



PRMI International Bulletin

Overcoming a dogmatic and sectarian approach

19&20 July the PRMI is organising an online meeting open to all members and supporters entitled:

"Building a genuine revolutionary movement in challenging times - the need to overcome sectarian and dogmatic approaches from our past".

To facilitate the discussion, we are distributing a series of articles/documents which raise questions and pose different positions.

Translations (some deep!) can be found at this address:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1TQ1Plc9DSjxy-a0AjxsV-aJul7Zfy4px?usp=sharing>

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For notes

Agenda and questions for discussion

The Agenda for the meeting on 19&20 July is the following:

- A. What is Dogmatism & Sectarianism, with special reference to the approach of the CWI & ISA and why we need to break with it
- B. Overcoming the Eurocentrism that developed in Marxist trends
- C. Connecting Marxism to all struggles against capitalist oppression and exploitation - developing a genuinely integrated world view

The following questions are intended to stimulate the discussion, naturally other questions can also be addressed.

- What is our experience of dogmatism and sectarianism, and are there examples that can be used to discuss how that approach could have been avoided?
- How did the sectarian approach unfold in the past?
- How can a dogmatic/sectarian approach be avoided in the future?
- How is a dogmatic/sectarian approach related to our internal culture?
- What is the truly internationalist approach needed to overcome eurocentralism?
- How central is the struggle against colonialism to the work of revolutionaries?
- How can the struggle against different forms of oppression - against women, LGBTQ+, national minorities and on the basis of racism be interlinked in a non-sectarian way?
- Overall, do we judge the historic position of the CWI/ISA to have been sound? What were its most important distinctive elements; what should be retained and what should be rejected?

Additional reading

Additional reading:

Historical articles:

Lenin: [“Left wing communism” - an infantile disorder](#). Particularly the chapter “An essential condition of the Bolsheviks’ success”.

Trotsky: [“A summary of Transitional demands”](#). This can be found in the Pathfinder Press version of “The transitional programme” - if unobtainable, can be sent by email.

Hal Draper: [“Anatomy of a micro-sect”](#)

Articles written by project supporters:

Laura F: [“The CWI and Socialist Feminism -- a critical review to further strengthen the ISA”](#). If unobtainable, can be sent by email.

Kevin M: [“The Dual Task, new mass parties, and the revolutionary party”](#)

If unobtainable, can be sent by email.

Paul Moorhouse: Recorded [introduction on Islamophobia](#).

Tiphaine: Recorded [introduction on Hijabophobia](#).

Sectarianism, Centrism and the Fourth International

Leon Trotsky Analyzes the Role of These Tendencies in the Revolutionary Movement

1.1. It would be absurd to deny the presence of sectarian tendencies in our midst. They have been laid bare by an entire series of discussions and splits. Indeed, how could an element of sectarianism have failed to manifest itself in an ideological movement which stands irreconcilably opposed to all the dominant organizations in the working class, and which is subjected to monstrous, absolutely unprecedented persecutions all over the world? Reformists and centrists readily seize upon every occasion to point a finger at our "sectarianism"; and most of the time, they have in mind not our weak but our strong side: our serious attitude toward theory; our effort to plumb every political situation to the bottom, and to advance clear-cut slogans; our hostility to "easy" and "comfortable" decisions which deliver from cares today, but prepare a catastrophe on the morrow. Coming from opportunists, the accusation of sectarianism is most often a compliment.

Marxian Distinctions

1.2. Curiously enough, however, we are often accused of sectarianism not only by reformists and Centrists but by

opponents from the "left," the notorious sectarians, who might well be placed as exhibits in any museum. The basis for their dissatisfaction with us lies in our irreconcilability to themselves, in our striving to purge ourselves of the infantile sectarian diseases, and to rise to a higher level.

1.3. To a superficial mind it may seem that such words as sectarian, centrists, etc., are merely polemical expressions exchanged by opponents for lack of other and more appropriate epithets. Yet the concept of sectarianism as well as the concept of centrism has a precise meaning in a Marxist dictionary. Marxism has built a scientific program upon the laws that govern the movement of capitalist society, and which were discovered by it. This is a colossal conquest! However, it is not enough to create a correct program. It is necessary that the working class accept it. But the sectarian, in the nature of things, homes to a stop upon the first half of the task. Active intervention into the actual struggle of the workers' masses is supplanted for him by an abstract propaganda of a Marxist program.

The Sectarian View of Society

1.4. Every working class party, every faction passes during its initial stages through a period of pure propaganda, i.e., the training of its cadres. The period of existence as a Marxist circle ingrafts invariably habits of an abstract approach to the problems of the workers' movement. He who is unable to step in time over the confines of this circumscribed existence becomes transformed into a conservative sectarian. The sectarian looks upon the life of society as a great school, with himself as a teacher there. In his opinion the working class should put aside its less important matters, and assemble in solid rank around his rostrum: then the task would be solved.

1.5. Though he swear by Marxism in every sentence, the sectarian is the direct negation of dialectic materialism which takes experience as its point of departure, and always returns to it. A sectarian does not understand the dialectic action and reaction between a finished program and a living, that is to say, imperfect and unfinished mass struggle. The sectarian's method of thinking is that of a rationalist, a formalist, and an enlightener. During a certain stage of development rationalism is progressive, being directed 'critically against blind beliefs and superstitions (the Eighteenth century!). The progressive stage of rationalism is repeated in every great emancipatory movement. But rationalism (abstract propagandism) becomes a reactionary

factor the moment it is directed against the dialectic. Sectarianism is hostile to dialectics (not in words but in action) in the sense that it turns its back upon the actual development of the working class.

Ready-Made Formulas

1.6. The sectarian lives in a sphere of ready made formulas. As a rule life passes him by without noticing him; but now and then he receives in passing such a fillip as makes him turn 180 degrees around his axis, and often makes him continue on his straight path, only ... in the opposite direction. Discord with reality engenders in the sectarian the need to constantly render his formulas more precise. This goes under the name of discussion. To a Marxist discussion is an important but a functional instrument of the class struggle. To the sectarian discussion is a goal in itself. However, the more that he discusses all the more do the actual tasks escape him. He is like a man who satisfies his thirst with salt water; the more he drinks, the thirstier he becomes. Hence the constant irritability of the sectarian. Who slipped him the salt? Assuredly, the "capitulators" from the International Secretariat. The sectarian sees an enemy in everyone who attempts to explain to him that an active participation in the workers' movement demands a constant study of objective conditions, and not haughty bulldozing from the sectarian rostrum. For analysis of reality the sectarian substitutes intrigue, gossip, and hysteria.

Twins and Antipodes

1.7. Centrism is in a certain sense the polar opposite of sectarianism; it abhors precise formulas, seeks routes to reality outside of theory. But, despite Stalin's famous formula, "antipodes" often turn out to be ... "twins." A formula detached from life is hollow. Living reality cannot be grasped without theory. Thus both of them, the sectarian and the centrist, depart in the end with empty hands and join together ... in their feeling of animosity towards the genuine Marxist.

1.8. How many times have we met a smug centrist who reckons himself a "realist" merely because he sets out to swim without any ideological baggage whatever and is tossed by every vagrant current. He is unable to understand that principles are not dead ballast but a lifeline for a revolutionary swimmer. The sectarian, on the other hand, generally does not want to go swimming at all, in order not to wet his principles. He sits on the shores and reads lectures on morality to the flood of the class struggle. But sometimes a desperate sectarian leaps headlong into the water, seizes hold of the centrist and helps him drown. So was it; so will it be.

* * *

1.9. In our epoch of disintegration and dispersion there are to be found a good many circles in various countries who have acquired a Marxist program, most often by borrowing it from the Bolsheviks, and who then turned their

ideological baggage into a greater or lesser degree of ossification.

1.10. Let us take for example the best specimen of this type, namely the Belgian group led by comrade Vereecken. On August 10 the Spartakus, the organ of this group, announced its adherence to the Fourth International. This announcement was to be welcomed. But at the same time it is necessary to state beforehand that the Fourth International would be doomed if it made concessions to sectarian tendencies.

Vereecken's Predictions

1.11. Vereecken was in his own time an irreconcilable opponent of the entry of the French Communist League into the Socialist Party. There is no crime in this: the question was a new one, the step a risky one, differences were entirely permissible. In a certain sense, equally permissible, or, at any rate, unavoidable were exaggerations in the ideological struggle. Thus, Vereecken predicted the inevitable ruin of the international organization of the Bolshevik-Leninists as a result of its "dissolution" in the Second International. We would advise Vereecken to reprint today in the Spartakus his yesteryear's prophetic documents. But this is not the chief evil. Worse yet is the fact that in its present declaration Spartakus confines itself to evasively pointing out that the French section remained true to its principles "in a considerable, we may even say, a large measure." If Vereecken behaved as a Marxist

politician should, he would have stated clearly and definitely wherein did our French section depart from its principles, and he would have given a direct and an open answer to the question of who proved to be right: the advocates or the opponents of entry?

Democratic Centralism

1.12. Vereecken is even more incorrect in his attitude toward our Belgian section that entered into the reformist Labor Party. Instead of studying the experiences resulting from the work carried on under new conditions and criticizing the actual steps taken, if they merit criticism, Vereecken keeps on complaining about the conditions of the discussion in which he suffered defeat. The discussion, you see, was incomplete, inadequate, and disloyal: Vereecken failed to satisfy his thirst with salt water. There is no "real" democratic centralism in the League! In relation to the opponents of the entry the League evinced ... "sectarianism." It is clear that comrade Vereecken has a liberal and not a Marxist conception of sectarianism: in this he obviously draws close to the centrists. It is not true that the discussion was inadequate; it was carried, on for several months, orally and in the press, and on an international scale, besides. After Vereecken had failed to convince others that marking time in one place is the best revolutionary policy, he refused to abide by the decisions of the national and international organizations. The representatives of the majority told Vereecken on more

than one occasion that if experience proved that the step taken was incorrect, we would rectify the mistake jointly. Is it really possible that after the twelve years' struggle of the Bolshevik-Leninists you lack sufficient confidence in your own organization to preserve discipline of action even in case of tactical disagreements? Vereecken paid no heed to comradely and conciliating arguments. After the entry of the majority of the Belgian section into the Labor Party, the Vereecken group naturally found itself outside our ranks. The blame for this falls entirely upon its own shoulders.

Adaptation to "Legality"

1.13. If we return to the gist of the question, then comrade Vereecken's sectarianism stands out in all its dogmatic uncouthness. What's this! cried Vereecken in indignation, Lenin spoke of breaking with reformists but the Belgian Bolshevik-Leninists enter a reformist party! But Lenin had in mind a break with the reformists as the inevitable consequence of a struggle against them, and not an act of salvation regardless of time and place. He required a split with the social-patriots not in order to save his own soul but in order to tear the masses away from social-patriotism. In Belgium the trade unions are fused with the party, the Belgian party is essentially the organized working class. To be sure, the entry of revolutionists into the Belgian Labor Party not only opened up possibilities but also imposed restrictions. In propagandizing Marxist ideas it is

necessary to take into account not only the legalities of the bourgeois state but also the legalities of a reformist party (both these legalities, it may be added, coincide in a large measure). Generally speaking, adaptation to an alien "legality" carries with it an indubitable danger. But this did not prevent the Bolsheviks from utilizing even Czarist legality: for many years the Bolsheviks were compelled to call themselves at trade union meetings, and in the legal press not social-democrats, but "consistent democrats." True, this did not pass scot-free; a considerable number of elements adhered to Bolshevism who were more or less consistent democrats, but not at all international socialists; however, by supplementing legal with illegal activity, Bolshevism overcame the difficulties. Of course, the "legality" of Vandervelde, De Man, Spaak and other flunkeys of the Belgian plutocracy imposes very onerous restrictions upon the Marxists, and thus engenders dangers. But Marxists, who are not as yet sufficiently strong to create their own party, have their own methods for the struggle against the dangers of reformist captivity: a clear-cut program, constant factional ties, international criticism, etc. The activity of a revolutionary wing in a reformist party can be judged correctly only by evaluating the dynamics of development. Vereecken does not do this either in regard to the faction Action Socialiste Révolutionnaire (Left-wing in Belgian Labor Party –

Ed.), or the Verité group. Had he done so, he would have been compelled to admit that the A.S.R. has made a serious development forward in the recent period. What the final balance will be it is impossible to forecast as yet. But the entry into the Belgian Labor Party is already justified by experience.

Discussion as a Dogma

1.14. Extending and generalizing his mistake, Vereecken asserts that the existence of isolated small groups which split away at different stages from our international organization is proof of our sectarian methods. Thus, the actual relationships are stood on their head. As a matter of fact, into the ranks of the Bolshevik-Leninists there came during the initial stages a considerable number of anarchistic and individualistic elements generally incapable of organizational discipline, and occasionally a mere failure who did not make his career in the Comintern. These elements viewed the struggle against "bureaucratism" in approximately the following manner: no decisions must ever be arrived at, but, instead, "discussion" is to be installed as a permanent occupation. We can say with complete justification that the Bolshevik-Leninists manifested a good deal, perhaps even a good deal too much patience toward such types of individuals and grouplets. Only since an international core has been consolidated that began to assist the national sections in purging their ranks of internal sabotage did there begin an actual and

systematic growth of our international organization.

1.15. Let us take a few examples of groups that split from our international organization at various stages of its development.

A Strange Example

1.15. The French periodical *Que Faire* is an instructive specimen of a combination of sectarianism with eclecticism. On the most important questions this periodical expounds the views of Bolshevik-Leninists, changing a few commas, and directing severe critical remarks at us. At the same time this periodical permits with impunity a defense of social-patriotic garbage, under the guise of discussion, and under the cover of "defending the U.S.S.R." The internationalists of *Que Faire* are themselves unable to explain how and why they happen to cohabit peacefully with social-patriots, after breaking with the Bolsheviks. It is clear, however, that with such eclecticism *Que Faire* is least capable of replying to the question what to do (*que faire*). The "internationalists" and the social-patriots are agreed on only one thing: never the Fourth International! Why? One must not "break away" from the communist workers. We have heard the self-safe argument from the S.A.P.: we must not break away from the social-democratic workers. In this instance, too, antipodes turn out twins. The peculiar thing, however, is that *Que Faire* is not connected and, by its very

nature, cannot be connected with any workers.

1.16. There is even less to be said about such groups as *Internationale*, or *Proletaire*. They also abstract their views from the latest issues of *La Verité*, with an admixture of critical improvisations. They have no perspectives at all of revolutionary growth; but they manage to get along without perspectives. Instead of trying to learn within the framework of a more serious organization (to learn is difficult) these abhorers of discipline and very pretentious "leaders" desire to teach the working class (this appears to them to be easier). In moments of sober reflection they must themselves realize that their very existence as "independent" organizations is a sheer misunderstanding.

Field and Weisbord

1.17. In the United States we might mention the Field and Weisbord groups. Field – in his entire political make-up – is a bourgeois radical who has acquired the economic views of Marxism. To have become a revolutionist Field would have had to work for a number of years as a disciplined soldier in a revolutionary proletarian organization; but he began by deciding to create a workers' movement "of his own." Assuming a position to our "left" (where else?), Field shortly entered into fraternal relations with the S.A.P. As we see, the anecdotic incident that befell Bauer was not at all accidental. The urge to

stand to the left of Marxism leads fatally into the Centrist swamp.

1.18. Weisbord is indubitably closer to a revolutionary type than Field. But at the same time he represents the purest example of a sectarian. He is utterly incapable of preserving proportions either in ideas or in actions. Every principle he turns into a sectarian caricature. That is why even correct ideas become in his hands instruments for disorganizing his own ranks.

1.19. There is no need to dwell upon similar groups in other countries. They split from us not because we are intolerant or intolerable but because they themselves did not and could not go forward. Since the time of the split they have succeeded only in exposing their incapacity. Their attempts to unite with each other, on a national or an international scale, produced no results in any single case: peculiar to sectarianism is only the power of repulsion and not the power of attraction.

