

Nature, Function and Tactics of the Revolutionary Party of the Working Class

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The question relating to the tactics of the party is of fundamental importance and will be clarified in relation to the history of the disagreements in tendency and direction which occurred in the II and III Internationals.

We must not regard the question as being secondary or derivative in nature, in the sense that groups who are in agreement on the doctrine and the program may, without affecting those basics, support and apply different directions in action, albeit with respect to transient episodes.

To pose problems relating to the nature and action of the party signifies moving from the field of critical interpretation of social processes to that of the influence that these processes may exert on a force that is actively engaged. The transition is the most important and delicate point of the whole Marxist system and was framed in the youthful sentences of Marx: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways. The point, however, is to *change* it" and "The weapon of criticism cannot, of course, replace criticism by weapons".

This passage from pure knowledge to active intervention should be understood according to the dialectical materialist method in a manner totally different from that of followers of traditional ideologies. All too often it has been useful to the opponents of communism to exploit the Marxist theoretical background in order to sabotage and disavow the consequences of action and battle, that is, from the opposite perspective, to appear to adhere to the practice of the proletarian party while challenging and rejecting its fundamental principles. In all these cases the deviation was the consequence of anti-classist and counter-revolutionary influences, and expressed itself in crises as what we shall call, for the sake of brevity, opportunism.

Principles and doctrines do not exist in themselves as a foundation arisen and established before action; both the former and the latter are formed in a parallel process. It is their opposing material interests that in practice impel social groups to fight, and it is out of the action instigated by material interests that the theory which becomes the party's characteristic inheritance is born. If the balance of interests, the incentives to act and the practical directives for action are changed, then the doctrine of the party is likewise modified and distorted.

To think that this doctrine might have become sacred and inviolable due to its codification in a programmatic text and through a strict organizational and disciplinary arrangement of the party organism, and that therefore one may

adopt various policies and have recourse to multiple maneuvers in the area of tactical activity, means having failed to identify, using Marxist criteria, the real problem that needs to be resolved in order to decide how the methods of tactical action may be selected.

We return to the determinist analysis. Do social events unfold through uncontrollable forces, giving rise to diverse ideologies, theories and opinions among men, or can they be modified according to the more or less conscious wish of men themselves? This question is dealt with by the proletarian party's own method, with which it radically brushes aside traditional thinking, which always refers to the isolated individual, claiming to resolve the question for the individual and then to deduce from this the solution for society as a whole; whereas on the contrary, you must move the question from the individual to the collectivity. The "collectivity" is always understood by the other metaphysical abstraction to mean the society of all men, whereas in the Marxist sense we must understand collectivity as the concretely defined group of individuals who, in a given historical situation have, through their social relations, that is to say in relation to their position in production and in the economy, parallel interests; groupings that are in fact called classes.

For the many social classes that human history presents, the problem of their ability to understand exactly the process in which they live, and to exercise a certain degree of influence over it, is not resolved in one and the same generic way. Each historical class has had its own party, its own system of opinions and of propaganda; each one has claimed with the same insistence to interpret the meaning of events precisely, and to be able to direct them towards a more or less vaguely conceived objective. Marxism provides the critique and the explanation for all of these approaches and points of view, showing that the various ideological generalizations were the reflection of the conditions and the interests of classes in conflict, expressed through opinions.

In this continuous change, whose engines are material interests, whose protagonists are groupings in class parties and governmental organisms, and whose outward appearances are political and philosophical schools, the modern proletarian class, once the social conditions for its formation have matured, presents itself with new and superior capabilities, both in terms of its possession of a non-superficial interpretation of historical movement in its entirety, and in terms of the concrete efficacy of its action in social and political struggle in influencing the general unfolding of this movement.

This other fundamental concept was set out by Marxists with the classic and notable phrases: "With the proletarian revolution human society emerges from its prehistory" and "The socialist revolution constitutes the passage from the world of necessity to the world of freedom".

It is not, therefore, a matter of asking, in banal traditional terms, the question of whether man is free in his will or determined by the external environment, if a class and its party are conscious of their historic mission, and derived from this theoretical consciousness the power to implement it with a view to bringing about a general improvement, or are drawn into the struggle, into success or disaster, by higher or unknown forces. You must first ask what classes and what parties they are, what are their relations in the field of productive forces and state powers, what is the historical path already taken, and what is the path that, according to the results of critical analysis, remains to be taken.

