

The International Communist Party

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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 manoeuvrings

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Immigrant Worker Revolt Rips Across Los Angeles

On June 6, 2025 Los Angeles was the scene of a significant spontaneous proletarian revolt. Following an escalation of ICE raids as part of a federal directive aimed at increasing daily arrests to 3,000, the repressive forces of the bourgeois state launched provocative militarized operations against proletarian neighborhoods inhabited mainly by immigrant workers from Latin America across the city, breaking legal norms regulating federal authority and repudiating the local left bourgeois “Sanctuary City” policies aimed at limiting cooperation with federal immigration agencies.

Despite the Democrats rhetoric which always glorifies such piecemeal policies as realistic and reasonable steps towards future meaningful change, these alleged “Sanctuary” policies, masked as progressive multi-culturalism, in practice do very little to stop ICE agents who have facilities and capabilities to operate independently in all such cities, maintaining the constant threat of deportation in the minds of immigrant workers while capital continues to lure in large pools of undocumented labor to cities across the Southwest to be exploited whenever it's agricultural, construction and hospitality sectors pine for more immigrants to exploit. These local policies which in reality never actually offer much protections or legal guarantees from federal authorities, are consistently matched with the Democratic Party's own quiet continuity with Republican immigration policy whenever they return to power in the federal government. Despite the Democrats attempt to cast themselves as the defender and advocates for the immigrants, the false democratic opposition is exposed as the federal forces arrived on the scene in Los Angeles, as local and state authorities offered only flaccid statements of democratic and anti-fascist sentimentality leaving it to the proletariat alone to defend itself.

By early May, 239 undocumented migrants had already been captured. ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and DHS (Department of Homeland Security) agents raided construction sites, warehouses, and public spaces such as Home Depot parking lots targeting day laborers. In one raid alone 44 workers were arrested at a clothing warehouse. Over the course of the day another 77 were captured throughout Los Angeles. As the arrests tore families apart, dragging terrified mothers away from their daughters, throwing parents into steel cages and leaving many children forgotten on the streets, friends, family members and co-workers took defiant action motivated by a combative feeling of solidarity. Protests broke out, small at first, then growing larger and larger. In an explosion of proletarian energy, unorganized youth and workers, along with union members, took to the streets. Many of these demonstrations often began with groups of teenagers not connected with established leftist groups or currents and quickly grew into street clashes with well-armed and equipped state authorities. Unlike the student protests of the last two years against the war in Gaza, which took place mainly on university campuses affiliated with various activist tendencies and always quickly dispersed in the face of state repression, these protests had their roots in the spontaneous resistance of the proletariat.

Early on, the Los Angeles head of the SEIU union, David Huerta, was injured and arrested while blocking the entrance to a workplace to prevent ICE vehicles from leaving with seized workers. In response to this and other confrontations, the demonstrations quickly turned violent in the days that followed, with the Federal Building in the city center becoming one of the hotspots of the demonstrations, along with the Home Depot in Paramount. Traffic on the 101 freeway was stopped. Workers also tried to physically prevent ICE agents from making arrests by throwing objects and trying to block vehicles carrying immigrants. At a clothing warehouse, a crowd surrounded black SUVs and other vehicles, trying to prevent them from leaving, forcing agents to use flash-bang grenades to disperse them. In subsequent clashes many police vehicles and surveillance systems were destroyed.

As the unrest grew, 2,000 National Guard troops were deployed to Los Angeles on that Saturday, followed by another 2,000 on Monday and 700 Marines. This move bypassed the usual protocol of a governor's request, with the president invoking a little-known law called Title 10, arguing that the protests constituted “a form of insurrection.” But the legal justification for deploying the active military has not yet been worked out, as it likely violates the Posse Comitatus Act, an 1878 federal law that the bourgeoisie has not been willing to trample on in the past. The governor of California and the mayor of Los Angeles, both Democrats, condemned the deployment and were subsequently threatened with arrest by the federal government which did little to change their plans of doing nothing tangible about the intrusion regardless.

As ranks of Marines and National Guards occupied street corners across Los Angeles, curfews were implemented and a strict regulation of proletarian movement across the city implemented. The workers were not quickly intimidated by the curfews, tear gas, police and military presence they faced. In fact, the imposition of this quasi-martial law and repression made it easy to see that the class dictatorship will always abandon its liberal mask of “justice” and “the rule of law” when the profitability of its capital is threatened. The grandiosity of the deployment by the state was a well measured response that the ruling class showed they were willing and able to make and one

that workers will now have to anticipate in any place where masses take to the streets in combative opposition to the repressive policies of the capitalist state. This show of force is meant to further discipline and demoralize labor and relocate its expendable wage slaves according to the changing needs of accumulation; however, we should see in the upsurge an energetic spark signalling the potential of future developments and maturation of the workers' defensive struggle.

The deepening crisis of capitalism is forcing the regime of capital to intensify the extraction of surplus value from wage labor, reducing the most vulnerable sectors of the working class, such as immigrants, to conditions of hyper-exploitation by brutally crushing their ability to organize amongst themselves. To administer this brutality, the bourgeois state mobilizes its apparatus of coercive forces, in keeping with its historical role as the armed guardian of capital accumulation. As such exploited immigrant labor desperately need the wider class solidarity of the working masses to unite their forces in joint strike action to stop these attacks as they are not merely attacks on immigrants but an assault on the entire working class that menaces to set the stage for the capitalist state intent on organizing to defend itself and the property regime, amid the continual plunge of the working masses into ever greater immiseration and exploitation.

While the outbreak of spontaneous proletarian response in the streets disrupted the repressive activities of the bourgeois state for a time and shatters the veneer of social peace, such protests must develop into collectively coordinated labor action to deprive Capital of it of its surplus value life blood, starving in order to force the enemy to make real concessions on workers demands, grinding down its profit accumulation for a time, something street riots and protests can not accomplish on their own.

The Immigrant Face of the Proletariat

Undocumented immigrant workers are the most exploited section of the working class in the United States. Concentrated in sectors where work is long, poorly paid, and physically grueling, they are essential to the functioning of capital, but are deprived of even the most basic social protections. Their legal precariousness is a deliberate mechanism of class discipline to ensure they constantly toil under fear of being exposed to the authorities by the employers. The ever-present fear of ICE raids and indefinite detention serves as a repressive and preventive tool against strikes, to prevent collective action and keep wages low.

As the crisis of capital profitability worsens, the bourgeoisie therefore resorts to terror to manage the working class. Deportation campaigns, raids, and detentions are not aimed at completely eliminating the undocumented which forms a large bulk of the workforces in agricultural, construction and hospitality industries, but at preventing this section of the working class from openly organizing for it's common defense and reducing its relative size to the wage-labor needs of capital. The arrest of agricultural workers' union leaders in New York, the detention of an immigrant unionist in Tacoma, and the targeting of immigrant neighborhoods with operations such as “Return to Sender” are all part of an effort to squeeze more surplus value out of immigrant workers by pervading their ranks with fear and attacking their existing union structures.

Organize to Defend Immediate Needs

No appeal to humanitarian norms will defend immigrant workers from the exploitative needs of capital which it fulfills with violent coercion. The intensification of the deportation campaigns and the arrest of union organizers are widespread abuses and only one of capital's responses to the approaching crisis it is facing. Attempts to appeal to “human rights,” legal reforms, or interclass coalitions only serve to obscure the true nature of the conflict and divert the working class from its tasks toward dead ends.

Legislative strategies and appeals to the sympathies of the left bourgeois parties neutralize proletarian strength by tying it to the bourgeois order. As long as the dictatorship of capital remains intact, supported by its prisons, armies, and laws, every reform won is always temporary, every legal protection is revocable. The immigrant proletariat is at the forefront of a repression that will ultimately reach all sectors of the working class.

The current attacks, deportations, incarceration, martial law in the cities, are preparatory maneuvers for the more serious crises to come: economic collapse and inter-imperialist war. In this context, only class-based union organization, uniting native and immigrant workers, can offer a real path of defense.

When spontaneous uprisings occur, which are to be welcomed as positive expressions of proletarian anger, the working class must seek to raise them to the level of an organized movement of strikes that are as widespread as possible.

In response to these workplace raids for the purposes of deportation of immigrant workers and arrest of union militants, the International Communist Party urges all workers to build up the class-union movement and use the weapon of the strike on a workplace and territorial basis

In Los Angeles, if there had already been a sufficiently mature and strong class-based trade union movement, the raids should have been met with a general strike in support of the revolt. We communists are fighting for this goal, for which we call on all militants of class-based trade unionism to unite and fight. Workers who find themselves outside of the established unions must work to establish territorial assemblies and councils amid such revolts to organize mobilize the collective labor power of wide sections of the workers into generalized economic action which can grind to a halt, even if temporary, the organs of surplus value extraction for capital, forcing its state to capitulate on workers demands to end the deportations.

The young proletarians who took to the streets to fight the police must discover the great strength of the workers' movement, and the class-based trade union movement must once again draw on the vital forces of the young proletariat to wield the weapon of the strike.

Local resistance must give way to a national and international class-based trade union, tempered by struggle, which aims not at parliamentary changes but at the concrete goals of the working class: substantial wage increases, especially for the lowest paid; a reduction in the working day with no loss of pay; full wages for workers laid off at the expense of the bosses and their state. We reject “national solidarity” and raise the banner of proletarian internationalism: the only banner under which the working class can win.

Chinese Workers Rise Amid Imperial Banditry

In the midst of the “trade war” between the world's two dominant imperialisms, the US Treasury Secretary made a trip to Beijing in the spring of 2025. A so-called “truce” was then negotiated in early June, resulting in much higher US tariffs on China and lower Chinese tariffs than those in place before January, when the new American government took office. Framed as an effort to accomplish fair terms for the U.S., these trade negotiations were in reality an act of gunboat diplomacy by US finance capital to subordinate the Chinese capitalist class which is currently grappling with an increasingly serious crisis. In the foreground of the talks a bubbling workers movement has begun to organize itself outside the official Chinese regime union structure taking independent combative action, representing a potential prelude to the future resurgence of the mass class struggle.

The Tariff's Economic Consequence in China

In mid-2025, U.S. tariffs, peaking at 145% before settling near 30%, triggered a sharp contraction in China's export-driven manufacturing sector, with official data showing factory output growth slowing to 5.8% in May, the weakest in six months, and exports to the U.S. plunging by 34.5% year-on-year. According to Reuters, estimated industrial job losses remain between 4 to 6 million despite the tariff rollback, with economists warning that these trade measures could cut China's annual GDP growth by up to 1.6 percentage points. At the same time, the country's protracted real estate crisis continues to drag down broader economic recovery. Real estate investment declined 10.7% from January to May, new-home prices fell in 70 major cities, and unsold housing stock reached 391 million square meters. Together, with the tariffs, these shocks have led to widespread factory closures, including in electronics and textile sectors, mass layoffs, delayed wages, and rising protests, particularly in provinces already devastated by collapsed property markets like Henan and Hebei.

In this context under the pretext of “normalizing trade,” the U.S. Treasury Secretary presented the now usual list of US demands to China: increased purchases of US Treasury securities to finance the US budget deficit, dismantling of state subsidies protecting Chinese industrial capital, and forced opening of national financial markets to US companies. While officially settling for a reduction in the Chinese tariff on U.S. goods and tolerance for an increased U.S. tariff on Chinese goods, China has so far halted its sell off of U.S. debts that it started in March and April. The framework for these demands, the so-called Mar-a-Lago Accord, as we reported in TICP 63 is nothing more than a modernized system of tribute and a continuance by other means of the same old same old imperialist brigandry.

Rising Worker Combativity in China

While U.S. and Chinese officials spoke of finance and diplomacy, the reality behind their words was fear, of both economic collapse and the ever looming potential for such a crisis to result in a proletarian eruption from the industrial foundations of China. In recent years the Chinese labor movement has seen increasing activity. According to the China Labor Bulletin, there were 434 factory strikes in 2023, a dramatic increase compared to 2022 when only 37 occurred and only 66 in 2021. In 2024 the trend continued to grow with China Labor Bulletin (CLB) recording 1,509 labor protests/strikes, including 719 in just the first half of the year, indicating relatively sustained high

levels of unrest. Between January and April of this year CLB reported that approximately 540 incidents were recorded, with 171 strikes in January alone.

The upward trend of strike activity has only continued. As a result of the tariffs and factory closures, from April until the writing of this article in June, China has been the scene of escalating proletarian dissent and independent collective action organized outside the states domineering regime union structure. On April 24, hundreds of workers of Guangxin Sports Goods in Dao county went on strike after the company's factory was shut down without paying employees their compensation or their social security benefits. Workers struck in the Shangda Electronics' factory that manufactures circuit boards, after not being paid wages since the start of the year and social security benefits for nearly two years. On April 28, a large-scale workers' protest broke out in Wuzhen, eastern China, over wages that have been reportedly unpaid since January where over a thousand went to the town hall to protest and a dozen were arrested. Workers at Yunda Express in Chengdu, Dongguan and Dao County went on strike and took to the streets against factory closures. Workers' protests also took place in the autonomous region of Inner Mongolia, against the non-payment of wages. In the southwestern province of Sichuan, a textile factory was set on fire over unpaid wages, preceding the fire, affected workers had staged vigils, filed wage claims and protest sit-ins, decrying the absence of legal recourse, but state enforcement remained absent until the extreme act of arson forced their plight into the public eye, generating a viral response across Chinese social media. Online platforms quickly dubbed the arsonist “Brother 800,” with thousands of posts expressing sympathy, calling his act a desperate “lesson for exploitative bosses,” and condemning delayed wage enforcement, though authorities later labeled the “800 yuan” narrative a rumor.

Thousands of workers at the BYD electric automobile factory went on strike following one of the largest union actions in China's recent history. In early April, around 1,000–2,000 workers at BYD's Wuxi and Chengdu electronics plants went on strike to oppose a series of economic attacks by the company: performance-based pay was slashed, & overtime was forbidden, reducing total earnings by roughly 40–50%. The strike represented a development in Chinese workers militancy, in that it was coordinated between two factories over 1000 kilometers apart. Numerically it was much larger than the typical strikes which tend to involve only a few hundred workers focused on local issues pertaining to a single workplace accepting quiet back room deals. Instead, this strike openly refused management's offer of closed-door delegate negotiations, and instead pressured BYD for mass, open talks. Thus workers signaled a strategic shift toward unified action and class combativity operating outside of the company and state controlled regime union structure of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU). The character of the strike underscores growing militancy and networks of solidarity across factory sites which have raised alarms for the company and government. CCP authorities responded with SWAT raids, mass arrests, and intimidation to prevent broader labor mobilization. In the face of state repression, these strikes may mark the emergence of a qualitatively new phase in the Chinese labor movement, more confrontational, collective, and politically aware than previous industrial disputes.

The all pervasive ACFTU union remains China's only legally sanctioned union. It is the largest trade union in the world with 302 million members in 1,713,000 primary trade union organizations. The CCP exerts significant control over the ACFTU, particularly through the appointment of officials at regional and national levels. As with all regime unions it prioritizes containment of worker unrest, snuffing out strike action while subordinating the workers to the interest of the national capital. Thus the current wave of Chinese worker strikes that operate completely outside the established regime union, demonstrates a notable development for the independent class struggle of the Chinese workers.

At the same time, demonstrating the depth of the social crisis, other sections of the petty bourgeoisie, homeowners and shopkeepers, have protested in front of local offices, blocking highways and occupying construction sites, as the financial and real estate crisis worsens.

The Regime Union & CPoC Response

The Chinese capitalist class, unable to resolve the crisis, has so far responded with state violence. Protesters are beaten, arrested, and disappeared. Amid the mounting repression, Hong Kong based Chinese Labor Bulletin which has for years reported on the developing Chinese labor movement mysteriously shut down operations starting on June 12 that it “can no longer maintain operations”, closing its website and social media.

The All-China Federation of Trade Unions has echoed Chinese Communist Party leadership by emphasizing the need for “harmonious labor relations,” wage negotiation mechanisms, and workplace stability, particularly as it marked its 100th anniversary in April. While it has formally ignored directly commenting on the strikes in official comments, along with top CCP officials it has warned of “mounting employment pressures” and stressed

that “jobs are the foundation of social stability” in recent public statements. Recently, ACFTU has also promoted state-guided collective bargaining reforms in provinces like Guangdong, feigned as democratization measures, while simultaneously working to defuse strikes or mass worker mobilizations.

The rising proletarian activity is not a collection of isolated incidents, but the initial pangs of the working masses spontaneous return to class struggle, albeit not yet led by its party with its program of action, not yet organized within class unions, but already appearing again onto the historical scene with barricades, fists, and fire spreading throughout the world at the onset of the looming economic cataclysm of capital and it's future inter-imperialist war. The American bourgeoisie watches with concern and calculation. Trump claimed to have struck a “quick deal” with China to “save them from what I thought was going to be a very bad situation.” The harsh tariffs were not partially revoked out of generosity, but because adequate concessions were made to shore up U.S. financial dominance while simultaneously balancing the reality that behind all of the U.S. maneuvers to destabilize the CCP it is tempered by the risk of inadvertently breathing life into a renewed class militancy within the Chinese working class who toil within the world's preeminent industrial power house.

The ruling classes in the East and West understand each other perfectly. What terrifies them most is not war between nations, which they actually desire as the only way to save their rule and privileges, but war between classes, as the only sure way to their defeat and end. The fear of rebellious workers unites them across borders, and for the bourgeoisie, this international unity finds no better expression than in sending the proletarians of their respective countries to slaughter each other in war. The bourgeoisie will vacillate between tariffs and treaties, between concessions and repression, but it will not be able to resolve the contradiction it carries within itself.

The proletarian masses in China and throughout the world are not yet organized, they are not yet armed with their program or their party, and they remain dominated, as everywhere else in the world, by the bourgeois state apparatus that fits them like a glove, acting in China as the last garment of the Stalinist betrayal of the global proletariat. But the working class movement is still on a historical course for the horizon traced by Marx, for the goal that the communist left has never abandoned: the dictatorship of the proletariat, the abolition of wage labor and the obliteration of class society. Until then, every embassy meeting, every Treasury mission, every bill or trade agreement is nothing but a delaying tactic, a scaffold erected on top of a volcano.

The Big Beautiful Bill Financed by Saudi Tribute

On May 16, 2025, Moody's became the last of the major rating agencies to downgrade U.S. sovereign credit from AAA to AA. A move triggered by the House of Representatives passage of a \$1 trillion “One Big Beautiful Bill”, a sprawling package that is estimated to add \$2.4 - 3.8 trillion to the national debt over a decade, raising federal deficits to around 9% of GDP by 2035. Against this backdrop, President Trump visited Saudi Arabia in May 2025, returning with pledges from the Saudi Public Investment Fund totaling \$12 billion in part of a broader \$600 billion Saudi commitment across U.S. defense, AI, and infrastructure, including a record-setting \$142 billion arms deal. Trump claimed these deals would “boost GDP” and thus improve the U.S. debt ratio in an attempt to bolster confidence to ensure the passage of his spending bill in congress. American finance capital, having reached the limits of accumulation, must work to maintain the appearance and strength in order to continue to enlarge it's debts, to ensure “consumer confidence” in the glass house of speculation. Thus to back up its growing pool of fictitious capital it can only offer what remains under its control: its army, its currency, and its willingness to crush rebellion wherever it arises.

The Bourgeois State Tightens Its Belt

Behind the rhetorical carnival in Congress of “tax relief”, the so-called One Big Beautiful Bill is another indication of desperate move by U.S. capital to reallocate its funds towards increased war production clipping away elements of its state agencies mostly necessary for disciplining and funding its reserve army and putting the funds towards its military which now must be put to the work of disciplining this mass. The bill makes permanent the tax cuts of 2017 and slashes the minuscule government welfare programs still in existence. It introduces work requirements for unemployment benefits and stricter verification. It is expected to drop 8–10 million people from Medicaid by 2034. Simultaneously, it abolishes green energy subsidies as the U.S. detaches itself from the Chinese controlled EV supply lines. Artificial intelligence capital is granted a ten-year moratorium on state-level regulation. At the same time, an additional \$150 billion are allocated to military expansion, and \$70 billion to border enforcement, confirming that what is taken from proletarian exploitation is

redirected to proletarian repression.

The reallocation of funds follows the classic arc of capitalist crisis management: withdraw from unproductive outlays on labor reproduction, and expand expenditures on the instruments of coercion and war. Social programs are cut not because capital no longer needs to buy-off masses of workers, but because it can no longer afford to in the same manner it used to. The budget's increases in weapons systems, border fortifications, and police militarization are not a response to external threats, but to capital's own internal economic contradictions that drive it to attempt to maintain profit margins by investing in war industries as an outlet for increasing production while maintaining the social basis for wage-labor by restricting the abundance of real use-values which could free humanity from want and toil. Thus every dollar denied to a hungry child is increasingly converted into a drone, a surveillance node, or a concrete cell.

U.S. Finance & Its Reliable Saudi Tribute

It was in this context that Trump's delegation traveled to Riyadh to meet with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the heads of the economic organs of the Saudi monarchy and its oil monopoly. The Riyadh summit, framed in the press as an investment dialogue, was in reality the continuation of Saudi imperialist subordination to U.S. finance under the exchange of U.S. security guarantees for control of Saudi oil surpluses as U.S. imperialism makes its rounds doing its dirty work of divide and conquer, breaking up rival blocs and ensuring the supplication of its subordinates by leveraging its "security guarantees" to counteract the unraveling of the economic basis of the former petro-dollar system. The American delegation composed not of diplomats but of finance capital's technicians of accumulation: Elon Musk (Tesla, SpaceX), Sam Altman (OpenAI), Larry Fink (BlackRock), Andy Jassy (Amazon), along with leaders of DataVolt, Nvidia, AMD, Citigroup, Palantir, and others secured from the Saudi monarchy a pledge of \$600 billion in capital, to be distributed across defense, energy, AI, and logistics. This transfer, camouflaged as partnership, was payment for the enforcement of imperial order: protection of oil routes, crushing of Yemeni insurgency, and the continued integration of Gulf capital into the U.S. military-industrial complex. It was not a deal between states, but a settlement between factions of the world bourgeoisie, dividing among themselves the labor and blood of others.

The Saudi demand, formalized in Riyadh and accepted without objection, was clear- the neutralization of the Houthis threat to Red Sea commerce. In the weeks leading up to the summit, American warships intensified their presence in the Bab el-Mandeb strait, drone strikes resumed, and joint Saudi-U.S. operations targeted Yemeni infrastructure. These actions are not merely military strategies; they are the contractual enforcement of imperial subordination. Saudi capital is rendered to Washington; in return, Washington supplies firepower to extinguish disruptions to global circulation within its finance bloc. The proletarians of Yemen crushed by their own bourgeois Parties, like those of Gaza, Israel, or Los Angeles, find themselves crushed beneath a system which recognizes only one logic: uninterrupted valorization.

