

*Without revolutionary theory
there can be no revolutionary movement.*
V. I. Lenin, *What is to be done?*

Revolutionary Marxism 2018

Special annual English edition

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Cover Photo

As 1917 advanced, the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies became increasingly the major centre of power.

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In this issue

The first issue of *Revolutionary Marxism*, the English-language annual publication of the Turkish journal *Devrimci Marksizm*, appeared at the end of 2016. It was distributed and sold around the world from Beirut to Buenos Aires, from San Petersburg to Skopje, from Milan to Montevideo. It may not have sold in the thousands, but on its modest scale, it perfectly fulfilled the mission it was meant for: to contribute to internationalism in militant Marxist theory, leading naturally to proletarian internationalism in the political and organisational spheres, in the Middle East and North Africa, in the Balkans and the Caucasus, in the Mediterranean and Eurasian regions, and in the world at large. In line with this goal, we have now taken a new step and included translations of the editorial piece you are now reading into several other languages, which we are publishing at the end of the edition. This way we can at least transmit the gist of our message to people around the world who cannot read English, but are interested in the voice of internationalist and revolutionary Marxism.

This second issue, *Revolutionary Marxism 2018*, aims to continue working towards the same goal, with a primary focus on the Middle East, with a companion article leaning on the question of the reactionary movements in the imperialist countries, with a special dossier on the October revolution on its centenary celebrating that great festival of the people, with an article looking into the demise one of the countries (Bulgaria) where a workers' state existed until the fall of the Berlin Wall, and with an article that turns our attention to that great masterpiece on the present and the future of humanity, *Das Kapital*, on the 150th anniversary of the publication of its first volume.

The first issue, in its introduction and in several of its topical articles, characterised the world situation by placing the now decade-long economic crisis after the financial crash of 2008 in the centre as a backdrop to several parallel processes: the

rise of proto-fascism around the world; the concomitant rise of the Islamic takfiri-sectarian movement, with its most salient example in Daesh or ISIL; the increasing threat of regional wars turning into a world war; and the rise of the people's revolt both in insurrectionary (Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Bahrain, Wall Street, Greece, Spain, Turkey, Brasil, the Balkans etc.) and parliamentary (Podemos, Syriza, Sanders, Corbyn, and most prominently the Frente de Izquierda (FIT) in Argentina) forms since 2011.

As the issue came out immediately after the election of Donald Trump to the highest office in the most powerful imperialist country in the world, this singular event formed the point of entry into a discussion of the new international reactionary phenomenon variously called "populism", "extreme right", "nationalism" etc. Our early diagnosis that Donald Trump was a "loose cannon fascist", a fascist without an established party and paramilitary troops, or, in still other words, a proto-fascist, was amply confirmed by the facts of the past year. The word "fascist" has been in wide circulation, in particular in the wake of the Charlottesville events, to depict Trump's attitude after he light-heartedly and repeatedly condoned the action of white supremacists and self-declared neo-Nazis. Steve Bannon, the top ideologue of the so-called "alt-right" is no longer in office, but is still palpably the alter ego of the US president, carrying out statesman-like visits to countries like China to sound out the situation before the president himself visits the country. Beyond the borders of the US, on the international scene, the liberal establishment has been too quick to characterise the results of the elections in Europe as a series of defeats for what they erroneously have dubbed "populism": in France, Marine Le Pen, the most clear representative of the rising proto-fascist plague, received in the second tour of the elections the vote of every third French citizen and in Germany the Alternative für Deutschland has now become the third biggest party of the country despite the U-turn of Angela Merkel in her immigration policy. If that is defeat, one wonders what victory would have been for an international movement that was considered, only up to recent times, the lunatic fringe!

The reverse of the same medallion for the liberals was the victory of Emmanuel Macron. In a clear instance of wishful thinking, they interpreted this as the comeback of globalism after the astounding defeats of Brexit and Trump. Emmanuel I, as his critics on the left have sarcastically called him in France due to his regal style and his recourse to rule by decree (itself almost a mimicry of the methods employed by Erdoğan in Turkey, who is rightly considered to have become more and more of a despot by the self-same liberal establishment), has seen his magic reduced to ash in a vertiginous collapse of popularity in opinion polls. The success achieved by two strikes within a matter of ten days (12th and 21st September), despite the capitulation of the leadership of some of the labour confederations, is testimony

that the “French spring”, evoked in our first issue in reference to the spring 2016 movement against the earlier counter reform of the Labour Law under the so-called “socialist” government of François Hollande, promises to continue. France remains the key country in Europe as was underlined in our first issue. Macron’s globalist and neo-liberal road is no answer to the Trumps and the Le Pens. It is only the political independence and united struggle of the working class that can definitively push back the rising evil. The horizon is still filled with the Modis and Dutertes and Putins and Erdoğan and Aliyevs and Orbans and Trumps of the world.

No less conspicuous has been the prospect of all out war over the planet since we emphasized the threat of world war in our first issue. Leaving aside for a moment the interminable suffering in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Libya and the still glowing cinder of the war in Ukraine, the Asian geostrategic zone is marked by the different facets of the emerging conflict between imperialism and China. Most prominent among these is obviously the US-North Korea brinksmanship that threatens to carry the world to the first nuclear catastrophe since Hiroshima and Nagasaki three quarters of a century ago. Characteristically with his proto-fascist zeal, Trump has threatened “millions of deaths” in North Korea and razing the entire country to the ground. Despite the mendacious presentation of the facts by the “international community” (another name for imperialism) and the capitalist media, the North Korean nuclear preparation is a defensive measure against the US striving for military domination in the Pacific, the presence of a total of more than 80 thousand US troops in Japan and South Korea, and the rising threat of war on the horizon in Asia in general terms. In its confrontation with imperialism, revolutionary Marxists should stand behind a bureaucratically degenerated workers’ state, even in the case of this caricature of workers’ state based on “socialism in one dynasty”.

Closer to home, in our region of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), this reactionary wave has led to a new realignment of forces. Trump’s endorsement of the Egyptian Bonaparte al Sisi during the latter’s visit to Washington was followed by his pompously organised visit to Saudi Arabia. The *kitsch* moment of that visit, when the ridiculous trio of Trump, King Salman and the Egyptian president caressed a shining globe with extras holding guard in the background, was significant above all for the symbolic absence of two actors. On the one hand, Zionist Israel was the absent *eminence grise* of the new alliance that was being set up. Trump’s anti-Iran, pro-Israel policy orientation has been exposed to override all the complications and contradictions of his policy towards the region. Notwithstanding his palpable effort to court Putin, Trump, as attested to once again in his UN speech, is aggressively pushing to form an alliance between all the other reactionary forces of the Middle East in order to isolate and bring to its knees Iran, notwithstanding the almost unbreakable alliance between the latter and Putin’s Russia. That, inci-

dentally, is also why Hamas has recently been pressured to capitulate before Egypt and Israel. The other conspicuous absence was that of Erdoğan, another source of contradictions for the MENA policy of Trump. The official reason was that Trump's visit coincided with the AKP Congress at home, where Erdoğan returned to take control of his party after the April referendum in Turkey, which has laid the ground to a transition towards a more presidential system. However, it pretty soon transpired that the real reason lay elsewhere.

The display of Sunni sectarian power that the Saudis intended to rehearse by inviting a full array of Arab and non-Arab countries to greet Trump proved ephemeral. The Qatar crisis broke on the heels of this triumphalist celebration of unity, driving a wedge between the Saudi-led camp and the Rabiist bloc. To understand what we mean by this, consider the following sequence of events. 2013: the Bonapartist coup of Sisi brings down Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwan) government in Egypt, with the support of Saudi Arabia, and cold-bloodedly kills hundreds of Ikhwan supporters on Rabia-t-ul Adawiya square in Cairo, thus leading to a fallout between Saudi Arabia and Turkey, since Erdoğan has staked his whole strategy of becoming the "Rais" (leader) of the Sunni world on an alliance with the Ikhwan in a series of countries (Tunisiaia, Syria, Morocco, Palestine, i.e. Hamas, as well as Egypt); 2015: despite his explicit Rabiism (a movement based on a revanchist attitude concerning the Rabia incident), Erdoğan ties up with the new King Salman of Saudi Arabia in the wake of the death of the former king, even joining at year end 2015 the Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism, a Saudi initiative bringing together 34 Sunni nations, and almost going to war in Syria in February 2016 together with the Saudis and Qatar (a duo to be noted carefully!); 15th July 2016: the Saudi camp abandons the Erdoğan government to its fate in the face of the coup attempt; 2017: among the 13 conditions posed by the Saudi-led anti-Qatar coalition as terms of reconciliation appears the withdrawal of Turkish military forces from Qatar, a condition rejected by the Turkish side, which, loyal to its Rabiist strategy, squarely sides with Qatar. We should hasten to add that after the July 2016 failed coup, Turkey has been seeking a countervailing source of power in the Russia-Iran camp to balance the pressure of the US and the EU on its international orientation and domestic policy.

All this goes to show that the sectarian Sunni forces of MENA are unable to form a durable unitary coalition against the Shia camp led by Iran. This does not mean, however, that the threat of sectarian war on the scale of the entire Middle East is now a thing of the past. It only means that the Sunni camp is not as united as it seemed at a certain moment and that Iran has room for manoeuvre and may be able to at least neutralise some of the countries within the reactionary Sunni camp. That the threat continues to exist and will probably get a new lease of life from the

policies of Trump and Israel is shown by the incessant proxy wars in countries such as Syria, Iraq and Yemen. Only a unified and independent bloc of working class and socialist forces all over the MENA region, allying itself with corresponding forces in the Balkans and the northern Mediterranean, can stop this threat of Sunni-Shia sectarian war, a prospect that is certain to lead to the decimation of the population and the destruction of the historic cultural heritage of the region. As the Final Resolution of the 4th Emergency Euro-Mediterranean Conference held in Athens on 26-28 May 2017, which we are publishing in this issue as a document says: “Carnage can only be stopped by a broad front of anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist forces that fight also against the reactionary regimes in their own countries. Only a Socialist Federation of the Middle East and North Africa will provide the final solution to all the ills of the region.”

Into this maelstrom Massoud Barzani, the leader of Iraqi Kurdistan, has added the independence referendum, which has conjured all the age-old demons of the regional powers and the machinations of the imperialists. Revolutionary Marxists are for self-determination of the Kurds. The problem is that this referendum is devised not for that self-determination, but for the self-aggrandizement of Barzani and the coffers of his oil rentier supporters. Barzani has fought and clearly intends to fight in the future against the freedom of Kurds in other parts of Kurdistan (i.e. in Turkey, Iran, and Syria). So a victory in this referendum ironically implies a defeat for the cause of national liberation in Kurdistan, on top of giving imperialism another beach head in the Middle East. Revolutionary Marxists are unswervingly against military intervention by any regional power in Iraqi Kurdistan, but stand against Barzani and for the liberation of the entire Kurdish population.

Our first dossier in this issue dwells on the different facets of the struggle in the MENA region, with both a short-term and a long-term perspective. The first article of that dossier is a piece that analyses the Syrian civil war and its international ramifications in its successive stages. Levent Dölek’s article titled “The stages, lessons, and future of the Syrian civil war” opens up with a diagnosis that since the popular revolt against Assad’s dictatorship with demands of freedom and justice could not acquire a proletarian political framework, it soon became open to the manipulations of imperialism and reactionary states of the region. It demonstrates that the interventions of imperialism, Zionism, and regional powers (such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, and Iran) transformed the popular revolt into a bloody religious-sectarian war between the Sunnis and others (Alawis, the Druze, Christians, etc.). The article makes a detailed analysis of the military activities of all major actors (USA, Russia, ISIL, Free Syrian Army, etc.) during the civil war. A separate section is devoted to the developments in Syrian Kurdistan. Dölek acknowledges the strong progressive basis of the Kurdish movement in Rojava but argues that its

current military cooperation with the US imperialism is both wrong and dangerous. We believe that Dölek's article will remain a valuable source on the Syrian civil war in the coming years.

Kutlu Dane's article titled "The centenary of the Balfour Declaration, the memorandum of the Nakba and Zionist occupation" makes a detailed investigation of the historical background of the colonization of Palestine. It discusses the historical context of the Balfour Declaration of 1917 (which granted a blank check to the foundation of the state of Israel) by shedding light on the shifting positions of all actors involved in the process (including the British and French imperialisms and the Ottoman state). Dane's article demonstrates that both the US imperialism and the Soviet Union (which was following the policy of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism at that time) supported the foundation of Israel in 1948. It also underscores the fact that all reactionary regimes of the region have supported Israel in practice. As Dane shows, the current AKP government in Turkey (which has continued to cooperate with Israel in many areas and never embraced the Palestinian cause sincerely) is no exception.

Sungur Savran surveys the revolutions in the Middle East from the beginning of the twentieth century up until today and derives generalized conclusions from it. According to Savran, Middle East experienced a large number of revolutions in the twentieth century and the first victorious revolutions of the twenty-first century also took place in the region (Egypt and Tunisia). The article shows that twentieth century Middle East experienced four waves of revolution and the Arab revolution of 2011 can be considered as the fifth wave. As Savran notes, high frequency of revolutionary waves disproves the simplistic (and Orientalist) belief that "Muslim societies are submissive due to their belief in Islam and therefore do not make revolutions." It also provides a strong proof of the Marxist thesis that history progresses not simply by evolutionary advances but actually through revolutionary leaps. Finally, by demonstrating that Middle Eastern history has been determined at revolutionary turning points, Savran's article exposes the shallow and baseless character of the reformists' claim of being "realistic" (the belief that revolution is a distant possibility and left politics should aim small-scale changes). In fact, it is impossible to attain (small or large) changes without revolutions. In other words, the historical experience proves that revolution is a more "realistic" goal than reform.

A companion dossier takes up the reactionary trends and the response necessary to these in other parts of the world. In his article titled "Methods of understanding the 'contemporary': a discussion on populism and fascism", Cenk Saraçoğlu argues that fascism is a much more appropriate and useful concept than "populist right" (a concept that is currently popular among the international left) to understand these reactionary movements. Saraçoğlu identifies "counter-revolutionary subversive"

and “non-contemporaneity” as the two key distinctive characteristics of the fascist movements and regimes of the inter-war period and compares the contemporary reactionary movements by using these concepts. He argues that the reactionary movements of the relatively peripheral countries such as Hungary and Turkey resemble the classical fascism of the inter-war period more than their counterparts in advanced Western countries.

A somewhat different take on the situation in Europe and the world is presented by the Final Declaration of the 4th Euro-Mediterranean Conference, an international event where militants and intellectuals from 18 countries participated in late May 2017 to discuss the way forward on the international level and, in particular, in the European and MENA contexts.

This year is the centenary of the October revolution of 1917. This was an epoch-making event that opened up new vistas not only for the peoples of formerly Tsarist Russia, but for humanity at large and, in particular, for the workers and toilers and the oppressed of the world. We celebrate this world historical event and delve into its different facets in four different articles.

In his paper, “October 1917: A world event”, Savas Michael discusses the relations and the differences between 1917 and 1991, in dialogue with an article by the French philosopher Alain Badiou written shortly after the demise of the Soviet Union. Savas Michael reminds that 1917 was a world event, and was recognized by everyone as the beginning of a global socialist revolution. The social revolution expanded from Russia to Eastern and Central Europe, and produced effects that ranged from Europe to Asia and the USA. As Keynes was very well aware at the time, Bolshevism and the October revolution posed a threat to the global capitalist order. In this sense, the October revolution was certainly not a premature attempt. Rather, it was a world historical “event” that opened an entirely new epoch for humanity. By contrast, 1991 was not an “event,” but a “simulated event”: it did not open a new age for humanity. Savas Michael concludes by emphasizing that the cycle opened by the October revolution has not closed. We are still living in the epoch of October, and we need to make the revolution permanent in the new century.

Tamás Krausz’s paper is a shortened and at the same time partly revised version of a chapter from his celebrated work, *Reconstructing Lenin*. Here, Krausz comments upon one of the most influential works by Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, written in August-September 1917, just before the revolution, and first published the following year. According to Krausz, this small pamphlet, barely over a hundred pages, contains the philosophy of the October Revolution. In this pamphlet Lenin focuses on the question of the state, this “central issue of every revolution” and discusses the overthrow of it as the first phase of the social revolution. Krausz emphasizes the non-utopian character of Lenin’s vision. “From the perspective of

the revolution this thin volume essentially set out, in methodological and political terms, to do away with the ‘opporTunistic illusions’ bound up with Parliamentarism, and with Bernsteinian revisionism, as well as the utopist, anarchist approach, all at the same time.”

The article by Özgür Öztürk, “Socialist planning in the 21st century” discusses the potentials of socialism with reference to the possibilities of the present. Öztürk tries to outline the kind of economic planning system that can be built immediately, within at most a few years after a new revolution. According to him, in the 21st century, a planning system that is fundamentally different and far more effective than the previous century can be established. He points to the fact that in the 20th century, one of the major problems of socialist construction has been to prevent the transformation of money into capital. However, a planning and “payment” system that is based on labour time – as foreseen by Marx in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* – will limit monetary relations, and hence the threat posed by capital. Moreover, such a system will solve the problem of computation more easily. Öztürk also discusses the possible forms of new industrial relations, and claims that under present conditions, a socialist regime may realistically target full employment, full automation, zero work accidents and the continuous shortening of working hours. According to him, these are potential trends that can never gain full actuality under capitalist relations.

Armağan Tulunay takes up an aspect of the October revolution that has been to a certain extent purposely ignored by some quarters. Since the anti-Leninist, indeed anti-Marxist turn set off on the left from the 1980s on, the relevance of Marxism as a corpus of thought and a programme and of communism as a quest for a different type of society for the question of women’s liberation has come to be rejected on an increasing scale. Identity politics was the panacea. The communist movement was oblivious to women’s oppression and nothing to offer by way of women’s liberation. Tulunay delves into the policies implemented by the Bolsheviks immediately after the revolution to demonstrate incontrovertibly that Bolshevism under Lenin and Trotsky was incomparably more sensitive to women’s oppression than the liberal establishment so much adored by the anti-Marxist post-modernist currents of the day, implemented a concrete programme of measures undreamt of in the most advanced societies of the capitalist world and tried to create not only formal equality between the genders but a real one. That most of these measures were later undone by the bureaucracy that usurped political power, a fact equally demonstrated by Tulunay in her article, can in no way be cited as evidence regarding the alleged indifference of communism to women’s oppression. The bureaucracy, after all, abandoned communism and so none of its activities necessarily implicate this movement.

Our last article on the October revolution attacks an area that has always gone

unnoticed in Western Marxism. It has long been a commonplace to observe that proletarian power was first achieved by the Russians, perhaps the most backward among the big nations of Europe, but it has escaped the Western-biased commentators of the October revolution that, even further, this revolution was also a revolution of Muslim peoples. An important element of the Soviet Union as it was finally established along Lenin's guidelines on 31 December 1922 was the Muslim and mostly Turkic peoples of inner Russia in its eastern borderlands (Tatars, Bashkir, Kalmuk, Dagestani, Chechens etc.), of Transcaucasia (Azeris, Abkhaz etc.), and Central Asia (in what is today Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan). In an original article, Sungur Savran explains, in summary form, how communism/Bolshevism conquered the heart of Muslim peoples immediately in the wake of the victory of the revolution and how Muslim communists conquered their own land and people. The later rise under Stalin of so-called Great Russian chauvinism and its impact on the life of Muslim peoples in the Soviet Union are materials for further study.

An article that is related in a somewhat roundabout manner to those on the October revolution focuses on the collapse of the 20th century experience in socialist construction through the prism of Bulgaria. Daniela Penkova's article titled "Bulgaria in the trap of neoliberalism" investigates the process of capitalist restoration in the country after 1989. The author argues that institutions of international capital, especially the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, have imposed a prescription on Bulgaria that was very similar to those imposed on the Third World countries. Although Bulgaria was an industrialized country with respectable living standards by 1989, neoliberal prescriptions of the post-1989 period (such as privatization and deregulation) have impoverished the Bulgarian people. The article empirically demonstrates that although on paper the Bulgarian economy appears to grow, ordinary people struggle to meet their basic needs. Penkova concludes her piece by emphasizing that abandoning the neoliberal "development" policy is absolutely necessary to achieve a well-working industry and social structure.

This year is not only the centenary of the October revolution, but also the 150th anniversary of the publication of Volume I of *Capital*. Our final article is thus devoted to a general overview of the method, content and significance of this masterpiece of human thinking that is a synthesis of social science and revolution.

Capital ultimately is about the progressive exhaustion of the possibilities of the capitalist mode of production to carry humanity into a better future and the necessity of its overturn in order to release the energy of the working population of the planet for progressive purposes. That we are already in that phase of historical development is palpably clear from the deep international economic crisis, the looming threat of nuclear war and even world war, and the destruction of nature, the only so-

urce of reproduction for human and other living species. The defence of humanity, even of life in general, requires the advent of a new mode of production based on collective property in the means of production and democratic central planning, as well as a fraternal fusion of all the nations of the world. In short, it requires internationalist socialism. This can only be brought about by the forces of the proletariat, through revolutionary class struggle, which requires revolutionary parties of the proletariat and a revolutionary International. That is what revolutionary Marxism is about and why our journal has proudly assumed this name.

Phases, lessons and future of the civil war in Syria

Levent Dölek

The world is being dragged towards a great war. The possibility of a third world war looms large on the horizon. This possibility of a great war is approaching from Pacific to the Middle East, from Africa to Eastern Europe with a flourish of trumpets. Syria is the prelude of this great war. Almost all the global and regional powers show up on the Syrian platform in one way or another. This article aims to examine the civil war of Syria, its development phases and to put it in a systematic framework. While doing this, unavoidably we had to concentrate more on the internal development of the process in Syria. We had to exclude from the scope of this article, the type of relations the powers, which confronted or allied with each other in Syria, have in other platforms, the developments in such areas. The process experienced in Iraq, which is almost nested within Syria, is also included in this exclusion. We also could not deal with the conflicts between Iran and Saudi Arabia, which have the potential of causing a sectarian war in the Middle East at any moment.

This article assesses the intervention of imperialism to Syria mainly with respect to the imperialism of the USA. This is due to the fact that the USA is the power continuing to be the imperialist power which is the most effective one in Syria and

which is the most determinant one in the development of the process. The policy pursued by France, which is the prior colonialist power of Syria, in this area where it is also present militarily is also important. For example, France being the only country supporting Turkey's buffer zone plan from the very start, in order to open an area for itself in Syria, is another issue which is worth examining. The dreams and interventions of Britain in the region, as well as the USA, Germany staying away from Syrian area, meanwhile, playing the leading role in the containment of Russia in the Eastern Europe, analysis of such policies with respect to compliances and conflicts with the USA policy, are all undoubtedly required in order to present the whole picture.

Israeli Zionism, which is another reactionary power directly intervening Syria together with the USA, and its policies should also be examined carefully. The position of Iran, its policies concerning Syria, their reflections in the internal policies of Iran and the developments in Iraq, which are inseparably linked to these, are also very important for making a comprehensive political analysis. Although we do not bring such multi-directional analysis together within the scope of this article, we did this partly in *Gerçek* newspaper, *Gerçek's* website (www.gercekgazetesi.net) and congress documents and declarations of Revolutionary Workers Party (DIP). The ideas presented in this article are based on these previous analyses. Our purpose in this is to focus on the political lessons to be derived with respect to the challenges in the regions, Turkey in the lead, which are under the threat and risk of becoming another Syria. By focusing on Syria, where the pain of the approaching world war is getting denser, we aim to have an easier and definite access to some diagnosis which can be extended to extended to the whole region.

A stillborn revolution in Syria

In order to understand and explain what is happening in Syria today, we have to go back to the beginning of the events. The civil commotion, which started as the continuation and a part of the Arab revolution and a rebellion against the dictatorship of Assad, which identified with the corruption, inequality and pressure of those dispossessed of Syria, is required to be correctly assessed. This movement did not start on a religious/sectarian basis. Religion (and religious sect) was not the basic and distinguishing identity of the rebelling masses.

Before anything else, the power led by Bashar al-Assad does not have a structure which can be labeled basically as Alawi. Although al-Assad family is Alawi, their power was supported by the Sunni bourgeois loyal to the state, due to the privileges then acquired since the Hafez al-Assad era.¹ In Damascus and Aleppo, trade was

¹ *Gerçek* newspaper, "Suriye: Arap Devrimi Kapımızda", 12.05.2011 <http://gercekgazetesi.net/manset/suriye-arap-devrimi-kapimizda>.

mainly controlled by Sunni sections. Since Alawis constituted the section which lacked land and capital in Syria historically, they were more inclined to take positions as officials in the state and in the army. During the era of Hafez al-Assad Alawis acquired more positions in the army, and at least, no discrimination against Alawis was made. Despite Alawis' interests in the army, 75 percent of the soldiers were Sunni and the Alawis were the minority in Syria in general.² Moreover, the Sunni generals dominated the command level.

Tlass family is almost the symbol of the relation of the Sunni bourgeois with the regime. The father Mustafa Tlass, who was of Circassian origin and Sunni, had served as the Minister of Defense during Hafez al-Assad's era. One of his sons, Firas Tlass, is known as the sugar king in Syria and he has monopolized the sugar sector. Firas's brother Manaf Tlass was promoted to brigadier general before the rebellion and was brought to the command of 104th Brigade within Republican Guards which were strategically significant for the regime.

Alawism does not have a dominant position with respect to religion. A structure similar to the Religious Affairs Administration in Turkey, also exists in Syria. Although religion courses are given in compliance with Sunni belief, Alawi children also take these courses and Christians are exempted from such courses. While Sunni holidays and holy nights are official holidays, and allocations were provided from the state budget for the celebrations on such days, Ghadir Khumi which is important in Alawi and Shia belief, is not even officially recognized.³

While the power in Syria cannot be labeled as Alawi, the rebelling masses cannot be simply named as Sunnis. Before anything else, there were also Alawis among the rebels. At this early stage in which the rebellion in Syria had similar characteristics with the Arab revolution which started in Tunisia and Egypt and spread to the whole geography, the protests were not led by any party or organization. Spontaneity was the prominent factor. The role of the social media, which is one of the expression forms of spontaneity, was also generally accepted.

At this stage, Islamists also took a significant position, although not hegemonic, within the mass movement. However, their existence and influence were not yet at a level which would cause a self-defense mood on Alawis. Impoverishing effect of neo-liberal policies implemented by Bashar al-Assad, on the masses and increasing unemployment were the basic factors that activated the laboring masses. Arab revolution was showing the poor masses that an alternative is possible. According to majority of the Syrian people, Bashar al-Assad was not more attractive than the dictator of Tunisia, Ben Ali or the dictator of Egypt, Mubarak.

2 Droz-Vincent, "The Military amidst Uprising and Transitions in the Arab World", *The New Middle East*, Cambridge University Press, 2014, p.194. Quoted by Fehim Taştekin, p.51.

3 Ömer Ödemiş, *AKP'nin Suriye Yenilgisi ve Esad*, Ankara, Nota Bene Yayınları, 2014, p.32.

Consequently, the rebellion spread all over the country including Latakia, which is assumed to be Assad's castle. Among the areas where the rebellion intensified, the agricultural centers Daraa and Izraa and industrial zones of Syria, Duma and Moadamyeh came to the fore, this was an important indication of the participation of the working class. Accordingly, the rebellion in Syria also possessed the characteristic of being based on the working class, just like in Tunisia and Egypt during Arab Revolution. However, Syria differed from Tunisia and Egypt significantly and this difference played a key role for the whole country being dragged to a reactionary civil war.

The difference of Syria was that although the working class constituted the majority of the masses during therebellion, unlike Egypt and Tunisia, it could not constitute the backbone of the rebellion by their own organizations and struggle methods. The dictatorship in Syria was more successful in making the union movement an extension of the state and not giving the alternative movements the chance to develop, when compared to its equivalents in Egypt and Tunisia. Contrary to Egypt and Tunisia, neither the activities of unions nor the general strikes were seen in Syria. An organization to play the role played by UGTT, the confederation of unions in Tunisia, did not exist in Syria. Independent unions emerging in Egypt during the process, which quickly became strong, did not emerge in Syria at any stage. Finally, the forms of action specific to the working class, primarily strikes, never left their mark on the rebellion.

The cost of the failure of the rebellion to acquire a working class backbone was very high. The presence of such a backbone in Tunisia and Egypt, even if insufficient, provided the exposure of a power which would overthrow dictatorship, despite the fact that it did not bring a full victory to proletariat. Following the overthrow of the dictatorships in Tunisia and Egypt, the revolution leaned on this backbone and struggled against the counter-revolution. Although the revolution could not be prevented from being stolen by Morsi in Egypt and by Al-Nahda in Tunisia, the most important factor that prevented these countries from being dragged into a sectarian war was this class backbone. The backbone formed by the working class also prevented the fate of Egypt and Tunisia being determined by the imperialist centers as a whole. Despite General al-Sisi's coup supported by imperialism and Saudi Arabia and the power being besieged completely by the EU in Tunisia, and the opposition which exceedingly received its share from the same siege, the internal dynamics still preserve their decisiveness relatively in the politics of these countries. If the future of Egypt and Tunisia is not being discussed in the conferences organized under the auspices of imperialism or the regional powers in foreign cities such as Geneva, Brussels, Astana etc., this is neither attributable to General al-Sisi's Bonapartism in Egypt nor to National Unity Government led by Nidaa Party in Tunisia. The only

factor that prevents these countries from being falling apart is the working class.

The working class in Syria neither took the leadership of the rebellion nor provided a class backbone for it. However, the rebellion was spread within a process which gradually got harder. Tie of public rebellion and Assad power was accompanied by a drag towards a process in which weapons were decisive on both fronts. The effects of imperialism, Zionism and regional powers were significantly decisive in this drag. However, the internal dynamics of the public rebellion in Syria also could not have the potential to stop this drag.

The existence of a channel that opposed the armed struggle in Syria for a long time proves that public rebellion started as a part of the Arab revolution. Local Coordination Committees (LCC), which emerged at the first stage as a result of the spontaneous public movement, intensely accommodated leftist and secular opposition factors. These committees stood up for continuing the rebellion with peaceful methods for a long time. Despite suppressing a series of protests by weapons and despite deaths, they insisted on this attitude. In the beginning, this attitude meant that the form of struggle which emerged in Arab revolution was also accepted in Syria. After some time, LCC's attitude for counter-proliferation policy was converted to an argument that discriminated it from the Islamist and sectarian structures which were directed to armed struggle. However, two determinant factors were required to be present so that these peaceful and mass protests could accomplish results. A class backbone, class organizations and activities were required so that the protests could achieve a power which had the ability to apply sanctions. Another factor was the progress of Arab revolution outside Syria. Under conditions in which a class backbone was not present and formed, the hesitations in Arab revolution and its downward acceleration cancelled out the unarmed protests from being a realistic alternative for the masses.

Protesting armament turned by time into a tool for some leftist groups emerging from the rebellion, for introducing themselves to the West as a democratic and secular alternative. However, being unarmed was not a positive reference for the Western imperialists anymore. The leading name of the opponents who protested armed struggle, Parisian doctor Haytham Manna disclosed that a Syrian businessman with Western passport offered him to arm the opponents. Again, the ambassador of the USA, Robert Ford was going to say him "we would support you, if you had two battalions of soldiers behind you".⁴ Haytham Manna who is against armed struggle was finally going to be the Co-President of the Syrian Democratic Council and was going to work in cooperation with the PYD and YPG, which are the most important armed powers of Syria, until his resignation due to declaration of autonomy by the

4 Fehim Taştekin, *Suriye Yıkıl Git Diren Kal*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015, p.83.

PYD.

The groups with socialist tendency, which are only a few in Syria, also opposed armament and declared that they pursue a third front policy between Assad and takfiri sectarian armed groups. Unfortunately, these groups also point out that as the process progressed and armed clashes completely replaced peaceful mass struggle, many members and supporters of them either “individually” joined the armed struggle or migrated abroad.⁵

When examined from this point of view, as a civil war made an appearance in which armed struggle dominated and sectarian grouping become more decisive, the rebellion which started as a part of the Arab revolution in Syria disappeared without being able to turn into a revolution. It was replaced by a bloody and reactionary civil war.

The first phase of the civil war in Syria: The rise of the FSA

The rise of Free Syrian Army (FSA) left its mark on the first phase of civil war in Syria. Suppression of mass protests by weapons in some places caused the rise of the tension (and deepening of the cracks) within the army.

The opposition groups coming together in the meeting organized in Istanbul on April 26th, 2011, which was named as Istanbul Meeting for Syria, and in the conference organized in Antalya one month later on May 31st, were still talking about the overturn of the regime by peaceful methods or about supporting the democratic struggle of the Syrian people. There were no calls for a diplomatic or military intervention from outside in the final declarations of the meetings.⁶ However, following months of summer witnessed intensification of the armed clashes. As the groups escaping from the army came together, FSA was established on July 29th, 2011 by the ex-general of the Syrian army, Riyadh al-Assad.

However, FSA emerged in the beginning as a reaction movement. Since it lacked a political program it also did not have a military strategy. This political gap was again filled in Istanbul. So-called members of the Syrian National Council (SNC), which was established on August 23rd, were far from representing the mass movements in Syria or the military powers constituting FSA. The chairman was an academic living in France. The main factor building up, collecting and shaping the elements of the council facing western imperialism was Qatar and Saudi Arabia together with Turkey. This way, the political backbone required for the opposition

5 Revolutionary Left Current's declaration of establishment of "People's Liberation Fraction" <https://syriafreedomforever.wordpress.com/2014/03/17/revolutionary-left-current-in-syria-establishment-of-the-peoples-liberation-faction-to-commemorate-the-third-anniversary-of-the-syrian-revolution/>.

6 Taştekin, *ibid*, p.84.

in Syria was externally created. Following the establishment of the SNC, the Friday protests called by the opposition were declared as “Friday for International Protection” on September 09th. On September 27th, the FSA officially declared that it started an armed struggle. Afterwards SNC recognized FSA as its official armed wing by the beginning of 2012. Accordingly, the process which started as a part of Arab revolution on March 15th was gradually extinguishing and Syria was being dragged towards a civil war in which it shall pay for the heavy cost of the failure of the revolution.

Year 2012 was FSA’s year of rise. FSA united the armed struggle under its umbrella with the money of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, the protection of Turkey and the support of imperialism. FSA caused Assad to recoil at a series of fronts. It created some liberated areas. During this process, Assad’s reform words, dialogue calls and even amnesty announcements were rebounding. FSA, which found the external support in imperialism and in the cooperative states within the region and acquired a considerable military power in Syria, saw these calls as a sign of weakness and preferred to escalate the war. For the careerist officers in FSA and the refugee politicians of SNC who already fled to imperialism, the positions offered to them in the cost of the blood of Syrian people were more important than the future of Syrian people.

By the August of 2012, the panorama was getting clearer. And the future was getting darker. At this stage we analyzed the conditions in Syria as follows:

On March 15th, 2011, the rebellion which started from Daraa city in Syria and spread over the country, was a real part of the Arab revolution wave, in other words, it was a revolution of the dispossessed. Imperialism and reactionary regional allies first tried to force the Assad regime to make reforms as a first method of extinguishing this revolution. However, when the regime proved that it is unwilling or incapable with respect to this issue, imperialist allies tried to build a bourgeois opposition. Turkey had undertaken the main role during this “production” process. Syrian National Council was caused to be established as a dependent opposition. Free Syrian Army was created in Hatay with the money received from Saudi Arabia and Qatar. In addition to this bourgeois opposition which was an international creation, each element of the coalition provided support to the powers which were close to them. Accordingly, these powers gradually became the dominant powers within the country.

The revolution could not beat the regime. Neither the regime could stop the revolution nor the revolution could overturn the regime. It was this state of stalemate, in which the bourgeois opposition and its various factors seemed to be realistic as a third option. There was no revolutionary leadership whom the people could trust. The revolution could progress over wide, spontaneous organizations called “Local Coordination Committees”. People, killed as thousands, ten thousands,

started to approach “realistic” solutions step by step. The strategy applied today by imperialism and Arab reaction with the active support of Tayyip Erdoğan, seems to have produced its fruits: Syrian revolution is leaving the stage, and is being replaced by bourgeois opposition. Or maybe by the lords of war.⁷

The second phase: The era of the warlords and the rise of salafism, takfirism, and sectarianism

In the first phase, US imperialism pursued a policy in which the aid provided to the forces in Syria, named as “opposition”, by humanitarian aid, excluding weapons. However, the possibility of having a solution without weapons in Syria soon completely died out. On June 30th, 2012, the first meeting in Geneva, in which UN Security Council (standing members the USA, Britain, France, Russia and China) and the foreign ministers of Iraq, Turkey, Qatar, and the representatives of the EU and UN participated, ended without taking any concrete decisions, beyond expressions of goodwill and without any significant effect on the area.

Those who desired to overthrow Assad did not have the chance to intervene the process in Syria, except to arm the opposition. However, this option brought forward the risk, which the USA tried to avoid from the very beginning, of the weapon aid being seized by al-Qaeda and similar radical organizations in Syria.

The USA, which insistently refused to get involved with its military forces, had no other way but to arm the opposition through its regional allies. At this point, although Qatar and Saudi Arabia were also allies of the USA, Turkey, as a NATO member ally, came to the fore as a more reliable and stable alternative. However, as the USA avoided soiling its hands, it had to provide its regional allies an area in which they can move more autonomously. Even the benefits of Turkey and the USA in Syria seemed to overlap in general, there were significant differences in the political approaches and priorities of both countries since the start of the process. While the USA preferred for Syria – realistic or not – a more extensive power alternative facing West, AKP in Turkey invested all in strengthening of Ikhwan and Ikhwan being the dominant force in the structure to be formed post-Assad.

The USA saw Syria dominated by Ikhwan or more radical Sunni Islamist groups, as risky with respect to its own and Israel’s interests. At this point, the difference of orientation between Turkey and the USA caused the Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, to announce that they had withdrawn their support from SNC. SNC was gradually protected more by Turkey and was converted into an instrument of Ikhwan. The USA was not pleased with this, and Clinton expressed this by proper

⁷ *Gerçek* newspaper, “Suriye: Rejim Çöküyor Yerine Ne Gelecek?”, 18.08.2012, <https://gercek-gazetesi.net/akdeniz-dunya-devriminin-yeni-havzasi/suriye-rejim-cokuyor-yerine-ne-gelecek>.

language, by questioning SNC's capacity for representation.⁸ Afterwards, a new meeting was held in Doha, again with the initiative of the USA, and The National Coalition for Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces (NCSROP) was established.

Although it was claimed to establish a more extensive roof, the real meaning of Doha was the USA efforts to avoid placing all its eggs in Turkey's basket. While SNC's center is Hatay, NCSROP's center is in Cairo. Even if the transfer of the center to Egypt, where Ikhwan is in power through Morsi, seems to conflict with the USA's distant attitude for Ikhwan, actually it is just vice versa. While SNC is a direct production of Turkey/Erdoğan, there is a "Made in USA" sign on NCSROP. With NCSROP, the USA is able to intervene Ikhwan, which is seen as dangerous by the USA, directly, not through intermediation of Turkey. While the USA was making this move, Israel had pressed the button for a bloody attack to Gaza. Hamas, which was at the target of the attack, was in the position of Palestine branch of Ikhwan. However, Morsi took a position against this Zionist attack which tied up Hamas's hands, instead of taking a position beside it. Morsi and Erdoğan together attempted to mediate in favor of Zionism and prevented Hamas from giving a response.⁹

The USA headed for aligning Ikhwan with diplomatic and political instruments and Israel, with military methods, especially by smoothing its anti-Zionist aspects. In this respect, killing of Ahmed al-Jabari, military wing leader of Hamas, by an Israeli rocket on November 14th, 2012 is very typical. Since Hamas fought directly with Israel within Ikhwan movement, the military wing within Hamas which has military solidarity with Iran constituted the most distant structures to the sectarian war in Syria. The political headquarter of Hamas was in Syria and Assad had evacuated this headquarter by the beginning of the year and expelled the Hamas leaders from Syria including the General Secretary Khaled Mashal. Hamas's relations with Hezbollah, which was one of the most important allies against Israel, were also getting worse. When these developments were viewed from Gaza or the West Bank, they were not as it was seen from Cairo, Hatay or Doha. At this stage, the rise of resistance against the common enemy Israel could form another center of attraction against the sectarian war in Syria. Killing of al-Jabari was a heavy blow struck on this policy and was a clear message. As a result, the resistance bond between Hamas and Hezbollah gradually weakened during the following period. Hamas published announcements that Hezbollah is required to withdraw from Syria; afterwards, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the religious leader of Ikhwan, named Hezbollah, which meant the

8 Bipartisan Policy Center, *US-Turkish Cooperation, Toward a Post Assad Syria*, <http://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/BPC%20US-Turkey-Syria.pdf>.

9 *Gerçek* newspaper, "Suriye: ABD Erdoğan'a 'sen yapamadin kenara çekil dedi" 07.12.2012 <http://gercekgazetesi.net/uluslararası/suriye-abd-erdogana-sen-yapamadin-kenara-cekil-dedi>.

God's party, as Hezb al-Shaytan, which meant the devil's party, which would bring the bonds to a breaking point.¹⁰

While the USA tried to save the opposition in Syria from Islamic radicalism and especially Ikhwan's hegemony with its NCSROP move, it also had played the sectarian card, so that the development process of the civil war does not result in conditions that are against itself and Israel. A Western and secular bourgeois opposition becoming dominant in Syria remained uncovered on the field. On the other hand, the lords of war order created over the defeat of the revolution in Syria constituted a great basis for the sectarianism to grow and flourish.

On the other hand, the USA's for the inclusion of al-Nusra Front, which is bonded to al-Qaeda, in the terrorist organizations list received reactions both from the Ikhwan side and SNC. The Chairman of SNC, "democrat intellectual" George Sabra defended that al-Nusra was a part of Syrian Revolution, and explained that Riyadh al-Shaqfeh, the leader of Ikhwan in Syria living in Turkey, saw al-Nusra as a group fighting against Assad and protecting the people. Objections were being raised on the NCSROP side, for inclusion of al-Nusra in the terrorists list. Erdoğan joined this chorus on behalf of Turkey, claiming that the West exaggerated al-Qaeda's presence in Syria: "al-Qaeda would fall of the map in Syria. When the opposition achieves results there, there would be nothing left there as al-Qaeda."¹¹

This way, although included in the terrorists list by the USA, al-Nusra gradually increased its power on the ground by using the atmosphere created by sectarianism embittered by imperialism and Zionism. CIA and MİT (National Intelligence Agency of Turkey) organized the armament of the groups tied to FSA in Syria, jointly in Gaziantep. Even a special interview system was established so that the weapons sent do not go to Nusra or its derivatives. However, it is known that this structure did not make any discrimination among the armed groups until al-Nusra was included in the terrorists list and that the weapons acquired by many groups marketing themselves as moderate opponents were sold in the Syrian civil war market. Consequently, it was disclosed by an authority of FSA to *Daily Star* newspaper that FSA shared ammunitions in the joint operations made together with al-Nusra and that anti-aircraft guns received from Saudi Arabia worth 5 thousand dollars were sold to al-Nusra which paid 15 thousand dollars.¹²

Under these conditions, takfiri and sectarian organizations with salafi belief rapidly came to the fore and started to become the dominant color of this multi-colored fan named as "opponents". Al-Nusra which made a name for itself by a series of

10 <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/06/hamas-hezbollah-syria-iran-lebanon-palestinians.html>.

