

Platform

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A stylized illustration of a woman with dark hair, wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt, holding a large, dark red flag aloft with her right arm. The background is a solid red color. The illustration is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page, partially overlapping the text area.





Contents

Work	“Left-Wing” Childishness ······ 2 V. I. Lenin
Article	The Dialectics of the Historical Process and the Methodology of Its Research ······ 19 Victor Alexeyevich Vaziulin
	About the NCPN and KKE ······ 26 Antifascist Former Resistance Fighters Netherlands (AFVN)
	Russia is resisting imperialism in Ukraine ······ 31 Communist Organization (KO, Germany)
	The imperialist epoch is the epoch of socialist revolution and the decay of bourgeois society ······ 48 Party of Committees to Support Resistance—for Communism (CARC Party, Italy)
	Statement by the “Revolutionary Unification” on the Passing of Comrade Ammar Khaled Bakdash, Secretary-General of the Syrian Communist Party ······ 56 Revolutionary Unification (Greece)
	The intensification of the military crisis and Trump’s three dilemmas ····· 59 Stephen Cho Coordinator of the Korean International Forum

“Left-Wing” Childishness

V. I. Lenin

May 5, 1918

The publication by a small group of “Left Communists” of their journal, *Kommunist* (No. 1, April 20, 1918), and of their “theses”, strikingly confirms my views expressed in the pamphlet *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*. There could not be better confirmation, in political literature, of the utter naïvete of the defence of petty-bourgeois sloppiness that is sometimes concealed by “Left” slogans. It is useful and necessary to deal with the arguments of “Left Communists” because they are characteristic of the period we are passing through. They show up with exceptional clarity the negative side of the “core” of this period. They are instructive, because the people we are dealing with are the best of those who have failed to understand the present period, people who by their knowledge and loyalty stand far, far above the ordinary representatives of the same mistaken views, namely, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries.

I

As a political magnitude, or as a group claiming to play a political role, the “Left Communist” group has presented its “Theses on the Present Situation”. It is a good Marxist custom to give a coherent and complete exposition of the principles underlying one’s views and tactics. And this good Marxist custom has helped to reveal the mistake committed by our “Lefts”, because the mere attempt to argue and not to declaim exposes the unsoundness of their argument.

The first thing that strikes one is the abundance of allusions, hints and evasions with regard to the old question of whether it was right to conclude the Brest Treaty. The “Lefts” dare not put the question in a straightforward manner. They flounder about in a comical fashion, pile argument on argument, fish for

reasons, plead that “on the one hand” it may be so, but “on the other hand” it may not, their thoughts wander over all and sundry subjects, they try all the time not to see that they are defeating themselves. The “Lefts” are very careful to quote the figures: twelve votes at the Party Congress against peace, twenty-eight votes in favour, but they discreetly refrain from mentioning that of the hundreds of votes cast at the meeting of the Bolshevik group of the Congress of Soviets they obtained less than one-tenth. They have invented a “theory” that the peace was carried by “the exhausted and declassed elements”, while it was opposed by “the workers and peasants of the southern regions, where there was greater vitality in economic life and the supply of bread was more assured”.... Can one do anything but laugh at this? There is not a word about the voting at the All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets in favour of peace, nor about the social and class character of the typically petty-bourgeois and declassed political conglomeration in Russia who were opposed to peace (the Left Socialist-Revolutionary party). In an utterly childish manner, by means of amusing “scientific” explanations, they try to conceal their own bankruptcy, to conceal the facts, the mere review of which would show that it was precisely the declassed, intellectual “cream” of the party, the elite, who opposed the peace with slogans couched in revolutionary petty-bourgeois phrases, that it was precisely the mass of workers and exploited peasants who carried the peace.

Nevertheless, in spite of all the above-mentioned declarations and evasions of the “Lefts” on the question of war and peace, the plain and obvious truth manages to come to light. The authors of the theses are compelled to admit that “the conclusion of peace

has for the time being weakened the imperialists' attempts to make a deal on a world scale" (this is inaccurately formulated by the "Lefts", but this is not the place to deal with inaccuracies). "The conclusion of peace has already caused the conflict between the imperialist powers to become more acute."

Now this is a fact. Here is something that has decisive significance. That is why those who opposed the conclusion of peace were unwittingly playthings in the hands of the imperialists and fell into the trap laid for them by the imperialists. For, until the world socialist revolution breaks out, until it embraces several countries and is strong enough to overcome international imperialism, it is the direct duty of the socialists who have conquered in one country (especially a backward one) not to accept battle against the giants of imperialism. Their duty is to try to avoid battle, to wait until the conflicts between the imperialists weaken them even more, and bring the revolution in other countries even nearer. Our "Lefts" did not understand this simple truth in January, February and March. Even now they are afraid of admitting it openly. But it comes to light through all their confused reasoning like "on the one hand it must be confessed, on the other hand one must admit".

"During the coming spring and summer," the "Lefts" write in their theses, "the collapse of the imperialist system must begin. In the event of a victory for German imperialism in the present phase of the war this collapse can only be postponed, but it will then express itself in even more acute forms."

This formulation is even more childishly inaccurate despite its playing at science. It is natural for children to "understand" science to mean something that can determine in what year, spring, summer, autumn or winter the "collapse must begin".

These are ridiculous, vain attempts to ascertain what cannot be ascertained. No serious politician will ever say when this or that collapse of a "system" "must begin" (the more so that the collapse of the

system has already begun, and it is now a question of the moment when the outbreak of revolution in particular countries will begin). But an indisputable truth forces its way through this childishly helpless formulation, namely, the outbreaks of revolution in other, more advanced, countries are nearer now, a month since the beginning of the "respite" which followed the conclusion of peace, than they were a month or six weeks ago.

What follows?

It follows that the peace supporters were absolutely right, and their stand has been justified by the course of events. They were right in having drummed into the minds of the lovers of ostentation that one must be able to calculate the balance of forces and not help the imperialists by making the battle against socialism easier for them when socialism is still weak, and when the chances of the battle are manifestly against socialism.

Our "Left" Communists, however, who are also fond of calling themselves "proletarian" Communists, because there is very little that is proletarian about them and very much that is petty-bourgeois, are incapable of giving thought to the balance of forces, to calculating it. This is the core of Marxism and Marxist tactics, but they disdainfully brush aside the "core" with "proud" phrases such as:

"... That the masses have become firmly imbued with an inactive 'peace mentality' is an objective fact of the political situation. ..."

What a gem! After three years of the most agonising and reactionary war, the people, thanks to Soviet power and its correct tactics, which never lapsed into mere phrase-making, have obtained a very, very brief, insecure and far from sufficient respite. The "Left" intellectual striplings, however, with the magnificence of a self-infatuated Narcissus, profoundly declare "that the masses have become firmly imbued with an inactive 'peace mentality'." Was I not right when I said at the Party Congress that the paper or journal of the "Lefts" ought to have been

called not *Kommunist* but *Szlachcic*. [*Szlachcic*—a Polish nobleman —Ed.]

Can a Communist with the slightest understanding of the mentality and the conditions of life of the toiling and exploited people descend to the point of view of the typical declassed petty-bourgeois intellectual with the mental outlook of a noble or *szlachcic*, which declares that a “peace mentality” is “inactive” and believes that the brandishing of a cardboard sword is “activity”? For our “Lefts” merely brandish a cardboard sword when they ignore the universally known fact, of which the war in the Ukraine has served as an additional proof, that peoples utterly exhausted by three years of butchery cannot go on fighting without a respite; and that war, if it cannot be organised on a national scale, very often creates a mentality of disintegration peculiar to petty proprietors, instead of the iron discipline of the proletariat. Every page of *Kommunist* shows that our “Lefts” have no idea of iron proletarian discipline and how it is achieved, that they are thoroughly imbued with the mentality of the declassed petty-bourgeois intellectual.

II

Perhaps all these phrases of the “Lefts” about war can be put down to mere childish exuberance, which, moreover, concerns the past, and therefore has not a shadow of political significance? This is the argument some people put up in defence of our “Lefts”. But this is wrong. Anyone aspiring to political leadership must be able to think out political problems, and lack of this ability converts the “Lefts” into spineless preachers of a policy of vacillation, which objectively can have only one result, namely, by their vacillation the “Lefts” are helping the imperialists to provoke the Russian Soviet Republic into a battle that will obviously be to its disadvantage, they are helping the imperialists to draw us into a snare. Listen to this:

“... The Russian workers’ revolution cannot ‘save itself’ by abandoning the path of world revolution,

by continually avoiding battle and yielding to the pressure of international capital, by making concessions to ‘home capital’.

“From this point of view it is necessary to adopt a determined class international policy which will unite international revolutionary propaganda by word and deed, and to strengthen the organic connection with international socialism (and not with the international bourgeoisie). ...”

I shall deal separately with the thrusts at home policy contained in this passage. But examine this riot of phrase-making—and timidity in deeds—in the sphere of foreign policy. What tactics are binding at the present time on all who do not wish to be tools of imperialist provocation, and who do not wish to walk into the snare? Every politician must give a clear, straightforward reply to this question. Our Party’s reply is well known. At the present moment we must retreat and avoid battle. Our “Lefts” dare not contradict this and shoot into the air: “A determined class international policy”!!

This is deceiving the people. If you want to fight now, say so openly. If you don’t wish to retreat now, say so openly. Otherwise, in your objective role, you are a tool of imperialist provocation. And your subjective “mentality” is that of a frenzied petty bourgeois who swaggers and blusters but senses perfectly well that the proletariat is right in retreating and in trying to retreat in an organised way. He senses that the proletariat is right in arguing that because we lack strength we must retreat (before Western and Eastern imperialism) even as far as the Urals, for in this lies the only chance of playing for time while the revolution in the West matures, the revolution which is not “bound” (despite the twaddle of the “Lefts”) to begin in “spring or summer”, but which is coming nearer and becoming more probable every month.

The “Lefts” have no policy of their “own”. They dare not declare that retreat at the present moment is unnecessary. They twist and turn, play with words, substitute the question of “continuously” avoiding

battle for the question of avoiding battle at the present moment. They blow soap bubbles such as “international revolutionary propaganda by deed”!! What does this mean?

It can only mean one of two things: either it is mere Nozdryovism,^[1] or it means an offensive war to overthrow international imperialism. Such nonsense cannot be uttered openly, and that is why the “Left” Communists are obliged to take refuge from the derision of every politically conscious proletarian behind high-sounding and empty phrases. They hope the inattentive reader will not notice the real meaning of the phrase “international revolutionary propaganda by deed”.

The flaunting of high-sounding phrases is characteristic of the declassed petty-bourgeois intellectuals. The organised proletarian Communists will certainly punish this “habit” with nothing less than derision and expulsion from all responsible posts. The people must be told the bitter truth simply, clearly and in a straightforward manner: it is possible, and even probable, that the war party will again get the upper hand in Germany (that is, an offensive against us will commence at once), and that Germany together with Japan, by official agreement or by tacit understanding, will partition and strangle us. Our tactics, if we do not want to listen to the ranters, must be to wait, procrastinate, avoid battle and retreat. If we shake off the ranters and “brace ourselves” by creating genuinely iron, genuinely proletarian, genuinely communist discipline, we shall have a good chance of gaining many months. And then by retreating even, if the worst comes to the worst, to the Urals, we shall make it easier for our ally (the international proletariat) to come to our aid, to “catch up” (to use the language of sport) the distance between the beginning of revolutionary outbreaks and revolution.

These, and these alone, are the tactics which can in fact strengthen the connection between one temporarily isolated section of international socialism

and the other sections. But to tell the truth, all that your arguments lead to, dear “Left Communists”, is the “strengthening of the organic connection” between one high-sounding phrase and another. A bad sort of “organic connection”, this!

I shall enlighten you, my amiable friends, as to why such disaster overtook you. It is because you devote more effort to learning by heart and committing to memory revolutionary slogans than to thinking them out. This leads you to write “the defence of the socialist fatherland” in quotation marks, which are probably meant to signify your attempts at being ironical, but which really prove that you are muddleheads. You are accustomed to regard “defencism” as something base and despicable; you have learned this and committed it to memory. You have learned this by heart so thoroughly that some of you have begun talking nonsense to the effect that defence of the fatherland in an imperialist epoch is impermissible (as a matter of fact, it is impermissible only in an imperialist, reactionary war, waged by the bourgeoisie). But you have not thought out why and when “defencism” is abominable.

To recognise defence of the fatherland means recognising the legitimacy and justice of war. Legitimacy and justice from what point of view? Only from the point of view of the socialist, proletariat and its struggle for its emancipation. We do not recognise any other point of view. If war is waged by the exploiting class with the object of strengthening its rule as a class, such a war is a criminal war, and “defencism” in such a war is a base betrayal of socialism. If war is waged by the proletariat after it has conquered the bourgeoisie in its own country, and is waged with the object of strengthening and developing socialism, such a war is legitimate and “holy”.

We have been “defencists” since October 20, 1917. I have said this more than once very definitely, and you dare not deny this. It is precisely in the interests of “strengthening the connection” with international

socialism that we are in duty bound to defend our socialist fatherland. Those who treat frivolously the defence of the country in which the proletariat has already achieved victory are the ones who destroy the connection with international socialism. When we were the representatives of an oppressed class we did not adopt a frivolous attitude towards defence of the fatherland in an imperialist war. We opposed such defence on principle. Now that we have become representatives of the ruling class, which has begun to organise socialism, we demand that everybody adopt a serious attitude towards defence of the country. And adopting a serious attitude towards defence of the country means thoroughly preparing for it, and strictly calculating the balance of forces. If our forces are obviously small, the best means of defense is retreat into the interior of the country (anyone who regards this as an artificial formula, made up to suit the needs of the moment, should read old Clausewitz, one of the greatest authorities on military matters, concerning the lessons of history to be learned in this connection). The “Left Communists”, however, do not give the slightest indication that they understand the significance of the question of the balance of forces.

When we were opposed to defencism on principle we were justified in holding up to ridicule those who wanted to “save” their fatherland, ostensibly in the interests of socialism. When we gained the right to be proletarian defencists the whole question was radically altered. It has become our duty to calculate with the utmost accuracy the different forces involved, to weigh with the utmost care the chances of our ally (the international proletariat) being able to come to our aid in time. It is in the interest of capital to destroy its enemy (the revolutionary proletariat) bit by bit, before the workers in all countries have united (actually united, i.e., by beginning the revolution). It is in our interest to do all that is possible, to take advantage of the slightest opportunity to postpone the decisive battle until the moment (or until after

the moment) the revolutionary workers’ contingents have united in a single great international army.

III

We shall pass on to the misfortunes of our “Left” Communists in the sphere of home policy. It is difficult to read the following phrases in the theses on the present situation without smiling.

“... The systematic use of the remaining means of production is conceivable only if a most determined policy of socialisation is pursued” ... “not to capitulate to the bourgeoisie and its petty-bourgeois intellectualist servitors, but to rout the bourgeoisie and to put down sabotage completely. ...”

Dear “Left Communists”, how determined they are, but how little thinking they display. What do they mean by pursuing “a most determined policy of socialisation”?

One may or may not be determined on the question of nationalisation or confiscation, but the whole point is that even the greatest possible “determination” in the world is not enough to pass from nationalisation and confiscation to socialisation. The misfortune of our “Lefts” is that by their naïve, childish combination of the words “most determined policy of socialisation” they reveal their utter failure to understand the crux of the question, the crux of the “present” situation. The misfortune of our “Lefts” is that they have missed the very essence of the “present situation”, the transition from confiscation (the carrying out of which requires above all determination in a politician) to socialisation (the carrying out of which requires a different quality in the revolutionary).

Yesterday, the main task of the moment was, as determinedly as possible, to nationalise, confiscate, beat down and crush the bourgeoisie, and put down sabotage. Today, only a blind man could fail to see that we have nationalised, confiscated, beaten down and put down more than we have had time to count. The difference between socialisation and simple confiscation is that confiscation can be carried out by

“determination” alone, without the ability to calculate and distribute properly, whereas socialisation cannot be brought about without this ability.

The historical service we have rendered is that yesterday we were determined (and we shall be tomorrow) in confiscating, in beating down the bourgeoisie, in putting down sabotage. To write about this today in “theses on the present situation” is to fix one’s eyes on the past and to fail to understand the transition to the future.

“... To put down sabotage completely. ...” What a task they have found! Our saboteurs are quite sufficiently “put down”. What we lack is something quite different. We lack the proper calculation of which saboteurs to set to work and where to place them. We lack the organisation of our own forces that is needed for, say, one Bolshevik leader or controller to be able to supervise a hundred saboteurs who are now coming into our service. When that is how matters stand, to flaunt such phrases as “a most determined policy of socialisation”, “routing”, and “completely putting down” is just missing the mark. It is typical of the petty-bourgeois revolutionary not to notice that routing, putting down, etc., is not enough for socialism. It is sufficient for a small proprietor enraged against a big proprietor. But no proletarian revolutionary would ever fall into such error.

If the words we have quoted provoke a smile, the following discovery made by the “Left Communists” will provoke nothing short of Homeric laughter. According to them, under the “Bolshevik deviation to the right” the Soviet Republic is threatened with “evolution towards state capitalism”. They have really frightened us this time! And with what gusto these “Left Communists” repeat this threatening revelation in their theses and articles. ...

It has not occurred to them that state capitalism would be a step forward as compared with the present state of affairs in our Soviet Republic. If in approximately six months’ time state capitalism became established in our Republic, this would be

a great success and a sure guarantee that within a year socialism will have gained a permanently firm hold and will have become invincible in our country.

I can imagine with what noble indignation a “Left Communist” will recoil from these words, and what “devastating criticism” he will make to the workers against the “Bolshevik deviation to the right”. What! Transition to state capitalism in the Soviet Socialist Republic would be a step forward? ... Isn’t this the betrayal of socialism?

Here we come to the root of the economic mistake of the “Left Communists”. And that is why we must deal with this point in greater detail.

Firstly, the “Left Communists” do not understand what kind of transition it is from capitalism to socialism that gives us the right and the grounds to call our country the Socialist Republic of Soviets.

Secondly, they reveal their petty-bourgeois mentality precisely by not recognising the petty-bourgeois element as the principal enemy of socialism in our country.

Thirdly, in making a bugbear of “state capitalism”, they betray their failure to understand that the Soviet state differs from the bourgeois state economically.

Let us examine these three points.

No one, I think, in studying the question of the economic system of Russia, has denied its transitional character. Nor, I think, has any Communist denied that the term Socialist Soviet Republic implies the determination of Soviet power to achieve the transition to socialism, and not that the new economic system is recognised as a socialist order.

But what does the word “transition” mean? Does it not mean, as applied to an economy, that the present system contains elements, particles, fragments of both capitalism and socialism? Everyone will admit that it does. But not all who admit this take the trouble to consider what elements actually constitute the various socio-economic structures that exist in Russia at the present time. And this is the crux of the question.

Let us enumerate these elements:

- 1) patriarchal, i.e., to a considerable extent natural, peasant farming;
- 2) small commodity production (this includes the majority of those peasants who sell their grain);
- 3) private capitalism;
- 4) state capitalism;
- 5) socialism.

Russia is so vast and so varied that all these different types of socio-economic structures are intermingled. This is what constitutes the specific features of the situation.

The question arises: what elements predominate? Clearly in a small-peasant country, the petty-bourgeois element predominates and it must predominate, for the great majority of those working the land are small commodity producers. The shell of our state capitalism (grain monopoly, state controlled entrepreneurs and traders, bourgeois co-operators) is pierced now in one place, now in another by profiteers, the chief object of profiteering being grain.

