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Destroying Our Planet... Sustainably



**The Current Crisis and the Tasks of
Communists**

Communism not Corbynism

UAW Contract Season and its Crises

**The Platform of the Internationalist
Communist Party 1952**

Revolutionary Perspectives

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Affiliate of the Internationalist Communist Tendency

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Perspectives for the CWO as discussed in its AGM, November 2019

The Current Crisis and the Tasks of Communists

Overview

Capitalism, the most dynamic mode of production in history, has created a world economy and the material means (productive forces) to support the present world population of 7.7bn. Everyone could be living comfortably without hunger or undue toil. In short, the material basis already exists for a peaceful, prosperous, self-organised world community based on production to directly meet the needs of everyone rather than the generation of profit for a tiny few.

Yet capitalism does not lead naturally to its own disappearance or overthrow even if it has an inbuilt tendency to crisis/temporary paralysis. The accumulation of capital has always been accompanied by periodic crises involving bankruptcies, closures and takeovers by firms with technically more advanced equipment which bring 'higher productivity', or higher output per employee. Cycles of boom and bust are intrinsic to the capitalist mode of production. They are not the consequence of 'mis-management' and, although they may be prolonged by state intervention, this does not solve the problem, because their root cause is to be found in the ineluctable tendency of the rate of profit on industrial/manufacturing capital investment to fall. This in turn is the result of the rising organic composition of capital, or the increasing ratio of dead (machinery, equipment) to living labour (wage workers whose unpaid labour is the source of all new value) as capital introduces more advanced technology and employs fewer workers. At a certain point in each cycle it is no longer profitable for industrial capital to invest in another round of accumulation. Traditionally, after a period of crisis which typically first appeared in the financial sphere but then led to industrial bankruptcies and takeovers, the conditions for a new round of capital accumulation were restored on the basis of more centralised capital until eventually capitalism had expanded to dominate the globe.

But these cyclical crises, which demand the devaluation of capital in order to resume a new cycle of accumulation, long ago ceased to serve a progressive function, i.e. the development of the material basis for a thriving world community without exploitation and wars. On the contrary, ever since 1914, when the First World War confirmed capitalism's global reach, the boom-bust cycles of the capitalist mode of production which can only be resolved by the massive devaluation of capital have

necessarily led to imperialist war and the deaths of millions.

A Crisis with a History

Today we are in the throes of capitalism's third global crisis of accumulation since the onset of the imperialist phase of its development at the end of the nineteenth century. This crisis has been prolonged by the combined efforts of the leading capitalist states to avoid an international slump which would propel the world towards a third world war. In the early Seventies the post-war boom gave way to a new profitability crisis. Struggling capitalist firms either went bust, or tried to counter falling profit rates by laying off workers and demanding more work for lower wages from those left, running clapped-out machinery and not replacing it etc etc: in short, the classical capitalist response to turn to 'absolute exploitation'. [Today wage workers' share of GDP is much lower than in the 1970s (when it was 64% in UK). For US capitalism the post-war system of fixed exchange rates with the dollar linked to the price of gold established at Bretton Woods started to work against it. (Printing dollars to finance Vietnam War encouraged others to buy up gold and the US was unable to devalue so long as there was a fixed link.) When Nixon devalued the dollar in August 1971 his Treasury Secretary, John Connally, famously said: "The dollar is our currency but your problem."

This marked the beginning of the end for the post-war settlement, including the two-bloc imperialist line-up and increasingly, the international institutions associated with it. On the economic front the post-war period of 'sustained economic growth' and near full employment gave way to rising unemployment and inflation and around two decades of working class defensive struggles which in the UK were largely conducted sector by sector. The Keynesian precept of deficit financing and the go-to policy of the state bailing out insolvent industries, particularly maintaining the so-called 'commanding heights' of the economy, was gradually abandoned in the face of rising government debt.

However, in a crisis of profitability heavy manufacturing industry was an increasing drain on states. By 1976 the UK's Labour government was obliged to borrow what at the time was the largest ever loan from the IMF. The famous quote from Prime Minister Jim Callaghan at that year's Labour Party Conference — *"We used to think you could spend your way out of recession and increase employment by boosting government spending, I tell you, in all candour, that that option no longer exists."* heralded the beginning of a period of massive restructuring where capital was written off. It was a process taken up by the Thatcher government which frontally attacked workers and destroyed their livelihoods. Mass unemployment, which our rulers found also had the advantage of undermining class resistance, now hit the West as capital shifted to low wage economies in the 1980s.

The collapse of the USSR, and its satellites, further undermined the notion that every state had to ensure that it controlled the “commanding heights” of its domestic economy to maintain “national security”. The main aim now was to try to create conditions to maximise inward investment whilst at the same time seek more profitable financial returns in the new financialised economy. Speculating on the Chicago stock exchange in futures was now much more rewarding than actually investing in any company that might want to produce anything. That kind of investment now went to the capitalist periphery where wages were low as in China, S.E. Asia and Latin America. The mostly authoritarian regimes in these places set up “special economic zones” or maquiladoras to facilitate this.

Already, before capitalism’s biggest-ever financial crash in 2008, the economic profile of the once most-advanced Western states had altered dramatically as de-industrialisation and globalisation of production dismembered the traditional industrial working class. In 2008 the banking and wider financial bodies were saved and the appearance of capitalist ‘normality’ maintained only by the concerted injection of gargantuan amounts of fictitious capital by central banks (Quantitative Easing) which is still being used today to maintain the appearance of economic normality. But there is nothing normal about this global capitalism which is still turning to services and financial speculation to generate financial profits, for the most part without the need for any new value to be created. World Bank figures show that ‘services’ represent a higher proportion of GDP for the world economy as a whole. For the UK 77.4% of GDP was attributed to ‘services’ in 2018, while the ‘City’ now claims to represent 10% of UK’s economic output and employ 2.3m people – more than double the figures claimed by Gordon Brown before the financial crash.

As we noted elsewhere, in the UK today 2.7 million people, or 8% of the total workforce of around 32.54 million are employed in manufacturing, producing an estimated contribution to GVA (the new way of calculating GDP!) of 11%. This declining share of manufacturing in national ‘economic growth’ is the pattern all over the world. Yet the UK’s 10-11% still puts it in the top ten “leading countries” for manufacturing output. Here we should remind ourselves that it is only in the aftermath of the financial crash, when total manufacturing production dropped, that the post-war trend of a steady growth in manufacturing even as the labour force diminished (a sign of the increasing organic composition of capital) was reversed. It is an indication of the severity of capitalism’s global crisis of production that ‘manufacturing activity’ has not returned to its pre-crash level.

So, after almost half a century of responding to the effects of the profitability crisis, from Keynesianism through monetarism and ‘globalisation’ to financial speculation and eventually the ‘unconventional monetary policy’ of reviving almost the entire banking and financial system when the financial bubble finally burst in 2007/8, the

underlying crisis of the falling rate of profit in the manufacturing and industrial spheres keeps on reasserting itself. And now capital has much less room for manoeuvre.

The world debt pile is now reckoned to be more than three times the value of global GDP. Most of that debt is not being used to finance new productive investment even if the opportunities for gains from financial speculation are declining. (Around a quarter of global debt issued by governments and companies is trading at negative yields.) On the other hand many companies are not making use of ultra-low interest rates to reinvest in productive capital but simply borrowing to cover the interest due on money they've already borrowed. (10.5% of companies in the world's thirteen most advanced economies are zombies, compared to 6% a decade ago.) At 3%, the IMF's latest world growth forecasts are the lowest since 2009, just after the financial crash, leading the Financial Times and others to dub the situation one of "secular stagnation". Within this tightening frame more 'conventional' responses to economic crisis are emerging, from trade wars and protectionism on the Right to calls for an injection of state spending and some sort of New Deal on the Left of capital. But whilst the policies of the Left remain mere aspirations it is the agenda of the Right which dominates the real world of imperialist rivalry.

Imperialist Rivalry and War

In a financialised world the main game in town for each state is to divert revenue, from whatever source, and by whatever means, towards their own jurisdiction. As a result competition is increasing on all fronts – manufacturing and industrial, commercial, monetary, and strategic. In this context the tendency to war is not a warning, but the concrete reality of all international relations and a state of affairs which involves all the main imperialist powers of the planet in various places around the world like Syria, Yemen, Libya, Ukraine or the Sahel.

In the crossroads of Asia, in the Middle East and Central Asia the main battle lines are being drawn. In Syria the massive presence of all the major culprits in this carnage continually shifts like a kaleidoscope. With their diverse, often conflicting interests, new alliances have been formed and old ones dissolved, in a series of episodes that have brought the ruin of an entire country with two million dead. 11 million have been displaced from their homes and over four million have become refugees outside Syria's borders. Turkey, Russia, Iran and the Shiite axis line up on one side. The US, Israel and the Sunni axis on the other. Each has its own interests to defend, whilst in the middle the various nationalisms have become the tools of one imperialism and thus the target of attack for others, even though they are part of the same coalition. It does not matter whether the proletarians are Kurds or Arabs, Shiites or Sunnis. The important thing is that they are being dragged into the ideological mechanisms of this or that imperialism and that they act as cannon fodder for the sole benefit of the

interests of the imperialism that has ideologically subjugated them. And, as the US demonstrated with its removal of air and ground cover for the YPG in Northern Syria, they can be cast aside as soon as their purpose has been served.

The major imperialist antagonists are already colliding in one of the world's most important strategic zones. Given the number of powers involved, their areas of influence, their active engagement in the war, we can only conclude that we are already in the midst of a "bizarre" world war where, even China, which has little to no military presence in the area, is highly interested in the outcome. Its new "silk roads" mingles with the bewildering array of rival oil pipeline projects in the battle for control of "Eurasia". Whilst the US is determined to crush Iran on behalf of its traditional surrogates Israel and Saudi Arabia, Russia and China are more and more being drawn into support for the Ayatollahs' regime. China buys Iranian oil in defiance of US sanctions whilst both China and Russia are drawing Iran further into their incipient trading bloc.

Behind it all lies the struggle of the epoch as a strong but relatively declining US power becomes increasingly belligerent against the declared Chinese aim to establish itself as the world's leading power by 2049. In the face of dollar domination this is still a long way off as there are no real rivals to the dollar as the world's main trading currency. It is still to the dollar that the smaller states and their plutocrats flock in times of political crisis (which galls Trump, since he is thus the architect of the strong dollar!). 90% of foreign exchange and 88% of one side of every trade in the world is dollar denominated giving the US the enormous advantage of being able to build up deficits abroad which have little consequence for the economy back home. It also "weaponises" US imperialism. When Trump pulled out of the JCPOA with Iran the EU did not, but it could not persuade its own companies to keep trading with Iran in the face of possible US retaliation. This kind of leverage has been repeated in Venezuela where the economic situation is so dire that the dollar now accounts for about 50% of all transactions and rising. Trump hopes that this will eventually bring about the final collapse of the Maduro government.

China's prospects look less good than they did 3 years ago. The \$1 trillion "Belt and Road" project has been scaled back in the face of lower growth at home (partly a function of the trade war), scandals surrounding some projects and the realization by some participants that they are surrendering their sovereignty to China. Add to that the turmoil in Hong Kong, the increasing awareness of the brutal and organised repression in Xinjiang and inward investment has dropped. The solution would seem to be further devaluation of the renminbi to compete with other low cost exporters. This will also further widen the trade gap between the US and China. These "beggar-my-neighbour policies" are precisely the strategies that Keynes identified as the causes of World War Two. This is not yet where we are but, despite all the financial jiggery pokery of the last ten years there is a distinct sense that imperialist rivalry is

becoming more intense. In some ways we have now reached the point which the early CWO thought we were in 1975. Socialism or barbarism is more real than ever. But the socialism bit depends on the working class. Where does it stand today?

And the Working Class?

Election promises aside, the situation of the working class can be described not so much as secular stagnation, but more like 'secular decline'. Despite increases in the minimum wage, for example, the Resolution Foundation reckons that half of employed workers have gained absolutely nothing since they "worked fewer hours than the year before". This also suggests that fundamentally precarious workers are a much bigger part of the workforce than usually estimated. And in any case the material situation of the working class is declining all the time. Under the draconian rules of Universal Credit, unemployment numbers have declined. Meanwhile people are having to work longer before they can collect a pension and company pension schemes are being perpetually robbed and abandoned. (e.g. BMW, Post Office).

For more and more people work is getting harder the older they are. According to the TUC, of the 3.25 million people (more than 1 in 9 workers) who do night shifts — 100,000 more than five years ago — almost 1 million are over 50 years old. (69,000 are over 65.)

On the housing front a property-owning democracy is out of the window. Home ownership (at 62.9% in 2016) is now the lowest since 1985 and the average house costs 7.6x earnings (c.f. 3.6x in 1997); 1 in 5 rented homes are owned by companies while the 'Bank of Mum and Dad' is now the ninth biggest lender in the UK (£65bn in loans).

Aside from housing, personal debt levels, encouraged by interest-free credit cards are a ticking time bomb. Credit card debt in the UK hit a record £67.3bn in February. (Last year, UK banks had £19bn of 'impairments' on credit cards, compared with £12bn on mortgages.). More generally, 3.3m people are judged to be in "persistent debt", where the minimum repayments go towards interest and charges, rather than reducing the principal amount borrowed.

