OVER-PRODUCTION CRISIS LEADS TO IMPERIALIST WAR

*"**In these crises, a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically DESTROYED. In these crises, there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity — the epidemic of OVER-PRODUCTION**. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation, had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? **Because there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce.** The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? **On the one hand by enforced DESTRUCTION of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the CONQUEST of new markets, and by the more thorough EXPLOITATION of the old ones.** That is to say, by **paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises**, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented."* (Manifesto of the Communist Party, K. Marx y F. Engels, 1848).

The key words of this passage that films all capitalist crises are: **OVERPRODUCTION**, **DESTRUCTION**, **CONQUEST** and **EXPLOITATION**. The subsequent development of capitalism has only confirmed this.

The tendency of the rate of profit to fall

Capital is composed of constant capital **c** (means of production: raw materials and machinery wear and tear), variable capital **v** (paid labor time or wages) and surplus-value **s** (unpaid labor time of the working class). The division $s' = {}^{s}/_{v}$ gives us the rate of surplus-value or degree of exploitation: unpaid time / paid time. The division $p' = {}^{s}/_{(c+v)}$ expresses the rate or share of profit, the surplus value extracted divided by the total invested capital: *"The rate of profit is the motive power of capitalist production. Things are produced only so long as they can be produced with a profit."* (Das Kapital, Volume III, Chapter XV, K. Marx). formulates the lapidary condemnation of the capitalist system, **the rate of profit tends to decrease with its own development**: *"The progressive tendency of the general rate of profit to fall is, therefore, just an expression peculiar to the capitalist mode of production of the progressive development of the social productivity of labour."* (Das Kapital, Volume III, Chapter XIII, K. Marx).

If we call **T** the entire working day (**s** + **v**, unpaid time plus paid time), we can divide the numerator and denominator of **p'** by **T**. We will obtain an equivalent version of the formula in which all the components refer to the whole working day: s_T is the ratio of surplus value to total working time (between 0 and 100%), v_T is the ratio of wages to total working time (between 0 and 100%), c_T is the value of raw materials and machinery wear processed in a day (between 0 and infinity).

$$p' = \frac{s}{c+v} = \frac{{}^{s}/_{T}}{{}^{c}/_{T} + {}^{v}/_{T}} = \frac{[0:1]}{[0:\infty] + [0:1]}$$

Let us look at the most favorable case to capitalism, with wages tending to zero and practically the entire working day as surplus value. $v \to 0$, s→ T:

$$p' = \frac{s_T}{c_T + v_T} \to \frac{1}{{}^{c}/_{T} + 0} = \frac{1}{c/T}$$

But... what is ${}^{c}/_{T}$ but the **degree of technological development** which only increases exponentially with the development of capitalism? A constant numerator (1) divided by a denominator that only increases, tends to 0. Therefore, historically and despite the increase in the degree of exploitation, the rate of profit tends to fall:

$$rate\ of\ profit = p' = \frac{s}{c+v} \to 0$$

Marx also enumerates the causes that make this law a tendency: the increasing intensity of exploitation, the depression of wages below the value of labor power, cheapening of elements of constant capital, relative over-population, foreign trade and the increase of stock capital.

But the tendency to fall of the rate of profit prevails and forces an increase in competition between capitalists, a sharpening of the commercial war between them and the necessary destruction of means of production and labor power (the denominator of division!) to relaunch another anarchic and chaotic cycle of accumulation for accumulation's sake.

Destruction to overcome over-production

Let us see with Marx the *exposition of the internal contradictions of the law* of the tendency to fall:

*"A portion of the old capital has to lie unused under all circumstances; it has to give up its characteristic quality as capital, so far as acting as such and producing value is concerned. **The competitive struggle would decide what part of it would be particularly affected**. (…) **The class, as such, must inevitably lose. How much the individual capitalist must bear of the loss, i.e., to what extent he must share in it at all, is decided by STRENGTH and CUNNING**, and competition then becomes a fight among hostile brothers. (…) the loss is distributed in very different proportions and forms, depending on special advantages or previously captured positions, so that **one capital is left unused, another is DESTROYED**, and a third suffers but a relative loss, or is just temporarily depreciated, etc.*

*But **the equilibrium would be restored under all circumstances through the withdrawal or even the DESTRUCTION of more or less capital. This would extend partly to the material substance of capital** (…)*

***The stagnation of production would have laid off a part of the working-class** and would thereby have placed the employed part in a situation, where it would have to submit to a reduction of wages even below the average.*

The ensuing stagnation of production would have prepared – within capitalistic limits – a subsequent expansion of production. And thus the cycle would run its course anew.** (…) **For the rest, the same vicious circle would be described once more under expanded conditions of production, with an expanded market and increased productive forces." (Das Kapital, Volume III,

Chapter XV, K. Marx)

The only way for capital to run its cycle again (vicious circle) is the forced destruction of a mass of productive forces. These productive forces include the material substance of capital itself and labor power, the only source of surplus value. This destruction takes place simultaneously with the conquest of new markets and the more intense exploitation of the old ones, in a struggle of competition in which the decisive factors are force and cunning. For the working class, this means: overexploitation of the employed ones, being cannon fodder for the war between capitalists and the liquidation of the overpopulation unfit for capitalist exploitation.