It is in this field that the main struggle is being waged. Between what elements is this struggle being waged if we are to speak in terms of economic categories such as “state capitalism”? Between the fourth and the fifth in the order in which I have just enumerated them. Of course not. It is not state capitalism that is at war with socialism, but the petty bourgeoisie plus private capitalism fighting together against both state capitalism and socialism. The petty bourgeoisie oppose every kind of state interference, accounting and control, whether it be state capitalist or state socialist. This is an absolutely unquestionable fact of reality, and the root of the economic mistake of the “Left Communists” is that they have failed to understand it. The profiteer, the commercial racketeer, the disrupter of monopoly—these are our principal “internal” enemies, the enemies of the economic measures of Soviet power. A hundred and twenty-five years ago it might have been excusable for the French petty bourgeoisie, the most ardent and

sincere revolutionaries, to try to crush the profiteer by executing a few of the “chosen” and by making thunderous declamations. Today, however, the purely rhetorical attitude to this question assumed by some Left Socialist-Revolutionaries can rouse nothing but disgust and revulsion in every politically conscious revolutionary. We know perfectly well that the economic basis of profiteering is both the small proprietors, who are exceptionally widespread in Russia, and private capitalism, of which every petty bourgeois is an agent. We know that the million tentacles of this petty-bourgeois hydra now and again encircle various sections of the workers, that, instead of state monopoly, profiteering forces its way into every pore of our social and economic organism.

Those who fail to see this show by their blindness that they are slaves of petty-bourgeois prejudices. This is precisely the case with our “Left Communists”, who in words (and of course in their deepest convictions) are merciless enemies of the petty bourgeoisie, while in deeds they help only the petty bourgeoisie, serve only this section of the population and express only its point of view by fighting—in April 1918!!—against ... “state capitalism”. They are wide of the mark!

The petty bourgeoisie have money put away, the few thousand that they made during the war by “honest” and especially by dishonest means. They are the characteristic economic type that serves as the basis of profiteering and private capitalism. Money is a certificate entitling the possessor to receive social wealth; and a vast section of small proprietors, numbering millions, cling to this certificate and conceal it from the “state”. They do not believe in socialism or communism, and “mark time” until the proletarian storm blows over. Either we subordinate the petty bourgeoisie to our control and accounting (we can do this if we organise the poor, that is, the majority of the population or semi-proletarians, around the politically conscious proletarian vanguard), or they will overthrow our workers’ power as surely and as inevitably as the

revolution was overthrown by the Napoleons and Cavaignacs who sprang from this very soil of petty proprietorship. This is how the question stands. Only the Left Socialist Revolutionaries fail to see this plain and evident truth through their mist of empty phrases about the “toiling” peasants. But who takes these phrase-mongering Left Socialist-Revolutionaries seriously?

The petty bourgeois who hoards his thousands is an enemy of state capitalism. He wants to employ his thousands just for himself, against the poor, in opposition to any kind of state control. And the sum total of these thousands, amounting to many thousands of millions, forms the base for profiteering, which undermines our socialist construction. Let us assume that a certain number of workers produce in a few days values equal to 1,000. Let us then assume that 200 of this total vanishes owing to petty profiteering, various kinds of embezzlement and the “evasion” by the small proprietors of Soviet decrees and regulations. Every politically conscious worker will say that if better order and organisation could be obtained at the price of 300 out of the 1,000 he would willingly give 300 instead of 200, for it will be quite easy under Soviet power to reduce this “tribute” later on to, say, 100 or 50, once order and organisation are established and once the petty-bourgeois disruption of state monopoly is completely overcome.

This simple illustration in figures, which I have deliberately simplified to the utmost in order to make it absolutely clear, explains the present correlation of state capitalism and socialism. The workers hold state power and have every legal opportunity of “taking” the whole thousand, without giving up a single kopek, except for socialist purposes. This legal opportunity, which rests upon the actual transition of power to the workers, is an element of socialism.

But in many ways, the small proprietary and private capitalist element undermines this legal position, drags in profiteering, hinders the execution of Soviet decrees. State capitalism would be a gigantic step

forward even if we paid more than we are paying at present (I took a numerical example deliberately to bring this out more sharply), because it is worth while paying for “tuition”, because it is useful for the workers, because victory over disorder, economic ruin and laxity is the most important thing; because the continuation of the anarchy of small ownership is the greatest, the most serious danger, and it will certainly be our ruin (unless we overcome it), whereas not only will the payment of a heavier tribute to state capitalism not ruin us, it will lead us to socialism by the surest road. When the working class has learned how to defend the state system against the anarchy of small ownership, when it has learned to organise large-scale production on a national scale, along state capitalist lines, it will hold, if I may use the expression, all the trump cards, and the consolidation of socialism will be assured.

In the first place, economically, state capitalism is immeasurably superior to our present economic system.

In the second place, there is nothing terrible in it for Soviet power, for the Soviet state is a state in which the power of the workers and the poor is assured. The “Left Communists” failed to understand these unquestionable truths, which, of course, a “Left Socialist-Revolutionary”, who cannot connect any ideas on political economy in his head in general, will never understand, but which every Marxist must admit. It is not even worth while arguing with a Left Socialist-Revolutionary. It is enough to point to him as a “repulsive example” of a windbag. But the “Left Communists” must be argued with because it is Marxists who are making a mistake, and an analysis of their mistake will help the working class to find the true road.

IV

To make things even clearer, let us first of all take the most concrete example of state capitalism. Everybody knows what this example is. It is Germany. Here we

have “the last word” in modern large-scale capitalist engineering and planned organisation, subordinated to Junker-bourgeois imperialism. Cross out the words in italics, and in place of the militarist, Junker, bourgeois, imperialist state put also a state, but of a different social type, of a different class content—a Soviet state, that is, a proletarian state, and you will have the sum total of the conditions necessary for socialism.

Socialism is inconceivable without large-scale capitalist engineering based on the latest discoveries of modern science. It is inconceivable without planned state organisation, which keeps tens of millions of people to the strictest observance of a unified standard in production and distribution. We Marxists have always spoken of this, and it is not worth while wasting two seconds talking to people who do not understand even this (anarchists and a good half of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries).

At the same time socialism is inconceivable unless the proletariat is the ruler of the state. This also is ABC. And history (which nobody, except Menshevik blockheads of the first order, ever expected to bring about “complete” socialism smoothly, gently, easily and simply) has taken such a peculiar course that it has given birth in 1918 to two unconnected halves of socialism existing side by side like two future chickens in the single shell of international imperialism. In 1918 Germany and Russia have become the most striking embodiment of the material realisation of the economic, the productive and the socio-economic conditions for socialism, on the one hand, and the political conditions, on the other.

A successful proletarian revolution in Germany would immediately and very easily smash any shell of imperialism (which unfortunately is made of the best steel, and hence cannot be broken by the efforts of any ... chicken) and would bring about the victory of world socialism for certain, without any difficulty, or with slight difficulty—if, of course, by “difficulty” we mean difficult on a world historical scale, and not

in the parochial philistine sense.

While the revolution in Germany is still slow in “coming forth”, our task is to study the state capitalism of the Germans, to spare no effort in copying it and not shrink from adopting dictatorial methods to hasten the copying of it. Our task is to hasten this copying even more than Peter hastened the copying of Western culture by barbarian Russia, and we must not hesitate to use barbarous methods in fighting barbarism. If there are anarchists and Left Socialist-Revolutionaries (I recall off-hand the speeches of Karelin and Ghe at the meeting of the Central Executive Committee) who indulge in Narcissus-like reflections and say that it is unbecoming for us revolutionaries to “take lessons” from German imperialism, there is only one thing we can say in reply: the revolution that took these people seriously would perish irrevocably (and deservedly).

At present, petty-bourgeois capitalism prevails in Russia, and it is one and the same road that leads from it to both large-scale state capitalism and to socialism, through one and the same intermediary station called “national accounting and control of production and distribution”. Those who fail to understand this are committing an unpardonable mistake in economics. Either they do not know the facts of life, do not see what actually exists and are unable to look the truth in the face, or they confine themselves to abstractly comparing “capitalism” with “socialism” and fail to study the concrete forms and stages of the transition that is taking place in our country. Let it be said in parenthesis that this is the very theoretical mistake which misled the best people in the Novaya Zhizn and Vperyod camp. The worst and the mediocre of these, owing to their stupidity and spinelessness, tag along behind the bourgeoisie, of whom they stand in awe. The best of them have failed to understand that it was not without reason that the teachers of socialism spoke of a whole period of transition from capitalism to socialism and emphasised the “prolonged birth pangs” of the new

society. And this new society is again an abstraction which can come into being only by passing through a series of varied, imperfect concrete attempts to create this or that socialist state.

It is because Russia cannot advance from the economic situation now existing here without traversing the ground which is common to state capitalism and to socialism (national accounting and control) that the attempt to frighten others as well as themselves with “evolution towards state capitalism” (Kommunist No. 1, p. 8, col. 1) is utter theoretical nonsense. This is letting one’s thoughts wander away from the true road of “evolution”, and failing to understand what this road is. In practice, it is equivalent to pulling us back to small proprietary capitalism.

In order to convince the reader that this is not the first time I have given this “high” appreciation of state capitalism and that I gave it before the Bolsheviks seized power I take the liberty of quoting the following passage from my pamphlet *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It*, written in September 1917.

“... Try to substitute for the Junker-capitalist state, for the landowner-capitalist state, a revolutionary-democratic state, i.e., a state which in a revolutionary way abolishes all privileges and does not fear to introduce the fullest democracy in a revolutionary way. You will find that, given a really revolutionary-democratic state, state-monopoly capitalism inevitably and unavoidably implies a step, and more than one step, towards socialism!

“... For socialism is merely the next step forward from state-capitalist monopoly.

“... State-monopoly capitalism is a complete material preparation for socialism, the threshold of socialism, a rung on the ladder of history between which and the rung called socialism there are no intermediate rungs ” (pages 27 and 28)

Please note that this was written when Kerensky was in power, that we are discussing not the dictatorship

of the proletariat, not the socialist state, but the “revolutionary-democratic” state. Is it not clear that the higher we stand on this political ladder, the more completely we incorporate the socialist state and the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviets, the less ought we to fear “state capitalism”? Is it not clear that from the material, economic and productive point of view, we are not yet on “the threshold” of socialism? Is it not clear that we cannot pass through the door of socialism without crossing “the threshold” we have not yet reached?

From whatever side we approach the question, only one conclusion can be drawn: the argument of the “Left Communists” about the “state capitalism” which is alleged to be threatening us is an utter mistake in economics and is evident proof that they are complete slaves of petty-bourgeois ideology.

V

The following is also extremely instructive.

When we argued with Comrade Bukharin in the Central Executive Committee; see present edition, Volume. 25, pages 358, 359.—Ed. he declared, among other things, that on the question of high salaries for specialists “we” (evidently meaning the “Left Communists”) were “more to the right than Lenin”, for in this case “we” saw no deviation from principle, bearing in mind Marx’s words that under certain conditions it is more expedient for the working class to “buy out the whole lot of them”^[2] (namely, the whole lot of capitalists, i.e., to buy from the bourgeoisie the land, factories, works and other means of production).

This extremely interesting statement shows, in the first place, that Bukharin is head and shoulders above the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and anarchists, that he is by no means hopelessly stuck in the mud of phrase-making, but on the contrary is making efforts to think out the concrete difficulties of the transition—the painful and difficult transition—from capitalism to socialism.

In the second place, this statement makes Bukharin's mistake still more glaring.

Let us consider Marx's idea carefully.

Marx was talking about the Britain of the seventies of the last century, about the culminating point in the development of pre-monopoly capitalism. At that time Britain was a country in which militarism and bureaucracy were less pronounced than in any other, a country in which there was the greatest possibility of a "peaceful" victory for socialism in the sense of the workers "buying out" the bourgeoisie. And Marx said that under certain conditions the workers would certainly not refuse to buy out the bourgeoisie. Marx did not commit himself, or the future leaders of the socialist revolution, to matters of form, to ways and means of bringing about the revolution. He understood perfectly well that a vast number of new problems would arise, that the whole situation would change in the course of the revolution, and that the situation would change radically and often in the course of revolution.

Well, and what about Soviet Russia? Is it not clear that after the seizure of power by the proletariat and after the crushing of the exploiters' armed resistance and sabotage, certain conditions prevail which correspond to those which might have existed in Britain half a century ago had a peaceful transition to socialism begun there? The subordination of the capitalists to the workers in Britain would have been assured at that time owing to the following circumstances: (1) the absolute preponderance of workers, of proletarians, in the population owing to the absence of a peasantry (in Britain in the seventies there was hope of an extremely rapid spread of socialism among agricultural labourers); (2) the excellent organisation of the proletariat in trade unions (Britain was at that time the leading country in the world in this respect); (3) the comparatively high level of culture of the proletariat, which had been trained by centuries of development of political liberty; (4) the old habit of the well-organised

British capitalists of settling political and economic questions by compromise—at that time the British capitalists were better organised than the capitalists of any country in the world (this superiority has now passed to Germany). These were the circumstances which at that time gave rise to the idea that the peaceful subjugation of the British capitalists by the workers was possible.

In our country, at the present time, this subjugation is assured by certain premises of fundamental significance (the victory in October and the suppression, from October to February, of the capitalists' armed resistance and sabotage). But instead of the absolute preponderance of workers, of proletarians, in the population, and instead of a high degree of organisation among them, the important factor of victory in Russia was the support the proletarians received from the poor peasants and those who had experienced sudden ruin. Finally, we have neither a high degree of culture nor the habit of compromise. If these concrete conditions are carefully considered, it will become clear that we can and ought to employ two methods simultaneously. On the one hand we must ruthlessly suppress^[3] the uncultured capitalists who refuse to have anything to do with "state capitalism" or to consider any form of compromise, and who continue by means of profiteering, by bribing the poor peasants, etc., to hinder the realisation of the measures taken by the Soviets. On the other hand, we must use the method of compromise, or of buying off the cultured capitalists who agree to "state capitalism", who are capable of putting it into practice and who are useful to the proletariat as intelligent and experienced organisers of the largest types of enterprises, which actually supply products to tens of millions of people.

Bukharin is an extremely well-read Marxist economist. He therefore remembered that Marx was profoundly right when he taught the workers the importance of preserving the organisation of large-scale production, precisely for the purpose

of facilitating the transition to socialism. Marx taught that (as an exception, and Britain was then an exception) the idea was conceivable of paying the capitalists well, of buying them off, if the circumstances were such as to compel the capitalists to submit peacefully and to come over to socialism in a cultured and organised fashion, provided they were paid.

But Bukharin went astray because he did not go deep enough into the specific features of the situation in Russia at the present time—an exceptional situation when we, the Russian proletariat, are in advance of any Britain or any Germany as regards our political order, as regards the strength of the workers' political power, but are behind the most backward West-European country as regards organising a good state capitalism, as regards our level of culture and the degree of material and productive preparedness for the "introduction" of socialism. Is it not clear that the specific nature of the present situation creates the need for a specific type of "buying out" which the workers must offer to the most cultured, the most skilled, the most capable organisers among the capitalists who are ready to enter the service of Soviet power and to help honestly in organising "state" production on the largest possible scale? Is it not clear that in this specific situation we must make, every effort to avoid two mistakes, both of which are of a petty-bourgeois nature? On the one hand, it would be a fatal mistake to declare that since there is a discrepancy between our economic "forces" and our political strength, it "follows" that we should not have seized power.^[4] Such an argument can be advanced only by a "man in a muffler",^[5] who forgets that there will always be such a "discrepancy", that it always exists in the development of nature as well as in the development of society, that only by a series of attempts—each of which, taken by itself, will be one sided and will suffer from certain inconsistencies—will complete socialism be created by the revolutionary co-operation of the proletarians

of all countries.

On the other hand, it would be an obvious mistake to give free rein to ranters and phrase-mongers who allow themselves to be carried away by the "dazzling" revolutionary spirit, but who are incapable of sustained, thoughtful and deliberate revolutionary work which takes into account the most difficult stages of transition.

Fortunately, the history of the development of the revolutionary parties and of the struggle that Bolshevism waged against them has left us a heritage of sharply defined types, of which the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and anarchists are striking examples of bad revolutionaries. They are now shouting hysterically, choking and shouting themselves hoarse, against the "compromise" of the "Right Bolsheviks". But they are incapable of thinking what is bad in "compromise", and why "compromise" has been justly condemned by history and the course of the revolution.

Compromise in Kerensky's time meant the surrender of power to the imperialist bourgeoisie, and the question of power is the fundamental question of every revolution. Compromise by a section of the Bolsheviks in October November 1917 either meant that they feared the proletariat seizing power or wished to share power equally, not only with "unreliable fellow-travellers" like the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, but also with the enemies, with the Chernovists and the Mensheviks. The latter would inevitably have hindered us in fundamental matters, such as the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, the ruthless suppression of the Bogayevskys, the universal setting up of the Soviet institutions, and in every act of confiscation.

Now power has been seized, retained and consolidated in the hands of a single party, the party of the proletariat, even without the "unreliable fellow-travellers". To speak of compromise at the present time when there is no question, and can be none, of sharing power, of renouncing the dictatorship

of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, is merely to repeat, parrot-fashion, words which have been learned by heart but not understood. To describe as “compromise” the fact that, having arrived at a situation when we can and must rule the country, we try to win over to our side, not grudging the cost, the most skilled people capitalism has trained and to take them into our service against small proprietary disintegration, reveals a total incapacity to think out the economic tasks of socialist construction.

Therefore, while it is to Comrade Bukharin’s credit that on the Central Executive Committee he “felt ashamed” of the “service” he had been rendered by Karelin and Ghe, nevertheless, as far as the “Left Communist” trend is concerned, the reference to their political comrades-in-arms still remains a serious warning.

Take, for example, *Znamya Truda*, the organ of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, of April 25, 1918, which proudly declares, “The present position of our party coincides with that of another trend in Bolshevism (Bukharin, Pokrovsky and others)”. Or take the *Menshevik Vperyod* of the same date, which contains among other articles the following “thesis” by the notorious Menshevik Isuv:

“The policy of Soviet power, from the very outset devoid of a genuinely proletarian character, has lately pursued more and more openly a course of compromise with the bourgeoisie and has assumed an obviously anti-working class character. On the pretext of nationalising industry, they are pursuing a policy of establishing industrial trusts, and on the pretext of restoring the productive forces of the country, they are attempting to abolish the eight hour day, to introduce piece-work and the Taylor system, black lists and victimisation. This policy threatens to deprive the proletariat of its most important economic gains and to make it a victim of unrestricted exploitation by the bourgeoisie.”

Isn’t it marvellous?

Kerensky’s friends, who, together with him,

conducted an imperialist war for the sake of the secret treaties, which promised annexations to the Russian capitalists, the colleagues of Tsereteli, who, on June 11, threatened to disarm the workers,^[6] the Lieberdans, who screened the rule of the bourgeoisie with high-sounding phrases—these are the very people who accuse Soviet power of “compromising with the bourgeoisie”, of “establishing trusts” (that is, of establishing “state capitalism”!), of introducing the Taylor system.

Indeed, the Bolsheviks ought to present Isuv with a medal, and his thesis ought to be exhibited in every workers’ club and union as an example of the provocative speeches of the bourgeoisie. The workers know these Lieberdans, Tseretelis and Isuvs very well now. They know them from experience, and it would be extremely useful indeed for the workers to think over the reason why such lackeys of the bourgeoisie should incite the workers to resist the Taylor system and the “establishment of trusts”.

Class-conscious workers will carefully compare the “thesis” of Isuv, a friend of the Lieberdans and the Tseretelis, with the following thesis of the “Left Communists”.

“The introduction of labour discipline in connection with the restoration of capitalist management of industry cannot considerably increase the productivity of labour, but it will diminish the class initiative, activity and organisation of the proletariat. It threatens to enslave the working class; it will rouse discontent among the backward elements as well as among the vanguard of the proletariat. In order to implement this system in the face of the hatred prevailing among the proletariat against the ‘capitalist saboteurs’, the Communist Party would have to rely on the petty bourgeoisie, as against the workers, and in this way would ruin itself as the party of the proletariat” (*Kommunist* No. 1, p. 8, col. 2).

This is most striking proof that the “Lefts” have fallen into the trap, have allowed themselves to be provoked by the Isuvs and the other Judases of

capitalism. It serves as a good lesson for the workers, who know that it is precisely the vanguard of the proletariat which stands for the introduction of labour discipline, and that it is precisely the petty bourgeoisie which is doing its utmost to disrupt this discipline. Speeches such as the thesis of the “Lefts” quoted above are a terrible disgrace and imply the complete renunciation of communism in practice and complete desertion to the camp of the petty bourgeoisie.

