

## SOME BASIC PROGRAMMATIC THESES

1. In the present capitalist social system of exploitation of labour by capital, the conflict between productive forces and productive relations -which is due to the contradiction between the social character of production and the individual appropriation of wealth that is produced- is increasingly growing causing an intensity of social contradictions and a sharpening of struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat.

2. The historically progressive role of capitalism lies in creating the necessary material and social conditions for the creation of a classless society. This role ends in the era of imperialism, the era of devastating international crises and world wars. The productive forces come into conflict with the existing productive relations and, as a result, these relations from forms of development of productive forces have turned into their bonds. The rampant race of capital for maximum profit has put the further development of humanity on absolute hold. Capitalism can neither be improved nor can be run for the benefit of society. On the historical agenda is posed, in the most explicit way, the dilemma 'socialism or barbarism', which can be solved only by the victory of world communist revolution.

3. The working class, i.e. the class of modern wage laborers who live by selling their labour power and produce the whole social wealth, is the most oppressed and the only potentially revolutionary class of bourgeois society, the future vehicle of the communist liberation of humanity. It is the social class whose objective interest is the abolition of capitalism. At the same time, since it is a non-possessing class, when it takes over the governance of society it will not establish a new system of exploitation but will open the way for the creation of a society of common ownership and equality.

The working class as an exclusively suffering class in bourgeois society - seen as a simple sociological category upon which the capitalist system is based- is an individualized multitude and the only thing that unifies it is that it is a human matter for exploitation, a universally alienated mass that constitutes the class of modern wage slaves of capital. This class is either revolutionary or nothing. In order to exercise its revolutionary liberating role, it has to be transformed from a subject of exploitation into a class that fights for its liberation by smashing all the chains that enslave it and, therefore, abolishing itself as a class.

4. The modern state, regardless of the variety of forms of regime, is not a neutral institution, but it is the political institution of the dictatorship of capital and, therefore, it is a mechanism of organized violence, an instrument for class oppression that acts for the benefit of the bourgeoisie in order to ensure the exploitation of the working masses and acts as guarantor of its collective interests. The modern state is

but a committee for managing the common affairs of the bourgeoisie as a whole. The class character of every government that takes over the administration of the modern state is bourgeois, regardless of the party or parties that form it. Communists do not support any form of bourgeois governance, including the so-called “progressive” or “left” governments.

5. Parliamentarism, i.e. bourgeois democracy, is the democratic form of the dictatorship of capital. Bourgeois democracy is the regime in which the bourgeoisie governs with the formal consent of the oppressed social classes. This special regime of the bourgeois state is the most appropriate form of domination of the ruling class, because it has proved to be the most functional, since it maintains the capitalist system with the minimum of friction and the maximum of results. Against the proletariat it presents the illusion of social equality through the system of typical equal vote, thus masking the real class inequality and, therefore, can integrate the working class into the political system, especially when ‘socialist’ and ‘communist’ parties take part in it and appear as defenders of workers' interests. Against the bourgeoisie it presents the greatest flexibility as it guarantees the political pluralism of contrasting bourgeois fractions. Thus bourgeois democracy, which the dominant ideology insists on deliberately presenting as ‘democracy in general’, is the ‘best possible political shell for capitalism’.

However, under conditions of sharpened class contradictions, bourgeois democracy reveals its reactionary role as guardian of capitalist exploitation and takes on more autocratic forms of governing and repression. In cases where the governing of the bourgeoisie can not be achieved by parliamentary means, then bourgeois democracy gives way to military dictatorship or fascism. Democracy and dictatorship are two forms of regime of the bourgeois state that alternate in power according to the dynamics of class struggle. And this is because the only true party of the bourgeoisie is its state alone which, precisely because it is the only guarantor of its domination, will rush into defending it with the aid of any government and any regime. So, without overlooking the important differences between bourgeois regimes, we are unreservedly against them. The transformation of democracy into dictatorship is a necessary one for the system of bourgeois rule, which the working class cannot prevent at will, but, instead, what is imperative is the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeois state itself. Otherwise, as history dramatically demonstrated by the rise of fascism in the interwar period, the working class will be first enslaved by the democratic part of the bourgeoisie, in order to be smashed at the end by fascism. For this reason, the real dilemma in such cases is not ‘democracy or dictatorship’ but ‘capitalism or communism’.

6. The proletariat can not abolish the system of bourgeois social relations and liberate itself from capitalist exploitation without the revolutionary overthrow of bourgeois rule, the smashing of the old state apparatus and the establishment of its own political power. In order to succeed, it must be constituted and act as an independent class force that defends its own general historical interests. Communists reject

categorically any form of class collaboration, reject flatly 'popular fronts' and 'patriotic coalitions' and come out for the intransigent autonomous proletarian struggle.

