as Leftraru, Pelontraro and our fallen in combat weychafe did at the time, which is not focused on obtaining bureaucratic crumbs from the enemy but rather on laying the foundations of our proposal of Mapuche national liberation, for which the expulsion of all capitalist and colonial expression of the Wallmapu is necessary.”

The only way forward is the class struggle of the proletariat

The Mapuche guerrillas adopted a self-contradictory approach, declaring that they fight against capitalism and end up claiming the utopia of an autonomous Mapuche State, which would end up assuming the production and commercialization of goods anyway, as in the past, that they intended to revive.

Communist society will not be a “society of nations.” The national claim is an exclusively bourgeois historical transition.

The proletariat will have to undertake the task of destroying bourgeois rule and conquering political power in each country in which it manages to accumulate the forces necessary to achieve its aim. “From here onwards, and from the contingent and formal legal-constitutional perspective, the proletariat must establish itself in a class State (dictatorship), all transitory in nature” (Factors of Race and Nation in Marxist Theory, 1953).

There is no other State to constitute in the fight against capitalism than the State of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and only temporarily, for the implementation of the communist program and to advance towards the extinction of social classes and of all forms of the State.

And in this context there is no historical space for the struggle for a Mapuche State.

The program of proletarian socialism supersedes the nation; it does not organize it in new ways. The survival of ethnic and cultural differences in the same territory cannot be a reason to demand a return to phases of historical development already surpassed by capitalism, which would distance the proletariat from the struggle for communism.

The Chilean proletariat – while not remaining indifferent to the armed resistance of the Mapuche and certainly not taking sides in solidarity with the bourgeois Chilean state – must concentrate its energies on the struggle against capitalist exploitation, with changes such as rising wages and the reduction of the working day, organizing class unions and confronting any artificial, non-proletarian division based on ethnicity or nationality.

In the practice of the general strike, the workers will also have to confront the capitalists of the countryside and of the lumber companies, but they must be confronted by the proletariat.

In Chile, the Mapuche struggle is not a national liberation struggle: ethnic and cultural differences are not enough to justify it. The struggle imposed by history throughout Chile is now only the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeois regime, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the implementation of the communist program.

Workers of Mapuche origin will have to join the struggles of the working class and eliminate from their demands those based on reminiscences of an ancestral past no longer possible.

The middle classes of indigenous origin, crushed and impoverished by the advance of capitalism, have only two paths ahead of them: either join the proletariat in the struggle for communist revolution, or side with the big bourgeoisie and the landlords as forces fighting to preserve the regime of capital. The class struggle today presents no other options.

For the Class Union **notes on the class struggle**

Militant coal miners fined millions of dollars by US government

Approximately 1,100 miners at Warrior Met Coal, a large private firm that operates several facilities across the state of Alabama, have now been on strike for over 16 months since negotiations over a new contract reached a deadlock on wages and working conditions in April 2021. Engaging in a strike that is unlimited in duration, these workers show the way to victory for the rest of the working class.

On July 22, 2022, the regional office of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), using company estimates as a basis, assessed the damages of the strike thus far at \$13.3 million – hardly a dent in their skyrocketing net income, reported as \$297 million in the last quarter alone – and ordered the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), which represents the strikers, to pay. The decision was rightly met with ridicule by the union president, Cecil Roberts, who has committed to a legal challenge: “[w]hat is the purpose of a strike if not to impact the operations of the employer, including production? Is it now the policy of the federal government that unions be required to pay a company’s losses as a consequence of their members exercising their rights as working people? This is outrageous and effectively negates workers’ right to strike.”

By the same principle, a union that truly aims to empower its members should do everything in its ability to maximize the impact the strike has on the operations of the employer—but the UMWA has not done this. Shortly following the beginning of the strike, the operator was granted a court order against pickets “interfering, hindering, or obstructing ingress and egress to the company’s properties.” The union has apparently encouraged its members to respect the ruling by clearing the entrances and exits whenever the sheriff’s officer, who is posted outside the facility to enforce the injunction, requests it, which hasn’t stopped them being hit and

injured while picketing by vehicles moving scabs into and out of the mines with impunity. Perhaps President Roberts should ask himself what the purpose of a picket line is if not to obstruct the flow of labor and goods!