According to the doctrine of religious schools, the cause of events lies outside of man, in God the creator, who has decided everything and who has also decided to concede a degree of liberty of action to the individual, for which he must therefore answer in the afterlife. It is well known that Marxist social analysis has completely abandoned such a resolution of the problem of the will and determinism.

But also the solution offered by bourgeois philosophy, with its claims to enlightenment critique and its illusion of having eliminated all arbitrary and revealed premises, remains equally misleading, because the problem of action is always reduced to the relationship between subject and object, and in the ancient and recent versions of the various idealistic systems the point of departure is sought in the individual subject, in the "I", precisely in which resides the mechanism of his thought and which then translates successively in the interventions of this "I" upon the natural and social environment. From this comes the political and legal lie of the bourgeois system, according to which man is free and, as a citizen, has the right to govern the commonwealth according to the opinion born inside his head and therefore also his own interests.

If it has thus thrown out all transcendent influence and every divine revelation, the Marxist interpretation of history and of human action has with no less decisiveness capsized the bourgeois schema of liberty and individual will, showing that it is the individual's needs and interests that explain his movement and action, and that his opinions and beliefs and what is called his conscience are only determined as the final effect of the most complicated influences.

Indeed, it is when we pass from the metaphysical concept of conscience and the will of the "I" to the real and scientific concept of theoretical conscience and the historical and political action of the class party, that the problem is posed clearly, and we can address the solution.

This solution has an original repercussion for the movement and the party of the modern proletariat, in that for the first time a social class appears which is not only driven to break up old systems and the old political and legal forms that impede the development of productive forces (a revolutionary task which

preceding classes also had), but for the first time carries out its struggle not in order to set up a new dominant class, but to establish productive relations which allow the elimination of economic pressure and the exploitation of one class by another.

Therefore the proletariat has at its disposal superior historical clarity, and in directing society, exercises more direct influence over events than the classes that preceded it could exercise.

This historical attitude and new faculty of the class party of the proletariat should be followed through the complex process of its manifestation in the sequence of historical events that the proletarian movement has encountered to date.

The revisionism of the Second International, which gave room for opportunism through the collaboration with bourgeois governments in both war and peace, was the manifestation of the influence that the peaceful and apparently progressive phase of the bourgeois world had on the proletariat towards the end of the 19th Century. At the time it seemed that the expansion of capitalism was not leading, as had been set out in Marx's classic schema, to the inexorable aggravation of class antagonisms and of exploitation and proletarian immiseration. It seemed, when the limits of the capitalist world could still be extended without arousing violent crises, that the standard of living of the working classes could gradually improve within the bourgeois system itself. Theoretically, reformism elaborated a scheme of evolution without clashes from a capitalist to a proletarian economy without conflict; practically, and consistently with the theory, it stated that the proletarian party could exert a positive influence, winning partial advances through the day-to-day trade union, cooperative, administrative and legislative activity, which would in addition expand the number of nuclei of the future socialist system within the body of the current one, which would gradually transform it in its entirety.

The idea of the task of the party was no longer that of a movement that would make everything dependent on the preparation of a final effort to attain the final goals, but was transformed into a substantially voluntarist and pragmatic idea, in the sense that day-to-day work was presented as a solid and definitive fulfillment, and counterposed against the emptiness of the passive expectation of a great future success that should arise from revolutionary struggle.

No less voluntaristic, also for its declared adherence to more recent bourgeois philosophies, was the syndicalist school of thought. Even if it spoke of open class conflict and the removal and abolition of the very bourgeois state mechanism that the reformists wanted to permeate with socialism, in reality, by localizing the struggle and social transformation to individual manufacturing companies, syndicalism also believed that proletarians would be able to

successively establish lots of victorious positions within islands of the capitalist world. The theory of factory councils put forward by the Italian movement of *Ordine Nuovo*, in which the international and historical unity of the class movement and of social transformation is fragmented in a series of positional gains within elements of the productive economy, in the name of a concrete and analytical preparation for action, was really a derivation of the syndicalist concept.