11 Taştekin, *ibid*, p.219-220.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 141.

suicide bombers in Aleppo, Hama and Damascus started to rise rapidly. Islamic State of Iraq which got stronger as Iraq branch of al-Qaeda changed its name afterwards as Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIL) and shall start to appear on the stage more powerful by forcing all the salafi groups including al-Nusra for submission. Among these organizations, Ahrar al-Sham, another salafi and sectarian organization appearing on Syrian stage previously, had risen to the level of “moderate opponent” being parallel to the rise of al-Nusra and ISIL. Many founders and directors of Ahrar al-Sham, which was the most significant ally of al-Nusra, were also of al-Qaeda origin. After ISIL broke its ties with al-Nusra, the latter weakened considerably and received significant support from Ahrar-al Sham

As the Syrian branch of al-Qaeda, al-Nusra was a part of bloody “global jihad with the USA”. ISIL was on the other hand on its way to becoming a state in the regions it dominated. It controlled several important oil-producing regions of Iraq and Syria. By time, Ahrar al-Sham became the main representative of Turkey and Qatar in the region and had undertaken the role of conveyor belt for the support given to al-Nusra.¹³

As a result, salafi, takfiri and sectarian organizations had risen step by step being contrary to Erdoğan’s words “al-Qaeda would fall of the map in Syria if opposition is successful.” and the “moderate opponent” groups, especially Ikhwan, which Turkey invested in, had fallen off the map.

Two important milestones ending the second phase: Hezbollah’s appearance on the stage and Ghouda massacre

As the Syrian civil war acquired a more sectarian character, and as the weight of salafi, takfiri and sectarian organizations increased, this state had created a consolidating effect for the other party. Lebanon’s Hezbollah providing political support to Assad power until that time, started to take place in the armed resistance step by step as of the first months of 2013. During the first phase in which the public rebellion broke out in Syria, Hezbollah’s leader Hasan Nasrallah was criticizing the opposition for not having a Palestine policy, but was not explicitly nurturing enmity. However, takfiri and sectarian offensiveness that had risen in time opened the way for Hezbollah’s Alawi and Sunni Arabs to appear on Syrian stage as based on the legal defense grounds. Hezbollah was participating in the clashes during the first phase of the civil war only at the borders of Lebanon and mainly in the issues of defense. The first clashes in Syria between Hezbollah and FSA was realized in February 2013. While the involvement of Hezbollah in Syrian civil war was being discussed for some time, Hasan Nasrallah gave a speech on April 30th, and said that

13 Fehim Taştekin, *Karanlık Çöktüğünde*, İstanbul, Doğan Kitap, 2016, p.164.

“they will not allow Syria to fall into the hands of the USA, Israel and takfiris”. An experienced and well-armed guerilla power, Hezbollah, which kicked Israel out of Lebanon in 2000, brought Israel down to its knees in 2006, showed its power as a game spoiler in Syrian civil war when it cleared off takfiri, sectarian powers in Qusair town on Lebanon border. Hezbollah were striking against takfiris with teams of 15-50 members, and was leaving such acquired regions to Syrian army. Hezbollah prevented the war from entering into Lebanon by controlling the border of Lebanon and by doing this, it also interrupted a significant supply source of the sectarian organizations in Syria.

The main reason for Hezbollah’s appearance being a milestone is that it demolished the policy which apparently replaced FSA’s failure at the first phase by organizations acting on sectarian motivations. Although these organizations appear to have attracted the most alive factors of the opposition during the first phase and have acquired acceleration, they enabled the power in Syria to acquire a strong support, both military and political, by forcing the counter front to pull themselves together, and by pushing onto the stage a power such as Hezbollah, which accommodates many features lacked by the Syrian army. Hezbollah took the stage not only with its guerillas but also with its prestige due to bringing Israel down to its knees, which cannot be forgotten in the Arab world for a long time.

While the organizations on the stage backed against Hezbollah and Syrian army advanced in Humus and Damascus, Israel entered the scene. Israel started to claim that Syria used chemical weapons and these weapons were being seized by Hezbollah. With this attack, Israel was trying to increase the pressure on Syria and Hezbollah and was planning to form the grounds for its military intervention in the worst scenario. Based on this, Israel started to increase the frequency of its air attacks at certain targets in Syria, which were made from time to time.

However, chemical attack claims did not result in the required effect for an external intervention which would also involve the USA. On the contrary, the chemical weapon attack and massacre in August in East Ghouda moved Syria to the edge of an imperialist intervention. The USA interpreted this attack as crossing over the red lines. The chorus of Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia were keeping the rhythm for the intervention. The information related to Ghouda massacre was far from being definite from the start. Rather than reflecting the reality, the death toll given was like the measure of the authority making the announcement, reflecting its extent of sympathy for external intervention. The death toll declared for the chemical massacre by France was 281, by Britain was 350, by doctors without borders was 355, by Observatory for Human Rights was 502, by Revolution General Commission was 635, by National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces

was 1300, by the USA was 1429, by FSA was 1729.¹⁴

The options of intervening in Syria was on the table for the USA. For the USA to have its soldiers on the stage, as famously expressed “boots to touch the ground” was not on the agenda yet. However, the options between a punishing attack and an extensive attack to overturn the regime were being assessed. As the dose of the attack decreased, risk also decreased, but also the expectation to fix the balances that changed in favor of Assad in Syria was also weakening. As the dimension of the attack increased, the regionalization of the war, direction of Assad towards the benefits of Israel and the USA, unforeseeable reactions of Iran and to some extent, Russia, were in question. Even if a solution which would not trigger such reactions was found, the winner of the intervention in Syria was going to be al-Nusra in each case and salafi, takfiri and sectarian groups, mainly ISIL, which made a fast entry to the stage. To fight on the same front with al-Qaeda was something which was not easy for the USA to explain to its people. Moreover, the military results of such organizations acquiring an uncontrolled power could not be anticipated.

Under these conditions, Obama preferred to have a decision adopted by the congress in order to provide political legality the domestic public opinion with respect to the attack to be made. But he had difficulties in convincing the congress of the USA. Other Western imperialist powers including Britain started to show reluctance for a possible intervention. Actually, what lied underneath was that although the USA imperialism explicitly accused Assad in front of the world public opinion, it was not sure about who had performed the chemical attack. Accordingly, the inspections of the UN inspectors increased the suspicions. The basic thesis of Syria and the powers that support Syria was that it was not logical for the Syrian army to make such an attack. Of course this defense could not be effective, alone. However, these theses suddenly were based on a strong support when UN inspectors disclosed that the chemical missiles launched over Ghouda were fired at most from a distance of 2 km and it was impossible to have these missiles to be fired from an area controlled by the Syrian army. Afterwards, the information that the “opposition” groups, especially al-Nusra had access to chemical weapons turned the attentions to the takfiri and sectarian groups which had benefits in triggering the external intervention.

However, the USA was never in full trust with respect to such groups. The doubt of the USA that Turkey and Saudi Arabia, its close allies in Syrian civil war, are involved in the chemical attack in Ghouda massacre, was going to require the USA to seriously review its policy pursued in Syria. The region of the attack was dominated by the salafi takfiri sectarian group, namely Liwa al-Islam, which was protected by

¹⁴ Taştekin, *Suriye Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal*, p. 262.

Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, a few months ago, a group of “opponents” were caught with 2 kilograms of sarin gas in Adana, Turkey in May.

An article published by Pulitzer awarded journalist Seymour Hersh 8 months after the massacre showed that Obama administration faced very serious claims. According to Hersh, the attack was not only realized by al-Nusra and its allies, but also was realized within the knowledge of Tayyip Erdoğan and support of MİT and gendarme. Hersh also claimed that during a meeting between Obama and Erdoğan, when Erdoğan said that the USA’s red line was exceeded, Obama, referring to Hakan Fidan, Undersecretary of MİT, replied “we know what you did with the radicals in Syria”. In the same article, it was written that the USA intelligence warned Obama government that Turkey wanted to trigger an external intervention and that there are elements trying to reach the chemicals used in the production of sarin gas both in Turkey and Saudi Arabia.¹⁵

The USA government never verified the claims of Hersh. However, when we look at the political moves the USA made following Ghouda attack, the USA’s attitude in the management of the chemical crisis and the changes in its attitude concerning the Syria policy seem to be consistent with Hersh’s claims.

Although the USA spoke clearly in front of public that Assad used chemical weapons, it made a sudden move when Kerry laid down the condition that Syria should discharge the chemical weapons within two weeks. Russia promptly responded to this move, intervened and started the process for Syria to discharge its chemical weapon stocks under the supervision of the United Nations. Obama avoided entering an indefinite process, with the provocations of its allies and their extensions on the stage and also apparently protected the USA’s red lines by saying that a political conclusion to be achieved by a potential attack was achieved through diplomatic methods.

The main lines of the new policy acquired by imperialism at this stage can be summarized as below: Distrust in the salafi, takfiri and sectarian groups, avoidance of a Syria new policy implemented on regional allies such as Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, moving away from a line prioritizing the overthrow of Assad, accepting a transition process with Assad and preparation of more dialogue grounds with Russia with which more predictable diplomatic relations can be established, even if strategic benefits conflict... Following the Ghouda attack, the USA’s Syria policy was being shaped with these approaches.

The symbolic event declaring the end of the second phase of Syrian civil war was the Geneva II Conference on Syria. Geneva II Conference on Syria did not bring any concrete result for the solution in Syria. It was as unsuccessful as the first

¹⁵ Seymour Hersh, “The Red Line the Rat Line”, <https://www.lrb.co.uk/v36/n08/seymour-m-hersh/the-red-line-and-the-rat-line>.

one. However, the transitional government, which anticipated the change of Assad regime in the first conference was replaced in Geneva II by a new approach anticipating the presence of Assad during the transitional period. It is apparent that this was an achievement for Assad. As a result, the voices against Geneva II were being raised by the front against Assad. Geneva II also involved Russia in the process more effectively from the political and diplomatic point of view.

The third phase: War with ISIL, transition with Assad, divided Syria

ISIL's getting on the stage in Syria and gradually getting stronger constituted a milestone in the course of the civil war. ISIL, being different from the other takfiri and sectarian organizations, had determined its field of activity as Iraq (in a manner to include Lebanon) and greater Syria. The target of the organization was to establish an Islamic State on this land. ISIL's state formation perspective and caliphate claim is a military and political strategy enveloped in an ideological package.¹⁶

With this strategy, ISIL overtook the oil areas and decreased the dependency on the Gulf countries, Saudi Arabia or the imperialist aid, transferred to tax collection level from racketeering, and acquired tax revenue of about 8 million dollars per month. Beside the weapon aid received externally and the weapons acquired as spoils on the field, it added the weapons produced by itself by using the industrial capacities of the regions occupied; the most important of all was that it gathered considerable number of militants from the salafi, takfiri and sectarian organizations by its state structure and caliphate claim, created the legal grounds in its own way on the regions dominated by it, in its war against these organizations, and also had the chance to direct the international militant flow to its own region in a denser manner. It increased its influence in Libya, Afghanistan and Boko Haram, which controls a wide area on the north of Nigeria, obeyed the control of ISIL. With the effect it had on the salafi circles worldwide, it acquired the capacity to carry out attacks in many imperialist metropolitans such as France, England, Belgium, and stepped ahead of al-Qaeda not only in Syria but also with this capacity. This strategy enabled ISIL to develop pragmatic alliance relations with the local tribes and former Baath elements, despite the harshness of the religious and political ideology it represented. This salafi pragmatism maybe played the key role in ISIL's progress and the locations it occupied in Iraq, especially the occupation of Mosul. The violence ISIL used on the field and the propaganda of such violence with sophisticated and professional methods are frequently emphasized. The significance of this pro-

¹⁶ *Gerçek* newspaper, "Irak ve Şam İslam Devleti Nedir?", <http://gercekgazetesi.net/uluslararasi/irak-ve-sam-islam-devleti-isid-nedir>.

paganda war cannot be denied. However, it is not the propaganda that makes ISIL step ahead of the other organizations, but it is the political and military strategy that we mentioned.

ISIL started its move by establishing its own dominance in the regions which were occupied by al-Nusra and its allied salafis during the second phase of the civil war. First of all, it acquired dominance over Deir ez-Zor, which is the oil area of Syria, then it advanced to Raqqa. Step by step, it eliminated the rival organizations in these areas or bonded them to itself. Afterwards, it provided dominance in the same manner, over Jarabulus, al-Rai and Tell Abyad on Turkish border. After taking over the control of Deir ez-Zor oil, ISIL was finding political center, a capital for itself by Raqqa, and was having the chance to open to the world by reaching Turkish border. Up to this stage, ISIL did not receive any serious opposition from the imperialists. Not until ISIL re-directed to Iraq and attacked Mosul. Although ISIL started its adventure as Islamic State of Iraq, it actually acquired its positions within the boundaries of Syria until 2014. By the beginning of 2014, Fallujah, which was the castle of Iraq Sunnis and had a strategic significance on the road leading to Baghdad, was occupied by ISIL. On June 10th, it acquired Mosul. Then, the control of Baiji and were also easily taken by ISIL.

This way, despite being very dangerous and out of control for imperialism ISIL, which is in the position of “the enemy of my enemy” suddenly had risen as a structure shaking the status of Iraq from its roots, which the USA tried to protect. Accordingly, the USA decided to struggle militarily with ISIL after this stage, by establishing a coalition against ISIL. A coalition was established under the hegemony of the USA against ISIL which started with about 40 countries as members and increased to 60 members by time and in August 2014, the air attacks started against ISIL. Russia, Iran and Syria did not take part in this coalition against ISIL. Despite this, the President of France, Hollande, was making calls for the moderate opponents in Syria in the first meeting of the coalition held in Paris and Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, which provided the grounds for the growth of ISIL and which offered direct or indirect political and financial support, took part in the coalition. In other words, there was no coalition against ISIL in a real sense. The main military power of this structure established was the USA. The political purpose was primarily to interrupt the support provided to ISIL by the regional allies of the USA which are the countries on Sunni axis. After all, the war against ISIL was becoming one of the main agenda for the Syria and Iraq policy of the imperialist powers, but not for Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

The air attacks of the coalition led by the USA never had the desired effect. However, it was a very significant milestone for starting the process, in which the original players took the stage at a step where a war fought through representatives

was blocked. Now Syria was turning into a stage on which the first rehearsals of a world war emerging on the horizon were practiced:

What is done is done, following the USA, France and Russia also militarily involved in Syrian civil war almost simultaneously. Now, if we are to express somehow in a sarcastic manner, about 65 countries out of 200 countries in the world are fighting on 185 thousand square kilometer land of Syria! 62 members of the coalition established by the USA (in which Turkey is also included now), Syria itself, Iran providing support to Syria behind the scenes, and now Russia in fact. Now add warlords to this: the barbarian political unit of ISIL's leader Abu Baqr al-Baghdadi, calling himself the "Caliph". Also consider an organization with its own army: Lebanon's Hezbollah. Almost the whole world swarming in a country which had population of 23 million just before the war!¹⁷

The milestones of the third phase: Kobani war

Strategic absence of a land force fighting on the field continued to be the weak link of the USA's Syria policy. The USA reactivated the train-equip project which was tried in the previous phases of the civil war but which was not successful. Obama had found a fund of 500 million dollars from the congress for this project. However, the main issue was that who were going to be trained and equipped with this fund. FSA had already disappeared, and even the most moderate of the remaining ones were the organizations which could be trained and equipped but could not be sent alone to Syria. Those trained and equipped were either being destroyed as soon as they enter Syria or being taken as captives or were directly going and joining al-Nusra.

Turkey was never willing to play an active role in the struggle against ISIL. Even the occupation of Mosul by ISIL and sudden attack at Turkish consulate and taking hostages inside did not result in any motivation in AKP power against ISIL. When those in the consulate were taken as hostages by ISIL, Davutoğlu was still identifying ISIL as a "terrorized" (not terrorist) group composed of angry young men. Erdoğan's disclosure for Kobani as "it fell, it is about to fall", which caused public indignation, was an indication that this organization was seen by Turkish government as a tactical ally against PYD dominance in Rojava; war against ISIL was far from being a priority. Following the occupation of Tell Abyad by YPG, ISIL promptly attacked Kobani and there were significant claims that Turkish borders were also used during this attack.

¹⁷ Sungur Savran, "Putin'in Hamlesi Erdoğan'ın önünü kesmek için", <http://gercekgazetesi.net/gundemdekiler/putinin-hamlesi-erdoganin-onunu-kesmek-icin>.

PYD and YPG were conducting a defensive war in the area. Rojava people saw this war as self-defense against the massacres of ISIL, and supported and joined it. It was not any external motivation, monetary support, political expectation etc., but this motivation enabled the formation of an effective and strong military power. One of the most important strategic powers of YPG was YPJ, which was formed of women warriors. Rojava was the center of a major awakening for women in Syria which turned into a hell in the hands of takfiri and sectarian structures. It is doubtless that the women's struggle practice of the Kurdish movement that spread over the years was determinant in this awakening. The role of women was one of the most important factors that increased the prestige of PYD and YPG in the whole world. The mobilization of women was also an advantage from the military aspect, which no other power possessed on the stage of Syria.

All the developments channelized the USA to cooperate with YPG, the armed branch of PYD, which carried out the most effective fight against ISIL on the field. However, the channelization also accommodated many risks for the USA. Although the tradition from which PYD emerged did not have any hostility for the USA since many long years, it was not the USA-lover formation like Barzani. Moreover, PYD had close relations with PKK which was fighting with Turkey, the major NATO power in the region. Even if PYD was to be pulled towards the line of the USA, the tensions to be lived with Turkey could always cause problems.

The milestone for the USA for acting together with PYD and YPG was of course ISIL's siege of Kobani. The USA waited until Kobani was on the brink of falling. Pro-American Barzani's peshmerga also waited the weakening of its rival PYD in Rojava. Kurdish people started a major rebellion on Turkish side of the border between October 06th-12th, in order to prevent the fall of Kobani. This rebellion caused Turkey to soften its policy. The USA also took this chance to be the rescuer of Kurdish people. Kobani was rescued. Kurdish people won a victory. However the price of this victory was going to be paid by Kurdish people. PYD leadership, instead of being cautious against the USA, started to perceive the relation established with the coalition at a strategic level and even used this as a political propaganda material. Rather than gaining independence from the USA, it pursued a policy which got more under the USA's wings.

Following the rescue of Kobani, the USA gradually developed its relations with PYD and YPG. It made Kurdish people pay the price for Kobani by taking PYD under its political dominance. All the gains in Rojava were won as a result of PYD's policy of pursuing a third way against Assad and opposition. As PYD entered the political influence of the USA, it also lost the political maneuver area, which had provided major gains for it.

We saw a striking example of this condition after the USA struck the air space of

Syria with Tomahawk missiles. Following the attack, PYD's leader Salih Muslim gave an interview to *Voice of America* and said: "I hope that this will not be limited only to Syrian regime and the other parties, which targeted the civilians and used chemical weapons, are also called to account. I believe that this attack shall have positive results, because those who do not believe in the political solutions shall find the correct path and shall understand that continuing the war shall not provide any results. America directly takes part in this and cannot remain silent." This blank check given to the USA by Salih Muslim has no logical explanation with respect to PYD. When a close cooperation was established between the Russian soldiers and Syrian army in Manbij and Afrin, when Afrin and Kobani cantons united over the area in which Syrian army had gained the control, if PYD leader applauds the USA's attack to Syria, this seriously damages the relations between Russia and Syria. Salih Muslim and PYD are neither that stupid nor an admirer of the USA so that they don't understand this. However, the alliance established with the USA in Rojava caused the USA to strategically settle in the area which prevented PYD from pursuing an independent politics. Salih Muslim had to make this illogical statement due to this fact.

When PYD leadership and Kurdish movement in general thought that walking side by side with the USA would protect and develop its gains in Rojava, the issue for the USA was to convert Rojava into a stable headquarter in the third phase in which overturning Syrian regime was not the priority anymore.

The milestones of the third phase: Russia's move and the battle of Aleppo

The third phase in which the war against ISIL became more determinant, created the conditions appropriate for Russia's military appearance on Syrian stage. Russia used the advantages of being in Syria all the way, based on the legal call of Syrian government. It fortified its military power by opening new headquarters in addition to Tartus headquarter from Soviet times. After reaching its fortification to a certain level, Russia appeared on the stage on October 7th, 2015, by sending 26 guided missiles to 11 targets at a distance of 1500 km. over the Caspian. Afterwards, Syrian army continued to advance owing to the air support provided by Russia. Majority of the air operations of Russia were intensified on the areas on which Syrian army had advanced and ISIL was not effective in these areas in general. This state caused Russia to be criticized seriously for hitting FSA and the moderate opposition. However, Russia easily avoided these critics. Russia had declared through Lavrov that it does not see FSA as a terrorist organization, before staging its missile show. Afterwards, it went further and said that it can provide air support to FSA, which is

supported by the USA, against ISIL.¹⁸

After all, Russia never accepted that it hit FSA. In fact, Russia's attacks were targeting primarily al-Nusra and various salafi, takfiri and sectarian groups which were its allies. Although these groups showed themselves as FSA, those criticizing Russia could not insist on their "FSA is being hit" claims when the circumstances were apparent. By referring legality to an organization which is not on the stage, Russia achieved to keep itself within the borders of the political solution desk and also to use an intense firing force against the powers against Syrian army.

The only serious reply to this move of Russia was downing of Russian SU-24 warplane on Hatay border by Turkey. Although these days, this event is completely pinned on the officers who are the members of Gülen's community, everything was clearly perceived during those days in which such event had occurred:

Turkish government ties the dawning of the warplane to border violation. However, since they do not know how to apply "d" of diplomacy, right after that, they confess that this is not the case.

Tayyip Erdoğan says: "...the area is not the area in which there is ISIL terror istorganization. Don't let anyone fool anyone. There are only Bayırbucak Turkmens, our cognates, our relatives there and by saying that they are hitting ISIL terrorist organization, they are hitting Bayırbucak Turkmens there." Davutoğlu goes further and says "Whoever shoots Bayırbucak Turkmens, Aleppo Arabs, or Arabs, Kurds, Turkmens in Azaz, whether Syrian regime or terror organizations or external intervening factors, our message for them is clear." Why does it go further? "We will down them again"!

Accordingly, the problem is not border violation, it is the protection of Turkmens. Okay, then does Syrian army bomb our "cognates" with the support of Russian bombing for no reason? For example, as in Nusebin, is it there to kill a mother who goes out for dumping the ashes of her stove? No, there is a military target there, because Turkey armed Turkmens and established a war force bonded to it. Civil war continues. That is what is happening. You first create an armed force on the land of others, then name it with Ottoman wannabe names as Yavuz Sultan Selim Brigade or Sultan Murat Brigade, then say that you cannot bomb this military power!¹⁹

These lines published in *Gerçek* newspaper's website clearly reveal the case. Downing of Russian warplane was the reaction of Turkey to the risk of closing of the final door, through which it intervened Syria through its representatives. Mo-

18 BBC, Syria War: Russia is ready to assist FSA rebels, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34627441>.

19 *Gerçek* gazetesi, "Dünya Savaşı mı İstiyorsunuz?", 25.11.2015, <http://gercekgazetesi.net/gundemdekiler/dunya-savasi-mi-istiyorsunuz>.

reover, there was also an initiation, which was made to include NATO in order to balance Russia's gradually increasing weight. Politicians of AKP and so-called security specialists created a new concept and started to defend rapid "Natofication" of the event. However, since the nature of the structures active in the area under the code name Bayırbucak Turkmens was known by the whole world, the event could not be Natoficated and Syrian airspace became the prohibited zone for flights for Turkey due to Russian air defense missiles and planes.

Downing of Russian warplane, this way indirectly led the way to the fall of Aleppo. Syrian army sieging Aleppo with the support of Russia took over the control of the city, at the cost of an extensive destruction in the city and massacre reactions by the world public opinion. It was not only the organizations which were not among the losers in battle of Aleppo. The protector of these wars, Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia of Sunni axis also got a heavy defeat.

With the fall of Aleppo, salafi, takfiri and sectarian organizations were stuck in Idlib. The initiative in this area is completely in the hands of Russia and Syrian army. However, it cannot be expected that Idlib would fall rapidly and without any cost. Due to this reason, Russia and Syria aim to raise the conflicts between the organizations in the area to the level of clashes by increasing their military pressure on Idlib.

As a result, Assad, who acquired a certain level of safety and stability as Hezbollah entered the stage by the end of the second phase of the civil war, had acquired a new initiative at least on the west of Syria and at significant portion of strategic centers as Russia appeared on the field.

The milestones of the third phase: Euphrates shield

After downing of the Russian warplane, Turkey had to face the reality of closing down of all the Syrian doors in the military area. The Syrian policy applied by Davutoğlu had completely collapsed. Davutoğlu's grave was dug by Erdoğan due to this unsuccessful foreign policy in addition to a series of other factors and Turkey tried to overcome the problem by a new political move which consented the transition with Assad and supporting Russia.

The coup attempt on July 15th, and the fact that this coup was supported by the USA and NATO created a new situation. Turkey was trying to normalize its relations with Russia. It was Russia which converted the unsuccessful coup attempt of July 15th into an opportunity. Russia achieved minimizing Turkey's reaction for the siege of Aleppo, by keeping the initiative at each step. Turkish government did not raise concrete and effective objections for what happened in Aleppo, except a few protests of low volume.

Turkey now had to adapt itself to the reality of the third phase. It was impossible

to have any influence on Syria without taking part in the war against ISIL. Under these conditions, Euphrates Shield operation was on the agenda. The officially declared target of Euphrates Shield operation was the presence of ISIL on Jarabulus-Azaz line. The reason for the operation was given as the suicide bombing massacre performed by ISIL during a wedding ceremony in Gaziantep. In order to justify this operation in the domestic policy and provide war motivation for TAF (Turkish Armed Forces), first it was unofficially, then afterwards, more explicitly emphasized that the operation was made against the presence of PYD in the area and the uniting of cantons in Rojava, which were created by PYD.

The official target of Euphrates Shield was in harmony with the third phase of the civil war. ISIL was on the target. Although all the salafi, sectarian, takfiri formations had participated in the operation under the cover of FSA or Turkmen power, the USA was not trusting these powers, but was trusting NATO army TAF which accompanied them. Russia assessed Euphrates Shield as an opportunity for dragging Turkey into a trap. Russia was in a state in which it could close Syrian airspace to Turkish planes at any time it desires. After downing of SU-24, Russia kept Turkish Air Forces away from Syria this way. Turkey did not have the chance to perform Euphrates Shield operation without obtaining the consent of Russia. After taking this consent, it would not have the chance to remain in the area as contrary to the consent of Russia. While the price to be paid by not letting Turkey in the airspace of Syria was limited, if Russia dragged Turkey into the trap, then Russia was going to have Turkey pay greater prices. And that was exactly what happened. Turkey did not exceed even by a millimeter, the borders drawn by Russia. When the final stage of the operation al-Bab was occupied by TAF and FSA flagged forces, Russia's official authorities said "The borders agreed with Turkey are reached". Our anticipation from the very first date that Euphrates Shield would turn into Euphrates trap was going to realize this way.

TAF and FSA tried to force the borders drawn by Russia at two points. The first one was during al-Bab siege. When TAF and FSA tried to perform the siege a little wider, Russia hit TAF "by mistake" and caused the death of 3 soldiers. Of course it was not a coincidence that the president of CIA was in Turkey at the moment when Russia hit TAF by mistake. Russia was not expecting Turkey to exit from NATO in consideration of the consent given to Turkey, but it was also clear that it wanted to prevent Turkey from playing the USA's game in full.

The second event happened when TAF and FSA headed for Manbij. While al-Bab was being sieged, Syrian army supported by Russia was having operations in order to block the whole road on the south going down to Euphrates river. Manbij was the only way where Erdoğan and AKP could realize the fantasy of going to Raqqa without coming across Russia and Syria. However, this fantasy was not

within the boundaries of Russia's consent. Russia intervened the process in order to keep Turkey within the boundaries of the consent, not because it was in alliance with PYD and YPG, but because it did not want Euphrates Shield to be broken at any point. The Russian soldiers were directly sent to Manbij, the eastern wing, and Afrin, the western wing of the trap. When Turkey did not comply with the borders orally agreed, Russia was surrounding these borders with its armored vehicles and soldiers. With regards to Manbij, Turkey had in hand, the promise "YPG forces shall withdraw to the east of Euphrates" given by the USA. However, it could say nothing to Russia. Russia's buffer zone between TAF and FSA, and Manbij meant being released from the pressure of sending YPG to the east of Euphrates for the USA and as a result of this they did not say anything for the presence of Russia. Also they did not have the ability to prevent this militarily.

As a result, the trap was closed, and moreover, was locked by the soldiers and armored forces of Russia. The closing ceremony was performed with the folk dance of the Russians with YPG members. At this stage, MGK (The National Security Council) had no other option but to declare the end of Euphrates Shield. On the other hand, Erdoğan stated that there will be other stages of the operation. To flesh out these statements, which make one think that Rojava shall be targeted with respect to Syria, it is evident that the civil war in Syria is required to enter a new phase.²⁰ Together with this, the indications that the civil war is progressing towards a new phase are increasing.

The characteristic features of the third phase

The most important element of the third phase of Syrian civil war is ISIL's appearance on the stage. Increasing power of ISIL and unwillingness of the USA's allies Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia in fighting with ISIL, cancelled out the priority of overthrowing Assad. The priority of the USA was now on acquiring zones of influence in Syria and providing the security of Israel, instead of the target of overthrowing Assad.

Accordingly, the USA reached a political agreement with Russia which can be named as "Transition with Assad, solution without Assad". In the military area, it ignored the bombing of the opposition by Russian and Syrian armies as long as it does not intervene its potential zones of influence targeted. In this period, the USA gave the priority on making Rojava its own zone of influence and military headquarter. Although it did not directly made any military attacks against Assad, it acquired as an invisible red line that Syrian army should not be present on Israel

20 Turkey's probable military intervention scenarios for Syria and Iraq are explained in *Gerçek* newspaper's 91. Issue in the article titled "Suriye ve Irak'ta kanlı sürprizlere hayır!". <http://gercek-gazetesi.net/uluslararası/suriye-ve-irakta-kanli-surprizlere-hayir>.

and Jordan border and Iraq border. Within this frame, whenever Syrian army approached Golan heights, it was hit by Israel warplanes and rockets. During Syrian army's advancement in Deir ez-Zor, the warplanes of the USA hit Syrian soldiers "by mistake".²¹

On both fronts, we see that takfiri, sectarian groups and ISIL reacquired the sites they lost following the attacks of the USA and Israel. In other words, the USA's war with ISIL plays a key role at this phase. However, it is also possible to see that this war is also determined politically according to the priorities of the third phase.

In the third phase, the USA's withdrawal from the priority of overthrowing Assad, the control of Aleppo being taken by Syrian army and the following ceasefire caused disappointment for the Sunni Troika of Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia. Sunni Troika had arranged a joint military drill, namely "North Thunder" in order to show the USA that it may appear on the stage in case the USA gives up hope for the representative organizations on Syrian field.²² However, the power show of Sunni Troika although showed the presence of a loyal military power for the USA which can be used against Iran and Russia, it was also an indication of a risk which would pull it into an unwanted sectarian Middle East war for which it is not ready yet. For the USA taking such a risk would not be logical at a stage in which it was positioning strategically in Pacific against China and in Eastern Europe against Russia.²³

In the third phase of Syrian war, although Assad had acquired many gains as Hezbollah and Russia appeared on the stage, it cannot be stated that the absolute loser is the USA and Sunni Troika when the whole picture is examined. Although Assad was not overthrown in Syria and was able to survive, the USA and its allies, thanks to the civil war, were able to establish zones of influence in Syria, where they could not influence directly before 2011. Rojava mainly became the zone of influence and military headquarter of the USA imperialism. Turkey, also with its title as NATO army, is on Syrian land. For Israel, rise of sectarian war caused Hezbollah and Hamas face off each other and wear away on Syrian field. Again, the potential of Syria to make a military attack against Israel or effective retaliations against Israel's military attacks were considerably eliminated. Obama administration in the USA saw that they are still on the plus side of the balance sheet and changed the strategy it applied on the second phase at the cost of Russia's appearance on the field and Assad's protection of its power and acquisition of force.

21 *Gerçek* newspaper, "ABD Suriye'yi Sehven Değil Kasten Vuruyor", <http://gercekgazetesi.net/karsi-manset/abd-suriyeyi-sehven-degil-kasten-vuruyor>.

22 *Gerçek* newspaper, "Suriye'de Ateşkes, Suudi Arabistan'da Savaş Provası", <http://gercekgazetesi.net/uluslararasi/suriyede-ateskes-suudi-arabistanda-savas-provasi>.

23 Armağan Tulun, "Üçüncü Dünya Savaşı Davul Zurna ile Geliyor", *Gerçek* gazetesi, Issue 88 <http://gercekgazetesi.net/uluslararasi/ucuncu-dunya-savasi-davul-zurnayla-geliyor>.

However, the USA had seen that as it slowed down Sunni Troika, the costs of its policy increased. Turkey started to develop autonomous relations, which found its basis during the Astana discussions with Russia and in Euphrates Shield operation.²⁴ If these relations was to make NATO member Turkey more influential on the field, the USA would even expect specific benefits from such autonomous relations. However, Turkey had to accept whatever Russia demanded during the Astana process which followed the assassination of the Russian ambassador. Moreover, the USA, happy to have a NATO army in Syria with Euphrates Shield, lost its taste as Euphrates Shield turned into a trap and Russian soldiers deployed on Manbij and Afrin wings of this trap.

Accordingly, the third phase of the Syrian civil war is identified by distrust by the USA imperialism in the representative powers on the field. The USA, which had TAF enter the Syrian field as NATO inspector on these factors with Euphrates Shield, started to build up a new representative power in Rojava under its own supervision and coordination. An inevitable result of this political approach was to withdraw from the priority of overthrowing Assad and to focus on acquiring zones of influence in Syria.

Sign of the Fourth Phase: Trump, the Second Ghouda and Tomahawks

Following the ending of the battle of Aleppo in favor of Assad and Russia, we anticipated (at a relatively early stage) that the course of the civil war may not continue on the same line, that significant changes were to be expected as Trump took over presidency in the USA. The following excerpt is taken from the evaluation which *Gerçek* newspaper made following the battle of Aleppo:

Current policy of the USA may undergo a significant change very soon, in fact, it is very possible that it will. On January 20th, which is only one month later, the new president of the USA, Donald Trump shall take over the presidency from the current president, Obama. Trump's policy for the Middle East and more extensively, for Eurasia, no doubt, shall have significant effects in the future of the Middle East and Syria.

Trump's international policy has conflicts. As it is understood for the time-being, isolating China and forcing it both economically and politically lies in the center of this policy. The intention to get closer to Russia, which is speculated much, is more understandable within this context. However, the conflict also starts at this point. Trump is hostile towards Iran. If, this way or another, he succeeds

24 *Gerçek* newspaper, "Fırat Kapanı: Halklarla barışmadan ve emperyalizme vurmadan çıkış zor", <http://gercekgazetesi.net/gundemdekiler/firat-kapani-halklarla-barismadan-ve-emperyalizme-vurmadan-cikis-zor>

driving a wedge between Iran and the West, then, no doubt, this will influence his own government's relations with Russia inevitably. His policy concerning Turkey and in general Sunni camp also seems to have conflicts. On one hand, these countries are his natural allies against Iran. On the other hand, he desires to start a major struggle against Sunni Islamic radical movements, especially takfiri organizations such as ISIL. It is very difficult to deal with both Iran and Sunni radical organization simultaneously with harsh measures. A living evidence of this is that the USA, trying to get Mosul back, is required to cooperate with Iran and Shia militants.

Then, balances shall change in Syria. The USA, governed by Trump shall apply a policy which is more hostile than Obama's policy, against Assad. And this may change all the balances.²⁵

Accordingly, on April 07th, 2017, Trump using as an excuse, a chemical weapon attack, which is claimed to be made by Syrian army in Idlib (Khan Shaykhun town), struck al-Shayrat Air Base with guided missiles, from where the warplanes bombing the area took off. When compared with Ghouda, it is very clear that we are facing a more active hostility policy.

Trump, prior to taking over the presidency, had very warm relations with Russia. It was also claimed that Russia intervened the elections in the USA, in favor of Trump. It is also known that Trump is softer than Obama with respect to Assad and the regime in Syria. However, following Khan Shaykhun massacre, Trump stated that his opinion for Syria and Assad had changed, that they cannot reach an agreement with Russia currently and that the USA-Russia relations are being reduced to a minimum level. These expressions are clear indications that the USA targets to put a tighter leash on Russia and Assad, who made rapid gains during the third phase of the civil war.

Okay, how is the USA going to achieve this? When the matter is Syria, there is no power which acquired any political/diplomatic gain until now, in which military power is not used in one way or another. Accordingly, it is evident that we are entering a phase in which the USA shall use its military power more intensely.

However, this does not mean that the USA shall immediately invade Syria with marine troops. A rapid military confrontation with Russia is also not possible. It is understood that Tomahawk attack was notified to Russia in advance. This prevented Russian and the USA from a hot conflict, but it also increased the temperature quite a lot. In the new period, we saw that the USA special forces were taking more part on the field during the airborne operation in Tabqa which was a part of Raqqa siege. The USA is seeing the east of Euphrates as its zone of influence and Russia

²⁵ *Gerçek* newspaper, "Halep Muharebesi Zafer mi İnsanlık Dramı mı?" <http://gercekgazetesi.net/uluslararasi/halep-muharebesi-zafer-mi-insanlik-drami-mi>.

did not oppose this, yet. However, the USA not only crossed to the west of Euphrates (Tabqa operation), but also was not willing to leave Idlib to Russia alone. The USA, watching all the military operations of Russia in this region from a distance during the third phase of the civil war, started to perform military power shows in this region in the new period. US air forces made an air attack, in which it stated that it targeted al-Qaeda in Aleppo area. The USA showed that it did not leave fighting with al-Qaeda and similar organizations in Aleppo and west of Aleppo to Russia's scope of authority. Moreover, it showed that it will not be sufficient for those, who want the support of the USA in the field, to fight only with those with which the USA fights, and the USA did not neglect to strike a mosque "by mistake" in order to show that they have to go down on their knees in front of the USA.

Finally, creation of de-conflict zones with the initiative of Russia and Iran in Astana, became a factor that increased the tension despite the expression "de-conflict". Russia and Iran took Turkey also beside them, and declared "de-conflict" zones at the areas dominated by anti-Assad powers, except ISIL. However, de-conflict did not cover terrorist groups. Terrorist groups are dominating almost the whole area due to the extensive identification by Russia and Iran. Accordingly, Assad, together with Russia and Iran, kept the initiative to attack these areas based on the presence of such groups. And it is forcing Turkey to separate the groups supported by it and those identified as terrorist by Russia and even fight with them.

It was not hard to convince Turkey in this agreement which is made during a period in which Erdoğan was getting prepared to go to the USA in order to meet Trump. When Erdoğan was going to the USA, he did not want to appear as losing initiative in Syria. When Erdoğan went to the USA focused on signing of the agreement, not on the content, in order to say "I have alternative, I am carrying out an alternative process with Russia and Iran."²⁶

The USA, which participated in Astana by sending a representative only, did not hide that it was disturbed by the results. However, the actual reply of the USA was not diplomatic, but military. The USA responded to Syrian army's advancement towards Jordan-Iraq border where there are groups trained and equipped by it, by an air attack. This time, there was no mistake. In the news made as based on the declarations of an authority from the USA, Ministry of Defense, the reason of this attack was given as the violation of the de-conflict zone by Syrian army (with the support of Hezbollah and Iraqi Shia militants). Although this air attack was at a lower size and tactical level, it should be interpreted as an important development marking the Syria policy of the USA, which started to change together with Trump.

The USA has not yet prioritized overthrowing Assad, but had shown that it will

²⁶ With respect to the agreement concluded in Astana and its potential reflections in Syria, see *Gerçek* newspaper, "Astana'da ne oldu?", <http://gercekgazetesi.net/uluslararasi/astanada-ne-oldu>.

not accept the evolution of the formula of “transition with Assad, solution without Assad” agreed with Russia in the third phase of Syrian civil war, into “solution with Assad”. No doubt that this orientation increases the risk of a hot conflict between Russia and the USA on the skies of Syria where the missile and warplane traffic has increased, even if the parties try to avoid it. It is known, especially by these states, that the potential of hot conflict between Russia and the USA could suddenly trigger a process which might end up in a nuclear war. Due to this, the steps are being taken more attentively. However, the scenarios in which the USA and Russia compete without having a hot conflict, also start to become harsher and more destructive alternatives. In other words, the probability increases that the USA and Russia may enter a battle of wills through the states which are their direct allies, not through representative organizations on the field in the period to come. Accordingly this will influence Turkey’s relations with the USA, its position together with Sunni Troika, its position against Rojava, Syria policy and its positioning against Russia and Iran in the fourth phase.

The impact of the fourth phase on Turkey and Rojava

The aggression of the USA shall mark the fourth phase of the civil war in Syria. It will be very optimistic that the results of this aggression will be limited to Syria. The new orientation applied by Trump shall have global and regional results. It is seen that the first important development for Turkey is to be realized within the context of Raqqa operation and the USA’s relations with the PYD. In fact, the parties of this issue had already started taking their positions before Trump took office. It is known that Erdoğan, AKP government and TAF in Turkey have an expectation from Trump. This expectation is that the USA shall stop supporting the PYD and YPG in the field of Syria and shall take action together with Turkey and the groups called FSA protected by Turkey.

After Trump took office, the telephone call made with Erdoğan in February was announced as the USA being ready to take action with Turkey in al-Bab and Raqqa. However, the only thing that was agreed on was that the first abroad visit of CIA Director, Mike Pompeo was going to be to Turkey. When Mike Pompeo made this visit, it was going to be understood that Russia was not going to watch this development with tied hands and feet, when it hit TAF soldiers “by mistake” in al-Bab.²⁷ However, the real important visit was made by the Republican senator, John McCain. McCain is among those names in the USA who defend taking action together with Turkey. McCain’s visit raised hopes of Erdoğan and ranks of AKP power in this sense. However, when McCain came, he did not neglect to make the first secret

²⁷ *Gerçek* newspaper, “Amerikan Memuru Türkiye’yi Suriye’yle Savaşa mı Sokuyor?”, <http://gercekgazetesi.net/karsi-manset/abdnin-memuru-turkiyeyi-suriyeyile-savasa-mi-sokuyor-0>.

visit to Rojava. In this visit, he discussed whether a joint solution could be found with PYD so that TAF and FSA powers used in al-Bab could be used in Raqqa. It was understood that McCain's plan was to open a corridor by American soldiers from Tell Abyad up to Raqqa and to provide TAF-FSA powers to proceed to Raqqa from this corridor. The realism of this plan was arguable, but this was also the only alternative for Turkey to go down to Raqqa without getting into a hot conflict with Syria after the Euphrates Trap is closed. Of course it was clear that this alternative finally required a certain level of normalization between Turkey and PYD, although not as the revival of Eshme spirit.²⁸

The discussions made on all these possibilities were considerably finalized before Erdoğan's visit to the USA. When Turkish delegation composed of the Chief of General Staff, Undersecretary of MİT and spokesman of the Presidency went to the USA before Erdoğan in order to establish the preliminary contacts, Trump signed the government order for providing heavy weapons to YPG. Before Erdoğan went to the USA, the weapons were already started to be distributed to YPG. Of course, Turkey was not happy with this. Turkey first gave mixed signals from its own side. Erdoğan was expressing determination when saying our meeting shall be "a full stop, not a comma" but also making very low profile sentences such as "using a terrorist organization against another terrorist organization is not an ideal way of thinking." Prime Minister Yıldırım was saying "we are not going to fight with the USA" and was confessing that Turkey was required to accept *fait accompli*. When Erdoğan returned from the USA, the only thing at like a "full stop" was that the operation in Raqqa was going to be carried out with YPG. Further, the full stop was put to this issue before Erdoğan went to the USA. Now it was not possible anymore for Turkey to go down to Raqqa.

