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## **The interpretation of the nature of current crisis decides communist parties' activity**

*Article by Nicola P. member of the editorial staff of the magazine [La Voce](#) del (nuovo)PCI for N° 36 (February 2010) of International Newsletter, organ of [ICMLPO](#) (International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations)*

It is very important, indeed it is essential that we correctly understand the nature of the current crisis. In the 11<sup>th</sup> of the *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845), Marx says: "The philosophers have only given different interpretations of the world. But the question is to transform it." On the other side, in the *Communist Party's Manifesto* (1848) Marx says that the Communists are distinguished from other proletarians because they have a more advanced understanding of conditions, forms and results of the struggle between classes and on this basis they keep pushing it forward. The interpretation of the world is not the goal of us Communists. Our goal is the transformation of the world. But people need to represent to themselves, to have an idea of what they do. The socialist revolution is not something instinctive. Lenin strongly taught (*What Has To Be Done?*) that the theory that guides the communist movement does not arise at all spontaneously from experience. It has to be elaborated by the Communists who, for this purpose, have to use the most sophisticated tools of knowledge that humanity has. The Communists took it to the working class that, for the position it occupies in capitalist society, is especially predisposed to assimilate and to take it as a guide for its actions. The practical communist movement can grow beyond a basic level only if it is guided by a revolutionary theory. Our action to transform the world, other things being equal, is all the more effective the more just and advanced is our understanding of the world. Only with a fairly good understanding of the nature of the crisis which we are involved in, we can make the socialist revolution, and the second wave of the proletarian revolution will bring humanity to finally overcome capitalism, to build socialism all over the world on the way towards Communism.

The interpretation we give to the world has a great importance for our political purposes. It influences our political activities, making it more or less effective. It is therefore necessary that we Communists take the time and attention needed to test and improve our understanding of the current crisis.

Even today many Communists interpret the current crisis by transposing in the present the interpretation that Marx gave of the crises of the capitalist countries in the first part of the Nineteenth Century, as if the current crisis would be of the same kind of ten-year cyclical crises described by Marx, as if it would be like those with the only difference that now it is global. This attitude is one of the manifestations of **dogmatism** that rages still in the communist movement and makes much of its activity fruitless and its action inconclusive.

The cyclical crises described by Marx in the 1<sup>st</sup> book of *The Capital* are over. Already in 1886 preface to the English edition of the 1<sup>st</sup> book of *The Capital* Engels pointed out that the latest of the cyclical crises of capitalism, the latest crisis of the same nature of those described by Marx, occurred in 1867 and that since 1873 capitalist countries were instead entered into a long and painful depression which in 1886 they still did not see the end.

The cyclical crises belong to the era of pre-imperialist capitalism, when economic relations were characterized by free

competition between many capitals. They were economic crises. They were determined by the anarchical proceeding of business and the solution of those crises was coming from the same economic movement of capitalist society. The fall of the business also created the conditions for their resumption. Not by chance the crises were cyclical, and the cycle lasted about a decade. When the imperialist phase began, on one hand the capitalist societies equipped themselves with large-scale systems and organisms that attenuate the amplitude of cyclical fluctuations of business: the Antithetical Forms of Social Unity, which Marx already described in the *Grundrisse*. On the other hand, the general crises of capitalism began. These are crises that have their basis in the absolute overproduction of capital. Marx explains what this is in chapter 15 of the 3<sup>rd</sup> book of *The Capital*: the capitalists have accumulated too much capital and *in the existing political and social context* they can no longer continue to accumulate and increase in value all it by producing goods. The political and social context must be disrupted and replaced by another. It is only by this political and social (and cultural, of course) upheaval that the solution of the general crisis comes. The solution does not come either by the anarchist proceeding of business, or by the economic measures governments and other social institutions could take. So the economic crisis becomes political and cultural.

The long depression mentioned by Engels in his preface of 1886 brought the major powers to divide the world among them (the Conference of Berlin occurred astride 1884 and 1885) and made the world enter in the imperialist phase of capitalism: the era in which economic relations are no longer characterized by free competition between many capitalists but by the dominance of monopolies in the production of commodities and by the dominance of financial capital on the capital employed in the production of commodities (Lenin, *The imperialism ...*). It is the era in which capitalism has exhausted its civilizing role and has become a parasite. In this era, the bourgeoisie in capitalist countries has politically allied and combined with the residual feudal forces (especially in Europe with the Catholic Church – the Vatican of Leon XIII). In the political and cultural field the bourgeoisie has become undemocratic, reactionary, militaristic and repressive. In the colonies it has combined with the feudal forces and has divided the world into imperialist countries and oppressed countries.