Cycles of Overproduction & The Inevitable Revolutionary Cataclysm

The overproduction crisis is a central element in driving capitalism to war, while also providing the social basis for the re-emergence of class struggle on a mass scale and eventually creating the objective conditions for proletarian revolution. In *Theories of Surplus Value*, Marx demonstrated that the more developed capital becomes, the more it displaces productive labor with unproductive functions. Capitalist competition drives each capitalist to expand output by reducing labor costs through technical innovation and attacking workers wages, thereby flooding the market with commodities while simultaneously driving down the masses of workers' ability to realize the value of these commodities through consumption. Productivity rises, labor time per unit falls, and the value of individual commodities drops, monopoly and cartel associations between employers ultimately have to be established to regulate production; however, over time the industrialization of other parts of the world and the existence of the world market leads to the return of imperialist rivalries and the breaking of the old national capital monopolies blocks on particular areas of production. This leads to recurrent crises of overproduction, moments when the mass of commodities exceeds the capacity of the market to realize them at profitable prices.

The Two Departments of Capitalist Production

Marx divided the capitalist economy into two basic departments:

Department I: Production of means of production (machinery, tools, raw materials).

Department II: Production of means of consumption (consumer goods).

Crucially, crises arise not only in consumer markets (Department II) but also in the domain of capital goods (Department I). When commodities in Department II cannot be profitably sold due to the impoverishment of workers, demand for the capital goods used to produce them also falls. A general contraction ensues, as both departments lose coherence. Department I begins to generate vast surpluses of unused machinery and overbuilt infrastructure, which cannot be employed profitably. Thus, overproduction is not merely a symptom of insufficient consumption, but a systemic dislocation between the intertwined processes of accumulation, realization, and reproduction across both sectors.

As the contradiction between growing productive capacity and shrinking realizable value sharpens, capital flees from the production of real value into the world of fictitious capital. Stock markets, derivatives, securitized debts, and other speculative instruments allow capital to circulate in search of monetary returns divorced from surplus value production. These mechanisms, however, are parasitic on value actually generated in production and thus cannot sustain themselves indefinitely. The inevitable collapse of these

financial superstructures leads to widespread devaluation of capital, bankruptcies, mass layoffs, and destruction of means of production through war paving the way for a new round of accumulation on a higher technical basis.

In the epoch of imperialism, monopolies dominate key sectors, and finance capital with its subordinate industrial monopolies fuses with the state. Unable to generate sufficient profits from production alone, capital attacks wages to inflate margins. But since the working class is also the main consumer class, this strategy reduces the effective demand needed to realize commodities. To offset falling profits, capital attempts to extract superprofits by offshoring production to low-wage regions and exploiting exchange rate differences between national labor markets. At the same time, it relies on higher-paid workers in imperialist countries to absorb these cheap goods.

Repression and Recomposition in Crisis

Within the overproduction crisis, when produced goods no longer can have their value realized smoothly, and speculative finance reaches its limits, capital begins a campaign of austerity. It slashes funding for public services, devalues wages, and lays off vast numbers of unproductive workers in the name of "fiscal discipline." What began as speculative excess turns into real devastation, a generalized devaluation of labor power and industrial capital. As this point approaches, state spending is increasingly reoriented toward militarism. The arms industry becomes one of the last resorts to stabilize the capitalist mode of production, capable of absorbing surplus capital while destroying it. War, whether inter-capitalist or imperialist, becomes the violent "solution" to crisis by annihilating human lives and productive forces, it clears the ground for a new cycle of accumulation.

Each phase of overproduction, stagnation, and crisis reproduces not only the contradictions of capital, but also the social basis for its supersession. The working class, though fragmented into various strata productive and unproductive, better paid and pauperized, remains unified by its separation from the means of production and its dependence on the wage. Communists recognize no division between industrial and service workers, between private and public sector employees, between productive and unproductive laborers in terms of their revolutionary potential.

The parasitical rentier bourgeoisie, its financial tentacles and its murderous state must be smashed. The labor aristocracy must be won back to class consciousness, and unproductive workers must be organized alongside all proletarians into a unified class union front. In the next generalized overproduction crisis, the decisive task is the formation of a single international communist party, leading the international proletariat under the slogan of revolutionary defeatism in opposition to the looming inter-imperialist war, and the inauguration of the dictatorship of the proletariat upon the successful international class civil war.

U.S. Capital's Immigrant Labor Reserve Army Problem

"The industrial reserve army, during the periods of stagnation and average activity, weighs down the active labor-army; during the period of overproduction and paroxysm, it holds in check their pretensions. Relative surplus population is therefore the background against which the law of the supply and demand of labor does its work." — Capital, Vol. I, Chapter 25, Section 4

The current attacks on immigrant workers has little to do with the fascistic sentiments of individual politicians and instead is rooted in the labor demands of the crisis ridden capitalist system for which they are merely its pawns. Regardless of the nationalist mythologies of the liberal bourgeois of the United States as a "country of immigrants" the immigration policy has always been set by the labor demands of capital. Regardless of the millions of devastated proletarian lives it leaves in its wake, both left and right bourgeois politicians do their jobs to ensure the ruthless exploitation of these most vulnerable workers and to regulate and ensure the maintenance of the capital's reserve army of labor.

The reserve army of labor is the surplus population of unemployed, underemployed, and often immigrant workers that exists within all capitalist societies. Marx explains that the reserve army of labor is necessary to capitalism because it allows capital to regulate wages, discipline employed workers, and ensure a constant, flexible supply of labor that can be expanded or contracted according to the needs of accumulation, without this reserve army capital cannot function. Yet the reserve army of labor serves a contradictory role in capitalism. While it disciplines employed workers by threatening them with replacement, it also expands consistently due to productivity gains which cast the newly unemployed into the reserve army, and can take great leaps during capitalist crises due to mass unemployment which in turn creates mass immiseration, and shared conditions of poverty in the face of splendor for the ruling class, that lay the basis for proletarian revolt, and at a certain stage revolution led by its class political party. Marx showed that the very surplus population used to stabilize capital's domination can, when made desperate enough, become the force that confronts it. So for the capitalist class, the proper regulation of its reserve army is not just a matter of economic necessity but in the last act it becomes a balancing game and a tightrope they must walk between life and death.

Marx divided the reserve army of labor into four main layers: the floating population consists of recently unemployed workers who cycle in and out of jobs based on business needs, often including skilled industrial workers displaced by technological changes or shifting demand. The latent population which includes rural and marginalized groups not yet fully proletarianized but available for exploitation as capital expands. The stagnant reserve comprises underemployed, precarious, and super-exploited workers stuck in irregular, low-wage work most typically including immigrants. The pauperized strata form the most destitute group, often completely outside regular employment, homeless populations, disabled workers unable to find steady work or criminals surviving through illicit means. Together, these

layers allow capital to regulate wages, discipline the workforce, and maintain a flexible surplus labor pool for its shifting needs.

However, the costs to the capitalist of maintaining a domestic reserve army are not non-existent as it requires all four layers to some degree and not all can be constantly employed in conditions of hyper-exploitation. Engels elaborates on this in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845), "The support of the surplus population, the cost of maintaining the unemployed, is naturally shifted onto the working class itself or the public, that is, the capitalist class as a whole... [which pays] as little as possible, and that only when compelled by unrest or fear of rebellion..." For capital it is caught in a contradiction, it needs the surplus population, its reserve army, to put a downward pressure on wages and discipline labor allowing for conditions of increased and hyper-exploitation, while at once it must pay out of its own revenues to sustain this surplus population in some minimal way or face the potential for their revolt. Likewise, the extension of the reserve army and their pauperization continues to risk for capital that the blame for social crisis will be correctly identified with the mode of production itself and not superfluous explanations. Thus for capital, financing a properly disciplined reserve army in appropriate proportion to the employed mass of workers is essential but ultimately futile as the overproduction crisis develops and this surplus population grows while its ability to fund social programs declines.

These underlying realities are behind the fictitious dance between the two bourgeois parties who mask the immigration issue as a joust between the defenders of either altruistic multiculturalism or national security. In the end, it is always the labor needs of capital which prevail in policy, serving as a critical weapon to attack the working class and maintain its discipline in times of splendor and crisis. Capital will thus increase immigration to undercut domestic organized labor and decrease it in times of economic slowdown, in order to avoid further stagnation and revolt when capitalist production faces increasing pressure to meet the real subsistence needs of the masses. It is a policy that will not be changed or combatted via legislative action, and ineffectual street protests, but only through the combined organization of all workers regardless of national origins or industry into collective strike action and the organization of the future international class union, to defend their respective working and living standards, with a focus on the most exploited layers of workers.

The Immigrant Reserve Army Through History

We only need to look at history to see the recurring pattern. In the early to mid-19th century, U.S. capital encouraged German & Irish immigration to supply cheap labor for its expanding canals, railroads, textiles, and manufacturing. These workers were recruited to undercut the rising demands of native-born artisans and mechanics, many of whom were organizing early trade unions and strikes for higher wages. Following the Panic of 1857, national unemployment is estimated to have reached 8-10%, being as high as 25% in some cities. Subsequently, a rise in anti-Irish pauper laws and anti-German political repression emerged in cities across the country to reduce immigration alongside the nativist Know-Nothing movement.

At the close of the Civil War booming Westward railroad construction, mining, and agricultural development led to growing demand for labor and enlarging union activity across the country. Subsequently came the mass recruitment of Chinese laborers by railroad companies under restrictive contracts to undercut domestic unions. With the onset of the financial Panic of 1873, unemployment grew to 14-18%, class antagonisms sharpened, and the Chinese immigrant labor force served as a racialized buffer, used by capital during the boom to cheapen wages, and then demonized during the bust to deflect class anger, culminating in the first federal legislation restricting immigration the Page Act in 1875.

During industrial expansion in the late 19th century, the federal government encouraged mass immigration of Southern Europeans to fuel factory growth; between 1880 and 1920, over 23 million immigrants arrived, supplying cheap labor to rapidly expanding industries. Yet the economic slump that followed the First World War led to a sharp recession in 1920-1921, with Industrial output falling by nearly 23%, unemployment soaring to 11.7% in 1921. Immigration was thus sharply restricted through measures like the Emergency Quota Act of 1921 and the Immigration Act of 1924.

Between 1900 and 1930, railroad, mining, and agricultural corporations in the Southwest began intensively recruiting Mexican workers, leading to over 1 million Mexicans moving to the country. They became the primary source of low-wage labor in the Southwest, dominating sugar beet farms, citrus fields, and rail lines. During the Depression when unemployment soared to between 15-25% and demand for labor sharply declined and between 500,000 and 1 million Mexicans were deported, an estimated 40-60% were U.S. citizens, primarily children born to Mexican immigrant parents.

Yet, once World War 2 began and military enlistments grew, the capital once again found itself starved for Mexican labor. Thus with the Bracero Program from 1942-64, the U.S. signed an agreement with Mexico to import temporary agricultural workers. Over 4.6 million contracts were issued, mainly in California and the Southwest. The program also enabled farmers to suppress wages and resist unionization through a rotating supply of temporary Mexican labor. In 1953-54 a recession was triggered by a drop in defense spending after the Korean War, unemployment rose to the highest since the great depression to 6.1%, thus "Operation Wetback", a militarized deportation campaign was organized, which removed over 1 million Mexican workers, especially those outside the Bracero Program. Yet following the economic recovery many of those who were deported were immediately re-recruited under Bracero contracts, showing the cyclical nature between mass deportations and expansion of immigration contingent on the labor needs of U.S. capital.

From the 1950s to the 1970s, U.S. immigration rates steadily increased as capital relied on Mexican and other foreign labor to fill low-wage jobs. However, following the 1970s economic crisis, marked by rising unemployment, falling profits, and inflation, immigrants were recast as dangerous "illegal aliens" milking the sys-

tem for social services and stealing jobs, deportations surged, with deportations rising from 345,000 in 1970 to over 1 million by 1979. Yet by the mid to late 1980's the economic interests of capital had shifted again.

In the decades leading up to the 2008 financial crash, U.S. immigration rates, especially of undocumented and low-wage workers, rose significantly, closely mirroring the speculative growth of sectors like construction, hospitality, and low-end services that relied heavily on cheap immigrant labor. According to the Pew Research Center, the unauthorized immigrant population in the U.S. grew from 3.5 million in 1990 to a peak of 12.2 million in 2007, just before the crash. Once the financial crisis erupted and unemployment spiked, immigration policy underwent a sharp reversal corresponding with the capital's diminished demand for immigrant labor. Under President Obama, the U.S. government launched a massive deportation campaign to reduce the reserve army. Between 2009 and 2016, over 3 million people were deported, with Obama earning the title "Deporter-in-Chief" from immigrant workers groups.

The Immigrant Reserve Army Today

In the wake of the 2020 financial crisis and the inflationary spiral that followed, finance capital moved beginning in 2022, to raise interest rates, not merely to stabilize markets or "correct" imbalances, but in the words of Federal Reserve Jerome Powell himself, to put downward pressure on workers wage demands. Thus larger firms are forcing the disposed workers "back to work" in worse conditions, disciplining the American proletariat by expanding the reserve army of labor. These maneuvers came with a complement of changes in immigration policy.

According to new data from the U.S. Census Bureau, immigration levels that had remained relatively stable since 2010 peaking at around 1.2 million in 2016, and then slightly declined every year until a huge drop occurred in 2020-21 as the 2020 financial crisis led to 14.6% unemployment, the need and demand by capitalists for new immigrant labor was no longer there, with new immigration dropped to a historic low of 376,000. However, after the subsequent stimulus check induced economic boom, an explosion in demand for immigrant workers occurred. Immigration levels increased sharply from less than half a million in 2020 to over one million in 2022 continuing to grow until between 2023 to 24 when it had reached an astronomical 2.8 million. The Kansas City Federal Reserve in one article from 2024 commented how "The influx of immigrant workers appears to have helped alleviate the severe staffing shortages in certain industries that were pervasive during the pandemic's volatile period...The same influx of immigrant workers that helped fill job openings also dampened wage pressures across the affected industries and states. At the industry level, sectors with some of the highest immigrant workforce growth, such as construction and manufacturing, saw the sharpest deceleration in wage growth (specifically, average hourly earnings) from 2021 to 2023...Overall, this analysis underscores how the recent increase in immigration has helped stabilize the labor market over the past two years. In industries and states that have struggled to fill positions, the arrival of immigrant workers has eased labor shortages and moderated wage growth..."

So from the mouths of the big managers of finance capital we see how the bulking of immigrant laborers helped them retain profit rates and keep wages down in the manufactured boom that followed the 2020 crisis. Yet today, the boom in immigrant labor for the capitalist class is now going bust as new job opening growth is decelerating. Throughout 2026 the overall U.S. labor force participation rate is projected to decrease, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The median forecast for the unemployment rate in 2026 is expected to rise to 4.7%, potentially peaking at that rate in the first quarter. According to a recent study by Staffing Industry Analysts on projected job growth "They predict average monthly gains of 87,000 this year, down from the forecast of 117,000 in NABE's pre-April 2 report. After posting a monthly average of 133,000 in the first quarter of 2025, the panel's median forecast calls for job growth to fall to 25,000 in the fourth quarter of 2025. The average monthly nonfarm payroll gain is expected to improve to 97,000 in 2026, but that is lower than the 127,000 forecasted in the pre-April 2 survey..."

As the forecast for demand for new immigrant wage labor has declined we have also seen more talk and policies from the White House regarding the costs of immigrant workers to the bourgeois state. In his 2025 executive actions Trump aimed to stop "taxpayer subsidization of open borders" and prevent illegal aliens from receiving Social Security Act benefits. House GOP Republicans have on numerous occasions put forward data claim that the costs of the government to sustain the current undocumented immigrant population at anywhere from \$181 billion to \$400 billion vs. the \$31 billion estimated they pay in taxes, while also estimating the costs to deport 1 million a year to be only \$88 billion. Trump has also parroted such numbers starting In his 2019 Oval Office address that "the cost of illegal immigration to taxpayers is hundreds of billions of dollars each year." During his 2020 campaign, Trump stated that "illegal immigration costs our country more than 200 billion dollars a year.

For the bourgeoisie they must maintain a reserve army to ensure labor discipline. They use it to push native workers wages as far down as possible while also creating a layer of hyper exploited within its stagnant reserve. Yet if the number of reserve army outpace predicted demands more are pushed into the pauperized and lumpenized layer of the reserve which can come at a greater cost to capital to maintain while risking greater social and political instability when crisis hits. Thus the bourgeois have an interest in ensuring the reserve army does not grow larger than they can manage or is necessary. We can see that in recent times these labor market demands are fluctuating with ever greater intensity corresponding to the ever greater economic volatility within the putrefying speculation driven capitalism of today. Thus this system increasingly must turn to repressive means of ensuring labor discipline and to maintain the flexibility of its reserve army.

The situation is bound to drive up more explosive revolts and episodes of militarized repression. Only through the organization of the international proletariat into class unions that fight for all workers focusing on common economic demands with a focus on the most ex-

ploited segment can workers defend themselves from the onslaught; however, it is a class struggle that can only be truly led to victory when it moves from a defensive fight to a revolutionary offensive for the conquest of power, led in both phases by the leadership of the proletarian vanguard attached to its international communist party.

The El Salvadoran Mega Prison and Immigrant Labor Discipline

El Salvador's monstrous new prisons, built under a legally ratified "state of exception," are another such example of even more naked bourgeois power, albeit in another nation, where the state's use of force to suppress dissent and control populations was justified under an "emergency declaration", where a year ago more than 100,000 Salvadorans (1.6% of the population) have been detained without the need for evidence or much process and explanations that make no sense.

An estimated 109,000 people are being held in prisons, which makes them wildly overcrowded, as those prisons are only supposed to hold 70,000 people. The Bukele administration was "incentivized" to fill these prisons indiscriminately in part due to the sanctions that the US put on the nation, officially as a result of the negotiations that the administration and prior administrations were having with gang leaders. After these sanctions the brutal dictatorial repression was set in and gang members and regular workers alike were being imprisoned indiscriminately to fill quotas.

The Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) gang emerged initially within LA, in the United States in the 1980's, forming among Salvadorian refugees, who fled the civil war in El Salvador. The civil war borne out of the inter-imperialist struggle between the United States and Soviet bloc. On the US side was the US backed government of El Salvador and on the other side was the National Liberation Front, leftist guerillas that got support from Cuba and Nicaragua, countries aligned with the Soviet bloc. When the conflict ultimately ended, the country was still reeling from the effects of the war and the MS-13 gang members were deported back to their home country. This mass deportation and the economic and political instability caused by the imperialist war, led to the explosion of the gang in El Salvador, where it was deeply embedded into every aspect of the society. Today the gangs are used as an excuse to discipline the international proletariat across the Americas, for which El Salvador is increasingly becoming one of the prison colonies of the US, benefiting the El Salvadorian bourgeois, which is playing its subversive role within the larger imperial order.

The conditions inside the infamous El Salvador prison called "Center for the Confinement of Terrorism" (CECOT) where deported migrants are held include "systematic physical beatings, torture, intentional denial of access to food, water, clothing, health care," leading to the deaths of at least 368 people officially. Access to anyone from the outside is denied, be it legal counsel or family and over 3,300 children with no gang ties have been subjected to torture and inhumane conditions.

The Center for the Confinement of Terrorism (CECOT), a mega prison, located in Tecoluca, opened in January 2023, with an initial capacity of 40,000 inmates. It cost approximately \$100 million and was primarily financed by the Salvadoran government's public funds but some of the funding also came from a \$6 million deal with the US government to house deported migrants, including the alleged gang members that the US used as an excuse to begin the deportations.

The effect on workers since the introduction of these facilities has been some growth in capital leading to higher employment but the jobs are ones with precarious conditions, low wages, limited social protections and large portions of the population are still in poverty and relying heavily on remittances from abroad. Also, since the country has been in a "state of exception", their workers have been subject to arbitrary arrests and worsening labor protections and generally are living in a state of fear.

US government officials have been in negotiations with close to 20 nations for expanding the system of international immigrant detention facilities, which have even less "oversight" than the already deadly ICE domestic facilities.

Speaking of the "equality of men", an old bourgeois sentiment that garners little to no respect anymore, is a cruel joke when thousands disappeared into a prison system with no due process and rampant abuses. Despite their brutality, US prisons and ICE detention centers are clearly not deemed terrorizing enough to scare immigrant workers away from demanding concessions at the workplace and so the United States bourgeois and their political administration are willing to pay to detain these workers and others in these more terrifying prisons as an effective tactic of attempting to further scare workers into compliance.

For those who analyze history, this is of course nothing new, as we can easily recall the continued operation of Guantánamo Bay, which is now also a sight of proposed expansion for immigrant detention. Guantánamo and "black sites", of course, became famous during the Iraq war as being sites of sadistic torture and death, whose official reason for existing was to extract information from "terrorists" but whose unstated reason for existing was to fully terrify both the domestic proletariat of any "enemy combatant" nations of the United States as well as the domestic proletariat of the United States itself. Those "black site" facilities are still in operation today and prisoners of the "war on terror" are still being held captive in these locations. What was started under prior administrations for the War on Terror has been expanded further to include detention of immigrant workers, striking legal precedent to do this without having to even show any kind of even tenuous link to terrorism, thus providing more pathways of terrorizing workers "legally."

But even this is not new, as similar actions were performed during the Japanese internment in World War 2, the system of chattel slavery and systematic state and private terrorism and oppression against black workers, slaves and former slaves alike before after the civil war, the Palmer Raids of 1921, the Red scare of the 1940's and 1950's as well as the countless daily abuses that workers face at the hands of the law.

The Cruel Joke of Bourgeois Law and Equality

The capitalist press speaks of civil, human and even national "rights". In perfect democracies such as the USA, which are simultaneously also perfect fascist dictatorships, the proletariat is indoctrinated from an early age into a false sense of security by the study of legal documents such as the Constitution, with its Bill of Rights and Amendments, while the day to day reality of proletarian life conflicts with the basic assumptions of the bourgeois legal prattle expressed in those documents. For the bourgeois the "law" is respected and broken as needed to suit the needs of capital and ultimately it is only wielded as a weapon in its arsenal of class domination.

The brutal reality of class exploitation and the materially impossible nature of the very notion of "equality" be it between individuals within a nation or between nation-states under a system of private ownership of capital and the means of production is one example of the fiction spun by the ruling class to perpetuate the notion that there is some alternate universe, where a class society can have equality between individuals in different classes.