In sum, the lowering of living standards is about much more than hourly wage rates. The whole framework for sale of labour power is being steadily undermined and bringing a generally lower standard of living both in terms of social wage (deteriorating NHS and welfare services, holiday entitlements, pensions etc) and conditions in the workplace Not surprisingly, as increased exploitation moves from relative to absolute, increasing life expectancy is beginning to reverse. The Institute and Faculty of Actuaries, based on death statistic from the Office for National Statistics, suggest that men aged 65 will now live another 22.2 years, down

from 22.8 years in 2013. Women aged 65 will now live for a further 24.1 years, down from 25.1 years in 2013.

Looking Ahead

We could go on, but this brings us to the prospect or otherwise of a class-wide movement developing. This we cannot predict. But what we do know is that more and more people are facing a less secure and less prosperous future than previous generations. More and more people are beginning to see capitalism as the root cause of their problems, but it is up to us to clarify what this indicates and pose the revolutionary solution. Those who work for a wage in the professions, for instance, are inclined to focus on the unjustness of capitalism and often focus on 'elites' as they demand reform of a system which is eroding their once-secure position in the world. Similarly, they are in the van of protests demanding governments take radical action against climate change. The petty bourgeois, on the other hand, who don't live on a wage but in the twilight zone between property ownership and the need for an income, tend to fall for nationalist "solutions" of protectionism, tax cuts and anti-immigration policies. Given what is going on in the wider world, we might expect more 'cross-class' protests like the gilets jaunes which have no clear class content and certainly no real revolutionary goals, although they may focus on 'getting rid of elites'.

As it is, spontaneous protests are proliferating across the planet. Whilst not proletarian in either content or composition, they do involve workers. Some are headed by those same professionals who are being proletarianised but are not yet ready to accept that either they or their children have been reduced to the condition of much of the rest of the population. We see them leading the movements in Sudan, Algeria, and Lebanon. In Iraq, Chile and Ecuador the movements have the support of all sectors from the petty bourgeoisie to those who "have been left behind" over the last several decades. These movements call for "a change to the system" but their broader demands are confined to getting rid of corrupt politicians, "more democracy" or a "new constitution".

Capitalism is not a form of government but a mode of production based on exploitation of the working class many by the capitalist few. Capitalism will not quietly morph into communism as some deluded souls (who also think the working class no longer exists) believe. The propertied classes have never given up their property without the bitterest of fights. No change of any significance can take place without the working class consciously finishing off this crisis-ridden system and, through its own organisations, starting to build a new society. The current cross-class movements are symptoms of the inability of capitalism to solve its problems. Are they the harbingers of a more clear and conscious class movement to come? This we cannot say.

Yet history tells us that many revolutionary movements began from unpromising beginnings and gradually morphed into a direct clash between classes. The capitalist crisis, which has now lasted so long that it is a manifestation of terminal decline, is not going away and further resistance is more, rather than less likely.

In this context of capitalist economic and political sclerosis, a new generation of political 'truth-seekers' is beginning to study and accept the revolutionary programme of the Communist Left, not only in the UK but in many countries across the world (and naturally we are particularly referring to our own Tendency). As with any political re-awakening there will have to be more newcomers before we have a complete game changer. Even so, we are adding more parts to the organisational skeleton which gives us more effective means to carry out the tasks we have set ourselves. A communist organisation cannot be built just on the internet (or behind a typewriter as Onorato Damen put it in his day). A real communist organisation is part of the class and has to be present wherever it can, whatever the situation. We have to win the confidence of our fellow workers, both by being prepared to relate to any groundswell protest movement and getting a revolutionary voice heard in more traditional struggles. While we support the immediate demands of workers we always need to point out what their long term, wider interests really are. After almost one hundred years of counter-revolution and the discrediting of the very word 'communism'; of fragmenting of the class, and the betrayal of its former organisations in the trades union and social democratic movements, the difficulties we face are enormous. Not least is the situation of today's generation of workers who will have to re-discover the forms of struggle organisations created by workers in struggle in the past. We don't fetishise these today but we do promote any form of mass independent class wide body. These are the prefigurations of the future organs of a workers' society. In 2019 in Chile, in France, in Mexico and Iran we have seen workers seeking to find ways to reinforce their collective struggle. It seems a long road today, but history is beginning to accelerate faster than we once thought possible. It could go in either direction. Socialism and barbarism are still the historic alternatives which will be decided by the outcome of the class war against capital. Whilst the capitalist class everywhere is preparing its own solutions in the shape of nationalism and xenophobia our task is still to be part of the struggle for an alternative. This means strengthening the organisation as a more solid nucleus of a future international all the more important.

CWO

Communism not Corbynism

The following article is the text of the introduction to the first ever CWO public meeting held in Oxford on 26 October 2019. Most of those attending either already considered themselves part of the Communist Left or were en route to accepting its basic premises. However, as expected, there was also dissent from our overview. The disagreement was largely along the usual schizophrenic line of those who realise that although a revolution in social relations is needed this is not likely in the short term. Therefore, in the meantime, "Corbyn is better than Boris Johnson". The meeting responded that this is exactly what the ruling class (of all parties) want us to conclude. They want us to believe there is "hope" (Corbyn's key pitch in the election) somewhere in the system, and they spend a lot of money to ensure our participation in those elections. This, despite all the experience which shows that when the left alternative wins those who voted for it soon find their "hope" is disappointed since capitalism still remains. Indeed the "left" is little different from the Right (just look at the fate (creeping privatisation) of the National Health Service under both Labour and Tory since 1948). Any vote is a vote for capitalism.

Moreover, not voting is only a negative gesture. Most people who don't vote are not doing so for revolutionary reasons. This led to a more serious discussion around the question of our alternative: the need to create a revolutionary party. As someone asked, "How do we do this at a time of class retreat?" In short, with difficulty. The wider objective situation on which depends the rise of an anti-capitalist consciousness is largely beyond our control. If many years of austerity doesn't provoke this, especially if the capitalist class can divert workers into believing that Brexit (and getting rid of "foreigners") will magically change their lot, a handful of revolutionaries cannot change this. But our position has remained the same. Whatever the objective situation revolutionaries don't abandon the field of battle that is the class war. We may get little response, but we do all we can to keep in touch with any element of struggle and pose the long-term solution for the working class (and humanity) that only the overthrow of the system can halt the road to destruction which capitalism is taking us down. And unless there is the core of a revolutionary political organisation, ready to act and point the political way forward when the working class decides it really has had enough and is ready to fight on its own account, then we are doomed to repeat the defeats of the past. Thankfully, there has been plenty of evidence in last two years that not only are workers across the world beginning to rediscover their collective ability to fight back but are even looking towards old historically-discovered forms of class organisation. This has had an impact on a new generation who have come to us in greater numbers than ever before allowing us to take part in struggles more widely and hold meetings like this one in towns where we never have

before. It seems that the revolutionary cause is now developing a “momentum” of its own!

The Corbyn Phenomenon

Corbyn was re-elected Labour leader in September 2016 with over 60% of the votes of Labour Party members. Many young and old, and a whole phalanx of the left from the social democratic supporters of the CPB *Morning Star*, the various Trotskyist groups, not least of course the Alliance for Workers Liberty, the radical union the International Workers of the World, and even individual members of the supposedly revolutionary Class War have all thrown themselves into supporting Corbynism.

Why have so many rallied behind the Corbyn banner? We have had 40 years of capital restructuring in which Labour became indistinguishable from the Tories, lauded the virtues of globalised capital, and let living standards for workers slowly spiral down. All this has been accelerated by the financial collapse of 2008, the worst capitalist crisis since 1929, which led to a Labour bail-out of the banks which, in turn, workers are having to pay for via austerity and further pay cuts. Corbynism thus seems to offer a vague hope that something might change for the better.

So what will the Corbyn team do for the working class? In the forthcoming election we will hear a lot about Corbyn’s “Socialist Vision of Britain.” What does this amount to? More state intervention and state ownership, higher wages and better welfare, better healthcare – in short a kinder capitalism, a capitalism which benefits the exploited class at the expense of their exploiters. All this is pie in the sky. It cannot be implemented in a world of globalised capitalism. Attempts to do so would result in capital withdrawal and watering down of these proposals. John McDonnell is already aware of this and is now trying to appease “small businesses.”

The Corbyn phenomenon has its echoes in Spain with Podemos and Syriza¹ in Greece. Both have either abandoned their “anti-capitalist agenda” and/or ended up implementing the dictates of international capital. In the case of Greece, this was the exact opposite of what Syriza promised, and the exact opposite of what was voted for in a referendum. There can be little doubt a Corbyn government would do much the same.

Corbynism is, in reality, nothing more than a rehash of Labour’s role in the past but proposed for a world where a specifically British Capital no longer exists. However even if the Corbyn programme could be implemented it would amount only to state capitalism. Nationalisation of parts of the British economy does not mean an end to exploitation. Russian, Chinese, North Korean, East European and Cuban workers

can all testify to this. Capitalism remains. Exploitation remains. Production for profit remains (even if it all goes into state coffers). The Corbyn agenda cannot in any sense be called socialism. Yet the need for a socialist, or communist, world has never been more urgent than today.

Need for a Communist World

Capitalism is driving humanity to disaster. For the majority of the world's population, the future promises destitution, starvation and war. The natural environment is being trashed to the extent that large areas of the planet are becoming uninhabitable. And food production is becoming more difficult leading to massive waves of migration. For the working class, the future is austerity, greater exploitation, unemployment, reduced benefits, and ultimately either recruitment as cannon fodder in the wars or as civilian "collateral damage" which will inevitably follow from the ruin which capitalism is bringing upon us all.

All this results from the internal workings of capitalism itself. It comes from the system of wage labour, the need to produce for profit and the necessary accumulation of capital which demands continual growth. It is the system of production itself, which is creating this catastrophe. And it follows that the only way this can be avoided is by ending capitalist relations of production. This means ending wage labour, ending production for profit, and ending the accumulation of capital and the need for continual growth.

In place of capitalism, a global system of production for human need must be created. This will have as its watchword "from each according to their ability to each according to their need." Such a system will need to be controlled and planned by a global system of workers' councils operating on the principle of direct democracy. Money will be abolished as will the present system of nations and frontiers. We call such a system communism or socialism. Such a system can only be created by the world's working class, through a global struggle coordinated by a global political organisation of the world's workers. Communism has never existed anywhere in the world so far. The various countries which have called themselves socialist or communist, have just been varieties of capitalism. They are simply capitalist states marked by greater state control or ownership of capital and have nothing whatsoever to do with socialism.

Corbynism has precisely nothing in common with any of the things we have just mentioned, nor is it a route to them. However, since it still seems to be a widely accepted that Labour is, or at least was, a genuine workers' party and that the unions defend workers' interests it is worth briefly considering Labour's history and the route to Corbynism.

Labour's History

The Labour Party was not founded with a socialist perspective like the European Social Democratic Parties. Instead, Labour was created by the trade unions to combat legislation against their interests through representation in Parliament.

In 1900, the TUC formed the Labour Representation Committee. Some socialists joined it but its driving force remained trades unionism and non-conformist Christianity. It has always been a champion of "fairness" under capitalism rather than fighting for a new society. Its first leader, Keir Hardie was a Methodist lay preacher.² He realised that trades unionism was too narrow a basis for an electoral party. He threw open the door to a wider "Labour Movement" and Socialists in the Independent Labour Party and various other organisations affiliated to it. However, its reformist credentials can be seen from the fact that its main thinking came from the intellectually elitist Fabian Society.³

With the outbreak of imperialist war in 1914, the LP did what almost every other social democratic party in Europe did, it supported the imperialist war. Immediately on Britain's declaration of war, the Labour Party made it clear that it would not obstruct the war effort. On the 7th of August its leaders in Parliament voted for special war grants. Both the Labour Party and the TUC proclaimed an "industrial truce" for the duration of the war and agreed to end all labour disputes. By mid-August they had fully lined up behind the British bourgeoisie's war effort and had agreed to help in its recruitment drive. In 1915, they entered the coalition government. In return for their support, the leaders of the Labour Movement demanded a greater say in the running of the war. And union officials, already well integrated into the state apparatus, took on the role of ensuring production in the factories and disciplining the working class in the name of the war effort. And later, they helped to administer conscription through their role in the tribunals hearing the cases of conscientious objectors. In this way the Labour Party and the trade unions passed definitively over to the camp of the bourgeoisie and its capitalist state.

Ironically the famous "socialist" Clause 4, calling for the "nationalisation" of the "commanding heights" of the economy, was added to the Labour Constitution in 1918 by the Fabian, Sydney Webb. Basically an effort to appeal to the more radical sentiment in the working class after the Russian Revolution, its aim was to undermine support for the emergence of a real communist party in the working class, which would look to revolutionary Russia. It was a master-stroke and remained a useful carrot to dangle before workers right up until it was watered down by Blair in 1995.

More pro-capitalist action was to follow from the Labour Government elected in 1924. Ramsey Macdonald and the TUC leaders opposed strikes and sabotaged

the General Strike in 1926 because they feared its possible revolutionary consequences. Labour also betrayed the working class in the Great Depression of the 1930s when instead of confronting unemployment, Macdonald decided to confront the unemployed. By imposing the hated "Means Test" he and his Tory allies cut the few benefits the unemployed received at the time. Labour split over Macdonald's "treachery" but the rump party did not reverse its course towards class collaboration in the "national interest".