The very first real general crisis of the imperialist era took place in the first half of last century. It brought humanity to the two world wars and created the long revolutionary situation which covers the entire first part of last century. It was a period of instability of political regimes all around the world. In its ambit, it developed the first wave of world proletarian revolution that created the first socialist countries and spread communist movement all over the world. So, it was a great advancement, even if it ended with a temporary defeat: this is something that is beyond the understanding and the limits of the outlook not only of bourgeoisie and clergy's open spokespeople, but also of Trotskyites, anarchists and "not communist left".

One of the main reasons why the Communist movement did not succeed to establish socialism in the imperialist countries and therefore to put a definitive end to capitalism consists exactly in the inadequate understanding of the nature of the general crisis in progress and of its economic foundations by the communist parties of the imperialist countries. Despite Lenin and Stalin's discoveries and teachings, substantially in the imperialist countries the parties of the Communist International remained anchored in the interpretation that Marx had given of the cyclical economic crises that the capitalist countries crossed in the first part of the Nineteenth Century. All the analyses of E.S. Varga, the greatest economist of the Communist International, remain in that ambit. They describe the fluctuations in the economic movement, not the long-term general phenomenon, still less the resulting political and cultural crisis from which the resolution of the general crisis comes. The communist parties of the imperialist countries were not able then to carry out their work despite their large growth, the heroism of millions of their members and their historic commitment to the successful struggle against fascism. The imperialist bourgeoisie managed to maintain the direction of the imperialist countries. Thanks to the turmoil produced by the two world wars and related social, political and cultural movements, it

was able to start again the accumulation of capital and to begin again to broaden the production of commodities on a large scale for several decades (1945-1975). On the contrary, the thrust the first wave of proletarian revolution impressed to the progress of humanity diminished almost to extinction. Modern revisionism took the direction of the communist movement, corroded and disrupted it on a large scale, made the first socialist countries regress, brought them to ape the imperialist countries and to depend on them, until they collapsed. The struggle the Communists led by Mao at the head of the Chinese Communist Party opposed to modern revisionism and to its destructive work did not serve to arrest the decline of the communist movement. Anyway, in particular thanks to the Great Cultural Proletarian Revolution, it gave great teachings to all the Communists who were able to get them. Thanks to them the communist movement is born again all over the world, struggling against **dogmatism** and **economism** that still restrain its impulse and its rebirth.

The capitalist world has entered its second general crisis since the 70s of last century. Capitalism could not escape the absolute overproduction of capital: it is the limit to development, the limit inherent to capitalism itself. Capitalism is bound to bump unavoidably into this limit. It took only thirty years after the Second World War for the bourgeoisie to find itself again to face a general crisis, but in the new conditions created by the first wave of proletarian revolution and by its decline. It had again accumulated too much capital and cannot continue to accumulate and increase in value all the capital accumulated producing commodities *in the political and social context created during the first general crisis*.

The inclusion in the global imperialist system of most of the first socialist countries, particularly China and Russia, has partially changed the situation but has not fundamentally altered the course of events. For the first time, the environmental crisis added to the general crisis of capitalism and the two crises together determine the objective conditions in which the rebirth of the communist movement develops and the second wave of proletarian revolution advances throughout the world. It will continue to advance, because mankind is a species provided with intelligence. During the many millennia of its evolution from a state similar to that of other animal species to its current state, it has been able to solve all the problems of its survival. Today it has the material, moral and intellectual means to overcome capitalism and establish socialism, and to end the devastation produced by capitalism and to definitely improve the natural conditions of the Planet. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is the revolutionary conception of the world that guides the rebirth of the communist movement. Only through this conception the communist parties shall be able to transform themselves and to grow until they will be equal to the tasks they have to carry out.

A just and adequate understanding of the nature and causes of the new general crisis and of the conditions of its solution is essential to form communist parties adequate to the historical tasks of this phase. So, it is essential a right analysis of the experience of the 160-years history of the communist movement and in particular of the experience of the first wave of proletarian revolution and of the first socialist countries. **Marxism-Leninism-Maoism** is this. That is why the fight for his assertion is the main aspect of proletarian internationalism. The main help that every communist party can give to the other ones, is to contribute to the understanding, assimilation and assertion of the right theory of general crisis and of the right analysis of the communist movement, so that each party could draw the right conclusions for constructing the socialist revolution in his country taking into account its particular characteristics, and so contributing to the common task of the world proletarian revolution.