Bourgeois law is a very malleable thing and doesn't even need to be followed when broken by the bourgeois. While it historically had a progressive role by codifying the interests of the progressive class of their day, the bourgeois, enshrining their rule of private property and equal rights with dictatorial legitimacy, paving the way for the completion of primitive accumulation and the expansion of capital into its ultimately monopolistic and imperialist phase, the rights were at all times suspendable under many different clauses and didn't even nominally apply to the majority of the population for a long period of time because it was clear naked bourgeois rule since its very inception.

Capitalism, having swept away the feudal relics of explicit privilege of the nobility, presented equality as that which creates the optimum conditions for business to exploit the labor of its workers. It is the perfect legal framework for wage and, in the historical case of the USA, also of chattel slavery and for the relentless extraction of surplus value from the sweat and blood of the working class generally. Illegal detentions and suspensions of "rights" are also "legally" justified because of "threats to national security" or "obstructions to enforcing federal law" similar to how they were "legally" justified during the anti-terrorist Patriot Act era laws that were also meant to protect national security and acts of terror.

But what is national security but the securing of the rule of the bourgeois? It must be so understood that the law is telling us in plain text that immigrants need to live in fear and not dare to make any demands of any kind, let alone wage demands, and definitely not even dream of fighting back in the streets lest the full force of the local military and law enforcement be deputized against them.

The crisis facing capital is so strong currently that when it's not convenient, these legalities can and will also be bypassed, as necessary. The same law, Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, which the Eisenhower administration chose to abide by is no longer being honored, for example, through the current administration's use of the US Marine corps. The use of the federal law enforcement and military to enforce the threats and detentions against judges and politicians, it once again shows that capital will trample over any and all of its old traditions when profits are threatened.

As Marx wrote in "On the Jewish Question":

<<Above all, we note the fact that the so-called rights of man, the droits de l'homme as distinct from the droits du citoyen, are nothing but the rights of a member of civil society i.e., the rights of egoistic man, of man separated from other men and from the community. ... The right of man to liberty is based not on the association of man with man, but on the separation of man from man. It is the right of this separation, the right of the restricted individual, withdrawn into himself. The practical application of man's right to liberty is man's right to private property... The right of man to private property is, therefore, the right to enjoy one's property and to dispose of it at one's discretion... without regard to other men, independently of society, the right of self-interest. This individual liberty and its application form the basis of civil society. It makes every man see in other men not the realization of his own freedom, but the barrier to it.>>

If individual "legal equality" is a contradiction that benefits only the ruling class individually, the "legal equality of States" is such theatre, just on the global stage. Just as brute force is the only means of enforcing law between social classes, the only law between States is the force of war. The United Nations, similar to the League of Nations, created as organs of the capitalist states to co-organize their common exploitation, will use "world charters" and "right of veto" to advance the rule of capital and neither can nor will do anything to stop any of the ongoing conflicts or the next world war that capitalism's drive to increase the rate of profit is driving humanity towards.

For the proletariat, the demand for "equality" requires nothing less than fighting against the class of owners of capital and owners of property in general and for the abolition of classes and the wage system, money and surplus value extraction which necessarily means fighting against the fictions of "human," "civil" rights and bourgeois rule of law in general.

Against Individuals, Towards Species

To be a communist is not to become a better person, it is to cease being a "person" in the bourgeois sense altogether. The individual & its "personality", as we know it today, is not an eternal essence but a historically produced artifact, born alongside private property, commodity exchange, and the fragmentation of the species into isolated selves for the objectification and sale of labor power within the capitalist marketplace. As Marx wrote in the 1844 Manuscripts, "Man is a species-being... because he treats himself as the actual, living species; because he treats himself as a universal and therefore a free being." Yet under capitalism, the human is mutilated, alienated from its nature, others, and body, reduced to a juridical subject trapped in a psychologized shell.

Marx's anti-individualism and materialist naturalism stem from the understanding that human history, like natural

history, unfolds through impersonal material processes, not individual will. As he wrote to Engels in 1860, "Darwin's book is very important and serves me as a basis in natural science for the class struggle in history," affirming that the evolution of the species and of society alike follows physical laws beyond personal intention. Today, mounting empirical evidence confirms this: even bourgeois neuroscience increasingly reveals the fiction of a sovereign, metaphysical self. "There is no single brain center where it all comes together," writes Neuroscientist Michael Gazzaniga. "What we find instead is that the left brain interprets after the fact the behaviors and feelings that have already occurred, creating the illusion of unity" (Who's in Charge?, 2011). The mind is not self-contained, it is post hoc, socially constructed, and materially dispersed. Yet regardless of the fiction of the coherent stable individual self, it is a social reality exploited laborers are violently coerced into accepting and conforming themselves to causing immeasurable social anguish and misery.

Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio affirms: "The mind is embodied, not just embrained. It arises from the interaction between the body's interior, the organism's motor system, and the external world" (The Feeling of What Happens, 1999). Thought is not an immaterial function but a product of breath, digestion, movement, and hormonal regulation. Decisions are not sovereign acts of will, but neurochemical reactions shaped by history and the traumas of class struggle. The soul, the ego, the inner life of the modern subject is simply the nervous system contorted by capital.

The human mind itself is a confluence of multiple, often competing neural networks that are shaped by social experience" (The Tell-Tale Brain, 2010). These physical and organic networks arise from language, labor, and social reproduction. They are not private phenomena or magic—they are historical and biological. Frans de Waal's studies of empathy in primates and Sarah Brosnan's research on inequity aversion reveal that social reciprocity are not moral constructs, but evolved instincts of the primate family. No animal clings to the delusion of individual autonomy—only capitalism manufactures this pathology.

This fragmentation is intensified under class society. Psychological trauma is not an individual flaw but the biological registration of systemic violence. Bessel van der Kolk, a researcher on post-traumatic stress disorder writes: "Trauma results in a fundamental reorganization of the way the mind and brain manage perceptions... It changes not only how we think and what we think about, but also our very capacity to think" (The Body Keeps the Score, 2014). Chronic stress reshapes the autonomic nervous system—heart rate, digestion, immunity—and even gene expression. A study of Holocaust survivors by Yehuda et al. (2016) have shown that trauma alters methylation patterns in genes regulating cortisol. As biologist Eva Jablonka explains, "Environmental stressors, including trauma, can induce heritable epigenetic changes... shaping developmental pathways in response to ecological demands." Biologist Massimo Pigliucci adds: "Organisms are not passive in evolution; they actively shape their own trajectories." Capital's violence does not just deform the psyche it inscribes itself in biology.

And yet, this same capacity for transformation lies at the heart of species evolution. The human mind evolved through embodied, cooperative labor tool-making, speech, and shared life. Neuroscience confirms that cognition thrives in active, social environments not in isolated intellectual tasks or mechanical repetition. But capitalism severs this evolutionary unity. It divides brain from hand, intellect from body, thought from labor. Mental labor is reserved for an ideologically loyal minority, while the vast majority are reduced to routine toil. The ruling class sustains this by promoting anti-intellectual resentment, scapegoating the academic "elite," while liberal thinkers mystify class with jargon and moral relativism. Under communism, this split is abolished. Labor becomes the unified activity of the species-being: a collective, conscious reproduction of life.

Scientific inquiry only deepens this insight. Neuroscientist V.S. Ramachandran writes: "The very notion of a single self is an illusion. In fact even in the level of the mind it operates collectively." Our intelligence resides not in individual brains but in the collective mind. ... Individuals rely not only on knowledge in our skulls but also on knowledge stored elsewhere: in our bodies, in the environment, and especially in other people," writes cognitive scientist Dr. Steven Sloman in The Knowledge Illusion: Why We Never Think Alone. To support this claim, Sloman draws on a range of cognitive science research demonstrating that individuals consistently overestimate their understanding of complex systems, a phenomenon the researchers call "illusion of explanatory depth." In one experiment, participants were confident they understood how everyday objects like toilets or zippers worked, but when asked to explain the mechanisms in detail, their understanding quickly collapsed. This revealed that much of what we consider "knowledge" is not located within the individual brain, but is distributed across tools, language, institutions, and especially other people. Alongside co-author Philip Fernbach, Sloman argues that human cognition is not housed in isolated minds but emerges from a networked system of shared thinking—what they term the "community of knowledge." Thus we can see here basic aspects of the Marxist anti-individualist thesis raised already nearly 200 years ago and precisely the exact purpose and need for the collective organ of the Party within the living biological life of the class.

Bourgeois society demands we internalize guilt, cling to personal redemption, and suffer in isolation. It offers romantic love rooted in the patriarchal family, legal justice, and self-help guides as substitutes for collective emancipation. "Love no one, love everyone" is not indifference—it is impersonal solidarity against personal despair.

In communism, there will be no "one" to forgive or condemn, no individual ledger of sin and merit. There will be no juridical soul to weigh, only the species in motion. Like all animals, humans are shaped by instinctual systems: attachment, fear, cohesion all evolved for collective survival. But capitalism forces us to suppress these and fabricate egos to endure exploitation. As neuroscientist Bruce Perry notes, trauma over-develops fear responses and stunts empathy, making us into defensive, fragmented organisms. What bourgeois psychology calls "personality" is often nothing more than the scar tissue of a damaged species-being.

Yet this defensive adaptation contains its own negation. When crisis breaks the

ego's shell, class instincts erupt. In the heat of uprising, the false self dissolves, and proletarian solidarity re-emerges—not from ideology but from life. The history of revolt shows this pattern: during summer heat, food crises, and repression, the individual disintegrates, and the instinctual class body awakens.

Communist theory is not therapy or spiritual refinement. It is the ruthless critique of class society and the false self it produces. It speaks to the proletariat not as a sum of persons, but as the species-becoming through class struggle and revolutionary warfare. The revolution is not a matter of better individuals—it is the destruction of the relations that produce them.

Activism, therapy, leisure, and intellectualism offer momentary shelter, but not escape. The catastrophe will come not because we fail to fix ourselves, but because capital can no longer reproduce its social relations. In that rupture, the false self will vanish. And in the aftermath, humanity may re-emerge not as a swarm of egos, but as a force of nature. It will be led by a collective "brain" of the Party the organ of the historical memory of the experiences and lessons of the class, bearer of the invariant communist program upon the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the subsequent elimination of the last vestiges of the capitalist mode of production, the species is finally fully able to obtain its real, material, and rational self-reproduction.

Tesla, the Cult of the Entrepreneur, and the Instinctual Class Hatred

The bourgeois cult of personality, the modern corporate brand and the speculative nightmare of modern finance capital go hand and hand with the dictatorial state of the capitalist class. The billionaire personality cults are nowhere easier seen than with Musk and Trump and the constant media bombardment with tales of their personal exploits and melodramas. While to themselves they each increasingly acquire their own media conglomerates used in their personal schemes of market manipulation and self-aggrandizement, all working toward the unitary purpose of capital's impersonal accumulation and concentration. After months of declining share value the industrial monopolies commanded by Musk sent him packing from Washington. Musk presented as a political neutral technocrat embodying the hopeful, optimistic & futuristic aspirations of capitals eternal expansion, and the petit-bourgeois values of individual enterprise by presenting as a selfless servant for gains in shareholder values. The enterprises he was allowed to captain in his position as CEO became the most profitable on earth, and he in turn the richest man. Yet Musk's fall from grace only underscores the frail confidence of the bourgeois order and its weakening real social basis, almost perfectly reflected with the decaying personalities of its fleshy accumulators who serve it's interest.

For Musk, not unlike the other functionaries of capital, the success of his companies has little to do with his exceptional human capacities and more to do with his function as a useful tool, cheerleader and sideshow clown for U.S. capital's military industrial complex. His companies, Tesla, SpaceX, and X (formerly Twitter), function as a key instrument of U.S. capitalist state power and military expansion. SpaceX is deeply embedded in the Pentagon's plans for orbital dominance. Beyond launching satellites, SpaceX is a principal contractor for the U.S. Space Force, supporting its strategy to militarize Earth's orbit through rapid satellite deployment, missile tracking systems, and space-based command infrastructure. The Starlink satellite network, initially marketed as a civilian internet service, has been deployed in Ukraine to aid NATO-aligned forces with encrypted battlefield communications and drone operations. SpaceX has received over \$15.3 billion in U.S. government contracts, binding its operations tightly to military objectives. Tesla, meanwhile, thrives not only on over \$2.4 billion in federal and state subsidies and a \$465 million loan from the Department of Energy, but also through hyper-exploited labor in China. At Tesla's Shanghai Gigafactory, responsible for over half of the company's global deliveries, workers endure 12-hour shifts, compulsory overtime, and regimented surveillance. Elon Musk publicly expressed hope that as president, Trump would leverage tariffs and trade pressure to subdue Chinese finance capital, weakening Chinese EV competitors while securing preferential access to cheap Chinese labor and parts for Tesla's factories like the Shanghai Gigafactory.

The series of corporate conglomerates commanded by Musk and their exploding profits were based not only on state funding but on the inflation of fictitious capital: a market valuation based not totally on surplus value realised from the sale of commodities but to a large degree also on investor belief in Musk's personal brand. Despite producing far fewer vehicles than traditional automakers like Toyota, Tesla reached a peak market valuation of over \$1.2 trillion in 2021, while Toyota, then selling more than 10 times as many cars, was valued at under \$300 billion.

Musk's takeover of Twitter in 2022 and his increasingly erratic personal behavior began to shatter this illusion of his old hopeful enterprising bourgeois spirit giving way to the dark brooding torment prevalent in the brooding American bourgeois watching it's decline. Musk positioned himself as a political figure rather than a neutral technocrat. As confidence in Musk's persona declined and the competitiveness of many of his companies came into question particularly as Tesla was no longer to benefit from lucrative EV tax breaks, so did Tesla's market value: between 2022 and 2024, Tesla's stock dropped more than 70%, erasing hundreds of billions of dollars in fictitious capital. A single comment by Trump, a vague critique of Musk's "disloyalty", was sufficient to drive Tesla's shares down by 14% on one day.

As a company Tesla and the associated companies under Musk exemplifies the fascistic fusion of capitalist futurism and pseudo-environmentalist ideological mystification, presenting a hopeful mirage of capitalist expansion into space and a greenwashed avenue to avoid capitalist endured environmental cataclysm.

Earlier this year, Tesla vehicles and dealerships became the target of attacks, smashed windows, defaced logos, and arson attempts.

These acts, though disorganized and ultimately fruitless as tactics to truly impact the exploitative drive of capital and it's enterprises, express a latent proletarian class instinct: hatred not of machines, but of capital's arrogant self-image. Re-

flexive actions of a proletariat that recognizes, even in confusion, the general class forces which cause its immiseration and toil. The apparatus of capital accumulation and control, whether dressed as "innovation" or "law and order." is zeroed in. Yet it is necessary for these revolts to mature into class-wide organized struggle of the working class within well organized class unions putting forward unified demands and advancing general strike action. The global bourgeoisie, whether investing in AI, restructuring trade flows, or bombing villages, follows the same historical line traced since capital first burst its feudal shell. It cannot save itself by investment, nor by diplomacy, nor by spectacle. Each maneuver prolongs the agony, deepens the contradictions, and sharpens the lines of confrontation. What appeared as a budget bill, a trade mission, or a diplomatic summit, is in truth a signal of war. Not yet between classes but between rival bourgeois factions who seek to desperately maintain the backwards social system of Capital that they serve. The proletariat, still disorganized, still blinded by the smog of ideology, will not remain inert forever. Its sporadic revolts, its confused violence, its shattered illusions, these are the preface. The ongoing task remains to reconstitute the world communist party & to restore its program of proletarian revolution and class dictatorship.

FOR THE CLASS UNION

Worker Strikes in Aircraft Arms Production Factories in the U.S. & Iranian Worker Strikes

Beginning on May 1st what should have been a day of international worker solidarity gave way to another pathetic display of union opportunism. In the current imperialist phase of capitalist decay, many unions, once organized by workers themselves to defend the immediate needs of the working class have been integrated into the legal regulatory regime of the capitalist state, working with boss-linked leadership to discipline and corrupt labor for the needs of national capital. The regime union mechanism functions to channel legitimate class antagonisms around declining wages into a mutual pact with capital to conquer imperial spoils while leaving the broader structure of exploitation of the vast majority of workers intact. These maneuvers pacify combativity, severing any possible link with the lower-paid, unorganized sectors, and burying class consciousness beneath nationalist duty. Under the guise of "solidarity," union leaders appeal to workers across the globe.

Between early May and early June 2025, two major strikes disrupted key segments of the U.S. war industry. At Pratt & Whitney, nearly 3,000 machinists from IAM Locals 700 and 1746 struck for three weeks, halting production of the F135 jet engine used in the F-35 stealth fighter and a variety of other warplanes. The strike disrupted deliveries and contributed to a breakeven quarter for parent company RTX, with CEO Chris Calio admitting that F135 shipments were affected. Workers won a 6% wage hike in the first year, improved pensions, and contractual protections ensuring that military engine production would remain at their Connecticut facilities through 2029.

Simultaneously, over 900 UAW members struck at Lockheed Martin plants in Orlando and Denver, both integral to F-16 fighter jet manufacturing, demanding better wages and the elimination of an extended tiered wage system. The strike lasted just over one month. While neither the UAW nor IAM coordinated these labor actions, their near-concurrent timing briefly disrupted the defense production chain. Yet, despite their material leverage, both strikes were ultimately contained within regime union channels and national frameworks, with UAW President Shawn Fain explicitly aligning the strike's purpose with the interests of U.S. imperialism, describing it as part of the patriotic "arsenal of democracy." Thus the dopey jingoism of Feign masked as high ideals is merely the cover for the corruption of the workers to maintain within the narrow self-interest and gaining its "fair share" of the blood drenched profits of U.S. imperialism. While Fain celebrates his role in securing the capitalist democratic states arsenal of mass proletarian slaughter, and endorses tariffs as patriotic necessity, his alleged "anti-fascism" is in fact precisely a replication of the state policies and rhetoric of fascistic syndicalism under Mussolini's regime, and later the embraced by the American capitalist class within the New Deal, assisted as they were by the corruptive Stalinist popular front policies which played a key role in dismantling the independence of the proletarian class defensive organs in the United States.

In Iran proletarian struggles have erupted into spontaneous revolt. Beginning May 19 with truckers in Bandar Abbas, the wave quickly spread to 150+ cities, engulfing Tehran, Mashhad, Karaj, and more. These workers—truck drivers, bakers, farmers, nurses—struck without union sanction, galvanized by fuel price spikes from \$0.04 to \$1.90 per liter, 35–50% inflation, unpaid wages, and insurmountable living costs. Their resistance is unmediated class defiance—an organic rebellion against both imperialist pressure and pro-capital domestic regimes.

Likewise, as we have already mentioned, in late March and April, Chinese workers at BYD plants in Wuxi and Chengdu walked out in protest against wage cuts, cancelled bonuses, and deteriorating conditions after a Jabil takeover. These were joined by struggles among migrant laborers, teachers, and factory workers demanding unpaid wages, particularly as local production slowed under rising Sino–U.S. trade tensions. These collective acts of proletarian revolt, though operating under ruthless capitalist states, signal the possibilities of spontaneous global proletarian class upsurge in the future, which must of course coalesce into a future united front for the class union..

Together, these episodes illustrate how unions can become shock troops of war production; the latter, how proletarian unity and solidarity arises without official mediation, across unorganized sectors acting out of a spontaneous class instinct as a result of material conditions. Yet still, these forces must develop and then coalesce to organize a mutual defense linking workers across continents and sectors, transcending contractual confines and nationalist illusions, and aimed at a unified defense against deepening wage slavery. Only such material solidarity, led by the class political vanguard of the In-

ternational Communist Party can, when the moment is right, convert isolated battles into revolutionary conquest of power.

North American Union Work

Comrades intervened at a February rally where the Federal Unionist Network (FUN) promoted strike action against mass layoffs affecting APWU, LIUNA, and AFGE workers. While the initial slogans were militant, FUN regressed into reformist, interclassist appeals to the state. The rally of 40 workers was saturated with electoral propaganda and speeches from politicians of the capitalist parties.

Our intervention included distributing Party texts, passing out leaflets of the Class Struggle Action Network and criticizing these electoral methods. The purge of federal workers no-longer deemed necessary for securing capital's easy valorization, confirms that only within the emergence of a generalized proletarian revolt and the emergence of the future class union can disposed workers defend their economic interest, while the existing microcosm of established unions disappear when the jobs disappear, the future class union is founded on the generalized solidarity of the working class itself.

Education Workers May Day Resolution: A Party comrade introduced a resolution at a 500-delegate educators' assembly calling for a May Day 2028 strike and alignment with other established unions who have made moves in this direction. The speech drew applause, with backing from major locals like Portland Association of Teachers. Despite a narrow defeat (244–242), many workers in the state are continuing to struggle in their locals to prepare for this eventuality.

Richmond and Southern Workers Assembly (SWA): SWA exists across 17 cities in 6 Southern states with severe union repression (e.g., NC and SC union density at 2.4–2.7%). Despite legislative tendencies, it remains fertile ground for agitation. ICP militants will intervene at the June SWA summit with press and materials in an effort to consolidate a class struggle pole.

CSAN Immigrant Worker Campaign Solidarity: At its May meeting, CSAN adopted a Party-led initiative to organize resolutions defending immigrant labor. The campaign includes: distribution of solidarity resolution templates, formation of immigrant worker defense committees, production of agitational literature, advocacy for inter-union direct action to free detained labor militants

Across sectors and geographies, the Party upholds its fundamental duty: to clarify, polarize, and consolidate the organization of proletarian elements in preparation for the generalization of the class struggle and towards the creation of the future united front for the class union.

An International Meeting for Class-based Trade Union Opposition

On April 27, the Class Struggle Action Network, an inter-union coordination in the U.S., of which our worker comrades are members, in the run-up to May Day promoted a tele-conference meeting between union militants from different countries to share experiences on the reality of the employers' attack, how workers are trying to defend themselves within or from outside the official unions, and to consider the possibility of starting propaganda for a future mobilization as coordinated as possible. About fifty workers and union organizers attended, as well as from the United States, Turkey and Italy. Here we report the speech of our Italian comrade.

Good morning comrades, I am a militant worker in the Unione Sindacale di Base, a grassroots union founded in 1980, formed in part by workers who left Italy's largest union, the CGIL, in reaction to its collaborationist behavior, so much so that it is called by many a union of the regime, that is, of the capitalist political regime. Let me give you a brief overview of the situation in Italy. The struggle of the working class in this country has been in decline since the late 1970s. However, this process is not uniform, as various sectors have demonstrated a remarkable spirit of struggle over these four decades.