1.20. Some crank has computed the number of "splits" we have had and arrived at the sum of about a score. He saw in this annihilating evidence of our bad regime. The peculiar thing is that in the S.A.P. itself, which has triumphantly published these computations, there occurred, during the few years of its existence, more rifts and splits than in all our sections taken together. Taken by itself, however, this fact is meaningless. It is necessary to take not the bald

statistics of splits but the dialectics of development. After all its splits, the S.A.P. remained an extremely heterogeneous organization which will be unable to withstand the first onset of great events. This applies even to a larger measure to the "London Bureau of Revolutionary Socialist Unity" which is being torn asunder by irreconcilable contradictions: its tomorrow will consist not of "unity" but only of splits. In the meantime, the organization of the Bolshevik-Leninists, after purging itself of sectarian and centrist tendencies, not only grew numerically, not only strengthened its international ties, but also found the road to fusion with organizations akin to it in spirit (Holland, United States). The attempts to blow up the Dutch party (from the right, through Molinar!) and the American party (from the left, through Bauer!) have only led to the internal consolidation of both these parties. We can predict with assurance that parallel to the disintegration of the London Bureau there will proceed an ever more rapid growth of the organizations of the Fourth International.

The Road to the New International

1.21. How the New International will take form, through what stages it will pass, what final shape it will assume – this no one can foretell today; and, indeed, there is no need to do so: historical events will show. But it is necessary to begin by proclaiming a program that meets the tasks of our epoch. On the basis of this program it is necessary to mobilize the

co-thinkers, the pioneers of the New International. No other road is possible.

1.22. The Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels, directly aimed against all types of utopian-sectarian socialism, forcefully points out that communists do not oppose themselves to the actual workers' movements but participate in them as a vanguard. At the same time the Manifesto was the program of a new party, national and international. The sectarian is content with a program, as a recipe of salvation. The centrist guides himself by the famous (essentially meaningless) formula of Edward Bernstein, "the movement is everything; the final goal – nothing." The Marxist draws his scientific program from the movement taken as a whole, in order then to apply this program to every concrete stage of the movement.

The Initial Difficulties

1.23. On the one side, the initial steps of the New International are rendered more difficult by the old organizations and splinters from them: on the other side they are facilitated by the colossal experience of the past. The process of crystallization which is very difficult and full of torments during the first stages will assume in the future an impetuous and rapid character. The recent international events are of incommensurate significance for the formation of the revolutionary vanguard. In his own fashion, Mussolini – and this should be

recognized – has "aided" the cause of the Fourth International. Great conflicts sweep away all that is halfway and artificial and, on the other hand, gives strength to all that is viable. War leaves room only for two tendencies in the ranks of the working class movement: social-patriotism which does not stop at any betrayal, and revolutionary internationalism that is bold and capable of going to the end. It is precisely for this reason that centrists, fearful of impending events, are waging a rabid struggle against the Fourth International. They are correct in their own fashion: in the rear of great convulsions only that organization will be able to survive and develop which has not only cleansed its ranks of sectarianism but which has systematically trained them in the spirit of despising all ideological vacillation and cowardice.

October 22, 1935

Notes for the discussion on Dogmatism and Sectarianism in the CWI

By Kevin M.

These notes are written simply to help comrades prepare for one of the aspects of the Review discussion on Dogmatism and Sectarianism taking place on 19 and 20 July. They are designed to stimulate discussion and are just notes, not a document of policy.

Not a few blind spots but a fundamentally flawed tradition

2.1. Did the CWI have some blind spots or was the CWI fundamentally flawed, with a narrow, limited, and inadequate version of Marxism? The inability of the CWI to analyse or deal with the issues and complications thrown up in this unprecedented period of capitalist crisis, suggests it is the latter.

2.2. There are some positives to register, but it is much more the case that we have to recognise the incorrect and bad aspects, in which we have been trained over many years and which we have to remove if we are to move forward on the basis of a better and deeper Marxist approach. Something needs to be overcome, not just in the past but in our present, and that can only be done with a very

conscious approach and hence the importance of this discussion.

A defence of the working class

2.3. Supposedly a hallmark and the key positive about the CWI was its defence of the working class as the agency for fighting capitalism and achieving socialism. The famous example of how Peter T challenged Mandel on this issue at a meeting in London in 1968 was repeated regularly enough in the CWI. The general context was the poor approaches of the forces in the Fourth International, where the different groupings and leaders had put forward the idea that the working class was no longer the agency for change and had now been replaced by students or by various national liberation struggles, or even that some of the newly formed Stalinist states. They also focused on the issues of oppression or a combination of these and represented them as the basis for the future of the revolutionary movement.

2.4. We should resist the temptation to take the historically poor and imbalanced positions of the Fourth International at the time as a basis to

overstate the strengths politically of the CWI in correctly defending a basic tenet of Marxism. It was important that such a defence was made, but in defending the agency of the working class it seems there existed/developed a prejudice against issues of oppression as if such a focus constituted a deviation from Marxism.

2.5. When the IS of the CWI produced a document in the context of the dispute in 2018/2019, they included a really rigid and dogmatic analysis of students, and how students are not working class. How once they step into a college, even if they come from working class backgrounds, they change in that instant. This at a time when many, many students are not only from working class backgrounds, but who work while attending college/university.

2.6. In the same dispute, the CWI basically argued that women were very close to achieving equality. How unbelievably backward, but also detached from reality such a statement was. Considering that it relates to the circumstances of half of the working class, such claims undermine any boast of being completely connected to the working class.

Economistic/workeristic

2.7. The CWI was working class in its composition and it played important roles in working class struggles in some countries, but there were also

really problematic tendencies/approaches.

2.8. There was a tendency to go from the historic general role the working class would play, to believing it was appropriate to tolerate backward attitudes that might exist among some layers of the working class rather than challenge them as part of the need to try to raise consciousness. We should look at the arguments of the CWI against affirmative action for minorities, for example, and question whether they were rooted in maintaining the status quo for current workers, but displayed little appreciation or sensitivity to the realities of the discrimination that minorities faced.

2.9. There was a tendency to only put forward things that you felt workers could unite around and not deal with issues that might be contentious or might be divisive. Did this help create or was it reflective of an economistic and workerist approach?

2.10. In an Irish context, did we sometimes not deal with sectarian or backward attitudes from one side for fear of alienating some working class people and supposedly thereby damage the prospects of workers' unity?

2.11. In a glaring way, the inability of our former comrades in Israel to call what was happening a genocide and in a much more clear and direct categorise and challenge the actual reactionary attitudes that exist in

Israeli society at this time are fundamental errors and is an example of where such an approach can lead.

Perspectives and the need for a critical Marxist analysis

2.12. If you read through much of the material of the CWI, there is often an absence of a scientific or critical assessment of the working class and its consciousness, and in this it often is in contrast and of a different quality to that of Lenin or Trotsky or other writers, when they are trying to estimate a particular situation or the attitudes of working class people. At discussions in the CWI, if you were trying to critically assess a situation or pose questions regarding the position or consciousness of the working class, there was often a pushback on the basis that you're being too negative and you're actually undermining the working class itself by raising such points.

2.13. The CWI fell into the trap, particularly in latter years, of mistaking the task of trying to develop perspectives on a Marxist basis, with the promotion of its basic programme, which is a positive advocacy of the role the working class can play.

2.14. Instructive is a quote related to the controversy that existed in the Labour Party in the 1980s about whether black sections, platforms where people of colour could organise in the Labour Party etc, should or should not be established. The Militant opposed black sections. This is from

public material: "Many of the filthy prejudices that thrive in capitalist society must inevitably rub off onto some workers...The labour movement, however, by its very nature does not base itself on these prejudices, but stands implacably opposed to them."

2.15. This is basically implying that the labour movement is able to defy the laws of political gravity and doesn't reflect the racism of capitalist society, that the Labour Party is organically and inherently not racist. This points towards a romantic view of the working class and the organisations of the working class, and borders on an idealist view, as if these questions had become articles of faith. It is an attribute of Marxism to be positive and to be able to point a way forward. However what existed in the CWI and the Militant/SP in Britain went beyond that and led to a distortion of analysis and increasingly to an inability to assess and develop an accurate perspective.

2.16. In general you can still go forward with such "positivity" when the working class movement is strong and consciousness is going forward. However, things can become difficult when there are defeats and retreats, as there is a predisposition not to fully recognise the negative, at least not in a formal and public way. The defeats that the working class, and indeed the Militant suffered in the 1980s, and in particular the collapse of the Stalinist regimes from the late 80s and early 90s, completely challenged the

idealised view that the Militant had of the working class and movement.

Defeats and the ongoing impact of the collapse of the Stalinist regimes - a wrong perspective and a wrong framework

2.17. The CWI did not understand the significance of the defeats of the 1980s, nor understand the significance and the ongoing impact that the collapse of Stalinism has had. What essentially opened up in the 1990s was not what was expected. This was the time of the factional battle with Ted G etc, and of the "Open Turn". But if you read the documents on the Open Turn, while they were politically correct in analysing the changes in the Labour Party regarding the feasibility of successful entrust work, in general there was an absence of a developed analysis of the broader conditions in which the International would be taking its open turn into.

2.18. While the CWI relatively quickly registered the setback to class forces that the collapse of Stalinism represented, it completely underestimated the depth of the impact this would have on the organisation and the consciousness of the working class, factors that are still present today. The material produced during the open turn debate barely mentioned this broader context, and the impact of the collapse of Stalinism. For a while Militant in Britain in particular put forward the slogan, "Forward to the Red 90s".

2.19. The International never recovered from the wrong perspectives and framing of perspectives that developed around this time, including the increasingly rigid and imbalanced model of the "Dual Task". This is one of the many issues from our past that is potentially in our present. Does an unMarxist wishful thinking exist in any of our analyses or approaches re the labour movement or the working class. Have we fully replaced the kind of 1950s portrayal of the working class with a real understanding of the modern working class with all its diversity etc, much or most of it unorganised?

2.20. Completely underestimating the actual knocking back of consciousness, the CWI proved incapable of actually having a discussion about the problems of consciousness, particularly in the 2000s, but also in the 1990s.

2.21. The CWI and the SP in England and Wales inevitably became increasingly disconnected from the working class. No amount of positions in trade unions, that were themselves becoming increasingly removed from the working class, compensated for this but instead acted to camouflage the disconnection. In such a situation, perspectives inevitably became dry and routinist repetitions. How can you develop a perspective for the working class you are disconnected from, operating off an idealised view of the same class?

2.22. This is not to mention that this bias, this workeristic view led to an inability to see or an aversion to the development of struggles around oppression and the new feminist wave of the last fifteen years or so.

Examples of dogmatism and sectarianism of the CWI

2.23. The perspectives that were put forward in regard to the dual task were in general not realised. They were expecting the dynamics of working-class struggle of the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s to be repeated, failing to take account of a new period. Economic crisis would lead to struggle, struggle would lead to radicalisation, that would lead to a desire for political organisation, and the difference this time being that instead of going to a compromised LP, the working class, mostly via the trade unions, would establish new parties.

2.24. Towards the end of 2015, by accident, Jeremy Corbyn was elected the leader of the Labour Party. Essentially within the following year, the membership of the Labour Party had surged, and there were more than 600,000 people in the Labour Party in Britain, mostly young people. Obviously, this was hugely significant, but the SP in England and Wales did not in any decisive way turn to these young people and to this situation. There was a tendency to be dismissive of this radicalisation; there was reference to most of the young people being middle class. The assertion was made, unsubstantiated with argument,

that a new party was imminent out of the mess that would inevitably unfold in the LP when the rightwing fought back.

2.25. Jump ahead two years to 2018 and the dispute between the IS and the Irish section around the issue of abortion and repeal of the ban on abortion in Ireland. To remind comrades, the party in Ireland, Rosa and our comrade Ruth C, were absolutely essential to the achievement of abortion rights in Ireland, probably the biggest social victory in the history of the State. And it's an example of sectarianism that can barely be matched that within weeks of this, the IS had launched an attack on the Irish organisation precisely because we played a role in such a victory for women and they feared that Rosa groups would now be established throughout the International, which for them and their biased orientation, would have been a disaster. So the socialist feminist work of the Irish section had to be challenged and undermined.

2.26. There is a quote from a document that they produced, "Probably a big majority of the young people who became active in the repeal movement would not have seen the trade unions as relevant to their struggle. Nonetheless, as part of educating them about the role of the organised working class we think it would have been important to have had a concerted campaign to put demands on the trade union leaders to

organise campaigns and action for the right to abortion, along with campaigns in the workplaces.”

2.27. So, just as a reminder, we played a critical role in a campaign that won. And if we had implemented what the IS advocated after the event, as they made no comment before or during the actual battle, we would have gone into a cul de sac, wasted our precious time and energy and possibly detailed our very focused approach, and not had the victory that we had. This kind of insistence on conducting struggle, regardless of the circumstances, through the trade union movement is a definition, a case study in the most abstract dogmatism and sectarianism.

2.28. What was supposedly a strength - a defence of the working class - became a distorted caricature of the working class and reflective of an idealist view, rather than dealing with reality. And if you're not connected to the working class, how are you going to develop real perspectives for working class struggle or development or general perspectives? And as time went on the CWI proved incapable of doing it, increasingly the perspectives were completely hollow repetition of an outdated framework for perspectives.

We should have challenged the IS/CWI at a much earlier phase

2.29. To quote a document that some comrades in the Platform in Belgium wrote, “Any Marxist thinker or tendency

can commit errors of perspectives and analysis. However, failure to acknowledge this openly, analyse it and correct it, elevates the error to the rank of bad method.” To be clear, this is correct, but what flows from this is that all comrades who were active over years in the CWI are guilty of the bad method being referred to, because this character in the CWI was there for decades and we didn't challenge it.

2.30. At some point in the 1990s and certainly by the 2000s, there was the basis to challenge the bad approaches and the political weaknesses. Why that did not happen should be thoroughly discussed. However, the fact that such a struggle was not waged was a reflection of our political and theoretical weakness. In a sense it is a comment on the character of the CWI, but we must take responsibility for our own mistakes.

Exaggeration and top down methods

2.31. There was a massive political arrogance, similar to that which develops from religious certainty, as well as a real issue with ego in the leadership of the CWI. The leadership believed that Marxism, but also the Militant had achieved historic conquests, and that they, the IS and PT in particular, constituted a leadership capable of carrying through the revolution, it was just a question of being patient with events.

2.32. What is being outlined here was most developed/exaggerated as the approach in the leadership of the CWI,

the SP in EW but also existed to one degree or another in all the sections of the CWI. If you went then into the different sections, there would be reflections of it, but it would be in degrees, with some very heavy reflections of it, some to a lesser, but still to a significant degree.

2.33. This was connected and led to a top down version of democratic centralism. They felt they had something to protect, the modern day representation of Lenin and Trotsky and the Bolsheviks - and it was a question of not losing it. They did not do this by waging a political and theoretical struggle. There was no real openness to engaging on different political issues. Doing that might run the risk of the reintroduction of bourgeois or petty bourgeois ideology into the movement. So there was a tendency towards being insular and more a closed and undemocratic approach.

2.34. There was talk of the idea of building collective leaderships, but very little in practice. Instead there was the extolling of the virtues of the PT model/type of general secretary, overly personalised and operating over several decades. There was actually a focus on "leaders" or working through people designated as those who would become the leaders in different countries, usually male.

2.35. There were definitely strong cultish elements and cult of personalities in the CWI. While there was an approach of discussing the

work politically, there was also an approach of undue pressurising, and guilt-tripping people re the work and the tasks in a way that was not necessarily or at all commensurate with what flowed from the objective conditions. The way in which financial collections were done inside the CWI was cultish. You can still make all the points about the necessity for sacrifice and all the political points, but this idea of calling out names of those who gave large donations was an attempt to manipulate the mood in the room and maximise a collection, it is cultish.

Away from a genuinely transitional approach

2.36. At certain stages. there was a good working class composition and orientation and there was a good implementation of a transitional method and programme. Again, that began to change, and particularly from the 2000s.

2.37. At a discussion/debate at the National Committee in Dublin in 2016 about programme there was a particular discussion about whether a key aspect of the transitional method and programme was the need to link or root the key issues of the day to capitalism, exposing that capitalism was responsible and had to be defeated etc. Representatives of the IS at the meeting argued that such an expose of capitalism was less important than the need to mention socialism in our material, as part of popularising it and the ideas of socialism.