There are more opportunities for the union to substantially improve its support for its members’ struggle. On its website, the company offers some useful information about itself: “Warrior Met Coal is a leading producer and exporter of metallurgical coal for the global steel industry from underground mines located in Brookwood, Alabama, southwest of Birmingham and near Tuscaloosa [...]. Metallurgical coal mined from the Blue Creek coal seam contains very low sulfur and has strong coking properties, making it ideally suited for steel makers. Warrior Met Coal’s cost-efficient operations serve markets in the United States, Europe, Asia, and South America via convenient barge and rail access to the Port of Mobile.” The striking coal miners should look to amplify the effects of their action through association with the workers of other companies that either transport or productively consume coal: to begin with, the miners can track coal extracted by scabs and communicate with port, barge, and rail workers to prevent the company from completing shipments; if Warrior Met succeeds in delivering the forbidden coal to a steel mill, then the miners can inform the workers there of its origins and ask them to withhold their labor in solidarity.

Currently, the mine workers’ union in many ways acts in the interests of the employers, whether it is conscious of it or not, contributing to the collapse of the union sector. (Note: The coal mining industry used to be totally unionized in the United States, but now only 15% of all the coal in the nation is mined by union workers.) But this situation is not inevitable; workers both inside and outside the existing trade unions can and should cooperate to oppose weak or opportunistic leaders and rebuild the labor movement.

Labor Notes – a reformist and trade-unionist organization with ties to the progressive wing of the union leadership (e.g. Teamsters for a Democratic Union) as well as Trotskyist groups like Solidarity – has reported on the strike in multiple articles freely available online. They are also planning a “Troublemakers’ School” on October 15 in Alabama “to strategize, share skills, and learn ways to organize to win,” including workshops on “Beating Apathy” and “Turning an Issue into a Campaign,” with the striking coal miners evidently being their target audience. From a materialist perspective, making action conditional on successfully raising consciousness beforehand is putting the cart before the horse: there is no better teacher than experience—in this case, of class struggle. More importantly, the miners in question have already realized the necessity of fighting capital in their workplace; what they need is critical-scientific analysis so they can overcome the different

The Communist Party is printed and produced by
Associazione La Sinistra Comunista – Casella Postale 1157 – 50121 Firenze – Italy
I.C.P. Editions – c/o 96 Bold Street – Liverpool L1 4HY – United Kingdom
C.L. Publishing – c/o 523 S.E. Morrison St. – Portland, OR 97214 – U.S.A

international-communist-party.org

obstacles they run into in the course of their struggle.

Only a union that promotes the militancy of its members, refuses to submit to the state at their expense, and seeks to extend their struggles beyond company and national boundaries – in other words, a class union – can guarantee lasting satisfaction for the workers. Only an international party of the working class with a clear vision and independent of the state and the bosses can provide adequate leadership for such an organization.

American auto union neglects industrial workers

In Marion, VA, a town of only a few thousand residents nestled in the Appalachian Mountains, 270 manufacturing workers at General Dynamics, a major military equipment contractor for the US military, have been on strike for over a month. The plant produces lightweight, mobile shelters that are important for protecting soldiers and other equipment in varying, often harsh, natural conditions, in addition to radar and structural components for aircraft. Many of General Dynamics' products are now being sent to Ukraine to bolster the war effort. The strikers' complaints include declining real wages and the recently (in 2008) introduced two-tier system.

Meanwhile, 30-40 auto technicians at a Mercedes-Benz dealership in San Diego, CA went on strike in mid June over the company's wage proposal for the next contract. About one month in, 20 of the strikers were fired by the company in retaliation.

Despite the fact that the falling purchasing power of wages, multi-tier contracts, and the right to organize and strike are hot issues for virtually all industrial workers in the union, only a small fraction of its total membership is presently being mobilized. Demands common to all the industries covered by the union, like wage increases across the board and equal pay for equal work should be advanced and directly fought for on the shop floor with the financial and organizational backing of the international union.

Judging from the United Auto Workers (UAW) – the union representing the strikers – and Unite All Workers for Democracy (UAWD) – a popular reform caucus within the union – international websites, there is no sign that these strikes are even taking place; the only reports on the action come from external news sources and the regional UAW office. It is certainly odd that the union is not doing more to promote the event and link up various workers' struggles with the resources it has at its disposal, let alone staging an apparent information blackout on the few existing sites of resistance.

A large part of the union's attention remains fixed on the Constitutional Convention which just closed in early August without any major changes to the sclerotic union structure. Although the rising internal opposition of UAWD indicates an uptick in combativeness among members, both factions vying for union leadership have effectively channeled rank-and-file energy into the relatively innocuous avenue of voting for reforms of their own organization, as opposed to organizing and supporting action in the workplace.