In the Second World War, Labour once again supported British imperialism and joined the Churchill wartime cabinet. But this time it hid behind the "progressive" notion that this was a war against Fascism. Long before the war ended it was clear that a new radicalism was developing in the working class. This was one of the chief reasons why the British ruling class came up with the idea of an extensive welfare state in the shape of the Beveridge Plan, so-called after Sir William Beveridge, a Liberal civil servant. His plan to bring in a health service, a welfare state and plans to maintain full employment appealed to all those who remembered the joblessness, poverty and squalor of the 1930s. With red flags going up over barracks across the British Empire in July 1945 Labour won its first outright governing majority.

The Myth of 1945

Today the myth of 1945 is one of the sustaining features of Labourism. Claimed as a step towards socialism, it was in fact the very opposite. It was a reform of capitalism in order to save the system and Labour was the ideal instrument to carry this out for the capitalist class. The National Health Service was started and the state took on responsibility for the welfare of its citizens "from the cradle to the grave". The famous nationalisations of mining, electricity, railways and steel production etc. amounted to the state rescuing bankrupt industries run down by war production and lack of investment. The nationalisation of the Bank of England gave the state greater control of the economy precisely for this purpose. The entire operation represented a coherent strategy to restore profitability to vital sectors of British capital and provide capital with healthy workers. It was a strategy in the interests of the national capital as a whole. But this did not end class struggle. The post-war years were full of strikes, factory occupations and squats. The Labour Government still did not shirk its responsibilities to the capitalist cause and used troops on at least 17 separate occasions to break strikes (a record that still stands). Under Clement Attlee, Labour also started development of the first British atomic and hydrogen bombs.

The Road to New Labour and then Corbynism

The destruction and devaluation of capital in the war laid the basis for increased profitability of capital and hence the reconstruction period which followed

the war. At the end of the reconstruction boom in the 70s, workers started to fight more widely against the effects of wage cuts brought about by increasing levels of inflation. Apart from the brief and ineffectual interlude of the Heath Government in the early 70s, Labour were in power for 11 of the 15 years from 1964 to 1979. However, Labour could no more solve the economic crisis than the Tories, and when it bowed to IMF pressure to make cuts to the welfare state, the response of the working class intensified. It was Labour, not Tories, who delivered the first dose of austerity in the 70s. Workers' struggles against austerity culminated in the Winter of Discontent that spilled over into 1979. For the British ruling class there was no point in having Labour in power if it could not convince the working class to accept cuts. Labour narrowly lost the June 1979 election and the Tories under Thatcher came to power.

Whilst Labour had been unable to confront the issue of restructuring due to workers' resistance, that resistance began to crumble with the new fear of job losses imposed by the Thatcher regime. Militancy began to decline, as did union membership, and this opened the way for a general restructuring of British industry. Only the miners stood in the way and their isolated fight was sabotaged by both Kinnock's Labour Party and the TUC.

By now, Labour accepted the Thatcher agenda, and began to make itself a more credible capitalist alternative by getting rid of the Trotskyist entryists of the Militant Tendency, which had dominated the Party's youth wing. Labour now espoused deregulation of the financial sphere and all the neo-liberal economic agenda of the capitalist Right. The election of Blair as Party leader, saw the abandonment of Clause Four and any other pretence that implied the party had anything to do with socialism. And just when years of Blairite support for the joys of capitalism seemed to have finally unmasked the real class character of the Party, it once again re-invented itself as the champion of the anti-austerity movement under Corbyn.

Partly this was possible due to the belief amongst many on "the Left" that, whatever control the Blairites have over the Parliamentary Party, there is also a wider "Labour Movement", which anyone could belong to through their trade union. Indeed the Trotskyist and Stalinist left saw winning votes to become union officials as the way to get influence in the Labour Party. Some were deluded enough to believe that they were trying to build a base for the future when the working class would become more "radical". Then they could turn the Labour Party into a real workers' party. And with the advent of Corbynism, the so-called "hard left" have received a real confidence boost.

Entryism

But what of entering the Labour Party to try and convert its members to communism? This has been a tactic of the left for nearly a century. The CPGB encouraged its

members to join the labour party from 1922 and from 1934 the Trotskyists did the same. It is a continuation of the errors of the Communist International which started with the "united front". For left communists the seriousness of this move cannot be sufficiently emphasised. It amounts to uniting with the very social democracy which had supported the war and murdered revolutionary workers in Germany and central Europe to save capitalism. It represents a complete betrayal of everything which had been achieved from Zimmerwald left to the Comintern up to 1921. Trotsky's 1934 "French Turn" in which he ordered his followers to join the social democracy produced a complete break between our political ancestors in the Italian left and Trotskyism. For then on they saw Trotsky as a "renegade in borrowed plumes."

Apart from the political betrayal this represents, the tactic has also proved useless. Working with or joining the social democratic parties serves only to give them credibility and political cover. If revolutionaries join these parties workers can only conclude that these parties are in fact organisations where their problems can be addressed and solved. That is they are at some level workers' parties. This, of course, is completely untrue. Workers need to break politically from the social democratic parties. These parties need to be exposed for what they are bourgeois parties, supporters of capital, strike breakers and when the crisis demands butchers of the working class.

What has nearly a century of entryism achieved? More or less nothing. As we have shown the Labour Party remains a party of capital and the militants who enter it simply help it control the working class and camouflage its capitalist nature. For the militants who join Labour the outcome is usually demoralisation and burnout. We urge all who have been fooled entering the LP to leave it while they can. We have published a text on our website by 3 young militants who were persuaded to enter the Labour Party to create a socialist Britain and have subsequently seen through the whole deception and moved towards left communism.

Communism

We have briefly outlined what we mean by communism. How can it be achieved? Communism is a total transformation in economic, social and political relations where the mass of the working class actively takes control of their own lives. It can only be achieved by international struggle against capitalism, which becomes a positive struggle for communism based on the communist programme. A programme which is the outcome of past working class experiences and struggles, and is developed by a global political organisation of the working class. Communism can only be created by the mass action of the world's workers. They will become active controllers of their own lives through participation in a system of workers' councils. Decisions will be made collectively, and passed to higher councils through elected and instantly

revocable delegates. The entire working class will be drawn into making the decisions and running the system.

It can only come about through millions of people rejecting old ways and old institutions in practice. It is only in a revolution that workers can shake off the muck of ages and make themselves fit to found society anew. Revolutions transform people's thinking, their consciousness, so that they embrace new ideas and take new actions. What was unthinkable before becomes perfectly normal. Workers become able to create an economic system where the production for profit is replaced by production for the satisfaction of human needs. To achieve this we need to build a global political organisation of the working class and anchor communist militants in today's struggles of workers to lead these struggles towards a communist goal.

Ergosum/CP

Notes

1. In Spain Podemos refused to enter a coalition with the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) but in a new election lost seats to them. They are now in coalition government with the same PSOE! In Greece Syriza did the heavy lifting for the Greek ruling class by keeping the class calm whilst they implemented the anti-working class policies of the IMF and EU. Once they had done their job they quietly ceded power to the conservative New Democracy Party last July.

2. Keir Hardie was the first Independent Labour Party MP. He blamed immigrants for driving down wages of Scottish workers and accused them of stealing and of failing to adhere to proper standards of hygiene. In an article written for the journal *The Miner* in 1887, he criticised the owners of the local Glengarnock ironworks for using "*Russian Poles*". (CWO note: they were actually Lithuanians but everyone called them Poles then.)

"What object they have in doing so is beyond human ken unless it is, as stated by a speaker at Irvine, to teach men how to live on garlic and oil, or introduce the Black Death, so as to get rid of the surplus labourers," he said. In a speech to a meeting of miners the same year, he said: *"In former years if a slave escaped in America and crossed to Canada he was a free man, but here we have a batch of men sent from their homes into our midst for the purpose of bringing you down, if possible, to their level. The authorities are at fault to allow it in view of their filthy habits."*

In 1889, three years before becoming an MP, he complained to a Commons select committee about 3,000 foreigners working in Scotland in Glasgow, Ayrshire and Leith.

From a review of Henry McLeish and Tom Brown's book *Scotland: A Suitable Case for Treatment* (Luath Press, 2009)

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/new-book-attacks-keir-hardie-as-a-racist6w72992wc2z>

3. The Fabian Society was founded by Sidney and Beatrice Webb. Against workers' own initiative they (and many other Fabians like George Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells) were eugenicists. Beatrice Webb declared "*eugenicism ... to be the most important cause of all*". Their idea of the welfare state (also followed by the liberal William Beveridge) was to stop the poor from breeding or soiling the gene pool. Whilst opposing the Russian Revolution they did write a paean of praise for Stalin's Russia in *Soviet Communism — A New Civilisation* (1936) which was simply a work of fiction. State capitalists love Big Brother!

USA:

Overview of Auto Workers Strike

*"I thought this strike was going to be revolutionary, a history-maker, because that's the feeling I had when we walked out. I thought America was due for a revolution and our strike was going to be it." **

The article here, from our ICT affiliate in the United States, evaluates the longest strike by US car workers in a decade. After six weeks, members of the United Auto Workers voted for the union's deal with General Motors. The strike, which began on 16 September, involved around 49,000 workers and closed 34 GM plants across the US. It had a knock-on impact on supply chain firms where workers were laid-off. Meanwhile workers in GM plants in Mexico and Canada resisted management pressure to up their work rate. Despite the US capitalist mantra of 'free enterprise' General Motors (and Chrysler) owes its existence to a government bailout during the recession that followed the 2008 financial crash. The company is now back in the hands of stock market capital and turning something of a profit again. Needless to say, this is thanks to tens of thousands of job losses and pay cuts for the remaining workforce as much Obama's \$85bn state bail-out. In the process, the company has further reduced its overheads by handing over responsibility for sickness benefits to the union and generally reduced its costs of production by farming out to factories outside the US, notably Mexico. At the same time the company is classifying more and more workers as 'temporary' in order to pay them less.

Typically, the strike came as workers' grievances reached boiling point. The UAW found that it had to appear to make a stand before the workforce acted on their own account. So, with the typical corporatist argument, the union stressed that its members had made sacrifices during the recession so now it is time for them to share in the company's gains. Unfortunately, equally typical of this kind of union-framed struggle, the 'deal' negotiated by the UAW does nothing beyond fine words to redress the main grievances of the workers. (Temporary workers, for example, are promised a path (unspecified) to permanent employment.) Plant closures in Baltimore and Warren, Michigan will go ahead while GM will continue to build up production in Mexico.

In 2008 only a state bail-out saved General Motors and only a wider state bail-out of the banks saved the entire international banking system. But the global capitalist crisis remains and will continue to demand more sacrifices. Sooner or later wage workers across the world will need to find their own solution, outside of and against any trade union frame.

ER/CWO

UAW Contract Season and its Crises

The recent agreements hammered out between General Motors, Fiat Chrysler and the United Auto Workers are another milestone concessions contract. It is like the agreement in 2007 that paved the way for the increased use of temporary workers and the shutdown of several assembly plants. These contracts do the same. The global auto industry is in deep crisis and this is certainly evident in the big three auto manufacturers. When a key industry locks tens of thousands of workers into a new contract it impacts the workforce in the entire automobile supply chain, and ultimately all workers. So the events surrounding the GM strike and subsequent negotiations between the UAW and Fiat Chrysler can set the tone for future assaults on workers. Few unions demonstrate what unions have become in the imperialist epoch like the UAW. They are indistinguishable from management because they are management. They own stock in the company and have officials sitting on their corporate boards. Many workers have expressed deep anger towards the union and the company while it is the UAW and the big three that have created a situation where the only course of action left is to act to form workers committees independent of the union.

The union leadership is mired in scandal from its rampant thievery of union funds. GM officials are going to court with the accusation that Fiat Chrysler had bought the entire UAW leadership. Payments to union officials were made through means of a series of "training facilities" whose purpose was not to train workers but to funnel money into the hands of the leadership of the UAW. No reform movement will make this machine work for workers. It is an arm of the capitalist class and its job is to manage labor and not to represent its interests.

There is no lack of militancy among the 49,000 workers who went on strike and even though the union had \$800 million dollars in strike funds, workers got the usual \$250 a week in strike pay. This was to force GM workers back to work. With an ample strike fund of \$800 million dollars the UAW could have waged a much more serious strike. The UAW owns a stake in all of the big three auto manufacturers. Many workers have charged that the contract vote was fraudulent. Many still voted for it anyway rather than wait and be forced to vote on the same contract again later.

The main demands of workers were for an end to permanent temp status as well as

multi-tiered pay for the same work. These were the key concessions. The contracts at GM and Fiat Chrysler both expand the use of casual labor. At GM vague promises were made by the company to give temporary workers an avenue to permanent employment. Workers in GM plants in Mexico refused to up their production to make up for losses due to strike activity in the US. GM has refused to reinstate these workers to make an example of them. Indeed, a number of workers have been fired since the strike ended over statements they made during the strike. If the first task auto-workers faced was to break with the UAW and form their own strike committees, their second task should have been to reach out to their fellow autoworkers in Mexico, Canada and elsewhere. Among workers the will to do this exists and would likely have been echoed in positive responses from workers at other plants in the big three and their supply chain. This brings us back to the role of the union in keeping a lid on strike activity, facilitating the casualization of employment and acting to keep workers' wages down. Whether it is a large state workers union or an auto-workers union, the position of unions in key sectors of employment makes them powerful guardians of the interests of capital. Unions generally act to prevent strikes from happening, if this doesn't work they then help make an example of the workers of what happens when you go on strike.