The ultimate reason for war in capitalism, then, is not victory but destruction: ***"War is the capitalist solution to the crisis; the massive destruction of facilities, means of production and products allows production to recover, and the massive destruction of men remedies the periodic "over-population" that goes hand in hand with over-production."*** (Auswitch or the Big Alibi, Programme Communiste, 1960).

Communists in the face of imperialist war

The Communist International, reorganization of the proletarian movement driven by the victorious Bolshevik revolution in Russia, rising on the ruins of the betrayal of the leaders of the Second International, declared the world proletariat:

*" **'Remember the imperialist war!'** These are the first words addressed by the Communist International to every working man and woman; wherever they live and whatever language they speak. Remember that because of the existence of capitalist society a handful of imperialists were able to force the workers of the different countries for four long years to cut each other's throats. Remember that the war of the bourgeoisie conjured up in Europe and throughout the world the most frightful famine and the most appalling misery. **Remember that without the overthrow of capitalism the repetition of such robber wars is not only possible but inevitable!**"* (Statutes of the Communist International, 2nd Congress, 1920).

In 1920 it was clear to all communists precisely that the fact that the imperialist war was a result of the crisis of relative overproduction of capital imposed the international character of the emancipation of the working class: *"The imperialist war confirmed once again the truth of what could be read in the statutes of the First International: **the emancipation of the working class is neither a local nor a national task but a social and international task.**"* (Statutes of the Communist International, 2nd Congress, 1920).

This was before the severe tactical errors of the "political united front", of the "workers government", of the "workers and peasants government", destroyed the International itself, turning it into a branch subordinated to the needs of the construction of capitalism in Russia. Already in 1934, Stalinist Russia had entered the League of Nations, stigmatized by Lenin as a "thieves' kitchen". In 1943, in the midst of the Second World War, Stalinism dissolved the corpse of the International in order to better divide Europe and the world with the rest of the imperialist powers.

Well, after having exposed all this, in the present situation in which capitalism has spread to the last corner of the world and in the face of the deepening of the current crisis of overproduction and the sharpening of the conflicts between imperialist powers, **what is the international position of the communists?**

Today as yesterday, the communist militant position is that of **revolutionary defeatism**, the transformation of the imperialist war into revolutionary civil war:

*"6. It is the duty of any party wishing to belong to the Third International to expose, not only avowed social-patriotism, but also the falsehood and hypocrisy of social-pacifism. It must systematically demonstrate to the workers that, **without the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, no international arbitration courts, no talk about a reduction of armaments, no "democratic" reorganisation of the League of Nations will save mankind from new imperialist wars.**"* (Terms of Admission into Communist International, 2nd Congress, 1920)

*"How will proletarian women oppose this? Only by cursing all war and everything military, only be demanding disarmament? **The women of an oppressed and really revolutionary class will never accept that shameful role**. They will say to their sons: "You will soon be grown up. You will be given a gun. Take it and learn the military art properly. The proletarians need this knowledge not to shoot your brothers, the workers of other countries, as is being done in the present war, and as the traitors to socialism are telling you to do. They need it **to fight the bourgeoisie of their own country, to put an end to exploitation, poverty and war, and not by pious wishes, but by defeating and disarming the bourgeoisie**.""* (The military programme of the proletarian revolution, Lenin, 1916).

*"The proletariat must not only oppose all such wars, but **must also wish for the defeat of its 'own' government** in such wars and **utilise its defeat for revolutionary insurrection**, if an insurrection to prevent the war proves unsuccessful."* (The military programme of the proletarian revolution, Lenin, 1916). Only in this way will we free ourselves definitively from crises and wars, from exploitation and oppression:

*"**Our slogan must be: arming of the proletariat to defeat, expropriate and disarm the bourgeoisie.** (…) **Only after the proletariat has disarmed the bourgeoisie will it be able, without betraying its world-historic mission, to consign all armaments to the scrap-heap**. And the proletariat will undoubtedly do this, but only when this condition has been fulfilled, certainly not before."* (The military programme of the proletarian revolution, Lenin, 1916).

If it is true that capitalism leads inevitably to imperialist war, it is no less true that communists will not miss this crossroads to convert this reactionary war into a revolutionary war that will be the tomb of capitalism. Unavoidable condition: a single communist party for all the states of the world, rejecting any ally, firmly founded on the integral Marxist doctrine.

*"The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. **The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.***

Working Men of All Countries, Unite!" (Manifesto of the Communist Party, 1848).