Another contributing factor is the evolving composition of the union. Non-union manufacturing has rapidly overtaken its union counterpart since the 1970s, with the free flow of capital – from urban union strongholds in the east and north to more rural areas with lax labor regulations in the south and west, from the US to foreign countries, and from foreign countries to the US (as it's mainly the domestic auto companies that are bound to collective bargaining agreements with American workers) – playing a crucial role in the latter's decline. But UAW has done little to counteract the trend, for instance by expanding its territory to organize non-union workers and striking to prevent manufacturers from exploiting more vulnerable labor pools; instead, they have offered a number of concessions to the employers over the years so that union workers can compete in a race to the bottom with non-union workers.

Naturally, this has led to a drastic loss of members in the auto industry, which the union is attempting to compensate for by recruiting white collar workers like graduate students, who disproportionately belong to the activist left.

Several other unions have used the same tactic of organizing outside their jurisdiction, especially among the middle classes, to shore up their collapsing organizations, so they compete against one another for potential recruits and exhibit remarkable redundancies rather than rationally dividing up their tasks in cooperation to prepare the working class for struggle.

The proletariat is the only class capable of opposing the efforts of capital and its state to depress the living and working conditions of the vast majority of the population—because it alone, by its labor in the industrial core of the economy (e.g., manufacturing, construction, maintenance, transportation, agriculture and natural resource extraction), is responsible for creating the surplus-value which is the exclusive purpose of capitalist production. We communists focus on organizing the industrial proletariat into class unions so that workers can control the most strategically-important sectors and exercise maximal power when they take militant action.

US Postal Service propped up by workers' sacrifices

A plan to consolidate the operations of the United States Postal Service (USPS) has rankled workers across the nation. In the hopes of reducing the costs of doing business and making US mail a financially viable enterprise, the top management has decreed the opening of new, large facilities specializing in sorting and delivery covering an extensive geographical area, taking over and centralizing the duties that were once distributed over many post offices scattered across the same region. This move is supposed to save on both equipment and labor expenses, making a great deal of post office employees redundant and enabling staff reductions.

The postal service is designed to bear the burden of meeting the needs of capitalism which promise the least profit. One illustration of this fact is that the USPS is legally required to deliver to and from everyone in the country at a uniform low price, regardless of how difficult it is to actually provide service and despite falling demand (including, for example, a mailbox at the bottom of the Grand Canyon which is only accessible by mule). Meanwhile, corporations like Amazon, UPS, and Nordstrom are granted de facto government subsidies in the form of USPS contracts to complete their most inconvenient orders for pennies on the dollar, throwing absurd workloads on the broken backs of postal workers. As a result, the USPS lost \$87 billion in the period 2007-20, including around \$10 billion annually in recent years, a deficit that has been filled by immense emergency loans from Congress that merely prolong the crisis.

Due to ballooning debt and the desire to remain competitive on the world market, the US government has over a long period of time progressively reduced real wages as well as the quantity and quality of services provided by the USPS. Postal managers at the plant level are notoriously abusive as they drive employees into the ground, contributing to the apparently immense challenge of retaining employees. Chronic staff shortages and overwork (entry-level positions often entail 72 hour work weeks – six days a week, 12 hours per day of mind-numbing manual labor!) are then added to the factory despotism, which

helps explain the shockingly high number of suicides and mass shootings committed by current and former postal workers – a phenomenon charmingly named “going postal” in American slang.

Postal unions only won collective bargaining rights in 1970 after a massive and extremely effective illegal national wildcat strike organized clandestinely by rank-and-file associations. However, this remains the only notable example of a postal strike in the entire history of the United States, and the freedom to strike is still denied in this critical branch of industry. Thus, the only officially-recognized recourse workers have is grievance, mediation, and arbitration procedures, leaving many problems unresolved while dissipating tension with the bosses and asphyxiating any independent militancy. Further, the unions are divided into four separate crafts, each of which usually asserts its own sectional interests rather than their common interests against the exploiting employer: clerks, mail handlers, rural and non-rural letter carriers. Worse yet, the union leadership adopts the interests of the employer by endorsing Democratic Party politicians who are slightly more generous with support and campaigning to prevent the privatization of the USPS, if not blatantly pursuing co-management.

It means little to postal workers whether the boot that steps on their neck is public or private. Whoever is in office, no matter their ideology or party affiliation, will be compelled by economic competition and strategic concerns to run the state machinery as efficiently – and therefore as ruthlessly with respect to the lower-level workers it employs – as possible. The USPS cannot help but bleed money and deteriorate due to the nature of the services it is obliged to provide and the prevailing economic conditions, although the experience of working there demonstrates that it is hardly an institution worth conserving anyways. Postal workers can only save themselves through autonomous organization and combative action, whether legal or not, that rises above craft and company divisions, striving to extend their association until it encompasses not just all the workers of the supply chain but the entire working class – a real class union front.