2.38. However, if you just deal with issues on the one hand and then jump to the mention of socialism on the other, you are not really raising the consciousness of workers and young people on the need to resist, organise and defeat capitalism itself. There is not a strong and developed understanding of what capitalism is, consciousness has been pushed back compared to earlier periods.

2.39. In fact there tends to be a significant underestimation of capitalism by people broadly, so this is a crucial aspect of the work of a revolutionary party and of the transitional method. Also it is only possible to build a developed understanding of what socialism is or what a socialist approach is, if first there is an understanding of capitalism - one flows from the other.

2.40. Essentially this approach points backwards towards the minimum maximum approach of social democracy, which the transitional programme transcended. If you go and look at the public material and certainly the electoral material, for example, produced by the SP in EW, you will see this tendency, a focus on immediate issues, little explanation and then perhaps a mention of socialism with little attempts to develop the bridge or lines of argument of a transitional approach.

The need for a theoretical struggle

2.41. "What is to be done" in many ways seems to be becoming more

relevant as time goes by. In it Lenin spends an amount of time talking about the need for a constant theoretical struggle, that a revolutionary party needs to be guided by the most advanced ideas, "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." This approach was absent in the CWI, particularly experiencing a theoretical decline from the 1980s on.

2.42. So one of the things we need to do, in a balanced way, is to break the idea of frenetic activity, which was part of the CWI, and have a more balanced political approach that is sustainable and developed. There is a backlog of issues that needs theoretical consideration, and ground conquered fifty or a hundred years ago needs to be reconquered in this period

In summary, the CWI in a few paragraphs

2.43. The CWI claim as a badge of honour that they defend the working class as the agency for defeating capitalism and for socialist change. But their view of the working class in reality was rigid, conservative, superficial and became idealist in character.

2.44. They could get away with this political weakness because they had made good decisions regarding orientating to the mass organisations of the working class, and so were well positioned to grow substantially when there was a radicalisation and crisis in

these organisations in the 70s and 80s.

2.45. However, when the Labour and Social-Democratic parties went over completely to capitalism and the active link with the working class was broken, and the trade union leaders refused to fight, the CWI increasingly lost its connection with the working class and was not capable of finding new paths to the most radicalised and active elements and in general first suffered a decline and then stagnation.

2.46. While the CWI recognised that capitalism had been restored in the USSR and Eastern Europe, it completely underestimated the depth of the blow that this would have on an ongoing basis to working class consciousness and organisation. In a deterministic way they expected that economic crisis would propel the working class and youth to fight, creating a recovery of consciousness and organisation. The idea of the Dual Task had a basis but was a superficial expectation that previous working class dynamics would repeat themselves, but this time not via the traditional parties, but via the establishment of new formations. While some new parties were formed, in general this perspective did not materialise, and what was formed did not prove to be vehicles for mass struggle or radicalisation.

2.47. From the late 1990s on the CWI in general was characterised by a theoretical, political and organisational decline and an inability to analyse

consciousness and perspectives except on a very superficial basis. As their perspectives again failed to materialise, they retreated to an increasingly dogmatic point of view, refused to orientate to or didn't see the new movements that developed and increasingly broke with a genuine transitional method and adopted more a minimum/maximum approach to programme.

2.48. After an initial and limited battle against the IS of the CWI, the leadership of the ISA, who rode the opposition to the IS so they could secure the leadership of the new international, stunted political discussion and a real Review of the real lessons of the split. This was because they wanted to become the new leadership but they in fact in general agreed with the politics and methods of the IS/CWI. Their own dogmatism was demonstrated in their own idealism re the working class - "The working class is back" and in regard to their very rigid portrayal of the New Cold War relations.

People without history:

Christian Tello's contribution to the discussion against dogmatism, sectarianism and eurocentrism

I am not a prisoner of history. I don't have to look to it for the meaning of my destiny. I must remind myself at all times that the true leap lies in introducing invention into existence.

Frantz Fanon (1961)

Introduction

3.1. History, in its modern and teleological sense, begins with Hegel. When laying the foundations of universal history, Hegel alluded to the strangeness of an underworld that, from his perspective, was outside of history: the silent deserts of the sub-Sahara, the forgotten steppes of Patagonia or the hermetic jungles of Indochina, inhabited by humanoid figures that danced around the pagan midnight fire, emitting guttural screams and narrating myths about the stars and gods of ancient times. For Hegel, they were not even men, since they lived outside the habits, customs, values, ways of life, beliefs and geographies of the European continent and its civilizations. These people were on the margins of what he

calls "the deployment of the Spirit" (*Entfaltung des Geistes*) as progress of self-consciousness and freedom in the rational state of things. In this way, "What we call universal history is not the history of all peoples at all times, but only the history of the peoples who are part of the development of the universal Spirit (Hegel, 1830)." In such a way that the deployment of the Spirit does not appear suddenly as something complete, but rather develops historically in stages. Each stage of history (Egypt, Greece, Rome) represents a form of consciousness, social organization and progress towards European modernity in which "everyone can be free" according to Hegelian teleology. Therefore, "Africa (And therefore America and Asia) is not a historical part of the world; It shows no movement or historical development of its own [...] What we understand by Africa is a world without history, without movement or development (Hegel, 1830: 259)."

3.2. Since this philosophical prelude, modernity acquired the form of a rational story against those peoples without history: a linear and homogeneous pre-conception of

historical development; a story that emerges in Europe with the particular mission of illuminating those “dark areas” of the world populated by those figures “blunted” at the stake. From this civilizational project emerged a vision of the world called Eurocentrism, that is, an ideological vision that places Europe at the center of historical and cultural development, making invisible or subordinating other realities and historical experiences. Only then, Eurocentrism functions as part of a superstructure that justifies colonial expansion and global capitalist dominance. Initially, typical of the original accumulation of capital in the 15th century¹, Eurocentrism reproduced power relations that perpetuated the hegemony of Western capitalism over the rest of the world through overseas adventures and colonization processes in Africa, America and Asia.

3.3. As Marx warned, nothing escapes ideology, and this, in its concrete historical form, manifests itself as bourgeois ideology². Marxism and its attempts at revision, consciously or inadvertently, inherited, in such a way, part of the preconceptions about universal history: European, linear, homogeneous and positivist that impostor laws of civilizational development in an eschatology that subordinated the culture, societies and economic forms of other colonized peoples. This has been one of the many ways in which dogmatism has broken into Marxist thought. From Engels' studies in *Anti-Dühring*³ on the

development of the means of production through stages and verifiable historical laws, which later served to misappropriate and justify the civilizational policy of German social democracy with respect to the colonies, passing through the thesis of “socialism in one country” of Stalinism, to the omissions of the supporters of Eurocommunism in the second half of the 20th century in the face of the anti-imperialist struggles in Algiers or Vietnam, the Eurocentric dogmatism of certain traditions has distorted the vocation of Marxism as a theory of revolution.

3.4. Unfortunately, this bias has even contaminated our tradition, making it difficult to analyze our perspectives, our program and the formation of our militancy in the neocolonial world. Therefore, the task of Marxism and any serious review process in the PRIM must begin by unmasking these errors and why not? make us feel ashamed⁴ and guilt in the face of the past and its defeats. Not from a paralyzing pessimism, but as a gesture of historical responsibility, an outstanding debt with the victims of that unjust policy.

3.5. We must illuminate those opaque spaces, closed by the vulgar, Eurocentric and dogmatic historicism of our tradition and that of many others in Marxism. To quote Walter Benjamin: “we must capture those fleeting moments that occur as flashes in history (Benjamin, 1942).” Only in this way can we return to the past not as a well of melancholy, but

as a power to build a horizon of revolutionary hope. Only in this way is redemption possible, understood in Benjaminian terms: a redemption mired in guilt, discomfort, imbalance, and the impossibility of any easy reconciliation. Only in this way does a lucid hope make its way, a hope that does not idealize the future and closes the past, but faces the present with responsibility, in defense of those peoples "without history": the Peoples of the East that impressed Lenin, the Russian rural communes that Marx studied, the pre-Columbian communities that Mariategui admired or the black rebellions that gave hope to Fanon; those brown, yellow and black who knew how to show Europe a revolutionary power greater than what it ever offered them.

3.6. It is for this reason, and more, that our tradition has to open itself to the in-depth study of the peoples subordinated by imperialism, their historical experiences, their theoretical contributions to Marxism and revolutionary capacities to face a world certainly still divided by the scars of colonialism. What I will try to portray below will be a series of introductory experiences that can contribute to the review process against sectarianism, mechanism and dogmatism that have erred in their analysis of the specific situation, since their object of study is outside the dialectical method.

3.7. It is true that the history of revolutions and Marxism in what we call today "the global south",

"neocolonial world" or "the periphery" (Africa, Asia, and Latin America) is so vast that even encyclopedic scholarship could not complete the task at hand. Therefore, I will make use of what Benjamin defines as *dialectical images*⁵. According to the most complete definition in Enzo Traverso, these images are flashes of truth that interrupt the continuity of historical time, points of condensation where past and present intersect to reveal a repressed historical experience and thus form a constellation of revolutionary experiences and horizons (Traverso, 2021: 15)⁶. It is not about linearly reconstructing a closed totality, but about capturing critical moments that break with the dominant vision of progress, in this case, the one that places Europe as the center and measure of historical development. These images allow us to build a responsible memory, rebellious to the linear and homogeneous narrative of Eurocentrism, which becomes a methodological tool to think from and with the historical subjects who were constitutive of peripheral capitalist development but excluded from its global narrative and that of the so-called "Marxism" that the CWI and ISA insisted on defending.

3.8. This work will be divided into four sections that articulate theory and historical experience: **1) Dialectics and its subject of study**, where problematizes the theoretical and political omissions of our debate, and how the dialectical movement can be recovered based on colonial and

peripheral realities. **2) Original accumulation and accumulation by dispossession**, examining how capital is not born solely from the internal European process, but from colonial plunder, forced labor and dispossession on the periphery of the global market, thus forming a capitalism with dynamics different from those of the center of global wealth accumulation. **3) The revolutionary subject**, which moves away from the single figure of the European industrial proletariat to rescue anti-colonial, peasant, indigenous and black struggles as legitimate forms of revolutionary action. And finally, **4) The peasant and slave revolutions**, where the historical experiences that challenged the colonial, capitalist and imperialist order are studied, such as the slave revolts in the Caribbean, the peasant and indigenous movements in Latin America, and the anti-colonial revolutions in Africa and Asia.

3.9. The sections presented are intended to warn about the challenge of thinking beyond the prefabricated formulas of the so-called "Marxism" and thus, redeem a past obstructed by confusions and superficialities in its analysis. Even today Lenin's words resonate as a sentence when he states that "our European petty bourgeois do not even dream that the coming revolutions in the Eastern countries, incomparably more populated, due to their diversity of social conditions, will undoubtedly offer them more peculiarities to theory than the Russian

revolution (Lenin, 1979: 796)."⁷ Therefore, these entries do not intend to exhaust the debate, but rather to open it, generating a way to think about Marxism as a living and situated tool, deeply anticolonial and internationalist.

1) Dialectics and its subject of study

3.10. Colonial oppression has been a central theme in Marxist theory since its first debates. The approach to this problem focuses on the relationship between the world market, the international division of labor and the role that classes play in societies dominated by the logic of imperialism. Therefore, themes such as nationalism, revolutionary classes, violence, race, have a central role in each historical experience of the living movement of the working class. In short, the dialectical method of analysis plays a different role in the study of these realities that are not supported, for example, in the analysis of the historical development of capitalism in Europe, with its own categories and concepts. Here, both the subject and the object of study of Marxism usually hide dynamics totally different from those studied by the ABC of our tradition. These realities make us rethink the capacity and challenges with which Marxism can become a universal theory that not only observes from the outside but also inherits the particular characteristics of each society, ethnicity, race, religion and language.

3.11. And here's the thing, if we discard

the systematic study of the Marxist ABC of our tradition (which the majority of ISA obscenely repeated) we will realize that we have fatally omitted the systematic study of other authors or revolutionary experiences in the global south that were considered politically unreliable, exotic or contrary to the antiquated dogma that preceded the political ideas of the old ISA leadership. In Mexico, we had the embarrassing situation of being criticized by the leadership of the American section of ISA for integrating José Carlos Mariategui into our branches' readings. Mariategui, one of the great Latin American Marxists and revolutionaries, was dismissed by these people by accusing him of being postmodern without even hearing his name or discussing his writings beforehand. This is a small example of the political unrest that we had been predicting in informal discussions, meetings and international debates with comrades from other sections when ISA still existed.

3.12. While we strive to learn every detail of the Russian Revolution, learn about Marx, Lenin and Trotsky and debate the latest from Peter Taaffe, we forget the Haitian Revolution in a trunk of memories, we distantly ignore the ideas of Mariategui, Fanon, Cabral and Guevara and we superficially land the late discussions on decoloniality, populism, Bonapartism and left-wing progressivism in the global south. We still remember the discussions of the Latin American bureau that ended protocol by sentencing and ignoring

the limits of progressivism and its interclass dynamics while not advancing beyond the obscene formulas of their understanding. We celebrated 100 years of the left-opposition at the last ISA summer school, and it was completely forgotten that Latin America was celebrating 200 years of the Haitian revolution, the first slave, Black, and Caribbean revolution in history.

3.13. Even now, in the last Summer School, during the discussion on the Marxist approach to oppression, a comrade who had been active in Trotskyism for decades mentioned being amazed at studying *Black Skins and White Masks*, by Fanon, for the first time in a meeting like this while his former comrades still they qualified to the Martinique writer as a "petty-bourgeois revisionist."

3.14. Recently in the project, during the discussion on the criminal genocide in Gaza, comrades who left the ISA section in Israel-Palestine, made a substantial political call about the need for the sensitivity of our analysis and program to the reality of the Palestinian people. The problem of the national question has been discussed on several occasions, the difficulty of adapting a socialist program in the midst of the contradictions that Israeli society represents, the concessions to the international movement in solidarity for Palestine or even the use of words like genocide in our slogans. Everything has been mentioned, pointed out and discussed, however, do you remember the contributions of

comrades of the Third World on the issue? How many Palestinian, Arab and Muslim workers are part of the debate? What does the part that lives with the reality of this debate say, in its own voice? The comrades have mentioned it in a simple and direct way, we must listen and learn from the masses before formulating empty slogans, vague programs and liquidationist speeches that are more reminiscent of a pastoral catechesis than the revolutionary analysis of Marxism.

3.15. It is evident that we, who are battered by war and the misery of imperialist governments, are still on the sidelines of the debate on this issue among the major European sections. We do not produce our own documents, translation is slow, and the demands are exhausting. A clear example of this occurred during the Summer School: during the debate on the genocide in Gaza, the Irish, Belgian, and Israeli sections jumped from the war camp to the discussion of the concessions granted to the international movement in the solidarity camps held at universities in Europe and the United States. We, the sections in the neocolonial world, remained silent for much of the debate, observing and trying to understand how alien the polemic seemed to us. Amidst strangeness, we found ourselves talking in a corner of the auditorium, the Brazilian and Mexican comrades. Ask yourselves why these camps were not reproduced on a massive scale in the neocolonial

world? One of the answers is: for us, death is our daily bread. Violence, even massive and extraordinary violence, in the colonial world does not in itself cause solidarity and mobilization among the working class immediately, because the immediacy of life is lived in constant explicit violence. Today, 500 Palestinians die in bombings; tomorrow, drug cartels execute 43 students in Mexico; the next day, 800 indigenous people from a rival tribe are murdered in Sudan; and next week, 146 workers die in a textile factory collapse in Laos.

3.16. The death, violence, and cruelty we experience daily, a product of the colonial legacy in our dependent societies, becomes normal, indifferent, and even indispensable for the reproduction of life. What a macabre dialectic is at work here: the violence of capital renders the life of the colonized insensitive, and its only human expression is its reproduction through other channels. Thus, the colonized masses go beyond the camps: they set fire to the streets of Cairo, assault Israeli embassies in Buenos Aires, blow up foreign capital's gas pipelines in La Paz, or storm the government palace in Sri Lanka. For us, this reality is our reality, alien and distant from the reality underlying the debate in the European sections. We could end every speech at international meetings by calling for international workers' solidarity, but this solidarity is still abstract in the way that the sections in imperialist countries don't fully understand the

struggles against foreign capital, the scars of colonialism, and the logic of violence in neocolonial countries. By not fully understanding, they keep us on the sidelines of the debate.