Several factors are acting in contradictory ways but will lead to a reversal, a return to workers' struggle. The factors that have led to the weakening of workers' struggle can be summarized in four points:

1 - the relative strength of Italian imperialism within the framework of world capitalism, which has allowed the formation of a layer of working-class aristocracy that has provided a material basis for the corruption of the working class; today, however, as the global economic crisis of capitalism advances, this layer is becoming thinner and thinner;

2 - collaborationist and regime unionism, which throughout the postwar period worked to eradicate the methods and principles of class struggle from the workers, mainly through the CGIL;

3 - the crisis of overproduction, which began in the so-called Western countries in the mid-1970s and which in Italy has triggered a process of deindustrialization since the early 1980s, weakening the industrial proletariat; for example, the automobile industry partly moved from Italy to Turkey;

4 - the mistakes of the leaders of the grassroots unions, which in my opinion were dictated by political opportunism.

My union, the USB, promotes what is called class unionism. This definition refers to union conduct based on the principle that the conditions of the working class can only be defended through struggle, because the economic, and therefore also political, interests of the wage-earning class and the bourgeoisie are irreconcilable.

This is, of course, a general definition, and when it is translated into concrete actions, differences emerge. For example, one misconception of the USB leadership concerns its disavowal of the fact that the right of a class union to exist and struggle can be defended in capitalist society only by the strength of the working class: we must not rely on so-called "democratic rules" to ensure that class unionism can operate freely. Confictual, class-based trade unionism will always be fought by the employers' political regime, whether in formal compliance with the democratic political framework or through open fascism. In this regard, it is instructive to explain one of the aspects of the trade union movement in Italy in recent years. In reaction to the open betrayal of the CGIL, several so-called "grassroots" unions emerged in various areas in Italy.

The main strength of these unions was the weapon of the strike. Against them, the CGIL advocated for years a law restricting the freedom to strike in so-called "essential public services," in the name of the constitutional and democratic right of citizens to have access to such "essential services." It is clear how, in this case, the principles of democracy and the rule of law were used against workers!

Finally, in 1990 one of the most restrictive laws on freedom to strike in Europe was passed, voted by the main governing party in Italy, the Christian Democrats, and the main parliamentary opposition party, the Italian Communist Party. Under this law, a large part of the Italian working class is prevented from striking effectively. To give an example, while in Germany we see rail strikes lasting up to five days, in Italy strikes in sectors subject to this law cannot last more than 24 hours, must be announced about 20 days in advance, and often cannot be called more than once a month or even less.

With the economic crisis of 2008, the situation of workers' struggle in industry deteriorated further and grassroots unionism in it weakened. Since 2010, however, a struggle movement led by grassroots unions and composed mainly of migrant workers has emerged in the logistics sector. There have been hundreds of strikes, often very hard, involving clashes with police and layoffs, and many of them have brought concrete improvements for these workers. The strength of these strikes has been in the pickets, which have blocked trucks from entering and leaving warehouses. The CGIL has almost always opposed these strikes, fearing the strengthening of grassroots unionism in the industry. This year the right-wing government promoted a bill that, if passed, could make picketing illegal. The bill was converted into a decree law three weeks ago. The president of the Republic, whom much of the parliamentary left considers a democratic bulwark against the right-wing government, signed the decree. Both the law against strikes in so-called "essential" public services and the decree-law against picketing were thus deemed perfectly in line with the Italian Constitution, considered by much of the so-called left to be a bulwark in defense of workers!

So, regarding the first of the two issues we are talking about here, the fascist attack by the capitalist class against the workers, my conclusion is that sure, the attack is fascist, but it can take on the guise of democracy and be supported by parties that call themselves defenders of democracy. Fascism is the true nature of the capitalist political regime, and the working class can defend itself against it only by the strength of its organization and struggle.

Today's second topic is the general strike. In Italy the law against picketing completes the attack on the freedom to strike by affecting the private, manufacturing and logistics sector, while the 1990 law had affected the public service sector. This was a very serious measure that would have justified the use of a general strike. But the leaderships of the two major grassroots unions - SI Cobas and USB - acted divided, calling general strikes on different dates. This is a serious problem for the labor movement in Italy. The leaderships of these unions belong to different political groups, and they use unions only as tools to wage war against each other, going so far as to divide the workers' union struggle. This opportunistic behavior of the leaderships of the main grassroots unions prevents the strengthening and harms the prestige of class unionism.

That is why I am a member, together with militants of other unions, of the Self-Convoked Workers' Coordination (CLA), which promotes and fights for the unity of action of confrontational unionism and workers. In addition, there is a tendency on the part of the leadership of grassroots unions to call "general strikes" without a real connection to union struggles in the various sectors, especially with regard to the expiration of national collective bargaining agreements. The general strike should seek to unite the ongoing workers' struggles, involving a critical mass and thus reaching even those sections of the working class that are not currently in struggle.

In this sense, the proposal circulating in the U.S. labor movement to align the expiration of contracts with May 1, 2028, in order to promote a potentially large general strike is in line with the reality of the labor movement in the various sectors. Perhaps it sins, on the other hand, in the sense that the strike should not be contingent only on the expiration of collective agreements: if the force is there, it could be the working class that does not abide by agreements and demands wage increases before they expire. But the proposal, which has been taken up by CSAN, is certainly a step in the right direction.

In Italy, too, a proper balance is needed between the two elements: the calling of a general strike of the entire working class by a sufficient number of unions, as a political act in itself, and adherence to the reality of union struggles in the various sectors and categories.

This work, however, requires, at least in Italy, a struggle within the fighting unions against the divisions in action imposed by their opportunist leaders. This struggle can benefit from international relations with class-based labor movements in other countries, not least because the international framework of proletarian struggle is more vibrant and encouraging than the narrow national context in Italy. Today's initiative is a useful step in this direction.

Long live the struggle of the working class! Long live May Day! Long live the general strike!

Regime Unions and Grassroots Unions Tested by the Proclamations and the Rearmament of the Bourgeoisie

On page 6 of the last TICP (no.63) we published the text of a leaflet entitled ‘Capitalism Needs War – only the revolutionary struggle of the working class can oppose it’ which our comrades in Italy distributed at demonstrations held on Saturday March 15 in Rome, in Piazza Barberini, and in Genoa, in Piazza de Ferrari. We are identifying the locations of these demonstrations because they were to counter other demonstrations, held elsewhere in both cities—and elsewhere in Italy—on the same day.

The main one, as we noted, took place in Rome in Piazza del Popolo, and the whole array of the bourgeois left adhered

to it, supporting the European Union and, either explicitly or poorly disguised, supporting the rearmament plan which was launched a few days earlier by the EU political leadership.

Although the so-called European rearmament plan is still a declaration of intent and will face various obstacles on the road to its implementation, such as the contrast between the European and the global national capitalisms and, what is of interest to us, the opposition of the working class, it is nonetheless an extremely significant development, because it indicates that the European bourgeoisie has taken the plunge and is moving towards the open abandonment of the pacifist fiction, by launching a policy that openly recognizes the possibility of war and which, over time, will increasingly become preparation for it.

We are interested in the conduct of the workers' organizations with regard to the demonstrations on Saturday 15 March, because only the working class will be able to prevent imperialist war, or stop it if it starts, as happened in 1917 in Russia and at the end of the following year with the collapse of the internal front in Germany, due to strikes and the mutiny in the fleet.

The CGIL

A clear sign of the historical importance of the announced European rearmament plan is what happened in the largest regime union in Italy, the CGIL. After initially hinting that it would join the demonstration in Piazza del Popolo and then procrastinating for a few days, the leadership finally decided to confirm its participation, making the decision at a meeting on March 7 and publicly announcing it on March 9.

This conduct provoked widespread internal opposition, and an energy not seen in the CGIL for years, not even during congresses. Opposing the decision were not only the two small minority groups – 'Le radici del sindacato' (The Roots of the Union) and 'Le giornate di marzo' (The March Days) – but also the “Work and Society” group, which is aligned with the majority, several factory unions, the Filt in Pisa and above all, the national secretariat of the Fiom Cgil (the metal-workers union), which issued an internal statement dissociating itself from the confederal leadership's decision to join the pro-rearmament demonstration, and stating that it hadn't helped to organize the union's participation in it.

In Genoa, the provincial Fiom General Assembly unanimously approved a motion stating: “We consider the CGIL's participation in the March 15 demonstration, which objectively supports the strengthening of Europe as a power (...) to be unacceptable. For us, it is necessary to reiterate, even more than before, the slogans inscribed on our banners when we went on strike 24 hours after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine: 'For the unity of all workers, against all wars of imperialism.'”

This internal opposition has given rise to two opposing interpretations of the situation within Italy's largest regime union. One is that it shows that it is possible and necessary to fight within the CGIL in order to change its nature from that of a regime union to a class union.

Our party's reading of the situation is opposed to that: the fact that, despite such weighty internal opposition, the CGIL leadership still wanted to participate in the Piazza del Popolo demonstration confirms that it must be obeying orders from higher up in the bourgeoisie, even at the cost of harming the union itself by deepening its divisions. With which we conclude that the union is no longer conquerable to a class leadership and is irreversibly part of the regime. Therefore, in Italy, the class union can only be reborn outside and against the regime unions (CGIL, CISL, UIL, UGL).

What supports our reading of the facts relating to this turning point in the trade union movement in Italy is the way in which the decision was taken. As written on March 11 in Progetto Lavoro, the magazine of the alternative wing of the CGIL, Le radici del sindacato (Trade Union Roots), this happened at a “meeting on Friday 7, in which the general secretaries of the categories and regions, together with the national secretariat, took this decision. A circle that was informal and statutorily non-existent.”

Perhaps the most interesting criticism that emerged from within the CGIL is that the leadership of Italy's largest “social” organization, with its 5 million members, instead of promoting its own independent street initiative with its own content felt it had to tag along behind a deeply divisive demonstration promoted by others.

Landini disguised his subordination to the ruling class and its march to imperialist war by making fine distinctions between open support for the European rearmament project and what the demonstration's promoters believe. Distinctions symbolized by the instruction to take to the streets with pacifist rainbow flags instead of the union's banners.

Supported by most of the bourgeois press which had been preparing for it for weeks; by the parties of the ruling left; by the apparatus of the regime unions—since even the CISL and UIL joined in—not to mention being financed by the City of Rome, the demonstration in Piazza del Popolo was attended by roughly 30,000 people. The piazza chosen, much smaller than Piazza San Giovanni, the traditional destination for large trade union demonstrations, guaranteed that it would be filled, and the regime press could celebrate its success and pump up the propaganda for rearmament even more, with Repubblica declaring that there were 50,000 demonstrators. In any case, the rainbow flags of the CGIL would be drowned in the blue ones of the European Union.

Conflictual Trade Unionism

In response to the demonstration in Piazza del Popolo, demonstrations against rearmament and war were organized in Rome and other cities. The demonstration in Rome, which went from Piazza Barberini to Piazza Esquilino, was attended by 2,500 people. Considering that it was essentially a local demonstration organized in just a few days, the attendance was good. And even though it was promoted by associations and political groups, there was substantial participation by the USB, to a lesser extent by the CUB and the Confederazione Cobas, and also by the alternative wing of the CGIL, “Le radici del sindacato” (The Roots of the Union), with a banner and a group of militants and union leaders. This was the only faction, from among those within the CGIL opposed to participation in the pro-rearmament demonstration, which did not

limit itself to denouncing it and which acted accordingly, taking to the streets alongside the grassroots unions.

One of the last times this happened was 13 years ago, on 22 June 2012, with the participation in the general strike of grassroots unionism and protests against Maurizio Landini, then general secretary of the Fiom, who that very day was attending the national assembly of Confindustria in Bergamo. In September, following on from this, the only representative of the minority wing was removed from the Fiom national secretariat. The CGIL leadership does not tolerate openings towards grassroots unionism.

Landini has a track record that earns him a place of honor among the “agents of the bourgeoisie within the proletariat”. Firstly he blocked a strong workers' struggle against Marchionne's plan at FIAT, squandering the strength that was demonstrably available in the large demonstration on October 16, 2010, with 100,000 workers on the march. Since then, the CGIL has not been remotely capable of bringing so many workers onto the streets. In this he was helped by the leaders of the internal left wing, who lent him credence and who from the stage of that demonstration applauded, along with him, the speech of the then CGIL general secretary Guglielmo Epifani. In doing so, Landini made a fundamental contribution to subduing the grassroots unionism in the FIAT factories—another great service rendered to the industrialists—which for more than 15 years had fought for and practised building a class-based union force within them.

With the left eliminated from the Fiom secretariat in 2012, Landini got to sign, in 2016, what is considered the metalworkers' worst ever national collective contract, which involved the Fiom caving in and accepting the two separate and previously unsigned FIM and UILM contracts. For such great work he has been acknowledged, and rightly so, in his present role as general secretary of Italy's largest regime union. Today, by joining the pro-rearmament demonstration, and modestly covering his shame with the rainbow flag, it cannot be said that he hasn't showed that it is he who is responsible and grateful for it!

One of the leaders of the alternative wing of the CGIL “Le radici del sindacato” (The Union's Roots) wrote that it is necessary to “develop a defeatist and antimilitarist mass movement”. This task can only be undertaken by the forces of militant unionism and only if they—grassroots unions and class-based union currents within the CGIL—act in a unified manner. The demonstration in Piazza Barberini was a small step in the right direction but to achieve this unity, union activists must fight against the opportunist leaders of militant unionism who oppose such an approach, namely, those in the grassroots unions which subordinate unity of action to competition with other unions, and those in the class currents within the CGIL which prioritize maintaining their roles or mere viability within the regime union.

Birmingham Workers’ Strike, ‘Mega pickets’, and International Solidarity

In their latest ballot, 400 striking bin workers in Birmingham (UK), organized within the Unite union, voted by an overwhelming 97%, out of a 75% turn out, to continue their strike action in the face of the latest derisory offer from the employers, Birmingham City Council. The way is now open for the strike to continue to the end of the year.

Unite's general secretary, Sarah Graham, muses over whether it was the government commissioners brought in to oversee the council (after it had declared itself effectively bankrupt in 2023) who were indirectly responsible for watering down the ‘ballpark offer’, that had arisen out of discussions held in May; but here we have to interject: has there ever been any strike in which employers said they could ‘afford’ to improve workers’ terms and conditions?

The dispute began back in January after Birmingham City Council announced plans to scrap the role of the Waste Recycling and Collection Officer (WRCO). The union says the upshot is that 170 former WRCOs and 200 drivers face losing up to £8,000 a year under the council’s current proposals.

The strikers have certainly shown the essential nature of their work and are making a significant impact by withdrawing their labor: as huge piles of rubbish build up in the streets of Birmingham, with a corresponding influx of rats, huge queues have been forming at mobile collection points around the city. Obviously the inconvenience to residents is not something the strikers relish, but they don't intend to back down as a result of it either.

Indeed, the dispute would escalate in March to an indefinite walkout, and on May 9 at the Lifford Lane depot there would be a “mega-picket”, attended by – along with a gigantic inflatable rat – hundreds of workers and supporters from across the trade union movement, including from the Public and Commercial Services Union. This resulted in the waste depot being entirely shut down in what was a very significant day for the strike.

The mass industrial action by pickets led to 12,000 tonnes of uncollected waste accumulating on the streets, particularly in areas where the police had scaled down their presence. So it was not long before the council would be granted a court order to stop waste vehicles being stopped from leaving depots by those on the picket line. This has obviously had an impact, but workers in these kinds of situations have an almost ingrained talent at finding their way round these obstacles!

So as it stands there will be another round of negotiations, but ones crucially backed by ongoing strike action, fully supported by an overwhelming majority of bin workers in Birmingham.

The above short summary of the bin worker's dispute is certainly not comprehensive, and there is clearly more we could learn about this important dispute which, as an important bedrock of ongoing and determined workers' struggle, might boost the morale of other sectors, such as the doctors, nurses and teachers, where disputes around pay and conditions are currently threatening to re-erupt.

We will conclude by highlighting one of the most memorable aspects of the “megapicket” on May 9, which was its international character, with a memorable speech delivered by Khalid Sidahmed from the MENA solidarity editorial board, on behalf of the Sudanese Workers Alliance for the Restoration of Trade Unions

(SWARTU) and the Demands-Based Campaigns (TAM), and issued on behalf of Sudanese bin workers.

This expression of solidarity, from a group of workers facing not only attacks on their livelihood in an economic sense, but with their very lives threatened through having to conduct their struggle in the middle of a war zone, is truly humbling.

Their leaflet, distributed at the “megapicket”, which encapsulates the message of solidarity from the Sudanese bin workers is certainly worth printing in full:

Solidarity Statement from Sudanese Workers and Demands-Based Campaigns to Bin Workers in Britain

Greetings to you as you raise the banner of workers’ dignity in the face of repression and impoverishment.

We address you today on behalf of the bin workers in Sudan, who have fought their just battles in the streets and squares of our capital, Khartoum. We send our militant greetings and full, unconditional solidarity with your legitimate strike against attempts to reduce wages and dismantle your gains under the guise of restructuring and hidden austerity.

We have followed with admiration your resilience in the face of the City Council’s attempts, under the Labour government, to abolish the role of “Waste Recycling and Collection Officer” — a decision your union, Unite the Union, rightly recognises as merely a step to cut wages and undermine working conditions. We know very well that when the authorities fail to confront organised workers, they resort to their old tools: the police, defamation, oppressive laws, or even talk of military intervention to collect waste. We have witnessed the same in Sudan when the police were called to break our strikes, and we were replaced by private companies to break our unity — desperate attempts by the state to sow fear and division.

We know this kind of class war all too well: an undeclared war waged through hunger, arbitrary deductions, dismissals, and discrimination against women workers — denying them maternity and caregiving leave. We have seen how the authorities strip us of our rights to contracts, insurance, and workplace safety, even as we clean the very streets through which the state boasts of its “civilised” image — built on our sweat and broken bodies.

We must also highlight how the ongoing war in Sudan has deepened the suffering of bin workers and worsened already dire conditions. Many of them have lost contact, and their whereabouts and living conditions are unknown. Fears are growing over their fate amid reports of brutal killings in areas that witnessed intense fighting. The complete absence of information about them in the chaos and destruction makes their cause not only a labour demand but also a humanitarian and moral priority.

The solidarity between bin workers in the Global South and Global North is not just an emotional act — it is a necessary step in a shared struggle. Austerity, racism, and union-busting are global policies aimed at weakening the power of the working class.

The fightback begins with organisation, coordination, consciousness, and the tearing down of artificial borders between workers here and there.

We stand with you, and we say: there is no going back. You are not alone. Your voices reach us. Just as bin workers in Sudan — without an official union — organised their own committees by hand and seized their right to organise, we see you continuing on this path with resilience and awareness.

Long live your struggle.
Long live international solidarity.
Glory to the workers — everywhere, at all times.

On behalf of the Bin Workers’ Strike and Negotiation.

High School Protests in Turkey

On April 8, teachers at “project schools” were transferred to different schools in Turkey without explanation. It was announced that the terms of 38,000 teachers working at these project schools had expired. The incident naturally sparked a reaction from teachers working at these schools, and a nationwide protest by teachers began. Teachers criticized the Ministry of Education, saying that this was a political move. Students also supported the protests by staging a sit-in alongside their teachers..

The ministry's policy was established 10 years ago. Teachers and administrators at schools designated as “Special Project” schools could apply to continue working at the same school or transfer to another school after four years of service. Despite the “application” requirement, some teachers were disadvantaged by this policy. This year, the number of teachers affected has significantly increased compared to previous years.

In Ankara's Kuğulu Park, banners were unfurled with slogans such as “You erased those who educated us; we will erase you” and “Pleasure in the palace, oppression in schools.” One banner also featured a photo of Ali İsmail Korkmaz, who was beaten to death by police and shopkeepers during the Gezi Park protests.

The Education and Science Workers' Union (Eğitim-Sen) issued a statement on the matter:

“The process of appointing teachers to project schools is not based on any concrete, measurable, or objective criteria; it is shaped entirely by political and administrative discretion. The Ministry can appoint any teacher or education administrator it wants to project schools without announcing any criteria and without considering objective indicators such as seniority, service points, or professional competence. This practice has seriously undermined the sense of justice and fairness in education for years; labor, experience, and professional competence are being disregarded.”

The bourgeois state brutally suppressed protests against the dismissal of workers who had completed their terms of service. Students were not allowed to leave schools, and police violence was used. The regime is once again turning its guns on the proletariat to solve the problems it has created!

Students and their protests cannot defend the rights of the proletariat on their own; they are insufficient. They cannot direct the movement toward a communist program—the program of the proletariat—but can only support the proletariat. The only blow that teachers can strike against

the exploitative system that has brought them to this point is to join the general strike alongside all the other unions! Only the weapon of the strike can terrify governments and disrupt their operations.

Long live class unions!
Long live class solidarity!
Down with the system of exploitation and unemployment!

Protests in the Grip of Parliamentarism

Following the revocation of Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu's diploma and his arrest the following day, on March 19, 2025, on charges of “corruption, organizing a criminal organization, and terrorism,” a wave of protests began at universities, primarily in Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir, as well as many other large cities. The revocation of his diploma will prevent İmamoğlu from participating in the next presidential election. Additionally, it has reinforced the feeling among the public, particularly students, that their future is uncertain.

The protests at universities were largely led by METU (Middle Eastern Technical University) students, which is why police repression and violence were primarily directed at METU. Beyond that, police violence reached its peak both at Kızılay Square and in the streets of Istanbul. It is worth remembering that the police are not the friends of the proletariat; they work for the interests of the bourgeoisie at every turn. Ultimately, society is divided into classes, and liberal rhetoric only serves to obscure the existing order. Once again, it has been proven that the working class must never, under any circumstances, compromise with the bourgeoisie and its control apparatus, the “father state”! However, there is nothing new under the sun. The oppression and violence we are subjected to are not merely the policies of the current government. This is a problem that cannot be solved by any government that comes to power, due to the very nature of the bourgeois state. To attribute this solely to the current government in our analysis would lead us to reformism and opportunism. This is precisely where our criticism begins. The target of our criticism is not the base of the movement—especially the working class base—but the reformist or social democratic parties that lead this base. Throughout history, exploited classes have engaged in many movements in which they could vent their anger. However, as history has shown us once again, without a revolutionary doctrine, all these movements eventually faded away without changing the existing system. Lenin showed us in What Is To Be Done that all these movements would eventually drift toward reformism unless a party guided by Marxist doctrine led the movement. “There can be no revolutionary practice without revolutionary theory.” At this point, the source of the problem must be found in those who lead the movement.

Slogans are sentences that convey the demands of a movement in the shortest and most concise form. That is why we will begin our critique with slogans. First, let us strip away the movement itself and start with a slogan that has a revolutionary quality: “The solution is not at the ballot box, but in the streets.” This is a powerful slogan for the working class, but it has little relevance in the current protests. The primary effect of the protests will be to increase the vote for the main opposition Republican People's Party, and the left-wing parties allied with it. The current government is receiving support from both the US and Russia. However, these protests are also receiving significant support from the EU, particularly Germany. It is clear that one of the dynamics behind the protests is the power struggle between two capitalist parties. We are not surprised that the “radical” leftist parties are rushing so quickly and relentlessly to defend rotten parliamentarism with the support of a party that stands on the same platform as the murderers of Rosa Luxemburg.