Party Meetings in the US

CL Publishers - PO Box 14344 - Portland, OR 97293 - clpublishers.com

Party Meetings:

- email icparty@interncommparty.org to arrange meeting or let us know you will be attending.
- Denver, CO - First Saturdays at Therizo Cafe, 2890 Fairfax St, Denver, CO 80207: 11 am.
- Minneapolis, MN - First Saturdays at Hard Times Cafe, 1821 Riverside Ave: 3 to 5 pm.
- Portland, OR - First Saturdays at Honey Latte Cafe, 1033 SE Madison: 11 am.
- Pittsburgh, PA - First Saturdays at 61C Cafe, 1839 Murray Ave: 4 to 5 pm.

- Meetings can be arranged in: Akron, Charlotte, Raleigh, Salt Lake City, Yakima.

to contact email:

icparty@interncommparty.org

On the Thread of Time: The Shameful Lie of “Defencism”

(from *Battaglia Comunista*, issue 5 of 1951)

YESTERDAY

According to the reformists and “minimum program” parliamentarians who led the European working masses at the beginning of the century, the socialists “did not deal with foreign policy” and had no ideas on the question of war between states. Of course, until war dominated the scene and the field, “they were against all wars”, and on this subject they could not express more than the generic “pacifism”, such as was cultivated by the bourgeois or anarchists.

This attitude was a worthy predecessor for the policy of “support for all wars” in which the main European socialist parties were ruined when the cyclone of 1914 was unleashed. Then the scoundrels of opportunism, who had become allies and ministers of the bourgeois imperial powers, began to sophisticate and cheat on the fact that Marxism “did not condemn all wars” but conceded to some of them: this was of course the case with their country’s wars, like the one advocated in Germany by Scheidemann & C., in France by Guesde & C., in Austria by Renner & C., in Belgium by Vandervelde & C., in Russia by Plekhanov & C., in Great Britain by Macdonald & C., in Italy Mussolini &... well, nobody.

Lenin, with the same mental rectitude and the same absence of demagogy and posturing, works tirelessly to put things right, from 1914 to 1917 in the most solitary shadows, from 1917 onwards in the dazzling limelight.

The first concern of the great revolutionary is to reconnect solidly the treatment of the question to the foundations of socialist doctrine and politics, to its texts as well as to its background of struggle.

The continuity of the “thread” is Lenin’s first concern. He himself, who was the greatest scholar of the “most recent phase of capitalism” in its economic and social unfolding towards imperial forms, shows above all that only for the traitors was it a question of “unexpected prospects”, of “unforeseen situations” which suggested and authorized “new analyses” and “new methods” of socialism.

It was precisely the maniacs of updating – a quack fixation typical of bourgeois intellectuals – and of revisions, which had meant to correct Marxism from the extreme right like the Bernsteins, or from the false syndicalist extreme left like the Jouhaux, who were the first to pass into the chauvinist camp.

The path we have traced with Engels concerning the wars in Europe, in the fundamental historical developments studied by Marxism no less carefully than the economic and productive developments, we find it reconfirmed with absolute certainty in all the Leninist writings, the basis of the international programmatic reorganization, since the 1915 theses on “The Principles of Socialism and the War of 1914-1915”.

After discarding the abstract and insufficient evaluation of philanthropic pacifists and anarchists, for whom all wars (and we certainly think so too) are barbaric and bestial, Lenin retracts the doctrine on “The historical types of war”.

The absent-minded and forgetful – nothing to be hoped for by the erasers on the serial conversions and retroversions of past careers – can reread and reflect. Tirelessly, we repeat.

“The Great French Revolution ushered in a new epoch in the history of mankind. From that time to the Paris Commune, from 1789 to 1871, one of the types of wars were wars of a bourgeois-progressive, national-liberating character. In other words, the chief content and historical significance of these wars were the overthrow of absolutism and feudalism, the undermining of these institutions, the overthrow of alien oppression. Therefore, those were progressive wars, and during such wars, all honest, revolutionary democrats, and also all Socialists, always sympathized with the success of that country (i.e., with that bourgeoisie), which had helped to overthrow, or sap, the most dangerous foundation of feudalism, absolutism and the oppression of other nations”.