3.17. The colonial world is a Manichean world, Fanon warned, and in that Manichaean world, still latent in societies like ours, discussions like these are not expressed explicitly in the consciousness and nightmarish experience of the masses oppressed by imperialism⁸. Gege, during the debate, has expressed this clearly by highlighting in his participation the crudeness in which a Palestinian worker has told how his entire family was annihilated by the bombings of the Israeli army. How can you ask him to think about solidarity with the Israeli working class when the only thing he knows about them is their desire to see them die behind the rubble of fire and lead? Similarly, two years ago, during an informal discussion with Yassim about the international movement in solidarity for Palestine in Tunisia, he mentioned the difficulty and absurdity of introducing or trying to explain the program of the I-P section of ISA in its national context, since it would be a betrayal of the very anti-imperialist consciousness that survives among the workers of the Maghreb, those who lived through the most bitter and bloody national liberation struggles.

3.18. In the Manichean world the oppressed masses only know the violence of the colonizer and the suffering of their people, therefore,

when it comes to frontal combat there are no concessions. It is either the physical destruction of the oppressor or the complete extinction of the oppressed species. Violence, consequently, is the only rational means of containing social forces prepared to clash. It can be said that not all of the Israeli working class directly participates in or supports the genocide of the Palestinian people, but the prefabricated formula falters as it takes its first steps into the field of real movement. In the colonial system, whether under the modality of apartheid or the modern Israeli occupation, violence envelops all national life. By not understanding this, this hesitation ends up arbitrarily reducing the complexity of the analysis of the internal dynamics of the movement. Let us think, as Fanon says, of that support that springs from the daily indifference of the colonizer who enjoys the nightly gatherings in the city's Cabaré while the rat hunts begin in the Arab Cabash (*Chasse aux rats*)⁹, of the dear brothers who serve in the military or the areas occupied by neighborhoods with people of impeccable morals. In one way or another, in the eyes of the colonized, they are all the same, collaborators, representatives of the regime, first-class citizens, colonizers. "Either it's them or it's us", because what he has known all his life is that Manichean world that makes him animalistic, and the violence invested against the colonizer is finally the only redoubt of his humanity.

3.19. In the discussions we have prioritized sensitivity to the suffering of the Palestinian masses but we have not understood how that suffering turns into rage, the driver for the unique expression of all that flow of energy that is violence against the colonizer and against everything he represents, be it his people, his national culture and his parties. Thus "the violence of the colonial system and the violent response of the colonized constitute a fatal cycle. It is a closed universe, cut in two (Fanon, 1961)." Not understanding this character inevitably makes us take a Eurocentric position for the "poor" and "defenseless" colonized people who need help from abroad; It is a position dominated by the egomania of bourgeois altruism and the paternalism of the good colonizer who rejects the use of violence for Christian morality. It is the racist dialectic that liberal hypocrisy hides. Therefore, we cannot understand the massive support in those testimonial videos of the fighters and martyrs carried in coffins, after attacking the Israeli army despite the approaching bombing, who fight for different pro-Palestinian military organizations and who we decide to reject their political program.

3.20. All these examples are to show a discomfort that still persists in the ranks of our organization and that it is necessary to eradicate with dialectics acting in a totally different way from the formulas offered by our tradition.

3.21. From this perspective, dialectics operates in a sense of absolute

negation. There is no reconciliation between the colonizer, his society and the colonized, violence is a violence that humanizes¹⁰, the working class operates in terms of consciousness very different from that which lives in the imperialist centers, etc... Wherever one goes, each topic turns out to cause greater complications for the Marxists of our time who rely on a half-method.

3.22. It is necessary for this reason to reconstruct our understanding of Marxist dialectics. The underlying error in the dominant Marxist tradition has not only been political, but methodological. We did not understand dialectic as a living and totalizing method, but as a series of fixed conclusions that were repeated without life. As Georg Lukács warns in *History and class consciousness*, Marxism does not consist of the unquestionable acceptance of Marx's results, but rather of fidelity to the dialectical method, to its revolutionary character. This dialectical method is based on the idea that the concrete totality is the central category, that is, that the truth of social phenomena can only be understood from its location in the total historical process, in its internal contradictions, in its movement. Therefore, the struggles of the colonized peoples, far from being "exceptions" or "particularities", were concrete and legitimate expressions of the uneven and combined development of world capitalism. They were, in the strict sense, dialectical forms of political subjectivation

against capital. They understood—with or without European categories—that their liberation could not go through formal stages, nor through passive waiting for capitalism to mature its contradictions. The dialectic of the oppressed, like the insurgent thought of Fanon, Mariátegui or Cabral, starts from concrete life, from the material and spiritual relationships of people in struggle. That is why their understanding of dialectics is total, even if it does not conform to the doctrinal canon that organizations like ISA have maintained with sterile rigidity. Organizations that fail to theoretically develop even half of what these revolutionary thinkers produced.

3.23. We, on the other hand, have failed to apply that method. We turn it into dogma, we fix it in a Eurocentric framework, and with this we move away from the concrete totality that Lukács requires for any real analysis. As he says, “Marxism is not a series of abstract theses that are applied mechanically to facts, but the knowledge of the concrete process in its development and contradictions.” By abandoning that vision we omitted the contradictions that constituted the effective understanding of the oppressed masses, and therefore, we failed to offer a program with solid demands for their liberation. We thus break the unity between theory and revolutionary practice.

3.24. This theoretical distancing has a political price: a Marxism without a people, without a body, without a soul. While Fanon understood that “violence

is the only means by which the colonized can reappropriate his humanity,” we continued looking for answers in old resolutions that knew nothing about the pain of Gaza, the uprising in Chiapas, the drums of Bois Caïman. Dialectic, understood from Lukács, is precisely the opposite: it is the art of thinking about the present from its contradictions, not from nostalgia for the past. And in that sense, studying Fanon or Cabral is not only a passionate act of political justice, but of methodological coherence.

3.25. What we have experienced in our internal discussions—by omitting or qualifying as a complement experiences such as the Haitian Revolution, Fanon's ideas, and anticolonial struggles in Africa, Asia, and Latin America—is not simply a political omission: it is a moral and historical failure. It is the expression of a poorly processed shame, of a left that, in the name of ideological purity, refused to listen to the oppressed of its time.

3.26. The anticolonial struggle is not a complement to Marxism: it is its historical proof. There is no revolution possible without the recognition of the Manichean world that Fanon describes, where colonizing violence structures not only the territory but the subjectivity of the oppressed. In this context, talking about reconciliation or abstract solidarity between classes without addressing the colonial wound is repeating the same silence that the victors have imposed, making us

collaborators in the massacre. That is why Benjamin reminds us that “only through desperate love for the defeated does the historian have the right to light the spark of hope in the past” (Thesis VII).

3.27. This desperate love is not romanticism. It is consciousness. It is to assume that revolutionary history does not begin or end in Petrograd 1917, but also burns in Haiti 1804, in Morelos with Zapata, in Algeria, Tunisia, Palestine, Chiapas or Soweto. It is understanding that the redemption of the past does not occur from the altar of the most accomplished leaders nor from the paternalism of the colonizer with morals, but from the rage of the people who still struggle to exist and that we must extract from them a living voice of their knowledge. That is our method, and the method is so political that it translates into concrete political corrections.

2) Original accumulation and accumulation by dispossession

3.28. For Marx, capitalism began in a specific chapter of human history, comparable in his words to the “original sin” of the Christian myth.

From this original sin arises the poverty of the great masses who still today, despite how hard they work, have nothing to sell other than themselves and the wealth of the few, wealth that does not stop growing, although its owners have long since stopped working (Marx, 1867: 652).

3.29. Capitalism, as an economic formation in history, does not arise from a free association of producers in a market dominated by the harmonious law of supply and demand, nor did it manage to be formed from the good will of liberalism, free trade and Christian morality of European nations. The origin of capitalism or the “process of original accumulation” as Marx defines it, came into the world “dripping blood and mud from every pore, from the feet to the head” (Marx, 1867: 654). What may seem like a metaphor in Marx makes sense when studying the history of capitalism since the 15th century, recognizing the role of the bloody conquest of Latin America and Africa, the profitable slave trade in the Atlantic Sea, the violent dispossession of communal lands in Europe, the abrupt conversion of millions of peasants into wage workers, the genocide of indigenous civilizations and the imprisonment of millions of women to unpaid domestic work and motherhood. (Mies, 2019: 17).

3.30. All these aspects, events and historical situations that preceded the modern history of capitalism are, for Marx, an essential and characteristic part of its origin. Thanks to them, the creation of a global market was possible that for the first time connected all corners of the world in a system divided between the center of the global accumulation of wealth, Europe, and the peripheries in the overseas colonies where it came from. Europe is literally the creation of the

Third World¹¹. It allowed, in turn, an international division of labor of exchanges between producers at global distances. It managed to increase production from 1 to 100 through the dispossession of large indigenous lands converted into private property for the trade of tobacco, wool, cotton, sugar cane and livestock (De Angelis, 2012: 15). It reduced the role of women in society to the private life of the home to maintain domestic tasks that were the basis of the continuous global reproduction of the labor force (children who were born, raised and ended up in factories) (Mies, 2019: 164). It built entire cities, like Manchester or Lisbon, from the trade of black and maroon slaves (Leinbaugh, 2004: 129). It reinforced the strategic alliance between Church and State with the reform process, in 1545, against the peasant revolts in Europe and the creation of the Holy Inquisition to hunt down women accused of witchcraft, anticlerical religious radicals and commoners who escaped in the colonial incursions to the Americas (Federici, 2004: 34). Wherever one looks, the victims are innumerable in different situations and locations on the globe.

In the history of original accumulation all the transformations that serve as a point of support for the nascent capitalist class, and above all the moments in which large masses of men are suddenly and violently stripped of their

means of subsistence and thrown into the labor market as free and disinherited proletarians. Its history presents a diverse modality in each country, and in each of them it goes through the different phases in different degrees and in different historical periods (Marx, 1990 [1867]: 654).

3.32. The transatlantic slave trade, the dispossession of indigenous communal lands, the witch hunt throughout continental Europe, the colonization and evangelization of Africa and America, the exploration of new Asian trade routes through religious wars, etc... If one puts the puzzle together, one obtains the global image, the historical reconstruction of the mythical and most distant times of the emergence of capitalism. A long story of blood, horror, lead, mud and misery.

3.33. Let's take some historical examples of this puzzle. Silvia Federici (2004), in her work *"The Caliban and the Witch"* It tells the story of the witch hunt between the 15th and 17th centuries in Europe and how this campaign managed to discipline sexuality and the body of women through penance (Federici, 2004, Mies, 2019). At the same time, it shows the relationship between hunting and the success of the landowning bourgeoisie in the firewood trade, alcohol and the textile industry, enriched by hunting campaigns and the burning of accused persons at the stake.

3.34. In the *"Hydra of the revolution"*, Peter Linebaugh (2005), gives voice to those sailors, African slaves, buccaneers, petty criminals, vagabonds and religious radicals who were forced by the laws of the British crown to travel and work in enormous galleys for years at sea. These ended up being the corpses on which the great transatlantic trade was born. In literary works such as *The Tempest* From William Shakespeare we find a historical vision that is not far from the European conception of that time about the oppressed masses of the Caribbean, the figure of Caliban is crucial here, Caliban is enslaved by Prospero, who represents the European colonizer who arrives at an inhabited island, takes it as his own and subjugates its inhabitants. The language that Prospero uses to refer to Caliban is clearly dehumanizing: he calls him "beast," "monster," "devil," alluding to both his non-European origin and his supposed lack of civilization.¹²

3.35. In *"The limit of capital"* David Harvey (1982) tells us where the misery of Latin America and Africa comes from, based on the bloody conquest of Europe, the accumulation due to clerical dispossession of lands, the pandemic of European diseases such as smallpox, and the ruthless insertion of indigenous peoples into the global market based on the great slave business of the haciendas and mining companies that exported gold, silver, and agricultural products. These are just some recommended readings,

which despite particular controversies, are useful to understand the global, long and historical image of capitalism.

3.36. For Marx, the violent intrusion of capitalism into human history produced the most contradictory and fundamental element of modern societies, the process of separation. In which, in his words, the means of production and reproduction of life were separated from its producers. Artisans, peasants and free workers were stripped of the most essential aspects that determined their work and the ways in which they lived with the land they harvested, the tools they made, nature and the animals they cared for, the family relationships they fertilized and even the religious worldview they professed. It is, in retrospect, the beginning of the process of alienation in which, according to Marx

3.37. The worker feels like a stranger in his own work. Your activity is not your own activity; It is a means to live, not a manifestation of its essence. Man is alienated from his own essence when he cannot appropriate the products of his work, becoming a stranger to his own creation (Marx, 2001 [1844]: 57).

3.38. Although Marx delimited the scope of this process in a specific chapter of history, the truth is that capitalism has taken and continues to take more and more from the planet, from the people and our work. How is it possible that it happens? Are they

the echoes of primitive accumulation? For authors, such as Rosa Luxemburg, primitive accumulation was only one historical event in a long chain of events that maintain new cycles of accumulation, reinvention and innovation of the capitalist system. Luxemburg identifies two processes, on the one hand the one mentioned by Marx, the process of primitive accumulation, and the second as the accumulation process (properly speaking) or "accumulation process for the expanded reproduction of capital." What does this mean? That the survival of capitalism depends on its constant expansion and in the words of Luxemburg, "capitalism cannot exist without the expansion of its market. Accumulation continually requires the incorporation of new areas into the capitalist system" (Luxemburg, 2005 [1913]: 121).

3.39. By defining processes of accumulation in the history of capitalism we can identify moments of boom, decline, crisis and stabilization, either due to the dynamics of the anarchy of production and the decreasing law of the rate of profit in the global market. These are repeated again and again, forming cycles in a long-lasting linear history, and only in view of this tendency can one understand the self-destructive and at the same time innovative character of a system that seeks to preserve itself in every geographical corner and individual aspect of human life. The expansion that accumulation requires subsumes every aspect of life and the

territory where capital can make profits (De Angelis, 2012). The crisis can present itself as an economic catastrophe, a war, a pandemic or even a natural event that constrains the productive forces of capital and forces them to reproduce themselves again through military campaigns, the expansion of monopolies, the financialization of the economy, the construction of infrastructure, the relocation of value chains, etc...

3.40. For a new accumulation process to be carried out, it has to inherently start from a previous crisis that threatens its own existence. That is, capitalism cannot exist if it does not live in constant crisis. And in this way a vicious tendency is formed in the system that leads us to the final catastrophe. In a world with an environmental crisis where natural resources are finite and living conditions are detrimental. Since the 1970s, a large Latin American current of Marxist thought developed a study on the expanded reproduction of capital and *sui generis* capitalism of the colonial periphery, inserted in the dynamics of global accumulation. The reading of capitalism as a historical system of accumulation through non-exclusively economic means was critically taken up by authors of the Marxist theory of dependency, among them Ruy Mauro Marini, who made one of the most erudite and radical contributions to the analysis of capitalism in Latin America.

3.41. Marini understood that Latin America (and it can be said about the

entire case of the capitalist periphery) was not inserted into world capitalism late or incompletely, as the developmentalist and Eurocentric approaches of the mid-twentieth century maintained among the left, but rather that from its origin, the region was functionally integrated into the development of capital on a global scale as *dependent economy*. This dependence was not the result of "underdevelopment," but of a specific form of development: one structurally subordinated to the accumulation needs of the capitalist center and its cycles of expanded reproduction. Thus, the super-exploitation of labor, a central concept in his work, implied that Latin American and colonial world workers not only produced surplus value, but were forced to reproduce their labor power below its value (Absolute surplus value)¹³, which allowed a constant drainage of wealth towards the center, without the need for local autonomous development and with the entire dependence of the national bourgeoisie on the interests of foreign capital.