“In connection with the restoration of capitalist management”—these are the words with which the “Left Communists” hope to “defend themselves”. A perfectly useless defence, because, in the first place, when putting “management” in the hands of capitalists Soviet power appoints workers’ Commissars or workers’ committees who watch the manager’s every step, who learn from his management experience and who not only have the right to appeal against his orders, but can secure his removal through the organs of Soviet power. In the second place, “management” is entrusted to capitalists only for executive functions while at work, the conditions of which are determined by the Soviet power, by which they may be abolished or revised. In the third place, “management” is entrusted by the Soviet power to capitalists not as capitalists, but as technicians or organisers for higher salaries. And the workers know very well that ninety-nine per cent of the organisers and first-class technicians of really large-scale and giant enterprises, trusts or other establishments belong to the capitalist class. But it is precisely these people whom we, the proletarian party, must appoint to “manage” the labour process and the organisation of production, for there are no other people who have practical experience in this matter. The workers, having grown out of the infancy when they could have been misled by “Left” phrases or petty-bourgeois loose thinking, are advancing towards socialism precisely through the capitalist management of trusts, through gigantic

machine industry, through enterprises which have a turnover of several millions per year—only through such a system of production and such enterprises. The workers are not petty-bourgeois. They are not afraid of large-scale “state capitalism”, they prize it as their proletarian weapon which their Soviet power will use against small proprietary disintegration and disorganisation.

This is incomprehensible only to the declassed and consequently thoroughly petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, typified among the “Left Communists” by Osinsky, when he writes in their journal:

“... The whole initiative in the organisation and management of any enterprise will belong to the ‘organisers of the trusts’. We are not going to teach them, or make rank-and-file workers out of them, we are going to learn from them” (Kommunist No. 1, p. 14, col. 2).

The attempted irony in this passage is aimed at my words “learn socialism from the organisers of the trusts”.

Osinsky thinks this is funny. He wants to make “rank-and-file workers” out of the organisers of the trusts. If this had been written by a man of the age of which the poet wrote “But fifteen years, not more? ...”^[7] there would have been nothing surprising about it. But it is somewhat strange to hear such things from a Marxist who has learned that socialism is impossible unless it makes use of the achievements of the engineering and culture created by large scale capitalism. There is no trace of Marxism in this.

No. Only those are worthy of the name of Communists who understand that it is impossible to create or introduce socialism without learning from the organisers of the trusts. For socialism is not a figment of the imagination, but the assimilation and application by the proletarian vanguard, which has seized power, of what has been created by the trusts. We, the party of the proletariat, have no other way of acquiring the ability to organise large-scale production on trust lines, as trusts are organised,

except by acquiring it from first-class capitalist experts.

We have nothing to teach them, unless we undertake the childish task of “teaching” the bourgeois intelligentsia socialism. We must not teach them, but expropriate them (as is being done in Russia “determinedly” enough), put a stop to their sabotage, subordinate them as a section or group to Soviet power. We, on the other hand, if we are not Communists of infantile age and infantile understanding, must learn from them, and there is something to learn, for the party of the proletariat and its vanguard have no experience of independent work in organising giant enterprises which serve the needs of scores of millions of people.

The best workers in Russia have realised this. They have begun to learn from the capitalist organisers, the managing engineers and the technicians. They have begun to learn steadily and cautiously with easy things, gradually passing on to the more difficult things. If things are going more slowly in the iron and steel and engineering industries, it is because they present greater difficulties. But the textile and tobacco workers and tanners are not afraid of “state capitalism” or of “learning from the organisers of the trusts”, as the declassed petty-bourgeois intelligentsia are. These workers in the central leading institutions like Chief Leather Committee and Central Textile Committee take their place by the side of the capitalists, learn from them, establish trusts, establish “state capitalism”, which under Soviet power represents the threshold of socialism, the condition of its firm victory.

This work of the advanced workers of Russia, together with their work of introducing labour discipline, has begun and is proceeding quietly, unobtrusively, without the noise and fuss so necessary to some “Lefts”. It is proceeding very cautiously and gradually, taking into account the lessons of practical experience. This hard work, the work of learning practically how to build up large-

scale production, is the guarantee that we are on the right road, the guarantee that the class-conscious workers in Russia are carrying on the struggle against small proprietary disintegration and disorganisation, against petty-bourgeois indiscipline^[8]—the guarantee of the victory of communism.

Two remarks in conclusion.

In arguing with the “Left Communists” on April 4, 1918 (see *Kommunist* No. 1, p. 4, footnote), I put it to them bluntly: “Explain what you are dissatisfied with in the railway decree; submit your amendments to it. It is your duty as Soviet leaders of the proletariat to do so, otherwise what you say is nothing but empty phrases.”

The first issue of *Kommunist* appeared on April 20, 1918, but did not contain a single word about how, according to the “Left Communists”, the railway decree should be altered or amended.

The “Left Communists” stand condemned by their own silence. They did nothing but attack the railway decree with all sorts of insinuations (pages 8 and 16 of No. 1), they gave no articulate answer to the question, “How should the decree be amended if it is wrong?”

No comment is needed. The class-conscious workers will call such “criticism” of the railway decree (which is a typical example of our line of action, the line of firmness, the line of dictatorship, the line of proletarian discipline) either “Isvuvian” criticism or empty phrase-making.

Second remark. The first issue of *Kommunist* contained a very flattering review by Comrade Bukharin of my pamphlet *The State and Revolution*. But however much I value the opinion of people like Bukharin, my conscience compels me to say that the character of the review reveals a sad and significant fact. Bukharin regards the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship from the point of view of the past and not of the future. Bukharin noted and emphasised what the proletarian revolutionary and the petty-bourgeois revolutionary may have in common on the

question of the state. But Bukharin “overlooked” the very thing that distinguishes the one from the other.

Bukharin noted and emphasised that the old state machinery must be “smashed” and “blown up”, that the bourgeoisie must be “finally and completely strangled” and so on. The frenzied petty bourgeoisie may also want this. And this, in the main, is what our revolution has already done between October 1917 and February 1918.

In my pamphlet I also mention what even the most revolutionary petty bourgeois cannot want, what the class-conscious proletarian does want, what our revolution has not yet accomplished. On this task, the task of tomorrow, Bukharin said nothing.

And I have all the more reason not to be silent on this point, because, in the first place, a Communist is expected to devote greater attention to the tasks of tomorrow, and not of yesterday, and, in the second place, my pamphlet was written before the Bolsheviks seized power, when it was impossible to treat the Bolsheviks to vulgar petty-bourgeois arguments such as: “Yes, of course, after seizing power, you begin to talk about discipline.”

“... Socialism will develop into communism ... since people will become accustomed to observing the elementary conditions of social life without violence and without subordination.” [The State and Revolution, pages 77-78]; thus, “elementary conditions” were discussed before the seizure of power.)

“... Only then will democracy begin to wither away ...” when “people gradually become accustomed to observing the elementary rules of social intercourse that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all copy-book maxims; they will become accustomed to observing them without force, without coercion, without the special apparatus for coercion called the state” [The State and Revolution, page 462.]; thus mention was made of “copy-book maxims” before the seizure of power).

“... The higher phase of the development of

communism” (from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs) “... presupposes not the present productivity of labour and not the present ordinary run of people, who, like the seminary students in Pomyalovsky’s stories, are capable of damaging the stocks of public wealth just for fun, and of demanding the impossible” [The State and Revolution, pages 469-470.]

“Until the higher phase of communism arrives, the socialists demand the strictest control by society and by the state over the measure of labour and the measure of consumption ...” (ibid.).

“Accounting and control—that is mainly what is needed for the smooth working, for the proper functioning of the first phase of communist society” [The State and Revolution, page 473.] And this control must be established not only over “the insignificant capitalist minority, over the gentry who wish to preserve their capitalist habits”, but also over the workers who “have been thoroughly corrupted by capitalism” [The State and Revolution, page 474.] and over the “parasites, the sons of the wealthy, the swindlers and other guardians of capitalist traditions” (ibid.).

It is significant that Bukharin did not emphasise this.

Notes

[1] Nozdryov—a character in Gogol’s *Dead Souls* personifying the bullying type of landowner.

[2] Lenin is quoting statements by Karl Marx set forth by Engels in *The Peasant Question in France and Germany* (see Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, p. 438).

[3] In this case also we must look truth in the face. We still have too little of that ruthlessness which is indispensable for the success of socialism, and we have too little not because we lack determination. We have sufficient determination. What we do lack is the ability to catch quickly enough a sufficient number of profiteers, racketeers and capitalists—the people who infringe the measures passed by the Soviets. The “ability” to do this can only be acquired by establishing accounting and control! Another thing is that the courts are not sufficiently firm. Instead of sentencing people who take bribes to be shot, they sentence them to six months’ imprisonment. These two defects have the same social root: the influence of the petty-bourgeois

element, its flabbiness.

[4] Lenin has in mind one of the basic arguments used by the Mensheviks against the October Socialist Revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Mensheviks maintained that the seizure of power was “premature”, that Russia had not yet achieved a high enough development of the productive forces for socialism to be feasible. After the October Revolution they continued to oppose Soviet power and revolutionary socialist reforms.

These Menshevik views were summed up in a book by N. Sukhanov, *Notes on the Revolution*, which Lenin criticised in his article “Our Revolution (Appropos the Notes of N. Sukhanov)”. Refuting the Menshevik idea that the socialist revolution in Russia was “premature” because of economic and cultural backwardness, Lenin wrote that the working class of Russia must begin with the winning of state power by revolutionary means “and then, with the aid of the workers’ and peasants’ government and the Soviet system, proceed to overtake the other nations” (*Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 822).

[5] The Man in a Muffler—a character from the story of that title by Anton Chekhov. Typifies the narrow-minded Philistine afraid of all innovation and initiative.

[6] In June 1917 the Bolshevik Central Committee was planning a peaceful demonstration by the workers and soldiers of Petrograd. At a joint meeting of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies and members of the Presidium of the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets held to discuss the matter on June 11 (24), 1917, the Menshevik I. G. Tsereteli made a viciously slanderous statement against the Bolsheviks, accusing them of plotting against the government and aiding the counter-revolution, and threatened to take resolute steps to disarm the workers who supported the Bolsheviks.

[7] Lenin is quoting V. L. Pushkin’s epigram about a mediocre poet who sent his verses to Phoebus, god of the sun and patron of the arts. The epigram ends with the following lines:

And while he read, the yawning Phoebus asked
What age this rhymster had attained,
How long such rumbling odes composed?
“He is fifteen,” Erato made reply.
“But fifteen years?” “No more, my lord.”
“Then shall the birch be his reward!”

[8] It is extremely characteristic that the authors of the theses do not say a single word about the significance of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the economic sphere. They talk only of the “organisation” and so on. But that is accepted also by the petty bourgeoisie, who shun dictatorship by the workers in economic relations. A proletarian revolutionary could never at such a moment “forget” this core of the proletarian revolution, which is directed against the economic foundations of capitalism.

The Dialectics of the Historical Process and the Methodology of Its Research

Victor Alexeyevich Vaziulin

Contents

1. Introduction. Posing the Problem
2. The Methodology of Researching the Development of Society
3. Society as an “Organic” Whole
4. The Process of the Historical Development of Society
5. In Place of a Conclusion

The earlier installments of this article were published in previous issues.

4. The Process of the Historical Development of Society

The process of development can be considered from the point of view of the simultaneous givenness of its moments [sites, parts] (logical aspect) and from the point of view of the unfolding of development over time (historical aspect). In this section, we will focus on characterising the development of society over time.

The discovery by K. Marx and F. Engels of the materialist understanding of history made it possible to understand history as a natural-historical process, as a process that occurs due to necessity, in a law-governed way, and yet is realised through the activity of people who have freedom of choice, freedom of will (at different stages of historical development, the nature and degree of freedom vary).

To understand the process of historical development, it is necessary to define its change over time, and if development is law-governed, then the change must occur in some necessary direction. This law-governed

development does not exclude the activity of people as conscious, thinking beings; on the contrary, the historical development of society represents the resultant, formed from the activity of masses of people. However, the activity of people is ultimately carried out to maintain their own physical existence and that of their kind under certain objective, initially predominantly natural conditions. And for this reason alone, the historical development of society, i.e., the historical interactions of people, cannot occur purely arbitrarily.

The history of society cannot be free from accidents, zigzags, interruptions, etc. But still, if we take a sufficiently long period (the length of such a period varies depending on specific conditions), a direction of development will be revealed, making its way through all the accidents, zigzags, interruptions, etc.

The characterisation of any historical process of development means, first and foremost, the consideration of its general direction, therefore including the beginning of the process, the stages it passes through, as well as the ‘mechanisms’ of transition from one stage to another, the specificity, continuity, and direction of the process of development.

It is necessary to specifically emphasise that, by asserting the existence of a direction of development, we note the main direction of development. In doing that, we are abstracting from the fact that, along with the main direction, there may exist other, dead-end directions of development, and that interaction may occur between them and the main direction.

Society is, as already noted above, an ‘organic’ whole, passing in its ascending, progressive development through a series of stages, levels, and phases.

The real existing history of society is not the process of the development of an 'organic' whole in a 'pure' form. However, to understand the full complexity of the historical development of society, it is necessary to first isolate in a 'pure' form the main direction of the development of society and only then introduce complicating factors into the field of consideration.

Society, the social form of motion, is qualitatively distinct from the biological form of motion, but at the same time, society arises from nature and most immediately from the biological form of motion.

Consequently, if society is an 'organic' whole, then the history of society must be divided into stages, phases, which every 'organic' whole passes through in its development:

1. The formation of the historical preconditions of society, the formation of the social within the biological, and generally within the natural. At this stage, the preconditions for the emergence of society appear, but society itself does not yet exist.

2. The primary emergence of society.

3. The formation of society. The process through which the emerging society transforms the inherited natural basis is underway.

4. The maturity of society. The process of transformation of the inherited natural basis is completed. This substantially transformed natural basis is now included as a moment of the process of the development of society.

At the stage of the formation of the historical preconditions of society, natural laws reign supreme. The source of development here must be sought in the development of nature. At the stage of the primary emergence of society, a fundamentally new source of development is formed and begins to operate.

With the emergence of humanity, social factors became the main drivers of development, rather than natural ones. It is true that the natural factors, the natural basis, are only beginning to be transformed by the new process. At the stage of the formation of society, the transformation of the natural basis

continues, but to one degree or another, the natural basis still remains untransformed, and, therefore, the new essence, although it is the main, leading factor of development, does not yet dominate in the sense that the inherited process, the natural basis, has not been completely transformed.

At the stage of maturity, the social factor becomes not only leading but also dominant.

Thus, at the first stage, the source of development lies within nature; at the second stage, a social source of development arises, which immediately becomes leading. Thanks to the emergence of this fundamentally new factor and as its manifestation, an interaction between it and the natural factor arises. The interaction of the social and natural factors dominates, with the social factor being primary. At the third stage, the emerging social factor continues to be the leading, main factor. At the fourth stage, the social factor completely subjugates the natural factor, and only at this stage does it exclusively dominate, and thus only now does the self-movement, self-development of society, the interaction of people as an end in itself, the development of the essence of man as an end in itself, dominate exclusively.

The stage of the formation of the historical preconditions of human society begins with the existence of the ape-like ancestors of man. At this stage, due to purely natural activities (the interaction of the organism and the surrounding natural environment), the preconditions for the transition to the next stage are created, preconditions that are also natural in character.

The transition to the stage of the primary emergence of man occurs due to purely natural influences: it was the change in the surrounding natural environment (the thinning of forests, cooling, the reduction of opportunities for gathering food, etc.) that led to the fact that the ape-like ancestors of man began the transition from an arboreal to a terrestrial way of life and to the use of natural objects as means, tools for obtaining food, protection, etc. The

transition to the use of natural objects as tools was thus a continuation of purely natural development. But natural development included in the sphere of its activity such a natural factor that contained fundamentally new potentials for development, different from natural development. The transition to the use of tools, means of labour, opened the way to the creation of objects that do not exist in nature as such. As the use of natural objects as tools and means of labour became systematic, so too did the purposeful modification of the tools and means of labour themselves, i.e. there was a transition to the gradual production of tools, means of labour.

When does the stage of the primary emergence of man as a social being end? In our opinion, it is when the production of the products of labour becomes constant, regular.

Initially, production emerges as the production of tools for subsistence. Gatherers, hunters, and fishers do not engage in the regular production of the goods they consume.

Only with the emergence of animal husbandry and agriculture do human beings move to the regular, constant production of products of labour that serve as objects for satisfying the physical needs of man. It was then that the production of tools ceased to be primarily about subsistence and became about producing tools for production itself.

The emergence of man also meant a fundamental change in the relationship to nature: from satisfying physical needs with the help of objects found in nature in a ready-made form to the production of objects for consumption, to the purposeful alteration of some natural objects with the help of other objects used as means of alteration.

A fundamental change in the interaction of a living being with nature is, as in any interaction, a fundamental change in both interacting sides. The transformation of the ape into a new type of living being took place with the development of labour activity and was for the most part completed with

the formation of the components of labour: objects of labour, means of labour, purposeful actions, and products of labour. In turn, the formation of these components took shape when the foraging/extraction of ready-made objects of nature became the main source of subsistence for human beings and when the production of tools for foraging became constant. All the components of labour listed above are already present in the production of tools for foraging. It was at this time that the biological type of modern man was formed.

Above, we spoke of the primary emergence of a productive relation with nature. But the process of the primary emergence of this relation was also the process of the primary emergence of relations of production.

When foraging for consumable objects is the main source of subsistence, the use and distribution of the foraged objects are in general not differentiated from each other. What is gathered by the collective is consumed together.

In our opinion, if ready-made natural objects are used as tools, there is generally no social division between use and distribution, between consumption and production.

The social division between use and distribution, and between consumption and production, is only just beginning to emerge. As long as we are dealing with a society of 'foragers,' consumption and use, on the one hand, and the distribution of the results and tools of foraging, on the other, exist predominantly in an undifferentiated form. Relations of production only begin to emerge as relatively independent, primarily in the production of tools for foraging.

The primary emergence of relations of production as relatively independent can only be completed with the transition to actual production of objects for consumption and to the production of tools for production.

Natural factors transformed the troop of apes into human society. But that's not all. From the very

beginning of this transition, the main driving force behind development was the use of tools and the emergence of labour.

In our opinion, it is impossible to accept the view that, during a period of predominantly appropriating ready-made natural products, the economy and economic relations did not play a decisive role.

At the same time, however, any discussion about the decisive role of the economy or tribal relations should be taken *cum grano salis*.

Throughout the entire stage of the primary emergence of society, including the primitive stage and the lowest stage of barbarism, the primary emergence of the relations of production and the economy also takes place. This means that relations of production are already beginning to diverge from natural connections, although they still exist as indivisible from them. This means that relations of production have not yet completely transformed natural ties. In this sense, they do not yet dominate. But it is precisely the relations of production that serve as the leading factor of development during this era and, in this sense, the decisive factor.

Relations of production are only just emerging, and their content is largely determined by the weakness of the emerging productive forces, i.e. it is determined negatively. Since relations of production are not yet completely distinct from natural relations, relations of production merge with clan/tribe relations. Clan relations serve simultaneously as relations of production.

As production relations have become distinct from natural relations, they do not merge with clan relations, rather, they exist as a unique form of communal relations of production.

In primitive society, relations of production are predominantly merged with the natural relations of human beings to each other and to the conditions of production. 'Property' thus originally means no more than a human being's relation to his natural conditions of production as belonging to him, as his,

as presupposed along with his own being; relations to them as natural presuppositions of his self, which only form, so to speak, his extended body. He actually does not relate to his conditions of production, but rather has a double existence, both subjectively as he himself, and objectively in these natural non-organic conditions of his existence.^[1] The absence of a relation between man and his conditions of production means that property exists inseparably from the natural connection, natural relations.^[2] This is because man himself represents the subjective existence of natural conditions.

Thus, primitive communal property existed to a large extent merged with the natural relations of human beings to each other and to the conditions of production.