Even with regard to such wars Lenin is keen to establish very well the meaning of the Marxist “approval” or “justification”, and to explain with what scope it was said to be support for wars of “defense” or

“for the fatherland” in terms only partly suitable. In fact, those wars were often times wars “of aggression” or “invasions”. We read this without colored glasses, in Engels; we do the same in Lenin.

The first “praiseworthy” wars are those of France against the coalitions, but it must be established that Marx, Engels and Lenin (and we who modestly repeat it for their sanctimoniously failed pupils) include in the same (group of wars), considered useful because they spread throughout Europe the modern capitalist organization, both the first wars of the sans-culottes, which exalted the poets for the character of defense, at the same time, of the Revolution and of the French soil trampled by the invading armies, and the wars of Napoleon, which were wars of aggression and invasion of the feudal countries.

And in fact: “the revolutionary wars (note the definition: revolutionary in the sense of the bourgeois revolution, but still revolutionary) waged by France contained an element of plunder (sic) and conquest (sic) of alien territory by the French, but this does not in the least alter the fundamental historical significance of these wars, which destroyed and shattered feudalism and absolutism in the whole of old, serf-ridden Europe”.

For that reason, then, the Marxists “justified” those wars. Therefore, they did not apply the puerile method: who is the aggressor, the invader, the devastator? This one is wrong, we are “against his war”; even worse, we enlist for the war against him. *Id est*, we would be recruited by Dumouriez at Valmy, by Blücher at Waterloo....

Those who reasoned in this way, respectable because they never claimed to be Marxist, were for example Garibaldi, who “forgetting Rome and Mentana” and the Bonapartist bullets, ran to the Ardennes to defend France in 1870 when he saw it invaded by the Prussians.

How instead is such a war seen by the Marxist? Does he support Bonaparte or Bismarck? Never. We saw Engels’ analysis. Now Lenin’s: “In the Franco-Prussian War, Germany plundered France (annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, war indemnity in billions of the time), but this does not alter the fundamental historical significance of this war, which “liberated” tens of millions of German people from feudal disintegration and from the oppression of two despots, the Russian tsar and Napoleon III”. Lenin spelled for us the analysis by Engels, the latter was as little impelled to his invective by German patriotism as the former could be by Russian patriotism. Both equally guided by the reasons of the development of class and socialist movement, they openly consider as “liberating” wars that had the character of devastation, pillage, invasion, conquest and depredation: these are their words.

Here Lenin’s examination comes to the dilemma “Aggressive and Defensive War”. And he explains clearly: in that period 1789-1871 which left “deep marks and revolutionary memories” the proletarian struggle had not been able to struggle for socialism, but had to support the efforts of the bourgeoisie to liberate itself from feudalism. “By “defensive” war Socialists always meant a justified war in this sense”. The emphases are Lenin’s, who adds: “(W. Liebknecht once expressed himself precisely in this way)”.

The great young revolutionary had, almost single-handedly, to sustain the polemic against all the Marxists of German social democracy who crossed over to the dirty alliance with the Kaiser in 1914. These did not fail to oppose the Marxist predictions on the “war of races, a war with the combined Slavonian and Roman races” and the threat of Russian despotism, the same, they said, as in 1870. They advocated the extreme solution of “defencism”. It is well known how the war came to a head: the assassination of the Austrian Archduke in Sarajevo, the mobilization of Austria against Serbia, the immediate response with the Russian mobilization; the Tsar’s armies clearly began the offensive, not in the direction of Vienna and the Carpathian ramparts, but through the Baltic plains towards Berlin: therefore Germany mobilized “in its own defense”: militarily, according to the logic of its plans, it threw itself towards the Rhine. France, therefore, mobilizes in her own defense as well: they were all defending themselves, these slaughterhouse governments! The most

hypocritical of the Tartuffes of history also mobilized: England chose to defend little Belgium, through which the German forces were passing. And in the same autumn of 1914 history recorded two great halting battles, two “defensive” victories: Foch on the Marne, Hindenburg on the Masurian Lakes. Socialist ministers in Berlin and Paris were lined up for “national defense”. The social-traitors in Berlin wanted to crush Liebknecht (and when they were in power they shot him, while the Kaiser had only put him in jail) with the Marxist argument of “defensive war”. Agent provocateur of the Tsar! they shout at him: we throw in your face the address of the First International on the war of 1870 written by the hands of Marx: “On the German side, the war is a war of defence... With deep sorrow and grief we are forced to undergo a defensive war as an unavoidable evil... The German working class have resolutely supported the war... It was the German workmen who, together with the rural laborers, furnished the sinews and muscles of heroic hosts...”.