Returning to gradualist revisionism, it is clear that, as the maximum programmatic realization of the party's action was relegated to a secondary role, while partial and daily conquests were accorded the primary role, so the well-known tactic came to be publicly advocated of alliances and coalitions with groups and political parties that would from time to time consent to supporting the partial demands and reforms put forward by the proletarian party.

Even then, there was the substantial objection to this approach: that the alliance of the party with others, in a front which the political world divided into two on specific issues arising in the actuality of the moment, consequently distorted the party, clouding its theoretical clarity, weakening its organization and impairing its ability to frame the struggle of the proletarian masses in the revolutionary phase of the conquest of power.

The nature of the political struggle is such that the alliance of forces in two camps separated by opposing solutions to a unique contingent problem, polarizing all the actions of groups around this passing interest and this immediate purpose, and overwhelming any programmatic propaganda and any coherence with traditional principles, will determine orientations within militant groups that directly reflect and translate the demand for which they are fighting in an unrefined manner.

The task of the party, which was apparently a peaceful one to the socialists of the classical epoch, should have been to reconcile its intervention on specific issues and contingent victories with the conservation of its programmatic physiognomy and its ability to move on the terrain of its own struggle towards the general and final goal of the proletarian class. In effect, reformist practice not only made proletarians forget their class and revolutionary preparation, but led the very leaders and theoreticians of the movement to get rid of it, proclaiming that there was now no longer the need to worry about maximum objectives, that the final revolutionary crisis predicted by Marxism was also itself reducing to utopia, and that what mattered was daily conquests. The common currency of reformists and syndicalists was: "the goal is nothing, the movement is everything".

The crisis in this method presented itself powerfully with the war. This destroyed the historical assumption of an increasing tolerability of capitalist rule, since the accumulated collective resources of the bourgeoisie, in small part

handed over to the apparent improvement of the standard of economic life of the masses, were thrown into the furnace of war, so that not only all of the end-effects of reformist improvements vanished in the economic crisis, but the very lives of millions of proletarians were sacrificed. At the same time, while the still healthy section of the socialist movement deceived itself into thinking that such a violent representation of capitalist barbarism would have elicited the return of proletarian groups from a position of collaboration to one of open general struggle on the central question of the destruction of the bourgeois system, on the contrary, it was the crisis and failure of all, or nearly all, international proletarian organization.

The deferment of the agitational front and of immediate action that occurred in the years of reformist practice revealed itself as a fatal weakness, seeing as the class's maximum objectives ended up being forgotten and incomprehensible for proletarians. The tactical method of accepting the array of parties in two opposing coalitions according to country and contingency employing the most diverse variety of slogans (for a greater freedom of organization, for the extension of the right to vote, for the nationalization of some economic sectors, etc. etc.) was amply exploited by the dominant class to ill-fated effect, encouraging those political formations within the leadership of the proletariat, which represented social-patriotic degeneration.

Cleverly using the popularity accorded to the non-classist propaganda postulates of the Second International's large parties with their powerful mass organizations, it proved easy to throw their political preparation off course, demonstrating that it was in the interest of the proletariat, and even its road to socialism, to defend other outcomes at the same time, such as German civilization against feudal and theocratic Tsarism, or Western democracy against Teutonic militarism.

The labor movement's riposte to the betrayal of the Second International was the formation of the Third International, through the Russian Revolution. It must be said, however, that if the new International's restoration of revolutionary values as regards doctrinal principles, theoretical approach and the central question of State power was magnificent and all-encompassing, its organizational arrangements and its approach to its own tactics and to those of its member parties were not so comprehensive.

Its critique of the Second International opportunists was however comprehensive and unambiguous, not only as regards the latter's complete abandonment of Marxist principles, but also their tactic of coalition and collaboration with bourgeois governments and parties.

It was made very clear that the particularistic and contingent line adopted by the old socialist parties had not led to workers being guaranteed minor benefits and material improvements in exchange for them having renounced

their preparations for a wholesale attack on bourgeois institutions and power, but had led, by compromising both the minimum as well as the maximum outcomes, to a situation which was even worse, namely, one in which proletarian organizations, energy and combativeness, and proletarian individuals and lives, were being used not to achieve the political and social aims of their own class, but to reinforce capitalist imperialism. By means of the war the latter thus managed to overcome, for an entire historical period at least, the innate menace of the contradictions within its productive mechanism, and overcome the political crisis caused by the war and its repercussions by bending the political and trade union formations of its class adversary to its own will by embarking on a policy of national coalitions.