To one degree or another, the merging of relations of production with natural relations is indispensable to any community. This merging is rooted in the essence of all communities, regardless of their various forms.

At the stage of the primary emergence of man, society exists in the form of separate collectives, each representing society as a whole. The primary necessity for every collective is to provide its members with the minimum means necessary to sustain life and satisfy the minimum physical needs that are indispensable for life. This emerging mode of production exists as subordinate to this necessity, and its relatively independent development has only just begun. At the same time, from the outset, although the mode of production has been in service to the provision of the minimum means of subsistence, it has been the leading factor in development. However, influence of this factor still depends to a considerable extent on chance and specific natural conditions. Consequently, if natural conditions are sufficiently abundant to satisfy primitive needs, the development of the mode of production may stagnate. The primitive collective is, in a sense, a society of predominantly primitive consumers. Of course, overly harsh natural conditions also hinder the emergence of the mode of production.

The activation of the emerging mode of production,

as the leading factor of development, only occurs when there is a certain degree of 'pressure' from the surrounding conditions on human beings. At this stage, natural conditions and natural human connections (connections related to reproduction, changes in population size due to natural conditions) remain predominant factors but cease to be the leading factors of development.

The third stage is the formation of human society. At this stage, the emerging mode of production of material goods is formed, transforming the inherited natural basis. Of course, its primary emergence was simultaneously a certain transformation of the natural basis. At the previous stage, the basic components of labour, productive forces, and relations of production emerged. So, what exactly did the development of the mode of material production and the reshaping of inherited natural conditions involve during this formative period?

Natural connections and conditions continue to prevail during the formation of society. However, now the activity of the mode of production as the leading factor in the development of society has ceased to depend on random circumstances and has become predominantly necessary. In the process of formation, the mode of production becomes not only the necessary leading factor in development, but also the unchallenged dominant one.

Let us consider in more detail the process of the formation of society from the point of view of the development of the productive forces. The period of the formation of the productive forces begins from the stage when the level of the productive forces allows for the production of a constant surplus beyond what is absolutely necessary for physical survival and continues until the level at which an abundance of material goods can be produced. The formation of the productive forces begins after the basic components of the productive forces (human beings, means of production) first emerge. It consists, first and foremost, in the formation of the social character of labour. Initially, the social character of labour is generally dictated by the overall weakness,

underdevelopment and primitive nature of the productive forces, i.e. it is a consequence of the insufficient development of the productive forces. The formation of the social character of labour enters its final stage when processes in which different people serve as moments of a single productive process begin to predominate in production. The formation of the social character of production is completed when the entire production process of society becomes internally unified.

The formation of the productive forces is also the transformation of the inherited natural basis and its transformation into a subordinate moment of the movement of the productive forces. Already at the stage of the primary emergence of man as a social being, the production of tools (for foraging/extraction) becomes established. The production of tools (for foraging/extraction) in providing people with the means for subsistence plays, as does the entire mode of production, a leading role in development, but it by no means predominates in this process. At the stage of the formation of society, the use of tools (actually now tools of production itself, not of foraging/extraction) found in nature in a ready-made form still predominates. At this stage, the transition from the predominance of naturally emerging tools of production to the predominance of produced tools of production takes place. At the same stage, the transition from the predominant use of objects of labour found in nature in a ready-made form to the predominant use of artificial objects of labour, created with predetermined properties, takes place. Humanity at this stage of the development of the productive forces moves to the purposeful impact on all natural conditions on earth, on the entire surrounding earthly natural environment. Finally, the formation of the productive forces includes the formation of man as a productive force. All the transformations listed above mean the penetration into the essence of natural processes, and consequently, presuppose the transition from the empirical level of the development of knowledge to the theoretical, requiring a properly

scientific approach to reality. The formation of man as a productive force is his transformation from an empirically acting individual into an individual armed with theory.

The formation of society from the point of view of the development of the relations of production takes place, ultimately, under the determining influence of the forming productive forces. But, at the same time, the formation of the relations of production is a relatively independent process.

The development of the relations of production at the stage of the formation of human society occurs in a contradictory way. On the one hand, throughout the entire stage, although to varying degrees and in variously modified forms, the relation of man to his natural conditions of production 'as presupposed along with his own being; relations to them as natural presuppositions of his self, which only form, so to speak, his extended body'^[3], the direct relation of man to the conditions of production, is preserved. (This side is preserved to a certain extent even under capitalism.) On the other hand, a rift between man and the conditions of production is formed and develops; private property and antagonistic classes emerge and develop.

The first process changes and disappears as human society develops, while the second grows, becomes dominant, and ultimately becomes dominant at the end of the development process.

The basis for preserving, to one degree or another, in one form or another, the direct relation of man to the conditions of production is that the share and role of naturally occurring tools and objects of labour found in nature in ready-made form is still significant, and that man is still enslaved by the activity of natural forces.

The basis for the emergence and growth of the rift between man and the conditions of production is the totality of a number of features of the development of the productive forces. Firstly, it is the transition to the predominance of produced tools of labour, to the predominance of produced objects of labour, to the decisive purposeful impact of man on the

entire surrounding environment. Thus, the direct relationship between man and the natural conditions of production becomes mediated. Secondly, this mediated relation manifests as a rift. The productive forces at the stage of formation are sufficient to produce a constant surplus of means of subsistence beyond what is absolutely necessary to maintain the physical existence of individuals, but insufficient for the constant and total satisfaction of the physical needs of all members of society, which leads to the struggle of people with each other over material goods, to the formation of classes and private property. In addition, the predominance of individually operated tools of labour, the presence of the social character of labour, mainly as an external necessity, also leads to the emergence of private property.

What is the source of development at the stage of the formation of human society? The source of the development of society lies primarily in the mode of production, i.e., in the unity of productive forces and production relations. However, at this stage, the internal source, the source of self-development of society, is only just forming. The mode of production already plays the role of the leading factor of development, and it is precisely due to its activity that societal progress occurs at the stage of formation. At the same time, society still depends to a significant extent on natural conditions, which can either facilitate the progress of society (but cannot define its progress) or hinder the development of society. Therefore, the formation of the mode of production itself can begin and proceed under specific natural conditions.

Socio-economic formations characterised by class antagonism, represent various stages of the process of the formation of society. The entire history of humanity up to communism is a process of the maturation of society. When can we speak of a mature society?

A truly mature society is one in which the transformation of the natural basis, i.e., the foundation from which society emerged, has been completed. The stage of maturity of any given process of development

is the negation of the negation. Applied to society, this means that initially, there exists predominantly an immediate unity of society and man with nature (the distinction between them is not brought to the fore). Then, the transformation of nature and natural ties intensifies, and the rift between society and nature, the establishment of dominance over nature, begins to come to the fore. At the stage of maturity, there is a type of return to the starting point, to unity with nature, preserving the achievements of the first negation. The unity of society and nature at the stage of maturity of human society is mediated by the transformation of the entire earthly nature. However, here the rift between man and nature disappears, as does man's hostility towards the forces of nature, the one-sided struggle to become the master of nature, and the predatory attitude towards it, etc.

The productive forces of a mature society are quantitatively developed to the extent that they can deliver an abundance of material goods. The maturity of productive forces is also characterised by the fact that the production of society becomes an internally unified productive process; that the means of production are themselves created by production; and that man, as a component of the productive forces, is equipped with science, and the productive forces become the embodiment of science. The maturity of the productive forces also means the predominance of creative, meaningful, optimally sustained labour, which is impossible without developed automated production. In turn, the adequate basis for automated production is the production of automata by automata. The product of purposeful transformation at this stage of maturity is not only the means and objects of labour, not only labour itself, but all natural conditions on earth. All natural conditions on earth become a unified, purposefully transformed complex. This is followed by the purposeful, comprehensive exploration of near-Earth space.

The relations of production at the stage of maturity of society are no longer communal/tribal or relations of private property, but relations of public ownership,

i.e., social appropriation. The goal of society becomes not the provision of a minimum of material goods according to sex, age, and individual characteristics, as in primitive society, nor the acquisition of private property. It would be erroneous to consider the main goal of a mature society to be the provision of all members of society with an abundance of material goods. The main objective becomes the development, self-development of people as individuals. At the stage of the maturity of society, the relationship between productive forces and relations of production changes, as does the entire structure of society. A special study of these changes is the subject of separate research.

Socialism is a stage of maturity of society in which social ownership of the means of production has become the leading and determining factor of the development of society, but in which the limitations of previous development of society have not yet been fully overcome.

The communist phase of the development of the new society is, in fact, the development of the new society on its own foundation.

Notes

[1] K. Marx, *Grundrisse: Notebook IV/V—The Chapter on Capital, Continuation of “Forms which precede capitalist production”, 1858*

[2] This position should not be taken as absolute. Man cannot be completely unrelated to his conditions of production.

[3] K. Marx, *Grundrisse: Notebook IV/V—The Chapter on Capital, Continuation of “Forms which precede capitalist production”, 1858*

About the NCPN and KKE

Antifascist Former Resistance Fighters Netherlands (AFVN)

The New Communist Party of the Netherlands (NCPN) has, for several years now, fully followed the line of the Greek comrades. From 2022 onwards this became entirely clear, when Russia's Special Military Operation was presented as an inter-imperialist war.

Imperialism is regarded by them as a stage in which essentially all countries with capitalist relations are part of a pyramid, with the U.S. at the top of the hierarchy.

Other capitalist countries want to climb higher on this pyramid, which leads to inter-imperialist conflicts. According to this view, wars are waged only in order to obtain better positions within this hierarchy. Wars of national liberation supposedly no longer exist. Just like the KKE, but also like the Trotskyists, they claim that the contradiction between imperialist countries and countries oppressed by imperialism no longer exists. With the end of the colonial system, this contradiction is supposedly no longer relevant. In this context, these parties also never speak of neo-colonies.

According to this logic, there can be no resistance against imperialism from any country. Resistance to imperialism would in fact merely aim at securing a better position in the hierarchy. The arguments put forward in favor of this are in reality repetitions of the propaganda of our own imperialists. They, too, promote the idea that the rise of China is comparable to the rise of Germany before the First World War. Marx's statement that the ruling ideas are always the ideas of the ruling class becomes particularly relevant here.

The NCPN is part of the ECA and although the EU is labeled as imperialist, there is absolutely no clarity about what the various EU countries are actually doing outside of Europe. In particular, the role of

the Dutch ruling class is also left unclear. Only by ignoring the concrete crimes of the Netherlands and the other dominant EU countries can one reach the conclusion that a new Eurasian imperialist bloc comparable to the U.S. and the EU is emerging.

The claim that there are no oppressed countries anymore is, of course, nonsense.

Likewise, the idea that the working class in imperialist countries such as the Netherlands should not form an alliance with peoples fighting against imperialism is equally absurd. Now that the KKE is promoting a revisionist line within the Communist movement, it may be important to note that this line and the theory of the "imperialist pyramid" are relatively new. In its 1997 program, the KKE itself acknowledged the existence of anti-imperialist struggle. So the current theory of the KKE is less than 30 years old.

Naturally, Lenin always emphasized that under imperialism a strict distinction must be made between a handful of imperialist countries and the many oppressed countries. This also has direct consequences for the tactics and strategy that a Communist Party must pursue. When Lenin spoke of oppressed countries, he did not mean only formal colonies. According to the NCPN and KKE, the contradiction was between imperialist countries and colonies, and since the colonial system has ended, this contradiction is no longer relevant. Although it is never openly said that Lenin's thesis is no longer relevant, in their writings the other two contradictions are cited but not this one. That is why some background on the concept of "oppressed countries" is necessary.

In his Foundations of Leninism, Stalin begins by listing the main contradictions under imperialism.

He refers not only to colonized countries but also to dependent ones.

****Lenin called imperialism “moribund capitalism.”**

Why? Because imperialism carries the contradictions of capitalism to their last bounds, to the extreme limit, beyond which revolution begins.

Of these contradictions, there are three which must be regarded as the most important.

The first contradiction is the contradiction between labour and capital. Imperialism is the omnipotence of the monopolist trusts and syndicates, of the banks and the financial oligarchy, in the industrial countries. In the fight against this omnipotence, the customary methods of the working class—trade unions and cooperatives, parliamentary parties and the parliamentary struggle—have proved to be totally inadequate. Either place yourself at the mercy of capital, eke out a wretched existence as of old and sink lower and lower, or adopt a new weapon—this is the alternative imperialism puts before the vast masses of the proletariat. Imperialism brings the working class to revolution. The second contradiction is the contradiction among the various financial groups and imperialist Powers in their struggle for sources of raw materials, for foreign territory. Imperialism is the export of capital to the sources of raw materials, the frenzied struggle for monopolist possession of these sources, the struggle for a redivision of the already divided world, a struggle waged with particular fury by new financial groups and Powers seeking a “place in the sun” against the old groups and Powers, which cling tenaciously to what they have seized. This frenzied struggle among the various groups of capitalists is notable in that it includes as an inevitable element imperialist wars, wars for the annexation of foreign territory. This circumstance, in its turn, is notable in that it leads to the mutual weakening of the imperialists, to the weakening of the position of capitalism in general, to the acceleration of the advent of the proletarian revolution and to the practical necessity of this revolution.

The third contradiction is the contradiction between the handful of ruling, “civilised” nations and the hundreds of millions of the colonial and dependent peoples of the world. Imperialism is the most barefaced exploitation and the most inhumane oppression of hundreds of millions of people inhabiting vast colonies and dependent countries. The purpose of this exploitation and of this oppression is to squeeze out super-profits. But in exploiting these countries imperialism is compelled to build these railways, factories and mills, industrial and commercial centers. The appearance of a class of proletarians, the emergence of a native intelligentsia, the awakening of national consciousness, the growth of the liberation movement—such are the inevitable results of this “policy.” The growth of the revolutionary movement in all colonies and dependent countries without exception clearly testifies to this fact. This circumstance is of importance for the proletariat inasmuch as it saps radically the position of capitalism by converting the colonies and dependent countries from reserves of imperialism into reserves of the proletarian revolution.**

Just before the Second World War the book *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* was published, in which these contradictions were repeated several times.

Lenin showed that in the era of imperialism the capitalist yoke becomes more and more oppressive, that under imperialism the revolt of the proletariat against the foundations of capitalism grows, and that the elements of a revolutionary outbreak accumulate in capitalist countries. Lenin showed that in the era of imperialism the revolutionary crisis in the colonial and dependent countries becomes more acute, that the elements of revolt against imperialism, the elements of a war of liberation from imperialism accumulate. Lenin showed that under imperialism the unevenness of development and the contradictions of capitalism have grown particularly acute, that the struggle for markets and fields for the export of capital, the

struggle for colonies, for sources of raw material, makes periodical imperialist wars for the redivision of the world inevitable.

And later, when it speaks about the rise of fascism: *The world economic crisis further aggravated the contradictions between the imperialist states, between the victor countries and the vanquished countries, between the imperialist states and the colonial and dependent countries, between the workers and the capitalists, between the peasants and the landlords.*

After Stalin's death, confusion arose in the Communist world, and from the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union onward, revisionism became dominant in that country. It is important to know that the CPN was the only European party that did not go along with the anti-Stalin narratives and defended China against Soviet attacks. The party suffered interference from the Soviet Union as a result. This was also part of the criticism raised by those fighting revisionism in the international communist movement. Among them were successful revolutionaries such as Mao, Enver Hoxha, and Kim Il Sung, who took on the task of fighting revisionism. At a time when many colonies had already gained independence, they stated:

In the Middle East, two kinds of contradictions and three kinds of forces are in conflict. The two kinds of contradictions are: first, those between different imperialist powers, that is, between the United States and Britain and between the United States and France and, second, those between the imperialist powers and the oppressed nations. The three kinds of forces are: one, the United States, the biggest imperialist power, two, Britain and France, second-rate imperialist powers, and three, the oppressed nations. Asia and Africa are today the main areas of imperialist contention. National independence movements have emerged in these regions. The methods the United States employs are now violent, now non-violent, and this is the game it is playing in the Middle East.

Peaceful coexistence between two opposing systems

does not imply, as the modern revisionists claim, that we should give up the class struggle. On the contrary, the class struggle must continue, the political and ideological struggle against imperialism, against bourgeois and revisionist ideology, should become ever more intense. While struggling consistently to establish Leninist peaceful coexistence, while making no concessions on principles to imperialism, we should develop the class struggle in the capitalist countries, as well as the national liberation movement of the peoples of colonial and dependent countries.

The modern revisionists even oppose the national liberation struggle in colonies, clamouring for peaceful coexistence with imperialism. They regard the armed struggle of the oppressed peoples as a "spark" that could ignite a "worldwide thermonuclear war", and they disparage the national liberation struggle as a "suicidal act" or a "reckless act inviting human destruction".

When we apply this analysis to the current situation, it becomes clear that the line of the KKE and NCPN is revisionist and harmful. By presenting all wars as inter-imperialist, they deny the existence of national liberation struggles and the possibility of anti-imperialist resistance. This also has direct consequences for the political practice of communists in the Netherlands.

If one claims that Russia and China are simply imperialist powers competing for a better position in the "imperialist pyramid," then one must also conclude that solidarity with countries resisting U.S. imperialism is unnecessary or even wrong. In practice, this means that one adopts a neutral position in the struggle between oppressed peoples and imperialism. But neutrality in such cases is never truly neutral: it objectively favors imperialism.

Take the war in Ukraine as an example. According to the NCPN, this is an inter-imperialist war between Russia and NATO. But this is not the case. Ukraine is a neo-colony of the West, with a government installed and maintained through imperialist interference.

The 2014 Maidan coup was orchestrated by the U.S. and the EU in order to integrate Ukraine into NATO and the EU. The Ukrainian government represses communists, bans opposition, and glorifies fascist collaborators. Russia's intervention must be seen in this context. While Russia is itself a country which still has capitalist elements (the market economy) with its own oligarchs, its actions in Ukraine cannot simply be equated with NATO aggression.

To do so is to repeat Western propaganda.

Another example is China. According to the "imperialist pyramid" theory, China is merely an emerging imperialist power. But China has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, invests in infrastructure projects in Asia and Africa, and pursues policies that benefit developing countries. Of course, China is not socialist in the sense that Lenin and Mao envisioned, but it is also not an imperialist power in the same way as the U.S. or EU. To claim that China is imperialist is to ignore the reality of neo-colonial exploitation by Western powers.

For communists in the Netherlands, the most important task is to fight Dutch imperialism. The Netherlands is not a neutral bystander but an active participant in NATO wars, EU exploitation, and neo-colonial domination. Dutch companies profit enormously from the plunder of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Shell, Philips, Unilever, Heineken, ING—all of them are active in exploiting oppressed countries.

The Dutch state supports this with military interventions, political interference, and economic agreements.

If we adopt the KKE/NCPN line, we effectively ignore the role of Dutch imperialism.

By speaking only in abstract terms about "inter-imperialist contradictions," we fail to expose the concrete crimes of our own ruling class. This leads to passivity: instead of mobilizing the working class against Dutch imperialism, one retreats into abstract slogans about "all imperialists being equally bad."

But this is not Leninism. Lenin always emphasized that communists in imperialist countries must fight their own bourgeoisie first and foremost.

Ultimately, independence is not primarily about political independence but about economic independence. This is also the reason for all the coups initiated by imperialists after the Second World War. Efforts were always made to reverse steps toward sovereignty, particularly economic sovereignty, such as the nationalization of parts of industry.

Our positions must always be supported by evidence, especially economic facts.

The 2022 Forbes website shows very visually where multinationals are actually located. Research into plundering and plundered countries also reveals who is plundering, from which countries, and where the plunder goes. The world cannot be understood if communists deny the contradiction between imperialist countries and oppressed countries. By doing so, we deny on the one hand the crimes committed by the Netherlands and the EU abroad—something we already hardly address—and on the other hand, we deny the legitimacy of armed struggle and need not support it. But as Lenin teaches us, if we do not support the struggle of oppressed peoples against our own bourgeoisie, we are nothing more than traitors to the struggle and must be regarded as social-imperialists.

In these directions the following will objectively come together:

- The revolutionary labour movement in the capitalist countries.
- The countries that are building socialism under the particularly difficult conditions of domination by international capital.
- The anti-imperialist movements in the countries that are oppressed by imperialist centres.