Karl Liebknecht, whose preparation as a theorist or his heroism as a fighter against an entire mass of drunk-on-patriotism demagoguery cannot be remembered with greater admiration, made it clear that the political use of the term “defensive” war, and the usual quotation of detached passages, should not obscure the clear historical reason and evaluation of the bases and social effects of wars, and that after the war of 1870, having reached the goal, indicated in those same texts, of “the independence of Germany and the liberation of it and of Europe from the oppressive nightmare of the second empire”, a goal that justified the war also as an invasion of conquest and plunder, a very different historical period had opened. If, therefore, even before the distinction between war of defense and war of aggression was false, because the social and historical character of the “distinction” between such and such war was quite different, in 1914 it is a completely different matter, the savage contest between imperialist groups for the exploitation of the world, and the socialists no longer see wars to support, or fatherlands to defend, on this side or on the other side of the Rhine or the Vistula.

Lenin not only considers it of the utmost importance to clarify this point, but he wants to establish with documents that such a view was that of the true Marxists, even before the European War of 1914 and until the opening of that new period of dominant capitalism throughout Europe.

He establishes again with examples of “possible” wars at the date 1914, which of them might appear “progressive” and justifiable. He clarifies this (and here the easy-going ones must read cum grano salis as always when Marxists advance historical hypotheses and do not analyze concrete events) in order to prove that in none of the States of Europe in 1915 can we talk about a “just war”, and that in any case the criterion is a social one, not about whether it’s a war of aggression or defense, invasion or resistance, conquest or liberation.

Lenin’s example is this: if a country has no local government, but is under the political domination of another foreign country near or far, then it would still be the case today to justify its war. But mind you, this is not, was not at the date 1915, the case neither for France against Germany – which we consider to be settled forever under a capitalist regime since 1871 – nor vice versa and not even for Germany against Tsarist Russia! Here are the cases Lenin supposes: Morocco against France, India against England, Persia and China against Russia, since these are colonies or semi-colonies where the lack of national autonomy prevents the modern development of society. But Lenin immediately adds: they would be just and defensive wars (in the sense that they aim to dislodge a foreign conqueror) but this is regardless of which of the parties started the war. And as long as the system of predominance is “in order” it is clear that these hypothetical just wars could only be insurrections, uprisings, and therefore attacks on the occupying foreign military forces.

In Europe, therefore, the period of the wars of national settlement closes in 1871: historically there could perhaps still be some more, but outside Europe. The 1914 war falls into the type of imperialist wars, and is compared by Lenin to a dispute, not between slaves

and oppressors, but between “a slave-owner who owned 100 slaves warring against a slave-owner who owned 200 slaves for a more “just” distribution of slaves”. To disguise this turpitude the bourgeoisie deceives “the peoples by means of “national ideology and the term “defence of the fatherland” in the present war between slave-owners for fortifying and strengthening slavery”.

We will not repeat once again the features of the analysis of imperialism. Let us recall a few points which are useful to demonstrate the continuity of the Marxist evaluation in the period in question, after 1871, and well before Liebknecht, Lenin and the other socialists who fought tenaciously against the war. It is about unmasking social-patriotism in all its shame.

Lenin referred to the example of the Paris Commune, which was expressly recalled by the Manifesto of the Second Socialist International at the Basel Congress of 1912: “transform the governments’ war into a civil war”. Who of the great historical turning point takes note “ad horas” is Karl Marx himself, in the classic concluding passage of the address of May 30, 1871. “The highest heroic effort of which old society is still capable is national war; and this is now proved to be a mere governmental humbug, intended to defer the struggle of the classes, and to be thrown aside as soon as that class struggle bursts out in civil war. Class rule is no longer able to disguise itself in a national uniform; the national Governments are one as against the proletariat!”

Marx therefore saw the future war between national states, which the previous period had defined and settled, provoking class war, and the proletariat responding to the challenge of the national governments. The renegades of Marxism, in Berlin and in the other capitals, could only respond with the deception of national war by lowering the red flag and declaring the class struggle suspended, joining the ranks of the national bourgeois armies.

Lenin accused them of having betrayed Marxism in all its explicit manifestations from 1871 to 1914, and he was right.