Another slogan of the movement is “Justice, Law, Equality.” Yet the law is bourgeois law. Still, it is not at all surprising that the current so-called “Marxist” parties are using such a slogan; after all, their criticism does not extend to capitalism, but begins and ends with the government. The bourgeoisie can trample on the laws it has enacted through the current government, and when the government changes, it will trample on the new laws in the same way. At the root of laws is not this or that government, but class society.

The worst slogan comes from the Republican People's Party. "This struggle is not only the struggle of Ekrem İmamoğlu, not only the struggle of the Republican People's Party! This is a struggle to defend the future of 86 million people." The populist CHP still sees society as a classless and privilege-free whole! The interests of the people, the protection of the entire nation, etc., are fairy tales that the bourgeoisie has been shouting for a long time. Can the interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie be the same? Can the slave owner and the slave be equal? Ekrem İmamoğlu merely represents a section of the bourgeoisie on the political stage. The bourgeoisie, which shamelessly repeats the myth of classless democracy, offers nothing to the proletariat! The Republican People's Party municipality in Izmir refuses to pay the wages of municipal workers, while manipulating the workers' union organized in the sector!

Özgür Özel, head of the Republican People's Party said, “This is not a rally; this is an act of defiance against fascism,” while slogans like “Shoulder to shoulder against fascism” echoed from the crowd. What does Özgür Özel really have against fascism? Doesn't CHP already defend the interests of the people and the nation instead of the working class? Doesn't it use certain unions as a tool for its own vote-gathering policies and make class organizations dependent on itself? Mr. Özel is already taking steps that a fascist regime might want to take before even coming to power. Public opinion polls indicate that the İmamoğlu protests are bringing the Republican People's Party closer to power. The Republican People's Party, which yesterday ordered union leaders to end strikes, will be the party that deploys police against workers tomorrow when it comes to power.

In summary, the corruption of the movement led by the reformist bourgeoisie is inevitable. No matter how large the proletariat majority may be, the nature of the movement is determined by the class represented by the party that largely organizes and leads it. And the bourgeoisie's program has no purpose other than to completely exhaust the energy of the masses who want to rebel against an existence without a future and to gain votes from this. As long as the proletariat does not have its own class unions and party, it will

continue to be seen as a vote bank for bourgeois parties and stabbed in the back. The proletariat has only one program that can challenge the bourgeoisie and its police dogs. That is the communist program. The only structure capable of implementing this communist program and leading the masses is the internationally organized International Communist Party. The only force that can make the bourgeoisie and its despicable servants taste the weapons they use against the proletariat is the state under the rule of the Communist Party—that is, the dictatorship of the proletariat. The political slogans of the proletariat must be directed solely toward this goal.

THE IMPERIALIST WAR

Israel-Iran: Rehearsals for World War

The Israeli government has justified its attack on Iran as a means of preventing it from acquiring nuclear weapons. A defensive war then?

But the theater of war and its causes are not to be found in Iran or Israel, nor even in the entire Middle East. It is the irreversible crisis of global capitalism in its terminal phase that needs war for its survival. The attack by the State of Israel against Iran is only a first experiment and anticipation of this. As was the massacre in Gaza.

It is true that all forms of capitalism, all states, must now defend themselves. They must defend themselves against the economic and financial crisis, against competition in the markets, against the frenzied rearmament of their rivals. But more than anything else, they must defend themselves, on a general historical level, against their common great enemy, the international working class. That class, now almost invisible, but which is the bearer of communism, of revolution.

Today it is not conscious of this, except in its party, which safeguards its determined future.

But the Israeli government, like all others in the world, defends Capital, not its people. Netanyahu sacrifices them and hands them over to the orders of the Wall Street capitalists.

This is why it is necessary to provoke the collapse of the Ayatollah regime and replace it with another that is more responsive to Washington's interests in its fight to the death with rival Chinese imperialism: to cut off its oil routes and in Central Asia.

This project, moreover, is causing serious concern among other states in the region, especially the Gulf monarchies, which fear a power vacuum that is impossible to predict how it will be filled.

The overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq was an example of this policy of sowing chaos and destruction, with devastating effects on the populations, but also on the states. The fall of the Iraqi regime, imposed by the United States, brought down a state that opposed Iran's expansionism towards the Mediterranean, and certainly did not favor Israel. It took twenty years of continuous wars and massacres to destroy Syria, Lebanon, Gaza, and the West Bank. And in what way!

The preventive war waged by Israel, which also possesses the atomic bomb and has never allowed inspections of its nuclear plants, was approved by all Western countries, the same ones that condemned Russia's attack on Ukraine, which also justified it as defensive against NATO's expansion to the East.

International law is nothing but a deception and an illusion. Imperialisms now only confront each other on the level of deployed force, rearmament, and war.

We communists have no place on the side of Israel or Iran or any of the equally ferocious, militaristic, anti-worker, and anti-communist fronts of world imperialism.

The Iranian proletariat has no reason to show solidarity with those who exploit and oppress it, having suffered for decades the ruthless oppression of a bourgeois regime that kills and imprisons the most courageous workers' leaders and has sent millions of young proletarians to die at the front in the war against Iraq.

In this situation, the Iranian proletariat must take an anti-capitalist position, politically independent of all bourgeois parties, both in government and in opposition: no inclination toward democratic, secular, or even monarchical alternatives to the regime of priests.

In all countries, the duty of the working class is to strengthen its organizations for economic defense, to involve the female proletariat in the struggle for the emancipation of workers, to reject any appeal to national, religious, or ethnic solidarity with the ruling classes.

Only the reconstitution of the revolutionary Communist Party and the pursuit of the international communist revolution can put an end to exploitation, violence, and war.

The First Defeatism of the Palestinian and Israeli Proletariat Against the State of Israel and Hamas

The conflict in Gaza has been going on for 18 months. It is an inter-imperialist clash of capitalism in its putrescent phase. It is not between Zionism and Islamism, nor between Jews and Palestinians, but between strings of bourgeois states, hiding behind nationalist and religious ideologies to pursue ends of mere profit. A war that has produced the massacre of 54,000 Palestinians and 2,000 Israelis. Not because of any special evil on either or both sides, but because war for the preservation of capitalism is necessarily ruthless.

Bringing back peace is therefore not a matter of eliminating "fascism" on one side or "fanaticism" on the other, which would have produced and prolonged the conflict, but capitalism, which necessarily leads to war, producing and serving increasingly reactionary ideologies and movements. By mid-January last year-after 15 months of war, which began on Oct. 7, 2023, and just days before the new U.S. administration took office on Jan. 20-a truce had been reached between Israel and Hamas. As widely expected, the fragility of the truce quickly became apparent, and the second phase of the agreement was

never reached, with military actions resuming since March 18.

During those two months, the approximately 2.1 million Gazawis, spared from Israeli air force bombs, had faced the harshness of their plight and by the hundreds of thousands had flowed back from the south of the Strip to the north, finding the ruins of one of the most devastated areas of the conflict. Those two months also served Hamas to reorganize its ranks. Having suffered some 20,000 casualties among its militiamen, it would renew its ranks by enlisting as many more, driven by the search for what is now almost the only source of livelihood in the Strip. The Israeli state has thus failed to achieve its proclaimed goal of "destroying Hamas."

In the report exhibited at the general meeting at the end of January, published in the last issue of this newspaper, we showed how both sides in the war put forward arguments that they had emerged victorious, this mainly for internal purposes. We noted how the real loser, in fact, was the proletariat on both sides, since the truce had been the result not of its mobilization, but of agreements between the bourgeois parties, which, just as they had momentarily lowered their arms, so they would return to raise them, starting the slaughter again.

In the two months of the truce, the handing over of Israeli hostages was an occasion for the Hamas militias to show off, in the orderly uniforms during the war that had remained well preserved in the tunnels, barred to the civilian population, whose shield they were making. This display of force was aimed more at internal than external purpose, in order to deter the proletarian masses of Gaza from revolting. This assessment of ours has been confirmed by the events of the following months and up to the present. Having momentarily freed the Gaza proletariat from the grip of war, the control over it by the bourgeois Hamas regime cracked. Fighting resumed on March 18, and repeated demonstrations have unfolded with hundreds and in some cases thousands of proletarians calling for an end to the conflict and an end to the Hamas regime. These proletarians are calling for surrender, in a war between bourgeoisies in which they have realized they have nothing to lose. Not a single Palestinian flag has flown in these demonstrations, only white flags. It is clear that a sizable part of the Gaza proletariat places the responsibility for the conflict and its terrible consequences not only on the Israeli bourgeois state but also on Hamas.

Demonstrations have taken place mainly in the north of the Strip and some in Gaza City. Most recently, however, on May 19, they occurred in Khan Yunis, showing that the uprising is also gaining momentum in the southern part of the Strip, which many say is more firmly controlled by Hamas.

Other incidents have come to confirm Hamas's difficulty in maintaining control over the population with repeated looting of food stores and even a daylight execution of a policeman by local clansmen. The Israeli shelling, however, which began at relatively low intensity, became increasingly intense as the weeks passed. If they initially provoked street protests, past a certain limit they prevented or hindered them as the population had to put the urgency of surviving desperate conditions first. A proletariat prostrated and decimated by bombing is more controllable during and after the conflict. The Israeli Air Force came, therefore, to Hamas' rescue.

On the night of May 4-5, a week before the U.S. president's visit to three Persian Gulf countries-Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates-the Israeli government announced a new operation that should lead to the indefinite occupation of large parts of the Strip. The operation, "Chariots of Gideon," which began on May 18, was preceded by heavy shelling.

Among the targets repeatedly targeted by the air force was the European Hospital in Khan Yunis. In the tunnels below, Mohammed Sinwar, who had become the de facto head of Hamas after the killing of his brother Yahya last October, was reportedly killed. This confirmed how Hamas uses the civilian structures to hide, providing the Israeli state with the pretext to bomb them and carry out the project—explicitly claimed by the messianic far right alone but an objective result of the conflict—to make the Strip uninhabitable, then depopulate it as much as possible and control the population, who are locked up in internment camps or deported. On May 13 Netanyahu said, "For the emigration of Gaza residents, the problem is the reception of other countries: if they had the chance, 50 percent of Gazawis would leave." There is no doubt that this is true, that many proletarians would prefer escape from that hell, not seeking at all the martyrdom invoked by Hamas in the name of the Palestinian homeland. But no bourgeois party or state wants to take them in, first the Arab ones. Nor does Hamas, for which hundreds of thousands of unemployed youth represent its recruitment base and political clout, want to liberate them.

Gaza has a population that no capitalist state wants or knows what to do with. There were 400,000 in 1967, 1.1 million in 2001, 2.2 million in 2022, the year of the last census, with 54,000 births. But as the economic crisis progresses, it will be the entire world proletariat that will represent an unnecessary and dangerous overpopulation for capitalism. Gaza is the future that imperialism is preparing for the whole world, leading it toward a third world conflict, a new proletarian holocaust.

A complete change in the system of food aid distribution to the exhausted population is a key part of the new Operation Gideon's Chariots. Previously it was run by UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, with Hamas, according to Israel, able to appropriate parts of the aid to derive funding from it. The Israeli state since early March and for 11 weeks has blocked all entry by starving the population. In the two months of truce between January and March nearly 600 trucks a day were entering. Looting of warehouses multiplied. Then, as of May 21, it allowed 119 to enter in four days.

The new aid distribution system would be entrusted to private U.S. companies through four large distribution centers, three in Rafah and one in the center of the Strip, south of the Netzarim corridor, which passes south of Gaza City. Distribution is supposed to be weekly by delivering one package to each hamulot, i.e., extended family. The distribution of the 4 centers in the intentions of the Israeli government will serve to speed up the evacuation of the population to the south and empty the northern part.

Since 2016, under the Obama presidency, the United States has guaranteed \$3.8 billion a year in military aid to Israel, about 15 percent of the Israeli defense budget. The agreement was

supposed to remain in force until 2028. But as of Oct. 7, 2023, as emergency aid, in the first year of the war alone, the U.S. has allocated about \$23 billion to Israel and related operations, nearly six times the planned package. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, from 2019 to 2023 the U.S. supplied Israel with 69 percent of the weapons it imports; Germany 30 percent; Italy third with 0.9 percent.

Trump concluded commercial agreements with Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates worth \$600 billion, \$243 billion and \$200 billion, respectively. A few days earlier, on May 6, after bombing the Houthis in Yemen almost daily and heavily for a month and a half, he concluded an agreement with them: U.S. ships will no longer be the target of attacks by Shiite Houthi militias. But the latter continue to fire missiles at Israel. During his visit to Saudi Arabia Trump also met with Syria's newly elected president Ahmed al-Sharaa to whom he announced the lifting of sanctions on the country, which will allow investment by local powers: certainly by Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

Finally, suddenly, after 17 months of war and more than 50,000 casualties, the governments of the UK, France, Canada and other European countries seem to have noticed the ongoing massacre, denounced the catastrophic human situation in Gaza and threatened concrete action against Israel. But the false indignation of these bourgeoisies has nothing to do with a newfound solidarity. Instead, they are to blame for the change in their relations with U.S. imperialism, in its international strategy. They also have an interest in maintaining a balance between the two alliances of capitalist states that back Hamas or Israel and assess the weakening of the former to have reached an excessive degree.

Confirming the hollowness of the thesis of Israel's international isolation, since April it has been conducting dense negotiations with Turkey, sponsored by Azerbaijan, in order to avoid a conflict in Syria, after tensions had reached a high level and shortly before the Turkish army occupied a military airport near Palmyra, the Israeli Air Force bombed its runway and other infrastructure. Over Palestine, the interests of the capitalists of England and France have always clashed. The very birth of Israel meant for British capitalism the loss of its mandate. The Suez crisis in 1956 and the failure of the joint maneuver between France, Britain and Israel marked on the one hand the end of the historical colonialism of European imperialisms, and on the other hand the final submission of the Israeli bourgeoisie to U.S. imperialism.

It is no coincidence that Germany and Italy, which sell arms to Israel, have taken a different demeanor, more aligned with U.S. conduct, limiting themselves to harmless verbal criticism of Tel Aviv's conduct of war. The maneuvers of imperialisms, beyond a certain limit, are inscrutable. But what must concern the Palestinian, Israeli and international working class is that any agreement between the imperialisms will not be a harbinger not of a peaceful future but of an even worse conflict. The bourgeois powers that would find it expedient to silence arms today are the same ones that financed the war fronts. By the exact same cynical calculations they can make peace now and wage war tomorrow. Consider Qatar: it is among Hamas's main financiers, hosting its leadership abroad, at the same time it is home to the largest U.S. military base in the Middle East, doing billion-dollar deals with Washington, which is the largest funder of the Israeli military. Or to Turkey, also a supporter of Hamas, but part of NATO. To point to the Israeli bourgeois state alone as the enemy of the Palestinian proletarians is to mystify the reality of world capitalism. For them - and for the working class in all countries - it is the bourgeoisies all living on their sweat and blood.

This chain, this international bourgeois Holy Alliance, the proletariat can only break by fighting against its own bourgeoisie, on pain of being sucked into the games between the powers and ending up fighting not for itself but, on the war fronts or in the cities under bombs, for the class enemy. War can be truly stopped -- and not be a mere bourgeois truce between one conflict and another -- only by the mobilization of the proletarians involved in it, in a defeatist struggle of the domestic national front. This is the exceptional value of the demonstrations against Hamas these past two months in the Gaza Strip! In this same direction go the demonstrations that have been taking place every week within Israel for months, with constancy and stubbornness. Important were several public letters, with thousands of signatories, including from reservists, in which they called for an agreement to release the Israeli hostages, coming to a peace with Hamas. Tens of thousands of reservists have refused to be recalled to duty.

An important and courageous step forward was marked by the demonstration in Tel Aviv on April 28, when hundreds of demonstrators marched showing photos of Palestinian children who were victims of the war in Gaza, despite the fact that police tried to prevent it. A wall was broken, publicly affirming solidarity for the victims on the other side of the war, rather than merely calling for the release of hostages. However, this movement, admirable in the historical and current conditions of war in Israel, is interclass, disorganized and disoriented in character. To stop the war requires the intervention of a real social force. This force can only come from the class opposed to all bourgeois interests, a class that can present itself as cohesive, unified, framed, disciplined and politically directed to an end. This class is the working class. The basic framing of the working class is in trade unions and its weapon the strike. But the unions today, even in Israel, are headed by agents of the bourgeoisie, patriotic and warmongering.

On May 6, Histadrut leader Arnon Bar-David categorically rejected the idea of a general strike, adding that he did not support the recent teachers' strike: "They must go back to work. I do not support the strike (...) I made a strategic decision not to stop the country in wartime" ("The Times of Israel," May 7).

Israeli teachers, who have been fighting against the wage cuts imposed by a government maneuver to meet the costs of the war, have separated their interests from those of their own ruling class and have in fact stood against its war and for its defeat. A defeatism sympathetic to and convergent with that of the Gazawis. "Stop the country in time of war," Bar-David's well-motivated fear, is a historical necessity, and the watchword of the communists.

The road will be neither easy nor short to the rebuilding of real trade unions and a real world communist party, both defeatist and anti-patriotic. The working

class, even of Israel, is still under the control of the bourgeoisie, because of the long tradition of trade unions sold out to the regime, because of the residual strength of imperialism that still guarantees the corruption of a layer of the working class aristocracy. But this first small defeatist strike of Israeli teachers, however partial and limited, points the way to a general proletarian struggle on class positions and, therefore, implicitly also against the war and militarism of the State of Israel, in de facto solidarity with the oppressed and exploited of Palestine and against the war being prepared between states around the world.

World Imperialism's Struggle For Control of the Seas

As we said in our article *Aircraft Carrier Imperialism in Il Programma Comunista*, 1957

Always keeping in mind that we are abstracting from other basic differences in the production systems prior to capitalism and capitalist imperialism are most notably distinguished by that fact that one was manifested in state structures that had a basis in territories and land, while the other emerged on the historical stage above all as world domination founded on naval hegemony and therefore on the domination of the great ocean trade routes. In the slave production system a state power that enjoyed land-based military superiority could play an imperialist role; under capitalism, on the other hand, which is the mode of production that has led to unprecedented levels of commodity production and expanded beyond the limits of credibility the phenomena of mercantilism that had already been stirred up in the preceding modes of production, imperialism is connected with naval supremacy, which today means naval-air supremacy.

Capitalist imperialism is above all hegemony on the world market. In order to conquer this hegemony, however, it is not enough to possess a powerful industrial machine and a territory that ensures a supply of raw materials. What is needed is an immense navy and merchant fleet, that is, the means by which the great intercontinental trade routes can be controlled. For history shows that the succession in imperialist supremacy is strictly linked, in the regime of capitalist mercantilism, to the succession in naval supremacy.

A familiar story is playing out across the world's oceans. The preeminent world imperialism, decayed and overstretched, is struggling to maintain its naval supremacy. Amid the developing overproduction crisis, across the world the United States and its sub-imperialisms are engaged in an active struggle with the China-Russia-Iran bloc over control of the planet's maritime commercial networks. It is in this war on the seas that the decisive battles for global supremacy shall be waged. Already the planet's oceans are increasingly the site of competing naval fleets exercising their contesting claims of sovereign legal regulatory powers over vast tracts of waters, attempting to police foreign vessels belonging to the vast commercial fleets of the rival imperialism leading to rising tensions and escalating potential for military confrontation.

Accusations of state sponsored "lawlessness" on the high-seas and allegations of "piracy" are now exchanged. Contributing to the tensions is the Russian "shadow fleet" of potentially over a thousands ships increasingly backed by military force to evade Western sanctions, a massive Chinese shipbuilding industry facing a production glut, and a growing Chinese navy which threatens to outmatch the overstretched U.S. fleet in the South China Sea. As China begins to utilize its foreign bases in Djibouti to exert its influence over Africa and the Red Sea, it likewise has worked to utilize its industrial and financial monopolies to gain control of the Panama Canal for which the U.S. is presently actively contesting. Despite China's relative underdog status for the time being, U.S. imperialism finds itself in an untenable position, completely dependent on foreign shipping industry not only for its commercial interests but also for its military logistics. It is because of this critical weakness that its current imperial ambitions of the U.S. have been drastically hemmed making any aggressive action against China, Panama or Greenland likely to be a catastrophe unless the U.S. can rapidly redevelop it's naval merchant fleet and shipbuilding industry; however, its worsening financial situation makes such a rapid expansion of the vast infrastructure needed to redevelop it's shipping industry an unlikely prospect anytime soon.

Rise of U.S. Naval Supremacy

Over the last 30 years, maritime commerce has expanded dramatically. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, global seaborne trade rose from approximately 4 billion metric tons in 1990 to over 12.3 billion tons in 2023, more than tripling in volume. The Center for Strategic and International Studies estimates that maritime transport accounts for around 80% of global trade by volume and 70% by value, with over 50,000 merchant vessels registered across 150+ countries, employing more than 1.9 million seafarers worldwide. They also report that freight earnings from shipping total around \$380 billion annually, roughly 5% of the value of global trade, making maritime transport not only a logistical necessity but a major component of the world economy. Additionally, in some extractive sectors, such as mining and oil, maritime shipping accounts for up to 76% of all trade value. In contrast to this growth, the United States has retreated from direct control of global maritime infrastructure.

After World War II, the U.S. was the unrivaled maritime superpower, dominating shipbuilding, port management, and commercial shipping. During the wars, the U.S. capitalist state, relatively unburdened by previous debts, was able to raise enormous funds for investment into shipbuilding, building 2,300 vessels for World War I and more than 5,500 vessels during World War II. The war destroyed European and Asian maritime powers who emerged saddled with wartime debts and unable to fully redevelop, while the U.S. shipbuilding boom, stimulated by wartime state spending, left thousands of cargo ships and a vast logistical network. The dominance of the U.S. Navy ensured that both commercial shipping and military deployments remained under American domination. Through naval dominance, bilateral port agreements, and control of

key chokepoints, the U.S. integrated these laws and agencies into a broader imperialist framework that shaped the postwar maritime order to ensure the total dominance of U.S. finance capital and its commercial monopolies against potential competitors like in Europe and Asia.