Common action by these forces is capable of combating imperialist expansionism and impunity.

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Russia is resisting imperialism in Ukraine

Communist Organization (KO, Germany)

Topics: Imperialism and neocolonialism, War in Ukraine

18 discussion theses of the Kommunistische Organisation (Communist Organization) on the war in Ukraine

Table of contents

- Introduction
- The current situation and the problem of equidistance
- Outline
- Criminalization and repression
- Theses in short form
- **Part I: The historical context of the situation**
 - 1st Thesis: International counterrevolution
 - 2nd Thesis: Contradiction between imperialism and national self-determination
 - 3rd Thesis: The central challenge of the working class
 - 4th Thesis: The significance and determination of national and just wars
- **Part II: The Ukraine War from the perspective of national war**
 - 5th Thesis: Russia and China in the crosshairs
 - 6th Thesis: National War for Self-Determination
 - 7th Thesis: The anti-fascist resistance in eastern Ukraine as the vanguard of the struggle for self-determination
 - 8th Thesis: The Russian working class as the consistent representative of the national question
 - 9th Thesis: Strengthening the international front against imperialism
- **Part III: On the historical developments in detail**
 - 10th Thesis: Struggle for independence and sovereignty
 - 11th Thesis: Violation of the “world order”
 - 12th Thesis: Ukrainian fascism as an instrument of the West
 - 13th Thesis: Ukraine must serve imperialism
 - 14th Thesis: Historical turning point in Donbass
 - 15th Thesis: A forced defensive strike
- **Part IV: Germany’s role in the Ukraine war and in imperialism**
 - 16th Thesis: The Ukraine war as setback and springboard
 - 17th Thesis: A ‘Zeitenwende’ in the Federal Republic of Germany

Introduction

Immediately after the start of the Russian military operation in February 2022, we as the Kommunistische Organisation (KO) set ourselves the task of working on the urgent questions surrounding the war in Ukraine.^[1] We worked on these questions in several working groups, the results of which we are publishing in stages. These theses are not a summary of these results, but rather formulate the central political insights we have gained.

More than two years after February 24, 2022, the initial wave of discussion in the communist movement has subsided and it seems that positions have been established, adjusted, or accepted. Nevertheless, we believe that there continue to be very different points of view and a great need for discussion and clarification, even if this need is rarely articulated.

These theses speak of NATO waging war against Russia, this also means that this war will not end with a possible deal in Ukraine. On the contrary, recent developments in Germany, the US, and the EU show that the great war against Russia is just being prepared. With historically unprecedented war credits and the open announcement that it intends to wage this war from 2030 onwards, German imperialism is clearly positioning itself to wage a war. The communist movement is therefore not facing a swift return to calm, but rather an escalation of the international situation. It will not be able to stop this escalation if it does not understand it or refuses to understand it.

These theses are put forward for discussion. They do not represent the final position of the KO. We still have many gaps, questions, and needs for clarification and discussion. Even within the KO, some points continue to be assessed differently, and there are many questions on which we need more information and analysis. With these theses, we are presenting an interim summary of our discussion and research process, which will be further deepened in order to sharpen our understanding or revise it where necessary.

The discussion theses are intended to contribute to a joint public debate. Anyone who would like to comment on or contribute to the discussion of these theses is welcome to contact us. We look forward to receiving your submissions.

The current situation and the problem of equidistance

War is the most terrible state in which human society can find itself. It leads to destruction and death, chaos and suffering. It is therefore all the more important to name and fight those who want war, plan it, and bring the world into it. These are NATO countries and, at its head, the US. There is no doubt about this if one looks at history and the circumstances surrounding the war without bias. When these theses

state that Russia is resisting imperialism in Ukraine, it is because Russia is putting its foot down to NATO, the central source of war and destruction.

Anyone who looks at the world as a whole will have to agree that it is the NATO countries that are waging war not only in Russia and Ukraine, but also in Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, Syria, and, in a particularly brutal manner, in Palestine. In numerous African countries, be it Congo, Sudan, the Sahel, or Kenya, the NATO countries are continuing their brutal policy of oppression and destabilization. However, these undeniable facts are being covered up, concealed and distorted, especially in the central NATO countries.

The US and the Federal Republic of Germany have established a fascist regime in Ukraine that is capable of and willing to wage war against Russia and has been armed and made dependent on them. Swoboda, Right Sector, and other fascist, deeply anti-Semitic, and anti-Russian organizations were bred and brought to power with the Maidan coup in 2014 in order to build a state that would wage war against Russia.

These theses are by no means directed against Ukraine—on the contrary: we stand for the anti-fascist liberation of Ukraine from the Bandera fascists put in power by NATO. This is the prerequisite for the Ukrainian and Russian nations to be able to live together peacefully again. When NATO officers, CIA agents, and think tanks are expelled from Ukraine, when the Bandera ideology and its fascist terror are defeated, people will be able to live together peacefully again.

NATO is continuing its aggression and has begun to attack Russian heartland with long-range missiles. The communist movement is ill-equipped to deal with this situation. Equidistance, i.e., treating NATO and Russia as equals, not only prevents recognition of this reality, but also prevents consistent intervention.

While the formula of “Russia’s war of aggression in violation of international law” has served to integrate social democracy into the war camp, the

position of ‘inter-imperialist war’ prevalent in the Communist movement allows for a passive stance while maintaining revolutionary rhetoric for the Communist movement. It allows such communists to continue to agitate against NATO in words but essentially serves to cloak an opportunistic position in seemingly revolutionary phrases.

Who is the aggressor and who is the victim in a war is by no means a secondary question. For the propaganda of the ruling class, terming a country as the aggressor is central to justifying their armament and war policies. It is easier to accept that a country that has been the victim of aggression must then be supported. That is why it is criminalized to argue that Russia’s attack are actually justified. It is therefore one of the crucial questions of propaganda, of ideological class struggle, and thus a crucial question for communists.

For communists, however, there is more at stake than just the question of what or who triggered the war. In the theory of scientific communism, war is understood as the continuation of politics by other means (in reference to Clausewitz’s work “On War”). This implies that depending on which politics are being “continued,” war may also be considered just under certain circumstances.

The decisive factor for this assessment is the relationship between the objective political content of war and the concrete historical interests of the working class. However, since their struggle as a revolutionary class includes the struggle for democracy, national independence, and peace, it is not only a revolutionary war under working-class leadership that is just. National liberation wars or anti-fascist wars led by national bourgeoisies can also be just wars, as can civil wars against reaction and counterrevolution involving a wide variety of forces.

Outline

The theses begin with a general assessment of the

historical situation, the development of imperialism, and why the struggle for the national question, the right of peoples to self-determination, is the central struggle in which the working class must take the leading role.

The second part deals with the classification of the war in Ukraine in the context of national war and class relations in Russia and beyond.

The third part deals in more detail with the historical developments in Russia, Ukraine, and the People’s Republics of Donbass in order to understand more concretely how the Russian Federation came to its decision.

The fourth part examines the role of German imperialism in the Ukraine war and the tasks that arise from this role for the communist movement.

Criminalization and repression

The Federal Republic of Germany never developed into a particularly democratic state. From its inception, it has been a bulwark against socialism, communists, and any progressive development. In some phases, this may have appeared somewhat differently, but political persecution and comprehensive lies and propaganda have been carried out consistently. Currently, dissenting positions on the Ukraine war are being prosecuted under the rubber-stamp of section 140 of the criminal law which prosecutes the act of endorsement of any criminal offenses. It is perfectly clear that this is intended to criminalize any position on the war that differs from the official line.

While the neutral slogan “Neither Putin nor NATO” is unlikely to make any enemies, the Federal Republic of Germany is exerting enormous pressure on opponents of the war who explain the reasons why Russia is waging this war and also explain how these reasons are legitimate. That alone speaks volumes.

Condemning Russia is a safe bet for a ticket to joining the ruling discourse—no matter how radically opposed to NATO one claims to be. But this is also where the limits of what can be said and the limits of

freedom of expression end. Those who do not bow to the shibboleths of German propaganda face charges, smear campaigns, and court cases. Those who dare to continue to take a fundamentally oppositional stance on this issue can no longer be sure of their fundamental rights. The situation is similar when it comes to solidarity with the Palestinian people's struggle against Zionism and imperialism.

We insist on our fundamental right to freedom of expression and we are prepared to defend it. The cheap attempt to accuse us of condoning actual or alleged war crimes is baseless. But if the statement that Russia had good reasons to act as it did is to be made a criminal offense, then that means that only the view of the federal government ("war of aggression contrary to international law") is permissible. That would clearly be an admission of discursive bankruptcy.

In these theses, we will not be able to cite all the facts and assessments of international law experts. That is not the purpose of these theses. They are intended to serve as a basis for discussion within the communist movement.

The politicians who installed and supported the fascist Maidan regime, including its brutal war against its own people, and who have started a war against Russia, sending tanks and training soldiers, should be sitting in court. They are the same people who aim to send our children to war and make our country "Kriegstüchtig" [fit for war]. Have we not learned this from history? Should they also not know from history that they will be held accountable for this?

Theses in short form

- The struggle for national self-determination of the vast majority of peoples is in contradiction to the imperialist rule of a few powerful states that have historically established and shaped imperialism.
- The struggle for national self-determination and its link to socialism is the challenge facing the

working class and oppressed peoples.

- In the era of imperialism, national wars against (neo-)colonization and oppression, as well as against annexations and aggression, are on the rise. Every war must be subjected to a concrete analysis; it is wrong to blindly impose the conditions of the First World War on current conflicts.
- The national self-determination of Russia and China is in the crosshairs of imperialism. They are to be eliminated as political actors and possible allies for oppressed states in their defense against imperialist aggression. The strategies of the imperialists to combat these states are in part contradictory.
- A fascist regime has been established in Ukraine to turn the country into a spring board against Russia and threaten Russia's national existence from there.
- The masses took the initiative against NATO fascism. They pushed it back in eastern Ukraine and founded the People's Republics. In doing so, they defended the anti-fascist legacy of the Great Patriotic War.
- Russia's military operation serves to defend national sovereignty and the People's Republics. The operation does not aim to exploit and subjugate Ukraine, but to defend itself against imperialist aggression.
- The working class is the consistent representative of the struggle for national self-determination, while the national bourgeoisie is a fickle ally. The communists are at the forefront of the struggle.
- Russia's struggle against NATO is an important struggle against imperialist rule and serves the liberation struggle of other oppressed peoples. The international front against imperialism is being strengthened.
- After the phase of economic destruction and political humiliation in the 1990s, Russia has since been on a course of strengthening its national independence, which NATO is determined to halt by any means necessary.
- The destruction of Russia's economic, political,

and military power is intended to set a world-wide example to eliminate any resistance.

- With the Maidan coup, the arming of the Kiev regime, and the increased military threat from NATO, Russia was pushed into a corner and forced to launch a defensive counterattack in order to avoid a militarily hopeless situation.
- Germany is using the war against Russia as an opportunity to arm itself and strengthen its own power. At the same time, it is under pressure from the US and is being economically squeezed. In any case, German imperialism has its own interest in subjugating Russia.
- In order to rally social forces against NATO's war against Russia and, in particular, against German war policy, a clear and unambiguous analysis and political strategy is needed that counters the ideology of "equidistance."

Part I: The historical context of the situation

1st Thesis: International counterrevolution

With the victory of the imperialist NATO bloc over the USSR, a phase of international counterrevolution against all progressive forces in the world began. The US was able to assert itself at the head of the imperialist camp.

In the course of the international class struggle against the socialist world system, a camp has emerged that is organized under the US as the leading power. It continues to exist today and has dominated the "world order" since 1990. There are contradictions and competition within this camp. This is illustrated, among other things, by the various strategies for containing and subjugating Russia and China. A prerequisite for its stability is that the various imperialists benefit from this world order.

The international balance of power has shifted sharply in favor of imperialism as a result of the collapse of the socialist world system, primarily

because imperialism has a centralized military command and economic power structures at its disposal. With institutions such as NATO, regional command structures such as AFRICOM and many others, but also the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the imperialist camp has been able to impose its dictates on the rest of the world. Many states lost important gains in their ability of self-determination, for which they had to struggle and fight even in the period after formal independence.

The counterrevolution was followed by wars against states that stood in the way of imperialism, were of strategic importance or stood against subjugation and oppression. Without the former protective power of the Soviet Union, such states could now either be economically blackmailed or bombed into submission for the sake of finding new markets and areas of expansion for profitable capital accumulation.

However, since 2007/08, imperialism has been in a deep economic crisis, which could not be overcome with conventional instruments. The severe crisis of overproduction and falling profit rates in the imperialist countries on the one hand, and the economic rise of China and its growing international role on the other, are the main reasons why Western hegemony has landed in a historic crisis. The imperialist countries are forced to push for war in order to conquer new markets and break all forces that attempt to defend their national sovereignty against imperialism.

2nd Thesis: Contradiction between imperialism and national self-determination

Imperialism stands directly opposed to the national self-determination of many peoples and must prevent, deform, or only grant it in appearance as far as possible. The national self-determination of previously colonized countries (Cuba, China, Vietnam) or countries threatened, attacked by and resisting imperialism after the revolution (Russia/Soviet Union) have been an important part of the struggle of the

socialist countries against imperialism. The struggle for self-determination has come to the fore and currently represents the main stage of the political struggle of the oppressed peoples and classes.

Although the socialist world system has been largely destroyed, the contradictions of imperialism have not disappeared. It must plunder entire countries economically, blackmail them militarily, and oppress them politically in order to maintain its position of power. Due to the economic crisis, the pressure to maintain this power relationship by all means is increasing. The old imperialist colonial system was smashed by the liberation struggles of the oppressed peoples. As a result, the US and its allies established the system of neocolonialism, which was intended to enforce formal independence while increasing economic dependence and military threats against the newly liberated states. Those who resisted neocolonial subjugation had to reckon with aggression and war before 1990 and continue to do so today.

Economically and politically, the imperialist countries dominate the international division of labor and subordinate it to their reproduction process. Workers in underdeveloped capitalist countries are exploited and the wealth they produce is siphoned off to the ruling monopolies. The largest monopolies have subordinated the economies of less developed countries to their accumulation regime. Politically, this is followed by the subordination of less developed countries to the dictates of the leading imperialist states. Imperialism exerts massive influence on the conditions of economic and social development, on trade and financial policy, and on much more. In a comprehensive sense, the interests of the leading monopolies assert themselves and further restrict the self-determination of countries and the possibilities of class struggle.

Independent economic development is undermined in many ways, and development disparities and

dependence are perpetuated. For the oppressed peoples, national self-determination means a struggle against economic and political influence by foreign imperialist states and for the independent determination of their living conditions. This is the connection between the struggle for social self-determination and, ultimately, the struggle to eliminate capitalist exploitation on the basis of combating political control and foreign domination by imperialism.

This national question is also of existential importance for large countries that have become economically and militarily strong, such as China and Russia, because imperialism threatens them as well. This is not only a question of their economic exploitation and oppression, but also of neutralizing them as political subjects, as independent actors who can potentially act against the imperialist powers.

3rd Thesis: The central challenge of the working class

Historical development shows that the working class must play a decisive role in the struggle to defend national self-determination and social progress, as well as to defend the interests of the oppressed countries against imperialism. Even if the working class is not in power, or not alone in power, in most countries at present, it is nevertheless already the social factor that must fight hardest against subordination to imperialist rule.

This decisive historical process does not proceed without contradictions between the classes in the oppressed countries and without the necessity of the working class asserting itself. The class struggle against the bourgeoisie of the non-imperialist countries is therefore not abolished, but exists in a historical context in which the achievement or defense of national self-determination will depend on the political strength of the working class.

Neocolonialism and the related question of the

struggle for national liberation as an anti-imperialist struggle and its connection to the struggle for socialism have always been an important part of the communist movement's theory and practice. Views that see the current conflicts as the result of the "rise" of new imperialist states ignore this contradiction and declare it a relic. The common struggle of the working class of the imperialist centers and the oppressed peoples against their common enemy is denied, thereby negating an essential foundation of proletarian internationalism. They do not understand the task of the working class in this phase of the struggle.

4th Thesis: The significance and determination of national and just wars

The assumption that, in the era of imperialism, national wars can no longer exist due to the formal independence of states is false. Wars waged by colonies or semi-colonies against imperialist states, as well as those waged by threatened or oppressed states against imperialist aggression, are just wars of national liberation.

The course of world history is contradictory; therefore, a concrete analysis of the concrete situations is a prerequisite for understanding how the lawful development of history from the lower to the higher occurs. Since the imperialist governments had justified the First World War with "defense of the fatherland" and thus national defense, and opportunistic social democrats had taken up this propaganda to conceal the imperialist character of the war, some Marxists came to the wrong conclusion that there could in principle be no more national wars in the imperialist era.

Especially in his text "On the June Brochure" (Lenin Works, Volume 22, p. 310 ff.), Lenin deals with Luxemburg's argument that there could be no more national wars and argues that history is contradictory: "Thirdly, even in Europe, national

wars cannot be considered impossible in the era of imperialism. The 'era of imperialism' has made the present war an imperialist war; it will inevitably (as long as socialism does not come) produce new imperialist wars; it has made the policy of the present great powers thoroughly imperialist, but this 'era' by no means excludes national wars, e.g. on the part of small (let us assume annexed or nationally oppressed) states against the imperialist powers, as it does not rule out large-scale national movements in Eastern Europe either." (ibid., p. 316 f.)

Lenin points out that national wars can turn into imperialist wars and vice versa, and that this is precisely why a concrete analysis of the concrete situation and its development is necessary. Looking at developments since the First World War, it is clear that, for example, the war against fascist Germany and its occupation of France led to a national war by France as an imperialist country against Germany. The rule of the imperialist camp led by the US since 1945 has led to numerous national wars against its aggression and threats. Russia's military operation is a special war in this series, as it is being carried out by a larger military power, but this does not change the character of the war.

Part II: The Ukraine War from the perspective of national war

5th Thesis: Russia and China in the crosshairs

Subjugating Russia and China is a prerequisite for maintaining the imperialist order. A driving force behind imperialist policy is the contradiction between the growing sovereignty of Russia, China, and other states and the imperialist countries' claim to world domination. This front against the oppressed peoples is in the common interest of the imperialists.

The increasing ability and willingness of Russia and China to defend themselves and set limits to

imperialist aggression goes hand in hand with various trends that are diametrically opposed to imperialist rule. These include independent relations between oppressed states, an alternative monetary system, the development of productive forces, industrialization of these countries, and scientific and technological progress—in short, social and economic development and the independence that this brings. These trends are currently in a contradictory and early stage.

Russia and China are therefore in the crosshairs of the imperialist camp's aggression. With the war in Ukraine, we have already entered the phase of "decisive battles" for the maintenance of the existing imperialist order. The war in Ukraine is thus both an expression and, given NATO's failure so far, an accelerator of the decline of imperialism.

The course of events has brought Russia into a stronger and more unified position against the imperialist countries. The aggression of the imperialists is itself the central driving force behind the more unified formation of its opposing forces. Even if Russia is not a socialist state, the maintenance of its national independence means a strengthening of the forces opposed to the interests of the imperialist camp.

6th Thesis: National War for Self-Determination

Armed Ukrainian fascism has always been an aggressive force in the struggle against the Russian nation and in the war against the Donbass Republics. Communists in Ukraine and Russia are pushing to turn the anti-fascist character of the war into a consistent anti-fascist war, as they see the fight against fascism as a national necessity for both Russia and Ukraine.

Russia is waging a national war that is now directly aimed at years of imperialist aggression. With its military operation, Russia is responding to the threats to its security interests. This includes supporting the anti-fascist liberation struggle of the Donbass republics and, beyond that, pushing back NATO and

its war of attrition in Ukraine.

This makes the Russian military operation the first war in a long time waged by a major military power against imperialist oppression—which makes it historically significant.

Due to the economic aggression in the form of an expanded economic war, the open and covert warfare waged by NATO and Ukraine against Russia since 2014, and the ideological aggression in the form of nationalist and racist propaganda, Russia saw no alternative to this military operation.