The contract between Fiat Chrysler and the UAW is much the same as the contract with GM with the disturbing additional concession to allow FCA to impose time and motion studies and movement monitoring on FCA workers. It is the sort of scheme that once would've been called Taylorism. It is part of the eternal pursuit to squeeze out more productivity from fewer workers. No matter how much they try to increase the rate of exploitation, Fiat Chrysler, Ford and GM are headed they way of Rover¹ every time they shut down a plant and pretend their temporary excess liquidity is profit.

The broader situation in the auto industry in the world is characterized by a projected fall in auto sales by 3.1 million in 2019, a bigger drop than in 2008.² In the US it has caused the big three to eliminate most of their four door car models and largely abandon the car market to their competitors abroad. The decision to focus more on the manufacture of SUVs is an admission of defeat for the American industrial giants who were once the apex predators of global capitalism.

It is not a matter of there not being enough transportation, or that a factory that makes cars couldn't be put towards the manufacture of other forms of transportation. In a communist society this might be possible. The current system can only shut down plants and give an ever smaller sum back to the workers. The monthly payments for a new car are beyond the means of many of those who started work after the Obama White House brokered the bailout of the big three in exchange for new hires getting their wages cut in half.

The UAW has a history of nationalism, including stirring up xenophobia against workers in other lands and racism against rank and file union members. An extended UAW campaign of nationalism motivated the beating to death of Vincent Chin in 1982. His attackers confessed to the crime and never saw a day in prison. The UAW carried on this tradition largely in support of Trump's protectionist trade warfare policies where they posed for photos with Trump in 2017.

The unions have helped cultivate an internalized sense of defeat among workers, fostering the belief that a strike can neither be waged nor won; that autoworkers in other countries are competitors rather than allies. In short, the exact opposite of the truth. Even the UAW won't be able to keep the lid on the class struggle forever.

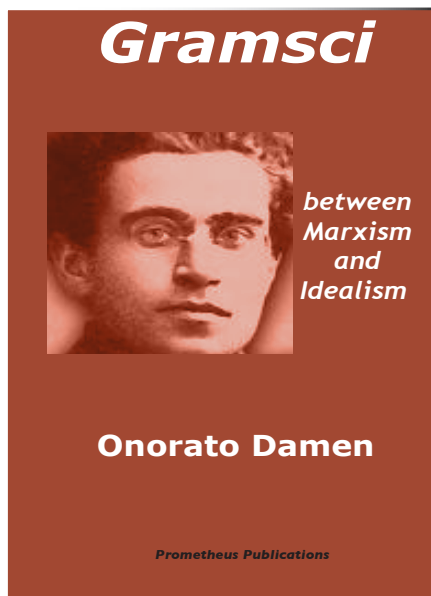
ASm (Internationalist Workers' Group)

Notes

* Quoted by a worker on condition of anonymity, in an article by Tom Perkins and Dominic Rushe in The Guardian, 25 October 2019.

1. <http://www.leftcom.org/en/articles/2005-06-01/the-slow-death-of-rover-and-the-reorganisation-of-capitalism>

2. <https://www.fitchratings.com/site/pr/10102929>



Now in English with a CWO introduction. This collection of articles by Onorato Damen traces key aspects of the myths which developed about Gramsci both in his life-time and during the post-war years when the Italian Communist Party used him to advance its own political agenda. See the ICT website for details of how to order a copy through the post. Check out alternative bookshops.

Destroying Our Planet ... Sustainably

As this article goes to press, the bush fires that have been raging for weeks through six Australian states, from Queensland to Western Australia, have consumed 12.5 million acres of land and the death toll is mounting. They continue to wreak disaster as record-breaking temperatures average over 40°C. Australia's Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, was eventually persuaded to cut his holiday in Hawaii short and return to show some interest in managing the domestic crisis. Like President Trump, Morrison denies the basic fact that man-made climate change is for real. He prefers to support the lucrative export of Australia's coal-mining industry, one of the factors in his election victory last year.

As for Trump, the recent report by the UN Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) is unlikely to persuade him to bring the US back into the Paris agreement fold. And so other 'climate laggards' are encouraged to make light of measures needed to get anywhere near to reducing global warming. Admitting that their "findings are bleak" — the IPCC are making a staggering understatement, as can be seen from even a cursory reading of the report.¹ A movement to combat this is on the rise, but it offers all the wrong solutions — primarily because it is trying to solve the problem within the boundaries of the capitalist system.

The Burning Issue

The IPCC gap report of November 2019 notes that countries have collectively failed to stop the growth of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions and that in 2018 emissions were at a new record level. At the end of 2018, the world reached the position the IPCC predicted it would reach at the end of 2020 if no action whatsoever was taken! This means the previously assumed rate of emissions has increased. The so-called emissions gap between what was promised at the Paris climate conference and what has been achieved is larger than ever before. The reduction pledges of the Paris conference (2015) need to be tripled to reach even the limited goal of 2°C by the end of the century, while the present level of reductions will lead to a temperature rise of 3.7°C. The link between growth rates and carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, which is something the capitalist class has for years tried to deny, is stated as a matter of fact in the executive summary of the report. GDP growth which in 2018 was 4.5% in non-OECD countries and 2% in OECD countries is now listed as a key driver of emissions. In other words, the

capitalist system's insatiable drive for growth is the key driver of climate disaster.

A commentary article in the scientific journal *Nature*² points out that, whereas two decades ago the IPCC thought only a rise of 5° C would trigger a tipping point, two recent IPCC reports, from 2018 and 2019, indicate we could face a cascade of tipping points, which could be triggered by a much lower temperature rise of only between 1 and 2° C. Several tipping points appear alarmingly close. Both Arctic and Antarctic ice sheets and the Greenland iced sheet are now considered as having passed the point or as being close to the point where melting becomes irreversible. A number of biosphere tipping points are also being approached. Those listed are: the reduction of the Amazon rainforest, the Boreal forests in the northern hemisphere, the bleaching of coral reefs, the thawing of the permafrost areas, and the Atlantic current circulation. One process affects the next. Melting ice leads to more heat being absorbed in the Polar Regions, the warming of these regions leads to thawing of the permafrost which releases methane, a GHG 30 times more powerful than the carbon dioxide, stored in the soil and under the sea; heating causes forest fires and the collapse of the rainforests turns them from carbon sinks into carbon dioxide generators, warming and acidification of the seas destroys corals — all this contributing to further warming and extinction of species as well as erratic weather patterns. A cascade of local tipping points could be leading to a spiral of global heating.

<i>The World's Top Ten Carbon Producers</i>			
Rank	Country	2018 carbon dioxide emissions (billions of tons)	World Share (percentage)
1	China	10.06	28
2	USA	5.41	15
3	India	2.65	8
4	Russia	1.71	5
5	Japan	1.16	3
6	Germany	0.75	2
7	Iran	0.72	2
8	South Korea	0.65	2
9	Saudi Arabia	0.62	2
10	Indonesia	0.61	2

Source: Global Carbon Project

The present rate of release of GHGs is an order of magnitude faster than anything in the geological record which means that radiative forcing, which is the process by which heat is captured by the earth's atmosphere, is also greater by an order of magnitude.

Concentrations of CO₂ in the atmosphere are already at levels last encountered in the Pliocene period four million years ago; a very dry period when the forests disappeared over much of the world and our ancestors had to abandon life in the trees. The authors note, however, that concentrations of CO₂ are heading to levels last seen 50 million years ago when the temperature was 14°C above pre-industrial levels. The authors argue that the existing climate models used to predict future trends are inadequate and we may already have lost control over whether tipping happens.

In this context the miserable failure of the latest UN climate talks (COP25), held at the last minute in November in Madrid, is symptomatic of the deeper impotence of the world powers to come up with effective action. As it is, the Madrid meeting could not even reach an agreement on the central task the organisers had given themselves: drawing up rules for a new version of the long-discredited carbon trading system whereby each country is allowed a nominal level of emissions and those who overstep the mark can 'offset' their surplus by buying credits from countries whose emissions are lower than they are officially allocated. Get it? However this is dressed up — and the haggling in Madrid was mainly over demands from the likes of China, India and Brazil to hold on to credits they had acquired before they became major polluters — carbon trading is just a financial capitalist smokescreen for business largely carrying on as usual.

Given the failure of the global political 'community' to do anything about the mounting number of 'extreme' climate-triggered disasters, we have seen an intensification of climate change related protests all around the world.

Protesting our Impotence

Over the past two years protests against global warming have been making the headlines, partly thanks to Greta Thunberg's call for young people to pressure their governments so that they would finally start doing something. As encouraging as it is to see global warming and other environmental issues finally being brought more and more to the forefront of the agenda, this 'climate movement' brings with itself a plethora of issues — not least in the fact that it largely revolves around just that: pressuring governments to bring about (often quite piecemeal) changes that go directly against their interests as the ruling class. Some of the 'climate strikes', which are in fact just demonstrations,³ are even followed by group sessions

of writing to your MPs ...

At first it would seem as though the most radical elements of this diverse climate movement can be found within Extinction Rebellion (XR). Despite its recurring religious theme, spokespeople for XR are not averse to holding 'capitalism' and 'the elite' to account for 'destroying the climate' and in turn bringing 'mass starvation' and 'social collapse'. Mercifully "the capitalist system is going to be brought down by itself", thus posing the "need for fundamental change in the structure of the economy".⁴ This reveals their fear of capitalism collapsing into a new global dark age. Otherwise XR's religious "longings ... to be in unity with each other and with the life-source, call it the divine, call it the still small voice",⁵ has no affinity with the ONLY way to bring about a superior social alternative to capitalism: a political movement of the world's exploited with a clear revolutionary programme which points the way towards a global, borderless community producing directly for social needs, not capitalist profit. What XR is actually doing, despite its claims to the contrary, is channelling people's fear of climate disaster into a campaign to reform capitalism. It makes demands for reform on the state and cooperates with the police, while its leaders stand in elections.⁶

Furthermore, XR has plenty of its own organisational and fundamental problems. There is a degree of unpleasant irony to be found in more privileged protest organisers urging everyone to put themselves at risk of being targeted by the police, even going as far as writing and publishing a thirteen page guide on how to deal with imprisonment!⁷ A short stay in a cell (assuming things would not go even further) may seem like no big deal for those with the financial capital and social connections to squeeze their way out of the grip of the repressive state apparatus, but a criminal record that lingers over a worker's any and all future prospects is not so easy to tackle, not to mention the traumas associated with the possibility of serving a prison sentence.

The irony goes further as activists guilt-trip individuals about using plastic straws, while huge industrial-scale chopped fruit factories like Orchard House Foods use unthinkable amounts of single-use plastics on an everyday basis, hour-by-hour, all to satisfy the quotas needed by supermarkets to turn a profit. And while Greta Thunberg is hailed a champion for her environmentally-friendly ways — travelling from one continent to another on a multi-million-pound, zero-carbon, solar-panel-covered, underwater-turbine-powered yacht⁸ is something completely unachievable and beyond the wildest dreams of any ordinary person. In the same vein, taxing flights might seem like something that only affects those for whom it is a luxury mode of travel for holidays, but for migrant workers who often already struggle financially it is the only viable way of visiting their families still living far away across borders enforced by nation states.

And it is in these ways that XR, along with most other sections of the climate movement, reveals its completely class collaborationist nature — by focusing only on how to compel governments to make largely ineffective reforms and with their protests targeting things that, under the capitalist reality we are currently living in, would only make life even more difficult for workers and migrants without actually bringing a halt to the Earth-destroying process of accumulation of global capital. In fact, in an absurdly direct move by the movement's leadership that caused widespread disquiet among its grassroots, the short-lived 'XR Business' website revealed all sorts of shady connections between the founders of Extinction Rebellion and various capitalist proponents of so-called 'responsible capitalism' or 'green capitalism'...⁹

As hard as it may be for the foot soldiers of Extinction Rebellion to accept, the XR Business fiasco revealed that their entire movement was started by a small group of opportunist investors from the financial sector who simply saw another opportunity to get wealthy on the new wave of increased awareness about climate change.

And as well-intentioned as some of the activists on the streets may be, the whole milieu around Greta Thunberg boils down to lobbying groups whose pleas will largely fall on deaf ears. Ears which will remain deaf because the pleas run against the basic requirement of the capitalist system itself, which is to turn a profit. Only projects which fill this bill will be taken up by capital. Moreover, no amount of cuts or taxes will stop the impending disaster. Nothing short of shattering the currently established order through a communist revolution will spare the human race and the natural world with it.

What's the Deal?

The left of capital and its supporters are also campaigning for their own 'solutions' to the climate crisis that are supposedly achievable through reform of the capitalist system, with the so-called Green New Deal (GND) becoming an umbrella term for these efforts. The reference to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, a series of state regulations and welfare programmes applied in the US to help the country recover from the Great Depression, is a clear statement that is gaining traction among some of the Democrat opposition to Trump.

In the context of the UK, the GND has found its supporters among the left liberal and social-democratic Momentum milieu organising within the Labour Party. What does the GND actually encompass?