Jules Guesde, who so wretchedly invalidated the points he himself made before, head of the Marxist left in France, in 1899 (En garde) lashed out against socialist ministerialism, both in peace and in the event of a war “hatched by capitalist brigandage”; Kautsky, who ended up in the same way, in 1908 (Der Weg zur Macht: The Road to Power) declared the peaceful era over, and opened the era of wars and revolutions. Basel, Lenin notes, reiterates both the historical concept and the concept of action. He recalls the latent conflicts in Europe, all of brutal dominance on all sides: Austro-Russian in the Balkans, Anglo-French-German in Africa, Austro-Italian in Albania, Anglo-Russian in Central Asia, and so on. Lenin comments: “the idea of defending the fatherland [is] theoretical nonsense and a practical absurdity. The big sharks are fighting each other to gobble up other peoples’ ‘fatherlands’”. But “Recognition that a war is being fought for national liberation implies one set of tactics; its recognition as an imperialist war, another. The Basel Manifesto clearly points to the latter. The war, it says, “will bring on an economic and political crisis”, which must be “utilised”, not to lessen the crisis, not to defend the fatherland, but, on the contrary, to “rouse” the masses and “hasten the downfall of capitalist rule”. Lenin recalls that the Manifesto said that “the ruling classes fear the proletarian revolution as a consequence of a world war”, and he linked this not only to the Commune but to the great Russian revolution of 1905 that came out of the Russo-Japanese war.

Uninterruptedly, consistently, from Marx to Lenin, the socialist revolutionaries have never followed the bourgeois figure of the “war warden”, as dumb as he is impotent, but they have prepared themselves to be, in the revolutionary sense, opposed to that of super-imperialism, the “war profiteers”.

Lenin erected the doctrine of defeatism and led it to a resounding historical victory.

When this was only a distant prospect, he, answering the question: defeatism against which side? was able to write: “Only a bourgeois, who lives in the faith that the war ordered by the governments will inevitably end as a war of the governments, and who desires this, finds ridiculous and crazy the idea that the socialists of all the countries at war should desire the defeat of all their governments”.

When the proletarian parties were, by treachery, made to “desire” the victory of certain governments, and to fight for them, the forces of world revolution were ruined.

In Marxist and Leninist doctrine, as we have shown, it remains established that, with regard to both wars of national liberation (1792-1871) and imperialist wars, the distinction between historical types of wars has never gravitated to the acceptance of the notion that every war of defense is justified. In the first period Marxism justifies

as historically useful some wars, generally offensive, in the second it disavows both offensive and defensive wars, that is, it expects historical usefulness not from a given outcome of the wars, but from the successes of internal revolutionary defeatism, which it preconceives and hastens wherever possible.

TODAY

Once the criterion of “defense” has been expelled from the evaluation of wars made by Marxists in the two periods, questions arise concerning the wars which have come and may come later, that is, in the period following these historical facts: the First Imperialist World War, the Russian Revolution; the failure of the Second International, the foundation of the Third.

We have in other articles of the “On The Thread of Time” series seen the point of the proletarian “revolutionary” war. After the bourgeois revolution there were wars of the States, to prevent the feudal regime from being restored from abroad, and then to attack it at home; will the proletarian revolution present a similar process?

A first attempted application of this hypothesis was even made by the Russian opportunists after the fall of the Czar in February, and the first revolution which brought the bourgeois democratic parties to power; they pretended that proletarian opposition to the anti-German war would cease. We showed how the Bolsheviks liquidated that trap. But the problem arose again when the Bolsheviks took power and the German army advanced with the purpose of overthrowing the revolution. On that occasion Lenin fought the “leftist” thesis of Bukharin, who was passionately for the revolutionary war; he explained that a reactionary war had been inherited and it had to be liquidated by leveraging German proletarian defeatism. Red Russia apparently knelt down with the famous peace of Brest-Litovsk, but German militarism soon collapsed: the Ludendorffs admitted that it was for internal political reasons that, after considerable strategic successes, they saw the Western front destroyed in November 1918, and had to capitulate without the enemies having won a major battle or violated the German border.

Only the imbeciles circulating today, however, can attribute to Lenin the definition of provocative to the theory of revolutionary war. Lenin in principle never ruled out its historical possibility: between 1918 and 1920 Russia waged authentic revolutionary wars, both defensive against foreign invasions led by the French and the British, and a war of aggression against White and bourgeois Poland.

But the undoubtedly Leninist theory of revolutionary war entails these conditions: that there be an effectively proletarian State – that it be led by a red army as Lenin announced it at the Second Moscow Congress: proletarian armies arise everywhere, and the communists of all countries work to form one army!

Given these conditions, the revolutionary war is not only possible, but it is “legitimate”, since it coincides with the world civil war, and it can arise as resistance to a capitalist invasion in the proletarian country, as well as and above all – and only then will its victory be possible – as a war of attack on world capitalism.