To date, there are no signs that Russia is seeking violent domination and exploitation of Ukrainian territory with this operation. The military conquests are deliberately limited to the east and south of Ukraine. Their goal is to end Ukraine's role as a spring board against Russia in military, infrastructural, and political terms and to liberate it from the fascist terror of the Kiev regime. Its main goal is not the political subjugation of Ukraine. The purpose of the war is not the economic exploitation of Ukrainian labor and means of production. Even after the start of the military operation, Russia accepted Ukraine's accession to the EU, including economic integration into the EU. However, it did not accept NATO membership.

7th Thesis: The anti-fascist resistance in eastern Ukraine as the vanguard of the struggle for self-determination

The resistance against the fascist coup of 2014 that began in eastern and southern Ukraine was the courageous vanguard of the struggle for self-determination. The masses of the people took the initiative and opposed the fascist offensive of the Kiev regime. At great sacrifice, they defended their right to self-determination and the anti-fascist legacy of the Great Patriotic War, thereby posing a powerful obstacle to the expansion of the NATO-Bandera regime. Their recognition and protection, as well as the military operation, are fully in line with the will of the masses.

The establishment of the People's Republics of Lugansk and Donetsk represented the culmination of this struggle. This not only protected part of Ukraine from fascist encroachment, but also raised the struggle to a higher political level and gave it the significance it deserves: as an anti-imperialist and anti-fascist struggle. This action by the masses also represents a decisive turning point in terms of the necessity for action by the Russian Federation.

The US-led regime in Kiev has always sought to destroy the People's Republics and thus eliminate all resistance, but it has failed. NATO's arming of the Kiev regime against the anti-fascist republics was a direct preparation for war against Russia.

The recognition of the People's Republics and their protection by the Russian Federation correspond to the declared will of the population of the People's Republics, which they have repeatedly expressed clearly. It came far too late. Russia's military operation is the continuation of the anti-fascist struggle of the People's Republics and is completely in line with the will of the masses—in no way contrary to it.

8th Thesis: The Russian working class as the consistent representative of the national question

Russia's bourgeoisie is an unreliable and fickle class factor because it always has its own capital interests in mind and is prepared to betray the national question. The working class is the only class that will consistently stand up and fight for the defense of national sovereignty. It must therefore be strengthened. Its interest lies in a consistent anti-imperialist revolution toward socialism. This can only be achieved by strengthening the Communist Party. Although the national and anti-fascist war is only a strategic stage in the political-military liberation struggle of the working class, it is at the same time a prerequisite for and part of the class struggle. It is therefore in the immediate interest of the Russian working class and its fascist-ruled and NATO-war-wasted Ukrainian class brothers

and sisters.

A NATO victory would also mean a victory for Ukrainian fascism. The subjugation and exploitation of Ukraine would go hand in hand with renewed oppression and exploitation of Russia by imperialism. The international balance of power would shift in favor of imperialism.

Russian communists have long pursued a course of national defense, which they see as both a prerequisite for and a possible transition to socialism. The measures necessary for effective defense open up opportunities for changes in property relations and for the suppression of the bourgeoisie, especially its collaborating sections. In this way, the class struggle can be decisively advanced toward socialism.

It is in the interests of the Russian working class to utilize the revolutionary potential of this national and anti-fascist war. To do so, it must assert itself as a decisive political factor in favor of consistent national defense and consistent anti-fascism against its class enemies. After the period of subjugation and plunder of Russia in the 1990s, the working class knows what it has to lose.

The national bourgeoisie clearly has an advantage from the measures that have been implemented. It has consolidated its political influence and expanded its sphere of activity. At the same time, the process of Russia's national independence has also brought progress to the masses. These gains are now being defended by Russia's military operation. The fact that the working people in the cities and countryside no longer have to endure the old double yoke of domestic and foreign exploiters is changing their conditions of existence and, at the same time, the conditions of their struggle for economic and political power, which is easier to wage in an independent state than under the whip of foreign monopolies and exploiters.

For the Ukrainian working class, the military operation will decide whether they will continue to be bled dry as NATO's battering ram, while all

working-class organizations are either banned or severely restricted. The defeat of imperialism and fascism in Ukraine is also in the interests of the working people of Ukraine. NATO stands in the way of a peace process, as it wants to enforce this policy of subjugation and aggression by any means necessary.

9th Thesis: Strengthening the international front against imperialism

The defeat and weakening of the aggressive NATO bloc in the war against Russia meant the retreat of imperialism and a shift in the international balance of power. This opens up scope for progressive and anti-imperialist forces. This character and the resulting international developments must be recognized and taken up by the communist movement worldwide in order to show that Russia's military operation is in the interests of the liberation of the working class and oppressed peoples worldwide.

Among other things, the international working class can overcome its divisions between the imperialist countries and the oppressed countries through the military operation. Developments in the Sahel, Palestine, and Yemen, as well as the BRICS alliance in general, highlight the contradictions that have been intensifying globally since Russia's military operation. The warring imperialist governments are increasingly feeling discontent and rejection of their arms race and war policies, while the oppressed peoples are rising up against their subjugation.

Ever more open rifts are appearing between the oppressed peoples and the imperialist centers. It is in the interests of the global working class and the oppressed peoples to contribute to the defeat of this imperialist war machine, to increasingly lead it and strengthen it with communist positions.

Part III: On the historical developments in detail Russia's character and development

10th Thesis: Struggle for independence and

sovereignty

With the counterrevolution in the USSR, Russia was subjugated to imperialism and reduced to the role of a raw materials supplier and sales market. Since the beginning of the 2000s, Russian policy, both in economic and domestic terms and at the international level, has been increasingly directed against this political and economic subjugation by imperialism.

The capitalization of the Soviet economy led to the destruction of the existing production relations throughout the former USSR. This in turn caused the decline of the now Russian economy, which led to capital flight from Russia. As a result, a bourgeoisie emerged that accumulated its capital mainly abroad and therefore had no interest in Russia's national capitalist growth. In addition to this sell-off of production, another trend emerged: the takeover of control over the profitable raw materials sector by foreign capital. It is therefore a mistake to claim that the privatized large enterprises and banks of the former Soviet Union were transferred to national monopolies or financial capital that merged with the Russian state.

In the wake of this economic decline and sell-off, Russian capitalism developed a growing dependence on the capitalist world market of imperialism. This dependence enabled the institutions of imperialism to impose their political agenda on Russia. Specifically, Russia was reduced to the status of a supplier of raw materials and an investment location for foreign capital. The profits of this capital were siphoned off from the country and accumulated in the currencies of the imperialist countries.

Against the backdrop of these dependencies, Russia is now pursuing an economic policy aimed at greater state control over strategically central key industries and banks. This control, in turn, is intended to create the conditions for import substitution and diversification of exports.

The necessary prerequisite for this agenda, which

is fraught with contradictions, is therefore not the expansionist extension^[1] of Russian capital in the medium term, but the consolidation of Russian capitalism through a stronger detachment from imperialism. Contrary statements by certain Russian politicians and thinkers, as well as possible developments in the distant future, do not change this current objective situation.

Russia demands that its right to independence be recognized. Thanks to the military resources it inherited from the USSR, it is in a position to enforce this right. Imperialism has responded to this demand with encirclement and threats and, since 2014, with support for an armed conflict in Ukraine.

11th Thesis: Violation of the “world order”

With its military strength and its desire to overcome its own dependence and subordinate role in the international division of labor, including in material terms, Russia poses a challenge to imperialism—because it is shifting the global balance of power in a way that has not been seen since the counterrevolution. Consequently, the imperialist countries are now fundamentally concerned with destroying Russia’s means of power and its political ambitions through comprehensive military and economic warfare on the one hand and political destabilization on the other. This destruction is also intended to set an example for other counterforces to the imperialist order.

With its agenda of proletarian internationalism, the Soviet Union supported national and anti-imperialist liberation movements. With its material resources, it was thus able to be a significant factor in the power struggle between the working class and imperialism. Specifically, it was able to provide material support to liberation movements on the one hand and, on the other hand, set limits to imperialism’s suppression of these aspirations and offer an alternative system of economic integration.

A military strike is the last resort for enforcing one’s

own interests. With Russia’s military intervention, the contradiction takes on a new form for imperialism and, in contrast to previous independence efforts by smaller states, Russia’s actions are seen as the ultimate violation of imperialism’s world domination. The complete destruction of its material, i.e., military and economic, means of power and the bringing about of a pro-imperialist political upheaval in Russia are therefore necessarily the strategic goal of imperialism. The failure of these plans is therefore in the objective interest of the struggle against imperialism worldwide.

The development of Ukraine into a springboard against Russia

12th Thesis: Ukrainian fascism as an instrument of the West

A decisive condition for the development of Ukraine into a military springboard against Russia was and is Ukrainian fascism, both as a movement and as a state power. Ukrainian ultra-nationalists and fascists were and are the most important allies of the Western imperialists in their policy toward Ukraine and Russia, and were kept alive by the latter even in exile after the defeat of German fascism.

Due to its geographical location, Ukraine has always been seen as the launching pad for a conventional war against Russia. Even before World War I, German strategies saw Ukraine as a key area for victory over Russia. During World War II and after the defeat of fascism, Ukrainian fascists were also supported or directly collaborated with. After the counterrevolution, Ukrainian fascism continued to fulfill its anti-Russian role for the NATO powers. With the help of modern Banderism, the “Western integration” of Ukraine was carried out for the purpose of turning Ukraine into a battering ram against Russia. The US and Germany in particular armed and financed various fascist groups inside and

outside Ukraine for this purpose.

Since the Maidan coup in 2014, the fascist movement in Ukraine has taken over key positions in the military, administration, and state, enabling it to openly terrorize the labor movement, the left, communists, and Russian-speaking or Russian-identifying segments of the population. Banderism was elevated to a *raison d'état*, and Hitler's collaborators were declared national heroes. It is the anti-Russian ethno-nationalist ideology of the fascists that threatens the national unity and sovereignty of Ukraine and did not shy away from waging war against its own population, as the war against eastern Ukraine has clearly shown.

The Ukrainian fascist movement served German imperialism as an important ally in the pursuit of its own interests after the First World War and especially in the war against the Soviet Union. In addition to its aggressive anti-Semitism and anti-communism, Ukrainian fascism was characterized by a radical anti-Russian, Ukrainian ethno-nationalist ideology that justified the mass murders committed by the OUN and UPA between 1943 and 1945. After 1945, the most important leaders of Banderism were protected from persecution by the imperialist powers and integrated into anti-Soviet programs of the US, British, and German secret services.

Under the leadership of the US and Germany, the counterrevolution in Ukraine promoted forces that advocated an aggressive anti-Russian stance, including fascist structures that were the successors of Banderism. The Maidan coup orchestrated by the West showed the central role played by paramilitary fascist forces in enforcing NATO interests in Ukraine. Since then, fascism in Ukraine has served to terrorize the population, reorient its ideology, and divide it. Even before the start of the SMO in February 2022, the regime had already implemented brutal measures against any opposition. The organizations of the Ukrainian labor movement were outlawed and smashed, with communists in particular being

forced into complete illegality. Massacres of anti-fascists and ethnic minorities, as well as attacks on bourgeois-democratic forces opposing fascism, were carried out by fascist gangs with the approval of the state apparatus.

Ukrainian fascism is racist and aggressively anti-communist and denies Ukraine's Soviet history. It is therefore also directed against Ukraine's historical Soviet identity as a multi-ethnic state. All these advances were aimed at increasingly involving and preparing Ukraine and its population for NATO's war plans against Russia. To this end, Ukrainian fascism is dividing the Ukrainian population and leading it, against its interests, into a war against Russia.

The comprehensive revisionism of history is intended to reinterpret Ukraine's Soviet history as a period of foreign rule, with the aim of artificially constructing Ukraine's belonging to the EU and thus to Western imperialism. But this shared history is precisely the history of collaboration with Nazi Germany, in whose plans Ukraine was always intended to serve as a non-sovereign breadbasket. Neo-Banderism is therefore anti-national because it expresses the interests of foreign imperialists over those of the Ukrainian nation. Even though it can draw on a Ukrainian national movement, Ukrainian fascism has been continuously sustained by Western powers throughout its emergence and development, and has been supported with massive political, financial, and military resources. The term "exported fascism" aptly sums up this situation.

Like German fascism back then, the Federal Republic of Germany is once again reversing the roles of perpetrator and victim in order to legitimize its own interests in Ukraine: the narrative that the Ukrainian nation is defending itself against Russian oppression is being seamlessly adopted from the past. Through its support for neo-Banderism, the FRG is thus openly rehabilitating German fascism today.

13th Thesis: Ukraine must serve imperialism

The integration of Ukraine into the aggressive NATO bloc, which has been ongoing since the counterrevolution, took on a new quality with the Maidan coup. The coup was accompanied by a radical sell-out of the country's economy to Western monopolies. Today, imperialism, especially US imperialism, controls Ukraine politically and economically. The goal was to prepare Ukraine for the war plans of the US and NATO and to economically subjugate and exploit the country.

The separation of Ukraine from Russia brought about by the counterrevolution immediately opened up many opportunities for NATO countries to exert influence and bind Ukraine to themselves through various foundations, advisors, the media, and politicians trained in their countries. In conjunction with the sell-out of the country, Ukraine has since been integrated into numerous Euro-Atlantic networks. Ukraine's geographical location continues to place it in a strategically important military position against Russia. The IMF's austerity dictates and capital exports disguised as "development aid" reinforced the influence of foreign financial capital. In 2004, the "Orange Revolution" was the first attempt to accelerate Ukraine's subjugation by installing a pro-Western puppet government. The coup attempt failed due to resistance from the Ukrainian people.

A milestone in this development was the "EU Association Agreement" adopted by the coup government in 2014. The subsequent "reform programs" led to the privatization and opening up of almost all sectors of the Ukrainian economy, exclusively for the benefit of Western monopolies. These were able to penetrate deep into the Ukrainian economy and, through their simultaneous strong influence on the state apparatus, align it with Western interests against the interests of the Ukrainian people. The state and government are not only subject to direct political pressure from Washington and Brussels and their NGOs, but are also infiltrated

by advisors and ministers from these circles. From the very first day of post-Soviet Ukraine, political and economic decisions about the country's future were increasingly influenced by the profit and expansion interests of Western capital. An orientation of Ukraine towards Russia was never an option for the West.

The anti-fascist resistance of the People's Republics

14th Thesis: Historical turning point in Donbass

Since imperialist interests in Ukraine first emerged, parts of the population in the territory of present-day Ukraine have been fighting against fascism and imperialist influence. The Maidan coup was a serious defeat for the Ukrainian labor movement and these anti-fascist forces. At the same time, this resistance in Donbass and Crimea reached a new level. Their struggle is and was an existential defensive struggle against their oppression. This struggle became particularly active with the proclamation of the People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, which were the result of popular uprisings against the Kiev regime and which, for the first time, drew a red line for NATO in its advance to the east. Since then, the Donbass population has been defending its legitimate and internationally recognized right to national self-determination against NATO aggression led by Ukrainian fascists.

Throughout Ukraine, resistance has been mounted against the Kiev regime's so-called "anti-terrorist operation" launched in 2014, which was in fact a fascist-led purge of the resistance. The sharpest expression of this struggle unfolded in Donbass and reached its peak in the popular revolutions of 2014, which led to the founding of the People's Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk. These were a necessary and successful act of self-defense, which has been directly supported by Russia's military intervention since 2022.

The People's Republics in Donbass are based on their anti-fascist and anti-imperialist foundations and enjoy broad support from the people. With the secession and separation of the People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, the People's Republics exercised their legitimate and internationally recognized right to national self-determination in favor of maintaining relations with Russia (politically, economically, and culturally). They took a historic step against imperialist NATO aggression in Eastern Europe and have since defended their right to self-determination. Communists in Russia and internationalists from all over the world continuously urged support for the population in favor of improved living conditions and conditions of struggle for the working class, as well as the weakening of imperialism by resisting the subjugation of the population. The aggression against the People's Republics was always directed against Russia as well.

The resistance against the fascist coup government, which originated in Donbass in 2014 and resolutely and consistently opposed the Nazi troops, is the vanguard and the real historical turning point. It set a limit to the fascist troops in Kiev and showed the only way in which fascism can and must be fought. Its military successes and perseverance also gave the Russian Federation time to prepare for confrontation with imperialism and made it difficult for NATO and Kiev to rapidly escalate the threat against Russia.

15th Thesis: A forced defensive strike

The violation of Russia's core security interests and the rejection of any negotiations, as well as increased military activity and provocations by the Ukrainian army from 2021 onwards, were met by the Russian Federation with clear warnings and the demonstration of military capabilities. These warnings were met with further military and political escalation on the part of the West. Russia saw no alternative to a military response, which was also demanded by the People's Republics. The military response contains the

increasing threat and escalation by the West and at the same time exposes its increasing weakness.

The Russian government's years of diplomatic efforts to secure its security interests in a treaty have failed due to the unwillingness of the West. The list of aggressions is long: it begins with NATO's eastward expansion and continues with the termination of the INF treaties and covert warfare against Russia. This came to a head in December 2021, when the Russian government presented a concrete draft treaty demanding the withdrawal of NATO troops to 1997 levels. This was met with an escalation of military threats from the West: at that time, a massive advance of Ukrainian troops could be observed along the front line in eastern Ukraine. At the NATO security conference in February 2022, a few days before the start of the military operation, the Ukrainian president announced that he considered the Budapest Memorandum obsolete. Ukraine thus announced its intention to acquire nuclear weapons, which was confirmed by the then ambassador to Germany, Melnyk. At this point, the Kiev government was finalizing plans to conquer Crimea and the People's Republics. These latest provocations showed that Russia could no longer achieve its security interests vis-à-vis the West through diplomacy. A military invasion of the People's Republics by Kiev's troops would have under no circumstances prevailed. The recognition of the People's Republics by the Russian Federation and a mutual assistance agreement were unmistakable signals that consequences would follow if this line was crossed. After the West continued to reject any negotiations and assurances, intervention became necessary and inevitable as a last resort.

This strategically defensive action has a tactically offensive character and represents a consistent counterattack. It is a response to the aggression of NATO imperialism.

After a long period of encirclement, treaty violations, and provocations by NATO, and the threat

to its national existence, the Russian Federation has taken a decisive political step that was also inevitable on a historical level. The phase of apparent triumph of imperialism after the counterrevolution, which was marked by the almost unchecked military and economic power of the imperialist states on the one hand, and subordination, oppression, political control, and even the destruction of entire countries on the other, has come to an end or entered a new stage. The formation of the BRICS and the strong development of China created conditions in which the national development prospects of many countries were able to take shape again.

Russia's policy on the Syrian question prevented the destruction of the country and thwarted the plans of imperialism, especially those of the US. These and other political factors, which could lead to a weakening of imperialist rule and a strengthening of independence and autonomy, prompted the US to put the Russian Federation in an existentially threatening position and to push ahead with its long-planned warfare through Ukraine, which had been turned into a springboard. Russia's response marks a turning point in which NATO's military threat has for the first time received a response on a scale that shows many countries and peoples that the power of imperialism is not inviolable. Giving in to the provocations, threats, and subjugation would have meant standing idly by and watching them continue.

Part IV: Germany's role in the Ukraine war and in imperialism

16th Thesis: The Ukraine war as setback and springboard

The Ukraine war exposes both the contradictory and common interests of German and US imperialism. Assumptions that Germany has no interests of its own in the Ukraine war or that it will have no negative consequences for German imperialism are wrong. This is based on a false assessment of the

German-US relationship, which is expressed either in an overemphasis (Germany's third attempt at world power) or an underemphasis (Germany as a vassal of the US) of the strength of German imperialism. The "either/or" is wrong here and should be replaced by "both/and." For the situation of German imperialism results from the contradiction of pursuing independent interests while at the same time subordinating itself to US imperialism.

Germany's interest lies in asserting its supremacy over Russia, continuing the eastward expansion of the EU unhindered, assuming a leading role as a pillar of NATO against Russia, and using the war as a catalyst for its own military rearmament. At the same time, the nature of warfare is largely determined by US imperialism, which pursues, among other things, the goal of disciplining and significantly weakening German imperialism economically. Despite their inter-imperialist contradictions, however, the US and Germany are fundamentally on the same side in the war against Russia.