No unified answer to that question can be found among its advocates, which is one of many problems with the whole idea, but some constants can be found across these proposals: government investment in 'green' industries and generation of jobs in these sectors, taxation of polluting and GHG emitting corporations, and incentives for the production and usage of greener forms of transport.

In Labour's case, the proclaimed goal is "to achieve the substantial majority of our emissions reductions by 2030"¹⁰ — an idea that does not even equate to the aim to reach net zero emissions by 2030 that activists have been trying to push through. But even with the publishing of their 'Green Industrial Revolution' manifesto, Labour continues to be divided on exactly how to deal with the impending climate disaster.

More importantly, even if present-day state funding and welfare programmes could reach the level of post-war development campaigns without the widespread destruction of capital and human life that preceded the latter, any attempts to create a greener society will be fiercely opposed by the capitalist demands for growth, as well as the fact how deep-rooted the global financial market continues to be in GHG-producing industries.

Ironically, the production of electric/hybrid vehicles, wind turbines, and other 'green' technologies is also done in factories using methods that only further contribute to global warming. Furthermore, even if capitalism could somehow be successfully reformed to curb climate change, the decision would have to be made globally and agreed by all countries to have any effect – something that individual states have been unable to fully accomplish, let alone competing imperialist blocs.

Minus Trump's continued refusal to accept basic facts, perhaps the most obvious and cynical example of 'dealing' with climate change without making any actual progress whatsoever is that of China. The Chinese government continues to pour hundreds of billions of dollars in the industry of renewable energies, with \$100 billion invested in these sectors in 2015 alone and the country now apparently owns five of the six largest solar module manufacturing firms in the world.¹¹ If we are to heed the calls for 'green capitalism' and 'green investment', then the numbers speak for themselves — China is the world leader in clean energy and the saviour of humanity!

But what about all those massive factories of traditional industries that China has relied on for so many decades, where is their place in China's own 'green industrial revolution'? Abroad, in Africa, apparently.

Just as the wealthy states of Europe and North America export much of their waste to developing countries for further processing, China has continued to rely

on the flow of global capital through the traditional industries by moving its coal production to Africa. Countries like Kenya are already becoming toxic dump sites for the Chinese economy, with potentially disastrous effects on Kenya's coastline that will negatively affect not only the local environment and wildlife, but also its people, if developments in the area are to continue as projected.¹² In this way China is reducing its domestic contribution to worldwide emissions of GHGs while adding even more to global emissions through business developments and the destruction of nature in other countries.

The Actual Solution

The Communist Workers' Organisation has been arguing for 30 years that capitalism is doomed to destroy the environment — our position on this has not changed. In the first volume of *Capital*, Marx wrote:

Capitalist production collects the population together in great centres, and causes the urban population to achieve an ever-growing preponderance. This has two results. On the one hand it concentrates the historical motive force of society; on the other hand, it disturbs the metabolic interaction between man and the earth, i.e. it prevents the return to the soil of its constituent elements consumed by man in the form of food and clothing; hence it hinders the operation of the eternal natural condition for the lasting fertility of the soil ... But by destroying the circumstances surrounding that metabolism ... it compels its systematic restoration as a regulative law of social production, and in a form adequate to the full development of the human race ... All progress in capitalist agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the worker, but of robbing the soil; all progress in increasing the fertility of the soil for a given time is a progress toward ruining the more long-lasting sources of that fertility ... Capitalist production, therefore, only develops the techniques and the degree of combination of the social process of production by simultaneously undermining the original sources of all wealth — the soil and the worker.

The crux of the matter is that Earth will not be saved without getting rid of capitalism — something which the latest IPCC report implies though, of course, it does not state it. Any movement with radical changes in mind that is based primarily on civil disobedience rather than class struggle is doomed to fail, succumbing sooner or later to the demands of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, it is impossible to reconcile economic growth with ecological sustainability. The capitalist mode of production has already created the means to produce enough for all of humanity to live comfortably, but its time as a progressive force has long gone. What we need now is de-growth, de-growth on a scale that simply cannot be achieved by a system that continues to demand more growth and produces ever increasing volumes of

products for profit. No meaningful changes that could curb climate change can be achieved under capitalism. If the planet's ecosystems as we know them — along with any semblance of human civilisation — are to survive, the working class of all countries must overthrow the planet-killing capitalist regimes and establish a world society based on the production for human need instead of profit!

***Nikopetr and CP
December 2019***

Notes

1. For access to the UN Environment Programme's full Emissions Gap Report for 2019, see: <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2019>
2. Full article here: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03595-0>
3. At one of these protests, members of the CWO have even personally encountered employees of DEFRA (the UK government's Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs) who had been given paid leave to join the 'climate strike' demonstration for the day.
4. Quotations are from Roger Hallam in a BBC interview, for 'Hard Talk', a programme broadcast during the small hours of 16 August, 2019. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/n3ct5tkp>
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/n3ct5tkp>
5. XR's *Why We Rebel*, mini booklet distributed free with certain publications, e.g. *London Review of Books*, November 2019.
6. Roger Hallam and some other XR activists unsuccessfully stood as independents in the 2019 European elections.
7. See more in Extinction Rebellion's police and prison guide: <https://rebellion.earth/2019/10/08/extinction-rebellion-police-and-prison-guide/>
8. In August of 2019, Greta Thunberg travelled from Plymouth to New York on a zero-carbon yacht to reach two global gatherings on climate change, as reported by *The Guardian*:
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/aug/14/greta-thunberg-sets-sail-plymouth-climate-us-trump>
9. For more information on this, see Winter's Oak exposé of Extinction Rebellion at: <https://winteroak.org.uk/2019/04/23/rebellion-extinction-a-capitalist-scam-to-hijack-our-resistance/>
10. Quoted from Labour's 'A Green Industrial Revolution' manifesto.
11. Source: <https://phys.org/news/2017-01-china-global-energy.html>
12. For more on Chinese developments in Kenya, see: <https://theconversation.com/the-environmental-impact-of-a-coal-plant-on-kenyas-coast-is-being-underplayed-84207>

The Platform of the Internationalist Communist Party 1952

The Context

We have written much on workers' history over the years but very little about our own as a tendency. There are good reasons for this, since analysing the present and working for the future, are more fundamental tasks than the investigation of what our Italian comrades call our own "archaeology". However as others, and not always those well-disposed to our tendency, have written their own distorted versions of the history of the Communist Left it is necessary, from time to time, to redress the balance.

The Committee of Intesa 1925

Here we are publishing the 1952 Platform of the Internationalist Communist Party in English for the first time. There are two documents which, above all, form the bedrock of the pre-history of the Internationalist Communist Tendency. This Platform is the second in chronological terms. It is a worthy heir to the first key document of our tradition, the Platform of the "Committee of Intesa" of 1925. We translated and published this as a pamphlet back in 1995. The significance of that document was not only as a first open resistance to the "bolshevisation" of the Communist Party of Italy, which had been founded by the Communist Left, but also for its ringing opening declaration against opportunism.

It is mistaken to think that in every situation expedients and tactical manoeuvres can widen the Party base since relations between the party and the masses depend in large part on the objective situation...

...the party's influence over the masses depends on a sharpening revolutionary situation and the extent to which it is true to the revolutionary task ... The other currents apparently consider the problem of conquering the "masses" as a question of will. However little by little they are adapting themselves and are essentially lapsing into opportunism.

The "other currents" referred to were the party's new Comintern-imposed leadership headed by Gramsci and Togliatti and the Comintern itself. In Italy the Comintern had taken advantage of Bordiga's imprisonment to replace him at the head of the Party. Gramsci and Togliatti were now in the process of replacing all the local party secretaries loyal to the original leadership of the Left. They started with Bordiga

himself, who having “retired” from the Executive had been elected secretary of his local Naples federation. The Centre leadership’s excuse was that Bordiga was already too well known to the police.

The same thing happened in all the strongholds of the left, culminating in the replacement of Bruno Fortichiari as secretary of the Milan federation. All this was taking place surreptitiously, without discussion of any kind. Rather than go under without a fight, the Left decided to form the Committee of Intesa. Its Platform was intended to provoke a discussion inside the Party prior to its next conference (which in the event would not take place until 1926, and in Lyon in France). It was signed by Bordiga but the initiative had been taken by the other signatories Damen, Fortichiari, Grossi, Girone, La Camera, Lanfranchi, Manfredi, Perrone, Repossi and Venegoni. Bordiga played no part in the subsequent agitation of the Committee inside the Communist Party of Italy.

Bordiga’s last acts of opposition were to draft the Lyons Theses of the Left in opposition to those of the Centre. By a rigged vote these were rejected in favour of Gramsci’s in 1926. By this time Bordiga had already made his last stand in the Communist International with his famous speech criticising both what “bolshevisation” had come to mean (not copying the revolutionary example of October 1917 but simply total control of the other parties by the Russian party) and the degeneration of the International which interfered in every party but did not discuss what was happening inside Russia. After this, apart from a letter to Korsch that same year, Bordiga did nothing for almost two decades. He was arrested by the now well-established Fascist government on his return to Italy in 1926. Released in 1928, he was closely supervised by the Fascist police until 1934 but refused all entreaties by his former comrades to head for exile and cut off any further contact with them. In 1934 he took up his old career as an engineer and architect, travelling round Italy and working on various projects. He had already been expelled from the Communist Party of Italy (1930). the Party he, above anyone else, had been responsible for bringing into existence at Livorno in 1921.

The Inter-War Period

In exile (mainly in France and Belgium) and in the prisons and “in galera”, the internal exile system of Fascist Italy, the “Bordigists”, as the Italian Left was referred to, continued their fight against both Stalinism and Fascism, but now without Bordiga.

The historical continuity of a revolutionary communist current was due solely to all the other comrades of the Italian Left, operating in Italy and especially abroad, though also based on the fundamental contribution of Bordiga before 1926. Thanks to their commitment and their sacrifice the work of theoretical elaboration and practical activity continued and developed: and kept it alive, even if within

objectively imposed limits, in terms of direct political leadership and action, which Bordiga would be uncomfortable, or even at odds with, on his reappearance in 1945.

The task they faced was formidable, something we, living a century on, find difficult to grasp. They could not possibly have foreseen that “bolshatisation” would end up in the monstrous murder of so many communists under Stalin. They were aware that a counter-revolution was in progress, but it would be many years before the precise class nature of the USSR would be understood. And before that they were faced with the problem of how to comprehend what had happened to the first proletarian revolution, and the International it had produced, but from which they were now excluded. It is therefore no surprise that the Italian Left abroad went through many trials and tribulations (and publications!) which have been well-documented elsewhere and which is not our central concern here.

Less well-documented, for obvious reasons, was the “internal” opposition of the Italian Left inside Italy itself, starting in Mussolini’s prisons. Despite spending most of the years after 1926 in prison, or under close supervision by the Fascist state, Onorato Damen had taken a keen interest in events both inside and outside Italy. Some clandestine contacts had been maintained between Italy and the exiles (in the years 1938-43 mainly through Giacomo (Luciano) Stefanini who was arrested 4 times by the Fascists as he passed between Belgium and Italy). Through it all Damen could not understand Bordiga’s absence from the scene.

Bordiga’s political conduct with his constant refusal to take any politically lead has to be considered. Political events that were sometimes of historical importance, came and went: the Trotsky Stalin conflict; Stalinism; our fraction abroad, in France and Belgium, had historically continued the ideology and politics of the Party of Livorno; (the civil war in Spain), the Second World War and, finally, the Russia’s entry into the war as an imperialist power, but none found an echo in his lofty detachment.

In one of the many prison encounters, Onorato Damen persuaded Bruno Maffi to abandon the liberal anti-fascism of *Giustizia e Libertà* for the working class politics of the Italian Left. The two of them, alongside Fausto Atti, Rosolino Ferragni, Giacomo Stefanini and others, would be among the principal founders of the Internationalist Communist Party in 1942-3. It was the only Party founded during the war condemning both the Axis and Allied sides as equally imperialist.

The Internationalist Communist Party

At this point the collapse of the Fascist regime in July 1943 left Italy divided between the Germans (who installed Mussolini as leader of the Republic of Salò in Northern Italy) and the Allies had fought their way up to Rome from Sicily. It was in the North of Italy that the class war in the factories erupted first. At the beginning of October

1942, a general strike broke out at FIAT in Turin, followed by mass strikes which in March 1943 extended to the Italian food, chemical, and metal industries. In these strikes in the factories of Turin and Milan, young workers talked openly of forming factory councils and soviets against the attempts by the Stalinist Italian Communist Party (PCI) to curtail them. These anti-war strikes were not confined to Italy alone but had already begun a year earlier among the German workers. Despite Nazi repression and their isolation they were still going on in 1942. The biggest struggles there broke out in 1943, when all the Italian immigrant workers ceased work, supported tacitly or actively by strikes by German workers.

And strikes against wartime austerity were not confined to the Axis powers. In Britain, much to the Daily Mail's later disgust workers at a factory in London making tail-fins for Halifax bombers went on strike and more than 16,000 women and some men walked out of the Rolls-Royce factory in Glasgow — where they should have been making engines for fighter planes.

They were soon to be followed by workers in the USA. In 1944, the last full year of the war, more strikes took place than in any previous year in American history...