Following air attacks of Turkey to Qarachok and Sinjar, show up of the USA flagged armored vehicles on Syrian-Turkish border had shown that conflicts with YPG may mean confronting the USA. However, TAF and the USA soldiers coming up against each other is a possibility that not only Turkey but also the USA shall desire to avoid. Accordingly, by giving heavy weapons including anti-tank weapons to YPG, the USA made an attempt to deter Turkey from entering Rojava without its own intervention, and expanded its maneuver area politically. This way, the USA acquired the alternative to intervene the process in order to first fade from the scene and stop such violent clashes afterwards (of course in a manner to increase its own

28 When the so-called "peace/solution process" was not over yet, although it is not officially accepted, TAF, PYD and YPG coordinated during the operation of the transfer of Suleiman Shah's tomb under ISIL siege. Afterwards, Öcalan gave this as an exemplary event for the progress of the initiative process and named it as "Eshme Spirit" in his Newrouz message. For this issue, see *Gerçek* newspaper, "Süleyman Şah Algı Operasyonu", <http://gercekgazetesi.net/karsi-manset/suleyman-sah-algi-operasyonu>.

influence) in addition to the option to intervene and stop the attack in case TAF made any unilateral intervention (this, even low, has the risk of having a military conflict with TAF).

It was disclosed by the military authorities of the USA that the heavy weapons given by the USA to PYD in Rojava were given permanently. On the other hand, the USA is guaranteeing that these weapons shall not be used and YPG in general shall not make any operations against Turkey. It is evident that this guarantee can be realized by increase of the USA military presence on the field, not by the USA's political influence on PYD. On the other hand, preventing the intervention of Turkey on the region will also be a means for increasing the USA's military presence. In any case, when considered from the fourth phase of the civil war in Syria, Rojava was stepping ahead as a region where the USA soldiers will have "their boots touch the ground" and build-up.

Increasing American political influence and military presence in Rojava would strengthen the tendency of "normalization" of Turkey-PYD relations. Domestic political balances of Turkey may extend the process or a tenser tone may be used in speech, but the tendency is within this direction. For example, after the use of YPG in Raqqa operation following the meeting with Trump and PYD dominance in Rojava became clearer "at the level of a full stop", Erdoğan stated that they will not be in Raqqa (as if it was possible after this stage), and then defined the new position of Turkey as "if there is an attack from YPG, we apply the engagement rules without asking anyone." The meaning of these words expressed in a harsh manner, can be read just the opposite way. Mentioning "engagement rules" which are only applied to the dominant states in an environment in which Turkey identified PYD and YPG as "terrorist", can be interpreted as an adaptation to the new status being formed, more than just a simple slip of the tongue.

However this state cannot be interpreted as the USA entering into a relation of strategic alliance with the Kurdish movement as a whole. Although it seems that PYD had acquired a significant political power, especially by implementing the third front policy for some time in Syria, and obligated the USA to cooperate with it on the field, now it is clear that it is PYD which needs the USA as an inevitable result of dancing with the imperialism. This is so clear that after Trump won the elections in the USA, Cemil Bayık felt the need to say "We hope that Kurds are also considered in the Middle East policies of the USA" during a statement he gave to Sterk TV. Following the strike of Syrian headquarter by the USA by Tomahawk missiles, PYD's leader Salih Muslim supported the attack.

The only thing the USA considered in its relations with anyone and any region is its own imperialist interests. These imperialist interests require the USA to hold Turkey within NATO and use NATO's army TAF in its own line. The effect of YPG

concerning the USA's imperialism is limited even on the field of Syria. The role to be played by YPG following the provision of order after Raqqa is saved from ISIL, is also questionable. When this was the case, build-up of the whole strategy of the USA on YPG cannot be rational under any condition. In fact, Deputy Secretary of State of the USA, Jonathan Cohen clearly defines the relations with YPG as "temporary and tactical."

Accordingly, when defining the USA's relation with YPG as tactical and temporary, is evaluated together with identifying PKK as a terrorist organization and promising more intelligence support against PKK following Trump-Erdoğan meeting, it is apparent that the USA considers Kurds in the Middle East but will not be behind them until the end. The strategy pursued here by the USA is to support Turkey's operations against PKK within the boundaries of Turkey, to approve Turkey's pressure on PKK together with Barzani in Iraq and this way, to provide Kurds to focus only on the interests of the USA. The USA's benefits are on the side of a new initiation process in Turkey. This "solution process" aims to weaken the PKK's military influence on the north within the boundaries of Turkey, and replacement of its political influence by Barzanism. It is clear that an environment in which Demirtaş is in prison and spokesman position of HDP is undertaken by Baydemir is beneficial for the USA in this sense. However, it is very hard to make a Barzanist PKK without breaking its military power. In this context, it is clear that the USA shall continue to support TAF's operations against PKK. This support becoming an approval for a military pressure even intervention on Sinjar is a possibility which should be carefully assessed. Thus, Cohen, who identified the USA's relation with YPG as "tactical and temporary", said that efforts shall be intensified to have PKK leave Shengal/Sinjar, voluntarily or otherwise, following the taking over of Mosul from ISIL.

Due to this reason, it shall be more correct to expect heating up, rather than cooling down in the relations of Turkey, which could not receive what it wanted with respect to Raqqa and YPG titles during Erdoğan-Trump meeting (Gülen's return was not expected anyway and it remained only as an argument used in domestic policy), with the USA. Mentioning of the problems Trump faced in the USA, Erdoğan's continuous complaints about the Obama period should be seen as an effort to prepare Turkish public for this heat-up.

In this sense, the USA and Turkey's increasing cooperation not against PYD and YPG but against PKK in the coming period shall have Turkey enter under the USA's scope of influence more. Turkey's NATO membership, and the US activity at the Incirlik base, will not be weakened but strengthened. As a probable result of all these, it can be expected that Turkey's approach to Russia and Iran over processes similar to Astana will slow down, and even Turkey's position can be against Russia

and Iran step by step.

One more time, no matter how rhetorically expressed, whether as anti-imperialist, or anti-American, a foreign policy based on hostility against Kurdish movement results in increase of imperialism in general and influence of the USA on Turkey in particular. With respect to Kurdish movement, as the alliance with the USA deepens, the probability of clearance instead of freedom increases.

What should be the correct policy in Syria?

It is evident that the good will declarations longing for peace and comfort in Syria and in the Middle East in general do not have any applicability. Peace and comfort can come to the people of Syria and the Middle East only by the **correct** war. Brotherhood of people can rise over a joint hostility that is directed towards the correct target.

In the days when Erdoğan and AKP were saying “my brother Assad”, the purpose of this policy was to break off Syria from Iran and to make harmonize it with the interests of the USA and Israel. The target of “Eshme Spirit” which was spoken out during the process in which TAF and YPG cooperated implicitly in moving Suleiman Shah’s Tomb was to make cooperation on the basis of Sunni Islamism against Kurdish movement and Assad and again in harmony with the interests of the USA and Israel. The results of both policies were the massacre of people not the brotherhood.

It was not difficult to see the longing of the masses for Arab unity, anti-imperialism and anti-Zionism at the heart of Arab revolution which started with Tunisia and Egypt. Overthrown dictators Ben Ali and Mubarak were the leaders of the regimes who became the slaves of imperialism and a friend of Zionism. Downfall of these dictators gave hope for the millions for the overturn of Israel and expelling of imperialism, the only condition for Arab unity. Imperialism and Zionism on the other hand, directed and choked the anger of the masses in the sectarian channels. While doing this, they received the main support from the sectarian cooperative Arab regimes and AKP’s Turkey. They did not have any difficulty in finding the actors for their dirty games.

However, the Middle East does not only have corrupt gangs, collaborationists, and murderers. There is a strong tradition of struggle with anti-imperialism, anti-Zionism in the Arab world and Turkey. There is a strong Kurdish revolutionist tradition which fought feudal structure in Kurdistan and walked arm in arm with socialism. Iran is a country which also started the 20th century with a revolution and entered the last quarter with revolution. In these countries, no matter how many times such reformist movements are defeated, there is deep-seated fire of revolution which does not die out. However, there is also this reality that flaming of this fire

is not possible over identities, passivism, nationalism, search of democracy and human rights in the imperialist centers.

In the Middle East and Syria, it is not possible to expose the reformist dynamics and build up the brotherhood of people without centering on the struggle against imperialism and Zionism. When the problem is perceived with this clarity, it is possible to find the solution. There is no way to defend Assad's bourgeois dictatorship. The same applies for the sectarian, takfiri gangs also. However, at this stage reached, a reformist military-political attitude, which does not target the defeat of imperialism, Zionism and their cooperators in Syria is not feasible at the current stage in which the public rebellion rising as a part of Arab revolution against Assad's bourgeois dictatorship, died out and corrupted and the imperialism and Zionism clearly intervened the process.

In Turkey, the brotherhood of people cannot be defended without defending Turkey's exit from NATO and the closure of İncirlik. A consistent anti-imperialist line cannot be followed without defending the brotherhood of people and the rights of Kurds. Otherwise, as we had seen many times, the end of begging for democracy from the USA and EU is to be contented with the democracy alms of imperialism. It is evident that US imperialism easily chokes any activity against it in the waters of Kurdish hostility. Kurds are people which had encountered bloody experiences to see and know that liberation cannot be achieved by cooperating with the US imperialism. However, the nationalist colonialist attacks always push them toward the imperialism of the USA. Kurdish movement, which opened its ranks and positions to the USA, increases the influence of nationalism that poisons Arab, Turkish and Iranian workers, rather than reducing it.

Accordingly, anti-imperialist united front, which is the only solution in Syria, appears as the only way out in Rojava and Turkey. Within this context, the USA soldiers should get out of both İncirlik and Rojava. Turkey should exit NATO, Kurdish movement should end its policy for cooperation with the USA.

Let's not forget that, ISIL and similar takfiri, sectarian formations do not have any chance to live in an environment where Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran do not take hostile actions against each other and against the Kurds. If Turkey supported the resistance of Kurdish people against ISIL in Kobani, ISIL would be defeated and also the imperialists would not open a space for themselves.

Nationalism and colonialism shall be deprived of their basic basis in Syria and Middle East from where imperialism and Zionism are kicked out. The way for Socialist Federation of the Middle East to lead to the joint liberation to bring the equality, brotherhood and freedom of the Turkish, Arab, Kurdish and Iranian people shall be cleared this way.

The Mediterranean: new basin of world revolution!

RedMed

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About us

RedMed (Red Mediterranean) is a web site that publishes news, opinion, commentary and political declarations from around the Mediterranean Sea, the Balkans, the Middle East, the Black Sea region, Transcaucasia, and the broader Eurasian region. It works hand in hand with the Balkan Socialist Centre Christian Rakovsky to establish links between socialists and revolutionaries from these regions. These two have been organising the Euro-Mediterranean Conferences held every year in Athens, Greece, of which the fourth was convened this year in June. They are also holding together a one-day conference on the Centenary of the October Revolution this December in Istanbul, Turkey.

Its aim is to link up with revolutionary organisations and militants in the countries of the Mediterranean basin, which has been turned into the epicentre of world revolution thanks to the Arab revolution and the class struggles that are taking place in response to the havoc wrought by the capitalist economic crisis in the southern periphery of Europe.

To this end we will provide our analysis of the events in southern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. We will try to understand the forces, in particular the class forces, that have gone to shape the different upheavals in the Arab world, in Palestine, in Iran, in Turkey, in Kurdistan and in southern Europe, so as to be able to draw the correct conclusions regarding the way to move forward in establishing workers' power in the whole region.

We welcome letters, comments, news about struggles, debates and material in different languages. We would appreciate very much if people would volunteer translating the different articles and declarations that we publish in the web site into their native tongue.

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The centenary of the Balfour Declaration, imperialists' visa for Nakba and the Zionist occupation

Kutlu Dane

The twentieth century began with a grand war. In favour of the interests of a fistful of monopolies, millions of workers were forced to slaughter each other in the First Imperialist War. The “middle east”, which was then under the Ottoman rule, was in a turmoil. One aspect of this was the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire, while the other was the founding of the Zionist Israel which would have been a watchdog of imperialists' in the region afterwards. The Balfour Declaration, issued in November 1917, was a sort of a visa in order for the Zionists to fulfil the second.

As a result of this declaration, an occupier and expansionist apartheid “state”, functioning as a bastion for imperialists, is standing in the heart of the Socialist Middle East Federation that we, revolutionary Marxists, struggle to establish. The destruction of this entity, an ally of all the reactionary forces of the region, is a sine

qua non for us. The masses of the “Middle East”, who are exploited, oppressed, displaced, tortured and slaughtered are so exhausted that they will not bear the consequences of this document for yet another one hundred years. Therefore, in order to understand the historical importance of this document and to lay the foundations of a struggle against Zionism and imperialism in the region, we need to comprehend this document and the circumstances of the time period that it was issued. The issuance process and aftermath of this document includes valuable lessons for all the forces fighting against imperialism and Zionism. For this purpose, we will explain shortly the development of the Zionist movement and its relations with imperialists, examine the declaration in detail, and evaluate its results.

The Birth of the Zionist Movement

As a political project, Zionism was born in the last decades of the 19th century. This was a time which the number of Jewish organisations were increasing in Europe. Tsarist Russia’s massacres and exiles aiming at Jews, were the main reason behind this. Hovevei Zion (Zion Lovers) which was founded in 1882 and aimed to transfer Russian Jews to Palestine is usually shown as a prototype of Zionism.¹ But not merely in the Tsarist Russia, beginning with the 1870s, anti-semitism was becoming widespread all across Europe.

These motives, led to the Jews at the beginning. Theodor Herzl, an Austrian journalist, was the man who brought these ideas to maturity. In his book, *The Jewish State*, Herzl asserted that the only way for Jews to survive was to have a nation state. In fact, his views had important contradictions with Judaism. A Christianity-like expectation of a messiah², has an important role in Judaism. Ideas of Herzl were taken as an attempt to mobilise Jews, before the arrival of the messiah, and his views could not become popular at least between religious Jews in the beginning. Moreover, many like the United Committee of Jews under the leadership of Lucien Wolf at Britain, took the views of Zionists contrary to their own plans³ and opposed.

But later on, many people from both religious Jews and Wolf’s supporters, tended towards Herzl’s ideas, partly because of the rising anti-semitism. Zionism took an organisational form in time. 200 delegates from different countries, joined the first World Zionist Congress held in Basel in 1897. Formation of a Jewish State, an idea parallel to Herzl’s, was one of the decisions of this event. The congress clearly

1 Fahir Armaoğlu, *Filistin Meselesi ve Arap-İsrail Savaşları*, İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, Ankara, 1991, p. 14.

2 This expectation was often criticised for passivising the Jews against anti-semitic attacks.

3 Unlike Zionism, these Jewish organisations were aiming at the assimilation of Jews in societies which they were part of. Wolf and his followers were working for the improvement of the rights and statutes of Jews in these societies. They also asserted that British Empire had to make a separate peace agreement with the Ottoman Empire.

pointed to Palestine for this purpose.⁴

One must state that the Zionist movement had distinct tendencies in. A group of Zionists under the leadership of Haim Weizmann were aiming the formation of a Jewish state in Palestine, while another group under the leadership of Romanian Moses Gaster were limiting their aims to the improvement of Jewish culture and Hebrew language all around the world. But, the winner were Weizmann's. After Herzl's death in 1904, Weizmann, who would later become the first president of the illegitimate state of Israel, took the leadership of the Zionist movement. Zionists under the leadership of Weizmann, rejected offers made by imperialists in order to settle them on lands in Uganda, Texas, Canada and Argentina. Zionist movement's program for the Jews, to settle on the lands on which then another people were already living, in order to get rid of the atrocity that they faced, were highly accepted. We will discuss this later on.

Palestine at the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th centuries

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Ottoman rule which began in 1517 was still continuing in Palestine. Ottoman administration had given the name Arz-i Filistin (Palestine land) to the region and divided it into sanjaks (Al Quds, Gaza, Nablus and Safed) under the Şam (Damascus) province. Although some notables revolted against the empire at time, and Mehmet Ali Pasha took the control of the region in the middle of the 19th century, the Ottoman rule persisted until the Great War. But it was the same Ottoman rule that became so fragile as a consequence of the fact that the empire itself had been gradually turning into a semi-colony, during the 19th century.

At the end of the 19th century, few landowner families began to concentrate the economic power in Palestine. One must add the ulema and multezims (tax collectors) to them. At the beginning of the same century, an advanced level of development in agriculture, trade and crafts could be observed in Palestine. Despite the negative consequences of the collaboration of Palestinian notables with the Ottoman administration, Palestinian society were productive and culturally rich.⁵ Palestinian Arabs were constituting 80 percent of the total population of Palestine at that time.⁶

Abdulhamid II was the Ottoman Sultan who diverted the Empire's politics to panislamism in order to eliminate the possible dispersive effects of the nationalist movements across the Arab provinces of the empire at the end of the 19th century. His attempts to reunite the ummah such as the Hedjaz railway project were followed by

4 William Cleveland, *Modern Ortadoğu Tarihi*, Agora Kitaplığı, İstanbul, 2008, p. 269.

5 Ralph Schoenman, *Siyonizmin Gizli Tarihi*, Kardelen Yayınları, İstanbul, 1992, p. 20.

6 Justin McCarthy, *The Population of Palestine*, New York, 1990, p. 11.

a gratifying of Arab nobles by the Sultan. After the 1908 revolution, panislamism was displaced by first Ottomanism, and then, particularly after the Balkan Wars, by Turkish nationalism. This policy change led by the İttihat ve Terakki (Committee of Union and Progress), the bourgeois revolutionary political party of 1908, sparked some negative effects all around the Arab region, particularly when the İttihat ve Terakki turned Turkish language into the official language of the empire, and when the same party show a tendency for building a more centralised state structure. These attempts resulted with the raising of Arab nationalism and foundation of many Arab nationalist organisations. Arab nationalists demanded the Arab language to be one of the official languages of the empire, and also autonomy for the Arab provinces.⁷

The Palestinian intellectuals played an important role in this movement. They even had a publication entitled *Palestine*. An important factor for this was the silence of İttihat ve Terakki on the Jewish possession of Palestinian lands during the first years of their government. Arabs were aware of the aims of the Zionists, and they were also worried about an inability of İttihat ve Terakki government defending the Arab lands against Zionists. In general, İttihat ve Terakki's approach to these movements were quite hostile. Ottoman forces under the leadership of Cemal Pasha, began an assault at Syria, including the execution of some of the leading figures of this movement. Apparently, this enormous pressure was successful in cushioning the blow, but in reality, Arab nationalism grew further among the Arabs.⁸ This trend would of course effect Palestine, but as we see, imperialists had other plans regarding the Palestinians and their lands.

Ottoman Empire and the Zionist Movement

Ottoman Empire's relationship with the Zionists was quite different from the popular narrative that's wide-spread today, even on TV series. While diverting the empire to panislamist policies, Abduhamid II did not avoid bargaining about a "Jewish home" in Palestine with Theodor Herzl, the historical leader of the Zionist movement, through the agency of the German emperor Wilhelm II. His final answer to Herzl was negative, because of the fact that the disintegration of the empire had begun then. **But he did bargain with Herzl multiple times, although he knew what Herzl would demand again!**

First contact between the two was in 1896. Herzl transmitted his offer of paying 20 million sterling Ottoman debt, in return for a "Jewish home" on Palestinian lands to Abdulhamid II. Five years later, on 17th of May 1901, and again on 4th of July 1902, Herzl met with the sultan. Abdulhamid II, did not reject Herzl's offer directly at the last meeting, but instead, he transmitted his negative answer through

⁷ Cleveland, p. 159.

⁸ Tayyar Arı, *Geçmişten Günümüze Ortadoğu*, Alfa Basım-Yayım, İstanbul, 2007, p. 110.

the leader of the Jewish minority in Istanbul.⁹ It's clear that the sultan thought for a while, and then said no, probably because he found that the game was not worth the candle. Zionist movement saw the Arab nationalism rising in Palestine as a great danger for its aims, both in the Abdulhamid II and the İttihat ve Terakki eras. Zionists warned both of them about the "dangers" resulting from the Arab nationalism and showed themselves as "a group, that will chest the attacks made against the power of the sultan, in Palestine." Moreover, while Palestinians were embracing the Armenians, who were escaping from the genocide, Zionists like Vladimir Jabotinsky were supporting the genocide directed to Armenians.¹⁰

Between 1882 and 1903, first Jewish migration to Palestine, named as the First Aliyah, began. In these years, most of the Jews migrating to Palestine were originated from Eastern Europe and Yemen. Especially the Jews escaped from the pogroms of the Tsarist Russia, settled to Palestine following the first initiatives of the Zionists. Many of these, amounted to 25.000, left Palestine afterwards. But with the Second Aliyah, nearly the same amount of Jews settled to Palestine, and settled in the coastal regions of the country.

Zionists' relations with the imperialists

Jews having an important social and economic power in the US, began to carry a big importance for the internal conflict among the imperialists, as this conflict took its final shape with the alliance of Russia, England and France against Germany. Zionist movement was important for Germany, particularly for receiving the support of Russian Jews living in the US who hate the Tsarist regime. Germans were hoping to win the United States to their side or to neutralise it totally. Moreover, Germans hoped to canalise the Russian Jews to a revolt. The presence of the centre of the Zionist movement in Berlin, was what Germans relied on.

Zionists were aiming to manipulate the conflict between the imperialist camps. At first they got closer to German imperialism and persuaded German emperor Wilhelm II to support their projects. But Wilhelm could not be able to persuade Ottomans to follow such a policy. Zionist movement would stake on English imperialism.

Zionists had darkened the British door per se, before they got closer to Germany and the Ottoman empire. Herzl asked England for acquiring some areas on the Sinai peninsula in order to establish a Jewish state. England was a coloniser in Egypt then. In a similar manner, Nahum Sokolow, an administrator of the Zionist movement, had a meeting with the English department of state on 3 March 1914, a

⁹ Armaoğlu, p.21.

¹⁰ Schoenman, p. 20.

date before the Zionists changed their course to the English imperialism. But Zionists could not get what they wished. In the first years of the First World War; Haim Weizmann, Nahum Sokolow and Walter Rotschild, three important names of the Zionist movement, began to get the support of some important names of the English cabinet. At the same time, the Zionist movement was extending its popularity in the Jewish population.

English imperialism “bargains” the region with many “clients”

For the British, the Zionist movement was crucial in the sense of, firstly, obtaining much more military support of the United States, which had just went to war as an ally of England, France and Russia, and secondly, benefiting from the financial power of the US banks. (US President Wilson was a supporter of the Zionist movement. Also, there were many Jews who support Zionism, owning many US banks or at least working in the decision making bodies of these banks.) But English alliance with the Tsarist Russia became an obstacle for these pursuits. Anti-Tsarist movement was quite strong among the Jews who immigrated from Poland and Russia¹¹ at the beginning of the war. This prevented England and France to find credits for their war expenditures from the US banks. It was the juncture for both countries to create an initiative aiming to win the Zionist movement. The process leading to the Balfour Declaration matured as a consequence of this need. Balfour Declaration meant a permission of the English state for the materialisation of the Zionist project. We will discuss it later on. But first, one must clarify how English imperialism made Palestine lands a subject of separate bargains with separate powers.

First bargain was made with the Arab rebels, on the condition that they would fight against the Ottomans. First contact between the English and the Arabs was at the beginning of the war. Before the beginning of the war, emissaries of the Arab nationalist movement were declaring that they prefer at least a federal structure against the centralising policies of the İttihat ve Terakki. The Adem-i Merkeziyet (decentralisation) party of Egypt was among these. At first, İttihat ve Terakki didn't change its approach against these movements. But after the loss of Libya, İttihat ve Terakki's attitude softened. In order to regain the Arab nationalists, Said Halim Pasha was appointed to the grand viziership and the use of Arab language was eased. Beginning with the start of the war, these attempts failed. However, almost none of the Arabic communities at Bilad Al-Sham (Levant) or Bilad Ar-rafıdayn (Mesopotamia) clashed with the Ottoman armies. Only Sharif Hussein, who was appointed as the Sharif of Mekka by İttihat ve Terakki, took action to establish an

¹¹ After the ten years following 1881, 134.000 Jews immigrated to USA as a consequence of Tsarist Russia's oppression (Armaoğlu, 1991, 13). In 1892, 500.000 more Jews were added to this sum.

Arab state¹², and applied to the English imperialism. As far as we learn from the correspondences between Sharif Hussein and Henry McMahon, then English high commissar of Egypt, Sharif demanded to establish an independent Arab state on all the Arab lands excluding Egypt (also taking the Mersin-Mosul line as a northern border), and McMahon declared that England would admit such a state on the lands that Sharif mentioned, but Bagdad, Basra, Syria and Mersin-Antakya.¹³ English imperialism did not draw a fixed border line for the Syrian shore to the Arabs primarily because they had proposed it to the French before. They also wished to hold Palestine for themselves. This policy led English imperialism to wield the Arabs against the Ottoman Empire's jihad tactic¹⁴, and the Arab rebellion against the Ottoman Empire began on the 5th of June, 1916.

Second bargain of the English was the one made with the French. Totally beyond the Arabs' knowledge, the Sykes-Picot treaty which divides much of the lands promised to the Arabs between France and England, was signed between these two imperialist countries in May 1916. Sykes-Picot treaty reserved the Mersin-Sivas-Midyat triangle and the Syrian coast under the direct control of France, and Basra under the direct control of England, left the lands that mostly laid within today's Jordan, Iraq and Syria to an Arab state which would be under the domain of France and England.¹⁵ Although France insisted to keep Palestine under her domain as a part of Bilad Al-Sham, the establishing of an "international administration" in Palestine was agreed upon in the treaty. Moreover, England would keep Haifa and Akka (Acre) in order to provide the security of the Suez channel.

The third bargain that English imperialism made on Palestinian lands was with the Ottoman Empire which held these lands for four hundred years. During the war, England proposed to Enver Pasha of the Ottoman government, that the Ottoman flag could go on waving on the Palestinian lands, in return of a separate peace agreement between the two empires which would result with the disengagement of the Ottoman Empire from the German bloc. Enver Pasha refused. He probably had bigger dreams about the future of the Ottoman Empire then.

12 Abdulaziz Ibn Saud, who could be taken as a rival of Sharif Hussein, stayed neutral as a result of the inducement of the English imperialism. But, when Sharif Hussein did give his cold shoulder to imperialists after the war, Ibn Saud would come into play and founded his state that covers a large part of the Arabian peninsula.

13 Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin, *The Israel-Arab Reader*, Penguin, ABD, 2008, pp. 12-13.

14 Armaoğlu, p. 30.

15 Laqueur and Robin, pp. 12-13.

The Declaration

Balfour Declaration, was a consequence of a fourth bargain between the Zionists and the English imperialism, as a result of the convergence of the two as we mentioned above. In fact, English imperialism was hesitant about such an attempt even in the summer of 1917. For instance, Zionists made an appeal to English government in the summer of 1917, for a declaration of the latter stating Palestine as the “home” of Jews. But the English government refused.

Weizmann, the leader of the Zionist movement in England, told the English government that Germans were having tripartite meetings with the Zionists and Cemal Pasha of the Ottoman government, which will result in an acceptance of Zionists’ demands about the Palestinian lands in a short time. Meanwhile Arthur Balfour, the English foreign minister returning from his visit to the US, was arguing for a support to the Zionist movement, in his talks with other members of the English cabinet. Also for the English imperialism, the fat hit the fire in Russia, following the February revolution which created a dual power in the country. According to Balfour, Jews both living in the US and the Tsarist Russia were under the influence of Zionism, and a support to the Zionists’ goals would create benefits for the interests of England.

In the end, the renowned declaration was given to Jewish banker Lionel Walter Rotschild on the 2nd of November 1917, to be forwarded to the British Zionist Federation. The declaration had a balanced content, including commitments to Zionists while at the same time indicating that the Arabs living in Palestine would not be affected negatively:

Foreign Office
November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you on behalf of His Majesty’s Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by the Cabinet.

“His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours sincerely,
Arthur James Balfour¹⁶

¹⁶ Laqueur and Robin, p. 16.

The declaration appeared in newspapers on the 9th of November, 1917. English army prepared leaflets and airdropped to German and Austrian battlefronts. Jewish soldiers in these armies summoned to lay down arms by these leaflets. It was also emphasised in these leaflets that a victory of the allied powers would mean the return of Jews to Zion.¹⁷

In the period following the declaration, Ottoman Empire lost its power in the region. On the 7th of December 1917, Ottoman army left Al Quds to English and Arab armies, in less than one year, defeated by the same forces at Nablus, lost Damascus and Aleppo in succession. After the signing of Mondros Armistice Agreement at the end of 1918, Ottoman Empire's relation with Arab nation became limited to "neighbourhood", except for a relatively small Arab population which had already been living in south Anatolia. Following the Great War, Arabs had to negotiate their sovereignty on their own lands, with English and French imperialisms.

After the war

France, USA and Italy, declared that they support the Balfour Declaration, in 1918. A committee from the World Zionist Organisation visited Al Quds and examined how could the topics related to the declaration be handled. Zionists were aiming to put their plans on Palestine into practice. The only armed force before them was Sharif Hussein's¹⁸ Arab troops engaged with English forces during the war. Sharif had trouble with the imperialists when the Bolsheviks revealed all the secret agreements which the Tsarist regime was part of, including Sykes-Picot. But he was first soothed by the imperialists and then inculcated that a collaboration with the Zionists would be also in his benefit. Zionists got in touch with the Sharif too, in order to prevent any possible disagreement with him. As a consequence of this contact between the Sharif and the Zionists, a treaty was signed between Sharif's son Faisal and Haim Weizmann, at Akabe. By signing the treaty which also refers to the Balfour Declaration (in article 3), Faisal approved the Jewish migration to Palestine (in article 4).¹⁹

For sure, the views of the winners of the Great War on the region which would come to light at the Paris Peace Conference beginning on the 18th of January 1919, was more important than this treaty. The foundation of mandate governments under the French and English administrations in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire was accepted as a general principle. On the other hand, Sykes-Picot treaty led to some unexpected results for Sharif Hussein and his sons, during the conference. Commitments made to Sharif seemed to be impossible, and large parts of the Arab

¹⁷ Leonard Stein, *The Balfour Declaration*, Valentine Mitchell, London, 1961, pp. 579-580.

¹⁸ Sharif was named as the *King of Hedjaz* after the war.

¹⁹ Laqueur and Rubin, pp. 17-18.

Kingdom which Sharif dreamed to establish, was divided between two imperialist powers. Sharif tried to react, but his lands were invaded by Ibn Saud's troops backed by England, and he lost his sovereignty.

Arab nationalists, mainly the ones resident in Syria, began scrutinising the new situation they faced. The existence of the mandate governments and Zionists' plans about Palestine, made them feel quite anxious. In this period, Arab nationalism emerged as an inconvenient factor for France and England in the region.²⁰ Arab nationalists began to put pressure on England, to ensure a grant of self determination right which was accepted generally after the war, for Arabs, especially for Palestinians. Then, in July 1919, Arab nationalists convened at the Syrian Congress, and published a resolution which indicates that they, unlike Faisal, would not allow a Jewish state in Palestine²¹ (article 7). Arab nationalists also protested any treaty that may led to the establishment of a Zionist settlement in south Syria (aka Palestine) as a result of a partition of Syria, and called for the cancellation of any such treaty (article 10).²²

But the declaration of intention of the imperialists would be heard from Arthur Balfour soon. Balfour gave a memorandum to the British government on 11 August 1919:

The four great powers²³ are committed to Zionism, and Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700.000 Arabs, who now inhabit that ancient land.²⁴

Balfour's words speak for themselves. Here, the "desires" refer to the right of self determination of Arabs, and the "prejudices" refer to Arabs' reactions against the Zionist's plans, which were laid bare.

20 Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, *Osmanlı Devleti'ne Karşı Arap Bağımsızlık Hareketi*, Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, No. 512, Ankara, 1982, pp. 243-244.

21 Resolution of this congress addressed, to a large extent, to the US president Wilson, and demanded the Arab nationalists to be invited to peace talks in France. The congress, pointed to the Taurus Mountains as northern, Aqaba as southern, River Euphrates as eastern and Mediterranean Sea as western borders of Syria (article 1). Also, Faisal, son of Sharif Hussein (who later became the king of Iraq), was pointed as the king of the state which was to be founded (article 2). The 3rd article of the resolution protested the mandate governments, by stating that the Arab nation was not a lower nation compared to the nations that are "at the middle stages of development", like Bulgarians, Serbians and Greeks (Laqueur and Rubin, 2008, 21-23).

22 Laqueur and Rubin, pp. 21-23.

23 England, USA, France and Italy.

24 Harry N. Howard, *The King Comission: an American Inquiry in the Middle East*, Beyrut, 1963, via Schoenman, p. 23; Peter Mansfield, *A History of the Middle East*, Penguin, Londra, 2003, pp. 164-165.

English mandate in Palestine and Jewish migration

Although the mandate governments were de facto established after the Paris Peace Conference, the details of these governments were discussed at San Remo Conference in 1920. Mandate governments were confirmed by the League of Nations on 24th of July, 1922, and put into practice in March 1923.²⁵

The decision of the United Nations put a burden on England, for the implementation of the Balfour Declaration. This was of capital importance for Palestine. As a consequence of this, the Balfour declaration which was previously a binding agreement for English imperialism, and also for French, USA and Italian imperialisms, became a text acknowledged by the League of Nations.

Palestinians lived under this government until 1948. Britain had an important role on the settlement of Jews from various parts of the world. At the time of the declaration, the Palestinian Arab population was 670.000, a high number compared to the 60.000 Jewish living in Palestine. Although few in number until 1930s, the continuing Jewish migration increased the number of Jews in Palestine eventually. The number of Jewish migrants increased to 30.000 people per annum in 1930s. In 1936, the number rose to 62.000.

Jewish migration upset the social balance in Palestine, which had limited resources and had already been damaged previously with the beginning of the war. Increasing of unemployment following the migration, also provoked the reaction against Jewish migration to the region.

Ghassan Kanafani, Palestinian poet and militant of the PFLP (People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine), states that the lands which Jewish groups possess was 1.250.000 dunams²⁶ in 1930, whereas it was 300.000 dunams only one year ago. 200.000 Palestinians had already lost their lands by 1931. According to Kanafani, this huge loss amounting to one-third of the Palestinian farmlands, drove Palestinians to poverty. Kanafani also states that the land loss created a significant cultural and social disintegration alongside the economic one.²⁷

The handover of the lands did not occur by force. At least to a certain year during the mass migrations, Jews did not (or could not) annex the Palestinian lands. Immigrant Jews bought these lands from Palestinians. They also bought lands from English mandate government. This government, seized the lands of Palestinians who did not pay taxes, and sold these lands to immigrant Jews. The underlying reason of the land sales of particularly the poor farmers, was the fact that they had borrowed huge amounts in order to discharge their previous debts, and to buy seeds, agricultural implements, livestock etc, during the last period of the Ottoman domi-

²⁵ Laqueur and Rubin, p. 30.

²⁶ An area equal to approximately 900 square meters.

²⁷ Ghassan Kanafani, *The 1936-39 Revolt in Palestine*, New York, 1972, p. 20.

nation in Palestine. So, it must be emphasised clearly that land sale was a last resort for Palestinians. It's a big mistake to assert that Palestinians betrayed their country, or their lands, by selling their lands to Zionists.

English imperialism did not only provide lands for the settler Jewish population. It also played an important role in strengthening the Jewish bourgeoisie in Palestine. The mandate government gave 90% of the public privileges to Jewish bourgeoisie, and led the control of the economic infrastructure of the country fall into the hands of this group.²⁸ Moreover, it was mostly Jews who were made to use incentives for industrialisation and the like. This, increased the differentiation of the levels of development of two communities.

1920s were the years in which Palestinians confronted the results of the waves of the Jewish immigration to Palestine. The dynamics mentioned above made Palestinians feel more and more angry against Jewish migrations and their consequences. After some small-scale riots during the 20s, a rebellion, in which hundreds of Arabs and Jews were killed, occurred in 1929. English government, feeling that the social transformation created by the Jewish migration is becoming highly unsustainable, began to work on how it could bring the situation under control. Eventually, a report by Lord Passfield, which pointed that one-third of the Palestinian Arabs did not have lands and problems occurred because of the inability of the English in limiting the Jewish migration, were published. This report stated that the English mandate government had to limit the land sale to Jews.²⁹ But Zionists started a campaign against the report, and blamed England for failing to fulfil the requisites of the Balfour Declaration and the commitments of the mandate government. Pressure of the Zionists, made English imperialism retreat. One year later, a new report, called "the black letter" by Arabs, was published. Although this report, also known as the MacDonald Letter, didn't refer to the previous one, it did give a guarantee for the contents of the Balfour Declaration to be fulfilled by England.

During the 1930s, armed Zionist gangs began attacking Palestinians, while the Jewish immigration to Palestine was going on. One of these gangs, Haganah, was supported and trained by the English army. The struggle against the Zionist settlers and the Zionist terror, politicised all the Palestinian society rapidly. Amin Al-Husseini, then mufti of Al-Quds, rose to prominence and head the newly founded Al-Jihad Al-Mukaddes (The holy jihad) organisation. Other organisations like the Black Hand and the Green Hand were also founded in this period. In 1935, the murder of Izz Ad-Din Al-Qassam, the leader of the Black Hand organisation, by the mandate government, upsurged the Palestinian resistance.

But, in time, Al Husseini came into the service of Nazis, so to speak. He met

28 Schoenman, p. 30.

29 Armaoğlu, p. 53.

with Hitler, and helped Nazis forming Muslim brigades, after spreading his ideas among the muslim population of the Balkan peninsula. Al Husseini's support to the Nazis cannot be defended, for sure. But the Zionist movement was not in a better position compared to the mufti's. Many indicators, like the Anglo-Palestine Bank's breakage of the boycott of Jews to the Nazi regime, by making an agreement with the Nazis, or the rapprochement and the reciprocal visits between the Zionists and the Nazis³⁰, prove this. The Zionist movement was in a great betrayal of European Jews. Since the emancipation of the European Jews could hinder the settlements and the migration to Palestine, Zionists' interests were conflicting with those of the great majority of the European Jews. Zionists tried to show the Zionist entity in Palestine, as a shelter for the persecuted European Jews.³¹

The selection of settlers was important for the Zionists. Because of this, during 1933 - 1935, the World Zionist Organisation did not give permission to the Jews who were escaping from the anti-semitism in their countries and wishing to settle to the "promised lands" in Palestine, for reasons such as being old or not having vocational skills, but above all, for not being Zionists. Instead, educated and young Jews amounting to more or less 6.000, from countries like the USA and England where Jews were living safely, were accepted.³²

The 1936-1939 revolt and afterwards

Neither Palestinians nor the Arab countries could maintain a stance against the Zionist gangs systematised attacks until 1936. Needless to mention the fruitless attempts of Arabs before the imperialist countries, without learning any lesson from the Balfour declaration and the Sykes-Picot treaty.

But Palestinians began to show their rage in a more organised manner, as a result of the Zionist migration and land loss. The revolt of 1936-1939 was the most important one. On the 7th of May, 1936, a conference which brought together Palestinian delegates was held and a decision of not to pay taxes to the mandate government was taken there. It was followed by a general strike across Palestine.³³

A counter attack came from the English imperialism in the same summer. A Martial law was declared. Imperialist occupiers tried to stop the revolt by mass custodies and arrests, and also arsons. Zionists helped the British imperialism on its attacks to Palestinians. Part of the Zionists were taken to the "police force" of the mandate government. Many others were organised in gangs like Haganah and Irgun, which had 12.000 and 3.000 gunmen respectively. The so-called police force

30 See Schoenman, p. 51.

31 Schoenman, pp. 51-52.

32 Schoenman, p. 52.

33 Schoenman, p. 30.

reached 15.000 by the end of 1938. In 1938, 5.000 Palestinians were arrested and 2.000 of them received imprisonment from the mandate government. 148 people were executed. More then 5.000 houses were demolished.³⁴

After realising the impossibility to govern the region, England held a conference in 1939. A White Paper was published in the following days of this conference which failed just as the previous attempts of the occupiers. The White Paper was asserting that the Jewish migration would depend on the allowance of Arabs, after England's allowance of 75.000 more Jewish settlements to be carried out in the following five years. The report was also stating that the term "a national home for Jews" caused a confusion and resulted at the revolts of Arabs, and England is not aiming to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. The new formula of England was establishing a Palestine state, in which Arabs and Jews will live together, and thus realising the interests of both sides mutually.

Some Arabs' acquiescent approach to this plan, divided the resistance movement of Palestine. Some groups laid down their arms to the English army. Just then the Second World War began and the these ongoing problems of Palestine were froozen by the imperialists. On the other hand, the dissent among Palestinians ascended.

The curse of Balfour becomes real

Haganah gained strength during the war years by supplying arms from the British. It also helped illegal Jewish migration to proceed under its control. Some Jews fought voluntarily in the English brigades in Italy, and then, used the military experience they acquired during the war, against the Palestinian Arabs.³⁵

After the war, the US demanded from Britain, to lift the quotas which the mandate government of England imposed before. Then president of the US Henry Truman was claiming that the migration of at least 100.000 more Jews to Palestine was requisite, based on a research that he ordered to be done himself. A UK-USA commission established with the initiative of Truman, also did some research in Palestine and found similar results.³⁶

Balfour's heritance were adopted by the US imperialism after the war. Partly relying on this, the Zionists began also attacking the British army in Palestine. Britain, realising that it cannot steer the process in Palestine, brought the problem before the United Nations in 1947. The problem was handled in the Special Committee of Palestine. The committee suggested to dissolve the mandate government, to give independence to Palestine, to establish either two separate states for Jews and Arabs

34 Schoenman, p. 31.

35 Cleveland, p. 290.

36 Ari, pp. 218-219.

or one federal state, to turn Al Quds into an international land.³⁷ After voting on 29th of November, 1947, the infamous resolution 181 of the United Nations, which is also known as the “Partition Plan” was accepted. The USSR voted in favour of this resolution, as a result of Stalinist bureaucracy’s policy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism.

When the Partition Plan were on the UN’s agenda, there were 630.000 Jews and 1.300.000 Palestinian Arabs living in Palestine. But this plan was giving 54% of the lands to the Jews.³⁸ About three-fourths of these lands had already been invaded by the Zionist organisations before. Moreover, an important part of the lands given to the Jews were consisting of fertile agricultural lands.