3.42. This approach demystifies the idea that capitalism works in the same way in all places, and denounces that in the periphery - unlike the center of global accumulation - the development of capital does not eliminate pre-existing forms of domination, but rather resignifies, incorporates and exploits them¹⁴. It is at this point where Marini's theory connects deeply with the concept of *accumulation by dispossession* formulated by David

Harvey and which explains the dynamics of capitalism in the peripheries of the global system.

3.43. For Harvey, accumulation by dispossession is the contemporary form of the original accumulation described by Marx: a continuous process, renewed in each crisis of capital, through which common goods, labor rights, indigenous territories, communal lands, public services and even ecological resources are expropriated. This form of accumulation does not only belong to the origins of capitalism, but constantly reappears, especially in the territories of the Global South. Latin America has witnessed this through the forced privatizations of the 1980s and 1990s, the expansion of agribusiness and extractive megaprojects in indigenous territories, such as the case of Belo Monte in Brazil or the Mayan Train in Mexico. Africa, for example, has been the target of new enclosures by dispossession through land grabbing by foreign companies, such as the case of the current vulture funds of the Asian Development Bank (Directed by China). In Asia, the forced displacement of peasants due to infrastructure megaprojects, such as those linked to the Belt and Road Initiative, also exemplifies this process.

3.44. Both perspectives—Marini's structural dependence and Harvey's accumulation by dispossession—agree that capitalism has not stopped expanding through the systematic

violence that Marx already studied and that in turn acted with entirely different dynamics on the periphery of the capitalist system. In this way, we are faced with a sui generis capitalism outside the integral development of capitalism in the historical centers of global accumulation. Far from an internal logic of harmonious self-regulation, capitalist accumulation in the periphery is reproduced through the systematic plundering of entire regions of the planet, perpetuating colonial relations in new forms. The periphery is not an anomaly in the capitalist system; It is one of its pillars, its rule. So much so that the European welfare model in the post-war decades was based on the super-exploitation of the workers and peasants of the periphery who supported the concessions offered by that "Welfare State."¹⁵

3.45. Returning to Benjamin's dialectical images, these historical processes must be captured not as linear sequences, but as meaning-laden constellations, where the past is illuminated in the present. Thus, today's super-exploitation in Latin America, Africa or Asia is not a simple colonial legacy, but a contemporary update of that violent past that never stopped operating, an expanded and constant reproduction of it, as Luxemburg points out. Capital continues to absorb life, nature and entire cultures through new forms of dispossession, often legitimized by progressive discourses of development, technological innovation

or modernization.

3.46. This analysis not only allows us to reinterpret the uneven development of global capitalism, but also connects an anti-Eurocentric Marxist critique. Marini, Harvey and Luxemburgo force us to reformulate, faced with the sui generis dynamics of peripheral capitalism, the historical subject, no longer as a spectator of European capitalist development, but as a fundamental actor in its formation and contradictions. Dialectic ceases to be a European method and becomes a tool for thinking from the South. In the articulation between Marx, Harvey and Marini, we understand that structural violence is not a past event, but a constant principle of capital. Accumulation occurs in cycles that repeat and reconfigure expropriation in the periphery. Thus, far from being limited to the industrial proletariat of the center as a central actor in the process of separation, the revolutionary subject in the periphery includes peasants, indigenous peoples, women, precarious workers and pigeonholed laborers, whose struggles are expressed dialectically in the face of permanent cycles of dispossession and the dynamics of super-exploitation that present the payment of their salary below its value.

3.47. Experiences such as the slave revolts in the Caribbean, the Andean peasant insurrections, the guerrillas against the Japanese occupation or the jihad against Christianity in the Maghreb are not pre-modern residues, but advanced expressions of the class

struggle in contexts of dependency (*Sui Generis* Capitalism). They are dialectical images that illuminate the possibility of a Marxism that thinks from the margins of capital, outside the dogmas and teleological meanings of universal history. Together, these perspectives allow us not only to reinterpret the past, but also to intervene in the present. The task is not only to understand capitalism as a global system, but overflow it with the theoretical and political tools that emerge from those peoples who have been its condition of possibility. From there, Marxism becomes not only more faithful to its original spirit, but also more universal.

3.48. Some historical examples account for this statement, and in this way they reconstruct the images of a clear constellation of experiences against accumulation by dispossession in peripheral contexts. The slave insurrection in Haiti not only challenged the French empire in 1804, but also altered the entire Caribbean slave plantation system, depriving capital of one of its main sources of income. Here, the “original accumulation” was questioned and seized by the insurgent blacks themselves, showing that the revolutionary subject was not always the nascent industrial worker and craftsman who rose during the French Revolution of 1789, a social model that prevailed during the first half of the 19th century. The revolutionary subject in this peripheral context was the rebellious slave who sang the

Marseillaise, as one of the first internationalist symbols of the *Revolution*, while Napoleon's troops charged against those irrational beings.

3.49. From Túpac Amaru II in Upper Peru (present-day Peru and Bolivia) to the Mayan insurrections in Yucatán, indigenous peoples have resisted accumulation by dispossession through revolts that demanded the restitution of their lands, knowledge and ways of life that Mariategui already materialized politically in the figure of the *ayllu* as an ancient form of indigenous communism, where land was collectively owned and work was done in community.¹⁶ In Mexico, the Zapatistas' *Plan de Ayala*, in 1911, already contained this programmatic demand, defending pre-modern forms of communal organization with modern ideas of socialism. The defense of the so-called “*ejido*” as a form of collective property, rooted in the indigenous traditions of the center and south of the country went against the form of private property of capitalism. Thus, the slogan “*Tierra y Libertad*” consecrates the political action of an indigenous peasantry and agrarian worker, who fought for the heroic creation of a socialism based on the experiences of their history. Although later co-opted by bourgeois sectors, the Mexican Revolution was born as a peasant struggle against the landowning oligarchy and foreign capital. Zapatismo and Villismo embodied self-managed forms of community life and agrarian

distribution, against a regime based on the systematic dispossession of indigenous and peasant lands that were completely dedicated to the satisfaction of European industry. "*Tierra y Libertad*" is a radical critique of capitalist accumulation based on the model of haciendas, striped stores and pigeonholed peons.¹⁷

3.50. In Africa and Asia, revolutionary processes influenced by the Viet Minh in Vietnam, the FLN in Algeria or the MPLA in Angola were not mere wars of national independence organized by organizations with defects rooted in pre-modern logic (See the case of religious bases and telluric that maintained popular support for these projects), but were projects capable of reinventing the struggle for socialism in its context, even with the "variegated" and archaic historical forms in which colonial societies lived together with capitalism as a whole. In this regard, the National Liberation Front did not use the term "Islamic socialism" formally, but in its writings and statements, they did emphasize the need to build a socialist society based on the historical values of Islamic societies. A relevant fragment is the following, taken from its 1954 Manifesto: "The socialism we defend is not Western socialism, it is a socialism based on our traditions, our Islam, our history and our people. The State will be the guarantor of equality, social justice and collective ownership of natural and productive resources, always in accordance with Islamic principles (FLN, 1954)." Regarding this

issue, it is important to understand the historical relationship of Islam, the fight for national liberation and socialism in the rebellions of the people of the Maghreb.¹⁸

3.51. In Central America, liberation theology also played a similar role to socialism with Islamic values advocated by the FLN. This political movement articulated revolutionary aspirations with pre-modern forms of religious organization. Inspired by a Marxist reading of Christianity, this movement proposed a preferential option for the poor, finding fertile ground among indigenous communities, where popular Catholicism already coexisted with ancestral worldviews. Thus, liberation theology not only served to denounce the structural oppression imposed by imperialism and local oligarchies, but also to revitalize the forms of community and solidarity characteristic of indigenous peoples, giving them a spiritually rooted socialist horizon. As Salvadoran Bishop Óscar Romero, a martyr of this cause, stated: "A Church that does not suffer persecution, but rather enjoys the privileges and support of those in power, is a suspect Church. The true Church is the one that stands in solidarity with the poor and becomes their voice." In this sense, Fanon warns: "Religion in the colonies is often the refuge of the exploited masses. While it is true that religion has been used by colonizers to calm and manipulate oppressed peoples, we cannot ignore that in the struggle for

liberation, religion can also become an engine of resistance (Fanon, 1961)."

3.52. These ideas and political experiences, from a specific historical context, can be problematically clarified in working-class political programs other than the secular factor of revolutionary movements in Europe. And although they may be problematic and open to criticism, as in the case of the FLN with the conservative ties with Islam. Without falling into romanticism, the truth is that criticism begins with an understanding of the phenomenon before advancing into the realm of the recognizable. Listen before you speak, be silent before you hear, this is the path Marxism has always followed. A priori judgments are not characteristic of dialectics, and proud vanguards with a finished program are not characteristic of a humble militancy connected to the working-class movement.

3.53. Likewise, at the end of the century, during the Zapatista insurrection of 1994, the EZLN emerged in Chiapas as a response to the Free Trade Agreement and neoliberalism, new forms of accumulation by dispossession. Their armed and autonomous resistance challenged capitalist logic from the worldview and forms of social organization of the Tzotzil people united with the dialectic of Marxist criticism towards capital as a totality (Despite being far from the political conclusion on the seizure of power)¹⁹. The Zapatistas became a living dialectical image, denouncing

colonialism as a fact that is still present and that seeks to submerge all communal forms of social organization in the modern and cold logic of calculation and profit. For example, they currently denounce the processes of dispossession of water and territory that are plaguing all of Latin America and are the result of the new dynamics of accumulation and expanded reproduction of capital.

Conclusion

3.54. In summary, the uneven and combined forms of capitalist development in the colonial world of the past and the post-colonial world of the present reveal archaic and primitive elements that coexist with forms of working-class political activity. When comparing the facts, it is evident that a revolutionary program for the working class cannot be based on notions, formulas, slogans, and demands that call for the socialist transformation of society without first understanding the old and present transformations of a reality that affirms its necessity. For Marxists, major peculiarities must be clarified in a colonized society where the national and anti-imperialist factor plays a progressive and decisive role, where the peasant class or agricultural day laborers play a much more combative role than the urban proletariat, where communes, neighborhoods, and community assemblies replace bureaucratized union leaderships, where daily struggles are in constant contact with the explicit violence of capital without covert mediation.

Obviously, these characteristics have been historically outdated, and it would be pointless to mechanically fit them into the current perspectives and demands of our program. Most of the examples presented are just that—examples; they do not seek to formulate an ahistorical canon that falls into the doctrinal notions of Marxism-Leninism and the Marxist caricature currently presented by some old Stalinists (Dinosaurs in danger of extinction).

3.55. What has been demonstrated so far have been dialectical images in the history of the workers movement, viewed from the perspective of "peoples without history." In this way, history is not only presented as a progression of events, stages, or productive needs toward communism, based on historical laws of Eurocentric inheritance —influenced by Hegelian teleology and the natural sciences of the 19th century²⁰— but rather offers a point of support in the past to break the continuum of presentism and open up the revolutionary possibilities of a socialist future. A future that preserves the traditions and aspirations of those peoples without history, ready to burst into it. This is how dialectics effectively operates.

3.56. The dialectical method, simply and plainly, is the procedure that accounts for reality in its rational and immanent unity, reproducing itself through thought based on a synthesis of consciousness that recognizes its necessity in the multiple determinations of reality. The

universality of the method is based on the necessity discovered in the concrete, because it is the path to the synthesis of the reason for the existence of the concrete. The dialectical method does not impose on reality any necessity that is not contained within it; it adheres to its internal unity. It is a leap from reality to its necessity, and in this leap, mediations such as categories, concepts, historical experiences, and national realities overcome the mechanical, primitive, and vulgar logic that has long prevailed in certain aspects of the old CWI and ISA material.²¹ Understanding this fact, we must advance the reconstruction of the dialectical method to achieve this transition from necessity to action, that is, to move from dialectical understanding to the construction of a transitional program that elevates the ambitions, hopes, and dreams of the working class.

Notes:

1. For greater detail, see chapter 24 of *Capital*, volume II Vol. I on original accumulation (We will go into detail about the issue in section 2).
2. For Marx, bourgeois ideology is the set of dominant ideas in a society, which reflect the interests of the ruling class - the bourgeoisie - and which are falsely presented as universal, natural or neutral truths. These ideas work to hide the contradictions of capitalism, justify exploitation, and maintain the status quo. In this framework, positivism, especially in its more orthodox version inherited from Auguste Comte, served as a key ideological tool: by seeking to apply the methods of natural sciences to the study of history and society, positivism denied social conflict, dialectical contradiction and the historicity of social relations, reducing human processes to fixed and evolutionary, linear and ahistorical laws.
3. Garaudy, for example, criticized Engels for having crystallized a "dialectic of nature" that was never fully accepted by Marx. While, for Enzo Traverso, this "totalization" of thought, typical of a confusion of methods between historical dialectics and the laws of nature, can be interpreted as a step towards the Marxist-Leninist dogma that would later be institutionalized in the Second and Third Internationals.
4. This allusion comes from a letter that Marx wrote to Arnold Ruge in March 1843. In it, Marx reflects on the role of shame in political consciousness: "I see that you smile and say: what's the point of that? Revolutions are not made out of shame. And I answer: shame is already a revolution; it is, in reality, the victory of the French Revolution over the German patriotism that defeated it in 1813. Shame is a kind of anger turned inward. And if an entire nation were to feel shame, it would be like a lion that draws back to leap (Marx, 1843)."
5. In *The book of passages* like an unfinished work, Benjamin returns to this idea already formulated in his essays on the concept of history: "the dialectical image is not a motionless image, but an image that emerges at the moment of danger. In it, what has been

is brilliantly united with the now to form a constellation (Benjamin, 1982)."

6. Observe in *Revolution*, "Understanding history, Benjamin maintained, involves contemplating the past through its 'visuality' (*clarity*) and fix it 'perceptually'. As revolutions are 'dialectical leaps' that explode the 'continuum of history', writing their history means capturing their significance through images that condense them: the past 'crystallized as a monad'. Dialectical images emerge from the combination of two essential procedures of historical research: compilation and montage. [...] that is, not as a chronology of events nor as a linear history of causes and effects, but as a constellation of 'dialectical images' that condense historical experiences, collective imaginaries and utopian desires. These images condense past and present, failure and hope, memory and projection, and allow us to read revolutions not only as political events but as symbolic and intellectual productions." (Traverso, 2020: 15). "Dialectical images are not mirror images; They are not the reflected views of past events, they are lamps that shed light on the past" (Traverso, *ibidem*).

7. For more detail read: V, Lenin. (1979). V. I. Lenin selected works, volume 3 (Our Revolution). Progress Publishing House: Moscow. p, 796.

8. In *Black skin, white masks*, Chapter 5, Fanon says about the question: "the lived experience of the black": "The black man is not a man. There is no ontology for the black man. The colonial situation is defined by the exclusion of the indigenous from the human world. In a society where racism reigns, the black man cannot recognize himself in the class struggle, because before class, he is race. The colonial proletariat is not a proletariat like the European one: it is a subman, subjected not only to exploitation, but to dehumanization."

9. The expression "rat hunt" in the context of Algeria during the French colony refers in a brutal and dehumanizing way to the torture, raids and military, repressive and systematic persecution operations that the French colonial forces carried out against the Algerian

population, especially during the War of Independence (1954-1962). In the movie *"The Battle of Algiers"* (1966), directed by Gillo Pontecorvo, graphically represents how the French military organized these nocturnal "hunts" in the Casbah while the European neighborhoods slept peacefully. Authors such as Pierre Vidal-Naquet and Henri Alleg documented the torture and repressions in works such as *The question* (1958).

10. "When the peasants receive the rifles, the old myths fade, the prohibitions disappear one by one; the weapon of a combatant is his humanity. Because, in the first moments of the rebellion, one must kill: to kill a European is to kill two birds with one stone, to suppress at the same time an oppressor and an oppressed: there remains a dead man and a free man; the survivor, for the first time, feels a national soil under the soles of his feet. At that moment, the Nation does not distance itself from him: it is found wherever he goes, wherever he is—never further away, it is confused with his freedom (Sartre, 1961: 12)."