Similar movements broke out elsewhere and it seemed, to most revolutionaries at the time, as though a potential post-war revolutionary situation was developing, and not just in Italy. Recognising that the principal cause of the failure of the Russian revolution was due to its confinement to one country, the new party consciously adopted the title "The Internationalist Communist Party" (PCInt). It soon grew inside the workers' struggles and established itself in the factories of Northern Italy despite having to operate in clandestinity. Its focus on trying to win workers from the pro-Allied partisan movement headed by Stalinists and liberals brought down upon it the wrath of Togliatti's PCI. Not only did the PCI issue a death warrant for Damen signed by Togliatti himself but they actually succeeded in murdering two of the leading militants of the PCInt, Fausto Atti and Mario Acquaviva.

Until 1945 there was no contact with the comrades in the South who, under Allied occupation, were able to operate rather more freely than in the North. Here there were workers who also rejected the class collaborationist PCI. Various small groupings thus emerged but the most significant was the Left Fraction of Italian Communists and Socialists, formed in Naples at the beginning of 1944. It claimed to be in the tradition of the Left Italian, making particular reference to the abstentionist communist fraction of 1919. It did have some confusions though especially in its relations with the PCI and the need for a new party.

Bordiga maintained some contact with this Fraction and in early 1945 broke his silence of nearly two decades in his contribution to a pamphlet, *For the constitution of the true Communist Party*, edited by R.M. Pistone and L. Villone (the latter soon

went over to Trotskyism). This document of March-April 1945, also saw that a revolutionary situation was developing which made it possible for a new Party to come about, but strangely it also called for revolutionaries "to develop within the socialist and communist parties a continuous work of ideological clarification". This fits in with Bordiga's attitude at the time. When the Southern comrades had earlier asked Bordiga what practical steps they should take, he advised them to take part in the Bari Congress of the PCI (January 1944). In the end this Fraction dissolved and its members joined the PCInt in late 1945.

The PCInt was now en route to becoming virtually a 'mass party'. Over the next couple of years it would have something like 4-5000 members grouped in 13 federations, with 72 sections. It had a weekly press in some towns (like Cremona), held numerous public meetings, and was deeply implanted in the main industrial centres, with its own factory publications. There were however two problems. The first was that the Fraction abroad, despite years of serious work and discussion had never really settled many political issues. Indeed it had collapsed on the eve of the Second World War with one part of it (headed by Perrone [Vercesi]) claiming, only weeks before Hitler's invasion of Poland, that imperialism had no need of a general war as the needs of the capitalist war economy was satisfied by a succession of small wars!

An early issue was the question of the unions. With the Fascist unions having disappeared with the regime political parties had started the process of rebuilding the old unions. At the first Convention of the PCInt in Turin in 1945 there was a wide-ranging discussion on the precise response the PCInt should make to this development. Most agreed with Stefanini (who was already one of Damen's closest collaborators and spoke for him in this debate) that the unions were now part of the capitalist state but what policy should flow from this was at the heart of the debate. Stefanini thought that Party members should enter the unions but form their own "factory groups" inside the workplace in opposition to the class collaborationist line of the union apparatus. This was rejected by Perrone arguing that the Party should go back to the 1920s position of forming "class unions" acting as a transmission belt to the Party. This though looked like a proposal to try to capture or re-capture the leadership of the existing unions. The debate was an amicable one and so the decision was deferred by the setting up of a commission to examine the question more deeply.

However "going back to the 1920s", and building on the work of the comrades both inside and outside Italy during the inter-war period, was soon to differentiate two tendencies inside the PCInt. This differentiation became more acute with Bordiga's return to political life. Bordiga fired a warning shot of this when he sent a draft Platform to the Central Committee of the PCInt for consideration at the same Turin Convention (having refused all the invitations to attend it). The draft arrived with Bordiga's peremptory ultimatum that it should be adopted by the PCInt. The

ultimatum was rejected and the document referred back to Bordiga for amendment since it was considered incompatible with the positions already defended by the PCInt . He redrafted it but it was only accepted as a contribution to discussion . It was already clear that the twenty year absence from political developments had out Bordiga on a slightly different course to that of most of the founders of the PCInt. Damen noted this

His manner of talking differed from ours (when he was trying to push for a general political direction not always coinciding with that of the party) even if, roughly speaking, the method of analysis was the same as always. He maintained that the Russian economy should not be spoken of in terms of State Capitalism but as State Industrialism; October was no longer a socialist but now anti-feudal revolution and therefore he talked only of an economy "tending towards capitalism". But he did not seem very convinced of what he was saying, and the corrections he had to make to his thinking shortly afterwards confirm this.

The Split of 1951-2

Bordiga never formally joined the PCInt but from 1949 onwards he contributed a regular column "On the Thread of Time" to its publications. Using this, and private correspondence largely with his "loyalists", Maffi and Perrone, he began to doubt the very foundation of the PCInt. Damen later summed up the issues that developed.

It should be remembered that Bordiga was not even a member of the party: he never participated directly in the organisation and activities of the party; he was deliberately absent from the Convention of Turin (1945) and the First Congress in Florence (1948), despite the fraternal solicitations and telegrams sent to him by his comrades. That same attitude of rejection and condemnation of all activity, then still clandestine, and which had characterised the whole period of his private retreat, would resurface for good part in Bordiga from the fall of fascism to 1951. At this date his dissent burst into the open on the question of imperialism, on the unions, and on national independence struggles. Through the voice of his loyalists, Bordiga had repeatedly called for the liquidation of "that" party, which he found excessively "activist". There were, he said, too many "boots" on the ground, "carelessly spawning an activism that devalues theory". It was better to return to the more limited role of a fraction and a lack of interest in political action ("renegade" stuff) and trade union struggle. The participation of internationalist militants in the workers' struggles was, for Bordiga, "a personal problem" and, in the expectation of the rebirth of the class union, he ranked different "types of union" as his solution to the "immediate problem of participating in the work in them" that is, to keep oneself out of the revolutionary communist party".

The definitive victory of the counter-revolution, and the stabilisation of capitalism after the Second World War was recognised by everyone but it now emboldened the future “Bordigists” to increase the volume of their siren calls for the dissolution of the Internationalist Communist Party. For Perrone in particular Bordiga’s call for a return to fraction work was like a resurrection of his own disastrous position in the 1930s. Damen, and his comrades, fully recognised the victory of the counter-revolution and the possibility that a new world war would soon follow. He stuck though to the fact that whatever the situation the class party should organise itself for whatever fight lay ahead. To do otherwise was to leave a “lacuna” in the class which could only be filled by counter-revolutionary elements. Directly after the Florence Congress he replied to the defeatists:

The harder authentic revolutionaries fight, the more they become tempered by that climate. The Party entrusts these revolutionaries with the historical task of its continuity even in the most difficult situations, even in war. For many it will eventually be a matter of going through the same experiences all over again.

Indeed, in some ways this was already happening as the debates about the existence or non-existence of the Party had also taken place in the Fraction before the Second World War. The added and complicating factor was directly linked to the figure and personal history of Bordiga who remained tenaciously attached to the experience of the Third International, whose collapse he never fully understood, but which the rest of “Italian Left” had spent two decades coming to terms with.

The fight for the continued existence of the Internationalist Communist Party became a fight to clarify what were the important class positions in this post-war period. In a future article we will go into this in greater detail but for now the differences can be summarised as follows .

On the USSR Bordiga still tried to insist that it was not capitalist, but in the process of industrialising and thus was not really imperialist either, whereas Damen spent most of the Five Letters trying to get him to acknowledge that not only was the USSR state capitalist but equally imperialist as the USA. For Bordiga and co at this time the Stalinist Communist Parties were also not seen as bourgeois or capitalist but as either “opportunist” or “centrist”. It was as if nothing had happened for him since his “retirement” from political activity in the Twenties.

On the unions the Bordigist faction did not recognise that these were now integrated into the capitalist state and that therefore the possibility of conquering them was not ruled out. They also supported the struggle of “peoples of colour” (Bordiga) in their fight against colonialism, and failed to recognise that, in the epoch of imperialism, national liberation struggles were now impossible, since the local bourgeoisies could

only win “independence” by swapping one imperialist domination for another.

However it was on the question of the Party that the widest divergence became clear. Both sides agreed that the Party was an indispensable tool that the working class creates for itself in the process of its emancipation. However Bordiga now insisted that the Party was not simply a part of the class but was the class. Gone was Marx’s distinction between a “class in itself” and “a class for itself”. Now one could only speak of a class if it was represented by a class party. This would not only lead the struggle for power but once in power would never let it go. For Damen and his supporters the lesson of the Russian Revolution was that the “class cannot delegate its historical mission to others ... not even to its class party”. Communism is not just a new mode of production that can be instituted by decree. It can only be constructed by millions creating it for themselves. The Party can lead the way but the class has to complete the task itself.

By 1951 these matters had all come to a head. By then Maffi and Perrone had succeeded in winning a majority inside the Executive Committee (EC) for Bordiga’s positions. Damen, Stefanini, Bottaioli and Lecci were thus expelled from the EC, and the various Federations which they belonged to were declared dissolved. The expelled EC members however, appealed to the members in a new Congress, and a majority backed their theses which were a prefiguration of the document that follows. Written some seven decades ago it obviously includes formulations and issues which were of their time (“internal commissions” for example) and this have been superseded since in both the 1982 revision and in the Platform of the Internationalist Communist Tendency (a new version of which will appear very shortly). However it retains its interest as a historic milestone in the formation of our tendency in direct continuity with the fight of the internationalist communist left against the counter-revolutionary consequences of the failure of the post-war revolutionary wave in the 1920s.

***Communist Workers’ Organisation
January 2020***

Notes

1. “Intesa” can be translated as “alliance” or “understanding” or “agreement”. The pamphlet contains the original Platform, plus correspondence around it, and an introduction on how the Communist Party of Italy which was founded by the Communist Left was undermined by “orders from Moscow”. Under “bolshevisation” its best leaders were ejected from the leadership even though they still had the support of the overwhelming majority of the members. It is still available from the CWO address at £3.
2. *Platform of the Committee of Intesa* p.18
3. For the only full copy of this in English see Onorato Damen, *Bordiga Beyond the Myth*, pp.142-5

4. Fabio Damen, *L'area internazionalista e la scissione del 1952* in the pamphlet *Per una analisi critica del tardo-bordighismo e dei suoi epigoni*
5. *ibid.*
6. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2932437/The-dockers-Churchill-war-s-shameful-secret-Second-World-War-strikes-reveal-disgusting-lack-patriotism.html>
7. <https://libcom.org/history/world-war-ii-post-war-strike-wave>
8. Fabio Damen, *L'area internazionalista e la scissione di 1952* at <http://www.leftcom.org/it/articles/2000-03-01/l-area-internazionalista-e-la-scissione-del-1952>
9. Nonetheless, the various Bordigist organisations today print this document as if it had been accepted.
10. Quoted in <http://www.leftcom.org/it/articles/2000-03-01/l-area-internazionalista-e-la-scissione-del-1952>. One of the corrections Bordiga had to make was to finally recognise that the USSR was state capitalist – something he denied in the exchange of *Five Letters with Damen* in 1951. See <https://www.leftcom.org/en/articles/2013-05-15/bordiga-beyond-the-myth-five-letters-and-an-outline-of-disagreement>
11. Bordiga's piece *On Activism* can be found at <https://libcom.org/library/activism-amadeo-bordiga> In fact many of the arguments Bordiga makes in this were accepted by all the PCInt. However what Bordiga really wanted to argue for was that the Party did nothing and waited for the class to recognise its existence. A position which his followers were unable to maintain themselves. Damen partially replied to him in the section "Overturning Praxis" in the *Five Letters* quoted above.
12. Thesis of 1951 on *The Party and Economic Action*. On this see in the Introduction to the collection of Documents of the Conference of Turin – 1945 and of the Congress of Florence – 1948, and Notebook No. 3 of *Battaglia Comunista* (dedicated to the internationalist split of 1952). <http://www.leftcom.org/it/articles/2000-03-01/l-area-internazionalista-e-la-scissione-del-1952>
13. *Battaglia Comunista* November 1948, CWO translation.
14. But for now the issues are dealt with at length not only in the *Five Letters* (see footnote 10) but also in Onorato Damen, *Bordiga Beyond the Myth* which is still available from our address.

Political Platform of the Internationalist Communist Party (1952)

Introduction

The theses which we are publishing here date back to the Milan Congress of 1952. It was a time when the Party suddenly found itself faced with an attempt from inside its leading bodies to put in doubt its very existence as a party. The Internationalist Communist Party had come into existence to encapsulate, in the continuity of its cadres, through its tradition in the "Italian Left", and in its fundamental ideas, the programmatic and organisational precondition for the future party of the working class.

In our theoretical and political work, even if modest, which followed the events of the workers' international struggles, we are not looking for signs of infallibility, but for confirmation of the validity and the accuracy of the questions posed in the programme of our Second Congress (Milan, 1952), such as the nature and function of the party, the political and economic character of the Russian state, and the role of the colonial revolts in Asia and Africa.

The present publication thus allows comrades to critically re-examine our political platform which is today as alive as ever, despite operating in the midst of such an unforeseen collapse of men, ideals and programmes. This gives us an irreplaceable test bed for the development of these theses at a Third Congress of the Party.