Zionists accepted the UN resolution, which Arabs clearly opposed. Zionist gangs began an assault. Haganah and other such organisations attacked Palestinians, and made hundreds of thousands of Palestinians flee and become refugees, in 1948. There were 475 villages and small towns belonging to the Palestinians, 385 of which were demolished and wiped off the map. Between the acceptance of the partition plan and the declaration of the “foundation of Israel”, Zionists put 780.000 Palestinians in a refugee situation.³⁹ They also committed all-out slaughters, on the way to the Nakba, the day which Palestinians commemorate on every May 15th. As a matter of fact, there was no other way to turn such a big population into refugees and to expel from their lands. On April 9, 1948, Zionists slaughtered 254 defenceless people, including children, in Deir Yassin village. Another slaughter was made in Dueima in the same year. These sort of slaughters became a common practice for the Zionists in the following years.

Then newly founded Arab states declared war on the Zionist entity, after its foundation. Although Arab armies gained success at the beginning of the war, Zionists won, thanks to the support given by the imperialists.

The division among Arabs brought negative material results. On September 22, 1948, Al Husseini’s organisation declared the foundation of the state of Palestine. Many Arab countries recognised officially this new state, except for King Abdullah of Jordan, who were then willing to annex Palestinian lands. After the victory of the Zionist entity, the same division manifested itself when the Arab states signed separate peace agreements with the Zionists. After the war, the illegitimate Israel annexed more lands than the envisaged area decided in the partition plan.

Zionists seized all the properties of the people that they exiled from their lands, by the “Absentees’ Property Law” of 1950. Between 1948 and 1953, they annexed lands 2,5 times larger than the area provided to them by the mandate government.

³⁷ Cleveland, pp. 292.

³⁸ Schoenman, p. 33.

³⁹ Schoenman, pp. 33 and 36.

Citrus yards, olive groves, shops and buildings and also all the underground treasures were annexed by the occupier entity. Furthermore, all these resources were bestowed only to Jews, and by a racist practice, whole Palestine was judaised. The selling or leasing of lands or any other immovables to non-Jews was forbidden.

After the Nakba

After the foundation of the Zionist Entity, the struggle of the Palestinian people came to a new stage. A considerable part of the Palestinian people had become refugees and the remaining were struggling to survive. In this setting, first the Fedayeen and then, in 1958 Al-Fatah was founded. An important milestone was the 1964 congress in Al Quds, which declared **a repudiation of the Balfour Declaration** and **a demand of the founding of one Palestine State**, along with the foundation of one the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO).

In 1967, the Zionist entity launched an assault against its Arab neighbours and defeated them. The number of Palestinian refugees increased sharply as a consequence of the victory of the Zionists, which led to further annexation of Palestinian lands. Egypt and Syria attacked the Zionist entity in 1973. As a result, Israel could not be defeated, but Syria and Egypt retrieved some lands back from the Zionists.

After the 1973 war, two lines became evident among Palestinians. One of them was the guerrilla war waged especially by the PFLP which was founded in 1967, and later by the Islamic organisations, while the other one was the diplomatic attempts of the PLO. Even though there's no need to put one against the other completely, but it's worth saying that the diplomatic line did not bring any success to Palestinian people. The same is true for the repetitive diplomatic failures of Anwar Sadat of Egypt, who even spoke at the occupier's parliament, the Knesset.

In 1980s, with the help of Ronald Reagan, then newly elected president of the US, Israel became clearly the spoiled child of the Southwest Asia. In 1981, this illegitimate state bombed Iraq, then, declared that it annexed the Golan Heights of Syria, but most importantly, invaded south Lebanon in 1982, which accompanied by the bombing of civilians in Beirut, and the massacre in Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

It was not the diplomatic manoeuvres of Yasser Arafat of Al Fatah, which went so far as to recognise the Zionist entity officially, that made the Zionists step back, but instead, it was the intifada of 1987, with its heroines and heroes attacking the occupier with only stones. Beginning with the Oslo Process in 1993, especially after the Cairo Treaty of 1994 and the Washington Treaty of 1995, PLO gave up its demand of the Palestinian people's right to return, and dirty work of the Palestinian people, and the Palestinian Authority, an infant of the Oslo process, transformed into a gang which does the dirty work of Zionists and batters with the funds of

the European Union. The failure of this authority in meeting the needs of Palestinian people, and Oslo's end in smoke, caused the beginning of a new intifada in 2000. This time, the resistance organisations and military actions were on the stage. But even Hezbollah's victory against the Zionist occupier in 2006 could not deter the Palestinian Authority from its strategy of "land bargains" with the occupier.

In 2007, Hamas, the Islamist resistance organisation in Palestine having its origins in the Muslim Brotherhood, took power in Gaza. Unlike the accommodationist Palestinian Authority, Hamas was denying the existence of the Zionist state, which in the end of 2008, led to a Zionist assault against Gaza, that killed nearly 1.500 Palestinians most of whom were civilians. Both 2006 and 2008 wars of the Zionist entity were part of the imperialists' - post 9/11- **permanent war** strategy, directed to countries which did not slavishly attached to them, as well as some organisations which were in contradiction with imperialists. Zionists tried what the US imperialism did in Iraq, a regime change coming after an embargo trying to disorganise the embargoed society, or, if this fails, a military assault.

On the other hand, the Palestinian Authority led by Mahmoud Abbas insisted carrying out the policy that is opposite to the policies of the PFLP, Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Years 2013 and 2014 passed with vain bargainings under the watch of US foreign secretary John Kerry, while in 2014 Israel was attacking Gaza again, killing 2.000 civilians this time.

In 2015, an initiative called the third intifada or (the knife intifada by many people) began. Palestinians (can only) use knives and sometimes, especially when grouped, stones, Molotov cocktails and fireworks, thanks to the disarmament of the West Bank by the Palestinian Authority, for the good of the Zionist entity. The apartheid wall and the checkpoints of the occupier which both turn the West Bank into a prison, are obstacles in front of a mass uprising. Unlike the previous intifadas, this initiative is also peculiarly targeting the "settlers", who in growing numbers became an armed and organised threat to the Palestinian people. Another difference from the previous attempts is that Palestinian women, especially the young ones, take part in the forefront of the clashes, or stabbing occupation soldiers, while being killed or being put into the Zionists' prisons is a moral certainty.

In addition to some Palestinian organisations which did not cooperate with the occupier, e.g. the PFLP, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, two contemporary important elements of the Palestinian resistance against the occupation are worth mentioning: The international BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) Movement and the ISM (International Solidarity Movement). BDS movement focuses on the pressing of the occupier, while the ISM is focusing on the support to Palestine, with the help of campaigns like the Freedom Flotilla. Particularly the BDS movement, inspired by the anti-apartheid campaigns of South Africa, is seen by the illegitimate Israel as a massive threat to its interests.

Conclusions: Challenging the Balfour Declaration

The contemporary history of Palestine teaches lessons for the working class and the oppressed of the Southwest Asia. But, when analysed by a nonmaterialistic approach, this history may be evaluated in an improper manner. Especially when taking into account the increasing influence of political Islam, it's so important to pay attention to this danger. Because political Islam analyses this history, also the Balfour Declaration, as a struggle between Muslims and Jews (and the Christian supporters of Jews). Political Islam confuses opposing Zionism with opposing Jews and Judaism, thus leaves the door open for anti-semitism. It also ignores the Christian Palestinians opposing the Zionist occupier.

It's a one of the common mistakes of the Islamists is to analyze the role of English imperialism after the declaration, through the religious beliefs of English statesmen. According to this approach, British statesmen like Arthur Balfour and Lloyd George were followers of Christian Zionism, which is based on the belief that in order for Jesus Christ to return to earth, Jews must be re-settled to Palestine first. That's the reason for the support of Lord Balfour et. al to the Zionist cause for them. This approach shades the material basis of Britain's need for the support of the Zionists during the First World War. British statesmen worked in accordance with the interests of imperialism, not the interests of themselves. They did not tend towards an alliance with the Zionists from the beginning. They began looking for such a collocation after realising that it would be salutary for British imperialism. They also wished to keep Palestine in their hands, in order to provide the security of the route which goes to Britain's colonies.

Islamic movements came to existence at a relatively later time. Hamas, the most powerful Islamist organisation in Palestine, was founded as an extension of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. In time, due to some lamenesses of the secular bourgeois movement and the help which they got from some Arab countries, it quickly gained strength. Until 2017, Hamas did not commit a political suicide by making a mistake of recognising the Zionist entity, like Al Fatah did. It also continued to reject the Balfour Declaration systematically. Of course, the political program of Islamist organisations like Hamas cannot be advocated by revolutionary Marxists. But, albeit giving no political support to these movements, revolutionary Marxists insist on advocating the legitimacy of the war that these organisations wage against Zionism and imperialism, and use their reasonable efforts to provide these organisations to win against the Zionist occupier.

Zionists make the Balfour Declaration out to be a document, that provided the emancipation of the European Jews from the anti-semitism of 1930s. We briefly mentioned how Zionists collaborated with the Nazis in line with their interests. But the most important problem with the Zionist movement was that this movement

channelled wrongly the steam sourcing from the oppression of the European Jews in the last quarter of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. Schoenman, a Jewish Marxist writer, meant this, while blaming Zionist leaders like Herzl and Weizmann for **choosing the wrong side of the barricades**. Zionists aligned themselves with capitalist exploitation. Instead of championing the rights of Jews together with the opponents of exploitation in the countries Jews lived, Zionists applied to first the Ottoman Empire and German imperialism, and then, English and US imperialisms in order to achieve an “emancipation project” which has only mythologic references, and also is crystal clear to make another people be stricken with griefs. Zionists tried to persuade the imperialists that their project is in line with imperialists’ interests. Indeed it was. But the “insignificant” problem with this project was that it was not in line with the interests of the European Jews. The massacre of these Jews even suited the Zionists’ book, in their endeavour to persuade the European Jews to a colony in Palestine. Furthermore, Zionism was not accepted among the European Jews to a large extent. Zionists, far from leading the resistance of Jews who wished to live equally in the countries they lived, or to live somewhere other than Palestine, hindered the Jewish campaigns to boycott the Nazi economy. For Zionists, the Jews had better die en masse, instead of any other emancipation other than settling to Palestine.⁴⁰

Today, even if all the Jews seem to be the winning party of the post-Balfour era, it’s apparent that this is not true for all. Although a substantial part of “Israel’s” working class, especially the low-waged ones consist of Palestinian workers, Jewish workers’ struggle against their bourgeois and their illegitimate state is being trivialised and ambiguated under the influence of a chauvinist hegemonic force, in the “Israeli society” which is becoming an increasingly racist and a settler population. The social depression caused by being an occupier on someone else’s land and also by being surrounded with (at least once) allies of the real owners of this land, creates results that are in favour of the Jewish bourgeoisie, and against the Jewish workers class. Jewish bourgeoisie can easily hide the class contradictions behind a fiction of a “common interest of a whole nation under attack”. This illusion hinders the collective struggle of Arab and Jewish workers. Although in an indirect way, an adverse consequence of the Balfour Declaration is paid by the Jewish working class.

The Balfour Declaration is a document of treachery with regard to the bourgeois Arab leaderships. Many Arab leaders, beginning with Sharif Hussein and his sons, faced the legacy of this document. But it seems that bourgeois Arab leaders did not take any lessons from this document. If this was the case, the bourgeois leaderships

40 Schoenman, pp. 59-60.

imposed to Palestinians, could not be looking for the solution in the collaboration with Zionism or imperialism time and again. In this sense, Sharif Hussein's legacy is in the hands of Abu Mazen. In fact, the history of Palestine is a stunning example of the bankruptcy of vain hopes for national emancipation through a collaboration with imperialism. This is because despite all the negotiations made with imperialism and Zionism, Palestine is still a colony. Imperialism opts for expansionist Zionist entity which is an outpost of theirs, to the real owners of Palestine. The bourgeois leaderships who then were only able to provide the Palestinians the status of being a colony of imperialism to Palestine people, ignore the right of return of the Palestinian refugees, and can only provide living in a disarmed open air prison, with apartheid walls around for the "non-refugee" Palestinians today.

The real winners of the Declaration were the imperialists who dominated all the Southwest Asia after the Great War. As Abu Mazen holds the legacy of Sharif Hussein, Tony Blair holds the legacy of Arthur Balfour and Donald Trump holds the Wilson's. The perpetrators of Balfour and Sykes-Picot still seek their interests in the region. Balfour had to write a letter, in order to get the support of the US finance capital. Today, in order to win the presidential election, Donald Trump has to declare that he would move the US embassy to Al Quds. Here it is, the "Trump Declaration"! For imperialists, the rights of Palestinians, like those of the Afghans and Iraqis are insignificant details for the realisation of their interests.

Ottoman Empire hold Palestine for 400 years, milked it by imposing taxes if well-meaning. The invasion of Arab provinces of the empire by the imperialists created a big devastation for the empire. In this sense, the Balfour Declaration created a rage in the empire. But as in the Cemal Pasha case, the Ottoman State made use of the declaration and the Sykes-Picot Treaty in its psychological war to divide the Arab forces. But it failed. As a matter of fact, after a certain point in war, Ottoman empire became incapable of thinking Palestine or any other Arab province.

It's clear that, at least ostensibly, the Balfour Declaration is a document to be slammed from the point of the AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, the Justice and Development Party, the ruling islamist party of Turkey), the carrier of Ottoman image in today's Turkey. But AKP's honesty in this subject is highly questionable, because of the fact that the AKP abused the Palestine question by using it as a domestic policy instrument, and then, stabbed Palestinians in the back by "normalising" Turkey's ties with the illegitimate Israel.

The declaration of Arthur Balfour must be analysed along with the process of sharing the region by imperialists. The "home" provided to Zionists in Palestine became also an outpost for English imperialism. Today, this outpost belongs rather to the US imperialism. Thus, in order to oppose the Balfour Declaration, one must oppose imperialism and its bases. But although AKP has some contradictions

with imperialists, it does not think of shutting down the Incirlik Base of NATO, based in Turkey, or of leaving NATO completely. Similarly, in order to oppose the Balfour Declaration, one must break off the relations with illegitimate Israel, the monstrosity that it created. But after six years of “abnormal” relations, (how come, in which trade numbers increased incrementally), the AKP government started a process of “normalising” with the Zionist entity, including a strategic cooperation between the two. AKP’s interests are the same with the Zionist occupier, when it comes to the fragmentation of Syria or the sectarian war in the Southwest Asia.

Contrary to this, Palestinian leftist organisations, especially the PFLP, although being under the influence of Stalinism in some degree, did not ever abandon its stance against Zionism and imperialism, in all this time period in which Marxism and Leninism was “falling from grace”. PFLP also managed to retain its base while keeping its stance against the forces mentioned. In this manner, PFLP carried out the most decisive and principled struggle against the occupier.

In the centenary of the Balfour Declaration; there are important tasks for the revolutionary Marxists to fulfil such as, telling the masses that the Israeli State is an illegitimate one build on stolen lands of Palestinians; unrolling the alliance between the AKP and Israel; mobilising Turkey’s workers against Zionism as well as against imperialism; elucidating to the masses that the Palestinian question cannot be solved by imposing a new subjection on Palestine, based on another form of colonisation of a country like the Ottoman empire and the like, nor by a “two state solution” accepted by the comprador Palestine Authority; and pointing the solution to be the foundation of a unified, secular, democratic, socialist Palestine, a member of a future Socialist Middle East Federation.

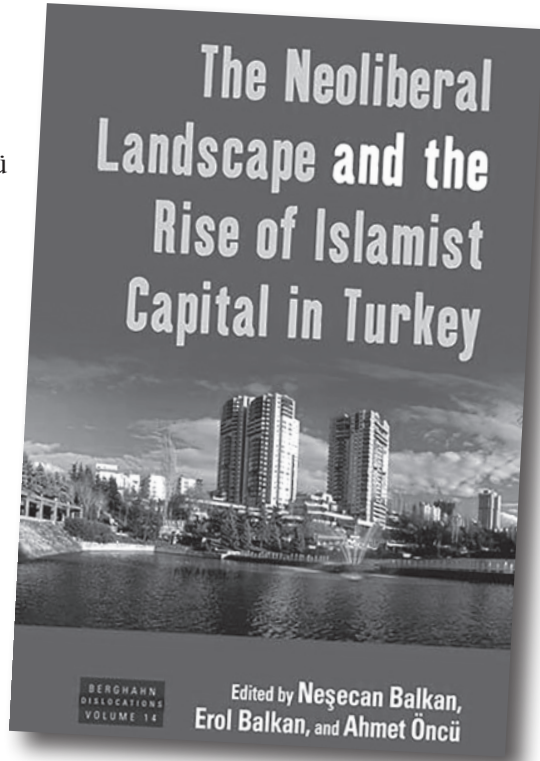
The Palestinian question is a national one. But Palestinian society does not consist of only the people living in the Gaza and the West Bank. An important part of Palestinians live in the refugee camps in some other countries, as a result of the consequences of the Balfour Declaration. The solution to Palestinians’ national problem, also include the right to return of these people. **The realisation of this right is possible only with the destruction of the illegitimate state of Israel. The task of Turkey’s revolutionary Marxists is to support the struggle of Palestinian resistance organisations as an internationalist duty, while working for the enhancement of the class struggle of their own country at the same time.**

The Neoliberal Landscape and the Rise of Islamist Capital in Turkey

Berghahn Books,
New York, 2015

Edited by Neşecan Balkan,
Erol Balkan and Ahmet Öncü

Chapters by Burak Gürel,
Sungur Savran,
Kurtar Tanyılmaz,
Özgür Öztürk,



Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey and the party he leads, the AKP, have been analyzed in many different ways. What was lacking was a materialist analysis using the methodology of Marxism. This is what this book does: it provides the reader the complex class dynamics that lie behind the rise and resilience of this leader and his party.

The hardback edition was published in February 2015 and the paperback edition is coming out now, in January 2017. The book has already been published in Turkish translation. It is also being prepared for a Farsi edition.

Revolution as the driving force of history in the Middle East

Sungur Savran

I will begin my presentation by protesting the repression meted out to socialist academics in Turkey.¹ Thousands of academics have been dismissed, barred from serving public office of any sort in the future, prohibited from travelling abroad, and all this through Decree Laws promulgated by the Council of Ministers. All of this has occurred under the State of Emergency declared in the aftermath of the failed coup of 15th July 2016, in the manner of condemnation without trial. It was claimed that the State of Emergency would serve to bring the coup-plotters to justice, but it was in effect widely used and abused in an onslaught against the left and the Kurdish movement. It is for this reason that many an academic planning to come to Beirut to participate in this conference was barred from coming. In our case, the journal *Devrimci Marksizm*,² which we represent here, was to organise two panel discussions on the current problems facing Turkish society, in which eight panellists were

1 This is the English translation, slightly amended, of an article by the same title in published, in the Turkish version of this journal, *Devrimci Marksizm*, No. 30-31, Spring-Summer 2017, which itself is a slightly expanded version of one of the presentations we made at the Historical Materialism-BICAR Conference held in Beirut on 10-12 March 2017.

2 The original quarterly Turkish edition of *Revolutionary Marxism*.

to speak. Five of the eight were not able to come to Beirut due to the repression!

Before going into the main body of the presentation, I would like to thank the journal *Historical Materialism* and BICAR³ for having organised this conference. The fact that it brings together Marxists and critical thinkers, as well as political practitioners, from different countries in our region, long labelled the “Middle East” by imperialism, and in Northern Africa, and thus makes it possible to engage in an exchange of ideas makes this conference particularly valuable. This is all the more important in a period when the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa) is being convulsed by war, revolution and barbarism. The ruling forces devise and execute their policies on the regional scale, which necessitates that we, as well, need to think, tie up, and organise at the regional level in full internationalist spirit.

We can now pass on to the topic of this presentation. In pointing to revolution as “the driving force of the modern history of the Middle East”, this presentation pursues very concrete aims. We have chosen to discuss this topic for this conference, where Middle Easterners and North Africans have come together, for very clear reasons.

First of all, we wish to put the proposition of Marxism to the effect that history does not move forward (and at times backward) on the basis of an uninterrupted process and through peaceful reforms, but through deep convulsions and leaps to the test for the particular historical development of our region. That this proposition, i.e. the idea that revolutions are the **locomotive of history**, is true for the Western world (i.e. the advanced capitalist countries), for Latin America, and for Asian countries such as Russia and China has long been demonstrated. But we have not seen similar studies on the MENA region in those languages we are familiar with. Our objective is to take an initial step into this long neglected domain, modest and somewhat schematic given the constraints of time.

Secondly, the concept of revolution is considered to be out of fashion on large sections of the left, to put it bluntly and without recourse to cosmetic touches. A majority of the left has turned its back on Marxism in disillusion, one that was created by the collapse of the experiments in socialist construction in the 20th century. Within this framework, revolution has suffered the same fate of being thrown away, in similar fashion to the centrality of class struggle or the importance of the revolutionary party. In our region as in the rest of the world, the agenda consists exclusively of the piecemeal and gradual progress to be attained in the areas of democracy and “civil society”. We wish to shake up these reformist illusions, by showing that in the modern history of the Middle East, all substantive gains, be it in the sphere of the interests of workers and toilers or that of fighting imperialism or the wresting of

³ The Beirut Institute for Critical Analysis and Research.

democratic rights from despotic regimes or of the rights of the oppressed categories, have been the product of revolutions.

Finally, we wish to challenge a deeply embedded prejudice on Middle Eastern society. This prejudice may very well concede that revolution can and does play a historic role in other parts of the planet, but holds that this is **excluded for Muslim societies for the simple reason that the resignation to God's will rampant in Islamic society shuns revolt and revolution in worldly affairs**. Muslims, it is held, bow to existing conditions rather than question an unjust or oppressive social and political order. We believe that this claim is **radically mistaken**. We think the sheer number and frequency of revolutions, revolts, rebellions in Middle Eastern and North African societies throughout the 20th century and in the present refute this Orientalist belief, paradoxically more often advanced by thinkers of the region than outsiders. Let us also stress the following: we will try to demonstrate that not only have revolutions dotted modern Middle Eastern history, but that **they have played a fundamental part in shaping the character of historical development**.

In what follows we will attempt to show the importance of revolutions in the MENA region in the 20th century and this beginning of the 21st on the basis of a summary exposition of five waves of revolution.

1. The constitutional revolutions

In the modern era, revolution came to Asia at the beginning of the 20th century. When it did, it assumed the character of a revolution that aspired to restrict the powers of the monarch of an absolutist state. Crammed, so to speak, into the first decade of the 20th century, revolutions erupted in four countries of Asia that had managed to remain independent (albeit under semi-colonial tutelage) despite the imperialist onslaught of the period: the 1905 Russian revolution; the constitutional revolution of Iran in 1906; the movement for the Second Constitutional Period in Turkey of 1908, which called itself the Revolution of Liberty; and the first Chinese revolution of 1911. A powerful revolution broke out in distant Mexico in 1910 as well. Similar conditions (despite all the differences) had generated similar consequences. To compare the Mexican revolution only with the events in the Ottoman Empire, the Revolution of Liberty flowed out of resistance against the 32-year uninterrupted absolutism of Sultan Abdulhamid II; the Mexican revolution, which started only two years later, targeted the 25-year despotism of a despotic president, Porfirio Díaz.

Two Middle Eastern states were involved in this enormous revolutionary wave of early 20th century. It would be tempting, yet wholly erroneous, to conclude that only two nations, in the modern sense of the term, went through processes similar to the classical bourgeois revolution against absolutism. It should be remembered

that the moribund Ottoman Empire still clung to almost the entire region that is now called the Middle East in addition moreover to a part of the Balkans. Hence, the Revolution of Liberty bore a fully **multinational character**, despite its widespread characterisation by the name of the leadership of the dominant Turkish component, the Young Turks. From the Balkan peoples that were still part of the empire (Macedonians, Albanians, the people of the urban hub that was Salonica etc.) through the ancient peoples of Anatolia (then called Asia Minor) such as Armenians, Greeks and Kurds, all the way to the Arab peoples of the Levant (today's Syria, Lebanon, Palestine), Mesopotamia (Iraq) and the Arabian peninsula (today's Gulf countries and Yemen) were all part of the revolutionary agitation, at different times and to differing degrees. Thus it has to be stressed that between themselves, the Iranian revolution of 1906 and the Ottoman revolution of 1908 threw **the entire gamut of Middle Eastern peoples** into the cauldron of revolutionary activity. This was the period when the whole territory of the Middle East, itself the historical breeding ground of Islam, was introduced to the age of bourgeois revolution.

North Africa, as distinct from the Middle East, had passed through a different historical trajectory. The fate of these two regions (with the notable exception of Iran) had been bound together for centuries due to their common bondage to the Ottoman state. However, with the rise of capitalism in Western Europe culminating in the first steps of colonialism, North Africa, almost a neighbour of Europe, separated from it as it is only by the Mediterranean, became early on a target of this colonialism. Algeria came under French rule in 1830 and Tunisia in 1881, both of them earlier Ottoman dominions. Egypt, the jewel amongst Ottoman possessions in North Africa since its conquest in the 16th century, practically became a British colony in that same year of 1881. Independent Morocco was coveted by the competing forces of Germany and France in late 19th century and finally became a protectorate of the latter country in 1912. As for Libya (Western Tripoli as it was then called), it fell to the lot of Italy after a war in 1911-1912 between this latter country and the Ottoman state. The impact of the revolutionary fervour that gripped the Middle East was not felt in this region, save in Morocco, which came under the pressure of a constitutional transition under the influence of the 1908 Revolution of Liberty in the Ottoman Empire. Thus, it must be underlined that the fate of the two regions of the Middle East and North Africa diverged considerably from the first half of the 19th century to mid-20th century.

The real exception is Egypt in this respect. Although a North African country in strict geographic terms, Egypt is sometimes also considered to be a part of the Middle East of which it is a neighbouring country. It was the first country among the possessions of the Ottoman Empire that was occupied by the forces of Western European capitalism: between 1798 and 1801 Napoleonic armies invaded it briefly.

This was followed by the great leap forward of the country under Mohammed Ali Pasha, as a result of which Egypt became virtually independent though nominally still under Ottoman jurisdiction. As indicated earlier, Egypt fell under first *de facto*, then *de jure* British domination, a fact that was of great importance for the subsequent development of the country.

The first wave of Middle Eastern revolution resulted in the emergence of the social forms and relations of the capitalist mode of production in the region. In the Ottoman state, parliament acquired, albeit in successive stages through a painful process, a central role. Even more important, local capitalism started to take root in the advanced regions of the empire, which created the basis for the subsequent bourgeois revolution of 1919-1923. The national awakening in the entire region, for its part, laid the groundwork for the anti-colonialist insurrection of the next period.

2. Revolution, rebellion, and war against Sykes-Picot colonialism

That World War One is a turning point in the partitioning of the Middle East amongst the imperialist states requires no explanation. After the agreements signed between Britain, France and Russia before the war, two major wartime documents, the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 that aimed to divide the Arab Middle East between Britain and France and the Balfour Declaration of 1917 that promised the Zionist movement a “Jewish home” in Palestine are the major milestones here. The so-called “Arab Revolt”, which the Sharif Hussein of Mecca and his sons triggered in collaboration with British imperialism, resulted in the eviction of the Ottomans from all its former territories where the population was Arab in its majority. The end of the war saw the Ottomans out of the game in the region, with the British and the French jockeying for influence. Hussein and his sons were to be made king in different parts of the Arab Middle East. However, the Arab peoples, and, in effect, the peoples of the entire Middle East, would soon rise up against the new colonialist order in a tremendous revolutionary wave.

The first revolution started in Egypt in 1919. The people of Egypt rose up against colonialism in wide masses. A strike wave broke out within this revolution, particularly in the port city of Alexandria. The British retaliated with heavy violence in response to the wrath that expressed itself against colonialism. In effect, this was not the first uprising in Egypt against British colonialism. In 1882, just as Egypt was coming under the colonial domination of Britain, the people had risen under the leadership of Urabi Pasha. Whether the Urabi Pasha insurrection was a full-scale revolution or a revolt with more limited scope is a controversial issue. But whatever the answer to that question, the Urabi Pasha uprising bequeathed a solid heritage of anti-colonial struggle to the 1919 revolution. The revolution that started in 1919 was to be defeated by 1921 and Egypt was to remain a colony of Britain.

Yet, as we shall see shortly, this revolution itself handed down a legacy to the next round of struggle.

The revolution in Egypt was followed by developments in Afghanistan and Turkey. In Afghanistan, the newly crowned King Amanullah engaged in a military expedition against Britain to support the struggle of the Muslims of India. This proved to be the first step towards a more general anti-imperialist stance in Afghanistan's policy. In Turkey, on the other hand, the partitioning of even Anatolia, the heartland of the Ottoman state, where the Turkish and Muslim population were a majority and the occupation of Istanbul, the capital city, led, in 1919, to the rise of what was called the "National Struggle", which in time turned into a hotbed for bourgeois revolution against the Sultan and led to the establishment of a republic in 1923. So the period 1919-1923 is to be properly conceived as a bourgeois revolution accompanying a war for national independence in Turkey.

In 1920, revolution spread to other countries. In March, a revolutionary movement was set off in Syria against the French administration. In April, the Palestinian intelligentsia against British domination and the creeping settler-colonialism of the Zionist movement joined this Syrian movement with a declaration. But the real revolutionary insurrection came in Iraq. This is the country that was the most important prize for British colonialism in the Middle East proper (i.e. excluding Egypt). This country rose in its entire social and ethnic tissue, the Sunni as well as the Shia population, the Kurd and the Arab, the urban sectors as well as the nomadic tribes. Cynically orchestrated by the then Minister of War, Winston Churchill, the British quashed this revolution *manu militari*, not refraining even from the use of chemical weapons.

Parallel to this revolutionary wave, Suud, the leader of the Wahhabi sect, mounted a war against Hussein, the Sharif of Mecca in the Arabian Peninsula. Suud won this war and proceeded to lay the bases of today's Saudi Arabia. This war bears not an iota of anti-imperialist orientation, was waged under a wholly reactionary leadership, and the outcome, the Saudi state, later became one of the fundamental pillars of the imperialist order of the Middle East. But it is not without importance that it was fought against the man of confidence of the British in the Arab Middle East, Hussein, because this is emblematic of how imperialist colonialism was a clear target for all the peoples of the Middle East at that historical moment.

An echo to the Middle Eastern revolutionary wave of 1919-1920 was heard in an insurrection that broke out in a remote corner of Northern Africa. An insurgency using guerrilla techniques erupted in the Rif region of Morocco, a region populated by Berber tribes, under the leadership of Abdelkrim against the military penetration of French and Spanish influence. Having put the colonialists on their defence between 1923 and 1926, this movement also resulted in the establishment

of a short-lived Republic of Rif. If one remembers that to this day Morocco has remained a kingdom, one can assess better the historical cost of the ultimate defeat of Abdelkrim insurgency.

The context of the revolutionary wave of 1919-1920

One of the sources of the revolutionary wave that gripped the entire Middle East like wildfire was the October revolution, of which we are now celebrating the centenary. Its influence on the Middle Eastern revolution was transmitted through diverse channels. The most important of these channels was, no doubt, the policy adopted by the Bolsheviks vis-a-vis the peoples of the East and of Asia. Soon after coming to power, the Bolsheviks adopted a very clear political line that would bring the peoples of the East under the spell of the revolution. In the forefront of this policy was the principle of the “**right of nations to self-determination**” that Lenin had persistently (and in total independence from the ideas of the US president Wilson) fought to integrate into the Marxist programme since the very beginning of the 20th century. This naturally seemed to be a very significant support to the eyes of the nationalists of the Middle East, who were faced with the concrete prospect of colonial rule. There was then the drive to “**put an end to secret diplomacy**”, which was implemented directly by Leon Trotsky, the first Foreign Minister of the new Soviet state, who disclosed the secret agreements signed by the Tsarist state for the whole world to see. Thus the public of the Middle East had the chance to pry into many a secret document, from the plan to turn Istanbul (Constantinople) to the Tsar all the way to Sykes-Picot. As for the **proletarian internationalism** of the Bolsheviks, which, to the extent that it was implemented in a consistent manner, was transformed into a principle that challenged colonialism for those who were struggling against it.

The second channel through which the October revolution had an impact on the Middle Eastern revolution was the **Communist International** (Comintern), established in 1919. As opposed to the Second International, where powerful tendencies that supported colonialism on the basis of the spurious claim that it was a mechanism of transmission of “advanced” Western civilisation to “backward” peoples rubbed elbows with revolutionary tendencies, Comintern approached colonies and semi-colonies in a manner that was fully assuring. The most important initiative of Comintern in this respect was the convening of the **Baku Congress of Eastern Peoples** in September 1920. This meeting, attended by thousands of delegates in the name of Muslim peoples, along with others such as Georgians or Armenians, transmitted to the entire world a resolute appeal of insurgency against imperialism, in particular the hegemonic British imperialist power.

The emancipatory impact of the October revolution may also be seen in its en-

couragement of the formation of working class organisations and the leap forward witnessed in the establishment of the communist movement in the countries of the Middle East. The British High Commissioner in Egypt even talked about the “Bolshevik tendency” of the 1919-1921 revolution in that country.⁴ In Anatolia, the heartland of the emerging Turkish republic, one witnesses a serious level of organising on the part of both communists and the so-called Green Army, a home-bred variant of anti-colonialist politics influenced by communism (the name was manifestly inspired by the Red Army). Currents influenced by Bolshevism appeared as a force to be reckoned with until the bourgeois leadership of the National Struggle repressed them to silence in the wake of the massacre of Mustafa Suphi, chairman of the newly-founded Communist Party of Turkey, and his comrades (“the fifteen”) in January 1921.

Still another dimension was the support extended to anti-imperialist movements in various countries of the region. The war waged by the Red Army against the Whites even made possible the formation of a short-lived Socialist Republic of Gilan on the shores of the Caspian Sea in Iran. But the importance of Soviet policy gained its real flesh and blood in the support it provided to new administrations that confronted imperialism against British power, among which stand out Afghanistan under Amanullah, Iran under the new Shah, and the Turkey of the Grand National Assembly under Mustafa Kemal’s leadership. A striking product of this policy was the successive signing of treaties of peace and friendship between the Soviet state and each of these new administrations in the course of the first quarter of 1921.

This discussion may be summed up by saying that while the Soviet revolution has usually been taken up in its aspect of acting as a spur on revolution in Western Europe (Germany, Hungary, Finland, Italy, Scotland etc.), and rightly so, its impact on the emergence of a Middle Eastern revolution is no less important. The difference, of course, is that whereas in the West what was on the agenda was proletarian revolution, in the Middle East the major question on the agenda was national liberation against imperialist colonialism.

The legacy of the revolutionary wave of 1919-1920

We observe that, apart from the case of Turkey, the 1919-1920 revolutionary wave that erupted against French and, particularly, British colonial ambitions, was defeated. However, despite this defeat, this revolutionary wave made a serious imprint on subsequent historical development in the region. For one thing, the culmination of the National Struggle in Turkey in the victorious bourgeois revolution and the foundation of a republic in 1923 laid the ground, for the first time in the history

⁴ David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace. The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989, p. 419.

of the Middle East, for the overcoming of pre-capitalist fetters in this country and opening the way to a rapid development of the capitalist mode of production proper: thanks to this leap forward, Turkey is today the most advanced capitalist country in the Middle East, with the notable exception of Israel, which, though, should be regarded an anomaly for the region. Due to the characteristics it developed through this process, Turkey is (or rather was, until recently) a showcase of Western imperialism in the Middle East that was pointed to as the embodiment of a good instance of capitalist “modernisation”.

Secondly, as part of this wave, three countries, i.e. Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan, found the possibility of developing as relatively independent countries aloof to the impact of colonialism in the next period, thanks also to Soviet support. On the basis of its idiosyncratic historical circumstances and the competition between Russia and Britain, Afghanistan had always been able to protect its independence, but the Ottoman state and Iran had been downgraded to the status of semi-colonies around the turn of the nineteenth into the twentieth century. The eruption of the whole region in 1919 made possible the reversal of this well-entrenched trend and the subsequent development of these two countries as independent national states rather than semi-colonies or even fully-fledged colonies.

Thirdly, a legacy remained alive even in those countries where the revolutionary wave was defeated. In particular in Egypt, where the revolution had erupted with an especially powerful momentum, patriotic forces continued to struggle against British colonialism until the breaking out of a new revolution in the post-World War II environment. Iraq, where the revolution had been quite powerful as well, obtained its independence in 1936. More generally, the 1919-1920 revolutionary wave proved to imperialist forces that colonialism in the Middle East was bound to create serious headaches for them. Palestine is the exception here. We will briefly touch upon this exception below under the heading “two special cases” (the other special case predictably being Kurdistan).

3. The Arab national revolution

The post-World War II period saw the emergence of two diametrically opposed tendencies in the Middle East: while this period witnessed the unfettered integration of the two countries that had experienced a bourgeois revolution in the first quarter of the century, i.e. Turkey and Iran, with imperialism, in the Arab world an anti-colonial or “national” revolution would spread from country to country. The fountainhead for this revolution that may be labelled the “Arab national revolution” was the Egyptian revolution of 1952-1954.

We recall that Egypt was not only a very special geography in ancient history, but also a country that had played a very special role in the modern history of the

Arabs. The first revolt in the Arab world against Ottoman supremacy had come from Egypt, under the administration of Mohammed Ali Pasha. Following the penetration of British colonialism into the Arab world, Egypt had experienced two revolutionary upheavals: the Urabi Pasha insurrection of 1882 and the revolution that erupted in 1919 both attested to the fact that the people of Egypt were not going to settle down for long as a colonised people. 37 years had separated the Urabi Pasha insurrection and the 1919 revolution. Only 33 years separated the latter and the new revolution of 1952. The Egyptian people were rising in revolt for the third time in a matter of 70 years. With all due respect for the Coptic minority of Egypt, the Muslim masses accused by many of subservience to existing circumstances, deemed incapable of insurgency, was going out on the streets for the third time, despite the losses suffered in the first two instances! In the interwar period, the main contradiction of Egyptian society had been between the ruling classes of Egypt, who kowtowed to British colonialism, and their mouthpiece, the royal institution, and the working masses and the various intermediary class forces that were decidedly anti-colonialist.

The popular insurrection of 1952 resulted in the setting of Cairo on fire. For this reason this episode has gone down in history as the “Cairo fire”. The people’s uprising against the British would set in motion the intervention of the “Free Officers” movement that had been formed in the armed forces, leading to the taking of power jointly by General Naguib and Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser. Following a period of instability that lasted for two years, the radical wing of the Free Officers movement under Gamal Abdel Nasser took control. King Farouk was dethroned and British colonialism was evicted out of the country. But the real test for the Nasser administration was to come in 1956 in the form of the Suez crisis. When Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal, under British control since 1869, the year of its construction, British and French armies attempted to occupy Egypt. A host of international factors, first and foremost Soviet support, but also the reluctance of the US, out to establish a different kind of hegemony after its rise to dominance in the wake of World War II, to support the British-French alliance resulted in the victory of Nasser over his foes, which naturally turned him overnight into a hero for the masses of the entire Arab world.

After this episode, Egypt was to become the site for an entirely new experiment, one that was wholeheartedly supported by the Soviet Union. Alongside the toppling of the royal family and the establishment of the republic and the eviction of the British colonisers, a radical agrarian reform, the nationalisation of whatever existed in terms of industry and extensive public investment in new industry, quotas for workers and peasants in the national assembly (with carefully engineered subservience to Nasser’s policies assured) and a regime secular to the extent possible in an Arab

country—all these measures were accompanied by the rise of Nasser to international prominence as a result of the anti-imperialist character of his foreign policy, a systematic effort towards the unity of the Arab nation and the inclusion of Nasser in the leadership of the so-called “non-aligned movement”, along with such figures as the Yugoslav leader Tito, the Indian Nehru, and the Indonesian Sukarno. After the Cuban revolution of 1958-1959, Nasser would also collaborate, during the decade of the 1960s, with revolutionary movements as well.⁵ This new orientation was to be dubbed the “non-capitalist path to development” in Soviet theoretical terminology and be labelled “Arab socialism” for purposes of propaganda.

Needless to say, despite the partial gains brought to the peasantry and the special treatment accorded to the workers, what was being built was anything but socialism. Nasser was trying to force the pace of capitalist development in Egypt, using the state, in Engels’ words, as the “collective ideal capitalist”, albeit in a pretty radical manner, just as Japan and Germany in the second half of the 19th century and many other late comers, among which Turkey, Brazil, Argentina and Mexico in the environment of the Great Depression of the 1930s, did before him. In effect, after Nasser’s death in 1970, Egypt would rapidly return to a “normal” capitalist path under Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak. The debate on “socialism” aside, the excitement created by the anti-imperialism of the Egyptian revolution in the Arab countries of the Middle East, where the sway of colonialism had been the order of the day since early 20th century, if not even earlier, and in the countries of North Africa, where at least in some, colonialism went all the way back to the 19th century, was to result in the spread of this national revolution into other countries by leaps and bounds.

However, before passing on to this extension of the Egyptian revolution as an Arab national revolution, we should first look at another revolution, which had an independent dynamics from what happened in Egypt. The gigantic struggle of the people of Algeria against French colonialism between 1954 and 1962 has customarily been called the “Algerian war”, an appellation no doubt formulated from the French point of view. But just like the American revolution of late 18th century, this was not only a war against an overbearing colonial power, but at the same time a revolution. Algeria had been brought under the yoke of French colonialism in 1830. In this long period of servitude, capitalism had developed in agriculture in Algeria on the basis of the expropriation of the Algerian peasants by the white-settler colonialists of French and Italian origin, called “*pieds noirs*”. The insurgency against French colonialism was thus also a rebellion against this type of class relations. Hence the so-called Algerian war, through the heroic struggle of the people of the

5 See Roger Faligot, *Tricontinentale. Quand Che Guevarai Ben Barka, Cabral, Castro et Hô Chi Minh préparaient la révolution mondiale (1964-1968)*, Paris: La Découverte, 2013, *passim*.

country against the cruel oppressor that was the French state, meant the accomplishment, at one and the same time, of a revolution that was anti-colonial, as well as one that totally recast production relations in agriculture. Algeria went farther than Egypt and partially put an end to private property in agricultural land through a cooperative movement and opened up new vistas of the conquest of power to the poor peasantry. Yet after the ouster of the leader of the revolution, Ben Bella, by the more conservative group led by Houari Boumedien, Algeria gradually returned to a “normal” capitalism. But for a period of time, Algeria also became prominent among those countries that were characterised, according to the official view, as “Arab socialism”.

The Algerian revolution was born to a great extent independently of the Egyptian revolution, although, no doubt, the two revolutions reinforced each other in a chain of mutual encouragement, providing a virtuous circle that represented the inbuilt permanence of revolution in the modern age. The Algerian revolution even had a historic precedent in 1945, when France had quashed the Sétif uprising by murdering thousands of rebels. In contrast to this kind of autonomy on the part the Algerian revolution, Egypt and Nasser definitely played the part of a source of inspiration in all the other countries that partook of the Arab national revolution. This is true for the Baath movements of Iraq and Syria. Although the history of the Baath Party goes back all the way to the immediate post-World War II period, the Iraq revolution of 1958, the first great leap forward of Baath, was so much influenced by its cousin the Egyptian revolution that it even borrowed the name “Free Officers” for its revolutionary junta within the military. This revolution was to bring down the Hashemite dynasty that was in complete collusion with US-British imperialism (along with the equally servile administrations of Turkey, Iran and Pakistan); in other words, it ousted King Faisal and his much-hated prime minister Nuri es Said (darling of the equally pro-American prime minister of Turkey at the time, Adnan Menderes, who himself was going to be brought down by a coup in 1960) and conquered power through a gradual process.