This, according to the Leninist critique, was tantamount to having completely perverted the role and the function of the proletarian class party, which isn't to protect the bourgeois fatherland or institutions of so-called bourgeois liberty from danger, but to keep the workers' forces drawn up on the movement's general historical line, the inevitable culminating point of which is the complete conquest of political power by overthrowing the bourgeois state.

It was a matter, in the immediate post-war period, when the so-called subjective conditions for revolution seemed unfavorable (i.e., the efficiency of the proletariat's organizations and political parties) but the objective conditions appeared favorable, due to the manifestation of a full-blown crisis in the bourgeois world, of redressing the main shortcoming with a speedy reorganization of the revolutionary international.

The process was dominated, and it could not have been otherwise, by the magnificent historical accomplishment of the first workers' revolutionary victory in Russia, which had allowed the great communist directives to re-emerge back into the light once more. But they wanted the tactics of the communist parties, which in other countries were a fusion of the socialist groups opposed to war opportunism, to be shaped in direct imitation of the tactics victoriously applied in Russia by the Bolshevik party, during its seizure of power in the historic struggle of February to November 1917.

Implementing this policy immediately prompted important debates about the International's tactical methods, and especially about the one known as the United Front, which consisted of frequently issued invitations to other proletarian and socialist parties for joint agitation and action with the aim of demonstrating the inadequacy of those parties' methods, in order to shift their traditional influence among the masses to the advantage of the communists.

Yet, despite the frank warnings of the Italian Left and other opposition groups, the leaders of the International didn't take account of the fact that this tactic of the United Front, by forcing revolutionary organizations alongside the very social-democratic, social-patriotic and opportunistic ones from which they

had just separated in implacable opposition, would not only disorientate the masses by making impossible the advantages this tactic was supposed to confer, but also – more seriously still – it would contaminate the revolutionary parties themselves. It is true that the revolutionary party is history's best and least restricted factor, but equally it never ceases to be its product, being subjected to transformation and change every time there is any modification of the social forces. The question of tactics shouldn't be thought of as being like the deliberate wielding of a weapon, which, wherever you aim it, stays the same; the party's tactics influence and modify the party itself. If it is true that no tactic should be condemned in the name of a priori dogmas, equally every tactic should be analyzed and discussed in the light of a question something like this: in possibly gaining for the party greater influence over the masses, might it not risk compromising the party's character and its capacity to lead these masses toward the final objective?

The adoption of the tactic of the United Front by the Third International showed, in fact, that the Communist International was also on the same road to opportunism that had led the Second International to liquidation and defeat. Characteristic of the tactics of opportunism had been the sacrifice of the final, total victory to partial and contingent successes; the United Front tactic revealed itself to be opportunist too, precisely insofar as it also sacrificed the primary, indispensable guarantee of final, total victory (the revolutionary capacity of the class party) in favor of contingent actions which would supposedly ensure the proletariat certain momentary and partial advantages (growth of the party's influence over the masses and greater proletarian cohesion in the struggle to gradually improve its material conditions and to maintain any advantages won).

In the circumstances of the post-First World War period, which seemed objectively revolutionary, the International's leadership was prompted by their concern – not entirely groundless – that they might be caught unawares and with scant support among the masses when a general European movement, with the potential to take power in some of the great capitalist countries, broke out. So important was the possibility of a rapid breakdown of the capitalist world to the Leninist International that today we can understand how, in the hope of leading ever greater masses into the struggle for the European revolution, they relaxed the admission criteria to admit movements which weren't genuine communist parties; and how they tried, with the flexible tactics of the United Front, to retain contact with the masses who were behind the hierarchies of parties which were oscillating between revolution and conservatism.

If the favorable eventuality had actually occurred, its impact on the politics and economy of the first proletarian power in Russia would have been so great it would have allowed an extremely rapid recovery of the communist movement's national and international organizations.