11. Quoting Fanon on the issue, "the wealth of the imperialist countries is also our wealth. On a universal level, this statement absolutely does not mean that we feel affected by the creations of Western technology or arts. Very specifically, Europe has inflated itself in a disproportionate way with the gold and raw materials of the colonial countries; Latin America, China, Africa. From all those continents, against which today's Europe raises its opulent tower, the people have been leaving for that same Europe for centuries. diamonds and oil, silk and cotton, wood and exotic products. Europe is, literally, the creation of the Third World. The riches that suffocate it are those that have been stolen from the underdeveloped peoples. The ports of Holland, Liverpool, the docks of Bordeaux and Liverpool that specialize in the slave trade owe their fame to the millions of deported slaves. of the unhappy underdeveloped peoples, we do not tremble with gratitude. On the contrary, we tell ourselves, "it is a just reparation that they are going to make to us (Fanon, 1961: 51)."

12. However, Caliban also has a voice. He claims: "This island is mine, by Sycorax my mother, / and you took it from me." (The Tempest, Act I, Scene II). Later, authors such as Aimé Césaire in *Une Tempête* (1969), will make an anti-colonial and Afro-Caribbean rereading of Shakespeare's work, turning Caliban into an anti-colonial revolutionary: "*Call me X! I will no longer answer to the name Caliban. That is not my name. My true name has been erased by the master!*" (Césaire, *A Storm*).

13. Note the exact definition that Marx offers about absolute surplus value in Volume I, Section IV, Chapter 16: "Absolute surplus value and relative surplus value." "The production of absolute surplus value consists, therefore, in the extension of the working day beyond the point at which the worker has reproduced the equivalent of his salary, that is, the value of his labor power. If the normal working day is 12 hours and the worker reproduces the value of his salary in 6 hours, the remaining 6 hours constitute absolute surplus value (Marx, 1867: 355)." Absolute surplus value refers to the increase in value extracted from wage labor through the extension of the working day, without changing the technological conditions or productivity of work. That is, it is obtained by making the worker work more hours for the same salary, thus reducing the value of his salary below its reproduction.

14. As Trotsky has already developed in his study on the laws of the uneven and combined development of capitalism, "The laws of history have nothing in common with pedantic schematism. Unequal development, which is the most general law of the historical process, is nowhere revealed to us with the evidence and complexity with which it is evident in the destiny of backward countries. Lashed by the whip of material needs, backward countries are forced to advance in leaps and bounds. From this universal law of unequal development is derived another that, for lack of a more appropriate name, we will describe as the law of combined development, alluding to the approximation of the different stages of the path and the combination of different

phases, to the amalgamation of archaic and modern forms. [...] The law of unequal development, which is manifested in the history of all nations, can only lead, in the conditions of the imperialist epoch, to the combination of the most diverse forms of economy and culture, to the fusion of different stages of the historical path (Trotsky, 1930)."

15. In the words of Wallerstein: "The welfare state in the countries of the center was financed, in part, by the flow of surplus value transferred from the periphery. While in the center high wages and social security were guaranteed, in the periphery superexploitation, low wages and labor repression reigned" (The modern world system, vol. III). "One can integrate several hundred million Western workers without the system becoming unprofitable, but if one were to integrate the billions of Third World workers, there would be nothing left for capital accumulation" ([1995], p. 25)."

16. "Communism, in Peru, will not be a copy or a carbon copy, but a heroic creation. Inspired by our realities, including the collectivist forms of the *ayllu* (Mariategui, 1928: 22)." "The laws of the Indies protected indigenous property and recognized their communist organization. The legislation relating to indigenous "communities" was adapted to the need not to attack institutions or customs indifferent to the religious spirit and political character of the colony. The agrarian communism of the *ayllu*, once the Inkaiko State was destroyed, was not incompatible with one or the other. Quite the opposite. The Jesuits took advantage precisely of indigenous communism in Peru, in Mexico and on an even larger scale in Paraguay, for its catechization purposes. The medieval regime, theoretically and practically, reconciled feudal property with community property (Mariategui, 1928: 50)."

17. Of this type of worker, typical of the capitalist periphery, Marx studied with particularity and makes a substantial definition, "In Mexico, for example, despite the legal reforms introduced by Benito Juárez, the situation of the classified peons has not changed substantially. These workers remain tied to the haciendas through debts and

obligations that keep them in a condition of servitude. (Marx, 1867: 143)".

18. Already in 1921, during the Congress of the Eastern Peoples in Baku-Azerbaijan, convened by the Third International, Gregori Zinoviev proposed understanding Marxism through the historical and cultural features of Islamic societies, using jihad and the teachings of the prophet Muhammad to defend a modern socialist program. In the issue he stated: "The lackeys of the Tehran government have seized the land that, according to Islamic law, was common property. They deal with this land as they want and impose taxes and duties as they see fit. [...] "Now we call them to the first real Holy War, under the red flag of the Communist International. We call for a jihad for your own well-being, for your own freedom, for your own life! Britain, the last powerful imperialist predator left in Europe, has spread its dark wings over the Eastern Muslim countries and is trying to turn the peoples of the East into its slaves, its spoils. (Proceedings of the Baku Conference, 1921)."

19. On the question of power, there is still a bitter dispute between sectors of the Marxist and Zapatista left. However, despite being politically distant from the political conclusions of theorists such as John Holloway, who advocate "changing the world without taking power", they offer a particular definition of the logic in which Zapatismo acts as a project that aims to "crack" capital in a particular context where pre-colonial indigenous forms of social organization converge with the commitment to an anti-capitalist horizon. In the words of Sergio Tischler, Holloway's own collaborator, he defines that "time in capitalism is a secularized and reified category. Zapatismo, by building its autonomy, proposes a break with this linear and cumulative conception of time, betting on horizontal time in collective social construction (Tischler, 2020: 249)."

20. We do not blame Engels for his intention to systematize Marx's thought into verifiable historical laws, as noted at the beginning of the document with the Duhring polemic. It is inevitable that individuals in their given historical epoch fall under the influence of the latest advances in human science and

technology, just as it was for Engels the marvelous discoveries of the natural sciences that permeated the philosophy, study of history, and politics of English society. It is enough to observe the decisive impact of Darwin's contributions on the origin of species for Marx and Engels, who insistently declared in their correspondence. In a letter to Lasalle in 1861, Marx insists: "Although clumsily developed in the English style, this is the book which contains the natural-scientific foundation of our outlook." He also comments to Engels in another letter dating from 1862 on Darwin's incredible intention behind his work: "It is remarkable to see how Darwin recognizes in animals and plants his own English society, with its division of labor, its competition, its opening of new markets, its inventions, and its Malthusian struggle for life. This is Hobbes's *bellum omnium contra omnes*, and recalls Hegel's *Phenomenology*, where civil society intervenes as the "animal kingdom of the Spirit," while in Darwin it is the animal kingdom that intervenes as civil society."

21. This aspect is intended to be addressed in more detail in the second part of the document, with the discussion through quotes and statements from the old material.

The dogmatic and sectarian approach to war we need to leave behind

Discussion article by Valery

"Marxism has built a scientific program upon the laws that govern the movement of capitalist society, and which were discovered by it. This is a colossal conquest! However, it is not enough to create a correct program. It is necessary that the working class accept it. But the sectarian, in the nature of things, homes to a stop upon the first half of the task. Active intervention into the actual struggle of the workers' masses is supplanted for him by an abstract propaganda of a Marxist program."

Sectarianism, Centrism and the Fourth International. Leon Trotsky 1935

Introduction

4.1. For many years, the international organisation to which we belonged - the CWI - cruised along as one of the largest Trotskyist organisations. Emerging from the ideological debates and splits which surrounded the Fourth International after the death of Trotsky, the ideas and perspectives that were developed by the then RSL*/Militant proved largely correct for a period.

**Revolutionary Socialist League, not to be confused with the RSL that existed before 1940. The RSL was the name adopted by the post WW2 organisation before it became popularly known as Militant.*

In the couple of decades after the launch of Militant in 1964 it succeeded in transforming the programme into an actual instrument used by the working class in struggle during the school strikes, the Liverpool City Council struggle and the 1984-85 miners' strike, culminating in the Poll Tax struggle. When these successes of the British section were fading into the past, other sections, most notably the Irish, and to some degree the US, demonstrated in practice how to intervene in a transitional way in working class movements, winning significant victories.

4.2. In the late 1970's and early 1980's, Ted Grant would promise that the revolution would take place within 5, 10, 15 years. This was based on the perspective that after the revolutionary wave in the years following 1968, the working class would continue to strengthen, with a strong revolutionary current developing within the Labour Party and wider labour movement, and at a certain stage, the rejection of reformism would lead to a new revolutionary crisis.

4.3. But these perspectives lost their validity as the wave of revolutions, albeit deformed, in the former colonial world accompanied by major defeats of the working class - such as the British miners and US air-traffic controllers - was drawing to an end.

4.4. Increasingly capitalism went on the offensive. The post-war era of Keynesian 'consensus' ended with Pinochet, Reagan and Thatcher spearheading the counter-revolution that later became known as neo-liberalism.

Experiences of war during the neo-liberal epoch

4.5. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 provided a huge propaganda victory to Western imperialism. The CWI formally opposed the intervention, but argued that the Soviet Union was still capable of developing backward Afghan society, so opposed calls for Soviet withdrawal, which, it argued, would be another propaganda boost for imperialism.

4.6. What actually happened was Afghan society did not develop, fundamentalism backed by the US gained a foothold, and the cost of the war severely undermined the Soviet system during the decade before its collapse. In hindsight, the approach was based on a failure to understand how far the bureaucracy in the USSR itself had undermined the advantages of the planned economy.

4.7. If the war started by the Argentinian Junta invasion of the Malvinas/Falkland Islands in 1982 had

lasted more than ten weeks, there would almost certainly have been a debate within the organisation over the British section's position.

4.8. Although formally correct in analysing the causes of the war: the attempt by the Argentinian dictatorship to cut across the increasingly revolutionary struggles by the working class, and which was used by Thatcher to whip up a patriotic wave in Britain, the programme it presented against the war was far from convincing. It was motivated by opposition to the pacifism of a section of the reformist left, attempting to apply what in reality was a continuation of the WIL's** WW2 policy, but in a completely different objective situation.

***WIL - Workers' International League - one of the two Trotskyist groups that existed in Britain during WW2 before their merging into the RCP.*

4.11. It failed to support calls for the withdrawal of the British fleet, arguing that such a call would have required a general strike to win. It offered no convincing positive alternative except to call for the election of a socialist labour government. The credibility of this was undermined by the fact that, although the Labour left was at the peak of its influence, Michael Foot, the Labour leader - widely seen as a 'pacifist' due to his long-standing support for nuclear disarmament - capitulated and gave uncritical support to Thatcher's decision to send the British Fleet to the Falklands.

4.12. At the same time arguing that a different emphasis was needed in Argentina, it called for the full revolutionary mobilisation including the arming of the Argentine working class to overthrow the dictator. In this context, this position was at best abstract and at worst difficult to differentiate from Foot's social chauvinism, especially in Argentina and the rest of Latin America.

4.13. A year later, an armed insurrection broke out in the Tamil regions of Sri Lanka, precipitating a major international discussion about the position of the Sri Lankan section, the NSSP. The NSSP majority had illusions in India, as a more 'progressive' imperialism, a position which had led them to welcome Indian intervention in Bangladesh's 1971 war of liberation. This led it to support calls for an Indian military intervention into the Tamil region. After many discussions the NSSP split from the CWI.

4.14. As the 1980s unfolded, so too did the crises in the Soviet bloc, which for decades had been seen by many lefts, and in particular by many in the post-colonial world, as a non-capitalist alternative to imperialism. Strangled by the dead-weight of the totalitarian bureaucracy the regimes collapsed under the pressure of mass movements. Out of the initial eight states, 26 newly independent capitalist nations emerged, accompanied by an economic depression, deeper even than the 1930s Great depression and,

in many parts, brutal ethnic and civil conflicts.

New phase of neo-liberalism

4.15. The neo-liberal onslaught and defeats of the working class in struggle combined with the collapse of the "socialist" states fed into a deepening ideological confusion and then retreat of the political consciousness of the working class.

4.16. The 1990's was a turning point requiring a radical review of perspectives. The conservative and dogmatic grouping around Ted Grant, who denied the need for change, departed in the 1991-2 split. In hindsight, what remained as the CWI, despite making some revisions, failed to draw all the necessary conclusions.

4.17. In reality, the CWI failed to recognise the depths of the retreat in organisational and political consciousness of the working class. To its credit, it did understand the qualitative change - the complete 'bourgeoisification' of the former mass workers' parties. But it clung to the perspective that eventually workers, as they move into struggle, will return en-mass to the unions, forming the basis for new mass workers' parties, and in the meantime, we should fight for a position in the unions, maintain an electoral presence, however insignificant, and eventually be in the correct place to lead a new mass movement.

4.18. This perspective, which underestimated the extent to which this new class balance of forces had

strengthened the integration of the trade union apparatus with the capitalist class and its state, relied upon, and indeed strengthened an increasingly 'economist' approach to work in the traditional trade unions and wider movement.

4.19. As if this wasn't enough, the weaknesses the CWI inherited from its early founders including the blindspot in relation to forms of oppression, from that of women to colonialism were exacerbated. Increasingly, it was argued, they would be resolved 'come socialism'.

4.20. This led to a mistaken strategy. Rather than wait for the current structures to fill out, there should have been a struggle to reconquer and rebuild the unions, in which anti-oppression struggles would play a critical role.

4.21. Despite a series of splits and setbacks, the CWI survived the 1990s and 2000s largely due to the momentum, authority, and material resources it built during the 1980s. What were once relatively healthy debates over perspectives and tasks were replaced by superficial and increasingly anglo-centric analyses, more akin to a collection of anecdotes from each country rather than a dialectical analysis. Organisational tasks fell into routinism.

Another turning point

4.22. When the neo-liberal epoch began its retreat after 2008, tensions within the CWI began to grow, leading to the split and formation of ISA in

2019. The split coincided with the start of the pandemic, which speeded up the deglobalisation processes, and then Russia's imperialist invasion of Ukraine.

4.23. The dramatic change in the global situation turned the spotlight onto the weaknesses of the CWI/ISA's analysis and programme, and in justice, to those of basically all other organisations that claimed the banner of revolutionary marxism.

4.22. The sectarian approach that had already been apparent in the CWI's dismissal of questions of oppression was now clearly appearing in other aspects of our work. The correct instinct of the mainly younger Russian comrades to oppose Russian imperialism's invasion of Ukraine clashed with the dogmatic and sectarian approach of the ISA majority. Major debates over our approach to war and what demands we should use developed. In opposition to the ISA majority's sectarianism, the Russian section made clear its opposition to the Russian invasion, but in correctly supporting the right of Ukraine to defend itself, wrongly crossed a line by calling on western imperialism to arm Ukraine.

4.23. What has become increasingly apparent since 2008 is that in those organisations with roots in the early CWI - today's CWI, ISA and IMT(now RCI) - despite all the talk about the need for an independent working class position, they all to one degree or another lack confidence that the

working class can play an independent role.

4.24. The ISA majority analyse events through a “geopolitical” prism, failing to understand the importance of a correct orientation to those sections of the working class at the forefront of struggle. The IMT, based on the conservative breakaway from the CWI in 1991 has done a complete ultra-left somersault with its ‘communist’ turn to students.

4.25. Today’s CWI bases itself on the more conservative layer of the [English] trade union leadership and working class, often reflecting their prejudices. [It even recommends voting for Galloway’s “Workers’ Party”](#) which campaigns on an anti-feminist, anti-LGBTQ+ and anti-trans programme highlighting racist demands such as “Stop the boats-tough on immigration”. At the time of writing Galloway is in Moscow together with Alex Jones and Erron Musk [Elon’s father] attending a Kremlin backed conference directed by the fascist ideologue Alexander Duggan.

4.26. They all fail to understand that the most oppressed layers of the class have moved further ahead than the more cautious, conservative layers of the traditionally male dominated and older sections of the working class.