The Egyptian revolution had its impact on other Arab countries as well. In Libya, Colonel Muammar Qaddafi brought down King Idris and established a “socialist people’s republic” in 1969. Yemen was divided into two, with a Democratic People’s Republic (namesake for the pro-USSR regimes of Eastern Europe at the time) established in 1970. In Oman, on the other hand, the Dhofar rebellion that had broken out in 1962 was to radicalise after 1967 and fight as a guerrilla movement targeting the establishment of “socialism” until 1976.

The context of the Arab national revolution

The Arab national revolution, just as any other social and political incident of a certain magnitude, naturally saw the light of day under very definite concrete circumstances. Four different factors may be adduced that made the post-World War II environment propitious for an Arab revolution.

The first is the great worldwide prestige that the Soviet Union acquired through the resistance of its people and its armed forces to Nazi barbarism, defeating the brutal military machine of this regime and thus liberating Eastern and Central Europe all the way to Berlin. Thus, the USSR had become, in the aftermath of World War II, an alternative to the imperialist-capitalist system in the eyes of the whole world. This made it easy for colonies and semi-colonies to lean against the USSR in their struggle against imperialism. The close alliance of the Nasser regime, in particular, as well as of the Baath regimes in Iraq and Syria, with the Soviet Union should be interpreted precisely in the light of this more general trend.

The second important development was the triumph of revolutions in many other countries, the abolition of capitalism consequent to this, and the initiation of a process of socialist construction. In particular the experience of countries such as Yugoslavia (1944), Vietnam (1945), and China (1949) proved that victory against imperialism is possible and acted as examples to the rest of the colonies and semi-colonies.

Third, with the contribution of the first two factors, this period witnessed the disintegration of the colonial empires through a process called “decolonisation” around the globe. Britain, France, and Belgium, in particular, moved to recognise the independence of their former colonies, conserving as much as they could their previous prerogatives, through peaceful agreements in certain cases or capitulating to rebellions and revolutions in others. (Portugal, on the other hand, refused to abandon its African colonies until the 1970s and paid for its stubbornness in the form of fighting hopeless colonial wars in Africa in the 1960s and early 1970s and in the form of a radical revolution domestically in 1974, which brought down not only the colonial empire, but came to the verge of toppling the entire bourgeois state.) The decolonisation process met with great challenges in many regions or countries. For instance, the independence of India was finally recognised after three centuries of British yoke, but at the cost of the death of millions of people and the division of the country along religious lines (India and Pakistan, later itself to suffer the separation of Bangladesh). The independence of Cyprus was recognised, but at the cost of the sowing of seeds of hostility between the two communities, Greek and Turkish Cypriot, and in the process hiding from view and clinging to the British military bases. The independence of Congo was recognised but at the cost of having the leader of the movement of independence, Patrice Lumumba, killed by the

wing of the leadership sold out to imperialism, represented by the likes of Mobutu, Kasavutu, and Bomboko. In the case of some colonies, the imperialist powers never yielded until they were forcibly evicted. Algeria and Vietnam are the two most prominent examples. It is no coincidence that the two bloodiest wars of the second half of the 20th century visited these countries. Egypt, as well, is a colony that was hard to renounce, due to the importance, most of all, of the Suez Canal.

Fourth, the hegemonic power within the imperialist hierarchy changed hands in the post-World War II period. Having held the hegemony of imperialism from the 19th century on, Britain had to turn over the privilege to the United States. For a number of reasons, the latter country was an imperialist power that had developed primarily not as a colonial empire but on the basis of open markets and realised, once the war was over, that its own style of domination was inescapably the correct method in the age of “decolonisation”. It is for this reason that it did not support the British and the French during the Suez crisis.

It is clear that the Arab national revolution enjoyed the outcome of a series of factors outside its own purview. On the other hand, if the revolutions in Egypt or Algeria had not occurred (it should be remembered that both countries were considered as indispensable colonies by their colonial power), the whole physiognomy of the Arab world would have been different today.

The legacy of the Arab national revolution

Because the Arab national revolution created a series of regimes that later degenerated and decomposed from within, it is easy to be oblivious to the historic successes this revolution gave existence to originally. It cannot be denied, above all, that the most spectacular instances of this revolution made it possible for the Arab people of Egypt and Algeria to cast off colonial oppression, that the revolution put an end to royal regimes that acted almost as stooges of imperialism in Egypt, Iraq, and Libya, that in many countries it made it possible for the peasantry to partially improve their lot thanks to agrarian reform, that it introduced secularism into the Arab world, albeit marked with grave limitations, that it accorded women a status that was clearly an improvement (relatively speaking, of course) upon the kind of servitude under which they continue living in the Gulf countries (one need only remember the sexual apartheid in Saudi Arabia). A comparison between the Gulf countries, untouched by this revolution, and those countries which came under the control of Nasserism or Baath will make it clear as daylight what kind of gains the Arab national revolutions brought to these societies.

From the point of view of the overall theses of this article, it is simply undeniable that the Nasser revolution dictated the destiny of the entire Arab world for a full quarter of a century. Here the idea that **revolution is the locomotive of history**

finds its full confirmation.

4. The Iranian revolution

As a rule, revolutions come in international waves. This rule was confirmed in the case of the Middle East. We have seen that all three waves of revolution that we have looked into came either almost in synchronised manner in different countries (the first two waves) or in quick and contagious succession. However, there have existed in history “solitary revolutions” as well. The best-known such revolutions are the Paris Commune of 1871 and, more partially, the Spanish revolution of 1931-39.⁶ A more recent instance of a solitary revolution occurred in the Middle East: the Iranian revolution of 1979.

It is not correct to view the Iranian revolution as an “Islamic revolution” from its inception. The working class as an organised force also played an important part in that revolution. The role played by the diverse wings of the socialist movement was also non-negligible. The Iranian revolution is, at bottom, the overthrow of the Shah’s regime, a regime that had come to be the most powerful and loyal ally of imperialism in the Muslim Middle East in the post-World War II period, on the basis of an alliance *cum* competition between, on the one hand Islamist, and, on the other, socialist forces.⁷ Once the Shah was overthrown and the revolution triumphed politically, the nature of the new regime became the bone of contention between the two sides. The two years that followed 1979 saw the Islamist wing wage an all out war on the socialist movement. Due to the errors of the left, first and foremost those of the Stalinists of the Tudeh party, victory was almost offered to the mullahs of Khomeini on a golden platter. The Islamic Republic of Iran is the fruit of this second struggle, of a counter revolution, so to speak, on the very terrain of the revolution.

The fact that the Iranian revolution ultimately produced a regime run by mullahs, one that can in no way be considered to be progressive by any historical yardstick, led many to question whether this was a veritable revolution from the very beginning. In order to answer this question, we need to remember that nearly all revolutions in the Middle East have gone through the same kind of struggle with Islamist movements; in other words, this was not in any way peculiar to the Iranian revolution. In the 1952-1954 revolution in Egypt, the year 1953 in particular was spent in a struggle between the Free Officers movement and the Ikhwan (the Muslim Brotherhood), already a powerful movement then. Had it not been the Free Officers but Ikhwan who won this battle, the Egyptian revolution would have taken a

⁶ We have seen that the Urabi revolution represents a clear example of a solitary revolution in the Arab world.

⁷ On the Iranian revolution see Araz Bağban, “Bir Şah, Bir Devrim, Bir İmam: 1979 İran Devrimi”, *Devrimci Marksizm*, No. 21-22, Winter 2015, pp. 58-92.

totally different turn. It therefore follows that we cannot determine whether a socio-political event is a revolution **solely on the basis of its outcome**. Obviously, exactly the same is true of the two Arab revolutions of 2011. Ikhwan in Egypt and its newly won sister party in Tunisia, Ennahda, were able to take control of the state born of the revolution into their hands. Even if this control had become durable, this would not have given us license to state that the Egyptian and Tunisian events of 2011 had not carried the characteristics of a revolution from the very beginning. Quite the contrary is, in fact, the case: more than any other revolution in the history of the Middle East, these two events bore all the hallmarks of a classic case of revolution. It is really very difficult to foresee where revolutions will end up for the simple reason that these are revolutions, in other words, all power relations are thrown up into the air and it is never easy to see beforehand how they will crystallize in the end.

The impact of the Iranian revolution

The impact of the Iranian revolution confirms the main thesis of this article in a devious manner. This revolution created **an immense impetus for the Islamist movement not only in the Middle East but throughout the Islamic world**. In precisely the same manner as Egypt under Nasser set off revolutions that provided for the relative development of anti-imperialism, republicanism, secularism, agrarian reform, women's rights etc. in other parts of the Arab world, the Iranian revolution, although it occurred in a Shia country, set off a mushrooming series of movements in countries all around the Islamic world, whether Shia or Sunni, that aimed at recasting state and society in line with the precepts of Islam. So here, too, historical development was fully marked by a revolution. Whether you consider the events of 1979-1981 in Iran as a revolution or a counter-revolution or as a complex synthesis of the two, as we are inclined to do, the upshot is that the history of the Middle East and North Africa in the three decades that followed has borne the imprint of this gigantic historic event.

Hence, at this stage, we can sum up the historic development in the following simple manner: Turkey under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was the guiding light with respect to the direction to be adopted in the Middle East in the interwar years, from the 1920s roughly to the 1950s. In the post-World War II environment, that is, from the 1950s to the 1980s, the standard bearer was Nasser's Egypt. From the 1980s to 2011, on the other hand, the rising trend was set by the Iran of Khomeini and his successors.

5. The Arab revolution – without qualifiers

The Tunisian revolution that erupted at the end of 2010 and triumphed with the ouster of Zin al Abidin ben Ali on 14 January 2011 and the Egyptian revolution

that started on 25 January only ten days after the overthrow of the Tunisian dictator and itself gained a first victory by bringing down Hosni Mubarak in a matter of 18 days heralded the opening of a new period, not only in the Middle East, but around the whole world. For the first time since 1979, that is, since the Iranian revolution and the victorious Nicaraguan revolution in Central America, the world witnessed revolutions that won. Like the first three revolutionary waves that the Middle East experienced in the 20th century, these revolutions also bore an international character. The revolution would quickly spread to other Arab countries: Bahrain, Yemen, and Syria (exclusively the first six months) were all shaken by popular insurgencies. The tremor created by the revolution would be felt in other countries as well (Jordan, Morocco, even the eastern provinces of Saudi Arabia). Moreover, the impact of the Arab revolution did not remain confined to the Middle East and North Africa. Many countries, among them Spain and Greece in southern Europe (2011), Israel (Tel Aviv, summer 2011), the United States (Occupy Wall Street, autumn and winter 2011), Turkey (Gezi, summer 2013), Brazil (same period as Turkey), and a series of Balkan countries (most importantly the working class uprising of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2014) became the scene of uprisings under the spell of this great revolutionary wave. This was the third wave of the world revolution, the first having been lived after the October revolution and the second during and immediately after the Second World War.

The 2011-2013 Arab revolution has been analyzed at length in the pages of the Turkish version of this journal, *Devrimci Marksizm*.⁸ We will only recall some major points. First, when we say that the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions were victorious, what we mean by this is that they were successful as **political revolutions**. (In Egypt, as is obvious, this success was reversed through the Bonapartist coup of General al Sisi in July 2013.) Both revolutions were able to overthrow the political regime they were fighting against. However, scrutinised more closely, they display the dynamics of **permanent revolution**. Both started from within the working class and on the basis of problems that were of an economic character and in both cases forms of struggle peculiar to the working class (strikes, priority of workers' organisations, unionisation etc.) were prominent aspects of the revolution. If that is the case, then it was possible for these revolutions to be **converted into social revolutions or, what is the same thing in this context, assume a socialist character**. But the working class was not able to rise to a hegemonic position within the revolution. The reason was, in the last analysis, the absence, in both cases, of a revolutionary proletarian party. It is because of this contradiction between the potential

8 Sungur Savran, "Arap Devriminin Vaadleri ve Zaafları", *Devrimci Marksizm*, No. 13-14, Summer 2011, pp. 133-185 and Sungur Savran, "Arap Devriminin Sorunları", *Devrimci Marksizm*, No. 17-18, Winter-Spring 2013, pp. 105-146.

and the final limitations of these revolutions that, in opposition to appellations such as “constitutional revolutions”, “revolutions against colonialism”, “Arab national revolution” attributed to the successive waves of the revolution in the Middle East, we have contented ourselves with an ironic qualification for the fifth wave: “without qualifiers”.

Secondly the Egyptian revolution was one of the most powerful mass revolutionary upheavals witnessed in history. In its total life span (so far, it needs to be added) of two and a half years, it extended throughout the country, fought three different power structures (Mubarak, the Supreme Military Council, and the Ikhwan government of Mohammed Morsi), and, moreover, brought down each and every one of them. But in the end, in the absence of a true proletarian party, the stalemate between the Ikhwan camp and the revolution without a proper leadership led to the grabbing of power by al Sisi, the chief of staff of the armed forces, who adopted a Bonapartist stance between the two camps. After having consolidated his own power, al Sisi proceeded to juggernaut the gains of the revolution and return to the *ancien régime*. The release from prison of the former dictator, Hosni Mubarak, last March is but the bitter act of registration of the defeat of the revolution. However, it is still too early to reach the conclusion that the Egyptian revolution has exhausted all its possibilities. As the economic crisis deepens and the al Sisi administration capitulates to the IMF line, the class dynamics of the revolution may yet again be reawakened.

Third, because the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions have not reached what could be considered a stable outcome, the prospects for the near future have not yet been defined. The Arab revolution has incited, at one and the same time, the working class, Islamism and the military, though the latter not in a Nasserite direction but in a reactionary orientation. The future is uncertain. In other words, as opposed to the previous revolutionary waves in the history of the Middle East, the fifth wave does not yet possess a well-defined legacy.

Two special cases

Because two peoples among the nations of the Middle East have been confronted with very special types of oppression throughout the 20th century, their history has displayed a *sui generis* evolution, with their development diverging in general from the overall trajectory of the region at large. These two peoples are the Palestinians and the Kurds. The former, the Palestinians, lost their territory to the state of Israel in 1948, a product of an international alliance that included all the great powers of the world, including the Stalinist USSR. The part played by British imperialism in support of the Zionist movement, which based itself on a plan for Jews dispersed around the world to return to their supposed “historic homeland”, Palestine, and

establish their own state, was decisive here. The territory where the latter people, the Kurds, lived and had been living since time immemorial, on the other hand, was partitioned, in the immediate post-World War I period, between four regional states. The Kurds lived as an oppressed nation throughout the 20th centuries in all these four countries, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. In some of these countries (Turkey is the prime example here), even their existence was denied, while in others (Syria is the culprit here), they were even left without access to so much as an identity card that would have recognised them the right to proper legal citizenship of the country in which they were born.

These special circumstances, in other words, the fact that their homeland had been forcibly wrested from them, led the Palestinian and Kurdish peoples to sustain a ceaseless struggle for their national rights and freedoms throughout the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries. In a certain sense, these two peoples are **unremittingly in revolt**. This state of permanent revolt has at times taken an armed form (guerrilla war) and at times great uprisings of the people at large.

The revolt agenda of these two peoples has not kept time with the revolutionary calendar of the other countries. Although it may safely be said that, for the Palestinians, Arab revolutions (in particular the Egyptian revolution led by Nasser) played a very stimulating role, the Palestinian people at times determined their own revolutionary agenda independently of the rest of the Arab world, as in 1936-39 during the great revolt, or engaged in serious revolutionary uprisings even though the Arab revolution at large was already suffering decomposition, such as the First and the Second Intifadas (respectively 1987-1993 and 2001-2005).⁹

The case of the Kurds is different. The Palestinian cause, however much betrayed, has the support, at least in lip service form, of the entire Arab nation. The Kurdish people, on the other hand, is oppressed under the yoke of states established by the three major national groups of the Middle East, the Arabs, the Farsi, and the Turks,. Hence even the revolutionary or, more generally left, movements of these countries have not supported the Kurdish cause consistently (although there are some notable exceptions such as the Communist Party of Iraq in the wake of the 1958 revolution or the Workers' Party of Turkey (TIP in its Turkish acronym) in the 1960s, as well as some revolutionary groups from the 1970s all the way to the present in the latter country). For this reason, the Kurdish movement for national emancipation has had to act independently even of movements for socialism or revolution. Inevitably, there has been a phase lag between the calendars of the Kurdish revolutionary movement and those of its Turkish, Arab or Farsi counterparts.¹⁰

⁹ See the article by Kutlu Dane in this issue.

¹⁰ See Şiar Rişvanoğlu, “‘Çar Hawar’: Kürdistan’da İsyân ve Özgürlük Geleneğinin/Politik örgütlenmelerin Kısa Tarihi”, *Devrimci Marksizm*, No. 3, March 2007, pp. 27-71 and “‘Çar Hawar’

However, overall, the struggle of both peoples has frequently taken revolutionary forms. As in the case of the other peoples of the region, the fate of these two peoples has been determined by these revolutionary leaps as well. Hence the Palestinian and Kurdish cases should be studied apart because of their peculiar dynamics, but rather than refuting the main theses of this article, the Palestinian and Kurdish cases forcibly support them.

Conclusion

The picture depicted in this presentation must have brought out some points of extreme importance with incontrovertible clarity.

The following may comfortably be said about the first of the ideas advanced at the beginning of this presentation: the proposition of Marxism that revolution is the locomotive of history is confirmed for the MENA region, as it has been for Western Europe, Latin America, Russia, China etc. Bourgeois revolutions, anti-colonial revolutions, political revolutions etc. have indelibly marked the historical development of the region since the beginning of the 20th century.

Secondly, all the revolutionary waves that have been taken up have determined fully the period that followed them. We see this in the formation of a bourgeois state and society after the 1908 and 1923 revolutions experienced in Turkey (for the former, it is better to say almost the entire region). We see this in the fact that despite the defeat of the revolution in 1919-1920, the Arab world persisted in following the cause advocated by that revolutionary wave. We see this most clearly in the imprint left on the history of the entire Arab world for a full quarter of a century by the Egyptian revolution under the leadership of Nasser. The same may be said of the Iranian revolution despite its much more controversial character. If all this is true, then the “realism” argument of reformists proves to be totally unfounded. By abusing the appearance, in the eyes of the popular masses, of difficulty, or even impossibility, surrounding revolution in times of “normality”, this argument contends that gradual and piecemeal reform is much more “realistic” than the dream of revolutionary triumph. The history of the Middle East throughout the 20th and at this beginning of the 21st centuries demonstrates, on the contrary, that “realism” requires that we be revolutionaries. Whoever wants society to change **must** have recourse to revolution. Reforms can only be secured in the overall field defined by revolutions.

Third, we observe that ideas dismissing revolution and revolt as an alternative to the ills of social life in Muslim society are refuted. We simply ask: which other geography in the world has had as regular and frequent revolutionary upheavals

(2): “İşyan ve İmhanın Tarihi” by the same author in *Devrimci Marksizm*, No. 10-11, Winter 2009-2010, pp. 138-165. See also the Editorial Board of *Devrimci Marksizm*, “Kürt Savaşının 30 yılı”, *Devrimci Marksizm*, No. 21-22, Winter 2015, pp. 12-22.

as the Middle East and North Africa since the beginning of the 20th century? Each wave that we have taken up is separated from the previous one by at most a quarter of a century. It is but one hundred years that separate the constitutional revolutions of Iran and Turkey in 1906 and 1908 respectively from the Arab revolution of 2011. A full five revolutionary waves have dotted these one hundred years! When taken individually, many Middle Eastern countries can be attributed ordinal numbers for their revolutions, such as the “first, second etc.” revolutions of Russia and China. Egypt has so far experienced at least three (1919, 1952, 2011), perhaps even four (1882) revolutions. Iraq, Iran and Turkey at least two.

The Middle East has been part of all worldwide waves of revolution. For the post-October first wave, the Euro-centric view has stubbornly dwelled on the revolutions of Europe, at most including the second Chinese revolution of 1925-27 since that is of course too big to hide. Yet a revolutionary tempest took the Middle East in its grip in the two years of 1919-1920, exactly the same years in which the much debated *Biennio Rosso* was experienced in Italy! The second wave of world revolution emerged during World War II. The Middle East fully joined this wave through the revolutions of Egypt in 1952 and that of Algeria in 1954. What started the third wave of world revolution in 2011 was the Arab revolution itself! The Middle East joined what we would term the “quasi revolutionary” wave of social and political unrest witnessed in and around 1968 through the rise of a gigantic mass movement in Turkey, culminating in the unarmed insurrection of the working class in June 1970, and at least the rise of the Palestinian guerrilla movement in the Arab world. In addition, Egypt and Algeria contributed, at least logistically, to the Tricontinental movement established under the leadership of the Cuban revolution.¹¹

Another aspect of the question is that the international character of truly revolutionary movements can be observed in all the instances of revolution in the Middle East, excepting the case of the Iranian revolution.

Finally, although the revolutions in the MENA region always started out as bourgeois and/or anti-colonial revolutions, they have over time moved toward a synthesis of this first type of revolution and social revolution in favour of the working masses, acquiring a tinge of permanent revolution. The first two generations were exclusively focused on the solution of bourgeois transition and anti-colonialism. With the Nasser and Algerian revolutions, the social question became part of the agenda: agrarian reform, the challenge against private property in land, a special status for workers and peasants etc. We have already discussed the special role of the working class in the 2011 Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions, leading to a logic of permanent revolution.

¹¹ See the source cited in footnote 5.

The 21st century will certainly show us that the Middle East and North Africa, as well as the rest of the world, will march forward with and through revolutions. The Arab revolution of 2011-2013, the popular rebellion in Turkey following the Gezi incident in 2013, Rojava in Western Kurdistan in its initial period and the Kurdish *serhildan* (Kurdish for intifada) in Turkey on the occasion of the defence of Kobani against ISIS in 2014 are only the beginning. The MENA region is no longer grappling with colonialism as it did in a good part of the 20th century. The problem for this geography now can be summed up as the trials and tribulations of the laboring masses of the region, who cannot enjoy the fruits of the natural resources that their countries wield because of the exploitation by imperialism and their domestic ruling classes in constant collusion with imperialism, who go unemployed and suffer miserable conditions. Then we can safely conclude that, whatever the level of consciousness of the masses at a given moment in these countries, in the future, when revolutions or revolts erupt, the class question will inevitably be at the heart of the conflict. The revolution in the Middle East will either conquer as a socialist revolution or be defeated.

Methods of understanding the “contemporary”: A discussion on populism and fascism

Cenk Saraçoğlu

The profound and incessant economic crisis of global capitalism and the concomitant ideological vacuum that started in 2008 has prepared the ground for a series of social movements and uprisings all across the world with varying characteristics. These cascades of revolts soon subsided as a result of the oppressive methods deployed by the respective states and of the militaristic or ideological intervention of imperialist powers. What has followed was the rise of reactionary right wing social movements, parties or political forces that seem to have defied mainstream political parties, their policies and power practices with an inconspicuous and sharp anti-establishment discourse. As of today these reactionary right-wing movements and political forces do no longer operate at the margins of bourgeois democracy with limited links to society. Rather they have acquired so much power and popular

appealing in recent years that they turned out to be an independent unsettling dynamic for bourgeois politics through swiftly transposing the conventional institutional arrangements and ideological codes in their respective countries and also posed a major challenge to progressive political forces.

Such a new phenomenon has sparked in recent years significant debates in both academic and intellectual circles as to the nature, possible trajectory and social basis of these movements. The presidency of Donald Trump in the USA, the appearance of Marine Le Pen as a powerful rival to mainstream politics in French presidential elections, UKIP's former leader Nigel Farage in Great Britain as a political figure who played a leading role in England's move towards Brexit, the increasing authoritarianisms of Victor Orban in Hungary, Tayyip Erdoğan in Turkey, Narendra Modi in India, Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, AfD in Germany have been thought of in this expanding literature as the manifestations of a single phenomenon. All these political forces have been supposed to share some commonalities in terms of their political objectives and ways of appealing to public. The term to designate all these political forces based on their common features has appeared to be "right populism".

The goal of this article is to explore some leading examples of this phenomenon in relation to a discussion as to whether right wing populism is a convenient or sufficient analytical tool to grasp the nature of these reactionary political forces. Based on this discussion the paper will also engage in a methodological and conceptual elaboration in regards to the possible ways of providing a plausible and a comprehensive picture of the current era that we have been witnessing. This discussion will also include a reflection on the extent to which our *zeitgeist* could be evaluated in relation to the concept of *fascism*.

Contextualizing the "populist moment"

In the recent discussions on reactionary right-wing political climate, the concept of populism has often been used in the ways in which it was articulated by Ernesto Laclau who formulated the concept within a distinct theoretical framework in his earlier work *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (1977) and then revisited it in 2002 in his book *On Populist Reason*. Laclau in his earlier works conceives populism not as a coherent ideology but rather as an ideological strategy employed by both bourgeois and revolutionary political forces in their "popular democratic struggles" (in their struggle for hegemony). In his later work *On Populist Reason* he goes further to state that the populist logic is not a sporadic or secondary element of political struggles but rather is an essential element that functions and dominates

the political discourse in the turning points of modern political history.¹ At the core of populist reason lies an attempt of a political subject –be it an anti-systemic or a systemic political force– to construct “the people” against the “power bloc”, its symbolic representatives and its dominant ideology. Populism interpellates people under an overarching issue or theme that could function as a nodal point of accumulated contradictions and the sources of discontent in society. It aims to bring together and mobilize different sections of society with various grievances. What characterizes populism, however, is not simply the pursuit of achieving the consent and representation of people. Rather the quintessence of populism, according to Laclau is rebuilding and remoulding “people” in accordance with the context-dependent necessities of the political power struggles, and positioning this reconfigured “people” against the existing political establishment and its ideological codes. Such logic could operate both in revolutionary or counter-revolutionary political strategies under different political programmes and objectives. What matters for the emergence and predominance of populist reason is the presence of a convenient political/social/ideological context in which it could have an appeal in society.² In this respect populism is not a free floating discourse that could be relevant in all times and places but rather is tied to the exigencies of context. As such populism does not characterize only the discursive or rhetorical content of the ideological strategy of a political force but it also characterizes the specific spatio-temporal context that generates populist arrangements, which is in this paper referred to as “populist moment”.

When populism is defined as such one can observe that the representatives of the recent reactionary right-wing political forces from Trump to Le Pen, from Duterte to Erdoğan etc. put the “populist reason” at the center of their political pursuits. In all of them, whether currently holding political power or not, we see an attempt to build or redefine “the people” in a particular way, represent and position it against the rhetorically constructed or real “political establishment” and its representatives. It is this commonality that induces many intellectuals today to put the concept of populism at the centre of their intellectual endeavors to get to grips of the nature of current era.

Considering that “populism” defined as such has been and is still employed by some left leaning political forces ranging from Podemos in Spain to Chavistas in Venezuela the concept of populism in its plain form would not suffice to comprehend the distinctive nature of the recent rise of reactionary political forces. It is in this respect that many intellectuals and academics have added the word “right” to

1 Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, London: Verso, 2005.

2 Ernesto Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory: Capitalism, Fascism, Populism*, London: New Left Books, 1977, p. 171.

define the aforementioned reactionary political figures and forces, which has given us the concept of “right populism”. At this point the question at stake is what makes the “populism” of these reactionary forces a “right populism”. The search for answer to this question would lead us to go beyond the discursive strategy of the current reactionary forces and explore some other commonalities in their vision of world and society that is, in their ideological content as well as in their organizational structure. This will help us to take some further steps in our endeavor to grasp a picture of this reactionary wave.

One of the characteristics that these reactionary movements share with the traditional right has to do with the nature of link between the leader and followers of the movement. The role of leader in these reactionary movements is not limited to becoming a “charismatic” spokesperson that transmits the demands and concerns of the masses to political arena. The leader in these movements identifies his/her personal ambitions with the expectations and concerns of the masses, makes his/her individuality and persona a central issue and even the constitutive of the (imaginary) people/power-block division and depicts any political attack to his political or private life as an assault carried out by the political enemy against the “people”.³ It is not necessarily the socio-economic affinity or the common class belonging that makes possible and establishes such a link between the leader and masses. On the contrary, the right populist leaders achieve this despite a huge disparity between his/her economic standing and that of masses. The secret of this link lies in the leader’s “immediate” representation in his language, gestures and life-style of the average raw sentiments, reasoning and practices prevalent among general public that have been hitherto excluded by the field of formal politics under the rubric of “political correctness”. This is how, in the absence of any shared class position, the sense of “he/she (the leader) is one of us” is created among the masses. The prioritization of the leader’s own agenda and his/her individuality in these movements make them amenable to a great extent to such conventional elements of right-wing politics as cult of leadership, hierarchy and fetishism of authority.

The second and probably more crucial element situating these reactionary movements on right is concerned with the ways in which they build the antagonistic relationship between the “people” that they purport to represent and “power-bloc”. The recent reactionary movements acknowledge and attempt to mobilize the “real” daily economic problems of the ordinary citizens that stem typically from the contradictions of capitalist system and its current unending crisis. They incite and disseminate a sense of alarm among the public on the basis of an agitated rhetoric

3 Arjun Appadurai, “Demokrasi Yorgunluğu” [“Democracy Fatigue”], in Heinrich Gieselberger (ed.) *Büyük Gerileme* [*The Great Regression*], trans. Merisa Şahin et.al., İstanbul: Metis, 2017, p. 18.

repetitively speaking about the fact that such conditions would further exacerbate unless the existing political establishment is sustained. Right-populism concedes the fact that such immediate economic grievances are linked to the fundamentals of the existing system and could only be resolved once the existing power arrangements are problematized and altered. Nevertheless, the forms in which these reactionary movements perceive and depict the culprits of these systemic problems necessarily involve the mystification of the objective roots of these problems in the fundamentals of capitalist system, and displacement and manipulation of class anger to secondary or completely false targets. Rather than the state as the field of class rule but the corrupt and passive politicians, not the capitalist class order itself but only some symbolic capital groups and financial oligarchs, not the imperialist wars but the refugees as the victims of these wars, not the unfair international world order but the other states and nations, not the neoliberal deregulation but the migrants and minorities are presented as responsible for falling wages and increasing unemployment. It has been against these enemies that populism urges “people” to react and organize. The construction of the “enemy” as such leads these reactionary movements to embrace a chauvinistic nationalism and racism and hence positions them on the right of political spectrum.

If “right populism” is not a self-evident and ahistorical political discourse but a strategy of power-seeking that bears the traces of some specific social and historical conditions (populist moment) then understanding the nature of the recent rise of right-populism entails an investigation as to what specific characteristics of contemporary capitalism could have prepared a favourable ground for this phenomenon. This means, in other words, simply asking “what characterizes the populist moment today?” Given that the refusal of longstanding political establishment, mainstream political parties and the codes of dominant ideology is an essential element of populism, a populist moment could be at stake when there emerges a social and political context in which traditional political institutions and conventional ideological patterns deeply lose credibility on the part of general public and lack capacity to ensure consent and build hegemony. This means that populist moment goes hand in hand with an ideological crisis and political stalemate that cripple the capacity of the existing political establishment to avert increasing discontent with the system.

It is on the basis of this reasoning that many intellectuals in recent years have tended to explore some linkages between the contemporary crisis of capitalism that reached its zenith in 2008 and the rise of reactionary right. Many of them rightly point out that the 2008 economic crisis and ensuing political and ideological predicaments have been rather a product of the gradual accumulation of some inherent contradictions of neoliberal capital accumulation that became conspicuously predominant as of the 1990s and triggered some significant crisis-ridden transformations

in the fields of politics and ideology as well. The accumulation of these dynamics of crisis has also been coupled with the recent exodus from Syria and Iraq, the so-called “refugee crisis” which has posed another challenge to existing political and ideological formations especially on the part of European countries. While the unending and deepening crisis of contemporary capitalism has delegitimized the deeply rooted political institutions and ideological codes and hence prepared a convenient milieu for the anti-establishment discourse of populism, the recent exodus from the Middle East has further intensified already existing xenophobic sentiments especially in Europe and has become a catalyst for the articulation of the deep mistrust in existing political system. These reactions revealed themselves in the forms of a chauvinistic nationalism and racism, a formula which gives us the right populism.

Let’s advance this analysis by carrying out an investigation as to what aspects of the inherent contradictions of neoliberalism and its accumulated social and political implications are related to the rise of right-populism. The first aspect is concerned with what is referred to in the recent discussions as the *sovereignty crisis of nation-states*.⁴ This refers to the process of gradual erosion of the role of nation-states to develop within their borders the programs and projects of enhancing capital accumulation. This role has been largely transferred to international financial institutions and oligarchs, such purportedly “supra-national” organizations as the European Union and multi-lateral economic agreements binding for the national economies.⁵ One of the implications of this process was the gradual elimination of the redistributive economic and ideological instruments that the nation-states employed to absorb within the confines of capitalist system the visible and potentially challenging class contradictions.⁶ As the capacity to devise economic programmes that would respond to the context-dependent class challenges to capital accumulation has eroded, the mainstream bourgeois political parties, be it a centre-left or centre-right party, were reduced to uniform and passive technocratic entities that have no function but defending and implementing the same standardized neoliberal economic policies.⁷

4 Appadurai, “Demokrasi Yorgunluğu”, p. 18; Wilhelm Heitmeyer, “‘A New Fascism?’ Symposium Speech”, Kassel, 2016.

5 Wolfgang Streeck, “Neoliberal Kapitalizm İçin Sonun Başlangıcı” [“The Return of the Repressed as the Beginning of the End of Neoliberal Capitalism”], in Heinrich Gieselberger (ed.) *Büyük Gerileme [The Great Regression]*, trans. Merisa Şahin et.al., İstanbul: Metis, 2017, p. 195.

6 Nancy Fraser, “İlerici Neoliberalizme Karşı Gerici Popülizm: Bir Hobson Seçimi” [“Progressive Neoliberalism versus Reactionary Populism: A Hobson s Choice”], in Heinrich Gieselberger (ed.) *Büyük Gerileme [The Great Regression]*, trans. Merisa Şahin et.al., İstanbul: Metis, 2017, p. 62.

7 Donatella della Porta, “Geç Neoliberalizmde İlerici ve Gerici Siyaset” [“Progressive and Regressive Politics in Late Neoliberalism”], in Heinrich Gieselberger (ed.) *Büyük Gerileme [The Great Regression]*, trans. Merisa Şahin et.al., İstanbul: Metis, 2017, p. 50.

This has created a sense of economic “insecurity” on the part of the working (or prospectively working) population whose historically gained rights and employment prospects have been threatened by neoliberal transformation.⁸ The end-result of this was the suspension of already fragile links between these political parties and general public, especially working classes. It is under these circumstances that the discourse of right-wing populism that ruthlessly denigrates existing political establishment and traditional political elites could have a large popular appeal.⁹ It is again owing to this context that the right-wing populism’s recall to “strong state”, epitomized in Donald Trump’s slogan “Make America Great Again”, could have mobilized large sections of society.¹⁰

We should state here a rather more contingent but at the same time crucial factor for the increasing popular appeal of right-wing populism’s recall to “strong state”: the series of terrorist attacks carried out by radical Islamist organizations in the most significant cities of Europe and the USA. These attacks combined the concerns regarding “economic security” with “physical security” and reinforced the common sensical conviction that the state, as it stands, under the rule of weak, corrupt and dysfunctional political leaders and entities could not perform its most fundamental and agreed-upon function: protecting the physical and economic security of its citizens. The terrorist attacks facilitated and accelerated the process of right-wing populism’s establishing powerful links to general public in two ways: First, masses have become more receptive of the right-wing populism’s endorsement of an authoritarian, monolithic and securitized state structure. Second, they have become more amenable to the right-wing populism’s culturalist discourse and its racist tendency of identifying the Muslim minorities as one of the culprits of the weakening of the nation-state.

The effects of inherent contradictions of neoliberalism on the state and the field of politics in capitalist social formations are intricately connected to the ravages that neoliberal policies inflicted on working class all across the world and the changing nature of labour processes. The rise of right-wing populism cannot be thought in separation of the changing conditions of working class which constitutes a substantial component of the social base of these reactionary movements. The impacts of neoliberalism and the recent 2008 crisis on the working classes such as increasing social insecurity, precariousness, unemployment and decreasing access to welfare have been extensively demonstrated in academic literature and it is not necessary to get into this discussion within the limits of this paper. The recent literature focuses

8 Chantal Mouffe, “‘A New Fascism?’ Symposium Speech”, Kassel, 2016.

9 Gáspár M. Tamás, “‘A New Fascism?’ Symposium Speech”, Kassel, 2016.

10 Ivan Krastev, “Çoğunlukçu Gelecekler” [“Majoritarian Futures”], in Heinrich Gieselberger (ed.) *Büyük Gerileme [The Great Regression]*, trans. Meriça Şahin et.al., İstanbul: Metis, 2017, p. 99.

on the inability of the mainstream political actors to avert the discontent arising from these material effects of neoliberalism as a crucial factor to be taken into account. Yet, it is not sufficient to highlight only the material losses of working class. One should also take into account the intensification of a sense of political and ideological “impotency” on the part of working class to understand why it has oriented towards right-wing populism in recent years.¹¹ The increasing political impotency of the working class refers to its declining capacity to influence the redistributive mechanisms as well as political processes by putting pressure on bourgeoisie and on its political institutions through its organizational units such as labour unions and revolutionary parties. This brings about a gradual erosion of the political subjectivity of the working class and its increasing inability to act as an independent political force.

One should note here the unfortunate complicity of some sections of radical left in the working classes’ increasing political and ideological impotency. It is a very-well known fact that the trauma of the dissolution of actually existing socialism in the early 1990s had induced some sections of left-wing political forces to revise their political strategy in such a way as to respond to the changing ideological and political climate after the end of the Cold War. Some sections of left-wing organizations and intellectuals especially in European left tended in this period to abandon their former position of envisaging the working class as the historical agent of future emancipatory transformation of society and of prioritizing working-class related stakes in their political discourse and action. Instead they embraced a cosmopolitanist strategy of struggling for the recognition of subaltern communities and identities and offered a liberal multiculturalism as a solution to their social exclusion. The left has been reduced among these circles to the defense of universal ethico-political values against oppressive political forces and ideologies.¹²

The unintended consequence of this new orientation was two-fold: First of all an overwhelming focus on abstract-universal/liberal principles overriding the national context obstructed radical left from devising power-seeking political strategies that could accord with the historical specificities and necessities of the class struggle in their respective countries. Second, the prioritization of the agenda and particular issues of subaltern communities has impeded the left’s capacity to represent especially the neoliberalism-related material losses of working classes, which had been already left unaddressed by mainstream politics. The multiculturalist and moralist discourse of the radical left that is focused on particularistic recognition has fallen

11 Franco “Bifo” Berardi, “‘A New Fascism?’ Symposium Speech”, Kassel, 2016.

12 Slavoj Žižek, “Populist Cazibe” [“The Populist Temptation”], in Heinrich Gieselberger (ed.) *Büyük Gerileme* [The Great Regression], trans. Merisa Şahin et.al., İstanbul: Metis, 2017, pp. 211-225.

short of problematizing the underlying class roots of the grievances of all powerless and propertyless sections of society and hence of building a common integrative ground of politics that would combine the grievances of the local working class with subaltern communities and thereby endow them with a common political/class identity. The eventual result of this problem of representation was the local working classes' increasing distrust and even anger against the radical politics and their distancing themselves through an exclusionary and nationalist discourse from the other oppressed sections of population, especially the migrants and refugees.¹³ Overall, this situation has left the local working class quite susceptible to the influence of right-wing populism which addressed and prioritized their real material losses, positioned itself through crude nationalist rhetoric against liberal multiculturalism and stigmatized migrants and refugees as the scapegoat of the economic and political impotency of the working class.¹⁴

The “nature” of fascism and the “populist moment”

The concept of right populism has been beneficial so far in exploring some common ideological patterns and strategic orientations observed in the recent reactionary movements as well as in situating them within a common world-historical context. In this respect and contrary to John Belamy Foster's claim¹⁵, the concept of populism cannot be considered fully useless. However, this concept belongs to such a high level of abstraction that it would not suffice to unravel some politically meaningful differences between the concrete manifestations of the “populist moment” in different countries. Although the (re)construction of people against an imagined or real power-bloc, which is the quintessential feature of populism, has been common in the recent reactionary movements, this populist logic operates in and through different political programmes in different countries with diverse social and political implications. This diversity is the inevitable result of the uneven and combined development of capitalism which generates different capitalist social formations across the world, having their historically specific course of class struggles, ideological contexts and political structure. A more comprehensive grasp of the recent state of the world entails an acknowledgment as well as an assessment of the ways in which the rise of reactionary politics has been mediated by these context-

13 Nancy Fraser, “İlerici Neoliberalizme Karşı Gerici Popülizm”, p. 63.

14 Oliver Nachtwey, “Uygarlık Dışına Çıkma: Batı Toplumdaki Geriye Yönelik Eğilimler Üzerine” [“Decivilisation. On Regressive Tendencies in Western Democracies”], in Heinrich Gieselberger (ed.) *Büyük Gerileme* [*The Great Regression*], trans. Merisa Şahin et.al., İstanbul: Metis, 2017, p. 165.

15 John Bellamy Foster, “This is Not Populism”, *The Monthly Review*, 69: 2, 2017, <https://monthlyreview.org/2017/06/01/this-is-not-populism/>, accessed: 1 August 2017.

dependent dynamics. Such an investigation is also crucial for devising some solid and realistic political strategies for progressive politics to counteract and reverse the existing poisonous trend. It is for these reasons we need to recognize the limitations of the concept of populism and invoke another concept to go beyond them. The concept that needs to be invited to our discussion is fascism.

The concept of fascism will be incorporated into our analysis by pursuing an answer to the question as follows: To what extent one can argue that the recent rise of right-populism could be designated also as an indication or harbinger of (coming or actually existing) fascism, i.e of proto-fascism? The search for an answer to this question will carry us to an analytical domain in which we would be able to discuss some meaningful differences between these right-wing movements in relation to their corresponding national context and provide some clues as to the possible trajectory of these movements as well as hints in regards to the most efficient strategy of resistance and action.

Introducing such a discussion first of all and necessarily entails a clarification as to what characterizes fascism as a specific political project and ideological arrangement? There is vast and quite contentious conceptual and methodological discussion in regards to the characteristic features of fascism. I will not attempt here to provide a full picture of class roots, political/institutional orientations (when it is in power) and organizational strategies of fascism, which have been comprehensively and intensely debated in the literature. Rather, in accordance with the subject matter of this paper and for the purpose of deepening the discussion we carried out so far, I will abstract out and scrutinize two distinctive ideological features of fascism that were in effect in its classical historical examples in Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Italy, and interrogate the extent to which it is present in contemporary right-populism. These two features are a) counter-revolutionary subversiveness¹⁶; b) non-contemporaneity.¹⁷

By counter-revolutionary subversiveness I mean the fascism's tendency to energize its popular base and justify its power and suppression through a discourse and (when it is in power) politics based on a promise and programme of subverting the most fundamental and long-standing political/institutional, legal and ideological arrangements of the existing order, which is depicted by fascist forces as the culprits of the existing alarming predicaments of and threats to the "nation", without necessarily building new ones to replace them. This subversiveness is necessarily counter-revolutionary as its demolitionist energy orient towards destroying all the

16 Robert O. Paxton, *Faşizmin Anatomisi* [*The Anatomy of Fascism*], trans. Hakan Atay and Hivren Demir Atay, İstanbul: İletişim, 2004.