But as it was the less favorable outcome which came about instead, that of capitalism's relative recovery, the revolutionary proletariat had to take up the struggle again and go forward with a movement that had sacrificed its clear political approach and structural and organizational homogeneity, and was now exposed to new opportunistic degenerations.

Yet the error that opened the doors of the Third International to the new, more deadly opportunist wave wasn't just a miscalculation about the likelihood of the proletariat becoming revolutionary; it was an error of historical approach and interpretation consistent with wanting to generalize the experiences and methods of Russian Bolshevism, by applying them in countries where bourgeois, capitalist civilization had progressed much, much further. Russia before February 1917 was still a feudal country in which capitalist productive forces were fettered by antiquated relations of production. In this situation, analogous to France in 1789 and Germany in 1848, it was obvious that the proletarian party needed to fight against Tsarism, even if the establishment of a bourgeois capitalist regime, once Tsarism had been overthrown, seemed impossible to avoid; and it was consequently just as obvious that the Bolshevik party needed to enter into contact with other political groupings, contacts rendered necessary by the struggle against Tsarism. Between February and October 1917 the Bolshevik party encountered objective conditions which favored a much more ambitious scheme: that of grafting onto the overthrow of Tsarism a subsequent proletarian revolutionary victory. As a consequence, its tactical positions became more rigid, and it adopted a stance of open and ruthless struggle against all the other political formations, ranging from the reactionary supporters of a Tsarist feudal restoration to the Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. And yet the fact that a real possibility of a restoration of absolutist and theocratic absolutism was still to be feared, and the fact that in an extremely fluid and unstable situation the political and state formations controlled or influenced by the bourgeoisie still lacked any solidity or capacity to attract and absorb the autonomous proletarian forces; this put the Bolshevik party in a position where it could accept the need for provisional contacts and agreements with other organizations which had a proletarian following, as happened during the Kornilov episode.

By realizing the united front against Kornilov, the Bolshevik party was actually struggling against a feudal reactionary restoration; what is more, the Bolsheviks didn't have to worry about the Menshevik and Socialist Revolutionary organizations being better organized, which might have enabled them to exert influence on the party, nor was it worried that the level of solidity and consistency of the state power was such as to have allowed the latter to derive any advantage from the contingent alliance with the Bolsheviks, by turning it against them later on.

The circumstances and relations of forces in countries where bourgeois civilization was more advanced were, however, completely different. In these countries there was no longer any prospect of a reactionary restoration of

feudalism (and even more so today!), and therefore the *raison d'être* for possible joint actions with other parties was entirely lacking. What is more, in these countries state power and bourgeois groupings were so entrenched in power and so used to wielding it that one could reasonably predict that the proletariat's autonomous organizations, if pushed into frequent and close contact with them via the tactic of the United Front, would almost inevitably be influenced and progressively absorbed by them.

Once it had ignored this profound difference of circumstances, and chosen to apply the Bolsheviks' tactical methods to the advanced countries, tactics which were adapted to the situation of the nascent bourgeois regime in Russia, the Communist International would lurch from one disaster to another, leading eventually to its inglorious liquidation.

The tactic of the United Front was extended to the point of launching slogans which diverged from the party's programmatic ones on the question of the State by supporting the installation of workers' governments, that is: governments composed of a mixture of communist and social-democrat representatives, able to attain power by the normal parliamentary means, without having to violently destroy the bourgeois state machine. This "Workers' Government" slogan would be presented at the Fifth Congress of the Communist International as the natural and logical corollary of the United Front tactic; and it would go on to be applied in Germany, resulting in a grave defeat for the German proletariat and its communist party.

With the open and progressive degeneration of the International after the Fourth Congress, the watchword of the United Front served to introduce the perverse tactic of forming electoral blocs with parties that were not only non-communist, but even non-proletarian, creating popular fronts, supporting bourgeois governments, in other words – and this is where the most recent issue arises – of proclaiming that in situations where the bourgeois fascist counter-offensive had obtained the monopoly of power, the workers' party, suppressing the struggle for its own specific ends, had to form the left wing of an anti-fascist coalition no longer embracing proletarian parties alone, but also bourgeois and liberal parties with the objective of combating bourgeois totalitarian regimes and putting in place coalition governments of all the bourgeois and proletarian parties opposed to fascism. Starting with the United Front of the proletarian class, we thus arrive at national unity of all the classes, bourgeois and proletarian, dominant and dominated, exploiting and exploited. That is to say, starting from a debatable and contingent tactical movement, having the absolute autonomy of the communist and revolutionary organizations as its declared precondition, we arrive at the effective liquidation of this autonomy and the negation not just of Bolshevik revolutionary intransigence, but also of Marxist class concept itself.