The attempts of German imperialism to conquer, destroy, and colonize Russia shape the relationship at the level of state policy. Even in the peaceful phases of this relationship, Germany strove to subjugate and subordinate Russia.

With the help of cheap energy imports from Russia, Germany was able to secure its export economy and thus its imperialist position in the world. For Russia, the deal with Germany did not have the hoped-for effect of industrialization and technological advancement. Even before 2022, Germany was pursuing an increasingly confrontational course toward Russia. For years, Germany has been striving to expand the EU eastward and to establish a ring of EU-friendly states through its European Neighborhood Policy. To achieve this, the close economic, cultural, and political ties between these states and Russia had to be dismantled. Russia's "disruptive" role reinforced Germany's interest in

weakening Russia politically, economically, and militarily. It is therefore too simplistic to explain current policy solely through the actions of the US and to describe Germany in this process as a mere follower or as being forced into war by the US.

Furthermore, German imperialism sees the war in Ukraine as an opportunity to position itself as a European pillar of NATO against Russia and thus massively expand its own military strength. However, the NATO alliance is always characterized by inter-imperialist contradictions, and so it is obvious that the war in Ukraine also has disadvantages for parts of German capital. The US is using the sanctions and the destruction of Nord Stream II to put pressure not only on the Russian economy but also on the German economy. However, despite these contradictions, disadvantages, and limitations that the alliance with the US entails, a break with NATO is not possible for Germany in the foreseeable future. This is countered by the close relationship between German capital and the US market, and the common interest in maintaining the imperialist order under the US, which fundamentally facilitates Germany's actions, at the same time, it maintains Germany's weakness in the high technology and military capacity it would need to act independently of the US.

17th Thesis: A 'Zeitenwende' in the Federal Republic of Germany

The 'Zeitenwende' or the turning point proclaimed by leading politicians in the FRG serves the war policy against Russia. It is an expression of the shift from integration and containment to open confrontation with Russia. This political project is backed up by a corresponding intensification of repression against opponents and critics of German war policy, as well as the dismantling of fundamental democratic rights. In order to push through its course of rearmament and intensified war economy, the class enemy is resorting to increased militarism and chauvinism against other peoples.

Thus, the "turning point" is also a program for mobilization and massive rearmament. It is now catching up with war preparations for a confrontational policy, up to and including open war against Russia. This war course is being further expanded militarily, economically, and politically. German imperialism is to be strengthened domestically in order to enforce this war course, if necessary with reactionary measures against its own population. To this end, the state is mobilizing its repressive apparatus and dismantling fundamental democratic rights. Militarism and chauvinism find concrete expression in Bundeswehr recruitment campaigns, plans for civil-military cooperation, the expansion of the arms industry, and the incitement of hatred against supposed "enemy states" under the guise of upholding superior Western culture and democracy. In addition, fascism is being rehabilitated. Ukrainian fascists are being portrayed as defenders of Western democracy. German imperialism is whitewashing its historical crimes and exploiting them for the purposes of a new war policy.

18th Thesis: The goal of communists: the defeat of German imperialism and NATO

The goal of communists and all progressive forces in Germany must be the defeat of Germany and NATO. The current NATO war against Russia marks only the beginning of a broader aggression against Russia. Despite all military setbacks, the aggressiveness and dangerousness of German imperialism must not be underestimated.

NATO's warfare is accompanied by increased repression of opponents and critics of German war policy, as well as the dismantling of fundamental democratic rights. In order to push through its drive towards rearmament and intensified war economy, the class enemy is implementing increasingly extreme forms of militarism and chauvinism against other peoples.

Opponents of German war policy are systematically isolated by the state—even though the majority of the population rejects a war against Russia and is increasingly realizing that their own children are once again to be sent to the front. In order to play a leading role in organizing an anti-war movement, among other things, a clear political analysis and positioning are necessary. Equidistant and other opportunistic positions that legitimize NATO in one form or another must be rejected.

This requires a great deal of work, especially on the strategy and role of German imperialism and the possibilities for combating it. These issues must be tackled with urgency and this must not be prevented by conciliatory and distracting positions any longer.

Notes

[1] We set ourselves the following questions: How should we assess Russia's military intervention or aggressive war in Ukraine, which began on February 24, 2022? Is it an imperialist attack? Is the war imperialist because Russia is an imperialist country? Is the war a defensive measure? Is there any overlap in this specific military intervention with the interests of the working class in Russia, Ukraine, and internationally? How should the working class in Russia, Ukraine, Germany, and internationally position itself in class terms with regard to this conflict?

<https://kommunistische-organisation.de/vollversammlung-4-april-2022/beschluss-der-vv4-klaerung-der-imperialismus-und-kriegsfrage/>

The imperialist epoch is the epoch of socialist revolution and the decay of bourgeois society

Party of Committees to Support Resistance—for Communism (CARC Party, Italy)

Supplement to La Voce no. 72 of the (new)Italian Communist Party - December 2022

The author of the article that we, as CARC Party, are submitting to Platform for publication is the (new) Italian Communist Party. The (n)ICP is the party in Italy that has developed a strategy for socialist revolution and, consequently, is a party operating underground.

CARC Party is a party with public offices that avails of the political freedoms conquered by the anti-fascist Resistance in Italy (1943–1945) and of the struggles of the '70s.

The relationship that exists between the CARC Party and the (n)ICP is one of ideological unity and unity on the strategic objective: to make Italy a new socialist country. However, they are two distinct organizations. The discovery of the need for two parties to make revolution in an imperialist country like Italy is a novelty in the international communist movement, but it is the result of our experience in light of the conditions we find ourselves operating within.

Table of contents

PART ONE—WHAT IS IMPERIALISM

1. Introduction
2. Imperialism and the previous stages of bourgeois society
3. From bourgeois democracy to regime of preventive counter-revolution
4. From cyclical crises to general crises to crises due to absolute overproduction of capital
5. The international development of Antithetical

Forms of Social Unity (AFSU)

6. The basic feature of imperialism

PART TWO—HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF IMPERIALISM SINCE 1916 ONWARDS

1. Introduction
2. The main stages of the history of imperialist epoch
3. The first socialist countries in the first, second and third stage
4. The role played by US imperialist groups
5. Types of current countries
6. Globalisation and its disruption (sanctions, pandemic, war in Ukraine)
7. Conclusions

The preceding sections of this article were featured in past issue

4. From cyclical crises to general crises due to absolute overproduction of capital

The society based on capitalist mercantile production of the material conditions for existence lasted until the 19th century, when it reached its limit in the most advanced countries: the manifestation of this limit were the ten-year cyclical crises, spanning from 1825 to 1865 (1825, 1836, 1847, 1857, 1865) and followed by the Great Depression of 1873-1895. For the first time in human history that, as Marx says (see *The Capital*, Book I Ch. 23—transcribed by www.marxists.org), we had to stop producing because we had produced too much and let the system of

production of the material conditions of existence (companies, workers, etc.) go to pot and then start again.

Which were the characteristics of cyclical crises? They began to appear when capitalism had extended mercantile production to such an extent that it had become the main productive activity in entire regions and countries, i.e. as early as 18th century and up to the end of 19th century (in the pre-imperialist phase when capitalism was characterized by free individual competition). They were cyclical crises:

- of imbalance between supply and demand: a shortage of demand for goods can be due either to a fall in demand or to the fact that demand does not grow as much as production has grown; overproduction of goods, similarly, can be due either to an increase in production or to production remaining the same while demand is falling. It is the same phenomenon (imbalance between demand and supply of goods) seen from two different sides. A fall in the demand can be due to various factors: falling wages and pensions, loss of an outlet market, declining investments in a sector, removal of customs barriers and other political measures hindering the entry of goods or the introduction of customs barriers and other political measures hindering the exit of goods, the take-over of another commodity, etc. The increase in the production of goods may also be due to various factors: rapid swelling of production in a sector that was offering good profits, entry of a capitalist selling a certain commodity that supplants other commodities hitherto produced by other capitalists, arrival on the market of a capitalist who was not there before (fall of customs barriers), etc;
- due to the anarchic character of the capitalist mode of production: a system in which, on one side, all its actors depend on each other for the purchase and sale of goods, but, in antithesis to this, each one of them acts as if they were independent from the others and everyone acts without any

understanding among them as to what should be produced, how, when and for whom;

- the solution to which came from the economic movement of bourgeois society itself: they were crises that “sooner or later ended on their own, just as they had come to be”.

The cyclical crises were a manifestation (a product) of the contradiction between the collective nature of bourgeois society (people and companies depending on each other for their productive activity) and the private nature of economic initiative and ownership of the means of production (people and companies considering themselves as independent of each other)*.

* The anarchic character continues to be there nowadays, indeed it is accentuated by privatizations, by the abolition of the red tape that limits the bosses' freedom of initiative. The anarchic character of bourgeois society means that even in the current general crisis, business keeps zigzagging between ups and downs. So, every now and then, with some real argument, members of the imperialist bourgeoisie announce that the crisis is over because business is better than in the previous month, quarter or year. Moreover, the modern economic system is varied and fragmented enough, and the statistical surveys can be exposed to manipulation of various kinds. Without lying anyone can always find an index that “proves” things are going better: if employment and incomes fall, the discount stores (shops, markets, institutions that sell expiring, low-quality or unsold items at reduced prices) sell more, so the index of their sales is positive.

With bourgeois society entering the imperialist epoch, crises due to imbalance between supply and demand continue to exist but lose their importance (they become relatively small fluctuations between periods of development and periods of depression) and crises due to absolute overproduction of capital become the decisive phenomenon. These crises are due to the fact that the accumulated capital is so large that capitalists are no longer able to valorize it all through the production and sale of goods. In fact, the portion of capital employed in the production and circulation of goods decreases in relation to the total capital that capitalists have to valorize. These are crises that, while arising from the economy, become general—that is, also political, cultural, social and, as

far as the current one is concerned, environmental—and find their provisional solution on the political terrain, i.e. in the upheaval of the social order within individual countries and in system of international relations (between countries).

5. The development of antithetical forms of the social unity (AFSUs) at the international level

The antithetical forms of the social unity (AFSUs) are practices, measures and institutions that express the economic unity of society within the framework of relations of production that keep society economically divided into as many opposing fractions as there are adult individuals. They are precarious and partial solutions to the contradiction between the increasingly collective character of the productive forces and their private ownership, a contradiction that capitalism has presented since its inception. The growth of the collective character of the productive forces already appears within the capitalist mode of production as development of various economic and political, ‘private’ and ‘public’ institutions which characterize modern bourgeois societies. These institutions express:

- attempts to overcome the antagonism inherent in the value relation and in the capital relation,
- attempts to direct the economic movement of societies by eliminating the most destructive effects of value relation and capital relation remaining within the framework of these relations.

Marx called these institutions ‘antithetical forms of the social unity’, i.e. expressions of the economic unity of society within relations that deny the unity of society and continue to divide it into as many opposing societies as there are adults living in that society. About AFSUs, Marx explains that “within bourgeois society, the society that rests on exchange value, there arise relations of circulation as well as of production which are so many mines to explode it. (A mass of antithetical forms of the social unity,

whose antithetical character can never be abolished through quiet metamorphosis. On the other hand, if we did not find concealed in society as it is the material conditions of production and the corresponding relations of exchange prerequisite for a classless society, then all attempts to explode it would be quixotic.)” (K. Marx, *Grundrisse*, Penguin Books in association with *New Left Review*, 1973, transcribed by www.marxists.org).*

* Drafted by Marx in 1857-1858, the *Grundrisse* were first published in 1939 in the USSR and only made accessible to the western public through the German edition made in 1953 in the German Democratic Republic. In Italy the *Grundrisse* were first published in 1969-1970 by *La Nuova Italia*. In the *Grundrisse*, Marx made a profound examination of the social relationships of bourgeois society. Bourgeois society is in crisis not only economically, but also in terms of general human relations. It does not educate human beings (and as of today, we have reached a total of 8 billions) to live together and in accordance with the reproductive conditions of nature. Having destroyed or circumscribed the morals of previous societies (appendices to but actually matrices of religions, which not surprisingly are now revived in sects), bourgeois society sets individuals against each other, or makes them indifferent to one another (while they are indeed ‘in the same boat’) or exploitative of each other. Here, too, we see that humanity must make a leap: the transition to communist society, through what we call in the *Manifesto-Program of the (new)ICP* “universal training in specifically human activities” (note 2, p. 249: the online version of the *Manifesto-Program* can be found at [https://nuovopci.it/eile/en/mp-npci-en/MP_ing_\(n\)PCI_WEB.pdf](https://nuovopci.it/eile/en/mp-npci-en/MP_ing_(n)PCI_WEB.pdf)).

By social unity we mean the condition already achieved in modern capitalist society: individuals depending on each other for the production and reproduction of the material conditions of existence while each of them is powerless to produce them individually, but can contribute to their production and reproduction only by being part of a productive social organism that includes all individuals.

This condition was created by capitalism: it had never existed before except at the level of small “natural” communities. It exerts its effects in bourgeois society, even if this society does not recognize it and does not take it as the starting point of its activity, relations and institutions. Hence both the contradiction between this condition and current practices in

bourgeois society and the resulting adjustments through traumas and crises. To bring the real social unity into existence means taking it as the starting point, as the premise for all the activity of groups and the whole of society, creating the institutions and relations necessary to this end.

It is impossible to understand the economic and political movement of modern societies without understanding AFSUs. The lack of interest shown by Marxist theorists in the AFSUs is a theoretical implication of the weakness of the proletarian revolutionary movement in imperialist societies.

Those who attempt to expose the economic and political movement of modern societies without understanding the AFSUs, inevitably oscillate between:

- attributing all power to subjective intervention (of the State and other associations of capitalists) in the economy,
- denying all power to subjective intervention (of the State and other associations of capitalists) in the economy.

In fact, they deprive themselves of the tool to understand the real dialectic between the attempts to govern the economy that are based on the social character of productive forces (i.e. the content of the production process) and the action of the objective laws of the capitalist relation of production based on the individual appropriation of the productive forces (i.e. the old form of the production process). Similarly, without an understanding of the AFSUs, it is impossible to understand the meaning of the thesis that the elements with which the new society will be built are formed within the dying society, and thus it is impossible to formulate the program of a communist party.

Those who attempt to outline a program of transformation from capitalism to communism without understanding AFSUs inevitably oscillate between resigning themselves to the present and

fantasizing about the future because they deprive themselves of the means to discover the only possible material constituents of the future as provided by the present. In bourgeois society itself, on the ground of the mutual indifference and independence of producers, the practices and institutions that seek to remedy and prevent the consequences of universal alienation are formed as a necessary manifestation of social unity (of universal mutual dependence). The imperialist bourgeoisie retains the direction of society in its own hands. The bourgeoisie was forced to create institutions and organizations that took into account the new social conditions in which men and women live today, reconciling them in some way with the survival of capitalist ownership of the productive forces, with the imperialist bourgeoisie's control over society as a whole, and with the antagonism of interests characteristic of bourgeois society. The bourgeoisie was forced to create these institutions by the struggles of the working class and the rest of the popular masses, by the increasingly collective nature of the productive forces and the overall economic activity, and by the increasingly organic nature of the society made up of the population of the entire planet.

1. These are the institutions and measures, with the associated institutional apparatus, that mitigate and to some extent regulate the contrasts between individual capitalists and between their "private associations" (between capitalist groups), that require capital accumulation activities to comply with certain rules, and seek to make capitalist activities congruent with public interests and objectives: with the survival of the natural and social conditions of the capital accumulation process itself. Examples are the international fiduciary currency and the international monetary system, national and international regulations of the monetary, financial, trade and production system (the quality standards and standardization systems), hygiene and health regulations on products and processes, limits placed

on competition, patent protection, regulations aimed at protecting the environment from the plunder that is a tendency of unlimited capital accumulation, public incentives for research and to support certain productive sectors, countercyclical and developmental state policies, regulations for public services, land use and construction, licenses for the exercise of productive activities, the introduction of economic and industrial policies, the economic and social role of States and their associations, etc.

2. These are the institutions and measures, with the associated institutional apparatus, that mitigate the contrasts between the bourgeoisie as a whole and the popular masses (in particular the working class), to some extent protect the popular masses from the most extreme manifestations of the destructive tendencies of the capitalist mode of production on their lives and promote their cultural and moral development and the spread of experience necessary to organize and direct themselves. Examples are systems of collective bargaining over wages and working conditions, regulations on work benefits, protecting the health and to some extent the civil and political rights of workers, national systems that to some extent ensure a basic income for the income-deprived proletarians (the unemployed, the marginalized, the sick, the invalids, the old, the orphans), the more-or-less free and public school and health systems, the rules of hygiene and public order, measures to protect women, children, minorities, oppressed nations and peoples, measures to protect maternity and birth rates, demographic policies, social security and social protection policies, etc.

Characteristic of the imperialist epoch is the great development (one next to the other and one after the other) of AFSUs on an international scale. With the exception of the Latin Monetary Union (founded in 1865), international AFSUs began to develop in the first decades of the 20th century. Between 1914 and 1916, economic conferences between the Entente States organized the defense of their own citizens'

trades and the blockade of German citizens' ones during the war. In 1919 the League of Nations was established (it went into operation in 1920), in 1921 the War Reparations Commission, in 1920 the Bank for International Settlements.

The highest expression of AFSUs on international scale is the creation of the international monetary system (Bretton Woods agreements, 1944) and of an international fiduciary currency (breakdown of the Bretton Woods agreements, 1971); the highest expression of AFSUs within a single state is State monopoly capitalism.

6. The basic characteristic of imperialism

The basic characteristic of the imperialist epoch is that the production as commodities of the material conditions of human existence becomes a secondary aspect of capital valorization and the activities of the bourgeoisie (although it remains an ineradicable aspect of them), subordinated to the capital valorization through financial and speculative transactions. The capital employed in the production of commodities is reduced to a small portion of the total capital that the imperialist bourgeoisie has to valorize with its activities. In 2013, with global gross domestic product estimated by the World Bank at 75 trillion dollars, the International Monetary Fund estimated that financial assets amounted to 993 trillion dollars, i.e. capital materialized in commodities amounted to less than 7% of the entire world capital: therefore it is reductive and misleading, even if considering only the economic activity, to reduce today's world society to the production of goods.

The expansion of wars, of production and research activities aimed at war, the invention of new substances (many of which are put into use without being checked for safety) and the multiplication of goods and activities that enter as new commodities into the consumption of human beings, the devastation of the planet through air, water and soil pollution, the elimination of the achievements (in

terms of security, equality, solidarity, education and healthcare) that the popular masses, especially in the imperialist countries, extorted from the bourgeoisie in the period 1917-1976 and the resulting undeclared war of extermination waged by the bourgeoisie against the popular masses, the recolonization of old colonial countries and former socialist countries (see Eastern European People's Democracies), the inducement of emigration of populations to make way for plantations and mining, along with intellectual and moral brutalization, constitute one aspect of the imperialist epoch of bourgeois society.

The other is the development of the first and new socialist countries that gradually unfold in the three phases (transformations from capitalism towards communism, gradual and peaceful restoration of capitalism, "restoration at any cost" of capitalism) outlined in chapter 1.7.3 of the Manifesto-Program of the (n)PCI.

Today, in the face of the persistent crisis, both the bourgeois right and the bourgeois left devise, propagandize and implement cures that disregard the source and nature of the crisis, and the nature of the imperialist epoch. Both cures based on the supply theory (the government must take measures that increase profits to capitalists who employ proletarians in the production of goods) and those based on the demand theory (the government must give money to proletarians and other workers so that they increase their consumption and thus buy more goods) confirm the collective character assumed by the economy. But neither has nor will end the crisis.