17 Alberto Toscano, "Notes on Late Fascism", 2007, <http://www.historicalmaterialism.org/blog/notes-late-fascism>, accessed: 1 July 2017.

emancipatory values and structures of humanity that have been gained through social struggles and also involves an inclination to completely cleanse the true revolutionary forces, i.e. communists from the political and ideological domain.

As the second idiosyncratic feature of fascism under consideration *non-contemporaneity* and *non-synchronousness* (a recurrent theme in Ernst Bloch's assessments of fascism revisited in Alberto Toscano's (2007) article on the blog of the journal *Historical Materialism*) refers to the tendency of fascism to oscillate between a mythic past, which is typically envisaged as the unfulfilled golden age of nation, and a distant future in which the nation will completely have overcome the impasses of the "present time" and be reborn from its ashes (what is referred to as "palingenetic myth" by Roger Griffin.¹⁸ The counter-revolutionary subversiveness of fascism is indeed intricately connected to its non-contemporaneity as such, since what it promises to establish in lieu of the present that it purports to destroy is the mythic and idealized past that would be renovated and fulfilled in the future under the fascist rule once it gets rid of (destroy) all the present national and international constraints. Fascism is thus non-synchronous as it discursively suspends and substitutes the present by an ancient past and promised future. These two distinctive features of fascism are important not only for the analytical trajectory of this paper. They are also crucial for not conflating such a specific political phenomenon as fascism with different variants of reactionary right with which the former shares various ideological and political (strategic) commonalities. Such characteristics of fascism as cult of leadership, militarism, anti-intellectualism, ultra-nationalism, chauvinism etc. are also present in various other right-wing political movements, but all of these seemingly common features take a different meaning and form in fascism when they are moulded by and incorporated into its counter-revolutionary and non-synchronous ideological motivations.

These two distinctive features of fascism cannot be seen merely as an "ingenious" formula invented by fascist movements and their leaders. Neither can they be assumed to dominate the domain of ideologies as an outcome of the competition between different discursive strategies of different political forces. Counter-revolutionary subversiveness and non-synchronicity should be rather interpreted as an indication of what Poulantzas calls a deep "generalized ideological crisis" of bourgeois rule in a particular society, i.e. the erosion of the capacity of bourgeoisie to secrete ideological and discursive elements that could possibly sustain the political and social framework reproducing existing regime of capital accumulation or, more seriously, social relations of production. It is true that not all ideological crises of bourgeoisie allow room for these two features to infiltrate into the domain of ideo-

¹⁸ Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, London: Routledge, 1991.

logies. They could appear as an alternative or indeed a last resort when all hitherto functioning ideological strategies that could remain within the confines of existing political establishment has been delegitimized to such an extent that their circulation in the domain of ideologies is of no avail for and even a catalyst of the ideological crisis. Expectedly such a context is also a favorable ground for the revolutionary left to introduce its radical alternative in a more full-fledged manner. Nevertheless, in the absence of or as a result of weakening of a powerful progressive revolutionary organization with deep links to working class and society the shocking subversiveness of fascism as well as its non-contemporaneity that substitutes a fantasy of past and future with the crisis-ridden contemporary that could no longer offer a realistic alternative may appeal to people with the consent, if not full support, of dominant classes. In this respect fascism with its unprecedented oppressive militaristic machinery could also play (and indeed played in its historical examples) the role of completely cleansing the left and its potentiality from the political sphere. As such, the rise of fascism with these two quintessential ideological motivations signifies, as has been the case in its historical examples, not only the ideological crisis of bourgeoisie but also of the political and organizational impotence of working class and socialist forces to retract fascism and prevent its ideological influence over some sections of working class. We should add at this point that in its historical examples such as Germany and Italy, such ideological features of fascism and the structure of a fascist regime as a whole was also complementary and in compatible with the endeavors of those sections of bourgeoisie that had seen an expansionist international strategy and hence the subversion of existing international order as a necessity for getting rid of the obstacles to capital accumulation. Yet, only this factor does not suffice to explain why not any other exceptional forms of capitalist state that would be compatible with expansionism but fascism dominated the political field in these countries. In the perspective of this article while the generalized ideological crisis of bourgeoisie and the exhaustion of the existing ideological elements to resolve this crisis, and the impotency of progressive social forces to fill the vacuum left by the existing political establishment are internal and necessary conditions for fascism to rise.

We are now in a position to further specify our question in regards to the relationship between the contemporary right-populism and fascism. The question as to whether the right-wing populism today is a symptom and indication of the existing or emerging fascism is at this stage of paper equivalent to asking whether the counter-revolutionary subversiveness and non-contemporaneity is present in the current leading reactionary political forces. The importance of this question is that it will enable us to see some context-specific diverse manifestations of right-populism across the geography of capitalism. I would state from the outset that there is not one

single answer to this question that applies to all the countries under the influence of right-wing populism. One of the missing points in Toscana's article, which tries to provide a plausible answer to a similar question, is its focusing merely on the instances of reactionary politics in Western Europe and the USA without taking into account its forms in rather more peripheral countries such as Turkey and Hungary. Here in this paper, I will try to formulate some preliminary ideas based on this question by also picking the current conditions in Turkey as an illuminating example to be compared to the right populism of advanced capitalist countries.

Is fascism actual? Where and how?

When the recent right-wing populist movements and political forces are assessed in light of the above-discussion one could say that they hardly incorporate subversiveness and non-contemporaneity, as the two essential features of fascism, into their political discourse and practice. It is true that Le Pen's National Front in France, Nigel Farage's UKIP in England and Donald Trump in USA rely on a chauvinistic nationalism and exclusionary and oppressive anti-migrant discourse in their appeal to society and it is also true that this position encourages and mobilizes hitherto submerged fascist tendencies and white supremacist groups in these countries. Nevertheless, the absence of the aforementioned two elements in these movements is a good reason to avoid a false diagnosis of their character and directly identifying them with fascism. Here what we do is not to devise a "fascist minimum"¹⁹ around the list of necessary properties of classical fascism and test whether any of these elements are present in the contemporary reactionary movements in advanced capitalist countries. As stated before these two essential elements are not simply two items among yet many other characteristic features of fascism. Rather they are constitutive of the distinctiveness of fascism as an ideology and movement, giving a qualitatively different character to all other features of fascism that are shared in varying degrees by other right-wing movements. As such they are the most convenient vantage points through which to discuss whether the recent reactionary movements could follow a fascist path.

The crude anti-establishment discourse of Trump, Le Pen and Farage, at least as of recently has not been yet combined with a radical subversiveness that promises to demolish longstanding political institutions and ideological traditions in their respective countries. They, particularly Le Pen, rather tend to organize its political discourse around the condemnation of the depreciation of these traditions under neoliberal globalization and corrupt politicians who are indifferent to the demands

¹⁹ Stefan Breuer, *Milliyetçilikler ve Faşizmler* [*Nationalisms and Fascisms*], trans. Çiğdem Canan Dikmen, İstanbul: İletişim, 2010.

of people.²⁰ They also do not build their political position on the emergent need to forcibly transform the existing balances of power in international relations as had been the case in the classical historical examples of fascism. In some cases they offer a kind of nationalist protectionism and isolationism as the necessary shifts in foreign policy. This is not to say that these movements are not dangerous and alarming enough. To the contrary they are the most striking epitomes and also catalysts of capitalism's reactionary predispositions in contemporary world and there is no guarantee that they could come to a position of fully embracing and embodying a true fascist character when the crisis of capitalism deepens further and the course of class struggle reaches at a more decisive level. Nevertheless, still, one should be cautioned against diagnosing their present position as fascism in order to be able to devise more reliable strategies of counteracting.

As for the non-contemporaneity of populist right in advanced capitalist countries today, Toscana's following statement is illuminating:

Now, how might we revisit this question of fascism and (non-)contemporaneity in our moment? Perhaps we can begin with an enormous dialectical irony: the fascistic tendencies finding expression in the election of Trump, but also in co-eval revanchist nationalist projects across the 'West', are seemingly driven by a *nostalgia for synchronicity*. No archaic pasts, or invented traditions here, but the nostalgia for the image of a moment, that of the post-war affluence of the *trente glorieuses*, for a racialized and gendered image of the socially-recognised patriotic industrial worker (Bifo's national-workerism could also be called a *national or racial Fordism*, which curiously represses the state-regulatory conditions of its fantasy). To employ Bloch's terms this is a *nostalgia for the synchronous, for the contemporary*. The authorised emblem of a post-utopian depoliticised post-war industrial modernity, the industrial worker-citizen, now reappears – more in fantasy than in fact, no doubt, or in the galling mise-en-scène of 'coal workers' surrounding the US President as he abolishes environmental regulations – in the guise of the "forgotten men", the "non-synchronous people" of the political present. If this is a utopia, it is a utopia without transcendence, without any "fanatic-religious" element, without an unconscious or unspoken surplus of popular energies.²¹

As such contemporary reactionary political forces in advanced capitalist countries rest on the nostalgia of the ideal of organic, expanding and seemingly homogenous society of the post-second World War era rather than on the recall of a

20 Bruno Latour, "Güvenli Avrupa" ["Europe as Refuge"], in Heinrich Gieselberger (ed.) *Büyük Gerileme* [*The Great Regression*], trans. Merisa Şahin et.al., İstanbul: Metis, 2017, p. 107.

21 Alberto Toscana, "Notes on Late Fascism", p. 4.

heroic and archaic past that is supposed to be revitalized in the future by means of subverting “the present” in both domestic and international arenas. It is therefore, at least as of today, unlikely for these political forces to enlarge their autonomy from the rationality of dominant capitalist classes, a disposition that has been seen in the historical classical examples of fascism.²² This crucial difference needs to be taken into consideration before drawing hasty parallels between classical fascism and examples of right-populism in the core countries of capitalism.

Those stated about the right populism of advanced capitalist countries do not necessarily hold true for the instances of populism in the rather more peripheral countries of the world such as Turkey. Here, both the counter-revolutionary subversiveness and non-contemporaneity is more obvious than USA, France and England, albeit much less intense, continuous and ambitious than the classical historical examples of fascism. Let’s now very briefly elaborate on some characteristic features of the AKP rule in Turkey and situate them within these two quintessential features of fascism. The AKP has been in power in Turkey since 2002 and its ideological strategies of hegemony have possessed continuous features as well as intermittent ones that have come to the stage depending on the course of political struggles in Turkey and in international arena. After the Gezi Uprising in 2013 a right-wing populism, as defined in this article, has occupied a central position in the ideological strategy of the AKP. This populism is characterized by the party’s and its leader Tayyip Erdoğan’s search for crafting a conception of “nation” and people from its conservative social base that is to be juxtaposed against those sections of society that have been alienated by the AKP project. This strategy has gone hand in hand with the increasing authoritarianism, cult of leadership and an assault against those traditional institutions and ideological codes in the country that have been depicted by the party as the remnants of earlier elitist political establishment. Today highly oppressive practices of political power in Turkey is coupled with and justified by a populist rhetoric of defending the “victimized” people against traditional elites.

What is crucially important in the Turkish experience is that such populist practice of power converges upon a certain degree of subversiveness and non-contemporaneity that differentiates this party from other right wing political forces in modern Turkish history. The party reveals its subversiveness in its objective of unsettling conventional political traditions, constitutional frameworks and long-standing official ideological elements and symbols to the extent that they pose an obstacle to the party’s and its leader’s unfettered desire of monopolizing power. The attempts to build a new regime by deliberately undermining, eliminating or at least circumventing institutional, ideological and legal framework of the “republic”

22 Nicos Poulantzas, *Fascism and Dictatorship: the Third International and the Problem of Fascism*, London: New Left Books, 1974.

is what differentiates the populist practice of power in Turkey from its counterparts in advanced capitalist countries. The whole discourse of “New Turkey” epitomizes such a subversive motivation of the AKP rule. The quest and promise of building “a new regime under one-man rule” has resonated in varying degrees so far with a reconfigured historical narrative that builds on an exaltation of the former Ottoman Empire. The medieval Ottoman times have been envisaged and presented by the party and its affiliated ideologues as an “unfulfilled Golden age” (i.e neo-Ottomanism) and supposed to be revitalized in future once the party and its leader eliminate the present obstacles threatening such a dream. The AKP’s subversiveness towards “the present” and “near past” does not accompany a novel political project or a new social contract based on the *synchronous* necessities and conditions of contemporary Turkey. What the party offers in lieu of the “present” is a glorified “past” that could be actualized in the future. It is this non-contemporaneity that is coupled with subversiveness that makes the AKP rule make at least *ideologically* closer to fascism compared to the instances of right-populism in the Western world. This discussion could be further expanded by demonstrating the concrete manifestations in the last ten years of this subversiveness and non-contemporaneity, but this lengthy discussion could be beyond the limited space of this paper. It is rather more crucial here to answer the following question within the limits of this paper: Does this ideological affinity suffice to identify contemporary Turkey with fascism?

In classical historical examples of fascism subversiveness and non-contemporaneity were not only discursive components of the ideological framework of fascist political powers but they also constituted the underpinnings of their actual political practice in domestic as well as international arena. The revisionist and expansionist endeavors of Italy and Germany before and during the Second World War were ideologically justified as the necessary actions oriented towards revitalization of the unfulfilled Golden Age in the distant future. At the same time it was by means of this continuous militaristic expansion and subversiveness that they tried to demonstrate to the public the “potentiality” of the nation under their rule.²³ This was necessary because any setback or failure to prove in the present time their capacity to actualize the glory of the mythic past would have jeopardized the sustainability of this fascistic fantasy. The question for Turkey in this context is that whether Turkey could have succeeded so far in presenting the public at least traces of the potentiality of its non-synchronous and subversive neo-Ottomanist rhetoric. Indeed, the facts indicate to us that there are some insuperable structural impediments for the AKP to “actualize” adequately its subversiveness and non-contemporaneity particularly in the international arena. Whenever the AKP searched for pushing the

²³ Paxton, *Faşizmin Anatomisi*, p. 260.

limits of the structure of power in international relations for the purpose of actualizing its non-synchronous Ottomanism it could not fail to find itself more entangled by and dependent on more powerful international actors. (The course of conflict between Russia and Turkey in Syrian issue is an indicative example of this.) The Syrian conflict, which the AKP rule had initially seen as an opportunity to prove the potentiality of neo-Ottomanism and then completely found itself in a trapped situation with no exit strategy, has been a litmus-test for seeing the limitations of the actualization of fascism in Turkey. Such limitations stem from both economically and politically “dependent” position of Turkey in international capitalist order that does not allow this country to possess an adequate imperialist capacity to fully and independently actualize its subversiveness and non-contemporaneity. This is a crucial point that makes it necessary to be cautioned against equating Turkey with a form of fascism despite the presence of meaningful and obvious ideological affinities.

This discussion overall shows us that although they share many commonalities making it possible to evaluate them collectively under the rubric of right-populism, the recent reactionary political forces across the world exhibit some significant context-specific features. Without taking into account this contextual variance one would not be able to devise thorough and realistic strategies of counteracting and resisting the current trend. Such historical and contextual specificities of right-populism could be more comprehensively grasped by incorporating the concept and phenomenon of *fascism* into our discussions..

Resolution on the World Situation

Christian Rakovsky Center and RedMed

The 4th Emergency Euro-Mediterranean Conference, which met in Athens, Greece, on 26th-28th May, adopted, among other resolutions, a Final Declaration that took up the world situation and regional questions in quite a comprehensive manner. We publish below this text, adopted unanimously on the last day of the Conference.

The world capitalist crisis, after ten years of economic stagnation, social devastation and political convulsions, continues and sharpens with no solution in sight.

All the extraordinary measures taken by governments and central banks after the Lehman Brothers debacle, the rivers of liquidity to the imploding financial system at a gigantic social cost under a permanent regime of the most draconian “austerity” on the popular masses, has failed to bring an end to the world slump, a **Third Great Depression** in the history of world capitalism. On the contrary, they have produced the social, economic and political conditions for new explosions.

The incapacity of the capitalist system itself to find so far an exit from this crisis demonstrates its advanced historic decline and its strategic impasse after the failure

both of Keynesianism in early 1970s and of neo-liberalism in 2007-2008.

All the contradictory tendencies of the last decade are now intensifying, the slide to barbarism but also the drive of the pauperized masses to seek a way out of the crisis through resistance, rebellion and revolution.

The structural systemic crisis of global capitalism is disintegrating the social fabric everywhere, plunging the immense majority of humanity to depths of sufferings and misery and pushing the system itself to the brink of a precipice: a slump with millions of unemployed and many more millions in underpaid “flexible” labor slavery in Europe and America; an unstoppable tsunami of desperate refugees from the South and East to the North and West, to the gates of the imperialist centers that have produced their destitution in the first place; regime crisis, decay of parliamentarianism and turn to authoritarian rule, a near collapse of the major parties of the bourgeoisie, rise of the far right and of fascism, of racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism in Europe and America, and of reactionary obscurantist “takfirism” in the Middle East and Africa; imperialist military interventions or wars by proxy in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, in the Eastern borderlands of Europe, with the NATO and US standoff with Russia and China threatening to expand imperialist war internationally.

America, as the most powerful capitalist country in the world, is the center of the world capitalist crisis. The post-Brexit European Union, in a process of disintegration, is a most vulnerable frontline target, together with China and Iran, of US capitalism’s efforts to export its own crisis. The election of Donald Trump to the White House is both the highest political manifestation so far of the decay and crisis of the global capitalist system and a powerful, unpredictable factor for its acceleration. Protectionism, economic nationalism and “America first” policies under Trump are means to overcome decline by an international offensive on a world scale, risking, among others, a dislocation of the world market.

The impending regime crisis in the US itself with the unprecedented clash between the personal rule of the Trump Administration and the intelligence services of the state- the worst political crisis since the Watergate scandal raising again the question of impeachment of the President- displays a deep split within the US ruling class; and this crisis in political power is playing itself out in conditions where millions of people are mobilized against Trump from Day 1 of his inauguration, escalating the mass movements already generated by the capitalist crisis, the Occupy movements, the Black Lives Matter, even the mass support around Bernie Sanders before his shameful capitulation in the Democratic Convention.

This upsurge in the US uniting, first of all, the most oppressed and overexploited layers – workers, Afro-Americans, Latinos, women, immigrants, other minorities and for the first time, Muslim and Jewish communities- is the manifestation

of a new powerful international wave of struggles world-wide that follows, after retreats, capitulations and blows, the previous first wave of mass mobilizations produced by the world crisis in Southern Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), from Tahrir to Puerta del Sol, Syntagma, and Taksim in 2011-2013. Now, the rise of the US popular movements comes on the heels of the “French Spring” of 2016 with the General Strikes, occupations, mass demonstrations and the “Nuits Debout” in the squares against the anti-Labor Law, the movement of a young generation around Jeremy Corbyn, the non-stop social upheaval that takes turns in the various countries of the Balkans, the huge mobilizations in South Korea to bring down the President, and the General Strike of a full 100 million workers in India and the most recent wave of struggles and general strikes in Brazil.

World politics moves in a most unpredictable, non-linear way, through feverish zigzags to the right and to the left, posing acute and urgent challenges to the masses of the exploited and the oppressed, to their political organizations and social movements, and to the revolutionary left itself.

The EU in terminal crisis?

The EU in a process of disintegration meets, interacts and interpenetrates with the chaos in the Middle East and North Africa. This is manifested most clearly in two countries where these two processes merge: a *Greece* already devastated by the diktat of the EU and the IMF, living a twin tragedy, its own humanitarian disaster combined with the tragedy of thousands of refugees trapped under appalling conditions in a destroyed country ; and *Turkey* in deep crisis, already involved in the wars in the region and with the Kurdish people, in internal civil strife and facing the rising despotism of Erdogan’s regime.

Undoubtedly, Europe, the birth place of capitalism now in historic decline, will become an arena of social battles superseding everything that happened in its historic past, full of blood and fury.

60 years after the launching of the initiative by the ruling classes in Europe of its economic and political integration, the entire project proved to be a disaster in every sense:

a disaster for the working class and the poor popular strata in the member States of this imperialist Union, facing constant destruction of jobs, wages, pensions, health services, education under a permanent “State of exception”.

a disaster particularly for the people in Central-Eastern Europe and the Bal-

kans, where the eastward expansion of the EU and NATO to recolonize the former Soviet space and a Mafia-style restoration of capitalist exploitation led to de-industrialization, destruction of the living conditions of the absolute majority, enrichment of a tiny minority of oligarchs and corrupt politicians, and mass immigration of the impoverished people.

a disaster for peace, both in Europe, from the EU's role in the Yugoslav wars to the current Ukrainian debacle and NATO's belligerent expansion to the borders of Russia, as well as the series of European imperialist aggression in Libya, Syria, the Middle East and Africa.

a disaster for millions of refugees, victims of European and US imperialism, who, searching for decent conditions of life in their quest for survival, face a "Fortress Europe", a cynical EU closing the Western Balkan road, signing an infamous deal with Erdogan's Turkey and then condemning the refugees to drown in the middle of the Mediterranean and in the Aegean sea, or to be interned in new concentration camps, or to be victimized by racists, fascists, the police and the military, or to be pushed back to their destroyed homelands.

a disaster for the environment and of all conditions of life destroyed by capitalist greed

a disaster for the capitalists themselves as the world capitalist crisis, gave a fatal blow to the euro-zone, led to an undeclared bankruptcy not only Greece but the entire European banking system, including Deutsche Bank, the biggest bank on the Continent, ignited poisonous nationalism, xenophobia, fascism and racist hatred, fed all national and imperialist antagonisms, and intensified the centrifugal forces of disintegration, starting with Brexit.

We have to organize, resist, fight, and win!

The intensification of all these contradictions produce conditions - despite the prevailing pessimism, particularly among the fragmented, confused and retreating Left- for new class confrontations, even revolutionary developments on the European Continent.

But to fight and win, we need to draw the lessons of recent and past strategic experiences, particularly from Greece, Spain, Portugal, France and Italy.

The huge radicalized mass movements in Southern Europe in 2010-12 has propelled, with some lag naturally, towards governmental power left reformist formations such as Syriza in Greece or movements like Podemos in Spain, as well as blowing wind into the sails of others such as the Left Bloc in Portugal, the IRA in Ireland and, most recently, the *France insoumise* of Mélenchon in France. Syriza, was celebrated, particularly by a defeatist liberal, international left, as the para-

digm of a “radical anti-capitalism” for social change, beyond the “old” dichotomy between reform and revolution, through the parliamentary election of “left governments” supported by mass extra-parliamentary social movements. But Syriza, fully accepting from the start, the framework of the EU and of capitalism, seeking desperately a class compromise and class peace in conditions of class war, with the EU, the IMF and the ruling classes of Europe and Greece, not surprisingly capitulated to these forces in July 2015, betraying popular expectations and the popular will expressed in the Referendum on the Troika’s ultimatum and threat for a Grexit. From the 2015 Memorandum onwards and now again in 2017 with the new one linked to the second review of the so-called “bailout program”, Syriza has implemented the harshest “austerity” measures that even the Right could not have imposed without facing the danger of a revolutionary overthrow. A similar right wing trajectory is followed by Podemos in Spain. In Portugal, the social-liberal, pro-EU government of the Socialist Party is in power, implementing austerity measures thanks to the support of the Left Bloc and the Communist Party.

The lesson is clear: ***there is no middle road or space for class compromise and class collaboration with the capitalist class and the imperialist EU!*** The result is here to be seen by all: the political collapse of nearly the entire traditional Left in Europe, both the openly reformist or the new fake “anti-capitalist” one, in Greece, in France, in Italy, and elsewhere. The ***political independence*** of the working class as the hegemonic force of all subaltern classes against the ruling class is the prerequisite for avoiding social catastrophe, defeating the demagogues of the rising far right and fascism, and a victorious, socialist outcome to the crisis. And this independence and hegemony can be achieved neither by sheer combative trade-unionism, as the experience of the struggle against the El Khomri Law in France has shown, nor by dispersed, spontaneous, unorganized, minority direct action, nor again by any “movementism”, and even less by dissolving into so-called “broad movements” around a charismatic personality like the left nationalist reformist Mélenchon. What is urgently needed is ***revolutionary political organizing, in other words, anti-bureaucratic, internationalist revolutionary parties of the working class and a revolutionary International.***

The European bourgeoisie has proved historically its absolute incapacity to unify the Continent either by means of war or by a “peaceful” economic process. The EU in decay is threatening now all the pauperized masses of Europe to starve them and bury them under its ruins. The call by right wing- or “left”- nationalists for a return to the straitjacket of the bourgeois Nation State is a recipe for disaster. The poisoning of economic life with nationalism leads to fascism and it is condemned to fail in overcoming the capitalist crisis. ***No compromise, no concession but a declared war against any manifestation of racism, of discrimination against the***

immigrants, the refugees or any community oppressed because of its national-ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation. No borders, unity in struggle of all the oppressed and exploited!

Only the working class - “native”, migrant or refugee, employed or unemployed and the vast nomadic proletariat moving between “flexible”, underpaid work positions - can and is forced to put an end to the crisis *by expropriating the expropriators*, all the banks and strategic sectors of the economy, re-organizing it on new, socialist bases, a democratically planned economy under workers’ control and workers’ management. To unify the Continent, on the ruins of the imperialist EU, into a *United Socialist States of Europe*.

The workers and the poor in Europe cannot emancipate themselves without solidarity and a common struggle together with all the oppressed against all forms of discrimination of gender, ethnic-national origin, religion or sexual orientation. A common struggle with the immigrants and refugees, as well as with all the peoples in the Middle East, Asia, Africa or Latin America oppressed by imperialism is necessary.

Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans

Central-Eastern Europe (CEE) and the impoverished Balkans are being turned into a powder keg by imperialism, US and EU, in their quest for the encirclement of Russia. The Balkan countries are gradually being prepared for “accession” into an EU that is itself in insurmountable contradictions and therefore keeps many countries in the ante-chamber. The “integration” of the region with the EU has been transformed from a pipedream to a nightmare. All the while, the bait of a future “accession” is used to keep the Balkans under the hegemony of the EU. For this reason, the region is even being robbed of its history, the appellation “Balkans” being replaced by the anodyne “South Eastern Europe”.

The region is shaken with constant unrest, national conflicts, the rise of far right governments in Hungary and Poland - but also recurrent social rebellions in Romania, Moldova, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia and Bosnia. Even in Poland, more and more brought under the control of a despotic PiS government, a victorious “Black Strike” of women took place against the extension of the anti-abortion law by the ultra-conservative regime. We refuse to capitulate either to the EU/NATO interventions and manipulations or to national-ethnic hatred. Here too internationalism in action is indispensable for survival and exit from the inferno. *Kick out EU/US/ NATO imperialism, their military bases and their puppets from Central-Eastern Europe and the Balkans! Expropriate all oligarchs,*

re-industrialize under workers' control and management on the basis of a democratically planned economy according to social need and in line with concern for the environment! Down with chauvinism, active solidarity among the peoples, for a CEE-Balkan Socialist Federation!

Former Soviet space – Ukraine and Russia and Transcaucasia

From the initial phase after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, it became clear that capitalist restoration was interconnected with the US and EU imperialist plans to fragment and re-colonize the former Soviet space exploiting its resources under oligarchic regimes thinly disguised as bourgeois “democracies”. As the contradictions of the capitalist restoration process were sharpened and became more and more insoluble, particularly after the eruption of the world capitalist crisis, this imperialist effort of re-colonization under local semi-dictatorial puppet regimes has intensified. An extreme and clear example is what happened with the economic-political collapse of Ukraine into a “black hole”, the EU Eastern Partnership” project that failed and the open intervention by NATO and US imperialism establishing a puppet regime of oligarchs and fascist followers of Stepan Bandera in Kiev launching a war against the resistance in the Southern-Ukrainian industrial workers centers of the Russophone Donbass region.

As the 2nd Euro-Mediterranean Workers Conference in 2014 and its related Appeal had stressed: *“The NATO-sponsored aggression in Eastern-Southern Ukraine threatens not only the Ukrainian people with a bloody generalized civil war and the peoples of Ukraine and Russia with a fratricidal war, but as well all the peoples of the region, of Europe, East and West, and world peace. We have to stop them by an international mobilization of the workers and popular movements!*

No confidence can be placed in the secret diplomacy between the rulers of US, EU, Russia, and Ukraine, which works as a smokescreen for geopolitical games and negotiations between imperialists and oligarchs competing at the cost of the peoples themselves in Ukraine, Russia, Eastern and Western Europe, and all over the world.”

Three years later the situation remains a disaster. It has even become worse as a result of the so-called “Minsk agreements”, the sanctions of the EU and the US against Russia, and secret diplomacy between the Kremlin and the West for a mutual “grand bargain”.

Opposing imperialist intervention and war in Donbass, opposing uncompromisingly both Ukrainian Bandera fascists and Great Russian nationalism, we stand firmly on the internationalist political basis of the previous Euro-Mediterranean Workers Conference: ***Kick out imperialism and fascism from Ukraine! The fake Verkhovna Rada of oligarchic Mafias has to be immediately dissolved. Workers***

*Councils have to be formed everywhere and elect delegates to a new, real Verkhovna Rada, in a **united, independent, socialist Ukraine ruled by the Councils of its workers and people** and not by gangsters at the pay of Washington, Berlin, or Brussels.*

In Transcaucasia, under the cross-winds of the pressure of imperialism and of Russia, the former bureaucracy has donned itself the garb of *parvenu* bourgeois and is pushing the exploitation of the proletariat to its limits, extending the working day, keeping down wages, and robbing the working class of its social gains in such areas as education, health and housing. This new bourgeoisie is engaged in diverting the attention of the masses from exploitation and misery by fanning ethnic-national tensions, most clearly in the case of Nagorno Karabagh that pits the peoples of Armenia and Azerbaijan against each other, and the closing of the border to Armenia by Turkey, which blocks trade from Armenia and further condemns that country already in dire economic straits to further poverty. The Aliiev regime in Azerbaijan is a copycat of the Erdoğan regime in Turkey. As for Georgia, since 2009 that country has been paying a high price for the dirty work its former president, Saakashvili, has played in favor of the US vis-a-vis Russia. That villainous politician has abandoned his own country to be accorded the dubious honour of being appointed governor of a state in federal Ukraine, quite a feat in the modern world, although not unfamiliar in the royal circles of medieval Europe.

Kick imperialism out of the Middle East and stop sectarian carnage!

The Arab revolution, in particular in Egypt and Tunisia, overturned decades-long dictatorships, put an end to a long era during which there was no victorious revolution internationally. The Egyptian revolution in particular was one of the most powerful mass uprisings in modern history, fighting three different power structures successively. Two of these it managed to bring down, but it was finally stopped by the military coup and the Bonapartist regime of General al Sisi in mid-2013. The recent release of Hosni Mubarak from prison is an affront to the heroic struggle of the Egyptian people and shows that the revolution has been beaten temporarily. The Tunisian and more markedly the Egyptian revolutions had a clear working class dimension, but the revolutionary tasks that derived from this dimension were not met because the political independence of the working class from nationalist and liberal bourgeois forces was not established. So it lost the possibility to become the hegemonic force in the revolution leading it to final victory. One of the major reasons for this and the consequent defeat of the revolution is the absence of a revolutionary proletarian party, the creation of which is a burning question in

all of our countries.

Imperialism intervened and spread chaos in the Middle East to stop the Arab revolution: the inferno in Syria and Libya, the al Sisi dictatorship in Egypt, the atrocities in Yemen. The so-called “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant”, ISIL or Daesh, is a Frankenstein’s monster created by imperialism itself and its regional allies, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Erdogan’s Turkey in the forefront, in their quest to transform the Syrian popular uprising of 15 March 2011 into a civil war on sectarian bases, casting Sunni against Alevi (and regionally against the Shia). Social misery in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) as well as racism and discrimination against Muslim and Arab marginalized populations in the imperialist heartlands, all this aggravated by the economic crisis that creates large pockets of unemployment and poverty in the metropolitan centers, act to throw young Muslims into the arms of the barbaric Daesh.

As a direct result of imperialist intervention, no less than three countries in the Middle East (Syria, Iraq, and Yemen) and one in North Africa (Libya) are in the throes of many-sided wars that pit a multitude of actors against each other, resulting in a bloodbath that is hardly comprehensible for the peoples of the world. In Syria alone, some 65 countries, most of them as docile followers of the so-called Coalition led by the US, and many non-state organizations are at war. The so-called “Syrian revolution” is long dead. It lives on as a figment of the imagination of left-wing movements out of touch with the realities of the country. The Syrian crucible is the harbinger of a Third World War that senile capitalism is threatening to draw the whole world into. The refugees are without a shred of doubt the victims of these imperialist policies, but are treated as the new pariahs of the world and pushed beyond the borders of Europe on the basis of a dirty deal between the EU and Erdoğan’s Turkey.

The heroic Kurdish people, the only force which really resisted Daesh victoriously in Rojava, Syrian Kurdistan, faces new dangers emanating from the intrigues of US imperialism, secret diplomacy, and the intransigent denial of Kurdish rights even beyond its borders by the Turkish state. Its recent position as the land forces of the US in its fight against Daesh, on the verge of turning into a strategic alliance with imperialism, threatens the emancipatory character of the decades-long struggle of the Kurdish people.

The new Trump administration will escalate the horror. It covers for the far right

Netanyahu government in Israel, expanding the settlers' colonization of Palestinian land and even planning for the annexation of the West Bank, to complete the Nakbah (Destruction) of the Palestinian people. Plans are also being advanced for the exploitation of the natural gas off the coast of Palestine, implying that the Palestinian people is going to be robbed of a lucrative resource that rightfully belongs to it. This year is the Centenary of the Balfour Declaration, that sinister *profession de foi* on the part of British imperialism that provided Zionism with the opportunity of establishing a "Jewish home" in Palestine, thus establishing the historical basis of the enslavement of the Palestinian people. Let us rise to defend the rights of this persecuted people in order to make self-determination possible for them. The Palestinian question can only be solved through the defeat of Zionism, the full implementation of the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people, including the right of return of the refugees, and the establishment of a free, secular, united, socialist Republic on the historic territory of Palestine on the basis of the coexistence of Jew and Arab.

Furthermore, the strategy of the Trump administration is to exploit the reactionary Sunni-Shia divide to form a war alliance of the oligarchic Arab regimes in the region, under the leadership of Saudi Arabia and the complicity of the al Sisi dictatorship in Egypt, with the warmongers in Israel, for a confrontation with Iran and its regional allies. This will play into the hands of the Saudi kingdom, probably the most reactionary state on the face of the earth today ruled by a band of *rentiers*, in its quest to seize ever greater sources of fossil fuel, and the AKP government in Turkey, in its obsessive effort to make its leader Erdogan the "*Rais*" of the entire Sunni world.

Everything shows that any solution to the ills of the MENA region is predicated on the eviction of imperialist forces from the region. Only when imperialism is cast out can the peoples of the region start to heal their wounds and overcome their differences. The festering dynamics of a sectarian Sunni-Shia war on the scale of the Middle East and beyond threatens not only the populations but also the age-old civilization of the region. This tendency is now joining hands with imperialism and Zionism. Carnage can only be stopped by a broad front of anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist forces that fight also against the reactionary regimes in their own countries. Only a Socialist Federation of the Middle East and North Africa will provide the final solution to all the ills of the region.

Urgent response necessary for an urgent situation

The drive to generalize the imperialist war is more dangerous than ever, it threatens all the peoples of the world- and ***we have to fight everywhere to defeat imperialism and war***. Even before the advent of Trump, US imperialism in collusion with its European allies was feverishly working through every means available towards the encirclement of both Russia and China with the purpose of bringing them down on their knees when circumstances permit. This dogged policy, accompanied by the drive to control the Middle East because of its energy resources, will, in all probability, lead the world to the catastrophe of a Third World War, sooner or later. The dramatic alternative posed by Rosa Luxemburg during the First World War is more topical now than ever before: ***Socialism or barbarism***.

The Emergency 4th Euro-Mediterranean Workers Conference in Athens, Greece, on May 26-28, 2017 appeals to all the forces of the international working class movement that are loyal to the revolutionary ideas of Marxism, to all genuine communists, to all who are struggling for the emancipation of the oppressed, to all freedom fighters to gather our forces in order to stop this drift into barbarism.

This year is the Centenary of the Great October Revolution, which created the first durable workers' state in history. All the rest of the revolutions and other types of transition to the abolition of capitalism in the 20th century were, to a considerable extent, the offspring of this fountainhead. Let us take our inspiration from the October Revolution, strive to create anew an international movement that will lead all the struggles for emancipation, avoid the mistakes of the past, and create the bases of a classless society on the international scale that will forever rule out the barbarism that capitalism in decline is driving us into once again.

Voted unanimously, 28 May 2017

October 1917: A World Event

Savas Michael-Matsas

Has the historical cycle opened by the 1917 October Revolution closed?

Yes, according to the dominant *doxa*. The answer is even considered to be self-evident, definitive and irrevocable after the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991. This event was hailed by the dominant classes of the world as “the complete and final victory of liberal capitalism”, “the irrevocable end of communism”, “the definitive end of the age of revolutions”, even as “the end of History”.

Yet twenty-five years later, nothing is self-evident, definitive and irrevocable. All the certainties of yore are now swept away by an unprecedented hurricane of History, which was supposed to have ended when the red flag was struck from the Kremlin.

The temporary triumph of global capitalism has been succeeded by the worst, and as yet unsolved after ten years already, global systemic crisis in the history of capitalism. The predominance of capitalist globalization was followed by its implosion in 2007-8, the return of protectionism and economic nationalism, and now by the warlike announcement of its disruption from the very centre of globalized capi-

tal, Trump's America. The attempt of the European Union and the euro to expand to Eastern Europe and colonize the former Soviet territory in a battle for global hegemony in the post-Cold War world has failed miserably, as shown by economic stagnation, the debt crisis, the Euro-zone crisis, the heightened national and imperialist antagonisms between Germany, France, Italy, the North and the South of Europe, this whole break-up process that extends from the ever-imminent Grexit to the Brexit and its international implications.

Liberal bourgeois democracy that reigned supreme in 1991 is being dethroned now due to its internal dissolution and the return of the far Right and overt fascism. The promises for an "eternal peace" after the end of the Cold War were succeeded by an unending series of imperialist wars, from Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq, to the new nightmarish cycle that followed the eruption of the global crisis and the mass mobilizations in Middle East, the imperialist interventions in Libya and Syria, the "hybrid war" in Ukraine, and the outrageous threats of NATO against Russia and Trump's America against China. The end of "the end of the Cold War" fosters the danger of an extension of the conflicts and an international inflammation at a stone's throw away.

At the end of "the end of History", nothing can be taken as a *fait accompli*. And the cult of *faits accomplis* has always been the quintessence of bourgeois ideology, as well as of opporTunusiam within the workers', popular and revolutionary movement.

This is not to say that the consequences of 1991 have been overcome. The claim of an "end of History" may have become a laughing-stock, renounced even by its author, Fukuyama himself, but the demise of the Soviet Union signaled for the vast majority of both enemies and friends the loss of the point of reference and the historical compass, for better or worse, of the previous century. ***It is now obvious that History has not ended, but to orient oneself in History is harder than ever before.*** This is true not only for the historically decayed ruling classes, but also for the working class (the "end" of which was also announced long ago), its militant avant-garde and all the revolutionary forces of universal human emancipation – i.e., communism.

There is no doubt that History is moving, and even accelerating its pace, feverishly tossing and turning. What will come next? The world is in transition. There is still a lot of darkness around us, in this morning of a new day.

Yet something keeps peeping through all this darkness. With the reemergence of popular masses on the stage of struggles in Europe, the Middle East, and even in America, one may hear again the sound of the forbidden words: *resistance*, *revolt*, *emancipation*, and even *communism*, however distant its echo as an "hypothesis" or a Platonizing "Idea". It is rare however to hear the word ***revolution*** – a longing

of the deprived, an intimate fear of the rulers –, lost somewhere in the past or in an undeterminable future. Even rarer is to hear about something almost inconceivable: *world* revolution. When it is not a mechanical repetition and a ritualistic leitmotiv uttered by dogmatists who don't really believe in their own words, it sounds as an echo of the distant October 1917. And the historical cycle opened by October has closed once and for all – so they tell us.

Besides, even before 1991, various dates of death of the socialist October revolution had been given. Berlinguer's "eurocommunism" announced in the 1970s that the revolution had "exhausted its propelling force". Others trace its death back in 1956, or 1927, or 1919-21. And some consider it to be still-born already since 1917. At this point, the latter coincide, although from different angles, with the capitalists who have always been claiming that what took place in October 1917 was not a revolution but "a Bolshevik coup", which established "a cruel totalitarian regime" before its eventual demise in 1991.

All these "interpretations" fail to answer the most crucial questions:

Why, after the disappearance of its "arch-enemy", the "triumphant" capitalism did not gain new vigor and juvenile force, plunging instead into a new and far worse crisis from 2007 on?

What exactly was this "arch-enemy", and *how* did it collapse in 1991?

The complete confusion behind both the exultations and the panics was eloquently expressed by philosopher Alain Badiou, in the short essay he published shortly after the demise of the Soviet Union, using a Mallarmé's verse as its title: *D'un désastre obscur*, "On an obscure disaster".¹

The Soviet Union is the state that emerged from the October Revolution, and the course and fate of the former is surely connected with the course and fate of the latter. However, the Revolution, although organically connected, is not *identical* with the state that emerged from it. Its source, the historical dynamic of its contradictions, its perspective, transcend the Soviet Union as a national-state formation. Badiou again, in his aforementioned essay, writes: "*October 1917 as an event enlists, to be sure, many practices faithful to it, but the thought that keeps them together and makes them coherent depends on the event as such, not on its state-projection*".² The French philosopher of the "event" (*événement*) goes even further. He contrasts 1917, which, as any other Event, "*is an infinite proposal, in the radical form of a singularity and a surplus*", with the "disarticulations" of 1989-91, which "*do not propose us anything [...] a sudden and complete change in the situation does not mean in any sense that it has also received the grace of an event [...] whatever changes is not an event, and the surprise, the rapidity, the disorder*

¹ Alain Badiou, *D'un désastre obscur: Droit, Etat, Politique*, Aube 1991 (2nd edition 2012).

² *Ibid.*, p. 26.

*may be nothing but simulated events, not the promise of a truth”.*³

In our view, only an approach based on historical materialist dialectics can bring out the relations and the differences between 1991 and 1917; first of all, by answering the question that all the early and late, bourgeois and “leftist” undertakers of the October Revolution are unable to answer: *What exactly happened in 1917?*

Was it a *local, national, Russian “anomaly”* that was “corrected” after a few tragic decades with the return to global capitalist “normality”? Or was it a ***world Event***, mediated through the particularities of the Russian social-economic formation, a ***break*** of the historical continuity of this alleged “normality” that has prevailed worldwide, and the *beginning of a new, still incomplete, historical epoch of transition?*

Could it be that the current historic systemic crisis of capitalism, and of the whole human culture as well, on a global scale, reveals in a contradictory way that it is impossible to return to a state of humanity before 1917? That the cycle opened by the October Revolution remains open to the present and the future?