The alliance of the proletariat with the lower petty-bourgeois strata of the city and the countryside is not carried on an equal basis, but in terms of sovereignty of the interests of the proletariat. Every political formula of 'popular alliance' or 'popular power'- even if in words it is mentioned the primacy of the working class in that social bloc- obscures the class character of those inter-class constructions and subsumes the interests of the proletariat under the interests of the petty-bourgeois masses and the development of national capital. It is the same for similar political formulas that dissolve the working class autonomy in artificial beyond-class constructions like the "crowd" or the "citizens".

*"Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product. The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance, they are revolutionary, they are only so in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat; they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat". (Marx-Engels, "Communist Manifesto").*

7. Because of the resistance that the bourgeoisie will offer against the loss of its domination, the radical social changes that will need to take place, the development that will be required to achieve social prosperity and the education of the society in radically new relations, a preliminary transitional period is necessary during which the bourgeois society is transformed into a communist one. This period will be the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e. the political domination of labour over the forces of capital, through a new type of state, which, while remaining a mechanism of class oppression, will be governed directly by the workers themselves with the final purpose being its dissolution into society through the progressive abolition of classes. The political form of the dictatorship of the proletariat is workers' democracy, which is the more advanced and substantial democratic government based on the active political participation of the vast majority of the working people in the functions of the state. Effective power is exercised by the workers themselves through elected and recallable delegates who constitute the organs of power at both productive and administrative level, in which it is guaranteed that every citizen has the opportunity to take public office, in which "every cook can govern the state" (Lenin, *The State and Revolution*). However, even with the wider democracy, as the state still exists there is no real freedom. Communist revolution is explicitly anti-state.

**8.** Communism or socialism is nothing less than a society without classes, without exploitation of man by man, without mechanisms of organized violence and oppression in general, without the whole of capitalist relations that are governed by property, commercial exchange, exchange value, surplus value, money and wage labor. It is an organic universal community of freely associated producers, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all; each member of which contributes to social welfare according to his ability and enjoys the social goods according to his needs and participate directly and actively in the collective management of common affairs. It is, finally, a collectivist and non-hierarchical society in which collectivity is matched with personal autonomy within relations of solidarity and equality, bringing into effect true political democracy, that is self-government of the society.

**9.** The revolutionary overthrow of the system is not a blind revolt of an undetermined crowd. Just because it is not just simply a spontaneous product of economic processes and it does not aim to reform the status quo or to establish of a new system of exploitation, but to create a radically new society, it is a long process, the realization of which requires the maximum degree of political and social consciousness. The proletariat can not achieve revolutionary class consciousness through its direct experiences. This consciousness can be acquired and transmitted only by a minority of the class that consists of the 'party of the vanguard of the working class'. Just as society cannot be liberated without the mediation of the rebellious proletariat, so the same potentially revolutionary class cannot be liberated without the help of its more advanced elements.

The essential precondition for the overthrow of bourgeois domination and the conquest of political power is the constitution of the proletariat in revolutionary class and therefore in political party.

*"This revolutionary struggle is the conflict between the whole proletarian class and the whole bourgeois class. Its instrument is the political class party, the communist party, which achieves the conscious organisation of the proletarian vanguard aware of the necessity of unifying its action, in space - by transcending the interests of particular groups, trades or nationalities - and in time - by subordinating to the final outcome of the struggle the partial gains and conquests which do not modify the essence of the bourgeois structure. Consequently it is only by organising itself into a political party that the proletariat constitutes itself into a class struggling for its emancipation". (Theses of the Abstentionist Communist Fraction of the Italian Socialist Party, 1920).*

For the overthrowing of the bourgeois state, the intermediary role of the revolutionary class party is necessary and indispensable. However, as demonstrated by the bureaucratic degeneration of the October Revolution, the communist party must not undertake to govern in the name of the class and must not merge with the state. *"There is no possibility for the liberation of the working class or the establishment of a new social order, unless this springs from the class struggle itself. At no time and*

*for no reason should the proletariat surrender its role in the struggle. It should not delegate its historical mission to others, or transfer its power to others — not even to its own political party”.* (*Political Platform of the Partito Comunista Internazionale*, 1952). The liberation of the working class is the task of the class itself.