One of the most important conclusions is that socialist revolution by its nature is not a popular uprising that breaks out and where the communist party, which has been well prepared for the event, avails itself of the opportunity to seize the power and to establish socialism. The socialist revolution is not an event that breaks out, as determined by the worsening economic and social conditions, by the suffering which the bourgeoisie imperialist constrains to the mass of the population, by the propaganda of the communist parties and by the organization of the popular masses. Communists

expecting the socialist revolution to break out will be disappointed again and again, today as they were in the past. Some will even draw reactionary conclusions: they will impute to masses' backwardness and cowardice, to oppressed classes' nature what is mainly due to communist parties' backwardness. Already in 1895, in the Introduction to *Class Struggles in France from 1848 to 1850* Engels pointed out that, unlike the bourgeois revolution, the socialist revolution by its nature does not break out, but it must be built by the communist party. As Lenin and Stalin (*Principles of Leninism*) taught, by constructing large mass organizations of the working class and of the other classes of the masses, the Second International (1889-1914) contributed to the construction of the socialist revolution in the capitalist countries. But most of the parties that composed it were not guided by a correct conception of the world, particularly of the general crisis of capitalism, of the long lasting revolutionary situation it generates and of the nature of the socialist revolution. They expected that the socialist revolution broke out instead of building it step by step, year after year, as a revolutionary people's war that leads to the establishment of socialism in every country, and then, in combination with the other countries, to the world proletarian revolution. They instead assumed as their sole or at least their main task the mobilization of the masses into struggles of demands, their cultural organization and their participation in the bourgeois political struggle, convinced that doing so they were preparing themselves to "seize the opportunity" of the revolution that would break out. In the imperialist countries the parties of the Communist International (1919-1943, but actually dissolved in 1956) have traced the same way, even though to a higher level of organization and international links. Many communist parties, especially in the imperialist countries, are still stagnant at this conception of their tasks and that the very experience of the first wave of proletarian revolution has proved to be inadequate. **Dogmatism** and **economism** are the main restraint to the revival of the communist movement. What the leaders do not understand, in their way the masses, especially the advanced workers, feel: in fact they do not join the efforts of dogmatic and economist new parties (even if these parties in all honesty claim themselves revolutionary, Marxist-Leninist and even Maoist) to follow the path that the experience has already shown to be bankrupt.

In 2008, with the financial crisis began in the U.S., the second general crisis has entered its terminal phase. Even in the richest imperialist countries (in the U.S. and the EU) a growing number of workers, millions and millions, are thrown into the street and add to the huge mass of hundreds of millions of workers in the oppressed countries against which for decades the imperialist bourgeoisie has been leading an undeclared war of extermination on a large scale in every corner of the world. The imperialist states cannot afford to endlessly expand unemployment benefits and other social security cushions because their budget deficits, the loans they take out and their debts further disrupt monetary and financial system, whose instability and crashes they instead should remedy, because a stable financial and monetary system is the condition and the support of their whole world. Then the terminal phase may not extend for long.

Given the nature of the current crisis, it does not admit "a way out done only or mainly of economic measures". It is not enough that the States create conditions to make the capitalists see more profit in the production of commodities rather than in financial speculation: this is the solution advocated by the moderate bourgeois right. Nor it is enough that the States distribute monetary income to the classes that will surely spend it for consumption: a solution supported by the bourgeois left and by the Communists who think that the current crisis is of the same kind of the cyclical crises of the Nineteenth Century and then apparently, denying evidence, believe also that the general crisis of the first part of last century has been resolved thanks to the Keynesian policies of the bourgeois state.

We can go out of the current crisis only by a political and cultural upheaval, creating a different social context. Basically, in the next future there are two and only two ways out, in every single country and internationally.

Or the revolutionary mobilization of the popular masses led by the Communist parties equal to their tasks, namely, by parties who dare to think that the socialist revolution is possible and understand that it is Communists' task to build it campaign after campaign, as a protracted revolutionary people's war until the establishment of socialism.

Or the reactionary mobilization of the masses. In fact, also the imperialist bourgeoisie and other reactionary classes are looking for a way out of the current situation. They need it and have it unless we stop them in time. In short, for bourgeois groups determined to halt the revolutionary mobilization and to prevent the disappearance of their world, the only feasible and realistic way to end the crisis is to mobilize that part of the masses they are able to mobilize under their direction for throwing it against the rest of the masses and drag it all to plunder the rest of the world: the imperialist war. It would be the continuation by other means of the politics that they lead today. The environmental crisis and the general crisis of capitalism combine to provide to the more far-sighted, more determined, more adventurous and more criminal bourgeois groups adequate excuses to mobilize masses against masses, countries against countries, a coalition against another.

The interpretation we give to the crisis is therefore a decisive factor.

The (n) PCI (new Italian Communist Party) calls the Communists all around the world, but particularly those of the imperialist countries, to join a true conception of the current crisis and of our tasks.