The wars of the States for the national settlement were revolutionary for the victory of the bourgeoisie, insofar as this class, economically and socially, is conditioned by national independence – a war can be revolutionary for the victory of the proletariat, insofar as the war, economically and socially, is conditioned by internationalism.

However, we have a third “type” of war, in which, in the light of Marx’s and Lenin’s method, is, as in the other two, fallacious and counter-revolutionary to apply the criterion of “defencism”.

We have gone through the second world war, and it has been pretended not to identify it with the “imperialist” type; and to “justify” it as a war against Germany and its allies. At the same time it was labeled as a war of the first type, of “national liberation”, and as a war of the third type: proletarian and revolutionary. The Stalinists have pretended, in both falsifications, to be always followers of Marxism-Leninism, and at the same time they have made common use of the defencist argument, claiming that it was a matter of repelling Germanic aggression.

Now, any other Marxist classification which isn’t exactly just that of the Second World Imperialist War immediately falls into absurdity, for reasons even more powerful than those which, in the critique of the First War, made the progressive and the defencist explanations put forward by the social-patriots of the various countries fall.

Judging it as a war of national liberation? Those wars had been considered progressive by the Marxists

because and only because they were a necessary step towards the diffusion of capitalist production and the abolition of feudal bonds and institutions. This argument has nothing to do with a generic acceptance and worse apology of the alleged conquests of the bourgeoisie revolution on the juridical level, such as liberty, democracy, equality of citizens, already disqualified by proletarian socialism since its first formulations. Now, if Mussolini and Hitler had undermined those vaunted conquests, they had not thereby overturned social history by fifty years, and not only had they not eliminated, but they had no intention of eliminating industries, machines, railways, banks and all the rest of the capitalist productive apparatus; rather, they had exalted its cycle, which we have long known to be beastly and slaver. Pure buffoonery then, to apply to Mussolini what was applied to Napoleon III, to Hitler what was applied to the Czar. Therefore, if it was necessary to apply defeatism to the wars of these leaders, it is not necessary to approve and support the wars of their enemy governments.

Judging it as a defensive war? We have seen that this criterion never guided the non-traitor Marxists. If, for a moment, in Italy in 1922 and in Germany in 1933, “the Middle Ages had been put back in power” and a new risorgimento was necessary, a hypothesis for pissing hens, then the offensive would have been sacrosanct.

It was said that it was Hitler who attacked Poland through Danzig, after a series of overwhelming of Austria and Czechoslovakia “tolerated” by the British and French. Why, then, if the defense and independence of nations is paramount and sacred, did the Russian army not move against the German one, and instead promptly moved against the Poles in agreement with the invader for a partition?

Judging it as a proletarian war? In order to keep up such a lie, it would be necessary to admit that the regimes of France, England and America, bourgeois capitalists and imperialists at the time of the First War and of Lenin, as well as bourgeois and imperialists still today in 1951, had had a strange parenthesis, not from 1939, but from 1941 to 1945, and had committed all their industrial and military potential to spread the socialist regime in the world, preventing the Germans from bringing it down!

Today the Stalinists recognize that the policy of American capitalism, not only against Asia but also against Europe, is a policy of imperial aggression, and they prove it with the same arguments that allowed us to establish it in Wilson’s time against the lie of the just war and the league for peace. Lenin’s writings, always quoted by us, are searched on the distant origins of the conquering imperialism of the United States, from 1898 onward, the last but most tremendous in the series of imperialisms of the white peoples. After Lenin’s death, would these basic characteristics, linked to a deep, long economic and social process of the American productive machine, have allowed an intermediate phase of struggle for freedom, for the repression of aggressors, even for the defense of the socialist country?

Nothing, absolutely nothing, can be invoked in the socialist and Marxist field to artfully attribute to the second world war a character like those of the progressive bourgeois wars prior to 1871. It was an open imperialist war. Every effort to create within the bourgeois States a solidarity of war with the governments of one of the camps was an irreparable counter-revolutionary effort, an irrevocable conferral of potential to the powers of the imperialist victors.

The misunderstanding about the deployment of the Russian State, although it can be explained by the influence of the traditions of Lenin’s revolution among the masses all over the world, had no other effect than to aggravate the crumbling of the revolutionary potential, if compared to what the solidarity of the first world war produced.

This second wave of opportunism cannot be sustained by the adulteration of Marxist traditions about “useful” wars. It could not but fall back into the most despicable pre-Leninism, and it did so by bringing to the forefront the expedient of defencist hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy to which only another is equal: the pacifist one.