The role of the party is not to substitute for the class, but, on the contrary, to contribute with all its forces in order the working class to gain confidence in its own strength. In any case, the role of a revolutionary vanguard –which should be taught to learn from its mistakes and to prove that it is really such a thing [that is, a vanguard]-, is to play the role of the irreplaceable organ of the political struggle of the working class. The work of revolutionaries is to show the way that the struggle should take and to display the final goal, helping in the development of consciousness and organization of the working masses with their ideas and to fortify their confidence in their own forces. The conception inherited from the bourgeois revolutions is that the public affairs should be run through the administration of political parties. A modern revolutionary conception should be radically different. Communists do not constitute a classical type of party that seeks to take the governance of society for the benefit of the workers, acting in their name and by right as their representatives. In reality, it is quite the contrary: the workers themselves must undertake the task of social transformation and the administration of their common affairs.

**10.** The purpose of a revolutionary organization, as a conscious part of the working class, is to show the direction the direction that must be taken and to bring out the goal that the class struggle of the proletariat against capital must adopt, exerting a radical criticism of bourgeois society, supporting the interests of the working class as a whole and contributing to the transformation of the working class into a power for the overthrow of the capitalist system and for the establishment of a communist society. The preparative work of a communist organization is: a) to elaborate the communist program and to propagate revolutionary ideas among the working class, b) to wage an organized and unified intervention in labor struggles in order to transmit communist consciousness, c) to contribute to the unity of communists and to their formation into an international communist party. Because of the dominant position of bourgeois ideology the communist party can never organize the majority of the class but only a small conscious minority of revolutionaries. However, the ideological advantage which that minority has against the rest of society in no way makes it the owner of the ‘absolute’, ‘unique’ or ‘objective’ truth nor gives it the right to speak in the name of the class of which it is only a part or to claim the privilege to represent it.

**11.** That organization is a free union of militants which is formed on the basis of ideological principles and programmatic positions and it is based on the political consciousness of its members. It’s a collectivity that is animated by the ties of solidarity, devotion and sincerity. It is democratic as regards decision-making and centralized in order to ensure the uniform execution of its decisions. Its organizational principle is "comprehensive freedom in conversation and comprehensive unity in action". In this organization all can exercise control and all

must be subjected to control. Its internal regime combines programmatic unity and collective action with democratic discussion, ensuring full freedom of expression for its members, creating an atmosphere that allows deep analysis of the questions that concern them, to point out and to solve its mistakes. However, discussion is not an end in itself, but a means in order to carry out practical political work. Its organizational apparatus does not consist of stratification of party officials but of a technical division of labour which contains alternating tasks and functions that are performed by volunteers. That organization is not an end in itself but a necessary means for the accomplishment of specific objectives. To the extent that it ceases to promote these objectives, alters its character and becomes a fetish, aiming only at its self-preservation and becoming a political clique, it is useless and harmful to the revolutionary cause.

**12.** Proletarian Revolution is national in its form and international in its content. It presupposes an international struggle of the working class in each country against its own bourgeois class. Socialism or communism is not built on a national but only on an international scale.

Stalinism, as the prime insidious anti-communist politics with communist mantle, formulated the reactionary doctrine of "building socialism in one country", in fact promoting the domestic development of state capitalism. For communists the universal character of proletarian revolution is a fundamental position of principle.

*"Will revolution be possible for this revolution to take place in one country alone? No. By creating the world market, big industry has already brought all the peoples of the Earth, and especially the civilized peoples, into such close relation with one another that none is independent of what happens to the others. Further, it has coordinated the social development of the civilized countries to such an extent that, in all of them, bourgeoisie and proletariat have become the decisive classes, and the struggle between them the great struggle of the day.*

*It follows that the communist revolution will not merely be a national phenomenon but must take place simultaneously in all civilized countries – that is to say, at least in England, America, France, and Germany. It will develop in each of these countries more or less rapidly, according as one country or the other has a more developed industry, greater wealth, a more significant mass of productive forces [...] It will have a powerful impact on the other countries of the world, and will radically alter the course of development which they have followed up to now, while greatly stepping up its pace.*

*It is a universal revolution and will, accordingly, have a universal range."* (Engels, "The principles of Communism").

**13.** The countries of the so-called 'really existing socialism' were only totalitarian bourgeois regimes of state capitalism. That system was the result of the Stalinist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union which was due to the isolation of the revolution in one country, leading to its bureaucratic degeneration after the end of the civil war and to the bureaucratic transformation of the Bolshevik Party into an organ of bourgeois counterrevolution. Stalinism was proven the most insidious form of anti-communism, it prevailed through the extermination of thousands of revolutionaries, it

monstrously distorted Marxism and it brought about tragic defeats in the history of the workers' movement, culminating in the mobilization of the working class on the side of democratic imperialist 'allies' in the World War II and it contributed greatly to the defamation of socialism, identifying it with totalitarian state capitalism.