4.27. This failure was harmful enough in countries with strong trade union traditions. In those countries in which the trade unions are historically very weak this led to confusion and an

increasingly sectarian approach often more akin to a conspiracy theory than Marxist analysis.

Roots of sectarianism

4.28. The first signs of this were seen during the break up of the Soviet Union. The Grantites did not understand how far the benefits of the planned economy had been destroyed by the bureaucracy, and how desperate the masses, spearheaded by the miners, were for change. Grant’s support, at least during the first hours, for the 1991 coup against Gorbachev if it had been maintained would have put them in the same camp as the ultra-sectarians of the time such as the Spartacists and what is now the WSWS, who in much of their material about those events differ little from the Stalinists.

4.29. A decade later many of the left developed this sectarian approach further when the coloured revolutions spread across the former Soviet bloc. The political consciousness of the working class in Eastern Europe had been so damaged by the experience of Stalinism that strong left forces were largely absent, and the explosions of anger from below at poverty and authoritarian rule had strong cross-class characteristics.

4.30. The participation by the working class could be quite significant, but at best it lacked a clear political programme, and as the decade passed working class participation increasingly tail-ended bourgeois forces. As a consequence the colored

revolutions usually ended up merely replacing one section of the ruling elite by another - more often than not with each section of the elite aligned with one or other of the imperialist forces.

4.31. The opportunist trends in the left tail-ended the liberal bourgeois opposition while the ultra-sectarians, along with the Stalinists usually dismissed these movements often saying they were conspiracies led by Western imperialism. They failed to understand that many workers and youth in the region had illusions in “the west”, usually in the EU as they saw higher living standards and a freer society than offered by the authoritarian leaders. Left wing forces should have intervened, presenting democratic demands in such a way as to counteract the false claims of the bourgeois opposition.

4.32. Not surprisingly the position of the IMT echoed the position of the ultra-sectarians. During the ‘Bulldozer’ revolution against Milosovic in 2006 [it argued](#) that workers should not be involved, leaving the bourgeois opposition to lead the movement.

4.33. To its credit, at least in the earlier period, the CWI avoided a sectarian pose in part because it had comrades in the region who understood the situation. Nevertheless, early [statements by the CWI](#) - for example during the ‘Bulldozer’ revolution - were exceedingly optimistic and one-sided - over-emphasising the key role of the workers in the protests, but practically

ignoring the role and danger of other class forces.

CWI's turn to Russia!

4.34. Increasingly though the CWI's position became abstract, despite its fine words, began to defend not an independent class position but one based on the enemy (Russian imperialism) of my enemy (US imperialism) is my friend. It is clear from comments made by an IS member at the time that this was in part due to a fear of coming into conflict with trade union leaders such as Alex Gordon and Bob Crow with whom the British section was working with at the time, or Steve Hedley who was actually a member of the SP for a period, and who did not disguise his support for the pro-Russian militias in East Ukraine

4.35. As, following Euromaidan in 2014, the Crimea was taken over by Russian forces and a referendum under gunpoint was organised, clearer differences began to emerge.

4.36. Comrades from the region [were writing reports](#) exposing the hypocritical role of both imperialist forces and demanding an end to all imperialist interference and military interventions in Ukraine and Crimea. We opposed the calling of the referendum at gunpoint and called for “the right of the people of Crimea to freely and without any hint of coercion decide their future, be it enhanced autonomy or independence.”

4.37. We called for a democratically-convened constituent assembly, representing all sections of the working class, overseen by elected committees of working people so the rights of the region's 300,000 Tartars and other minorities could be guaranteed, including their language and religious rights. This, we said, would not be possible under capitalism..."

4.38. Yet just two weeks later, the [IS published its position](#). It jubilantly declared: "96.77% voted 'for' integration and turnout was 83.1%. Tens of thousands celebrated in Simferopol, the capital of Crimea". A more credible result was revealed later by an article that appeared on the Kremlin's own site - barely 50% voted yes on a turnout of between 30-50%. The IS statement went on to explain that the "Parliament of majority Russian speaking" Crimea had first voted to join Russia. The IS did not even register that that vote had taken place after the elected Parliament, which had opposed leaving Ukraine, had been occupied by Russian troops and the Government replaced at gunpoint. When a Russian comrade speaking at that year's CWI Summer school pointed that out, Peter Taaffe complained angrily.

4.39. Although not immediately clear to many readers, the implication in the article was that although the "hugely popular vote among the majority of Crimeans" for union with Russia will lead to problems in the future, it was a better option than staying with Ukraine

with its pro-western and extreme far-right government.

4.40. This impression was soon confirmed after a letter written after the seizure of Crimea by a leading member of the German section was passed on to the Russian section. It correctly criticised a caricature initially used by the Russian comrades, but which had been quickly withdrawn.

4.41. But the whole letter was endorsed by the then International Bureau of CWI [email from BL 05/03/2014]. It stated:

"Putin's strategy is a defensive one....The Putin regime is not trying to go on the offensive and to get hold of the whole of Ukraine. The truth is that the EU and the US supported the Maidan movement and the coup against Janukowich to widen their sphere of influence over the Ukraine and to push Russian imperialism backwards."

Rather than class analysis, lesser evilism

4.42. This demonstrates where the IMT, CWI and ISA have problems. Their historical trend away from a dialectical analysis has led them increasingly to view the growing conflicts in Eastern Europe through a geopolitical prism, dismissing the role of the masses [the word "masses" is used intentionally here to describe the wider movement with elements of cross-class character], and the working class as a conscious force.

4.43. To different degrees each view the events in Kyiv in 2014 as a “coup”, or a conspiracy organised by western imperialism. A coup is normally understood as a sudden, violent overthrow of an existing government usually by armed forces.

4.44. While we should in no way view through rose-tinted spectacles the Euromaidan events in which the far right and liberal bourgeoisie played a big role, they started as mass protests against corruption and increasingly authoritarian government, and escalated out of control after the police killed dozens of demonstrators. The government was forced to resign and an election was held to form a new government.

4.45. Significantly not one of these organisations describes the seizure of the Crimean parliament by Russian soldiers [deniable troops who later formed the basis of the Wagner group] and the forced replacement of the elected Crimean President as a coup.

4.46. They correctly talk about how NATO has expanded across Eastern Europe but despite their often muted criticisms of the Putin regime, they clearly underestimate Russia’s aggressive imperialist policies, and in reality treat it as the lesser evil.

The Ukraine war

4.47. The material written particularly by Alan Woods on the IMT site about the war in Ukraine demonstrates how far that organisation has moved from a sectarian “neutrality” to, under cover of revolutionary phrases, a Russian-

apologist position, viewing the war almost solely as one driven by Ukraine and the US.

4.48. Today in their social media, some CWI sections openly and uncritically carry pro-Russian propaganda - for example a repost from the Kremlin’s propaganda machine [“Russia Today” of statements by Tucker Carlson](#), or most recently a repost of Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov’s press conference.

4.49. The ISA majority emerged from the CWI tradition, and lacking even the theoretical orientation of the CWI, has drifted in an even more extreme sectarian direction. Leading figures speak of the US led coup in Kyiv in 2014, and in recent articles echo the Alan Woods approach, viewing the war as one driven by Ukraine and the US with barely any criticism of Russian imperialism. The [latest article by ISA on Ukraine](#), for example, uses the word ‘imperialist/ism’ 24 times overwhelmingly linked to the US. It does not once describe Russia’s actions as imperialist!

An era of sharp changes

4.50. It should be stressed that the programme is not a fixed entity which is simply summed up in the need for socialist revolution. It has to be rooted in the dialectical analysis of current events based on the balance of class forces, developed in dialogue with the working class and particularly its most oppressed and politicized layers in order to connect to consciousness, and as Trotsky explained, it has to be

explained in such a way so as the working class can understand and accept it.

4.51. Sharp changes in the objective reality such as the outbreak of war put the programme and tactics of revolutionary organisations into the spotlight. Unfortunately our predecessors have been found wanting.

4.52. The ISA majority brought the weaknesses in the analytical approach of CWI/IMT/ISA to their logical conclusion. Having consistently and dogmatically opposed the arguments of the ISA minority that the volatility we see in this age of increasing disorder will depend on, and can be changed by the intervention of the masses, particularly the working class. Speaking at meetings in the summer of 2023, leading members, supported by the ISA majority, concluded that the third world war had already started, that the world has been polarised into two clearly defined blocks, and in articles wrote that “it would be wrong to think the blocs are still fluid, not yet clearly formed. That would be living in the past” [[Vincent Kolo, June 2023](#)]

4.53. There could not be a better illustration of how dogmatism sank deep roots in the CWI/ISA. Within months the election of Trump forced the ISA, not just into a 180 degree turn in its perspectives, but left it in a tail-spin, unable to develop any form of transitional programme and demands. They were, as Trotsky put it, refusing to struggle for transitional demands - i.e.

the elementary interests and needs of the working masses - as for them, preparing for revolution means convincing themselves of the superiority of socialism.

4.54. In practice from the IMT through to the CWI and ISA, behind the obligatory statements about the need to take power and construct a global socialist society, their articles reflect their one-sided geopolitical analysis. They are dominated by criticism of the Ukrainian regime, place the main blame for the war on US imperialism rather than the Russian invasion, and aim their fire at other lefts, many of whom have a pro-Ukrainian position.

4.55. They underestimate the determination of Ukrainians to resist the Russian occupation and overstate and exaggerate any gains made by the Russian regime. In their latest article the author claims that Ukraine has lost “many of the gains they made in 2022”. Anyone who has followed the war knows this is complete nonsense. It is based on their refusal to recognise the importance of the national question in Ukraine, about more of which later. Reading the articles gives a clear impression of a hope that a Russian victory is preferable to Ukraine.

Rewriting history

4.56. The one-sided analysis of the role of imperialism in the Ukraine conflict is summed up by the comment in the [ISA's latest article](#) in which they grudgingly recognise that apparently just “a decade ago, the Ukrainian

ruling class was already split between a pro-Western and a pro-Russian wing. Promoting this pro-Western wing was part of the relentless drive by the U.S. to push NATO ever further eastward". As if this was simply a one-sided and recent process.

4.57. The reality is that since Ukraine first gained independence well over three decades ago, it has been a battleground between Russian and Western economic and political interests.

4.58. In the first decade, the 1990s, Ukraine's ruling elite balanced between Russia and the West, while Russia had a close relationship with the EU and even NATO, which used an airbase in Central Russia as its transit point for its operations in Afghanistan.

4.59. But this was the period of the break-up of the Soviet Union and its state. By the end of the decade, Russia's ruling elite needed a change of course. It ditched Yeltsin, and Putin stepped in, tasked with rebuilding a strong, capitalist Russian state and establishing imperialist control over the neighboring countries. He came to power on the back of the second Chechen war. In 2008 the Russo-Georgian war left Russia with de-facto control of two of Georgia's regions.

4.60. With a new leader and new found confidence, Russia began flexing its imperialist muscles. Attempts using fraud, corruption and intimidation in favour of Russia's preferred candidate in the 2004 Presidential election

triggered the Orange revolution of 2004/5. Similarly in 2014, Euromaidan was launched after the government suddenly switched from a pro-EU course to one tying economic interests closer to Russia. In both cases, they were fuelled by mass opposition to the corruption and authoritarianism of the then in power pro-Russian figures.

Sectarian confusion and the national question

4.61. Most importantly, the Orange revolution and Euromaidan were fuelled by opposition to the domination of Ukraine by Russia. Ukraine suffered both in the pre-1917-revolutionary Russian empire, then under the Stalinist dictatorship, in particular during forced collectivisation and the Stalinist purges. Clearly the desire of Ukrainians to defend their right to self determination must be an essential part of any dialectical analysis of the political situation, including the current war in Ukraine.

4.62. Yet increasingly, the dogmatism of the CWI/ISA denied any need to understand the national question in Ukraine. Even the far from Marxist military strategist von Clausewitz understood the importance of psychological factors involved in defending homes and territory from foreign invasion. This, of course, is contradicted by the ISA who in their latest article waste no time in stressing that "The current war in Ukraine has had very little in common

with a genuine war of national and social liberation”.

4.63. This is the clearest possible example of what Trotsky in his [writings on Ukraine](#) in 1939 referred to when he wrote: “The sectarian simply ignores the fact that the national struggle, one of the most labyrinthine and complex but at the same time extremely important forms of the class struggle, cannot be suspended by bare references to the future world revolution.”

4.64. It is crystal clear that to analyse any war we should start by understanding the complex and dialectic interaction between the different imperialist forces, and those social forces driven mainly by a need to defend their rights to live free of occupation. As Trotsky put it in the “Transitional Programme” on the eve of WW2: “Imperialist war is the continuation and sharpening of the predatory politics of the bourgeoisie... But not all countries of the world are imperialist countries. On the contrary, the majority are victims of imperialism.”

4.65. Yet ignoring what both Lenin and Trotsky said, who argued that the approach of Marxists in the oppressor country must differ to that in oppressed countries, the sectarian approach today boils down to a one size fits all solution summed up in the call for “a mass internationalist, working class-centered antiwar movement that is consistent and opposes all sides in the

inter-imperialist conflict” and for “the working class to take power out of the hands of the capitalist class and begin constructing a global socialist society”.

Correct demands, wrong approach

4.66. Both of these demands are absolutely correct and essential when presented as part of a transitional programme and revolutionaries should do all in their power so that they are realised. However, when they are presented in isolation they become completely devalued, and reflect a combination of pacifism and sectarianism.

4.67. This approach is not due to laziness, but as we saw in the [final statement on the Ukraine war passed by the ISA leadership](#) it was a conscious rejection of a transitional approach. Whilst the statement is in places correct, it leaves the impression that once the war is over, the military occupation ended, only then the working class can organise to resolve other issues including the national question.

4.68. But what demonstrates that this impression is correct is what the ISA leadership refused to include in the statement, by voting down the following addition:

“Genuine self-determination for Ukraine, with the complete withdrawal of all Russian forces, can only be brought about by mass working class action, both in Ukraine and Russia, as well as internationally, to end the causes of the war, capitalism and its persistent drive

to imperialist expansion. By driving all imperialist forces out of Ukraine, an independent working-class force would base itself on workers' unity irrespective of nationality or language, arguing for international workers solidarity. Only such an approach, guaranteeing equal language rights and the right to autonomy, even if necessary, separation for regions, could cut across the attempts by the oligarchs and national/imperialist forces and their governments to use the national and language questions to divide the working class. In the same way a workers' government would allow the people of Crimea to decide their own fate based on the withdrawal of all military forces, and the conduct of a constituent assembly in which all national groups on the peninsula are represented."

4.69. It is because Radek had used a similar approach to that of the former ISA leadership that led Trotsky to suggest he had "skipped over the boundary that separates Marxism from opportunism, the revolutionary from the pacifist position." Radek had argued that all that was needed to prevent or end war was for the global working class to put the bourgeois under pressure, saying that Trotsky was wrong for only taking "into consideration the proletarian revolution exclusively".

4.70. Under certain objective conditions, when the bourgeois is in a weakened position, working-class movements can put the bourgeois under pressure and check its action,

only for the bourgeois to restore its position at a later stage. To end war it is necessary to overthrow the bourgeoisie.

4.71. As Trotsky pointed out in [reply to Radek](#), an end to war, like the fate of an independent Ukraine, is indissolubly bound up with the world socialist revolution. But, he said, "this general perspective, ABC for a Marxist" is used by sectarians "to make a recipe of temporizing passivity and national nihilism. The triumph of the proletarian revolution on a world scale is the end-product of multiple movements, campaigns and battles, and not at all a ready-made precondition for solving all questions automatically."

4.72. This clearly reveals the problem with the way the sectarians pose the question - yes they call for an international anti-war movement, yes they say this needs international socialism but they present no strategy or programme of how to transition between the two. In other words they present no bridge in the form of demands that can lead those who agree with the need to end war to develop the organisations armed with the political approach necessary to establish socialism.

Revolutionary defeatism misunderstood

4.73. Of course the sectarians comfort themselves by claiming to base themselves on Lenin's "revolutionary defeatism", but in doing so they miss the key lesson of Lenin's approach. Peter Taaffe, for example, in his [2014](#)

[article on Lenin and WW1](#) quotes Lenin's first iteration of "revolutionary defeatism" - "the defeat of the tsarist monarchy and its armywould be the lesser evil by far" and in [a later article](#) generalised this by saying it meant "preferring the victory of the enemy, rather than your own side".