After World War II, the U.S. Merchant Marine emerged as the backbone of American commercial shipping and military logistics. Though composed of privately owned, civilian-operated ships, the fleet was heavily subsidized, regulated, and mobilized by the state, forming a strategic auxiliary to the U.S. Navy. Much of the wartime-built tonnage, over 2,000 surplus vessels, was transferred to private companies, which continued to operate under U.S. flag with labor drawn from unionized hiring halls. The Merchant Marine Act of 1936 ensured that U.S. cargo was carried on U.S. crewed ships, and that the fleet could be requisitioned in times of war. In practice, most U.S. shipping after the war was organized within this system, blending private ownership with state oversight and a labor force organized through maritime unions.

Sailors Unions

Before World War II, U.S. sailors' unions were already among the most militant and internationally minded segments of the labor movement. Defensive organizations like the Sailors' Union of the Pacific (SUP) and the newly formed National Maritime Union (NMU) broke with conservative craft unionism and organized across lines of race, skill, and rank, embracing a combative, industrial union model. These unions led hard-fought strikes, and aligned with broader CIO efforts to build class-wide solidarity. Their ranks included many communist and socialist militants over the years who rejected segregation and imperialist war. Yet, with the outbreak of World War II, the communist party leadership within many of these unions, following the degenerated Communist Party USA's line after 1941, chose to subordinate the class interests of maritime workers to the national war effort under Moscow's Popular Front initiative, urging sailors to collaborate with government and employers in the name of anti-fascism. As a result, union leadership often suppressed strike activity, discouraged confrontation, and promoted unity with the capitalist state under Roosevelt's New Deal program, believing that their loyalty would secure gains after the war.

This strategy proved disastrous. Merchant mariners suffered the highest casualty rate of any service with 1 in 27 perishing. The wartime promises of improved conditions, job security, and recognition were broken. Thousands of merchant mariners were laid off in the immediate postwar years, union hiring halls came under attack, and leftist leadership was purged under the guise of national security. The Coast Guard's loyalty screening program, supported by the FBI and federal authorities, revoked seamen's papers based on political beliefs and union activity. While the rank and file grew increasingly militant in response, union leadership, particularly those following the misleaders in the Stalized Communist Party USA, remained bound by their wartime commitment to national unity, leaving them unprepared for the class upsurge that followed.

The rising cost of living and simmering feelings of betrayal culminated in a wave of postwar maritime strikes, the most significant being the 1946 national maritime strike, involving over 100,000 workers from the NMU, SUP, Marine Firemen's Union, and others. These strikes demanded wage increases, and job security amid rising layoffs and privatization. Their actions were part of a broader postwar labor upsurge but were met with intense repression, especially as Cold War anti-communism escalated. The 1947 SUP strike and solidarity actions with the ILWU's 1948 West Coast port strike further deepened their confrontation with employers in their state. It was largely in response that the government passed anti-labor legislation like the Taft-Hartley Act. The implementation of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 and the binding of the unions to the interests of the capitalist state, combined with the rise of containerization in the 1960s - 70s, U.S. sailor unions experienced a slow but steady erosion in power that culminated in the Reagan-era offensive of the 1980s. The period from the late 1940s to the early 1980s marked a transition from developing militancy and power of organized maritime labor to its near-total defeat.

Decline of U.S. Shipping At the Onset of the Overproduction Crisis

The attack on U.S. sailors' unions and the turn toward foreign shipping were inseparable from the broader reorganizing of global capitalism and the offensive on the working class that began in the 1970s and intensified in the 1980s. Both were key components of U.S. capital's strategy to restore profitability & overcome its emerging overproduction crisis. To fully take advantage of hyper-exploited Chinese workers, domestic consumer demand had to be increased and cheap commodities made more accessible. Thus the retail sector was expanded, industrial manufacturing and shipping offshored and delegated to countries who could offer more cheaply exploited proletarians.

As reported by the Brookings Institution and the Bureau of Economic Analysis, return on capital in finance and services far outpaced manufacturing and transport by 1985 with the average return on financial investment 12–14%, compared to 3–5% in U.S. industrial shipping. Thus, Wall Street investment banks like Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley exited shipping ownership and redirected capital toward port privatization deals, foreign shipping equities and bonds, maritime trade finance and derivatives. This process was helped along with the development of containerization and other logistics and communications technologies that revolutionized global shipping by drastically reducing costs and transportation time. These innovations allowed for a rapid increase in the volume of global maritime commerce while simultaneously decreasing the amount of wage-labor required. High fixed costs for U.S. shipping due to union wages and benefits (U.S. maritime crew costs were 5–8 times higher than foreign crews) made them less competitive on a global scale. With U.S. naval superiority guaranteeing imperial dominance, an abundance of more profitable investment opportunities available for capital, and a need to obtain lower shipping costs to access larger super-profits this shift was in the interest of the national capital accumulation at the time which always searches and finds the best

rate of returns.

As such, regulations like the Federal Maritime commission that mandated U.S. labor and operated ships for commerce had become a restraint to U.S. capital's profit rates. Thus the capitalist class in the period of the Reagan administration made the choice to sack these regulations as they did with many others. Thanks to these shifts, companies like Microsoft, Nike, Apple were able for decades to rake in super-profits, becoming the most powerful and profitable corporations on earth. Yet, these gains were underwritten by transferring a section of the profits to foreign-flagged carriers and global shipping cartels. Just as delegating manufacturing to China allowed its developing bourgeoisie to elevate its imperial might, the same was true of the regional capitals who had delegated to them the duties of shipping for the financial center of world imperialism.

As U.S. carriers declined, foreign carriers dominated, especially Maersk (Denmark), eventually COSCO (China), Hapag-Lloyd (Germany), and Evergreen (Taiwan). U.S. finance capital didn't wholly lose out, it invested in them. Reflecting the complicated balance of power between regional capital power blocks and the relationship between dominant and subordinate capitals, today, major U.S. institutional investors (BlackRock, Vanguard, JPMorgan) own substantial, while by no means controlling, shares in Maersk, Hapag-Lloyd, and ZIM Integrated Shipping Services. The result is that U.S. finance capital, while it has profited from its investment in the firms, has lost total control over this critical industry giving leverage to its subordinate imperialisms to use as a tool in their own constant quest for independence and accumulation at the best rate. Today, fewer than 200 U.S.-flagged commercial ships remain in international trade, and unionized maritime jobs are a fraction of what they once were.

U.S. Finance vs The Foreign Shipping Cartels

Since the 1980s, the United States has steadily ceded control of its maritime shipping industry to foreign capital, culminating in today's near-total dominance by a handful of foreign-owned shipping cartels. As of the end of 2024, three major shipping alliances, comprised of companies like Maersk (Denmark), MSC (Switzerland), COSCO (China), and CMA CGM (France), controlled approximately 90% of the U.S. containerized shipping trade. These cartels set freight rates, allocate vessel space, and effectively control access to the vast majority of U.S. ports. With fewer than 200 U.S.-flagged ships left in operation out of a global fleet of over 40,000, and only 0.13% of the world's cargo ships built in the United States, the U.S. now relies overwhelmingly on foreign-controlled capacity for both commercial trade and military logistics.

The consequences of this dependence became strikingly clear during the economic crisis that ensued in 2020, when foreign carriers, flush with state support and artificially propped up demand, hiked shipping rates on some routes by as much as 1,000%, raking in \$190 billion in profits in 2021 alone, according to maritime financial. Meanwhile, they rejected U.S. agricultural exports, leaving food to rot on American docks as they rushed empty containers back to Asia to capture more profitable cargoes. This sparked major conflicts with American agribusiness giants like Tyson Foods, who had already demanded federal intervention into the shipping alliances as early as 2016. In 2017, U.S. regulators launched a price-fixing investigation into the top 20 container carriers, an effort that ended without charges, despite mounting pressure. As a result, sectors like agriculture, retail, and manufacturing have been forced to absorb soaring logistics costs while remaining hostage to foreign carriers' capacity decisions.

U.S. finance capital, which once supported the dismantling of the domestic shipping industry in favor of leaner, offshore supply chains, is now struggling to reassert control over maritime logistics. It finds its larger imperial interests hemmed in by the commercial power of rivals and even its subordinate blocks who it cannot totally dominate without these industrial tools. As such, investment firms such as BlackRock, Goldman Sachs, and Brookfield have poured capital into port infrastructure, container leasing firms, and logistics platforms, but they do not own or control the ships themselves. Efforts to diversify port access or expand U.S.-flagged shipping has met stiff resistance from the entrenched cartels and their allies in European and Asian governments. The U.S. pays foreign companies to ensure access to their own supply chain in wartime. The Maritime Security Program (MSP), which pays Maersk over \$5.3 million per ship annually to provide vessels for U.S. military use, underscores the dependency. Meanwhile, if any major carrier, especially Maersk or COSCO, were to withdraw from U.S. trade routes due to political disputes or sanctions, the gap could not be filled by domestic or allied alternatives, given the lack of American shipbuilding capacity and crew availability.

The implications of this industrial weakness are dire for U.S. imperialism. In November 2024, the U.S. Navy was forced to decommission 17 support vessels due to a shortage of qualified civilian mariners. At current capacity, the U.S. could only field about 15 fuel tankers in the event of a major Pacific conflict, far short of the 100+ tankers needed for sustained operations. The U.S. now depends on shipping cartels whose vessels are flagged in foreign ports, crewed by non-U.S. nationals, and managed according to profit motives and foreign policy considerations beyond American control. Without a national merchant fleet or shipbuilding base, and with finance capital likely structurally incapable of reversing this decline, American imperial logistics now find themselves stuck between a rock and hard place. Thus it has once again turned to its allies among union leaders for support in its efforts against the foreign capitals, raising the banner of the infamous national interest.

Dockworker Unions & The Proclaimed National Interest

Boss-linked and opportunist Longshore union leaders in the United States, in both the ILWU on the West Coast and theILA on the East and Gulf Coasts, have deepened their alignment with the bourgeois state in a nationalist front to reclaim U.S. ports from foreign-controlled shipping interests in recent years. In April 2025, the ILWU's Coast Longshore Division formally urged the U.S. Trade Representative to impose a "land-border fee"

on cargo routed through Mexican or Canadian entry points, explicitly designed to direct more shipping through American ports and bolster domestic maritime infrastructure. Both unions' leadership have also affirmed their commitment not to interfere with military or arms shipments, including those bound for Gaza, reinforcing the function of the labor aristocrats as extensions of U.S. bourgeois national security policy. During the pivotal 2024 East and Gulf Coast longshore strike, both Vice President Harris and former President Trump publicly backed dockworkers in their demand that U.S. ports be prioritized over foreign carriers, exemplifying how opportunist elements in union leadership align themselves with imperialist policy which in turn they present to workers as an advantageous policy earned in common struggle with the bourgeois exploiters, when in reality is nothing but smoke mirrors and pathetic cowardice bought at a small price for the capitalist class.

This critical position within the production process and the support of U.S. bourgeoisie who hopes to bind the port workers to their cause amid the escalating inter-imperialist rivalry allowed the good gains achieved by dockworkers. In their 2024-25 contract, East Coast ILA longshoremen secured a wage increase of 62% over six years, with base pay rising from approximately \$39 to \$63 per hour, enabling many to earn over \$200,000 annually with overtime, more than double the national average wage of \$28.34 per hour. Thus we can see how in critical sectors the U.S. bourgeoisie is forced to pay off workers, binding them to the national project. While it inversely demonstrates the bourgeois' own vulnerability should workers manage to break with opportunist and boss-linked leadership and join the wider working class in struggling for establishing the united front for the class union.

Rising Chinese Naval Powers

China operates a vast merchant fleet, comprising over 5,600 vessels with a total cargo capacity of around 270 million tons, ranking it as the second-largest merchant fleet in the world, just behind Greece. Alongside this, China has rapidly expanded its influence over global port infrastructure. It now builds, manages, or operates more than 100 commercial ports across 63 countries, with seven of the world's ten busiest ports located in China itself. This civilian maritime network also lays the groundwork for potential logistical support to Chinese naval forces, as these global port assets could eventually serve military functions such as resupply or ship maintenance. Much of this maritime expansion has occurred through direct government support and strategic planning.

Chinese shipyards simultaneously produce both commercial and naval vessels, using shared infrastructure, labor, and technological expertise. According to projections from the U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence, China is on track to field 475 warships by 2035, compared to about 310 for the United States. A report from the Center for Strategic and International Studies notes that in 25 of 28 historical conflicts, the side with the larger fleet emerged victorious, largely due to its ability to absorb losses while maintaining combat effectiveness. While the U.S. Navy still holds an edge in terms of quality, especially in the number of high-capability destroyers, with 73 American destroyers compared to China's 42, China is catching up.

China also benefits from a geographic advantage. It is primarily focused on projecting naval power in the South China Sea, allowing it to concentrate its fleet regionally. In contrast, the U.S. Navy remains stretched across multiple global theaters. While military simulations suggest China would suffer higher losses in a hypothetical conflict with the United States, it is believed to have the capacity to endure those losses and sustain combat operations, posing a strategic challenge to U.S. naval supremacy.

The Shadow Fleets & The Shipping Glut

Russia's rapidly growing "shadow fleet" is not only a tool for circumventing Western oil sanctions it has also become a critical mechanism for alleviating the global overproduction crisis in shipping production. With estimates ranging from 343 to over 1,600 vessels, the fleet primarily consists of aging, second-hand tankers bought from Western and particularly Greek shipowners. These vessels, often decades old, rusting, uninsurable, and flagged under countries such as Gabon, Comoros, or the Cook Islands, carried as much as 53% of Russia's seaborne oil exports in early 2025. Their reintegration into global trade through sanctions evasion has created a secondary shipping economy where devalued tonnage, no longer viable in the main circuits of capitalist maritime trade, is repurposed, relieving pressure from a system plagued by chronic overproduction and collapsing freight rates.

The crisis of overcapacity is measurable and severe. In 2023, the global shipbuilding order book for new ship production stood at 27% of the total fleet tonnage, a dramatic rise from just 8% in 2020, despite flat or declining demand for new shipping carrying capacity. Global container freight rates have dropped over 80% since their 2021 peak, and LNG carrier rates fell by 70% year-on-year in late 2024. Major trade corridors have contracted under the weight of U.S.-China tensions, regional conflicts like the Red Sea blockade, and protectionist measures. This glut has left older ships redundant, prompting Greek shipowners, who control nearly 20% of global deadweight tonnage, to offload hundreds of aging tankers to anonymous shell firms in Hong Kong, Vietnam, and the Marshall Islands, many of which have reappeared in the Russian fleet.

Despite nominal sales, Greek capital still exerts control over this fleet through shadow management structures. Firms like Minerva Marine and Dynacom have been shown by Reuters and Follow the Money investigations to continue managing tankers carrying Russian Urals crude. Using flag-of-convenience registries and low-wage crews from the Philippines, Indonesia, and Ukraine, Greek shipping interests maintain profitability in a glutted market while evading legal liability. The shadow fleet thus acts as a circuit through which surplus capital and labor, otherwise unprofitable in core markets, are cheaply reabsorbed, exemplifying how capitalist crisis generates opportunities for speculative accumulation in peripheral, semi-legal zones of commerce.

Sanctions enforcement has intensi-

fied, with the U.S. Treasury sanctioning 183 vessels in January 2025, and the EU and UK banning 342 tankers in their 17th sanctions package. According to Brookings, 264 out of 343 monitored vessels have been designated by at least one Western authority, with nearly half facing multiple overlapping sanctions. This crackdown has triggered widespread deregistration of vessels, which now increasingly operate without flags or under opaque registries to avoid detection. In effect, Western enforcement has amplified the shadow fleet's demand for marginal, untraceable ships, vessels deemed too old, risky, or inefficient for mainstream trade, but ideal for clandestine sanctions circumvention.

In response, Western powers have initiated a broad militarization of sanctions policing. NATO-aligned states have begun surveillance, interdiction, and boarding operations against suspect tankers. In May 2025, Polish forces intercepted a shadow fleet vessel performing irregular maneuvers near an undersea cable between Poland and Sweden, redirecting it to a Russian port. Finnish patrols have deterred sabotage attempts by flag-of-convenience tankers, while NATO's "Baltic Sentry" mission now regularly boards vessels in high-risk zones. The UK-led Nordic Warden system, operated by the Joint Expeditionary Force, integrates AI-based vessel tracking and naval drones to monitor activity across 22 maritime zones in the North and Baltic Seas, signaling a new model of digitalized maritime policing.

These enforcement efforts have prompted increasingly assertive Russian naval responses. Russian warships were observed escorting tankers in the Gulf of Finland, and an Estonian-NATO boarding attempt in May 2025 on the flagless tanker Jaguar resulted in Russian air force intervention. Moscow now accuses NATO of "piracy" and defends its fleet as sovereign property, while quietly ramping up naval spending. The "Maritime Security Belt 2025" exercises between Russia and China, explicitly aimed at defending shipping lanes from "piracy," underscore how sanctions enforcement has contributed to a geopolitical feedback loop- capitalist overproduction of ships generates a shadow economy; Western policing of this economy provokes confrontation; and the global seas become militarized arenas of imperialist rivalry where economic crisis and geopolitical antagonism converge.

The Red Sea and the Suez Canal

The Red Sea, a critical artery for global commerce, accounting for nearly 30% of container traffic and vital oil shipments, has faced unprecedented disruption in recent years. Since late 2023, Iran-aligned Houthi insurgents in Yemen have launched hundreds of drone and missile assaults on merchant vessels transiting the Bab al-Mandeb Strait and adjacent waters. As a result, global shipping giants like Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd have rerouted at least 20% of Asia-Europe container traffic around Africa's Cape of Good Hope, extending voyages by 10 days, increasing fuel consumption, emissions, and insurance costs, while also halving traffic through the Suez Canal. Egypt consequently lost approximately \$7 billion in 2024 canal revenues, around 60% below pre-crisis levels.

The Houthis maintain strong connections with Iran who supplies drones, missiles, and financial support. Iranian oil exports, more than 90% of which go to China, have fueled the Iranian Revolutionary Guard's proxy operations, including support for the Houthis. Beijing, while officially condemning Houthi attacks in UN forums, has refrained from actively supporting U.S. military measures and abstained from critical Security Council votes. China's military presence in Djibouti, home to its first overseas base built as part of its Belt and Road Initiative, provides strategic proximity to Houthi-controlled routes.

Between late 2023 and mid-2025, Houthi attacks resulted in over 60 merchant vessels being directly targeted, with a dozen suffering damage or sinking. Casualties included at least three sailors killed and 20 crew evacuated due to severe injuries. In response, the U.S. Navy, backed by a multinational coalition under Operation Prosperity Guardian, deployed over 30 ships and expended roughly \$1.5-billion in munitions Despite intercepting dozens of missiles and drones, the U.S. struggled to fully secure the route. In early 2025, U.S. and British airstrikes comprising over 1,000 sorties and attacks targeted Houthi launch sites at Ras Isa and Saada.

The sudden surge in Houthi missile and drone attacks in early 2025 posed increasing threats to both Saudi oil infrastructure and vulnerable European shipping routes. By mid-2025, Houthi forces had launched over 120 attacks since the start of the year, marking a 400% increase compared to the previous year. Thus, European merchant traffic through the Bab el-Mandeb declined nearly 75%, prompting rerouting around the Cape of Good Hope and driving freight rates and insurance costs significantly higher. In response the U.S. significantly expanded Operation Prosperity Guardian, increasing its naval presence from an initial 2-3 vessels in late 2024 to a peak of 8 warships by March 2025. As daily air patrols and precision strikes targeted Houthi radar systems, drone launch sites, and suspected arms depots it was coordinated closely with Saudi military intelligence, which provided real-time surveillance, targeting support, and regional base access.

This U.S. escalation also served to counter European strategic autonomy ambitions, as seen in the launch of Operation Aspides. France, Italy, and Spain rejected U.S. command authority and initiated Aspides on February 19, 2024, under an entirely EU-led command structure with six warships, aerial reconnaissance, and ~130 staff. Funded at roughly €17 million (\$17.8 million) through February 2026, Aspides has escorted over 640 ships, providing close protection to around 370, but its purely defensive mandate banned any offensive strikes. U.S. officials publicly praised the EU mission for boosting maritime security yet emphasized that its role was complementary and subordinate to U.S. strategy, to "deconflict and coordinate defensive operations," ensuring that Europe contributes more without undermining U.S. dominance. This balance allowed Washington to present a façade of allied solidarity while maintaining operational leadership, a posture that was pivotal in solidifying Trump's May summit with Riyadh, which secured \$600 billion in promised Saudi investment, including \$142 billion in U.S. arms sales, conditional on continued U.S.-led security guarantees over the Gulf's trade arteries.

Just prior to the summit in May 2025, an Oman-mediated ceasefire secured safe passage for U.S. and allied merchant ships

but explicitly excluded Israeli-linked vessels. Israel, led by Defense Minister Israel Katz, denounced this as a "moral and strategic betrayal," asserting it must "defend itself independently" and warning of unilateral military measures to protect its maritime interests, demonstrating cracks in Israel's relationship with the U.S. who in turn wishes to curb its potential independence as an independent regional imperialism.

Since 2008, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has maintained a permanent escort presence in the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea, initially under the banner of anti-piracy operations. This presence deepened with the opening of China's first overseas military base in Djibouti in 2017, strategically located near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a critical chokepoint for maritime trade between the Indian Ocean and Europe. The Djibouti base serves as both a logistical hub and a projection platform for China's expanding global naval reach, directly supporting the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which has funneled over \$155 billion in Chinese loans and infrastructure investments into East Africa alone. During the Houthi shipping crisis, Chinese-flagged vessels remained untouched by Houthi attacks, the product of China's tacit alignment with Iran and its influence over Houthi decision-making, allowing Beijing to secure its commercial interests without military escalation. Refusing to join the U.S.-led Operation Prosperity Guardian, China instead deployed PLAN task groups, often consisting of two warships and a replenishment ship, to protect its own and allied shipping, particularly vessels tied to Chinese state-owned enterprises, logistics firms, and Russian cargo lines. These patrols safeguard not only trade routes but also the deepening interests of Chinese finance capital in Africa, including port infrastructure in Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia's access corridor, which are vital to China's strategy of securing supply chains, export markets, and debt-leveraged political influence across the continent.

The U.S. Conquest of the Panama Canal

In March 2025, a proposed \$22.8 billion acquisition was announced by BlackRock, via its Global Infrastructure Partners division and the Italian Aponte family's Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC), aiming to purchase 43 port terminals worldwide from Hong Kong-based CK Hutchison, including two strategically critical terminals at both ends of the Panama Canal. The deal marked a significant attempted reassertion of U.S. finance capital's control over key global shipping routes, serving the logistical and strategic interests of American industrial and financial monopolies amid intensifying inter-imperialist rivalry. Although Chinese state media condemned the planned sell-off as "treason," CK Hutchison, under billionaire Li Ka-shing, has long maintained a posture of pragmatic independence from Beijing, even while its port holdings were pivotal to China's Belt and Road Initiative. As of mid-2025, however, the deal remains in regulatory limbo, with China's State Administration for Market Regulation opening an antitrust review in April and warning that the transaction cannot proceed without official approval. Despite this, the BlackRock-MSC initiative, which also targets terminals in the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America, is widely seen as a strategic counter-move by U.S. imperialism to roll back expanding Chinese maritime influence and reestablish dominance over global logistics infrastructure.