This progressive development on the one hand results in a gratuitous contrast with the tactical theses of the first congresses of the International themselves and the classical solutions supported by Lenin in *Left-wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*, and on the other hand, after the experience of 20-plus years of life of the International, authorizes the assertion that the enormous deviation from the first aim resulted, in parallel with the adverse sequence of events of the anti-capitalist revolutionary struggle, from the initially inadequate formulation of the tactical tasks of the party.

Today it is possible to conclude, without recalling the totality of the key arguments from the texts of the contemporary discussions, that the balance-sheet of over-elastic and over-manipulated tactics not only had negative results; it was absolutely ruinous.

The communist parties under the leadership of the Comintern tried repeatedly and in all countries to use the situations in a revolutionary way with United Front maneuvers, and then oppose the so-called triumph of the bourgeois right with the tactic of left-wing blocs. This tactic only provoked resounding defeats. From Germany to France, to China and Spain, the attempted coalitions not only failed to move the masses away from opportunist parties and from bourgeois or petty-bourgeois influence to revolutionary and communist influence, they favored the success of the inverse game, in the interest of anti-communists. The communist parties either became the object, when the coalitions broke down, of ruthless reactionary attacks by their former allies, bringing them the heaviest defeats in their attempt to struggle alone, or, absorbed into coalitions, degenerated totally, to the extent that they became practically indistinguishable from the opportunist parties.

It is true that, between 1928 and 1934 a phase took place in which the Comintern went back to the slogan of autonomous positions and independent struggle, returning all of a sudden to the polemical and oppositional front against bourgeois leftist and social-democratic currents. But this brusque tactical volte face only produced the most absolute disorientation in the communist parties, and did not offer a single historical success in the annihilation of either the fascist counter-offensive or the joint actions of bourgeois coalitions against the proletariat.

The cause of these failures must be traced back to the fact that successive tactical slogans have rained down on the parties and their structures appearing as unexpected surprises, with the communist organization caught totally unprepared for the various eventualities. The tactical plans of the party, on the contrary, even if they do predict a variety of situations and conduct, cannot and must not become the esoteric monopoly of leadership circles; they must be strictly coordinated with and consistent with theory, with the political consciousness of the militants, with the movement's traditions, and they must permeate the organization such that it is always prepared in advance and able to

predict how the party's unitary structure will respond towards favorable and unfavorable events in the course of the struggle. To expect more, and different, things from the party, and to believe that it won't be wrecked by unforeseen blows to its tactical rudder, does not amount to having a fuller and more revolutionary concept of the party, but clearly constitutes, as proven by historical facts, the classical process defined by the term opportunism, which either leads the revolutionary party to dissolution and ruin under the defeatist influence of bourgeois politics, or to find itself more vulnerable and disarmed in the face of repression.

When the level of development in society and the course of events lead the proletariat to serve ends that are not its own, consisting of the false revolutions which the bourgeoisie now and again apparently needs, it is opportunism that wins; the class party falls into crisis, its direction passes over to bourgeois influences, and the recovery of the proletarian path cannot happen except with the split away from the old parties, the formation of new nuclei and the national and international reconstruction of the proletarian political organization.

In conclusion, the tactic that the international proletarian party will apply, attaining its reconstruction in all countries, will have to be based on the following directives.

The practical experience of opportunist crises and of the struggles led by left-wing Marxists against the revisionists of the Second International and against the progressive deviations of the Third International has shown that you cannot keep the party's program, political tradition and solidity of organization intact if the party applies a tactic which, even if only formally, entails attitudes and slogans that are acceptable to opportunist political movements.

Similarly, every uncertainty and ideological indulgence has its reflection in an opportunist tactic and action.