4.74. But this is a crude and one-sided distortion of Lenin's position. Realising that his approach had been mistakenly interpreted as meaning he wanted the victory for Germany Lenin corrected this impression. Speaking at the Conference of the RSDLP Groups Abroad in March 1915 he explained that revolutionary defeatism applied in all imperialist countries.

4.75. The RSDLP at that time was still split between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. The latter supported the Russian government in the war and were dropping the banner of class struggle. It was in this context that Lenin explained that "The struggle against the government that conducts the imperialist war must not halt in any country before the possibility of that country's defeat in consequence of revolutionary propaganda".

4.76. In other words, Lenin was not arguing in a positive way for the victory of one's enemy or the defeat of one's own country, but that revolutionaries should continue to do all in their power to overthrow their own bourgeoisie **even if that meant** defeat of the country.

4.77. It was precisely because Lenin's supporters in Russia interpreted

"revolutionary defeatism" correctly and stepped up their work in building the revolutionary alternative that the Bolsheviks were in a position to win the support of the working class in 1917.

4.78. It is the failure of sectarians to understand this that means genuine anti-war sentiments are sent down the blind avenue of pacifism disguised under radical demands for immediate disarmament and an end to militarism.

The national question during inter-imperialist war

4.79. Moreover, failure to analyse wars in a dialectical way, taking into account all the factors that caused the war and all the elements within it, leads the sectarians to view all wars as simply inter-imperialist without paying any attention to any national interests. As a consequence, this approach deprives those who are in the midst of war and genocide, in Ukraine or Palestine for example, of any agency in themselves struggling to defend their rights.

4.80. Criticising Junius [Rosa Luxemburg], Lenin scathingly dismissed the claim that in the epoch of imperialism there can be no national wars, which was: "very harmful in a practical political sense; it gives rise to the stupid propaganda for "disarmament ... and the still more stupid and downright reactionary indifference towards national movements. Such indifference becomes chauvinism when members of "Great" European nations, i.e., nations which oppress a mass of

small and colonial peoples, declare with a learned air that “there can be no more national wars!”

4.81. In his arguments Lenin concluded that the Russian party was correct to oppose the slogan “Defence of the fatherland” in the imperialist war, while criticising the Polish party for their opposition to “Defence of the fatherland in general” including in national wars. Those fighting annexation in Belgium, Galicia, Armenia or Serbia, he said, would be justified in calling their revolt “defence of the fatherland” even if it involved the national bourgeoisie.

4.82. This of course in no way meant submitting to the leadership of the national bourgeoisie. “We must combine the revolutionary struggle against capitalism with a revolutionary programme and tactics on all democratic demands: a republic, a militia, the popular election of officials, equal rights for women, the self-determination of nations, etc. While capitalism exists, these demands—all of them—can only be accomplished as an exception, and even then in an incomplete and distorted form” Lenin continued.

4.83. Trotsky’s invaluable theses “[War and the Fourth International](#)” of 1934 appeared when a new inter-imperialist war was looming, a process which could only have been cut across by the victory of the proletariat in any key capitalist country, or by the political revolution in the Soviet Union.

4.84. He scathingly described the ‘more “revolutionary” pacifists’ who spoke of insurrection to end the war but understood nothing about how the class struggle and revolutionary party needed for an insurrection should be built. In the imperialist states, the revolutionaries’ key strategic task was to turn the war into a civil war. In small nations and in regard to the national question in which the working class ‘is not indifferent to its own nation’, the revolutionary party must warn that reliance on national bourgeois forces and/or those linked with imperialism will lead to a new form of subjugation, and demoralisation of the working masses.

Rejecting the dogmatic approach to war

4.85. In this way it is clear that a non-dogmatic approach to analysing the war in Ukraine is to base it on the clear inter-imperialist conflict between western imperialism and Russia, as part of the wider unfolding global conflict, but also requires a clear understanding of the role played by the decades long struggle by the Ukrainian people for self-determination.

4.86. This leads to the conclusion that in the open, including Russia, imperialist powers “revolutionary defeatism” as proposed by Lenin with the use of class struggle methods to oppose the imperialist aims of the ruling elite, and ultimately to overthrow the imperialist governments, is the best approach.

4.87. Naturally in Russia that means stepping up all support for the anti-war movement, whether during the first phase of protests against mobilisation, or support for the relatives of those mobilised who are demanding their loved ones can return home.

4.88. But in a country that has been occupied by an imperialist power, in which there has a decades long striving for genuine self determination, the emphasis has to be different - any programme that is posed has to give positive solutions to how a genuine independent working class alternative can be built, one that would not weaken or diminish the struggle for self-determination, but actually strengthen it, stressing that it cannot be achieved under the leadership of the national bourgeoisie, or with the support of other imperialist forces.

4.89. A more detailed explanation of what programme could be useful was outlined in the article "Restoring the revolutionary transitional approach to war" which was eventually and very reluctantly published in the last International Members' Bulletin 30a, before the ISA split. An edited, updated version follows.

What is a transitional approach?

4.90. In giving our fullest possible support and solidarity to those fighting oppression, we also have a responsibility to do everything possible to build working class organisations, with a revolutionary leadership.

4.91. This is necessary because the only way that Ukraine can be genuinely

free is through revolutionary working class struggle, which would meet tremendous resistance from the imperialist powers, but would resonate hugely amongst the international working class, and lead to a real crisis in the Russian regime, as it would build bridges with the Russian working class and give it confidence to fight back against the Bonapartist regime.

4.92. Crucial to ensuring Ukraine's right to self-determination is the need for regime change in Russia. But changing the figurehead will not change the nature of the regime. Russian capitalism came into existence dripping in blood - in the first decade of its existence it waged two brutal wars in Chechnya, as well as conflicts in Georgia, Moldova and Central Asia, without even mentioning Yeltsin's brutal military suppression of his own Parliament.

4.93. Russian capitalism is merely an integral part of global capitalism. This is demonstrated by the approach of western imperialism which has regulated its level of support for Ukraine to ensure, at the same time, that the Russian regime can stay in power. Illusions that western imperialism is 'more democratic' and is itself against war have been dealt a serious blow by the increasing use of authoritarian methods and western imperialism's support for Israel's genocide of the Palestinians.

4.94. Now that Trump has taken leadership of the western imperialist camp, the rapacious, vulture-like

nature of imperialism has been revealed to all. Willing to deal with the Kremlin while demanding access to Ukraine's natural resources, he has shown that imperialism will not support a genuinely independent Ukraine.

4.95. Once again it is becoming clear that to actually defeat the Kremlin - not deal it a blow from which it can later recover, maybe with a different leader - but actually get rid of the dictatorship and the capitalist system that created it, an organised struggle by the Russian working class is needed.

4.96. This may appear to be an unrealisable task in the current circumstances, but it is the only way to defeat the bonapartist clique. The first signs of the development of a wider working class protest were seen in the initial protests against war, and then mobilisation. Even though repression during the war has acted to suppress the number of workplace protests, the number in 2025 already exceeds that reported in 2024 - many of which are due to the non-payment of wages. With new attacks on the rights of women and the LGBTQ+ community developing, alongside inflation and budget cuts, the potential for new workers' organisations is clear.

4.97. As has been clear from the start of the conflict, and is increasingly entering the consciousness of the Ukrainian working class, the complete defeat of the Russian occupation using military means alone is not possible. As negotiations stagger

along, the most likely outcome will be a stalemate or frozen conflict, postponing for a period new attacks.

4.98. The significant early success in forcing the Russian forces to retreat from Kyiv, Kharkiv, Kherson and elsewhere combined with the bloody and stubborn resistance preventing any real significant gains by the Russians in Donbas, albeit at a huge cost in lives and equipment, have demonstrated to the world the determination of Ukrainians to defeat the occupation.

4.99. But this determination has been undermined by the government's failure to mobilise the necessary industrial resources, willingness to agree economic reforms including privatisation with western powers, and the widespread corruption and incompetence at all levels of government. It has been unable to create divisions within Russia because its support from and for NATO has allowed the Kremlin to present the war as one in which Russia is fighting for its existence against western imperialism.

4.100. It is because Ukraine is seen as so close to the interests of western imperialism that confusion has been created amongst the working class internationally and undermined support for its struggle against Russian imperialism.

4.101. It would be a completely different story if the Ukrainian working class was to take control of the situation into its own hands, the

working class internationally would assure maximum solidarity, including the supply of all it needs for the independent struggle of the workers of Ukraine in defense of its own interests. And as importantly such a government would be immediately attractive to millions of Russian workers and youth, and help to build the forces needed to bring down the Russian regime.

4.102. So in Ukraine today this means being prepared for a period to swim against the stream, searching amongst the advanced layers of the working class and youth who understand the need to break the reliance on the national bourgeois and military chiefs, and who can orientate to the workplaces, the trade-unions, and within the fighting units to build an independent working-class leadership to challenge capital and defeat the Russian occupation.

4.103, The Ukrainian working class desperately needs strong and independent trade unions that oppose any worsening of labour rights, wages and pensions, as well as budget cuts. Instead of privatisation, key industries should be nationalised under workers' control with the expropriation of war profits, as well as the wealth of Russian and Ukrainian oligarchs used for reconstruction.

4.104. The attempts to build international solidarity between organisations of the working class, particularly trade unions are very important, although the narrow trade-unionist outlook of many

western unions if transferred to Ukraine will limit the possibility for effective change. The workers' movement should be at the centre of the struggle of all oppressed, including the women who face increased exploitation at work, and the threat of new violence at home, as well as groups such as the LGBTQ+ community.

4.105. This includes ensuring that workers mobilised into the army do not lose their jobs and championing the right of independent organization of soldiers in trade unions and political groups. Demands would include the provision of all necessary supplies and protective equipment to soldiers before being sent to the front, for a limit on the length of mobilisation, for the election of soldiers' representatives to control conditions in barracks and the trenches, and the election of the officers, commanders and technical specialists by democratically elected soldiers' committees.

4.106. With negotiations now staggering on, any settlement that takes place without the complete withdrawal of Russian troops is, by definition, a denial of Ukraine's right to self-determination. As a minimum, the workers' movement should be campaigning for full transparency during negotiations around the demand for the complete withdrawal of Russian troops without annexations, the expropriation of the oligarch's wealth – both Russian and Ukrainian – to pay for the restoration of Ukraine,

the annulment of all conditions and loan repayments demanded by Western imperialism.

4.107. Many workers internationally will welcome a peace deal, as it will be seen as lessening the threats to food supplies, and inflation, as well as easing the pressure for increased militarisation. But any deal that is based on the need for “peacekeepers” and “security guarantees” – whether provided by, the for now still, more liberal Western powers or authoritarian, and in the latter case full-on dictatorial, regimes such as Turkey and China will neither lessen these dangers, nor assure any long-term peace in Ukraine.

4.108. Socialists in all countries should support the struggle of the Ukrainian people against the Russian invasion and in defense of its right to self-determination, without in any way supporting the war aims of the imperialist powers.

4.109. Now governments are cutting back on resources to help refugees, and introducing racist policies in an attempt to divide the working class. We should insist that families who have had to flee should be welcomed, protected from profiteers, by guaranteeing them decent living conditions, education for the children and working conditions that are no less than those of the whole working class. This means stepping up united working class campaigning to ensure decent housing and jobs for all.

4.110. Rather than accept the claims by imperialist governments that they are helping Ukraine with military, humanitarian and financial aid, socialists should be exposing the real aims of these governments, revealing the real nature of the aid they are providing.

4.111. The delivery of solidarity to the Ukrainian working class should be done in such a way as to avoid any outcome that strengthens nationalist moods, leads to increased military spending, or boosts support for the ruling parties and imperialist blocs, even if only temporarily.

4.112. The only force capable of stopping this war, and destroying the conditions that lead to new wars, is international workers solidarity, workers of the world united in the struggle against their own national ruling classes, and on a global level against militarism, environmental destruction, imperialist warmongering and to replace the capitalist system that spawns them with a free, and voluntary federation of democratic socialist societies.

4.113. Since the start of the war however the left internationally has been divided into two camps. One wing, supporting Ukraine has campaigned for western imperialism to arm the country, the other - hiding behind an anti-war position - calls for an end to all arms supplies, ignoring the fact that this only harms Ukraine, as Russia has its own supplies of weaponry. Neither puts an

independent class, that is revolutionary, position.

4.114. The latter, the sectarians, proud of their “revolutionary” principles start their dialogue with Ukrainian workers and youth by attacking their demands for western aid - in the same way as a sectarian who first approaches a workers’ picket line immediately condemns their leaders. Any possibility of dialogue is quickly shut down. The former, while campaigning for imperialist weapons may begin by warning of the role of western imperialism, but soon drop those warnings and create illusions that western imperialism is somehow better.

4.115. A revolutionary approach to begin a dialogue with Ukrainian workers and youth does not start by creating unnecessary barriers to dialogue, it means opening discussions with proposals and demands that show a way forward in their struggle. In supporting the armed defence of Ukrainian self-determination, the issue should not be separated from the need for the struggle to be led by the organized working class.

4.116. Until this happens, it is quite understandable that many Ukrainians believe they need weapons from the West to defeat the Russian occupation. The objective reality is that western imperialists will send weapons to Ukraine as long as, and only as long as it is in their interests to

hold Russia at bay, and warn China to refrain from action.

4.117. Instead genuine solidarity to Ukraine’s struggle could have been delivered, and far more effectively not by hanging on the the coat-tails of the imperialists, which in reality has little impact on the volume of weapons delivered, but by waging a militant campaign directed at the blocking of any trade with the Russian military machine - the oil currently being transported in ‘grey ships’ docking in Amsterdam and elsewhere, the microchips produced by Intel and others used in most Russian missiles. It has now been revealed that the drones used by Russia to bombard Ukraine day in, day out rely on US produced computers and Canadian navigation systems, while over 90% of the electronics found in Russian fighter aircraft are supplied by well-known Western companies such as Texas Instruments, Analog Devices and Intel.. .

4.118. Such a campaign would have helped cripple the Russian war-machine, and exposed the hypocrisy of the western powers who publicly support Ukraine, while quietly continuing to help Russia arm itself. And, unlike the current Ukraine solidarity actions, could have been linked up with the attempts to block arms supplies to support Israel’s genocide. It would boost a class appeal to the Russian working class to end the occupation because instead of Ukrainian workers pushing for more weapons to kill Russians, they could

point to their attempts to restrict the number of Russian weapons that could be used to kill Ukrainians.

4.119. At the same time such an approach could be linked to a campaign against the political, economic and even military conditions attached to the weapons and other aid supplied by the Western imperialist powers. While Trump demands access to Ukraine's natural resources, the EU is greedily pushing for the sale of land to foreign companies, and the privatization of industry.

4.120. And it would undermine the current drive to escalate militarisation, and expand NATO, and expose how the profits of the arms manufacturers are being boosted.

4.121. Workers should not pay for the war. We call for militant action against any attempts to cut jobs, wages, social budgets, for all of Ukraine's external debts to be cancelled, and for all aid to be free of charge, without conditions. The energy, agro-business and arms companies should all be nationalized under workers' control and their horrendous profits expropriated to bring down energy and food prices.

4.122. If approached in this way our demands will help to expose the aims of imperialism and the Ukrainian bourgeoisie. It can be accompanied by patient explanation that the imperialists only support Ukraine for its own ends, that it is unreliable and will abandon Ukraine when it suits them.

4.123. These transitional demands create a basis for the unified struggle of the working class in Ukraine fighting Russian occupation, the working class in Russia suffering the effects of war and dictatorship, as well as the working class of NATO countries, who face increasing militarization, and attacks on their economic and increasingly political rights, as well as the proletariat in the less developed world who suffer poverty, authoritarian rule and ethnic conflicts which remain as the legacy of imperialist rule.

4.124. They lead the working class globally to the need to organize and fight against capitalism and imperialism in all their forms, and establish a revolutionary alternative based on an end to reactionary nation states replaced by a democratic and voluntary federation of socialist republics.