At the same time, Maersk had taken countermeasures. The Danish carrier controlling 14.3% of global container ship capacity across 672 vessels acquired the Panama Canal Railway Company as a crucial rail link that provides logistical leverage over canal transit. Maersk, a joint stock company with majority shares in the hands of Danish and European finance, represents the interests and ambitions of European imperialism ever yearning for a return to old glory. Maersk thus enters the game of imperial intrigue in Panama both to secure its profits and military interests of Danish-European imperialism. Maersk also remains a key industrial instrument in the U.S. Maritime Security Program, which transports the military's equipment around the world, earning \$5.3 million per vessel annually to support U.S. war logistics. Because its ships call at two dozen major U.S. ports that rely on Maersk it could cripple potential U.S. military operations in Greenland or the Arctic if it blocked shipping or logistics as the foreign-owned fleet remains vital to U.S. military logistic operations. Thus, it has strategically maneuvered to hamper and gain leverage over U.S. imperialism aspirations of conquering Greenland which remains in control of Denmark.

The announcement of the Blackrock deal in Panama, came amid a campaign of militaristic threats from the Trump administration. The brigandry bore fruits in April 2025, as U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced that Washington had reached a "framework agreement" with the Panamanian government granting toll-free and priority passage for U.S. naval vessels through the Panama Canal, a move justified as necessary for "hemispheric stability." As part of the agreement, Panama allowed an increase in the presence of U.S. military advisors and security contractors at Tocumen Air Base and Rodman Naval Station, officially designated for "joint maritime logistics and disaster response." However, local media and opposition leaders characterized the deployment as a de facto return of U.S. troops, sparking mass protests in Panama City involving thousands of demonstrators opposing foreign military encroachment and calling the deal a betrayal of national sovereignty. Despite the domestic protests and unable to resist the goliath of the U.S. Panama began unwinding its economic relationship with China, including formally withdrawing from the Belt and Road Initiative.

The Attempt at Rebuilding the U.S. Shipping Industry

In response to the crippling deficiency of the U.S. shipping industry, the U.S. has launched an aggressive maritime reform agenda. A revived Shipbuilding Office, established via executive order, aims to rebuild U.S. yards and reduce reliance on foreign-built tonnage. Concurrently, the administration rolled out port docking fees, \$50 to \$120 per ton, targeting Chinese-built or Chinese-flagged vessels, beginning October 2025, and backed these measures with the introduction of the bipartisan "SHIPS for America Act", which while still being considered, offers tax credits, direct contracts, and sets firm targets to build 250 ships in ten years. Be-

yond regulation, the U.S. has pursued bilateral shipbuilding collaboration with its subordinates. Huntington Ingalls Industries signed an MOU with South Korea's HD Hyundai Heavy Industries in April 2025 to jointly build commercial and defense vessels. South Korea, now a top-three global shipbuilder, also sent delegations to Washington to negotiate trade and defense partnerships that may include shipbuilding content or technology transfers.

Despite these initiatives, structural problems persist. BlackRock and MSC now are on the verge of controlling key maritime chokepoints, but they lack ownership of ships or crews or the essential machinery of maritime power, leaving the U.S. military to still be reliant on foreign-flagged logistics networks. Maersk's dual role as private carrier and Pentagon contractor magnifies this paradox: if Danish state policy diverges, U.S. operations could be disrupted. While collaborative ventures with South Korea and others aim to expand industrial capacity, they remain far from restoring a full U.S. maritime fleet. In sum, America's strategy to reclaim maritime sovereignty is reshaping policy, capital, and alliances but continues to fall short of rebuilding the industrial backbone necessary to maintain naval dominance and end reliance on this critical industry dominated by the interests of increasingly antagonistic sub-imperialisms.

For a successful revival, America must expand maritime academies, recruit thousands more sailors, and rebuild shipyards, tasks complicated by a labor-ready population that has shrunk from 50,000 in 1960 to fewer than 10,000 today. Industry experts warn that deep-seated structural issues ranging from aging infrastructure and cost overruns to regulatory red tape must be resolved before increased production can materialize.

The situation is increasingly paralleling that of the decline of British maritime power after World War II which was swift and decisive. At the end of the war, Britain still possessed the largest merchant fleet in the world, with over 30% of global tonnage under its flag. However, the postwar era brought imperial contraction, austerity, and deindustrialization. The United Kingdom faced mounting debts in maintaining its overseas colonies and domestic welfare programs while simultaneously losing market share in shipping to newer, lower-cost competitors. In the 1960s, the Shipbuilding Industry Board, created under the 1967 Shipbuilding Act, sought to consolidate British yards to improve competitiveness; however, despite these reforms, British shipbuilding faced stiff global competition especially from subsidized Japanese and Korean firms. By the 1980s, British shipyards had lost the capacity to compete on a global scale, and by 2012, the UK controlled less than 1% of global merchant shipbuilding reflecting the total decline of its former imperial might.

Industry experts and official estimates suggest that reviving the U.S. shipping industry to meet global competitiveness and military needs would require hundreds of billions in sustained investment. A congressional-commissioned study and economic think tanks estimate the nation needs assured access to at least 1,300 commercially viable vessels to ensure strategic sealift capability and maintain that fleet in active rotation. Currently, the U.S. operates only about 80 oceangoing vessels for international commerce, compared to China's approximately 5,500. To bridge this gap, the Maritime Administration (MARAD) requested \$235 million for operations and training (with \$151.5 million for the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy) and \$372 million for the Maritime Security Program, covering roughly 60 vessels in 2026. Additional grants include \$20 million for shipyard infrastructure and \$3.7 million for Title XI loan management.

The SHIPS for America Act, which is currently before Congress and included in "One Big Beautiful Bill," proposes much larger funding levels: it mandates financial incentives like a 25% investment tax credit for shipyard modernization, a national Trust Fund for maritime development, and consistent multi-billion-dollar annual spending on vessel construction, repair, mariner workforce, and port infrastructure. Though precise totals vary, the Act's proponents argue that full implementation would require at least \$50-\$100 billion over a decade, not including shipyard and academy modernization. In comparison, current appropriations sum to only around \$600 million annually across MARAD programs far below the scale experts identify as necessary to rebuild a fleet, modernize yards, and train sufficient personnel. Critics, especially so-called "debt hawks," oppose further expansive spending, arguing it adds to long-term obligations without robust offsetting revenue or entitlement reform. They call for transparent benchmarks and fiscal limits rather than open-ended maritime subsidies.

Thus the realities of a debt saddled U.S. imperialism, totally reliant on its declining military supremacy, confronts the reality that it is likely that it merely cannot afford the necessary expansion of it military fleets to keep up with the growing power of China and as such it must leverage its current strategic advantages to the maximum capacity now, escalating everywhere the risk of war or face it's inevitable demise.

LIFE OF THE PARTY IN THE US

Over recent months, the Party has deepened its theoretical and practical work across multiple terrains. At the level of publications, comrades have continued to produce a large volume of translated texts, covering Marxist theory of knowledge, regional analyses, and foundational theoretical documents. Notably, long-term projects like Economic and Social Structure of Russia Today and The Jewish Question Today are nearing completion.

Efforts around printed materials have advanced, particularly with the upcoming launch of a Spanish-language tabloid in the United States. This project, though initially limited in scale, aims to become a regular vehicle for political agitation among Spanish-speaking workers. Work has also resumed to improve CL Publishers, the Party's publishing platform, with a need to use it as a consistent outlet for the Party's core publications. The latest issue of our theoretical journal Communism is now available in print form, and comrades have continued national and international distribution of The Interna-

tional Communist Party (TICP) press, including TICP issues #62 and #63. These contain analysis and intervention reports from class struggles across the globe, including the United States, Chile, Iran, Greece, and Turkey.

The Party’s YouTube channel has become an increasingly important tool to put the Party’s program in contact with the workers. Over a dozen videos in multiple languages have been released in recent months, with strong engagement, especially in English and Italian. Among the published materials are the multilingual 2025 May Day statement and selected articles from recent TICP issues. Further projects are in production, including translated recordings of the Party Program and historical texts like “Lenin the Organic Centralist.” The organization and categorization of content across languages and subjects remains a priority, alongside efforts to improve coordination across national sections according to the common international publishing schedule.

Over the past three months, the developing social crisis within capital has led various opportunist groups to divert proletarian rage into Democratic Party linked apparatuses to add fuel for the future recuperation of the developing class antagonisms into inter-classist projects of reform and restoration of the regime of capital. Thus the U.S. section of the Party has carried out its essential task: intervening wherever the proletariat appears, even when cloaked in the blindfolds of opportunist leaders who sow confusion, nationalism, or petty-bourgeois illusions as it is our eternal duty to smash these ideological weapons of the enemy. At the so-called “Hands Off!” demonstration in Chicago, attended by around 700 and marked by pacifist appeals to the state and democratic platitudes, comrades distributed TICP No. 62 and CSAN leaflets, counterposing to the slogans of national defense the only real alternative - class struggle and the future proletarian dictatorship. Similarly, at the proclaimed “anti-Trump” rallies organized by opportunist groups in Virginia and Illinois, where the spectacle of “anti-fascism” served only to redirect class anger into electoral channels, Party militants distributed dozens of papers and engaged with workers disillusioned by both factions of the ruling class. These interventions were not tactical gambits, but expressions of the Party’s permanent responsibility to agitate among all class elements and to disarm the ideological weapons of the enemy: above all, those wielded by opportunist leaders who exploit crises to reinforce class subordination to the cause of the nation and defense of democracy.

May Day saw interventions in Portland, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Richmond, and New Mexico, confronting demonstrations largely organized by reformist and Democratic-aligned forces. In Portland, comrades attended two separate events—one held by electoralist organizations, the other by the Portland Teachers Association. Despite both being saturated in patriotic rhetoric, comrades distributed TICP No. 63, CSAN flyers, and made contact with militant elements, including a comrade involved in the Federal Unionist Network. Even in these politically backward environments, the interest in revolutionary material was evident, especially among workers who feel the dead-end of reformism but have not yet found a coherent alternative. The Party does not chase popularity, nor does it avoid hostile terrain. It intervenes to unmask the slogans of class collaboration, to separate proletarian instincts from bourgeois traps, and to affirm—through its presence, its press, and its agitation—that only the independent organization of the working class, aimed at the destruction of capitalism, can resolve the crisis now unfolding.

GENERAL MEETING

General Party Meeting January 25-26, 2025

The revolutionary Program of Communism opposes capitalism in mortal crisis, which is showing its ferocious face of national egoism, extermination, and destruction.

“Democratic socialism,” False Friend of the Working Class

In his Critique of the Gotha Program, written in 1875, Karl Marx targeted what he considered a particularly pathetic trend within the contemporary workers’ movement: a “type of democratism that keeps itself within the limits of what is permitted by the police and not permitted by logic.” Marx saw in the demands of this current “nothing more than the old democratic litany that everyone knows: universal suffrage, direct legislation, popular rights, popular militia, etc.” Today, a century and a half later, we are faced with the same litany, which has become even more absurd than in Marx’s time, given that capitalism, often under the guise of bourgeois democracy, which remains its most characteristic political form, has revolutionized the world.

We are referring to the ruins of “democratic socialism.” Those who adhere to this fundamentally petty-bourgeois ideology are often very sensitive to the shortcomings of bourgeois democracy: where it promises freedom and equality, they denounce the absence of freedom and inequality; where it promises the rule of the people, they complain about the rule of a small minority; where it promises the emancipation of minorities, they discover their oppression. In a word, they are disappointed by actually existing, i.e., bourgeois, democracy. Their solution is simple, if banal: more democracy is needed. Instead of asking themselves what democracy actually entails and whether it really is the only panacea for the world’s problems and ills, they simply assume that these problems are due to a lack of democracy. They sometimes go so far as to say that the form of democracy that currently exists is not true democracy.

In his “Notes on Bakunin’s Book,” State and Anarchy, Marx informs us that “Elections are a political form even in the smallest Russian communities and cooperatives (artels). The character of elections does not depend on these names, but on the economic basis, on the economic ties between the voters.”

Lenin takes up the same theme in The

Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky, where he castigates the opportunist in the title for his invocation of “pure” democracy: “If one does not want to make a fool of common sense and history, it is clear that it is impossible to speak of ‘pure democracy’ as long as different classes exist; one can only speak of class democracy (...) ‘Pure democracy’ is the lying phrase of the liberal who wants to deceive the workers. History knows bourgeois democracy, which took the place of feudalism, and proletarian democracy, which is taking the place of bourgeois democracy.”

Currently, the vast majority of countries in the world are governed according to different variants of bourgeois democracy: that is, democratic regimes suited to the needs and interests of the bourgeoisie, the class that enjoys ownership of the means of production. By extending political rights to the entire population and giving voice to the masses, the bourgeoisie ensures the continuation of its class rule. In fact, in a society without a priori political privileges, those who have economic power are inevitably destined to rule. Precisely for this reason, the bourgeoisie, in its great revolutions against the Ancien Régime, swept away the political privileges of the nobility and the king and, in so doing, replaced the feudal subject with the citizen.

The equality of citizens is only the political reflection of the economic relations on which bourgeois society is based. In this society, where private ownership of products intended for exchange prevails, individuals confront each other as owners of commodities. They are “free” in that they ‘voluntarily’ exchange their commodities; and they are “equal” in that they meet as owners of commodities and exchange commodities of equal value. Here, in the commodity exchange relationship, which forms the basis of capitalist production, all distinctions of social rank and traditional privileges have been abolished. There are only owners of commodities.

In Capital, Marx showed that the exploitation and enslavement of wage labor are perfectly compatible with this free exchange of commodities. The worker sells his labor power in exchange for a wage; he and the capitalist exchange their respective commodities on the market, without any extra-economic coercion being necessary. But labor power has a special use value: when it is used, it creates new value, more value than is necessary for its maintenance and reproduction. This is the source of capitalist wealth. At the end of the whole process, once the worker has exchanged his wage for food, clothing, rent, and other essentials, he has nothing left but his ability to work, his labor power. In order to survive, he must try to sell this unique commodity once again. The capitalist, meanwhile, has received the product of the worker’s labor, which, once sold on the market, has not only returned to him the equivalent of the variable capital (wages) he advanced, but also a surplus value that can be used to subjugate other labor power.

This is how the freedom and equality of the owners of commodities are dialectically transformed into their opposite, the exploitation and enslavement of some by others. As Marx says: “The law of appropriation based on the production and circulation of commodities, or the law of private property, is reversed, by its own internal and inevitable dialectic, into its direct opposite.”

It is therefore not surprising that, in constructing the political order most congenial to it, the bourgeoisie did not need to resort to the crude system of political privileges that characterized the feudal state. Freedom and equality are by no means incompatible with bourgeois production; on the contrary, the latter presupposes them as its basis. Therefore, in this abstract designation, devoid of any differentiation of rank, the citizen has gradually replaced the nobility, the serf, and the slave of pre-capitalist social orders. As citizens, individuals of all classes—at least in the classical form of bourgeois politics—are entitled to vote, that is, to participate in determining the government of the bourgeoisie. They select the personnel who will administer the bourgeois state, a state whose fundamental mission, the defense of private property and capital, is never questioned.

Democracy “changes every time the demos changes” (Engels), that is, every time the economic and social situation of the voters changes. The demos, in a typical capitalist society, comprises the entire adult population. But within this population, the dominant economic force, and therefore also the dominant intellectual force, is the bourgeoisie itself. Its command over the means of production also guarantees it command over the means of intellectual production; and therefore, “the ideas of those who lack the means of intellectual production are subject to it as a whole.” And since bourgeois democracy abhors special political privileges, that is, it treats every member of society as an abstract “citizen,” it is natural that those who have economic privileges rise to dominate the positions of government. They have the time, money, and resources to do so, and after all, “the ruling ideas are nothing but the ideal expression of the ruling material relations, they are the ruling material relations thought out as ideas.” Moreover, the state apparatus itself cannot be considered separately from the economic power of the bourgeoisie, since it depends on the accumulation of capital for its power, a power it exercises to safeguard that very accumulation. The state is an organ for the exercise of the class rule of the bourgeoisie, and the democratic forms it takes do not change this fundamental fact.

As Lenin writes: “The Marxist historian Kautsky has never heard that the form of elections, the form of democracy, is one thing, and the class content of a given institution is another.”

Thus, throughout history, the democratic mechanism has been used as an instrument of government by various ruling classes, from the Athenian slave owners to the Roman patricians to the modern bourgeoisie. The mere form of democracy in no way guarantees the rule of any class: its outcome depends “on the economic basis, on the economic ties between the voters” (Marx).

Individuals involved in bourgeois relations see the state as a means to achieve certain ends that the state itself imposes on them, such as the need for private property to satisfy their needs. Meanwhile, its true purpose, to safeguard the conditions for the continued accumulation of capital, remains unchallenged. The state, in reality, is the association of the bourgeoisie against the other classes. The outcry against the corruption of corporate lobbies reveals only a complete ignorance of the class nature of the state. The state is based on maintaining the capitalist economy for its own power and uses democracy as a means to achieve this end.

When democracy fails to produce the required docility, however rare, naked force can always be resorted to.

Violence is not a contradiction of democracy, it is its necessary complement; when the scalpel fails, the club is used. Marx thus demonstrated how economic freedom and equality can be transformed into their opposite: non-freedom and inequality. But those who accept this insight in the field of economics often remain curiously reluctant to apply it to politics.

They fail to realize that elections based on free, fair, and universal suffrage can serve as instruments of class domination because of the economic relations in which voters are entangled. They fail to understand that democracy “is worthless as a principle, being merely an organizational mechanism based on a simple and banal arithmetic presumption, that the majority is right and the minority is wrong” (The Democratic Principle, 1921), that its character “does not depend on this name [i.e., democracy], but on the economic basis, on the economic situation of the voters.” This economic situation, determined by the prevailing mode of production, dictates the content of the democracy in question. Therefore, the democratic “mechanism of organization” has proven its compatibility with social formations as diverse as the Athenian slave state, peasant village assemblies, and proletarian trade unions.

Our current wrote in 1920: “Bourgeois electoral democracy seeks the consultation of the masses because it knows that the response of the majority will always be favorable to the privileged class and will readily delegate to this class the right to govern and perpetuate exploitation. It will not be the addition or subtraction of a small minority of bourgeois voters that will change the relationship. The bourgeoisie rules with the majority, not only of all citizens, but also of the workers alone.”

It should be clear, therefore, that a “pure,” “true,” or ‘real’ democracy does not exist and never has existed; rather, the nature of a given democracy is determined by the economic base on which it develops. And this should demonstrate why “more” democracy will not solve the problems created by the capitalist mode of production. On the contrary: it is only by depriving the ruling class of its political rights, after overthrowing it, that the working class, by means of its own political supremacy without any restrictions whatsoever, will bring about the transformation of existing economic relations and remedy its ills.

This does not mean that, within the framework of the methods of organization of the proletariat, democratic mechanisms cannot be used. In the course of the revolutionary struggle, situations may arise that require the democratic consultation of the class or specific sections of the class. But to attribute an innate value to democracy is to tie the hands of the proletariat in advance, to arbitrarily limit it to a particular organizational mechanism, depriving it of the tactical flexibility it will need to prevail in the conquest of power. In the life-and-death struggle with the bourgeoisie, there may be moments when the proletariat must trust its leading organ (i.e., the party) to act without consulting the masses, such as during military emergencies, when the majority of the class is deceived by bourgeois propaganda, etc. To reject, in principle, any deviation from the democratic mechanism of organization means paralyzing the revolution in advance.

There can be no question of extending democratic rights to the bourgeoisie under the dictatorship of the proletariat. We have seen that, on the basis of the capitalist mode of production, the equality of political rights between classes is precisely what reproduces and sustains the present state of affairs; it is the device that corresponds to the interests of the bourgeoisie as the economically dominant class. To overthrow this mode of production, therefore, the proletariat must deprive its enemy of political rights and ensure that only the workers exercise power; it must privilege itself against the bourgeoisie.

The Petty-Bourgeois Enemy

One question remains to be answered: if the demand for “pure” democracy, or for more democracy in the abstract, does not come from the revolutionary proletariat, what is the class basis of this demand? Or, as Lenin would have said: who stands to gain from it?

The petty bourgeoisie occupies a special position within capitalist society. Caught between the ruling class and the class of wage slaves, its individual members are constantly threatened by possible proletarianization. It competes hopelessly against the big bourgeoisie, which, with its greater capital and its hold on state power, is perpetually destined to win and throw the small owners into the ranks of the working class—in short, to expropriate them from above. The bourgeois state, as the most advanced fighting organization of its class, may have an interest in maintaining a layer of small property owners to blunt the antagonistic relationship between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, but it can only do so in contrast to the incessant centralization of capital.

On the other hand, the petty bourgeoisie is threatened by expropriation from below, that is, by a revolutionary movement of the proletariat against the relations of private property on which the existence of the petty bourgeoisie is based. Too weak to challenge the bourgeoisie on its own, it must constantly seek to deceive the proletariat into supporting its demands. But as soon as the proletariat begins to feel its strength and fight for its demands, the petty bourgeoisie, bound by its interest in the preservation of property, betrays the workers at the decisive moment. This is the kind of vacillation shown by the so-called middle classes throughout history, an attitude that stems from their precarious position between the two great classes of modern society.

Moderation, adherence to an ideal bourgeois society, is therefore what the petty bourgeoisie desires most. The petty bourgeoisie wants private property, but of moderate size; it wants competition, but of moderate intensity; it wants docile workers; in a word, it wants capitalist society without its necessary consequences, consequences that threaten its petty-bourgeois existence. He is therefore not only an arch-reactionary, but an enemy of the working class, because he is an enemy of the socialization and concentration of the productive forces that constitute capitalism’s great contribution to social progress and that form the basis of the future communist society.

It is therefore not surprising that, in the realm of political ideology, the demands of the petty bourgeoisie appeal to

a “pure” democratic ideal, a form of democracy that has never existed and never will exist. It condemns actually existing democracy as false, while exalting an ideal and authentic democracy. The ideological reflection of bourgeois society, the image it propagates of itself, is venerated as a refuge from the precarious position that the petty bourgeoisie actually occupies.