Neither the former nor the remaining 'socialist countries' had, and they don't have, any progressive element in their social relations which is worth defending by the proletariat. All political powers of the Left which either identify socialism with state capitalism or with a milder exercise of capitalist exploitation are reactionary and they belong to the left wing of capital. The class revolutionary party doesn't enter into alliances, even for temporary questions, not only with liberal bourgeois parties but also with the allegedly socialist or communist parties, whose strategy is an alternative administration of capitalism or a state capitalist regime.

**14.** Since the beginning of World War I the following radical changes have taken place in the structure of the workers' movement and in revolutionary tactics:

a) Opportunism, from a secondary and occasional phenomenon due to the petty-bourgeois influence on the early workers' and socialist movement, constituting their right wing, this has been transformed into a general, typical and constant phenomenon, occupying the left wing of capital. It has been a constituent and necessary element of the function of the capitalist system to ensure bourgeois influence on proletariat, acting through a multiplicity of ideological and political forms, which varies from reformism to phoney radicalism and it is ensured by a net of social strata that derive privileges from their participation in the capitalist system.

b) Unions, from class organs defending the direct needs of the proletariat in bourgeois society, have been transformed into bourgeois institutions for the integration of the working class into the capitalist system. This was due to the very nature of that institution and not because of mistakes or betrayal of this or that leadership. The mechanism of delegation and representation, in connection with the function of mediation and negotiation, is precisely that creates the conditions for bureaucracy. Trades unionism by its very nature was the 'bourgeois policy of the proletariat' and, consequently, does not be transformed into a revolutionary current. Working class struggles for direct demands, that by no means lose their inevitable and necessary nature as an essential form of class struggle, come into conflict with the narrow limits of decadent capitalism to make important and medium-term concessions. Therefore, it is objectively posed the necessity for the self-organization of the working class outside and against the unions and for the transformation of economic struggles into a revolutionary political movement. Instead of the conservative slogan "*A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!*" the working class ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword: "*Abolition of the wages system!*"

c) In the era of imperialist democracy parliament ceases to play its decisive role as basic core of the bourgeois political system. Parliament, from organ of mediation between classes, has been transformed into a simple executive organ whose role is to affirm decisions that proceed from extra-parliamentary centres which are the real political power. Parliamentarism today has for our rulers an overwhelmingly

ideological function of cloaking their deeds in a “democratic” robe. For this reason participation in parliament has long ceased to be a tactic for communists.

**15.** In the era of decadent imperialism all national liberation movements are reactionary, because the demand for of forming a national state is historically obsolete, it hasn't any progressive content and it acts as an agent of bourgeois classes and as an organ of imperialist powers. Today all countries participate in the globalized imperialist system. Communists reject the demand of national self-determination, the tactics of united anti-imperialist front, and the support to smaller states against big powers. They wholly reject the policy of national unity and national defence in any warfare. They come out for the resurgence of class struggle inside nations that will lead to a civil war for the overthrowing of the power of bourgeois states anywhere.

**16.** The defence of the nation and the fatherland is only the defence of the decadent capitalism, a social system that leads humanity to chaos, to war and barbarity. Nation is a specific historical formation that fulfils a special social mission: the establishment of the national state as a determined area of economic and political domination of the bourgeoisie. Nation is the community of capital, the national state is the bourgeois state and the fatherland is the dominion of the bourgeoisie. Communists are against any form of patriotism. Communism is the common cause of all workers around the world and their place is all the earth. The only "socialism with national colors" is the state capitalism of Stalin and Hitler's National Socialism. We live in a planetary capitalist system with a global working class. The slogan of *Communist Manifesto* "Proletarians of all countries unite!" had never been more well-timed as in our epoch.

**17.** We reject individual armed terrorism, the exertion of violence by isolated groups in general and the reduction of political violence itself to a fetish. This does not mean subordination to bourgeois legality and cultivation of pacifist illusions. Class violence is a necessary means which the proletariat must exert for waging its daily struggles and mainly for the overthrowing of bourgeois class, exactly because the last is not going to leave voluntarily its rule and its privileges. It is a necessity which is even more acute in the era of imperialism, as capitalism escalates the use of violence through world wars along with a multitude of local confrontations, the accumulation of weapons of mass destruction and the reinforcement of state repressive apparatus. However, the exercise of proletarian violence should not be detached from the whole class movement or not contribute to the strengthening of its power and the rise of its political consciousness. Individual terrorism wants to replace the active role of the masses transforming them into passive spectators of a conflict between individual groups and state apparatus. Especially, in its modern form, it is an expression of decomposition of petty bourgeois strata and it is often an organ of conflict between bourgeois powers.

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Internationalist Comrades