The Ten Days that Shook the World, not just one country

No one can seriously doubt that the 1917 Revolution in Russian was interweaved with the *global* developments of the time, the *international* context of World War I, nor can anyone deny its *global* implications, both for the immediate future and the following century. Few, though, even among the self-proclaimed communists, are those who see it today as the beginning of a *global* revolution. It is no accident that the Hungarian Marxist historian Tamás Krausz, in his new, exceptional biography of Lenin that was awarded the Deutscher Memorial Prize 2015,⁴ answers the widely-shared contemporary objections in a chapter, the penultimate of his book, entitled “*World Revolution: Method and Myth*”.⁵

Yet, a hundred years ago, the *annus mirabilis* 1917 was not recognized as the beginning of a global socialist revolution just by Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolsheviks. The *whole world* was shook by the legendary *Ten Days* recorded by the American revolutionary and eyewitness John Reed. The whole of humanity, both repressors and repressed, either electrified or horrified, full of hope or in total panic, were watching and recognizing the revolutionary outburst in Russia as the beginning of a global socialist revolution destined to change the world. And everyone acted accordingly. They formed, all over Europe and on a global scale, two opposing classes

³ *Ibid.*, p. 16-17.

⁴ Tamás Krausz, *Reconstructing Lenin: An intellectual biography*, Monthly Review Press 2016.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 281-309.

in violent and irreconcilable conflict.

Since the European Revolution of 1848, Europe had not witnessed a revolutionary tide of this magnitude, though socially deeper and superior in its dynamic, its expectations and its implications, as in 1917-1921. The social revolution expanded from Russia to Eastern and Central Europe. The **German, Austrian and Hungarian** Revolutions swept the dynasties of the Hohenzollerns and the Hapsburgs in 1918, and in 1919 they were already threatening to overthrow capitalism. Transient **Soviet Republics** were established in **Hungary, Bavaria and Slovakia**. Revolutionary massive and general strikes, with occupations of factories and clashes with the forces of state repression, extended from **Norway to France, Spain and Italy**. Workers' councils – Soviets were formed from **Northern Italy to Scotland**.⁶

In 1919, in **England**, the very metropolis of the then world-ruling British Empire, the revolutionary fire spread out to the coalmines. The revolutionary 19th-century Chartist movement was revived and transcended. The militancy of massive strike actions, the struggle for the Charter of workers' rights and the violence of the conflicts with the state make the subsequent historic British General Strike of 1926 look like a pale reflection.⁷

The very "People's Spring" of 1848 now flickers, as in the new Age inaugurated by the soviets of workers, farmers and soldiers of Russia, the revolution crosses the oceans and embraces all the continents of the planet.

In the autumn of 1918, the "Rice Riots" erupt in Japan, sweeping along 25% of the population and facing the most ferocious repression by the imperial government.⁸ Throughout Asia, from **China and India to Persia, Armenia, Egypt** and the **Arab East**, the suppressed colonized peoples are in turmoil and turn their eyes, hearts and minds to the Bolsheviks and the red flag of liberation that blows in the land of the Soviets.

Across the Atlantic, the **United States of America** are shaken by insurrectional strikes of the American proletarians. Led by the anarcho-syndicalists of the Industrial Workers of World (IWW), the legendary Wobblies, and overcoming the ideological boundaries between anarchism and Marxism, they were singing Joe Hill's song about the power that resides fully in the hands of the workers:

*that's a power; that's a power
that must rule in every land!*

6 Cf. Krausz, *ibid.*, and Leon Trotsky, *The Five First Years of the Communist International*, New Park Publications 1973, p. 226-227, 290-291.

7 See Martyn Ives, *Reform, Revolution and Direct Action among British Miners. The Struggle for the Charter in 1919*, Brill 2016.

8 L. Trotsky, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

The fire of the world revolution also spread to Latin America, where its paramount expressions were the revolutionary General Strike in Sao Paulo, **Brazil**, in 1917, and the epic and tragic week of January 1919 in Buenos Aires, **Argentina**, which was rightly called and written in the History and memory of the working class as *Semana Trágica*. It started with the militant strike of metal workers in the English factory of Vasena; on 7 January, it spread to the port workers of Buenos Aires, and it escalated into a General Strike and an armed proletarian insurrection led by a coalition of anarchists and communists: both allies were savagely massacred by the Argentinian army, the navy and the marines. At the same time, the fascist Argentine Patriotic League sought bloody pogroms in the populous Jewish neighborhoods, where forty Russian-Jewish workers, the assembly of “*the first Soviet of the Federal Republic of Argentine Soviets*”, were arrested.⁹ The panic of the ruling classes spread from South to North America. The American bourgeois press of the time, horrified, wrote in their front pages: *Bolsheviks invade Argentina*.¹⁰

It is noteworthy that both the proletarians, the persecuted worldwide, and the capitalists recognized the *international* dimensions and implications of the 1917 October Revolution as the beginning of a *global* social revolution that posed an immediate threat to the domination of *global* capitalism.

Later, Adolf Hitler, as the Führer of the Third Reich, would constantly remind in his speeches the experience of the international revolutionary wave after 1917 as a “*Jewish conspiracy for global domination*”. According to Adam Tooze, “*Hitler returned incessantly to the revolutions that swept Europe in 1917-19. Anticomunism was a constant of his politics, in close interrelation with a particularly poisonous form of anti-Semitic conspiracy theory*”.¹¹

The myth of “Jewish-Bolshevism” as the instigator of global socialist revolution was used after 1917 by *all* the bourgeoisies. Bourgeois democracies preceded the Nazis in that. The infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which were fabricated by the Tsarist Okhrana, as shown by Dimitris Psarras in his book on the matter, while marginalized by then in Tsarist Russia, were promoted after the October Revolution to all the political-military headquarters of the ruling classes throughout Europe, the United States and all over the world. *Manuscripts of the document were distributed to the participants at the Versailles Peace Conference (!)*, and hundreds of thousands of copies were printed within a few months. In the USA, they were circulated by the secret agencies of the American army. The copies reached Germany in 1919, and it did not take long before the founders of Nazism made them instru-

9 See Julio Godio, *La Semana Trágica de enero de 1919*, Hyspamérica 1985.

10 *The Los Angeles Times*, 11 January 1919.

11 Adam Tooze, *Le salaire de la Destruction. Formation et Ruine de l'économie Nazie*, Les Belles Lettres 2012, p. 626.

mental for their purposes, from 1920 on.¹² In Great Britain, they were published in February 1920 by the official publishing house of the Crown...

The acknowledgment of the global, not national character of the revolutionary process inaugurated by the 1917 Revolution extended well beyond the spokespersons of the bourgeoisie, its propagandists and the ideological apparatuses of mass deception. The universal importance, the historical break and the global turn of what was taking place after October 1917 became also a common truth for the most perceptive and intelligent representatives of capitalist interests.

German bourgeois political leader Gustav Stresemann (Chancellor of the German Republic of Weimar in 1923 and Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1923 to 1929) had explicitly stated his belief that he would probably be the last leader of a bourgeois government in his country.

The leading bourgeois economist of the 20th century, John Maynard Keynes, who attended the Versailles Conference as an advisor for the British delegation, tried (in vain) to convince Winston Churchill that the major international threat for Britain and capitalism was not a defeated Germany but the land of the Soviets, October 1917 and its global expansion. In his work *The Economic Consequences of Peace* (1919), he warned that Bolshevism and the October Revolution pose a threat to the global capitalist order in general.¹³

The whole economic strategy that was eventually to take his name, “Keynesianism”, and become internationalized with the Bretton Woods Agreement in 1944, establishing a sum of provisions for workers and the welfare state, had as its explicit goal to prevent the internationalization of the revolution and, above all, to delay it in the metropolitan centers of capitalism. Keynes was well aware that the economic system he helped survive, with new means of economic policy, was getting old and declining.

Keynes did not share the bourgeois reassurance after containing the first wave of the world revolution; its defeats were due to both objective and subjective reasons that are still discussed, but one major factor was doubtless the counter-revolutionary stance of German and European Social-Democrats, who fell in line with imperialism. The euphoria of capitalists and their “willing” collaborators after the recession of the immediate revolutionary threat, as well as the skepticism of their revolutionary adversaries after the defeats, obfuscated in social consciousness the nature of the era opened by October 1917. The recession of the international revolutionary wave afflicted the isolated and encircled Soviet Union itself, it fostered the bureaucracy that was fed by the wounds of the country, and along with it the doctrine of

12 Dimitris Psarras, *To Best Seller tou Misous: “Ta Protokolla ton Sofon tis Sion” stin Ellada, 1920-2013*, Polis Publications 2013, p. 48-49.

13 See T. Krausz, *op. cit.*, p. 284.

“socialism in one country” – which eventually came to a bitter end in 1991... In a sense, its demise was the price paid for the delay of the global revolution, for the non-fulfillment of the demands born in 1917 by the new Age.

In the camp of the bourgeoisie and British imperialism, Keynes acknowledged that with the October Revolution, and despite its isolation, humanity had entered a different historical era. This is why during the Bretton Woods Conference, where the framework for a long-term capitalist expansion after the war was laid, he made his well-known, pessimistic and cynical statement: “*In the long run we are all dead*”.

As for Stresemann, the bourgeois politician of the Weimar Republic, his aforementioned pessimistic statement was not just an expression of a temporary panic due to the revolutionary crisis in his country. Stresemann had recognized in time that the material-historical foundations of political developments had taken up a **global** character and dynamic. As a young spokesperson for the National Liberal Party, he had stressed in Kaiser’s Reichstag that “*politics today is first of all the politics of global economy*” (our emphasis).¹⁴

This change in the very material-historical foundations of internationalized capitalism, which was perceived by the most acute bourgeois thinkers and politicians as a virtual earthquake, was understood, through Marxist materialist dialectics, by the Marxist revolutionary leaders of the 1917 proletarian revolution as essentially a *change of historical age*. On this basis, against the doctrines of the “orthodox Marxism” of the Second International, they were able to form, within and along with the insurrected masses, an “unorthodox” revolutionary policy that was a conscious expression of the deepest tendencies of the era, and managed to literally shake *fundamentally* the world not just for ten days, but for the next hundred years, until today. October 1917 caused an irremediable breach in the global historical foundations of capitalism itself, making the new age an age of **transition** beyond capitalism.

October must be seen from the standpoint of the epoch, and the epoch must be seen from the standpoint of October.

October 1917 from the standpoint of the epoch

To conceive the nature of the historical age requires us to break with the linear conception of History and the evolutionist “stage theory” of its development. Instead, the “Marxist orthodoxy” of the Second International and Kautsky, Social-Democracy, international and Russian Menshevism, prisoners of mechanistic materialism and economism, were solely interested, as Michael Löwy rightly points out, “*in directly reducing the revolutionary possibility to the economic potential on a national scale*”.¹⁵

¹⁴ Quoted by Adam Tooze, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

¹⁵ Michael Löwy, *The Politics of Combined and Uneven Development: The Theory of*

Thus, we have a double reductionism: the revolutionary possibility is first reduced to the *national* level and then to its *economic* level, which is classified formally according to certain general, abstract (and, ultimately, a-historical and metaphysical) rules of “historical” development that allow for, or preclude, the one or the other social formation.

According to this coarse metaphysics, it is an unacceptable scandal to start a socialist revolution in an economically backward country such as Tsarist Russia. Therefore, in this view, now as then, October 1917 is taken to be an expression of “arbitrary political voluntarism”, contrary to the national-economic requirements of a social revolution, a “Bolshevik coup” that could only survive temporarily through the most extreme absolutism, until its fateful collapse, in 1991.

The suffocating restriction of the revolutionary possibility to the “economic potential on a national level” posits as primary and absolute the *national* particularity and unevenness in relation to international interconnection and interaction. Then, it levels it down and deletes it in the *abstract generality* of a teleological determinism of mechanically separated and consecutive stages of social development. What is lost in this way is concrete universality, the *uneven* and at the same time *combined development* in the *non-linear* course of History.

Unevenness characterizes every level (not just economy, but also social classes, institutions, culture, etc.) and every different pace, non-homogenous time in the historical process. “*National particularities represent an original combination of the basic features of the global process. This original combination can be crucial for revolutionary strategy, for many years. [...] The particularity of a national social type is nothing but the crystallization of the unevenness of its formation*”.¹⁶ Unevenness and particularities do not preclude, rather the contrary, interconnections with their Other, interactions, contradictory relations, transformations to their opposite, complex combinations of heterogeneous multi-pace elements and structural contradictions. “*From this universal law of unevenness follows another law, which, for lack of a more appropriate name, could be called **the law of combined development**, in the sense that different stages come together, separate phases are combined, archaic forms are amalgamated with newer ones*”.¹⁷ The uneven and combined development of the historical process defines and constitutes it as what dialectics calls “*concrete universality*”. According to Hegel’s phrasing, which Lenin found it beautiful and quoted it approvingly in his *Philosophical Notebooks*, concrete universality is “*not merely an abstract universal, but a universal which comprises in itself the wealth of the particular; the*

Permanent Revolution, Haymarket Books 2010, p. 2 (emphasis in the original).

16 Leon Trotsky, *H Diarkis Epanastasi*, Allagi Publications 1982, p. 29-30 [our translation].

17 Leon Trotsky, *Istoria tis Rosikis Epanastasis*, vol. I, Allagi Publications 1984, p. 17 [our translation].

individual, the single".¹⁸

In this dialectical sense, the law of uneven and combined development becomes the basis of the theory of ***Permanent Revolution***, which was elaborated again, after Marx in 1848-50, by Trotsky in 1905-6, in the light of the first Russian Revolution – the “dress rehearsal” of the October Revolution –, at the dawn of the new historical age.

In June 1905, Leon Trotsky wrote the following very perceptive words, as the upcoming Great War, October 1917 and the first wave of world revolution were to show, which remain very much relevant today:

Binding all the countries together through its mode of production and its commerce, capitalism has transformed the whole world into a unitary economic and political organism. Exactly as modern finance binds thousands of enterprises with invisible chains and gives capital an unbelievable mobility, which prevents many small bankruptcies but at the same time becomes the cause of unprecedented, sweeping economic crises, the whole economic and political edifice of capitalism, its global commerce, its system of monstrous sovereign debts and the political groupings of nations that dray all the forces of reaction into a sort of globalized mixed-stock company, have not only resisted particular political crises, but they have also prepared the basis for a social crisis of unprecedented dimensions. By hiding all the processes of the disease behind the surface, by avoiding all difficulties, by putting aside all the deep issues of domestic and international politics and by covering up all contradictions, the bourgeoisie has managed to delay the culmination of the crisis; yet for this very reason, it has prepared the radical demise of its domination on a global scale.¹⁹

The ***world*** character of modern forces of production, which are under the control of imperialist metropolitan centres and gasp within the limits of nation-states and the capitalist relations of production, the ***world*** character of the division of labour, the increasingly tighter and deeper interconnection of economic, political and cultural life – these are the driving forces that give a ***world*** character to the workers’ class struggle and to the anti-imperialist struggle of oppressed peoples, thus making the revolution *permanent*.

“Permanent revolution, in Marx’s sense”, wrote Trotsky, “means a revolution that does not compromise in front of any form of class domination, that does not stop at the democratic stage, that proceeds to socialist measures and the war

18 V. I. Lenin, *Philosophical Notebooks*, Collected Works, vol. 38, Progress 1980, p. 99.

19 Leon Trotsky, *Apotelesmata kai Prooptikes*, in Trotsky-Serge-Radek, *I Rosiki Epanastasi tou 1905*, Leon Publications 2005, p. 128-129 [our translation].

against external reaction – that is, a revolution every consecutive stage of which is rooted in the former one, and can only end with the complete abolition of class society”.²⁰

Then, after pointing out, on the basis of the Russian experience, three aspects of permanent revolution – the transition from the democratic to the socialist tasks of the revolution, the revolution within the revolution after the rise of the working class to power, and its international dimension –, he concludes with one last aspect, which connects and defines them all: “Socialist revolution starts on a national basis, but cannot be complete on this basis. [...] A national revolution is not a self-sufficient whole. It is nothing but a link in the international chain. World revolution is an international process, despite all temporary recessions and low tides”.²¹

Despite all his political conflicts with Trotsky prior to 1917, Lenin never separated the Russian Revolution from the European and international revolution. Already in 1905, he saw the former as the “spark” that would trigger off the latter, from which its own final victory depended.

With the outbreak of the first imperialist world war in 1914 and the political bankruptcy of the Second International that sank into the gutter of social-patriotism, a major qualitative leap takes place in Marxist theoretical thinking – Lenin’s revolutionary politics and internationalist action. With his 1914-5 turn to dialectics and philosophy recorded in his *Philosophical Notebooks*, Lenin breaks on the most fundamental and methodological level with Social-Democracy, schematic “Marxism” and the linear conception of History that dominated the Second International. This break will fuel his path-breaking analyses about imperialism and the nature of the age of imperialism, the crucial strategic and programmatic turn of his *April Theses*, the tactically flexible yet strategically consistent orientation through the tides of the struggle for Soviet power, his unfinished libertarian-Marxist work on the *State and Revolution* – a virtual legacy for the future.

The core of Lenin’s thought and practice was his analysis of imperialism as “*the highest stage of capitalism*”²², the final stage of the economic development of capitalism that “*rots*” in its historical *decay* and *parasitism*. Most essential in Lenin’s analysis, against the liberal apologists of capitalism and theoreticians of Social-Democracy such as Kautsky, is his definition of imperialism not as a policy but as an *epoch*, the epoch *of capitalist decline*, and thus as a historical epoch of *transition*

²⁰ Trotsky, *I Diarkis Epanastasi*, *op. cit.*, p. 14 [our translation].

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16 [our translation].

²² See V. I. Lenin, *I imperialismos, anotato stadio tou kapitalismou*, Apanta, vol. 27, 5th ed., Synchroni Epochi Publications 1977; and V. I. Lenin, *Tetradia gia ton imperialismo*, Apanta, vol. 28, 5th ed., Synchroni Epochi Publications 1977.

beyond capitalism, to world communism.²³

The driving forces of this epoch of transition, its contradictions, form the historical material basis and drive the *world socialist revolution*. Not, to be sure, as a momentary concurrent subversion, a single episode, but as a permanent process that unfolds on an international level in a combined and uneven way, with different paces and forms in different countries and places, with high and low tides, through zigzags, leaps and regressions during a whole historical age, until its global predominance.

As T. Krausz points out: “*the international organization of capital cannot be contested or broken down on the national level, on the divergent tracks of the national workers’ movements – a realization Marx and Lenin had in common. [...] Lenin could never give up the hypothesis that the revolution had an international character, which is how the world war would signify the beginning of world revolution*”.²⁴

This was also the bottom-line of Lenin’s practical internationalism during the Great War, his revolutionary defeatist policy for the “*transformation of imperialist war into a civil war*” of the repressed against their repressors.

As Alexander Rabinovitch writes in his important book *The Bolsheviks Take Over Power*: “Lenin differed sharply from most of his comrades in that he rejected any support of the war effort and he put forward as an immediate slogan for the social-democrats to seek a social revolution in all the countries at war. Later he elaborated a bold theory – which was not welcomed at first – in order to show that with the outbreak of the war the capitalist system had reached the highest stage of its development, ‘imperialism’, a crucial stage of international economic situation, which, according to him, would necessarily bring an international socialist revolution”.²⁵

This is why, when the revolution broke out in Russia, as he was leaving Switzerland to return to his country, Lenin, in his Farewell Letter to the Swiss Workers,²⁶ underlined that the slogan to turn the imperialist war into a civil war had been confirmed by the facts, concluding with the phrase: “*Long live the proletarian revolution that is beginning in Europe!*”

23 Cf. Savas Michael-Matsas, *A Hundred Years after the 1917 October Revolution: Imperialism, War, and Revolution Today*, Critique, vol. 44, No 4, p. 419-434.

24 T. Krausz, *op. cit.*, p. 284.

25 Alexander Rabinowitch, *Les Bolcheviks prennent le pouvoir. La révolution de 1917 à Petrograd*, La Fabrique 2016, p. 27-28.

26 V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, Progress 1964, pp. 367-374.

As is well known, in his first speech at an overcrowded assembly of the representatives of the Soviets in Smolny, right after the takeover of the Winter Palace, on 25 October (7 November) 1917, Lenin also concluded shouting: “*Long live the world socialist revolution!*”

The epoch from the standpoint of October 1917

Besides frightened bourgeois, Social-Democrats, along with the pope of “Marxist orthodoxy”, Karl Kautsky, also protested in horror: a socialist revolution was not possible in an economically backward Russia, with such weak forces of production, especially before a similar event had taken place in the developed countries of the West, “as ought to happen”. Even in the revolutionary milieu, it is well known that in one of his early texts Antonio Gramsci wrote that the October Revolution “*prevailed against Marx’s Capital*”...

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The October Revolution is the greatest confirmation in social praxis of the theoretical analyses, the historical prognosis, the new horizon opened for repressed and struggling humanity by Marx’s work – and, in particular, his *magnum opus*, unfinished as it had been, *Capital*, to which he devoted his endless efforts for most of his life; “*the greatest missile ever launched against capitalists and landowners*”, as he himself once proudly said, with good reason.

For what else is this work if not a theoretically justified critique and a dialectical demonstration of the *transitional* nature and therefore the historically *temporary* character of capitalism,²⁷ the limits of its “historical mission”,²⁸ the prospect of an “*expropriation of the expropriators*”?²⁹

Already in the preparatory notes for *Capital*, the Manuscripts of 1857-9, also known as *Grundrisse*, Marx points out and underlines the “**universalizing tendency**” towards infinite development and globalization born out of the capitalist mode of production, which separates it from all the former modes of production. It is this defining tendency that urges it “towards the universal development of the forces of production, and thus becomes the presupposition of a new mode of production [...]. This tendency – which capital possesses, but which at the same time, since capital is a limited form of production, contradicts it and hence drives it towards **dissolution** – distinguishes capital from all earlier modes of production, and at the same time contains this element, that capital is posited as a mere point of **transition**” (our emphasis).³⁰

27 Cf. the Epilogue in the 2nd German Edition of *Capital*, volume I.

28 Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. III, Progress 1977, p. 266 and 441.

29 *Capital*, vol. I, Progress 1986, p. 715.

30 Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, Pelican 1973, p. 540.

The universalizing tendency gave the forces of production and the division of labour their global character already by the late 19th- or early 20th-century, thus heightening to the extreme the concomitant tendency of dissolution far beyond the limits of a periodical crisis of capital. It led to an outbreak of global contradictions, to an unprecedented historical-structural crisis, to the first global imperialist war; and so, the international imperialist chain broke at its weakest link, Russia, and, thanks to the Bolshevik intervention led by Lenin and Trotsky, the result was the Soviet Revolution of October 1917.

The **world** contradictions that led to the Revolution, the historical material conditions that came together on an **international** scale and caused the particular Russian social-economic formation to break; at the last instance, the deeper tendencies and requirements of the **world** social productive forces, and not whatever level they had reached in Russia, is the determining factor that made the October Revolution the beginning of a **world** revolution, not simply a subversion on a national scale, a Russian “accident” that, allegedly, left the “normality” of world History intact.

In this sense, the conditions for the revolution were *mature*. October 1917 was not a “*premature*” revolutionary attempt, as old and new Mensheviks claim, nor was it an arbitrary “Bolshevik coup”. Even the term put forth by some Marxists, “*early* socialist revolution”, may disorient us in the direction of the national-reformist premises adopted by classical Social-Democracy or the Stalinist doctrine of “socialism in one country”. An early revolution may be said to be, e.g., the Peasants’ War led by Thomas Münzer in the 16th century, because its social material conditions for the attainment of its communist goals were still nascent and unformed. More than three centuries later, Engels, in analyzing the revolutionary war waged by Münzer’s landless peasants in order to extract the lessons of the 1848 revolution in Germany and Europe, talked about the prospect of a resurgent Peasants’ War combined with the proletarian revolution. Such a combination, which proved impossible in the mid-19th century, at the heyday of capitalism, came true in the age of capitalist decay, in the 20th century, starting from Russia in 1917. The crucial factor that made it possible was not primarily the conditions of Tsarist semi-Asian barbarism, but the global crisis conditions of a mature, globalized and, by then, decayed capitalism.

The contradiction between the **world** character of modern productive forces under imperialist control and the **national** character of a socialist building that started from an economically weak country could be solved in the end only with the international expansion and deepening of socialist revolution and its victory in the capitalist metropolitan centers of global economy. In the short and long term, there was the possibility and the need to take measures that would strengthen and protect the transitional transformations against the pressures of imperialism and the general tendencies of capitalism, both domestic and external. Bureaucracy became

an obstacle to these short- and longer-term measures (especially when the Soviet transition economy had to pass from the extensive to the intensive phase of its growth), as well as to the expansion of international revolution, which was sacrificed for the purposes of national-state interests and a “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism. Yet sooner or later, the question *Who whom?* could only be judged at the international arena of conflict between the living social forces of revolution and counter-revolution.

The unresolved contradiction between the global and the national was to lead to the collapses of 1989-91. But what also remained unresolved was the global contradictions that had broken out a hundred years earlier and were reproduced on an increasingly wider and more destructive scale during the previous century. And in the first decade of the 21st century, the culmination of capitalist globalization was followed by the greatest and unsolvable crisis, the full impact of which has yet to be perceived.

Now we can see clearer and answer the question about the difference between 1917 and 1991 asked by Alain Badiou shortly after the demise of the Soviet Union, the question that has been our starting point in this text.

October 1917 was a world historical Event because it opened an entirely new epoch for humanity. It was the unexpected firstborn child of this epoch, and at the same time the practical evidence for the nature of the age. It was the historical demonstration that the epoch of the conflicting tendencies of universality and systemic dissolution foreseen by Marx in *Grundrisse* and *Capital*, ***the epoch of transition***, had ***begun***.

1991 was not an Event, but a “simulated Event”, in Badiou’s terms, ***because it did not open any new age for humanity***. On the contrary, it was a promise for an impossible regression of the whole of humanity before the landmark of 1917, to an unthinkable backwardness, to a deeply decayed system that confronts the permanent revolution of a new People’s Spring with a permanent decline, the kitsch mausoleum of the Trump Tower.

The cycle has not closed; it is always open, and it proceeds as a spiral. We live in the epoch of October. And the task of every communist revolutionary remains unfulfilled: **to make the October Revolution permanent in the 21st century!**

1st February 2017

The State and Revolution

Tamás Krausz

The impact of the book and its historical context

*The State and Revolution*¹ is perhaps the most influential, most read, and most highly valued work by Lenin to date.² The significance of the barely over a hundred-page pamphlet is unquestioned even by those of Lenin's biographers and analysts of his legacy who look upon it, from a theoretical point of view, as an insignificant hack job.³ Moreover, for some reason not even those who gave it an ahistorical

1 The credible history of the book is summarized by the best biographer of Lenin, Vladlen Loginov: "Sziniaya tetrad", in *Oktjabr 1917: Vizovi dlja XXI veka*, Moskva, URSS, edit: A.A. Sorokin, 2008. pp. 190-211.

2 This was Louis Fischer's opinion in the late 1960s in his cited volume, *The Life of Lenin*, p. 113.

3 There are those authors who profess that the main aim even of this work by Lenin, written in deep illegality, is some sort of personal ambition for power. "Among Lenin's main goals as a Marxist, was to prove the correctness of his own ideology." This statement holds that considerations of wielding power was the driving force behind the writing of this book as well. See Service,

examination, marking it off as some sort of specialized work, or a work that “had not been validated by history, and therefore held no interest,” could bypass it. To the contrary, passionately, or “professionally” they argued, and continue to argue with it mostly irrespective of the fact that the fundamental subject of the work and its field of interest covers the intersection of state and class relations in Marxist theory. In 1970s the significance of *The State and Revolution* could not be disputed in that its author had “unearthed, partly on his own and partly in the footsteps of other Marxist scholars, forgotten ideas of Marx” in order to theoretically better capture the outlooks of the socialist revolution. Virtually the same finding was made by Bukharin, who was earlier criticized in this very field by Lenin, in a lecture he gave on communism in the beginning of the 1920s.⁴ The twentieth century saw whole political movements built worldwide upon this unfinished work by Lenin. He paid close attention to the fate of his work after the October Revolution.

Not only communists read the volume almost like a bible (until Stalin slapped it out of their hands on the grounds of his statist conviction) however, but anti-statist, anti-capitalist parties and movements at large thought it merited in-depth study. This, primarily on account that it sketched an attractive socialist future, which brought high social-communal values into the sphere of politics. Obviously there must be a “secret” to the little book’s success if its historical influence goes far beyond any other work of the same field, though the others may have been better worked out, more matured. The book is easy to read, with a clear exposition of its logic, and it covers the requirements of a scientific-theoretical exposition just as well as that of a political pamphlet. It is a passionate work fully in the spirit of the struggle that is both a call for the implementation of the proletarian revolution and a classical summary of the aims of the fundamental aims of the revolution.

The significance of the book in world history is that—in more senses than one—it became **the philosophy of the October Revolution**. On the one hand, the revolution is presented through its component immediate objective (seizing power) and end goal (voluntary association of free communities) at once, with political revolution shown as the initial momentum in social revolution; on the other, though “**predating the revolution**,” its perspective became an integral part of the authoritative critical theory with which later developments were approached, also later becoming vulgarized in the utopist fashion, especially in the Marxist-Leninist pro-

2:216–17.

4 In this lecture of Bukharin—an excellent student of Lenin by that time—while discussing the issue of the state acknowledged the historical role of Lenin, saying that “he was the first who conducted archeological explorations into Marx’s theories, cleansing them from the layers of dirt left on them by their interpreters and commentators, such as Kautsky and Plekhanov.” *Lektsiya N. Buharina: Razvitije kommunizma ot Marksza do Lenina*, RGASZPI f. 329, op. 1. dok. 40. 2–3.

paganda publications during the period of state socialism. And then, decades later, in the dominant ideological “narrative” of the anti-utopist world of regime-change, this work of Lenin’s came to be sublimated in the guise of the pipe smoke–clouded dreams of a doctrinaire fantasm, which all “serious” intellectual trends were (and are) expected to ridicule. Two main tendencies can be observed even among the more notable analyses. One of the interpretations understood it as an intrinsically coherent and consistent theoretical work (Neil Harding, Kevin Anderson), grounded in libertarian ideals and principles, and the other main approach takes in the historical circumstances and consequences following from the revolution and historicizes these as if *The State and Revolution* had been the intellectual inspiration behind and expressions of an authoritarian turn and development (A. J. Polan and, less rigorously, Robert Service, who implicitly assumes the authoritarian message of this work by Lenin).⁵

Of all Lenin’s books, *The State and Revolution* has had the most interesting afterlife. The Marxist flank, and actually almost every system-critical and anti-capitalist movement has used it as its own, for the text could be applied in opposition to both capitalist and Stalinist conceptualizations of the state, inasmuch as the Marxist end goal of the state’s demise was (and is) a stated aim of the Russian Revolution itself, and the universal socialist revolution as well. The idea of transposing *The State and Revolution* into a different historical context had already surfaced in the last phase of the period of state socialism, especially in the Weberian, liberal analysis, with the aim of setting up the book as the historical precursor to the Stalinist period and the Stalinist interpretation. The conclusion to this line of thought was that the Soviet state and its institutions were crystallized as an embodiment of this work by Lenin, as the ideological underpinning of the communist monopoly on power. This is how Lenin’s text became “an active agent and component in the realization of the coming future,” in other words a causal relationship between the Leninian work and the development that followed the revolution, that is, the Stalinian praxis, the Gulag, came to be posited. This position sets out to eliminate the difference between the “autocratic” Lenin of *What Is To Be Done?* and the “libertarian” Lenin of *The State and Revolution*, with proof to the effect that the same “authoritarian” philosophy and politics are at the heart of both.⁶ Of course, later Marxist criticism showed the ahistorical and “presentist” ideological traits that characterize the approach

5 On the one hand, see Neil Harding, *Lenin’s Political Thought*, vol. 2; Kevin Anderson, *Lenin, Hegel and Western Marxism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995); on the other hand, see A. J. Polan, *Lenin and the End of Politics* (London: Methuen, 1984); and R. Service, *Lenin*, vol. 3, 379–80. This latter critique, with no minor distortion of facts “contextualized” *The State and Revolution* on the basis of Kautsky’s (*The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*) and Martov’s writings of 1918–19, and essentially presented as a literary justification of the evolving civil war and terror.

6 A. J. Polan, *Lenin and the End of Politics*, p. 49.

Polan subscribes to, and also demonstrated that the Weberian analysis accounts for the “unification of the executive powers and legislative powers in labor associations” as an authoritarian concept, because it paves the way for theoretical and political critiques of bourgeois democracy. For this thesis is where any liquidation of independent bureaucratic structures starts out and ends if it seeks to transcend the confines of either bourgeois democracy, or any kind of dictatorial handling of power.⁷ Since *The State and Revolution* speaks plainly, it frankly declares its party alliance and class-commitment, a fact that sent shudders down the spine of scientific officialdom even then. This finds expression in an oft-quoted formulation of Lenin’s regarding the essence of politics:

People always have been the foolish victims of deception and self-deception in politics, and they always will be until they have learned to seek out the *interests* of some class or other behind all moral, religious, political and social phrases, declarations and promises.⁸

Neither Marx’s approach nor Lenin’s, constructed upon it, are—as opposed to the Weberian reading—normative theories, and neither are independent of historical circumstance and conditions. Read adequately, according to *The State and Revolution* Lenin never thought that socialism, “self-governing labor democracy, commune democracy, could be easily introduced in Russia”; in his interpretation this was a task for a whole epoch. Moreover, this work, seen in purely philosophical terms was, in particular, not about the subordination of society to the state; to the contrary, it “subordinates” the state to society. This is in no way altered either by what happened in Russia after October 1917, or how it is evaluated. The following comment is right: “Clearly, Lenin did not fully address the issue of the state/civil society relation. . . . Both Lukács and Gramsci were inspired by the idea of Soviets as overcoming the state/civil society distinction, inscribed in liberal democracy, which separated the public from the private realm, the political from the economic.”⁹ The doubling of “private” and “political” is natural to bourgeois thinking; after all, its source and grounds are the market, the relations of capital. This is the problem Lenin raised in theoretical and practical terms.

The “demise of the state” as a political and theoretical problem always came up in the tradition of Marxist thought as the process of “eliminating class.” Lenin himself registered at the outbreak of the war, that in comparison with previous

7 An apt critical analysis by Jules Townshend, “Lenin’s *The State and Revolution*: An Innocent Reading,” *Science and Society* 63/1 (1999): 63–82.

8 Lenin, *The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism*, LCW, vol. 19, pp. 21–28.

9 Townshend, p. 72.

epochs of history the role of the *state* had grown in almost every sphere of social life throughout the capitalist world-system, but especially at its core. In this phase of growing regulatory bureaucratic complexity, Lenin postulated that the proletariat could replace the bureaucratic system with its own, pro-active apparatus organized from the bottom up. On the other hand, his image of the replacement of this “monster,” this “colossus of a state,” with the “workers’ state” had such facility and ease that it seems to have presumed that the crisis of power in the Russian system was typical of the whole world.

He was absolutely clear – opposite to old falsifications - that “every cook,” as mentioned in *State and Power*, cannot get on right away with the complex work of leading the state, but may nevertheless get on with its preparation:

We are not utopians. We know that an unskilled labourer or a cook cannot immediately get on with the job of state administration. In this we agree with the Cadets.... We differ, however, from these citizens in that we demand an immediate break with the prejudiced view that only the rich, or officials chosen from rich families, are capable of *administering* the state.

On the basis of the landlords having been able to direct their own state—for after the first revolution Russia was governed by 130.000 landlords—he argued, what is there to indicate that

240.000 members of the Bolshevik Party will not be able to govern Russia, govern her in the interests of the poor and against the rich.... In addition to that we have a “magic way” to enlarge our state apparatus *tenfold* at once, at one stroke, a way which no capitalist state ever possessed or could possess. This magic way is to draw the working people, to draw the poor, into the daily work of state administration.¹⁰

Anti-utopist utopia?

This “utopistic work” (dubbed as such by the moderate leftist ideologists of “modernity” who emerged out of the 1989 regime change in Eastern Europe)¹¹ set out as a reconstruction of Marx and Engels’ thought, which built its “image of the future” on a critique of the *Gotha Program*, the program of the German Social Democratic Party. In line with Marxist tradition, Lenin conceived the message of this work not particularly in a utopist vein. Indeed, he raised the question:

¹⁰ LCW, vol. 26, pp. 111–13.

¹¹ See for example, József Bayer, *A politikai gondolkodás története* [The history of political thought] (Budapest: Osiris, 1998), p. 321.

On the basis of what *facts*, then, can the question of the future development of future communism be dealt with? On the basis of the fact that it *has its origin* in capitalism, that it develops historically from capitalism, that it is the result of the action of a social force to which capitalism *gave birth*. There is no trace of an attempt on Marx's part to make up a utopia, to indulge in idle guesswork about what cannot be known.¹²

As Lenin thought of it, even the Paris Commune was “not a state in the sense of the actual meaning of the word.” The state in demise (*commune*), which comes into being during the period of the revolution, was presented as a fundamental institution of the *political period of transition* or *dictatorship of the proletariat*, which would, in principle, create the conditions for socialism. In the theoretical (three-step) groundwork, socialism was shown as the first phase of communism, and then communism itself shown as the *possible* end result of a long historical course of development. All state oppression would cease within the framework of socialism, but the civilized human race would only turn completely and finally into a “community of associated producers” in communism.¹³ Lenin reached these conclusions after a survey of the different economic fundamentals of the state and the state in demise, and the disparate producer-proprietor relations underlying them.

Critical commentary to this work by Lenin claiming it is “naïve” is of course not completely unfounded. Lenin recognized, or thought he recognized “primitive democracy” (Bernstein's concept), the early forms of direct democracy, as “an element of capitalism and capitalist culture.” He referred not only to the high level at which the socialization of production stood, but also to the workers' old tradition of organizing their community. Factually he was right, but it seems nevertheless that he overestimated the cultural experiences of the community already accumulated under the capitalist system to be defeated. The communal tradition of the *obshchina* was by then decaying, and he had studied the conditions of its coming into being in his earlier years. Large-scale industry, the postal service and other institutions of capitalist organization appeared to him as perfect initial vehicles for “commune democracy,” “soviet democracy,” and “labor democracy” under the hierarchical relations whose survival is unavoidable in the *transitional phase*. (No need to dwell on how greatly the authoritarian, autocratic traditions in Russia amplified this hierarchy.)

Sources

Marx saw a faint chance for the Russian village communities (the *obshchina*)

¹² LCW, vol. 25, p. 458.

¹³ Ibid., p. 457.

becoming a starting point for socialism, the first generation of Russian Marxists with Plekhanov at the helm related to the revolution as scholar theoreticians and did not perceive it as an immediate practical task, also convinced that the village communities were in the final state of dissolution and could not possibly fulfill any positive historical role. Their predecessors, the so-called revolutionary democrats—such as Herzen, Chernishevsky, or Dobrolyubov, not to speak of the Russian Jacobinists, Tkachov and Nechayev, or Russian Blanquism—had linked their own “peasant socialism” directly with the practical necessity of the revolution, under which they meant an idea of toppling the autocratic regime through a coup d’état that grasps the reins of power based on a minority group of revolutionaries.

The experience of 1905: The soviets

I may be wrong – he wrote -, but I believe (on the strength of the incomplete and only “paper” information at my disposal) that politically the Soviet of Workers’ Deputies should be regarded as the embryo of a *provisional revolutionary government*.¹⁴

In other words, he saw this people’s organization as a national political center comprising the whole of society, with its inclusion of others, and not only social democrats being its “advantage, rather than disadvantage.” In the soviets he saw evidence to the effect that the social democrats do not want to force any experimental principles upon Russia, and leave the direction of the country firmly in the hands of the popular alliances.¹⁵

Somewhat later Lenin thought about the role of the soviets as follows:

In the fire of battle, a peculiar mass organisation was formed, the famous *Soviets of Workers’ Deputies*, comprising delegates from all factories. In several cities these *Soviets of Workers’ Deputies* began more and more to play the part of a provisional revolutionary government, the part of organs and leaders of the uprising.¹⁶

14 Ibid., p. 21.

15 Ibid., pp. 26–27.

16 LCW, vol. 23, p. 248. In an article of 4 July 1906, Lenin entered into polemics with the ex-chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, Khrustalev-Nosar, who had been arrested and then exiled, arguing that the establishment of new soviets was not timely. When the revolution is on the defensive, it would be a mistake to risk the labor organizations, the “vanguard,” and expose them to the despotism of the power. Agreeing with Nosar, who wrote, “The Soviet was the revolutionary parliament of the revolutionary proletariat,” he made the establishment of soviets conditional upon specific conditions in politics and the movement. See LCW, vol. 11, pp. 90–93.

The labor self-government—Lenin emphasized many times during the years of 1905–1906—cannot exist in the framework of the old system, and pointed out for those who were naïve about this.¹⁷

The philosophy of the October revolution, or a critical appraisal of the modern state and parliamentarism

One of the cornerstones of Lenin's theory of revolution, as with Marx, was the first phase of the social revolution, the *overthrow* and liquidation of an institution of thousands of years of standing, the *political state*. The question of the state as a "central issue of every revolution" occupied Lenin since his student years. This approach had already engrained itself in pre-Marxist Russian revolutionary thought, taking a variety of historical shapes (foremost among them the Bakuninists and other anarchists).¹⁸ Lenin however, emphasized the *class characteristic, social* and universal bearings and traits of revolution from the start, confronting the "peasant" and "nationalist" utopias.

Even at the time of the war, when speaking of the system, Lenin drew attention to the circumstance that capitalism inevitably and continuously conflicts with democracy, which extends between legal equality and social-economic inequality. The system of capital tries to resolve this contradiction with the all-pervasive web of traits that typify "corruption" and "bribery."¹⁹

The basic difference between imperialism and pre-monopolist capitalism in the way Lenin's view was constructed was that in imperialism "the power of the stock exchange increases," as the greater banks merge with the stock exchange and swallow it whole, and thereby capital draws the sphere of politics under its supervision as if it were another item of sale, some sort of market phenomenon. Lenin was of course aware that the prostitution and corruption of bourgeois democracy was regulated by law, and thus not unbounded. At the same time, however, he stressed that these processes of legalized corruption on the scale of all of society are rooted in wealth, because *wealth* "is fully capable of achieving domination over any de-

17 "The Zemstvo Congress," *Proletary*, No. 19, October 3 (September 20), 1905; LCW, vol. 9, p. 306.

18 One kind of anarchism, the one most worked out in terms of theory, which may be tied to Kropotkin's name, could not gain an influence in respect of the social democratic labor movement involved in the class struggle—and even less so with Lenin—primarily because of its moral orientation. Kropotkin counterposed "mutual assistance" with "mutual struggle," and left politics, as a relatively amoral field of action, out of consideration, as in his opinion the "inclination," the moral necessity for solidarity and association that had developed among laborers, only takes shape in "civil" organizations. See P. Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, ed. with an Introduction by Paul Avrich (New York: New York University Press, 1972), pp. 246–51.