“The characteristic feature of social democracy,” writes Marx in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, “is that it demands republican democratic institutions, not as a means of eliminating both extremes, capital and wage labor, but as a means of mitigating their conflict and transforming it into harmony. But however different the measures that may be proposed to achieve this end, however much these measures may be adorned with more or less revolutionary representations, the content remains the same. This content is the transformation of society by democratic means, but a transformation that does not go beyond the framework of the petty bourgeoisie. One must not view things in a narrow way, as if the petty bourgeoisie intended to defend a selfish class interest on principle. It believes the opposite, that the particular conditions of its liberation are the general conditions within which modern society can be saved and class struggle avoided.

Democratic socialism, as the modern heir to the tradition known in Marx’s time as social democracy, fully displays these same tendencies. It seeks more democracy, pure and true, because the particular conditions of the emancipation of the petty bourgeoisie demand it, that is, the contradictory necessity of a capitalist society stripped of its necessary threats and antagonisms. And since the petty bourgeoisie is too weak to obtain significant concessions from the bourgeoisie on its own, it must enlist the proletariat in its cause. Thus, democratic socialists advertise their chimera of a renewed capitalism to the workers, promising that their sufferings are due to a lack of democracy and that “true” democracy will put power in their hands. Instead of organizing on their own class ground for their own demands, workers are encouraged to participate in interclass campaigns for universal health care, higher taxes on the rich, nationalization of industries, abolition of the Senate, universal basic income, etc. All these measures, as Marx points out, aim only to dilute the antagonism between capital and labor, keeping workers docile enough to be exploited productively and the big capitalists too weak to expropriate their smaller cousins. Above all, the petty bourgeoisie is concerned with maintaining its ever-threatened position, by hook or by crook.

Communism and Democracy

If democratic socialism is concerned with weakening the antagonisms inherent in capitalism, and thus with preserving the existence of the petty bourgeoisie and bourgeois society itself, communism is concerned with sharpening these antagonisms and bringing them to their historical conclusion: the overthrow of the ruling class by the working class. The proletariat has no interest in bourgeois society, which is based on the ruthless exploitation of its class. On the contrary, it can only free itself by abolishing bourgeois society and its material foundations.

The same cannot be said of the petty bourgeoisie, which wants more than anything else to maintain its position within this society. This is the source of its magnetic attraction to democratic socialism, which promises harmony achieved without the destruction of the existing social relations or of the petty bourgeoisie as a class. This ideology boils down to wishful thinking: a senseless opposition between the ideal expression of bourgeois society and its dirty reality, between “pure” democracy and democracy in its social reality. It is a fantastical attempt to perfect bourgeois society, to reconcile opposites, while the revolutionary proletariat seeks to abolish this society.

The ideology of democratic socialism bursts like a soap bubble at the slightest contact with the real world. Democracy, based on bourgeois relations of production, has given us the world we see today, the very world that democratic socialists condemn as undemocratic.

To change this world, democracy is not enough; no simple “mechanism of organization” can guarantee the success of a revolution in the social relations of humanity. Rather, what is needed is the proletarian revolution, which deprives the bourgeoisie of all participation in political life and uses its dictatorial hold on power to forcibly abolish the foundations of capitalist exploitation.

This will not happen until the proletariat has learned to stand on its own feet and fight for its own class goals; until, in other words, it has freed itself from the misleading influence of the petty bourgeoisie and its ideologues, who only want to enlist workers as deluded foot soldiers. The democratic socialists are the foremost advocates of these erroneous and inconsistent ideological principles, which are therefore harmful to the workers’ movement. The practical experience of the failures of the current workers’ movement will inevitably compel the workers to gain a theoretical and practical understanding of the meaning of democratic deception and to break with the petty bourgeoisie and its organizations. The practical experience of the success of the struggles of the workers’ movement, resulting from the rejection of democratic mystification, will ensure that as long as the proletariat remains the jealous guardian of its class independence and the program of communism, the petty bourgeoisie will never regain control over the workers’ movement.

The Ideologies of the Bourgeoisie: Dante Alighieri

Dante Alighieri represents one of the first attempts by the bourgeoisie to develop its own ideology. The famous opening lines of Dante’s Divine Comedy read: “In the middle of the journey of our life, I found myself in a dark forest, for the straight path was lost.” To the thousand interpretations made by Dante scholars, we add one more: if the author is in a situation where he sees and understands nothing and cannot find a way out, it is because the newly formed social class to which he belongs, the bourgeoisie, is constrained by the ideology of the feudal world in which it is immersed. It is an ideology that is inadequate to the needs of this new class and its development, as it is an expression of feudal relations that did not contemplate its existence.

The bourgeoisie, despite being objectively revolutionary towards feudalism, like all classes that have found themselves in a similar situation throughout history, is initially unaware of this, and it will take several centuries for it to develop its own revolutionary ideology. At its inception, it did not want to destroy the old world, but to find its place in it, thus developing a worldview that included its own existence within feudal society.

During Alighieri, known as Dante, was born in Florence in 1265 into a family of merchants: there was talk of a minor nobility because his great-great-grandfather Cacciaguیدا was a knight in the Second Crusade, but what is certain is that his paternal grandfather Bellincione was a commoner, and that Alighiero di Bellincione, his son and Dante’s father, was a money changer and also a usurer.

In January 1293, the Ordinamenti di Giustizia (Ordinances of Justice) were promulgated in Florence, which were then tightened in the following months, excluding the Magnati, i.e., the members of the small and ancient noble families, first from some public offices and then from all of them. Laws were enacted that favored the Popolo, the new bourgeoisie, and were unfavorable to the Magnati in all fields: taxes, tributes, penalties, etc. This lasted until February 1295, when Prior Giano della Bella, who had left due to the accusations against him, was sentenced to death and excommunicated.

The Ordinamenti di Giustizia were an inconsistent and even less conscious attempt at revolutionary dictatorship exercised over the magnates by the entire Florentine bourgeoisie. The alliance between the “popolo minuto” (the lower classes) and the “popolo grasso” (the upper classes) then broke down due to mutual distrust and when the latter, seeing their supremacy threatened, returned to seek allies among the Grandi and the Magnati.

In July 1295, after a failed attempt by the magnates to seize power, the “Temperamenti” (Tempering) to the Ordinamenti di Giustizia were promulgated, which consisted of a relaxation of the measures against the Magnati, but not their abolition. The Magnates, previously excluded from all offices because they did not practice any art and lived off their income, could now hold various positions on condition that they enrolled in one of the various arts, even without practicing them. On this occasion, Dante, enrolling in the Art of Doctors and Speakers, gave a speech in favor of the Temperamenti and joined the city magistrates, where he remained in various positions until 1301.

Historian Alessandro Barbero speaks of a Dante who was unoriginal in philosophy and reactionary in politics. This was also the opinion of Benedetto Croce and historian Jacques Le Goff. Scholars Eugenio Garin and Cesare Vasoli, on the other hand, rightly placed Dante on the cusp between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Dante’s thinking was indeed eclectic and unsystematic, but this was common in scholastic philosophy, where everyone made their own synthesis of various authors, who in turn had done the same. Dante was certainly an Aristotelian, and partly also an Averroist, in that he shared the separation of the spheres of faith and reason: a separation much clearer

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than that of Thomas Aquinas, and which was later reflected in his political views. On other points, he disagreed with Averroes but agreed with Thomas Aquinas.

His Aristotelianism was particularly influenced by that of Albertus Magnus, which was strongly imbued with Neoplatonism. He was also influenced by the Augustinian and Franciscan traditions, with Joachimite tendencies. Dante has been described as reactionary because his ideas were dominated by the Empire and the Church, the two medieval institutions par excellence, which embodied Divine Providence.

While the popes claimed the supremacy of spiritual power over temporal power, Dante argued that both powers were autonomous in their own sphere. Man has two ends and two possible forms of happiness: the earthly one, attainable through reason, and the supernatural one, attainable through faith. The emperor is the guide to the earthly end and the pope to the supernatural end. The emperor is necessary to bring peace and justice to a world where the lust for wealth generates hatred and continuous wars between cities, between kingdoms, and within them; the Empire was a manifestation of divine Providence in that Christ was born into it under Augustus. For Dante, human rational capacities can only be fully developed by the human race as a whole, and for this to be possible, peace, justice, and freedom are necessary, which only the undisputed authority of the Empire can guarantee. Undisputed but not "absolute," that is, not exempt from respect for human and divine law.

The mercantile pre-capitalism of the cities and kingdoms of the 13th and 14th centuries involved a process of alienation and commodification for which there was no solution. Dante saw the society of his time as antagonistic to the sacred and rational order, illuminated by the Christian faith, which he pursued. The fact that the Empire and the Church are at the center of his reflections makes him seem reactionary, with his head turned to the past. However, he remains a man of participation in city life and politics, a supporter of municipal freedoms, which he does not actually renounce when he asserts the preeminence of the Empire. Dante Alighieri

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The Left of Ottoman Socialism and the Communist Party: 4. The Left Opposition

1923 was a year of intense class struggle and repression in Turkey. From July to November, 32,000 workers participated in a wave of strikes. Nationalist sentiments were widespread. The communists played a significant role in only a small number of strikes, as they were harshly repressed. At the end of the year, the Red Trade Union League was dissolved and all communist organizations were forced underground by the Kemalists.

At the end of 1923, the repression of the communist left and the red trade unions cleared the field for the intellectual circles that had always been favorable to Socialism. In his 1923 article "Socialist Movements in Turkey," Sefik Hüsnî expressed not only his usual illusions about the Kemalist movement, but also his conception of socialism as a society introduced by national-bourgeois statesmen:

"Turkey is not without classes and class struggle. It is just that, since the capitalist bourgeois class is a very small and weak entity and the working and peasant class constitutes an enormous majority, the class struggle takes place between the foreign capitalists, the local elites and the rich landowners who serve them, and basically takes the form of a national struggle. Until now, in this struggle, individual dynastic governments have always taken the side of the capitalists, the enemies of the nation (...) From now on, the government of the people, which derives its power from national sovereignty, must take the side of the righteous, that is, of the nation, and be a government of labor and workers.

"The presence among statesmen, such as the Deputies of Economy and Social Welfare, of people who seem inclined to act with a Marxist mentality makes it essential that our government does not hesitate to follow this path. We want this policy to be more open and for more sincere and mutual trust to be established between the working and peasant classes and between the institutions and authorities of the government, which will be guided by the interests of the working masses. Only in this way will it be possible to adequately fulfill our current revolution. If, in the meantime, we succeed in developing our industry, then it will be necessary to take new steps in the valley of socialism."

By then, however, the left in Anatolia, Constantinople, and Baku had also come into contact with each other and did not intend to hand over control of the party to the right. A letter written by Ginzberg to his comrades in 1924 gives us an idea of the scope of the left's activities during this period:

"In every issue of the newspaper, you should report even the smallest events and changes in the trade union movement in Turkey and especially in Constantinople (...) Also include news about current trade union issues, current political events, peasants, taxes, etc., and news about the country, new laws, etc. Make sure there is more news from inside the country than from abroad (...) Report even the smallest details of May 1 and send a long account of what happened or a long news article on the 'Taarruz' (Offensive).

"As you know, the future intellectuals of the Turkish Communist Party are moving further and further to the right. We must fight this tendency towards 'legal Marxism' with all our strength, as we have done in the past, bearing in mind that if they persist on this path, the healthy elements – especially the proletarians – will not follow them (...) Only in action will their true face be revealed (...) Lenin once said: 'It is necessary to separate in order to unite better'; this is our current situation. I believe that many of them will sooner or later fall into Menshevism."

Aydinlik was harshly criticized by the Ukrainian delegate Manuilsky at the Fifth Congress of the Comintern.

"At the Second Congress, we established the attitude of the young communist sections towards the national liberation movements under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, which were marching towards power. But since then we have been faced with a new situation in the Eastern countries: what should we do against the national bourgeoisies that have taken power? Several articles have appeared in the organ of the Communist Party of Turkey calling on the Communist Party to support the development of national capitalism against foreign capitalism. On this point, we find among our Turkish comrades a tendency that finds its clear expression in the vision of "legal Marxism" once defended in Russia by Struve (who said that the working class had to support the development of capitalism in Russia).

The left's criticism of the right was beginning to be heard within the International. Manuilsky was answered by one of the delegates of the left, Kazim of Van.

Bilen's intervention, on the other hand, shocked Ginzberg, the delegate of the left from Constantinople, by stating that the working class did not really exist in Turkey:

"Some comrades are of the opinion

that in the Near East, during the world war, an industrial proletariat developed on the one hand and a national industry on the other, which prepared the ground for the economic liberation of the country from the imperialists. This is completely wrong (...) The war of Kemalism against imperialism and the remnants of the feudal system is not yet over. We are therefore obliged to support them as before, and this is in our class interest."

The first two documents we read at the meeting were written by Ismail Hakki and Aleko Stakos, from the left-wing youth organization. The first is significant for the development of the left's line against fascism: a resolute struggle but without forming a front or alliance with other parties or deviating from the goal of proletarian dictatorship. The second is a significant account by the left of the wave of strikes in 1923. The two articles express the line towards the national revolution and the role of the proletariat outlined by Ginzberg, one of the leading figures of the left.

The third document presented, Kazim of Van's speech at the Fifth Congress of the Comintern, differs from Ginzberg's position in its nuances regarding the duration of the destructive tasks of the national movement against the old feudal regime. Kazim also argues that there are no national demands among the Kurdish minority in Turkey, a position that is probably true with regard to the Kurdish uprisings in favor of the caliphate, but which will soon be disproved with the birth of the Kurdish Republic of Ararat in 1927.

The fourth document presented to the comrades is Ginzberg's response to Ismail Bilen at the Third Congress of the Profintern, where he refutes the idea of the non-existence of an industrial proletariat in Turkey.

The last document was an opposition article by Ginzberg, significant for resolving the party crisis by organic means, selecting the best, i.e., the most capable comrades, instead of relying on democratic majorities and elections, and for drawing lessons from the wave of strikes in 1923.

This documentation will be included in the appendix to the publication of the extended text of the report.

The Agrarian Question

Historical Background

During the 18th century, the population grew in certain areas and required an expansion of food resources with the transition to a higher system of production. Kautsky describes this important transition: "Such a system had already developed in England, where, due to special conditions, the foundations of feudal agriculture were undermined by a series of revolutions, from the reforms of Henry VIII to the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688, and in which the way was opened for the development of intensive capitalist agriculture, which replaced grazing with stable farming and the cultivation of fodder crops, and introduced tuber crops alongside cereals. But it became clear that it was impossible to introduce the results of that revolution on the European continent in a general way without revolutionizing the existing property relations."

The old mode of production became intolerable, at least for the larger farmers, who produced a considerable surplus for the market. "The mode of production of the Middle Ages was perfectly suited to the needs of a society of equals, who all had the same standard of living and produced for their own use (...) Now the market arose with its changing needs, and inequality developed among the members of the village, some of whom produced on their land just what they needed for themselves, while others produced a surplus. The former, the smallholders, continued to produce for their own consumption and were strongly attached to the community of origin, while for the latter it became an obstacle, since whatever the market demanded, they could not produce on their land except what was prescribed by the territorial community."

It was therefore necessary to eliminate this compromise between land communism and private property, to divide up the common pastures, to abolish the common cultivation of the fields and the obligation to cultivate, to centralize the various small properties and thus make the landowner the sole owner of the land, who could then exploit it according to the needs of the market.

But this development did not produce a class among the rural population capable of forming the backbone of this revolution. Agriculture depended on the social development of the capitalist mode of production in the cities. "The revolutionary force and initiative that agriculture had not been able to produce by itself was brought to it from the cities. The economic development of the city had completely transformed the situation in the countryside and made a transformation of property relations necessary. The same development created in the cities those revolutionary classes which, rising up against feudal power, brought political and legal revolution to the countryside, where they carried out the transformations that had become necessary, often amid the jubilation of the peasant masses, but sometimes also in spite of their resistance."

The urban bourgeoisie attempted this reorganization but failed to complete it. Only when the revolutionary classes of Paris rose in 1789 under the political leadership of the bourgeoisie, which called on the enslaved peasants to shake off the feudal yoke, only then did the transformation of rural property relations develop rapidly and decisively in France and, subsequently, in neighboring countries.

"In France, the transformation took place outside the law and with violence, that is, with a shock, and in such a way that the peasants not only freed themselves from their yoke but also obtained land belonging to the confiscated property of the clergy and emigrants, to the extent that the bourgeoisie itself did not seize it."

In Prussia, on the other hand, the transformation was the consequence of the defeat at Jena. Throughout Germany, this did not happen violently, but legally and peacefully, slowly and hesitantly, with efforts to obtain the consent of the lords, who were the protagonists of the whole movement, which had not yet come to an end in 1848. The peasants paid dearly for this peaceful and legal path, both with cash and with new taxes. F. Engels writes in his introduction to Wilhelm Wolf's work, "Schlesische Milliarde": "We can calculate that the sum paid by the peasants to the nobility and the treasury to free themselves from taxes (...) amounted to one billion marks. A billion to redeem, without having to pay taxes anymore, a tiny part of the land that had been taken from them for 400 years! A tiny part, be-

cause the nobility and the tax authorities reserved the lion's share for themselves."

In Russia, too, after the Crimean War, the peasants were freed not only from serfdom, but also from the best part of their land.

Although with limited results, the peaceful and legal revolution that developed led to the abolition of feudal burdens on the one hand and the remnants of primitive communism on the other, and thus to the establishment of private land ownership, paving the way for capitalist agriculture.

In Prometheus, November 1950, the inexorable advance of capitalism is described.

"Feudal characteristics persisted in Germany around 1850 because, less so than on the left bank of the Rhine, the landed nobility had even retained jurisdiction over its subjects, i.e., the lord acted as civil and criminal judge. In southern Italy, even before the French Revolution, the system of state judiciary culminating in royal power was in full swing. Those privileges had been claimed in vain by the barons since the centuries of the Angevin and Aragonese monarchies.

"The famous land equalization, the pride of Rome's liberal economic achievements, after 'all power to the bourgeoisie' was realized, formed one of the bases for capitalist accumulation in Italy, channeling, together with the skillful handling of banking policy, the proceeds of land rent from the tattered pockets of the former barons into the coffers of the aforementioned industrial and financial bourgeoisie. It is well understood that, in the process of capitalist development, many owners of so-called fiefdoms were transformed into industrialists, merchants, bankers, and various types of capitalists."

Capitalism and Agriculture

Kautsky highlights the dialectic of the question:

"There is no doubt that agriculture does not develop according to the same pattern as industry, but follows its own laws. This does not mean, however, that the development of agriculture is opposed to that of industry and that it is irreconcilable with it. We believe, on the contrary, that we can show that both are rushing toward the same goal, if we do not consider them separately from each other, but as common parts of an overall process."

And again: "The Marxist theory of the capitalist mode of production does not, however, consist simply in reducing the development of this mode of production to the formula 'elimination of small enterprises by large enterprises,' so that anyone who knows this formula by heart has the key to the whole of modern economy in his pocket. If we want to study the agrarian question according to Marx's method, we cannot simply ask whether small farms have a future in agriculture; we must instead study all the changes to which agriculture is subject in the course of the capitalist mode of production."

In "Commodities Will Never Feed the People," published in 1953, we write in the introductory prospectus: "While manufacturing industry can move its plants anywhere (...) the fact that land is immovable and indestructible (in general) creates another degree of limitation (...) This is of exceptional importance (...) in our discipline (...) it has a capital influence on the economic constitution of society, on the conditions and degree of well-being of its members."

In our "Comunismo" no. 51 of December 2001, we summarized the "Fili del Tempo" (Threads of Time) on the Agrarian Question published in the 1953 and 1954 issues of Programma Comunista. In the chapter "Rural Economy and History," we wrote: "Research on the changing forms of production and agricultural economy, which until yesterday were a predominant part of the entire social economy, must be extended to the entire human historical cycle. Marxism makes a decisive critique, on a purely scientific basis, of the molecular division of land, which is the cause of stagnation and endless misery. In this regard, it is important to establish the primacy of the historical method in order to clarify the social method."

The text continues on the theme described in the previous chapter: "The factors of land limitation and so-called declining fertility are relevant. In Germany, for example, there is a prevalence of land for civic use and state property, while in Latin countries there is the complete development of the allodial system (private ownership). The Germans, few in number on vast lands, use the centuries-old system of three fields: of three equal plots of land, one is cultivated with wheat, the most nutritious cereal, one with rye, barley or oats, less nutritious cereals, and one is left fallow (fallow land). For a long time, it was not land but livestock, kept on common pastures, that was the object of value and trade. Pecunia (money) derives from pecus (livestock). Private property derives both from the division of collective land among families and from violence, slavery, and conquest. Among the Germanic peoples, communal farming disappeared very late, while in Italy, individual division was pre-Roman (the god Terminus made land ownership sacred and inviolable) due to the very distant knowledge of crops (vines, olive trees, fruit trees, irrigation) superior to that of cereals. In Italy, feudal forms had little influence and disappeared rapidly between the fall of the Byzantine Empire and the era of the communes, when agriculture was highly intensive (vegetable gardens and orchards) and even fully capitalist.

The following chapter, "Exit from feudalism," framed the transition: "In the feudal relationship, the serf provided his master with a rent in kind or in labor with days of work in his garden and with a share of the produce of his small field; we are therefore in a natural economy. The modern landowner, the landowner, on the other hand, enjoys a cash rent. At the same time, land ownership becomes alienable,

and the agricultural worker, who was previously bound to the land, becomes free. Initially, this process is not determined solely by the unstoppable need to give free rein to the productive forces of manufacturing, but is also accompanied by an equal exaltation of the productive forces of agriculture."

Kautsky traces the 'natural' transition from one mode of production to another: 'In feudal times, there was no agriculture other than small-scale farming, and the lands of the nobility were cultivated with the same tools used by small farmers. Capitalism was the first to create the possibility of large-scale agriculture, which was technically more rational than small-scale farming'.

Let us continue from "Communism" 51: "The feudal agrarian economy, characterized among other things by the superimposition of land work and minimal domestic industry, keeps rural production away from the market. The capitalist economy draws small farms into the commercial vortex. The pretended independence of the very small farm leads to an immensely greater burden of work for the owner of the small piece of land. But, within capitalist limits, one cannot count on the disappearance of small-scale production in agriculture."

Returning to Kautsky: "The farmer did go to the market, but only to sell the surplus of what he produced and to buy only what he needed, apart from iron, which he used as sparingly as possible. His comfort and luxury depended on the outcome of the market, but not his existence. This self-sufficient community was indestructible."

On the current mode of production, Kautsky again: "The development of industry and commerce also created new needs in the cities. As new and more sophisticated tools penetrated the countryside, the exchange relationship between town and country became all the more active."

Furthermore, militarism, by attracting the sons of peasants to the cities, became the main cause of the spread of tobacco and alcohol consumption.

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