General Problems

1. The contradiction between capitalism's productive forces and the relations of production, in which the proletariat expresses its historical antithesis, is what gives rise to class struggle. This is not an episode of this or that phase of capitalist development, but a permanent reality of this mode of production. On a political level this class struggle will fluctuate in importance and intensity, according to the circumstances of the time. It will disappear the day that the revolutionary victory of the proletariat gives birth to the system of socialist production and distribution – which will coincide with the revolutionary destruction of all organs and forms of bourgeois power.
2. The class party is the specific, permanent and irreplaceable organ of the revolutionary struggle of the working class.
3. The Internationalist Communist Party is the political organ of the working class and the tool, neither temporary nor provisional, for its emancipation. In no phase of its history can the proletariat exist without the living and active presence of its

party. Likewise the revolutionary party is nothing if it does not root itself as deeply as possible in the class. If it becomes detached from the everyday life of the class, from its struggles for both its immediate and more fundamental demands, the victorious counter-revolution will reduce its importance and silence it, but will never be able to destroy it historically.

4. The Party regroups the most advanced and most conscious section of the proletariat and attempts to unify the efforts of the working masses by showing them that their partial and immediate movements cannot triumph if they do not link themselves to the struggle for the revolutionary emancipation of the proletariat.

The Party also has the task of awakening revolutionary consciousness in the masses; of tearing them away from the reactionary and mystifying influence of national-communism, national-socialism and social democracy; of preparing the weapons of revolutionary theory and the material means of action, in order to direct the proletariat, in the course of the struggle, towards its final objectives.

5. We reject the conception that in the phase of counter-revolution (although no school of revolutionary Marxism has ever tried to demonstrate when and how the bourgeoisie's exercise of power ceases to be counter-revolutionary!), the Party must limit itself to peaceful proselytising and propaganda whilst concentrating on the study of so-called fundamental problems, thus transforming its work into a fraction, if not a sect. This concept is undialectical and implies the liquidation of the organ of revolutionary struggle.

6. The world wars, which came out of the, increasingly serious contradictions within the capitalist system and which gave rise to modern imperialism, have caused the disintegration of capitalism (whatever its form of domination). In this phase class struggle will have to be resolved by armed conflict, by insurrection of the exploited masses against the power of the bourgeois States in their various phases of development, from the USA to Soviet Russia and to the new Peoples' Democracies.

7. In terms of the revolutionary programme, objective analysis of the situation reveals that, to the detriment of the proletarian struggle, the first Proletarian State has completely disappeared. It has entered anew into the cogs of world capitalism. Thus the second imperialist war saw the Russian State — the first revolutionary and conscious manifestation of working class power (1917), integrate itself with the general interests of the bourgeoisie.

In the supreme interest of the future revolution, the Internationalist Communist Party has a duty to subject the causes and effects of the process of degeneration of the first Proletarian State to the fire of Marxist critique, without ideological concessions

or political weakness.

8. The concepts of “national socialism”, “new democracy” and “liberation of oppressed people” are opposed to Marxism and must be rejected as part of the ideology and tactics of conservative forces. “Anti-fascism” is the most recent ideological and political lie behind which capitalism played the card for its own class preservation during the Second World War.

9. The Party believes that the epoch of national movements is incontrovertibly over. This also goes for the colonial countries with an essentially precapitalist economic structure where indigenous capitalism entangles itself with that of the colonising country through tight links of the same class character in order to jointly realise their domination over the “colonised” proletariat.

In the period between the Second and the Third World Wars, that is, in the harshest period of imperialist domination over the world, to struggle in solidarity with national liberation movements, whichever they might be, means putting the Party on the side of the class enemy, acting on the side of the bourgeoisie, which is where every national movement necessarily leads us.

Therefore, the Party rejects revolutionary alliances with the bourgeoisies of the West or the East (including Asia) and participation in wars of national formation; it likewise rejects the false dialectical conception that the Party should struggle for the victory of bourgeois revolutions over feudal regimes in order to support the success of the capitalist revolution. It believes that in all cases this would mean struggling for the triumph of one imperialism over another.

10. In the framework of the development of the counter-revolution, the national “communist” parties, now completely degenerated and transformed into blind instruments of the imperialist policy of the Russian State, have abandoned all methods of class struggle by agitating under the deceptive banner of anti-fascism, as if the greatest enemy to combat was no longer capitalism but merely one of its expressions: fascism.

This experience demonstrates that acting outside the dialectical concepts of Marxism only puts us back in the heart of bourgeois history, that is, fighting the effects and not the causes of capitalist stagnation.

The Internationalist Communist Party, which has by turns openly taken a position against the multi-coloured series of “new” schemas – “partisan struggles”, “national liberation movements”, “campaigns for peace”, etc. – will act energetically to rid the workers of these false conceptions, in order to restore the real historic conditions

of the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and establish a new balance of forces.

11. After the overthrow of capitalist power, the proletariat will only be able to organise itself as the dominant class by destroying (and not just by seizing) the bourgeois state apparatus and by installing its own class dictatorship. Political representation in the proletarian State will be based on the mass organisms that will have arisen during the revolutionary period, in which any expression of the bourgeoisie will be excluded from all political rights.

12. The State of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, born of a victorious proletarian revolution, is a realisation of the international proletariat, surpassing the limits of national experience as the first episode of the proletarian revolution in the world.

13. The defence of revolutionary conquests and organs of proletarian power, which, for historical reasons, might remain isolated whilst waiting for a further development in the international situation, will be confined to the armed insurrectionary workers and never to a permanent army.

14. The essential and immediate response of the proletariat to the problem of organising the State into its own dictatorship is one of "instant destruction" of the old administrative machine in order to immediately start to build a new one that precludes the expansion and reinforcement of all bureaucracy, and allows instead for its gradual suppression. The Proletarian State as a rule must ensure: the absolute electability to all positions, the instant recall of all functionaries without exception, and the reduction of their payment to that of an "average waged worker".

15. Only the Proletarian State, kept on the path of revolutionary continuity by cadres of the party, who in no circumstances will be able to identify with it or integrate themselves into it, will be able to systematically implement social and economic measures which will lead to the capitalist system being replaced by socialist management of production and distribution.

16. Following this economic transformation and the changes that will occur in all areas of social life, thus allowing for the abolition of class divisions, the need for a political State will likewise gradually disappear, and its operation will gradually be reduced to that of the rational administration of human activity.

Doctrine

It is necessary for the revolutionary Party to develop certain aspects of Marxist doctrine, the instrument for orientating and guiding revolutionary action. The variety of doctrinal interpretations have led to, and continue to lead to, serious internal disagreements and divisions in the revolutionary vanguard.

In opposition to the formal and sometimes mystical acceptance of historical materialism, Marx's *Capital*, the works of Lenin etc., we stand by the incontrovertible, living and comprehensive character of Marxist doctrine as an interpretation and critique of the capitalist economy throughout its existence, and in particular as an overall theory of the world and human history. Alongside Marx, Engels and Lenin, the Party believes that in history, nothing happens automatically or independently of human activity: "that is to say, men make their own history, in an environment that conditions them, and on the basis of given actual relationships in which the economic ones are decisive"

The common thread of this reciprocal action is the history of unceasing struggle between classes with a succession of highs and lows in the objective situation. Breaking this thread means breaking the course of history as living reality. It means denying the continuity of the class struggle, and the inevitability of its political party, as well as denying outright the expectation of proletarian revolution itself.

Thus we must reject all formulations, old and new alike, which are outside this central kernel of Marxism – whether "idealist" interpretations ("ordinovismo", stalinism, etc.) or dogmatic determinism (scientific determinism, economism, decadent bordigism, etc.) – and which end up leading to traditional bourgeois reactionary thought and to the inevitable halt in the development of revolutionary theory.

The Nature and Function of the Party

There is no possibility of working class emancipation, nor of the construction of a new social order, if this does not emerge from the class struggle; just as there can be no class struggle that is not at the same time a political struggle.

The instrument of this struggle is the political class party, which takes it from the level of immediate demands to the revolutionary insurrection which destroys the capitalist State in order to construct the State of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and oversee its management.

The class gives rise to the party as a condition of its existence. From a historical perspective, it is of no particular importance whether the class has scope for greater or smaller actions in its demand struggles, compared to the more specifically political level, which dialectically carries greater weight for the party. What really matters is the continuity of the essential relation between the party and the class; however, strengthening and expanding it depends greatly on favourable objective conditions, at which point the will to create the party becomes both a determined and determining factor.

It would be a gross and dangerous error for the future to believe that the moment the working class creates their party, then they somehow relinquish – totally or even

partially – those attributes which make them the gravedigger of capitalism, as if others could act as an alternative and have the same consciousness of the need to struggle against the class enemy and to overthrow it in revolution. At no time and for no reason does the proletariat abandon its combative role. It does not delegate to others its historical mission, and it does not give power away to anyone, not even to its political party.

The reversal of existing “praxis”, which is essentially the explosion of revolutionary will, comes about first and foremost through the accumulation of various factors and impulses from within the working class. These revolutionary dynamics will crystallise as a part of the class, that is its party. By virtue of its ideological preparation, political maturity and unified consciousness, the party will be the most capable of guiding and synchronising this fundamental, complex and multi-faceted movement, turning it into a powerful weapon of struggle and demolition (of the old order).

It is only when it responds to the party, and never simply from impulse, that the class will take advantage of the enormous revolutionary potential concentrated at the particular point in time by the anarchic and contradictory productive process of capitalism.

However, when the links between the party and the class are loosened, broken and thus inoperative, the class ceases to be a unified force; it divides into categories and is inevitably thrust into different forms of class collaboration. For its part, the party, detached from the class, ceases to be the revolutionary party and is destined to disappear from the class political scene or lose itself in parliamentary compromises.

The very nature of the Internationalist Communist Party, as a party of the working class, indicates and delimits its tasks within a framework of class tactics and strategy, in close conformity with its analysis of real economic relations and the technical development of the means of production. The laws that preside over social existence and, within certain limits, the degree to which historical forecast of their future development can be made, are based on this.

The party also rejects the concepts and practices of voluntarist “activism”, justified by an idealist vision of history and class struggle. Equally to be rejected are the concepts and practices of “inactivism”: the kind which, outside any particular struggle, limits itself to waiting for the blind and bewildering economic forces to reach their final explosive point in order to think about (and only then) the need to create the party, with all its ideological preparation, organisation and tactical training. The party is not formed spontaneously, nor is it improvised. Neither can it be dreamed up in the space of one morning (assuming it is afforded such a space) with the necessary subjective and objective capacity to be able to make use of the decisive moment that revolution offers.

"The activity of the party cannot and must not limit itself to the conservation of the purity of its theoretic principles and organisational network, nor to the realisation of immediate and measurable success at all costs. The party is at once a product and a factor of the class struggle."

The tasks of the party may be summarised thus:

- a) Propaganda for its principles and continuous elaboration of their development;
- b) Active participation in all working class struggles for immediate demands;
- c) Leadership of the insurrection for a revolutionary assault on power;
- d) By the active direction of its class party the proletariat exercises, through its dictatorship, the management of power and constructs a socialist economy.

In situations where direct struggle for the conquest of power is not yet possible, the party must jointly develop the first two tasks in tandem; its absence from the struggles of the proletariat, even partial and immediate ones, is inconceivable.

Abstentionism – Electoralism – Participationism

From the Congress of Livorno to now, the Party has never adopted abstentionism towards electoral campaigns as a principle, as it never accepted, nor will it accept today, systematic and thoughtless participationism. In accordance with its class tradition, the party will decide whether or not to participate on a case by case basis, in accordance with the political interests of the revolutionary struggle, and on the condition that it may be possible to mobilise a fraction, however modest, of conscious proletarians around this intervention.

Whatever the tactic of the Party (regarding participation in a single electoral campaign with written and spoken propaganda, putting up candidates, intervening in public meetings) this has not only to be inspired by its programmatic principles themselves but also with the clear declaration that electoral consultations never allow the exploited class to adequately express their needs and interests, and even less, allow them to gain political control.

In local elections the Party cannot be diverted, by consideration of immediate interests, from its general aim of separating the responsibilities and the approach of the proletarian forces from all the other sides of the struggle, in full coherence with its historical and general demands."

Relations Between the Party and the Masses

To avoid turning into a philosophy club, removed from the movement and the path of the class struggle, the party must resolve the problem of its relationship with the masses in accordance with Marxist principles.

One aspect of this problem is what some call the union question, which includes: opinion on the current unions, relations between the party and the unions, workers' agitations and the position of the party with regard to this, and factory groups.

The party categorically affirms that in the current phase of the totalitarian domination of imperialism, the unions are an indispensable tool of this domination, to the extent that they even pursue goals that correspond to the bourgeoisie's aims for its own preservation and war. Therefore, the party rejects the false perspective that these organisations could, in the future, fulfil a proletarian function so that the party would have to do an about turn and adopt a position of winning positions within their leadership. Contrary to the position which asserts that the unions in their current form have a proletarian character simply because they are made up exclusively of workers – and recognising equally the accuracy of this assertion – we affirm that:

1. Workers' adhesion to the union is not voluntary but obligatory;
2. The unions are no longer the expression of specifically proletarian interests since they have aligned their politics with that of the competing imperialisms.

Under different circumstances, when the working class, guided by its class party, mobilises to launch an all-out attack on the State, it will come up against the harmful role of the present unions. This is confirmed by the experience of the German and Italian proletariats which, in 1919-20, had tried to bypass the reactionary barriers of the unions in order to create new mass organisations.