Today, the production of commodities is an appendage of financial and speculative capital, the wealth of bourgeois society presents itself less and less as "a huge collection of commodities" (use-values, goods or assets, each of which satisfies a need but is produced as a bearer of exchange-value, in practice as a saleable product) and presents itself instead more and more as "a huge collection of money". And, since by its nature money can increase

in quantity beyond all limits, while the quantity of commodities cannot, this also alters the nature of commodities. They are, in fact, less and less intended to satisfy needs created by the general development of human society (the development of civilization made needs to be satisfied the production of tools, weapons, paper, construction, etc.) and more and more intended to create new needs in the population with purchasing power, in order to increase the mass of money that their sale accumulates in the hands of each individual capitalist. Costly and destructive megaprojects (such as the Strait of Messina Bridge in Italy), goods that quickly become obsolete or are otherwise perishable, packaging (with the enormous use of plastics) and advertising, the presentation of goods that prevails over their quality with all that this entails: these and the like are the laws that determine the quantity and quality of the goods produced. The bourgeoisie does not limit itself to satisfying the needs created by the general development of humanity, but, within the limits allowed by the division of society into classes of oppressed and oppressors, molds the system of social relations and individual conduct to the measure of the commodities whose use each capitalist manages to impose in order to enhance his capital, with the result that 'everyone' deplors. All this aggravates the moral and intellectual crisis of the popular masses in imperialist countries. To sell, in fact, the bourgeoisie not only satisfies needs, but creates new needs disconnected from the activities necessary to live and progress: it introduces 5G technology (enhanced data transmission to mobile phones) while even in imperialist countries the number of people who cannot access medical care increases. It is like a food producer who, to sell more, in a thousand ways induces people to spend the money they have to gorge themselves, heedless of their health and their lives.

The capitalist mode of production arose and supplanted the other modes of production (also based on the division of humanity into classes of exploited

and exploiters, of oppressed and oppressors) as a mode of production designed to increase the productivity of labour, that is, to increase the quantity of goods that people produced in a given labour time, and thus designed to make people on the whole freer from nature and richer in terms of time and means to engage in superior human activities (from which, however, the mass of the population remained and remains excluded). The general crisis of capitalism eliminates these assumptions of capitalism's success and makes its replacement a necessity for the survival of the human species.

The absolute overproduction of capital generates the ecological disaster, the exploitation of women reduced to a tool of advertising and a sexual object, the psychological, intellectual and moral deformation of the new generations and their mistreatment, gratuitous crime (i.e. without the motivation that the insufficiency of production once gave to war and crime), general insecurity and the widespread use of drugs that only demagogues perhaps really believe they are curing with more police and harsher penalties, the emigration that far exceeds that of the beginning of the last century. Suffice it to say that from Italy alone, with a population less than half of what it is today, more than 15 million workers emigrated in the 60 years following the Unification (1861), at an annual rate that exceeded the 350 thousand registered permanent emigrants in 1900.

What are the main repercussions of the transition to the imperialist epoch on the functioning of the bourgeois social system and what does it mean for the communists?

1. To produce the material conditions of human existence, a decreasing proportion of the working time of proletarians (people in general) is sufficient. Or, as long as we are in a regime of capitalist oppression of proletarians, the labor (which the capitalist pushes to the maximum in terms of intensity for each of his employees) of a decreasing proportion of the proletariat is sufficient. The other proletarians

become superfluous for the purposes of producing the material conditions of human existence:

a) unemployed people who press at the doors of companies to be hired, thus competitors of the proletarians hired by capitalists (Industrial Reserve Army, as Marx put it);

b) proletarians to whom the capitalists give a wage (in a now completely fiat currency, which the proletarian needs to live on) in exchange for services (activities) other than the work necessary to produce the material conditions of existence.

2. Financial and speculative relations and "specifically human activities" become an increasing part of the activities of the bourgeoisie and to some extent the access of the oppressed classes to these activities is also extended. A note on "specifically human activities": along the history of humankind, they arise and develop as activities of members of the ruling class. These are not forced to devote themselves to producing the material conditions of their existence (others do it for them) and develop other activities. Among "specifically human activities" there are beautiful, glorious and creative activities that constitute the civilization of the human species and there are also ignoble and harmful ones. Altogether they must:

a) either serve humanity in general (including those who produce the material conditions of existence) who, for this very reason, "recognize" the ruling class and agree to produce the material conditions for its members and what serves it as the ruling class as a whole,

b) or serve the ruling class to keep the oppressed classes subjugated,

c) or serve to satisfy the customs, habits and vices practiced by members of the ruling class.

We are no longer in a society that has at its own center the production of the material conditions of existence. Capital valorization is no longer primarily based on mercantile production but mainly on financial and speculative activities, and

the production of commodities is no longer closely linked to the production of the material conditions of existence, but rather to the need for the capital valorization that leads to the production of whatever one can sell, even filth and poisons, whether it be physical, intellectual or moral.

Only the self-styled communists in imperialist countries still believe they are and (the active ones) remain the promoters of social struggles not consciously aimed at the establishment of socialism: 1. dictatorship of the proletariat, 2. planned management of the economy to meet the needs of the resident population and its relations of solidarity, collaboration and exchange with other countries, and 3. promotion of the population's increasing access to specifically human activities.

We must insist (as a line to be proposed and practice to be implemented) on mobilizing and organizing the popular masses against the anti-popular effects of the course of things imposed by the imperialist bourgeoisie. At same time, with our propaganda (through open and frank discussion) and on an organizational level, we must struggle against the tendency among communists to limit themselves to mobilize the popular masses against the effects of the survival of the rule of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Instead, as communist we must promote the advancement of the socialist revolution and the gathering of our forces.

Statement by the “Revolutionary Unification” on the Passing of Comrade Ammar Khaled Bakdash, Secretary-General of the Syrian Communist Party

Revolutionary Unification (Greece)

July 21, 2025

The untimely passing of Comrade Ammar Khaled Bakdash, Secretary-General of the Syrian Communist Party, on the fateful evening of July 12, 2025, in Athens, starkly reveals the alarming escalation of aggression from the USA-NATO-EU axis across all theatres of operations of the ongoing Third World War (WWIII). Since 2011, Syria has endured relentless assaults from this coalition and its mercenary forces. The emergence of a regime comprised of Islamofascist terrorists—spawned by the machinations of the USA-NATO-EU and backed by the regimes of Turkey and Israel—has tragically dominated in Syria since November 2024. This regime has systematically perpetrated grievous atrocities against civilians of opposing jihadist factions and has waged war on political dissenters, with a particular focus on communists.

The racist Zionist state of Israel, as a proxy instrument of this imperialist axis in West Asia, is escalating the genocide / ethnic cleansing in Palestine, continues its military aggression against Lebanon, and the expansion its illegal occupation of Syrian territories under the guise of “new authorities”, to unleash new attacks on Iran and Yemen, with the absolute support of the USA-NATO-EU.

With the takeover of Syria by jihadists in late 2024, we witnessed a dreadful escalation of persecutions and massacres targeting political opponents, as well as ethnic and religious minorities. Under these dire circumstances, “Comrade Bagdache became a target of the jihadists and, together with his family, found refuge in Athens thanks to the high level of internationalist solidarity between the Syrian Communist Party and the KKE. On 29 January, 2025,

the Damascus authorities announced the dissolution of the Syrian Communist Party and the confiscation of its assets, escalating the persecution”.^[1]

Who was Comrade Baghdas?

Comrade Ammar Baghdas served as Secretary-General from 2010 until the end of his life. He was the son of the founder of the Syrian C.P., Khaled Baghdas, and held a Doctorate in Economic Sciences from the Lomonosov State University of Moscow. He was elected to the Syrian parliament from 2003 to 2024, where he served as head of the Committee on Economic Laws. As a revolutionary intellectual, Comrade Baghdas critically examined the structure and history of Syria through the lens of Marxism-Leninism, researched the structure and history of his people and country within the framework of global developments.

In exile, Comrade Baghdas undertook a thorough analysis of the social-class dynamics that contributed to the defeat, dissolution, and occupation of his country. He considered the necessity of frontal struggle of the Syrian communists under the conditions of the oppressive “reactionary black wave”. He and his party adopted popular-front, patriotic, anti-fascist, national liberation, and internationalist positions, against imperialist intervention-invasion and its local organs. *Mutatis mutandis* [allowing for necessary differences], Baghdas and his comrades have carried forward the noble tradition of the Third International, drawing inspiration from the First Letter of Zachariadis [1940] and the heroic Popular Front in Syria during World War III.

Comrade Baghdas identified three critical allies in the armed struggle for freedom and justice in Syria:

Iran, Russia, and Hezbollah.

It is therefore clear that the positions of the Syrian comrades are clearly opposite to the irrational metaphysical ideological construct of the so-called “imperialist pyramid”. An ideological construct which the bureaucratic leadership [of KKE] brazenly handles as a criterion to exorcise and characterize communists and fighters, parties and organizations with clear anti-imperialist frontal theory and practice as supposedly “opportunists” and “revisionists”.

Comrade Baghdas spent eight months in Athens before his untimely death. He died faithful to the revolutionary duty, persecuted by the imperialism of the axis, on the soil of a NATO country, after having already requested asylum. The granting of asylum was never secured for him, essentially leaving him a hostage to international conditions, which are cut and sewn according to the plans of the imperialists.

Comrade Baghdas was a live information bomb and a pole of attraction; he was a leader who could awaken and rally a mass militant anti-imperialist movement. However, the eight-month presence of the comrade in Athens and the positions of the Syrian CP did not receive the required publicity. It is reasonable, therefore, out of a sense of comradesly and internationalist solidarity, to also express our concerns about how Comrade Baghdas’s time in Athens was managed by the KKE, with which he had established close ties.

The questions raised by Comrade Dimitrios Patelis in his online post aimed precisely to highlight this. The inability on the part of the KKE to utilize a communist significant for his country in highlighting and propagandizing extremely important aspects, but also contradictions, of the anti-imperialist struggle in Syria and the wider region of West Asia. The fact that some formulations in the said post were utilized by “well-wishers” for the “character assassination” of our comrade, in no way justifies the inability to answer the fundamental theoretical and practical questions regarding the positions of the

KKE leadership on the “imperialist pyramid”, “equal distances”, etc., which have been raised by himself and Revolutionary Unification.

Communists, even if they deeply disagree, even if they publicly oppose each other, always focus on the essence and content of the disagreement, on public, honest, and open rational exchange of scientific arguments and counterarguments. Conversely, the excessively bureaucratic officials [from KKE], in a crisis of self-mastery, resort to personal vilification, to “character assassination” [2].

Since when is Comrade D. Patelis a “Notorious provocateur Patelis, acting on orders”? Perhaps when he was a member of the KNE [Communist Youth of Greece] and the KKE? When he excelled as a scholarship recipient of the KKE for his studies in the USSR? Or maybe when he was aligned with the KKE from 2019 until early 2022? It’s crucial to acknowledge that for the current leadership of the KKE, comrade D. Patelis has been labeled a “Notorious provocateur, acting on orders” when he exposed the anti-scientific, anti-Leninist ideological construct of the “imperialist pyramid” and “equal distances”, as well as highlighting the KKE’s role in weakening the consistent anti-imperialist struggle amidst WWII.

Personal attacks, insults, slanders, and labels have no relation to polemical rhetoric, which can often be welcome, they have no relation to the development of meaningful argumentation. The unabashed deceit of resorting to ad hominem pseudo-arguments, the systematic “character assassination” constitute, by all indications, recognized and tested practices, internationally and throughout time, of the deep state-parastate.

Does such behavior reflect the values of a party that claims to uphold our heroic communist tradition? The relentless retrospective revision of our party’s history, the assessment of the Popular Fronts of the Third International and by extension the EAM-ELAS [Greek World War II resistance movements]

as a “right turn”, and the vilification of comrades who adhere to this legacy as “opportunists” are manifestations of a harsh revision of Marxism and Leninist political economy of imperialism. This approach, marked by irrational doctrines such as the “imperialist pyramid” and “equal distances”, which whitewash imperialism, while even whitewashing the crimes of the proxy Nazis by saying that “Ukraine is waging a just war”.

Notes

[1] Statement on the sudden passing of comrade Ammar Bagdache, GS of the CC of the Syrian Communist Party, 2025.7.13.

[2] “Some people are constantly trying to strike a blow against the KKE, even resorting to dirty and unethical means in the process. The spokesperson for the non-existent “Collective Struggle for the Revolutionary Unification of Humanity” (D. Patelis), which never had and still has no ties to the working class and the popular forces of our country, launched yet another provocative attack, which was reproduced by other groups of the so-called “World Anti-Imperialist Platform””. In: CP of Greece, In response to the despicable attack on the KKE following the passing of comrade A. Bagdache.

The intensification of the military crisis and Trump's three dilemmas

Stephen Cho | Coordinator of the Korean International Forum

August 30, 2025

Military tensions are escalating. The world is facing the storm of World War 3. This storm is sweeping from “Northwestern Asia (Eastern Europe)” through Southwestern Asia (West Asia, the Middle East), across South and Southeast Asia, and into East Asia (the Western Pacific). After the direct attempts to provoke war in East Asia ended in failure in the latter half of last year, the imperialists are now pursuing the war in East Asia indirectly, through other routes.

The root cause of war is, as always, imperialism. The warmongering forces within imperialism ceaselessly provoke wars and are driving the situation toward World War 3. The imperialist camp acts as the provocateur of war, while the anti-imperialist camp is the defender of peace. The anti-imperialist camp is struggling to prevent war and preserve peace by every means—through war deterrent capabilities and “strategic patience.”

Contradictions within the imperialist camp are deepening. The imperialist camp is divided between warmongering forces and non-warmongering forces, and their conflicts are becoming even sharper. US president Donald Trump, who represents the non-warmongering forces within imperialism, claims that through a “staged battle” with Iran in June, he succeeded in halting the Iran-Israel war. He also stresses that he mediated the local conflicts between India and Pakistan, and between Thailand and Cambodia. In fact, Israel, Pakistan, and Cambodia have even nominated Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Given this, it would be unrealistic for Trump to launch a full-scale war against Venezuela. He may still resort to military threats and attempt “decapitation operations” or occupy certain areas if

the situation calls for it, as part of a strategy to seize control of oil. Meanwhile, the Maduro regime has ordered emergency mobilization and is strengthening revolutionary political forces centered around the communes, standing firm in resistance. Venezuela's politics are stable, security is reinforced, food self-sufficiency and inflation control are well-managed, and its air force is the second strongest in South America after Brazil.

Trump is caught in three major dilemmas. In the economic sphere, he is experiencing the “Triffin dilemma” through the “tariff war.” Protectionism and tariff pressure, as pursued now, will in the end weaken the hegemony of the dollar. At the same time, since Trump has always been mindful of stock prices, consumer prices, and oil prices, in the run-up to elections, the rise of domestic prices caused by the “tariff bombs” is becoming a heavy burden for him. What is decisive, however, is the fact that the deficit is increasing by 2 trillion dollars every year, leaving the US with a national debt of 37 trillion dollars, with annual interest payments alone amounting to 1 trillion dollars. This interest burden, now exceeding the defense budget, is fatal.

In the military sphere, Trump exists in a position of non-warmongering forces between the warmongering forces and anti-war forces. MAGA supporting him is basically anti-war. As an imperialist, Trump is torn between the warmongering forces within imperialism and the anti-war MAGA camp.

In the political sphere, there exists a contradiction: being anti-deep state while remaining non-Zionist. Trump opposes the deep state, yet takes an ambiguous stance toward its core—the Zionist capital. As is well known, antisemitism is fascist, but anti-Zionism is

anti-fascist—because Zionists are themselves fascists. Trump is fully aware of this reality. Nevertheless, he denounced and cracked down on student movements in the US that advocated anti-Zionism, branding them as anti-Semitic. At present, Trump’s opposition to the anti-Zionist movement is clear.

However, unless the Trump’s camp can resolve the three major contradictions—economic, military, and political—it has no future. It is no coincidence that Trump deployed the National Guard and effectively declared martial law in Washington, D.C. Above all, if Trump were to nationalize the Federal Reserve Board (FRB), it would mark a turning point: drastically reducing national debt and paving the way to normalize the US economy. Politically, this would signify a clear shift from a non-Zionist to an anti-Zionist position. That, in turn, would also clarify an anti-war stance in military terms. At that point, it wouldn’t just merit a Nobel Peace Prize—it would be the kind of achievement worthy of being carved into Mount Rushmore. This is the path on which Lincoln and Kennedy were assassinated. But for Trump—who has already had an assassin’s bullet graze past his ear—fear does not seem to be part of the picture. Known as the “Cheshire Cat,” all eyes are now on when and how Trump will finally reveal his true colors.

Recently, the “President of the ‘Republic of Korea (ROK),” Lee Jae-myung, met with Trump. The treatment and protocol he received were hardly befitting of an official summit. Above all, Lee Jae-myung, who was utterly outmaneuvered and left completely at the mercy of Trump, crawled on the floor in flattery. In return for promising an additional 150 billion dollars in investment, he received nothing but humiliation and loss—an unprecedented diplomatic disaster.

The ‘ROK’ has pledged to invest 600 billion dollars in the United States, equivalent to the level of the European Union’s 27 member states. Yet the ‘ROK’ does not have the capacity to sustain such an

investment. This has only deepened the difficulties of the economy of the ‘ROK.’ For Trump, the consummate dealmaker, Lee Jae-myung—tied to pro-US subservience and predisposed to treachery, national betrayal, and abject humiliation as a colonial appendage—was nothing more than a pliant and easily handled opponent.

Accordingly, when Trump thundered a warning, denouncing the special prosecutor’s search of the military facilities inside a US base in the ‘ROK’ as a “Purge,” and even went so far as to declare that he would outright claim ownership of the world’s largest US base in Pyeongtaek, Lee Jae-myung was dumbfounded, unable to say a word—a moment broadcast live.

In fact, this is a special measure by Trump, intended as preparation for the DPRK’s ‘subjugation’ of the ‘ROK’—refraining from direct involvement in a contingency, yet securing the safety of US forces, their families, and American citizens.

Yet failing to grasp the point or to comprehend it, Lee Jae-myung made the awkward joke that if Trump were the ‘peacemaker,’ he would be the ‘pace-maker,’ provoking a wry laugh from Trump.

Having extracted everything he wanted from his dealings with Lee Jae-myung, Trump—perhaps out of pity—went so far as to concern himself with saving Lee’s reputation. Among so-called reformist politicians in the ‘ROK,’ not one has escaped such a diplomatic debacle of losing both dignity and substance before a US president. This is because the ‘ROK’ remains a complete colony of US imperialism.

In contrast, the DPRK’s Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un has been invited as a guest of honor to the September 3rd Chinese Victory Day celebrations, where he will stand side by side with Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin. This marks a historic moment—the first time that the top leaders of the three main forces within the anti-imperialist camp come together. Chairman Kim Jong Un chose China for his first multilateral diplomatic stage, just as he did for his

first overseas visit. The DPRK and China are blood allies, having fought shoulder to shoulder in the anti-Japanese armed struggle. In recent years, the DPRK has focused its diplomatic efforts on Russia. It places strategic weight on its relations with China during periods of diplomatic focus, and on Russia during times of military emphasis. Thus, the DPRK's participation in the Victory Day celebrations signals that Chairman Kim Jong Un, while having concentrated on military matters in recent years, now intends to pursue diplomacy in parallel. In its diplomacy, the DPRK thoroughly excludes the 'ROK,' yet deliberately leaves some room for engagement with the US. China, for its part, is strengthening unity within the anti-imperialist camp—highlighting India at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Tianjin, scheduled just before the military parade in Beijing, where the DPRK will be placed in the spotlight a few days later.

The imperialist warmongering forces are using Israel to devastate the Gaza Strip, and they are openly revealing their ambition to occupy Lebanon and Syria, aiming ultimately to seize control of the western coastal region—the Mediterranean Sea coast—which is rich in oil resources. To this end, countries like the United States and Germany are intensively supplying weapons to Israel. This is also a sign that a renewed Israeli war against Iran may not be far off. This is one of the reasons behind the concentrated attacks on Yemen as well. Seen from this perspective, the US military threats against Venezuela may be a diversionary tactic—a feint designed to conceal this broader scheme. Of course, there must be firm preparedness against the imperialist strategy to create a “second Syria” in Latin America. The military crisis is deepening.

Platform



The World Anti-imperialist Platform