The party, therefore, differentiates itself from all the others, whether declared enemies or alleged kindred spirits, and even from those who claim to recruit their followers from the ranks of the working class, because its political praxis rejects the maneuvers, alliances and blocs that are traditionally formed on the basis of postulates and slogans common to several parties.

This party position has an essentially historical value, which distinguishes it in the tactical domain from all the others, exactly as does its original vision of the period that capitalist society is currently going through.

The revolutionary class party is the only one to understand that the economic, social and political postulates of liberalism and democracy are today anti-historical, illusory and reactionary, and that the world is now in the phase in

which, in the large countries, liberal organization is disappearing and giving way to a more modern, fascist system.

By contrast, in the period in which the capitalist class had not yet initiated its liberal cycle, had still to overthrow the old feudal power, or even in some important countries had to go through notable stages and phases of expansion, still laissez-faire as regards economic processes and democratic as regards the State; in these cases a transitory alliance of the communists with these parties was comprehensible and acceptable: in the first case, with parties that were openly revolutionary, anti-legalist and organized for the armed struggle, and in the second, with parties that still played a role assuring useful and genuinely "progressive" conditions, allowing the capitalist regime to speed up the cycle which must lead to its downfall.

This change in communist tactics, which corresponds with the passage from one historical period to another, cannot be reduced to a local and national case study, nor become dissipated in the analysis of the complex uncertainties which the historic evolution of capitalism undoubtedly presents, without resulting in the practice deplored by Lenin in *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*.

The politics of the proletarian party has, above all, been international (and this distinguishes it from all others) ever since its program was formulated for the first time and since the historic need for its effective organization first arose. As the *Manifesto* states, the communists, who support every revolutionary movement everywhere against the existing social and political order, put forward and assert, alongside the question of property, the common interests of the entire proletariat, who are independent of any nationality.

And the revolutionary strategy of the communists, until it was corrupted by Stalinism, has inspired an international tactic looking to achieve the breakthrough in the bourgeois front in the country where the best opportunities appear, mobilizing all of the resources of the movement to this end.

Consequently the tactic of insurrectionary alliances against the old regimes ends historically with the great event of the Russian revolution, which eliminated the last great state and military apparatus of a non-capitalist character.

After this phase, the possibility, even theoretical, of tactical blocs must be formally and centrally denounced by the international revolutionary movement.

The excessive importance given, during the first years in the life of the Third International, to the application of the Russian tactic in countries with a stable bourgeois regime, as well as to extra-European and colonial countries, was the first manifestation of the re-emergence of the revisionist peril.

The second imperialist war, and its already evident consequences, are characterized by the preponderant influence, extended to all regions of the world, even those where the most backward forms of indigenous society survive, not so much of powerful capitalist economic forms as the inexorable political and military control exercised by the great imperial center of capitalism, for now brought together in a gigantic coalition, which includes the Russian State.

Consequently local tactics can only be aspects of the general revolutionary strategy, which above all must be to restore the programmatic clarity of the global proletarian party, and then to rebuild the network of its organization in each country.

This struggle unfolds within a framework in which the illusions and the seductions of opportunism hold sway to the maximum extent: propaganda in favor of the crusade for liberty against fascism in the ideological domain, and in the practical politics of coalitions, blocs, fusions and illusory demands presented in concert by the leaderships of innumerable parties, groups and movements.

In only one way will it be possible for the proletarian masses to understand the need for the reconstruction of the revolutionary party, substantially different from all others: that is, by proclaiming the historically irrevocable repudiation of the practice of agreements between parties not as a contingent reaction to the opportunistic saturnalia and the acrobatic combinations of politicians, but rather as a fundamental and central directive.

Even in transitory phases, none of the movements that the party participates alongside must be directed by a super-party or by a higher movement standing above a group of affiliated parties.

In the modern historical phase of global politics, the proletarian masses will only be able to mobilize for revolutionary goals by achieving their class unity around a single party that is solid in its theory, in its action, in the preparation for the insurrectionary assault, and in the management of power.

This historical solution must, in any manifestation of the party, even limited, appear to the masses as the only possible alternative to oppose the consolidation of the international economic and political domination of the bourgeoisie and its formidable capacity – not definitive, but today growing ever stronger – to control the contradictions and the convulsions that threaten the existence of its regime.