However, the party, in strict accordance with the historical positions of the Italian Left, does not support leaving the unions, that is, it does not peddle empty slogans, either to found new unions, or for the organised workers to abandon the current unions. This last slogan will only be appropriate when the next general crisis in the capitalist structure gives rise to a mass revolutionary movement.

Having stated that in the current situation of great downturn of the workers' movement the majority of workers are in the main unions, despite their counter-revolutionary nature, the party believes that its militants must remain in the unions as long as they are not expelled for their activities. It believes that its militants should participate, in the general interest of the proletariat, in all internal manifestations of union life, criticising and denouncing the politics of the union leaders, in order to achieve some clarification and orientation amongst unionised workers.

The party considers that the workplace – factories, businesses, offices etc. – is where it is possible to develop criticism, political denunciation and revolutionary orientation towards the workers most effectively. It is there that the internationalist factory groups are the kernel of activity among the masses and they must be particularly aided by the party in order to be capable of intervening in situations whenever it

may be necessary to defend and affirm the politics of the party.

The arms race and the evolution of the situation towards the third world war will determine a series of movements that Stalinism will attempt to steer towards the objectives of Russian imperialism, just as it did before and as it continues to do today.

One of the tasks of the party and its factory groups is to be ready to intervene in every movement to clarify and guide them, and, if conditions and the balance of forces permit, even take up their political leadership.

In close relation with what has been said above and with the aim of remaining in permanent contact with the working class, the party does not underestimate the importance of being present, again balance of forces permitting, at elections of representative organs of the unions and factories. Therefore, the party will decide to intervene in workers' demonstrations on the basis of the possibility or impossibility of presenting, in particular in elections to internal factory commissions, a standalone list of the party and explaining it politically in an appropriate motion.

In cases where internationalist militants are elected to internal commissions, they must defend the workers' interests in these organisms, in accordance with the politics of the party. They must leave them if they find it impossible to defend these politics.

International Situation

Strengthened by the success of the Second World War, capitalist domination has crushed and scattered revolutionary political forces and pushed to the fore imperialist forces which are contending for world supremacy. Thus the climate is favourable for opportunist parties, in the service of one or other imperialism.

The task of regrouping the scattered revolutionary kernels does not depend on the initiative of this party or any other political group.

We must take into account the fact that the disappearance of the Third International, the defeat of the revolutionary opposition, its split into fractions and its dispersion, shattered the unity of revolutionary forces, cutting the thread of theoretical elaboration and delaying the possibility of any new international regroupment.

In the current situation with the perspective of psychological and material preparation for war intensifying every day, the objective possibilities for regroupment must be rediscovered among the national and international groups that have openly and definitively broken with Stalinism, democracy and war.

The proletariat is still absent from political struggle, and as a result, real class struggle, at least visible class struggle, has disappeared. However, the party does not accept that the lack of workers' activity will necessarily last, thus defining a tactic of "doing nothing". On the contrary, it accepts Lenin's theory of the possibility of sudden

turns, which are always latent in an economy whose internal contradictions increase little by little as capitalism rushes to war. The party would be ignoring its tasks if it did not take into account the fact that the European proletariat, though politically immobilised, corrupted by Stalinism and terrorised by counter-revolutionary pressure, has at its disposal a wealth of experience of class struggle that the British and American proletarians absolutely do not have; experiences that may remain dulled, compromised and latent, but that are nonetheless ready to revive and become crucial in the period when the proletarian movement is revitalised. Likewise, we reject as defeatist the theory that there is no place for the party in the historic period where the counter-revolution reigns uncontested.

The party affirms that even in the period of victory of the counter-revolution, which is certainly true of today, when monopolies, financial capital and militarism dominate, the choice for revolutionaries is never between “what we must not do” and “what it is only possible to do”. The choice is not between paradoxical and metaphysical formulations which inexorably lead to opportunism, but the harsh everyday necessity of supporting theory in the real world of antagonistic interests and class struggles from which theory is derived and of which it represents the historic justification. The action of the class party is always regulated not by “fear” of action and the “risk” that this comprises, but by the concern and “will” to do what objective conditions allow on a given level, with known difficulties against a determined adversary which cannot be chosen but only fought.

Facing Imperialism

Whatever the assessment of the Russian economy (whether or not pre-capitalist elements predominate, whether the capacity for domination and the extent of domination are due to elements of modern capitalism which had reached a monopoly within the framework of the State, however big or small), the Party affirms that the policy of the present Russian State reflects the fundamental interests of its economic structure. Thus, its foreign policy of imperialist expansion and preparation for war is the necessary outcome of the violent and typically capitalist thrust of its economy as it moves to conquer and control new centres of raw materials or consumption, indispensable to its development and to the demands of its strategic line-up.

“The Russian regime, after the first socialist achievements, has undergone a progressive but decisive degeneration. Privilege and exploitation of wage labour once more dominate the economy; previously influential classes have revived their influence in society; bourgeois forms and norms have reappeared in the legal system. On the domestic political front the Bolshevik tradition of the October Revolution and Leninism has been overwhelmed and dispersed and has lost control of party and state. Internationally, Russian state power is no longer the ally of the exploited classes fighting the civil war for revolution in every country, but one of the colossal military powers in the modern imperialist set up. It participates in the bourgeois

game of alliances and wars in the historic service, no longer of the working class, but of nationalism and imperialism, or rather of a foreign policy, dictated by the interests of a privileged national ruling strata, not by the needs of the world working class."

In no case whatsoever does the Party consider Soviet Russia a country that has not yet realised its bourgeois revolution and which should therefore be given solidarity and international support, theoretical or practical, in order to push the Russian economy beyond feudalism and beyond capitalism.

State capitalism is no less than a form of capitalism and does not fundamentally differ from any other form of capitalism, whether in terms of its internal contradictions or even the superficial ways in which it is organised from the sites of production to its internal and international markets, including the most advanced, most concentrated and most monopolistic: that of the USA. Differences in stages of development neither imply nor justify setting up a hierarchy of responsibility or threat, whereby the various centres of capitalism must be eliminated in the order established by this hierarchy: firstly Centre Number One, the USA, then the other capitalist states.

The revolution has never adapted itself, and will certainly never adapt to laws of any geometric or sentimental order, but rather will seek to strike where capitalism is most vulnerable.

Thus the Party rejects the theory that the proletarian revolution must first "clear away" the capitalist centre of the USA as a dangerous diversion. It reaffirms that during phases of crisis and high social tension, every victorious revolution inevitably carries within it the potential for expansion. This is the concrete basis for the extension of the revolutionary front. It is why the theory of socialism in one country is false, since it is also the theory that indirectly justifies the degeneration of the Russian State based on the backward state of its economy.

It would be infantile to anticipate a simultaneous collapse of the whole capitalist order, or a rapid succession of collapses in countries on this or that continent. But it would be equally infantile to suppose that a victorious revolution in a single country could and must last indefinitely, resting not on the active and inspiring solidarity of the international revolution but on the development and exploitation of its own national resources of human and economic materials. The conditions for consolidating a victorious revolution remain solely in its strategic influence; that is, how far the domestic conquests of the revolution shift the premises for attacking and violently destroying the wider enemy front.

Only on this path can the revolution be consolidated, by opening the era of socialist society. Otherwise it will fall like the Paris Commune of 1871.

About Us

The Communist Workers' Organisation is part of the Internationalist Communist Tendency which was inspired by the Internationalist Communist Party (Battaglia Comunista). Formed during the Second World War in 1943, the PCInt. condemned both sides as imperialist. Its roots go back to the Italian Communist Left which had fought the degeneration of the Communist International and the Stalinisation imposed on all its member parties. Today there are ICT affiliates in several countries.

We are internationalists. We believe that the interests of the exploited are the same all over the world, and that communism cannot be achieved in one country, a myth peddled by Stalinism. Stalinism was never communism but a particular form of capitalism, state capitalism. After 1917 the economic blockade of the Soviet Union and the failure of the world revolution in the West meant that the revolution was transformed into its opposite, eventually becoming an imperialist bloc that would collapse after only seventy years. We are opposed to all (Trotskyists, Maoists) claims that state capitalism in whatever form is socialism.

We aim to be a political reference point for the working class, first of all for those who are tired of the unions, all unions. This does not mean giving up on the fight to defend immediate interests (wages, hours, work rates, etc.). But the unions are now a tool to control the class struggle and manage the labour force on behalf of capital. Today, any 'self-organised struggle', has to go outside of and against the unions. However, rank and file unions are a blunt instrument for workers. Even when they win a particular battle if they settle into a permanent existence they must accept the legal and economic framework imposed by the state. Any attempt to maintain a permanent body to defend workers' immediate economic interests will fail.

The only permanent body the working class can establish today is the political organisation, which is not only possible but essential. The starting point for this must be recognising that the general interest of the class lies in getting rid of capitalism. This is only possible through a revolution, i.e. the overthrow of the existing state and establishment of a new form of political power by the proletariat. The road to revolution does not mean the futile attempt to win control of the existing state via elections to parliaments or local governments which are means for the capitalist class to exercise its rule. History has shown us that the forum of our "democracy", the bodies

of power of the revolution, will be the workers' councils, (or soviets) – mass meetings in which delegates will be entrusted with specific mandates and will be recallable at any time. But these potentially revolutionary organisations will be undermined by capitalist forces from within if they do not have a clear programme aimed at the abolition of exploitation and, therefore, the elimination of classes, for a society of “freely associated producers” who work together to directly meet human needs.

The programme is not the creation of any single theorist or one organisation. It is the outcome of the key lessons learned from past and present struggles and as such defines the practical way forward for the working class as a whole. Without a clear political compass the working class movement will be prey to all kinds of capitalist tricks and illusions. Thus political clarification and reorganisation today are vital for a revolutionary party to come into being which is in a position to win over the working class to the revolutionary programme. This is not a party of government that would replace the class and its class-wide organs of power, but a party of agitation and political guidance on the basis of that programme.

We are for the party, but we are not that party or its only embryo. Our task is to participate in its construction, trying to link immediate demands to the historical programme; communism.

Join us! Support the Internationalist Communist Tendency



**For a free copy or copies of
our broadsheet *Aurora* email
or send a stamped addressed
envelope to our London
address.**

The Internationalist Communist Tendency

UK: The Communist Workers' Organisation
produces ***Revolutionary Perspectives*** (a six monthly magazine) and ***Aurora*** (an agitational paper)
BM CWO, London WC1N 3XX

Italy: Il Partito Comunista Internazionalista
produces ***Battaglia Comunista*** (a monthly paper) and ***Prometeo*** (a quarterly theoretical journal)
CP 1753, 20101, Milano, Italy

USA: The Internationalist Workers Group
IWG, P.O. Box 14485, Madison, WI 53708

Germany: The GIS becomes the GIK

At the end of October an extraordinary Conference of the GIS was held to draw up a balance sheet and discuss a new orientation for our work. Amongst other things, we decided to change our name to the Gruppe Internationalistischer KommunistInnen. In our opinion, the old name, GIS, which we took on at the end of 1999 (!!) in the process of cutting the umbilical cord with Trotskyism, has for some time no longer been a suitable description of our group's subsequent political and programmatic development. We will shortly publish a political balance sheet of our work over the last 20 years.

Gruppe Internationalistischer KommunistInnen
produces ***Socialismus oder Barbarei***
de@leftcom.org

France:
Bilan&Perspectives
produces a journal of the same name
ABC-LIV, 118-130 Av. J. Jaures, 75171 Paris Cedex 19

Canada:
Klasbatalo
produces ***Mutiny/Mutinerie***, a broadsheet in English and French
www.facebook.com/Klasbatalocollective/klasbatalo collective@gmail.com

Our Pamphlets

The Platform of the Internationalist Communist Tendency 70p

Revised English version (including postage in UK)

For Communism £4

An Introduction to the Politics of the CWO

Class Consciousness and Revolutionary Organisation £3

“Consciousness” is one of the most important issues for the working class and for revolutionaries. Our approach is unashamedly historical and attempts to draw out the real experience of the working class in its struggles of the last two centuries.

Trotsky, Trotskyism, Trotskyists £3

How Trotsky, who made an enormous contribution to revolutionary practice, ended up giving his name to a movement which returned to the counter-revolutionary errors of Social Democracy.

Stalin and Stalinism £1

The lie that the former USSR was “really existing socialism” remains a potent weapon against the working class. Here we examine the origins of the regime that came out of the defeat of the October Revolution as well as the motivations of Stalinism.

Holocaust and Hiroshima 50p

Examines how the nature of imperialist warfare comes to inflict mass murder on the world through an examination of these seminal events.

Capitalism and the Environment (by Mauro Stefanini) £1

Translated from *Prometeo* these show that our late comrade was ahead of his time in analysing the unsustainability of capitalist production.

Spain 1934-39: From Working Class Struggle to Imperialist War £3

Reprint of key CWO articles long out of print and translations of contemporary documents from the Italian Left in exile. New introduction.

Platform of the Committee of Intesa 1925 £3

The start of the Italian Left’s fight against Stalinism as Fascism increased its grip.

South Africa’s New Turmoil £2

Analysis of class relations in the period after the fall of apartheid thrown into relief by the strike wave which followed the Marikana massacres.