19 LCW, vol. 23, pp. 45–46.

mocratic republic by bribery and through the stock exchange ... that is, politically independent, republic” as well. Therefore Lenin’s main thought in the field notes bourgeois democracy is not freedom, but “the freedom of purchase.” In September 1917 he formulated the problem as follows:

The capitalists (followed, either from stupidity or from inertia, by many S.R.s and Mensheviks) call “freedom of the press” a situation in which censorship has been abolished and all parties freely publish all kinds of papers. In reality it is not freedom of the press, but freedom for the rich, for the bourgeoisie, to deceive the oppressed and exploited mass of the people.²⁰

Bourgeois Parliamentarism holds, in this sense, only a “historical interest” of specialized scientific bearing for Lenin, but does not have a future. The emperor has no clothes.

Therefore in his interpretation “parliamentary rule” is only the battle of competing power cliques for the “spoils” (jobs, economic positions, etc.). The system is above calling it into question in legal and political terms. For this reason too the bourgeois democracies are also—and emphatically—dictatorships according to Lenin’s theory, and this, one of their particulars, cannot be corrected without revolution, and the “demolition of the bureaucratic-military state machine.”

Representative institutions remain, but there is *no* parliamentarism here as a special system, as the division of labor between the legislative and the executive, as a privileged position for the deputies.²¹

In the revolutionary program, or “philosophy” of liquidating the state as political entity, the elimination of the “parasitical state” was an important argument as a political precondition of the “economic liberation of labor.” Therefore where Lenin is concerned, state and freedom came to be interpreted as diametrically opposed notions.

From the perspective of the revolution this thin volume essentially set out, in methodological and political terms, to do away with the “opporTunusiatic illusions” bound up with Parliamentarism, and with Bernsteinian revisionism, as well as the utopist, anarchist approach, all at the same time. Lenin saw social democracy as the kind of plastic notion held by Engels, who noted in 1894, with regard to his articles from the 1870s, that he “used the term ‘communist’ instead of ‘social democrat’ in every article, since even the Lasalleans were calling themselves social democrats at

20 See “How to Guarantee the Success of the Constituent Assembly—On Freedom of the Press,” *Rabochy Put*, No. 11, September 28 (15), 1917; LCW, vol. 25, pp. 375–76; 377–78.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 424.

the time.” In contrast to the bourgeois conception of the state representative of the age, Lenin’s approach did not treat it merely in its sociopolitical or formally legal sense. He often alluded to the fact that the apologists of the state leave the “financial,” “all-capitalist,” “all-landowner”, that is, the economic function of the state hidden, but no one in the revolutionary camp apart from the anarchists—not even the peasant wing of the S.R.s, for example—understood that to fight the state was in itself wholly unproductive, unless its economic base was also liquidated.

Lenin arrived at a common position with the anarchists on the revolution as “happening,” as a question of “political and theoretical necessity.” Nonetheless, he called the anarchist thesis demanding the “total and final destruction” of the state the annihilation of the revolution’s defenses in the subchapter dedicated to disclosing the twists in anarchist reasoning.²² With reference to Engels he emphasized that with the disappearance of the political, state authority and subordination will not cease immediately. After all, if you “take a factory, a railway, a ship on the high seas, said Engels, is it not clear that not one of these complex technical establishments, based on the use of machinery and the systematic co-operation of many people, could function without a certain amount of subordination and, consequently, without a certain amount of authority or power?”²³ Lenin shared Engels’ difficulty with the anarchists, that they “want to abolish the state completely overnight.”²⁴

So Lenin outlined a sort of *tertium datur* between the reformist social democrats and anarchism based on Marx and Engels, in the way he connected the question of revolution and state. A highly significant political understanding that Lenin came to, noted in other contexts earlier, was that the Russian bourgeoisie and the “quavering,” weak middle class in general could not stabilize either the old “semi-parliamentary” system (with, or without the tsar), or the bourgeois democratic system. In his view, these attempts at stabilization opened the path to counterrevolutionary dictatorships if the revolutionary solution is set off, or suffers defeat.

The fact that Lenin wrote this work of his after he went underground, following the order of arrest issued against him by the Provisional Government after the “July

22 Ibid., p. 437. He argues elsewhere with the anarchists along the following lines: “There is no trace of utopianism in Marx, in the sense that he made up or invented a ‘new’ society.... He ‘learned’ from the Commune.... Abolishing the bureaucracy at once, everywhere and completely, is out of the question. It is a utopia.... We are not utopians, we do not ‘dream’ of dispensing at once with all administration, with all subordination. These anarchist dreams, based upon incomprehension of the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship, are totally alien to Marxism, and, as a matter of fact, serve only to postpone the socialist revolution until people are different.” Ibid., pp. 425–26.

23 Ibid., pp. 436–37. Lenin commented on Engels’ critical opinion of the anarchists as expressed in his article *On Authority*. The anarchists “demand that the political state be abolished at one stroke, even before the social relations that gave birth to it have been destroyed.” MECW, vol. 22, pp. 422–25.

24 LCW, vol. 25, p. 484.

days,” had symbolic significance. Hardly had bourgeois democracy taken shape than it was already in crisis. It is no surprise, then, that the question that preoccupied Lenin in his cottage in Razliv was with which institutional system should the revolutionary class “replace the destroyed state apparatus,” which lay in ruins across Russia. For this reason he did not bring the Russian model, the soviet, into relief, but the “prototype” instead, the Paris Commune, which could raise the end-goal of proletarian revolution in practice. The fundamental aim and subject of the new, “commune-type” *self-government* as an economic and community organization was to eliminate, in the final run, the *economic and social inequalities*.

It is not coincidental that the word *party* does not appear as a concept in *The State and Revolution*. This circumstance is often explained unclearly, though it is quite simple. For Lenin, classes and parties no longer exist in the theoretically outlined, self-governing socialism. It is quite unscientific to state, on the grounds of the Kautsky volume, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat* written in 1918, and various arguments raised by Martov in his later writings that Lenin’s *The State and Revolution* was criticized for introducing the one-party system in its own time. These prejudiced criticisms are directed at the realities of post-1917 Soviet Russia, drawing up arguments against it, and projecting the newly formed situation back onto Lenin’s earlier work, as if he had already been for the one-party system in 1917.²⁵ Lenin’s reasoning naturally changed, or came to be modified on numerous points in the spheres of both politics and theory over the years, but to smuggle the one-party system into *The State and Revolution* is the falsification of history, or a complete misunderstanding of things as they stood. Both in principle and practice, it is a fact that the October Revolution repositioned the soviet as a practical alternative to parliamentarism, even if by 1918 the soviet, as an organ of labor self-government, had begun to infiltrate the structures of central power, and the new hierarchy gradually developed and defined by it. Incidentally, the one-party system was not legally introduced, but if so, it was done by way of the 1977 constitution under Brezhnev, which declared the soviet system a *one-party system* for the first time. In Lenin’s day, political parties were generally persecuted on an administrative basis, taking either the war or counterrevolutionary actions as their grounds, but they were not legally banned under constitutional law. What was *effectively* a fully formed one-party system by 1921 took the legally never legitimated “official” stance also represented by Lenin that the *soviet dictatorship*, the “dictatorship of the majority (dictatorship of the proletariat) vis-à-vis the minority” was politically legitimated by the revolution itself. The contradictions were soon to make themselves felt.

²⁵ An example of such projection to the earlier period can also be found in Robert Service, *Lenin: A Biography*, p. 195.

Revolution and state: The functional alternative

From state to revolution

The February Revolution does not have an independent history, in that developments in Russia did not branch out on a bourgeois democratic course.²⁶ Even so, there was indeed an onslaught of bloodshed at its outbreak—in contrast, by the way, to the revolutionary events of October in St. Petersburg—with continuous political crisis in which the “July days,” which sent the Bolshevik Party underground, provided a turning point. But how does *The State and Revolution* enter the picture as the inciter of violence? This is simply a case—detailed above in a different context—of designs to reposition this work by Lenin from the independent-minded “libertarian interpretation” into the “authoritarian narrative.”²⁷ In a row of essays and lectures, Eric Hobsbawm shows profound wit in refuting those writers who unfold the actions and consideration of Lenin and the Bolsheviks not from the given historical alternatives, but from their own, current political views, as they derive history from the self-generated movement of ideologies. This sort of new presentism brings the usual distortion into play, pretending as of this day that the events and crossroads of the revolution had been entirely foreseeable, and only veered off in another, “wrong” direction by the will of Lenin.²⁸ Another frequent approach taken to presenting *The State and Revolution* as a book based on authoritarian principles is that certain inconsistencies of Lenin’s use of concepts are not taken into account.

In 1917, a modification in his understanding of the inner development of the phases of the Russian Revolution did take place. His idea that the bourgeois and socialist “stages” of the revolution grow separate in the course of development did not, and could not, prove true.

The modern industrial laborers in Moscow and St. Petersburg were the product

26 Recent historiography leans towards the interpretation—suggesting a number of reasons for each point of view—that the February Revolution signaled the beginning of a new revolutionary **process**, a process that could not be halted “artificially.” See, for example, C. Hashegava, “Fevralskaya revolyuciya: kontsensensus s issledovateley?” and V. P. Buldakov, “Istoki i posledstviya soldatskogo bunta: k voprosu o psikhologii ‘cheloveka s ruzhyom’,” both in *1917 god v sudbah Rossii i mira. Fevralskaya revolyutsiya: Ot novih istochnikov ko novomu osmysleniyu*, ed. P. V. Volobuyev (Moscow: RAN, 1997), pp. 107–8; 208–17. The editor found both studies “at fault” in exaggerating the “military aspect.” Modern literature on Lenin is also sensitive to the fact that a unified process is in question here. *The State and Revolution* documents how Lenin gave up his earlier concept of a “multiple phased” revolution due to this process. See Statkis Kouvelakis, “Lenin as Reader of Hegel: Hypotheses for a Reading of Lenin’s Notebooks on Hegel’s The Science of Logic,” in *Lenin Reloaded*, p. 195.

27 Service, *Lenin: A Biography*, pp. 197–98.

28 See Eric John Hobsbawm, “Looking Forward: History and the Future,” and “Can we write the history of the Russian Revolution?” in Hobsbawm, *On History*, pp. 37–55, 241–52.

of the coexistence of modern and archaic conditions, having preserved numerous elements of their past in the village community where in so far as their origins, living conditions and its way of thinking were concerned. This found expression in the independent functioning and internal structure of the spontaneously established soviets and workers' councils, and integration in even the most modern, well-organized social democratic workers' movement.²⁹

The other stratum of the revolutionary camp was composed of the essentially conservative "past-bound" but at that moment rebellious, anti-capitalist peasantry of the *obschinas*, with the desire to acquire land by prohibiting the sale of land—to stop future poverty. These aims found a voice in the famous land decrees of the October Revolution. These two strata were connected by the third main "stratum" of the revolution, a mass of armed soldiers numbering in the millions, who were mainly of peasant stock but had "seen the world." Historically speaking, the practical issues current in the period after the October Revolution had little in common with the theory of socialism, and more to do with all that was said in the *April Theses* and the post-October concept and practice of—to use a modern phrase—"mixed market economy" in the beginning of 1918. Włodzimierz Brus and László Szamuely, followed by Soviet historians, established this decades ago, and became the first to theoretically ground the *transitional period* and consider it socialism under the premises of "Socialist Market Economy"—in the footsteps of Stalin.³⁰ So the exaggeration of the "post-analogy" on ideological grounds, as a "part of socialism," also paved the way for an interpretation of this work by Lenin as an authoritarian.

It is evident that any interpretation that suggests or claims that Lenin's thought and political actions in 1917 were dictated by some sort of authoritarian conceptualization of power and revolution, cannot rest, so to say, on documentary proof. Lenin spoke not only about the direct forms of workers' rule, as opposed to the bour-

29 On the subject, see Dmitry Churakov, "A munkásonkormányzatok közösségi aspektusai az 1917-es orosz forradalomban" [Community in the laborers' local governments of the Russian Revolution of 1917], in *1917 és ami utána következett* [1917 and what followed], ed. Tamás Krausz (Budapest: Magyar Ruszisztikai Intézet, 1998), pp. 53–67; Vladimir Bukharayev, "1917—az obscsinaforradalom pirruszi győzelme" [1917—The pyrrhic victory of the obshchina revolution], in *ibid.*, pp. 37–52.

30 Włodzimierz Brus, *The General Problems of the Functioning of the Socialist Economy* (London: Oxford, 1961); László Szamuely, *Az első szocialista gazdasági mechanizmusok* [The first socialist economic mechanisms] (Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, 1971); E. G. Gimpelson, *Voyenniy kommunizm: politika, praktika, ideologiya* (Moscow: 1973). In the necrology he wrote for W. Brus ("Włodzimierz Brus: Economist committed to market reforms and democracy in Poland," *Guardian*, November 13, 2007), Jan Toporowski noted that in 1951–52, Brus spoke highly of Stalin's book, *Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.*, in which Stalin outlined the thought of market socialism for the first time, a momentum duly recognized in its own time by Ferenc Tökei. For more on this, see Tamás Krausz, "A 'sztálini szocializmus'" [Stalinist socialism], in *Lenintől Putyinig* [From Lenin to Putin] (Budapest: La Ventana, 2003), pp. 98–99.

geois republic, but also distanced himself from the tradition of *state socialism*, that is, the “introduction of socialism” by means of state power. He spoke, on the one hand, about the “commune-state,” and on the other, in thesis no. 8, about how “it is not our *immediate* task to ‘introduce’ socialism, but only to bring social production and the distribution of products at once under the **control** of the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies.” Among the main tasks of this program he mentioned the unification of all the banks “into a single national bank, and the institution of control over it by the Soviet of Workers’ Deputies.”³¹ (The “post office analogy” fits into this context.) In order to ensure that power remained firmly in the hands of the soviets and won the support of the poor peasantry as well as the landless agrarian proletariat, he planned the confiscation of land from the landed gentry, pomeshchikov by way of immediate nationalization, so it could be redistributed under the supervision of the peasant soviets (put into written word by the October land decree). The emphasis in the *April Theses*³² was already on cooperative agriculture.³³ The *April Theses* was a turning point in Lenin’s career, and signaled a turning point in the history of the revolution; it proved to be such a rare instant of foresight as to constitute a truly organic mold of theoretical analysis and political practice—a rare historical moment, which has a role in the historical context of *The State and Revolution*.

The *April Theses* defined the fundamental traits of the economic program in the supervision of laborers in industrial plants, in the soviet overseeing of trust companies, and in progressive taxation of income and property.³⁴ Apparently Lenin—in contrast to the commonplace statements and claims of current historical literature—did not set out for the October Revolution with any kind of nationalizing or statist concept. A centralized postal system and the hierarchic restructuring of trusts in general must be seen as the “state capitalist” methods of the *transition* period rather than instant nationalization—which in fact did not take place until later, along with “war communist” measures in the summer of 1918. This is the sense in which Lenin refers to the “planned operation” and methods of “accounting” in the economic institutions of the capitalist system as examples to be followed, as they are drawn organizationally into the scope of the workers’ authority, so that community interests gain prominence.³⁵ He could hardly have worked out more concrete ideas on economic policy for “indeterminable” historical-political situations at any earlier stage.

31 Ibid.

32 Lenin, *The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution*, LCW, vol. 24, pp. 19–26.

33 Ibid., pp. 22–24.

34 Ibid., pp. 327–29.

35 Ibid., p. 329.

The Social Backdrop to the Revolution

Lenin and the Bolsheviks could not have taken their place at the helm of the revolutionary masses in October 1917 had they not been aware of the social background to the revolution.

Lenin had drafted the framework for the Decree on Land, adopted in October by the 2nd all-Russian Congress of Soviets, at the end of August 1917. The decree, which was reminiscent of the S.R. agrarian program, showed that an overwhelming majority of peasants were just as opposed to capitalist ownership of land as they were to feudal large land-holdings. In terms plainly understood by all, the decree aimed to unify the revolutions of the workers and peasants to contend with the old ruling classes:

According to the summary, the peasant land demands are primarily abolition of private ownership of all types of land, including the peasants' lands, without compensation. This was probably the most succinct expression and practical attestation of the fact that a combination of two revolutions was unfolding: the revolution of the urban soviet and the peasant "*obshchina* revolution." Lenin did not call the October Revolution a "worker-peasant revolution" by mere chance. It not only pointed to the spontaneous confiscations of land by peasants in the summer and autumn of 1917, but also to the fact that significant masses of peasants across the country had organized themselves in their own soviets, as alternative seats of authority in opposition. The "revolution of peasant village communities" united with the proletarian revolution of the cities in October showed no signs of conflict, thereby strengthening the anti-capitalist aspect of the revolution.

Some notes of summary

The language, key terms, rhetoric and theoretical characteristics of *The State and Revolution* cropped up in the letters Lenin wrote when he was in hiding to the members of the Central Committee. These were analyses, and instructions of a political and organizational nature that encouraged implementation of an armed uprising and the seizure of power. After October, as events developed, the gap between the theoretical horizon and the practical political contingency of *State and Revolution* grew extremely wide. His most basic awareness among the theoretical experiences was that the socialist revolution and socialism (more exactly, the transition leading to it) became a concrete historical possibility for humankind.

On the basis of the above, it is an interesting and instructive experience that on the one hand, in the century after the October socialist revolution the Western working class and its political organizations could not and/or did not want to surpass the bourgeois world order, the capitalist mode of production, and on the other hand, this fact always served as an excuse for the political elite of the Eastern state socialist re-

gimes for deviating from the bases of Marx and Lenin, namely *theoretical socialism* (self-government – obshchestvennoe samoupraleniye). At the same time, at a global scale, from Spain to Mexico and Hungary or Poland, there have been a number of experiments of the workers and producers to organize production on their own.

The decisive lesson of the Soviet and Eastern European state socialist experience is that if power is transferred from the control of the productive classes to other bodies, it will have fatal implications for the social self-government (obshchestvennoe samoupravleniye). Lenin's original ideas about the transition to socialism as developed in *The State and Revolution* and other works, are very much instructive in this respect, and they contain a number of important considerations for the future socialist experiments. Therefore it is worth summarizing its most important conclusions.

In Lenin's theory the first stage of a Communist society, namely the socialist formation is a classless structure, whose real history starts with the abolishment of class differences. As Lenin writes: "Socialism will not be realized unless classes are abolished".³⁶ According to this, socialism does not recognize the political state and the parliamentary system; their tasks are taken over by the self-governing bodies. Democracy as a state form is replaced by the self-governing system of direct producers.

"And state is necessary only insofar it has to defend – apart from the defense of the public ownership of the means of production – the equality of labor and the equality of the division of products"³⁷ The organic consequence of the survival of civil legislation is the task to enforce the law, which, according to Lenin, presupposes the "civil" state. Thus, "it is not only the civil legislation, which survives but also the bourgeois state – without bourgeoisie!"³⁸ He adds that the transition from a capitalist society to a Communist one is impossible without the period of a "political transition".³⁹ The main function of this period is experimenting with and creating new forms of economic and social organization, which lead to socialism, and gain their final form and function in a Communist society.

The Soviets are the direct organizations of the working people, which help the masses to take control of the state and govern themselves in all possible ways. Through this activity, the individuals learn administration and the democratic exercise of power.

Lenin makes a clear distinction between nationalization and the realization of social control. He argues that the appropriation and nationalization of the means

36 Lenin's Collected Works in Hungarian, 40th volume, Bp., Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1974, p. 288.

37 Lenin's Collected Works in Hungarian, 33rd volume, Bp., Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1965, p. 86.

38 Ibid., p. 90.

39 Ibid., p. 78.

of production is a simple but the most important political-power operation. The realization of social control, however, means a new quality in an economic sense: production is organized in such a way that it provides for a national, economical and rational management and coordination of labor in a multi-sectoral economic system.

As in the Lenin's theory the local Soviets are considered to be the basic units of political life, in economy the cooperatives and communes constitute the "basic cells of the village and the town". In the new labor organizations the communalized producers are striving to utilize the most modern achievements of science and technology. Direct democracy is enforced also in the field of economics. (In the world of the Internet and modern computer technology this is not a utopia in any sense of the word.)

Until it is not possible to abolish private property (both the capitalist and the "statist") and create a classless socialist society, the bourgeois production of commodities will co-exist with the forms, which surpass it. The struggle with the surviving capitalist and petty bourgeois modes of production presupposes the context of market relations and the existence of the market sector.

Even later Lenin makes a clear distinction between the two types of "the dictatorship of the proletariat". In the advanced capitalist countries, where the majority of wage laborers are wage earners or agricultural workers, it is possible to realize a direct transition to socialism in a social, economic and political sense. According to Lenin's argument, in these countries there are no serious obstacles to create organs of "state administration" because the technical preconditions have already been realized in the capitalist era. Its introduction in itself is not an economic but a political act: the accompanying phenomenon of the takeover of the proletariat. In such cases the period of "central administration and control" will organically grow into the first stage of a Communist society, where the workers' control of the state bureaucracy will be replaced by the workers' control of production and distribution. This, according to Lenin, will lead to the gradual "withering away" of any state bureaucracy and it will create an order, where every individual can perform the simple tasks of supervision and accountancy, which will become habits, and therefore, the distinct functions of a separate group of people, namely state bureaucracy will cease to exist.

Since the Russian revolution was not accompanied with a Western revolution, the implementation of the achievements of the Western civilization was inevitable. In *The State and Revolution* Lenin clearly excluded the possibility of a direct transition to socialism for Russia.

By the end of the 1920s, the "dictatorship of the proletariat", the "dictatorship of the Soviets" was transformed into the "dictatorship of the Communist Party",

which was in sharp contrast with the original ideas, the revolutionary legitimation itself. Therefore the established one-party system was not included in the Constitution of 1936; this happened only in 1977, when the Constitution was modified. This was the date of the official renunciation of the self-governing socialism. Namely the theory that self-governance is the fundamental unit and system of socialism, excludes the existence of the parties including the Communist Party as well as all kinds of bureaucracy, which is detached from society. Such a system survived as a part of the 1961 theoretical program of the party and it disappeared alongside the party in the post-1989 world after the second issue (vtoroe izdanie kapitalizma) of capitalism. Eventually in 1989-1991 the enormous state property, which had been accumulated by many generations of the workers, was appropriated by the elite, which constituted 3-4% of the Eastern European societies through the process of privatization. This has been called the “change of regimes”. This new world, the world of oligarchic capitalism means “the return of the old shit” as Marx said.

Until we live in such a world, *The State and Revolution* will stay with us and the “blue note-book” will always be a handbook of the exploited, the people, who are standing at the bottom of the social ladder even if they are not conscious of it.

Socialist planning in the 21st century

Özgür Öztürk

In a speech he made in Switzerland in January 1917, Lenin said “We of the older generation may not live to see the decisive battles of this coming revolution.”¹ One month later, the February revolution broke out, and within the same year, the most glorious attempt ever to change the fate of humanity began.

This anecdote shows that it is almost impossible to predict the beginning of a revolution accurately: even Lenin, the greatest revolutionary in history could not succeed in this. A revolution happens all of a sudden, surprises the world. Like an earthquake, it is the moment of social breakup that suddenly erupts when a certain point is reached as a result of the accumulation of small, isolated events that take place almost “silently” in the background.

It may not be possible to predict when the revolution will begin; yet it can be determined objectively whether or not the current conjuncture has a revolutionary character, that is, the social “fault lines” have started to move. Indeed, Lenin depended on such an observation for his own epoch. Having said that “We may not see it,” he was also speaking of the coming revolution, stressing that it will happen sooner

¹ Lenin, “Lecture on the 1905 Revolution”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974, p. 253.

or later. For, according to him, the basic characteristic of the modern age was the “actuality of the revolution”.²

By and large, imperialism is the age of transition from capitalism to socialism. The advance of the social character of production that reaches global scale, the tremendous development of the productive forces, together with the increasing pressure, violence and exploitation, prepare the preconditions for the capitalist civilization to reach its limit and leave its place to a higher type of society. Undoubtedly, this transition will not take place at once and in the form of an irreversible break; the 20th century has provided us with enough evidence in this regard. However, the dynamics of transition is at work.

Certainly, there will be some cross-currents and tides within the general tendency. Viewed from the perspective of revolution, the years roughly between 1980 and 2010 correspond to a terrible retreat. Nevertheless, the recent period, characterized by the great crisis of capitalism, is likely to become the starting phase of a new breakthrough. After the gradual dissipation of a dark mist, socialism has loomed on the horizon of humanity again.

There should not be any misunderstanding here: unfortunately, a new world war that may cause the complete destruction of the planet with hundreds of millions of human deaths is a real possibility getting stronger every day. But the same possibility is also strengthening the opposite tendency towards socialism. The two greatest revolutions of the twentieth century took place in the middle of or immediately after world wars. To expect a new revolution without such great disasters is just a hope for the moment.

The seeds of the future lie in the present. A social revolution is the most possible radical rupture. Yet the new forms that will emerge after the revolution, and most importantly the new production relations, will not drop from the sky. The new forms will come into existence as the eventual outcome of **some** of the tendencies that have gradually matured in the old society. It is, of course, impossible to foresee precisely what tendencies these are. Moreover, in time, different dynamics can also become dominant within the existing order. Nevertheless, the basic principle is that we face the future today, whether we are aware or not:

most of the evidence for the possibility of socialism/communism surrounds us on all sides and can be seen by everyone. It lies in conditions that already have a socialist edge to them, such as workers’ and consumers’ cooperatives, public education, municipal hospitals, political democracy, and—in our day— nationalized enterprises. However, it also lies in conditions that don’t seem to have any-

2 Georg Lukacs, *Lenin: A Study on the Unity of His Thought*, 1924, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lukacs/works/1924/lenin/>.

thing particularly socialist about them, such as our developed industries, enormous material wealth, high levels of science, occupational skills, organizational structures, education, and culture. Evidence for socialism can also be found in some of capitalism's worst problems, such as unemployment and worsening inequality.³

The future may be uncertain, but what sheds light on the struggles to be fought today is the conception of the future that we take as our point of departure. For those who wish to see it, socialism/communism is **potentially** available everywhere. But the point is not just about seeing it. For this potential to become a reality, revolutionary action is necessary. Capitalism will not turn into communism by itself.

We do not know how the socialism of the 21st century will come into being or what it will look like. We can of course speculate on this – Marxism does not prohibit such thought exercises. As a matter of fact, today we encounter some discussions among scholars, under the title of “designing socialism”.⁴ Such initiatives are of course worthy of respect and attention: there is an experience of one hundred years, with all its sins and deeds, and it is necessary to face the past honestly and to draw lessons for the future. However, presenting the existing possibilities for socialism looks like a more advantageous strategy than designing it beforehand.

In this paper, I will discuss the potentials of socialism with reference to the technical and economic possibilities of **the present**. In particular, I will assess the current potentials in terms of planning. I will try to outline the kind of economic planning system we can build immediately, within a few years. In the 21st century, a planning system that is fundamentally different and far more effective than the previous century can be established. It is possible to create an economic planning system based on labour time calculation, in accordance with the original vision of Marx. By facilitating the calculation of the labour time content of each product, and enabling the elimination of monetary relations, such a system will form one of the most important pillars of new socialism.

1. Basic points

A situation encountered during the emergence of capitalism can help us when thinking about the future. The capitalist mode of production came to the historical stage before the productive forces corresponding to it were fully developed. Capital started off from the technical basis that was available at the time, and the develop-

3 Bertell Ollman, *Dance of the Dialectic: Steps in Marx's Method*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003, p.159.

4 See for example the April 2012 special issue of *Science & Society*.

ment of the productive forces appropriate for capitalist production took place later.⁵ Indeed, capitalist relations of production began to expand as early as the 15th and 16th centuries. But it was only with the Industrial Revolution, at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries, that it was possible for capital to stand on its own feet by arriving the form of production (the factory as a machine production system) that fits best to its content. From this moment on, capitalist production attained an irreversible character.

In previous transition periods, new relations of production were shaped **spontaneously**, in a trial-and-error process. But, in the transition to socialism, new relations of production will be consciously constructed. In the case of the bourgeoisie, a period of social revolution began when that class was strong enough economically within the old order. But the working class cannot gain economic dominance within the capitalist system. This domination will only take place after the revolution.

The primary goal of the socialist construction process is to change the relations of production. The new relation of production is the planned economy that will further promote the social character of labour, which has already become evident in the capitalist system.

The formation of productive forces most appropriate for the planned economy is a matter of time. In the sixteenth century, no one could predict that in the future the basic production unit would be the factory. In this sense, it can be thought that it is impossible to predict the technical form appropriate for socialist relations of production. But the situation is somewhat different in the socialist construction process. The fact that the relations of production are to be shaped consciously, not spontaneously, will undoubtedly put its mark on the development of the productive forces.

Two main dimensions can be distinguished in the development of the productive forces. The first is the means of production. The main goal of the socialist construction process in terms of the development of the means of production is full automation in production; or, more precisely, such a goal is meaningful and possible today.

Marx had conceived of large scale industry as capitalist production proper.

Large-scale industry ... had to take over the machine itself, its own characteristic instrument of production, and to produce machines by means of machines. It was not till it did this that it could create for itself an adequate technical foundation,

⁵ Marx discusses this in *Capital*, especially in the chapter on “The Division of Labour and Manufacture”. The earlier capitalistic form of production, that is, manufacture “was unable either to seize upon the production of society to its full extent, or to revolutionize that production to its very core ... At a certain stage of its development, the narrow technical basis on which manufacture rested came into contradiction with requirements of production which it had itself created.” Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, trans: Ben Fowkes, London: Penguin Books, 1982, p. 490.

and stand on its own feet.⁶

Capitalist production has an obvious tendency to increase mechanization, to use more machines, its “own characteristic instrument of production.” However, while capitalist production carries mechanization and automation to striking dimensions, it also creates, in the opposite direction, obstacles in front of this. For, the machine is employed in production if it is cheaper than the labour power it replaces. The limit to a capitalist’s “using a machine is ... fixed by the difference between the value of the machine and the value of the labour-power replaced by it.”⁷ When labour is abundant, and wages are below the value of labour power, “from the standpoint of the capitalist,” this makes “the use of machinery superfluous, and often impossible.”⁸ Under conditions of abundant cheap labour power, capital tends towards labour intensive production. Moreover, capitalist production impedes mechanization for another reason: though individual firms pursue innovations that reduce the share of living labour in production, surplus value (hence, profit) depends on living labour, and thus serious constraints emerge on the overall tendencies of mechanization and automation. As a result, capitalist production, constantly promoting mechanization on the one hand, feeds and keeps alive opposite processes on the other.

There is no such constraint in socialism; there are only natural/physical barriers in front of the full automation of the production of material objects. Beyond that, with today’s technical possibilities, the advance of automation is limited only by our imagination. From a technical point of view, a significant part of production can be realized by machines and robots, and even most of the tasks referred to as “services” can be automated. Using more machines in mines, construction sites, factories, etc., and fully automating the transportation business (including urban transportation) may require large investments at first. However, even these initial investments will probably be less than the present costs. When one takes into account, say, the resources spent for the production of motor vehicles and related items (including the gasoline wasted during traffic jams), it is clear that a much more rational, comfortable and fully automatic transportation system can be built at a much lower cost. Capitalist production can be very revolutionary compared to the production systems of the past, but it is not revolutionary enough to solve the problems of humanity today.

The second dimension of the productive forces is the human being as the most revolutionary productive force. The Marxist tradition predicts that, in future communist society, work will become a primary need. This means working for others,

6 Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 506.

7 Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 515.

8 Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 516.

of course; it is very different from that of the workaholic bourgeois, who works day and night to fill his own pocket. The social individual of socialism is aware that working “for others” is actually working for “herself,” and she can make herself human only in this way. In the midst of today’s egocentric capitalist relations, this prediction of Marxism may look like a dream. In capitalist society where self-seeking is the rule, to do something for others is indeed perceived as “foolishness”. However, it should not be overlooked that self-seeking is in fact a behavioral pattern associated with particularly the “economic” domain, or more specifically, the market. Within general social relations, being selfish is condemned, **even** in capitalist societies. It is no simple coincidence that Adam Smith, who developed the first systematic economic theory of capitalism at the dawn of it, was also a moral theorist. Arguing that self-seeking was natural for everyone within market relations, Smith avoided such a suggestion for the more general social context.⁹ In other words, even the foremost ideologists of capitalism are aware that it is not generally “good” for people to pursue their own interests. In this sense, socialism will feed the good side, not the bad side, of human beings.

But the issue is not simply the moral superiority of socialism. When work has become a primary need, nothing will stop the personal and collective development of human beings. The “lifelong learning” target imposed on the working class is unattainable under capitalist conditions, for the simple reason that the activity of learning, like everything else, is subject to self-interest in capitalism. If there is no direct monetary benefit, one does not need to learn anything at all. However, in socialism, different social criteria apply, and people can develop their potentials and capacities without facing external obstacles. Since the most important obstacle in this regard is the market today, the removal of market relations will pave the way for real human development.

2. The necessity of planning

It will not be a prophecy to say that the future socialist revolution(s) will begin in individual countries and then spread to other countries/regions. A revolutionary process that will cover the whole world in a short time would be as surprising and pleasing as winning the lottery. In fact, on the contrary, it is more likely that, during the transitional period, the revolutions that will take place in individual countries will encounter troubles after a while, because the imperialist system will try to strangle any move towards communism by doing whatever it can. Therefore, central capitalist (imperialist) countries such as the USA, Germany, England, France and Japan must join the revolutionary process at a certain stage. A revolution that

⁹ Duncan K. Foley, *Adam's Fallacy: A Guide to Economic Theology*, Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008.

does not cover the core regions of imperialism will face difficulties in the long run.

To say this does not mean to accept defeat from the beginning. It means that any socialist revolution must target a worldwide revolution from the first hour. For this, it is vital for the individual countries participating in the revolutionary process to establish permanent and strong ties among themselves and to take initiatives towards world revolution from the first day, including, especially, the creation of a new International. Of course, there will be many geopolitical contradictions, conflicts, etc. that cannot be foreseen now – tons of problems will arise. But the basic principle is that the socialist construction process must also be a moment of the world revolution. To settle for less and to limit the strategy of revolution to keeping the “positions” somehow captured is, to say the least, to continue dreaming. One can take occasional breaks during a long run; but if an armed gang of murderers are chasing behind, the breaks have to be as short as possible.

The key to the socialist construction process is the advance of the world revolution. For example, as will be discussed below, the shortening of working hours will constitute a basic part of the industrial relations in new socialism. However, if the revolution does not cover the imperialist countries, the attempts at socialism will undoubtedly be surrounded by imperialist enemies and their cohorts. The economic and military pressures from these powers may force the socialist countries to take unexpected measures, such as lengthening the working hours and/or other undemocratic steps. It must be kept in mind that, for the planning system discussed below to work, the world revolution has to make a significant headway.

The importance of creating a common planned economic framework in the individual countries involved in the socialist construction process cannot be exaggerated. The material basis of a new political form that transcends the capitalism-specific nation-state form lies here. This is one of the greatest failures of the socialist construction experiences of the 20th century. The consequence of abandoning internationalism and the lack of a single economic and political structure from Eastern Europe to China has been the confinement of socialist construction to national boundaries.¹⁰ At a time when capital has carried the socialization of labour to global scale, the socialist construction process has been deprived of such an advantage. In other words, the superiority of the capitalist system in terms of the capacity to develop the productive forces has continued.

Thus, in the new socialism, national borders must be transgressed or at least lose their decisive significance, and the basis for this will be the common planning system. The ultimate goal is to create a planned economy first in individual countries, then in many countries and regions, and then on the world scale.

10 See Sungur Savran, “Sovyetler Birliği’ni kim yıktı?”, *Devrimci Marksizm*, sayı 28-29, Güz-Kış 2016.

Planning is a relation of production, the basis of socialism. As the conscious regulation by humanity of the processes of production, consumption and distribution, it is the rejection of market relations. A socialist economy will either be planned, or it will not be socialism. In this context, the step-by-step elimination of market relations is necessary during the “transition process” which probably will span at least several decades.

Planning has encountered inevitable limits during the 20th century revolutions. Since the societies that experienced revolution were in a backward state in terms of capitalist development, there emerged specific problems. Undoubtedly, problems will also emerge in the future, but these will be of a different quality. In the various planning experiences, as practiced in the 20th century, usually there were rapid initial developments, but after a while inefficient systems arose. Though Soviet type planning was successful in mobilizing resources, it did not show the same success in providing the effective allocation of these resources. Under the Soviet planning system, the basic target was to increase the output at all costs, rather than to decrease the inputs used to produce the same amount. Thus, plants tended to stock as much input as possible, including labour force. In the end, the increase in output was conditioned by the increase in the amount of inputs and the means of production used. Output was more important than efficiency. It is perfectly natural for such a system to mobilize idle or potential resources and increase output in a short period of time. However, once the physical boundaries of inputs were reached, further progress became increasingly difficult. Indeed, in the Soviet Union, the system reached its limits during the 1960s, and thereafter faced a slow but steady crisis.¹¹

On the other hand, Soviet type planning systems also failed in overcoming market relations. Many products, especially rural food supplies, were not planned, and petty commodity production always existed alongside the plan. Over time, especially in the cities, many “service” activities were left at the mercy of the black market. Even if the problems this created for socialist planning are left aside, the result was a chronic disease that poisoned the socialist construction process.

In the new socialism, the basic principle has to be the geographical and sectoral expansion, as well as deepening, of the planned economic organization. Today, it is absolutely possible to make the economy of a country or a continent completely planned in as short as a few years’ time. As Paul Cockshott and Allin Cottrell emphasize, for example, “There is no **technical** reason why the United States could not have a **completely** planned economy.”¹² Political, ideological,

11 Özgür Öztürk, “Economic background of the collapse of the Soviet Union”, *Revolutionary Marxism* 2017.

12 W. Paul Cockshott, Allin F. Cottrell, “Value, Markets and Socialism”, *Science & Society*, Vol. 61,

and even cultural reasons undoubtedly exist, but in principle, the greatest economy in the world can work in a planned way down to the finest detail. Moreover, this can be realized much more efficiently than the market system.

3. What kind of planning is possible today?

This question can be answered on two levels. First, there is the planning potential that emerges from the working of the market system itself. Planning already exists in the capitalist system, within a chain extending from singular local/national firms to multinational corporations. The planned economy develops under capitalism. As is known, Marxism places great importance on the planning tendencies that arise within capitalist production, since these tendencies carry the socialization of labour to very high levels.

In this sense, socialism is the removal of obstacles to the tendency of socialization of labour. To bring this “direct” planning tendency of capitalist production to its logical conclusions in the socialist construction process means, first of all, large scale nationalizations. Big monopolies, banks, energy complexes, retail chains, transportation and communication companies, mines, other natural resources are the first businesses to be nationalized. They will function as parts of a single economic entity. On the other hand, since the profit criterion will be eliminated, perhaps some plants will be shut down, some will be merged, and the production policy will change from top to bottom. Especially the fixed capital investments, buildings, machines, equipments, and other means of production of these enterprises will be the initial springboard for the socialist construction process.

The second dimension of planning is constituted by other tendencies of capital. The most important of these is the evaluation by labour time. In the labour theory of value as developed by Marx, the value of a commodity is determined by its socially necessary labour time content. Since capitalism is defined by the dominance of value relations, an implicit labour time calculation is the organizing principle of social production and exchange. Yet there is actually no “calculation” in a market context; no one can precisely calculate the labour time socially necessary to produce an item. Instead, the fluctuations of supply and demand provide signals for the producers, and they act according to these signals. Thus there is an evaluation by labour time, but this evaluation is far from perfect.

The second tendency is about “abstract labour”. Abstract labour is standard, average human labour. According to Marx, this is not just a simple abstraction or idea: when commodities produced by different labours are exchanged, the concrete forms of labour that produce them become identical. This is a “real abstraction”: every

kind of human labour is treated as equal. However, beyond that, capital has also a tendency to bring all kinds of human labour closer together. Production based on capital, while increasing the diversity of concrete labour, at the same time and in the opposite direction, demonstrates also a tendency to standardize the labours of producers. In Marx's words from the Introduction to the *Grundrisse*:

Indifference towards any specific kind of labour presupposes a very developed totality of real kinds of labour, of which no single one is any longer predominant ... Then it ceases to be thinkable in a particular form alone. On the other side, this abstraction of labour as such is not merely the mental product of a concrete totality of labours. Indifference towards specific labours corresponds to a form of society in which individuals can with ease transfer from one labour to another, and where the specific kind is a matter of chance for them, hence of indifference ... Such a state of affairs is at its most developed in the most modern form of existence of bourgeois society - in the United States.¹³

In the rest of the passage, Marx emphasizes the fundamental difference between the labourers of a backward society who can “do anything” and the labourers of an advanced capitalist society who can adapt themselves to any kind of work.

The same theme appears in *Capital* as well, but in a slightly different way. Here, Marx avoids an in-depth discussion of the issue and does not formulate it as a “law” of capitalist production. Nevertheless, partly because it provides ease of calculation, and partly because of his opinion that it is an objective tendency, he minimizes the difference between the so called “skilled” and “unskilled” labours. In a long footnote, he writes:

The distinction between higher and simple labour, ‘skilled labour’ and ‘unskilled labour’, rests in part on pure illusion or, to say the least, on distinctions that have long since ceased to be real, and survive only by virtue of a traditional convention; and in part on the helpless condition of some sections of the working class, a condition that prevents them from exacting equally with the rest the value of their labour-power. Accidental circumstances here play so great a part that these two forms of labour sometimes change places. Where, for instance, the physique of the working class has deteriorated and is, relatively speaking, exhausted, which is the case in all countries where capitalist production is highly developed, the lower forms of labour, which demand great expenditure of muscle, are in general considered as higher forms, compared with much more delicate forms of labour; the latter sink down to the level of simple labour ... Moreover, we must not imagine that so-called ‘skilled’ labour forms a large part of the whole of the

¹³ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)*, trans: Martin Nicolaus, London: Penguin Books, 1973, p. 104.

nation's labour.¹⁴

Indeed, in the paragraph following the footnote, Marx declares that "We therefore save ourselves a superfluous operation, and simplify our analysis, by the assumption that the labour of the worker employed by the capitalist is average simple labour."

This emphasis by Marx on "average simple labour" is not just an assumption or reduction to simplify the matter. The capitalist system, one of the most unequal production systems of history, tends to equalize every human being and their labours in an abstract and purely formal way. The situation is similar to the one person – one vote principle of the modern election systems: inequalities are obscured by a formal appearance of equality. But that's not all. On the other hand, for the first time in history, although abstractly, the idea of equality of people has emerged, and has even become an unquestionable prejudice.

At this point it may be useful to turn back to the much discussed lines in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. Marx states that "Within the collective society based on common ownership of the means of production, the producers do not exchange their products." Because, in this society, individual labour exists directly in a social form, as part of total labour, not in the form of value, that is, indirectly. Marx emphasizes that here we are dealing with a "communist society, not as it has **developed** on its own foundations, but on the contrary, just as it **emerges** from capitalist society." This new society still bears the stamp of the old. Here, "the individual producer receives back from society –after the deductions have been made– exactly what he gives to it." The producer receives a certificate that shows the amount of labour expended (after deductions for the common funds), and with this certificate "he draws from the social stock of means of consumption as much as the same amount of labour costs. The same amount of labour which he has given to society in one form he receives back in another." Marx argues that since equal values are exchanged, this is the same principle that regulates the exchange of commodities. Content and form are changed, but the same principle prevails in distribution.¹⁵

A question immediately arises: how will the labour time spent by the individual producers be calculated in this early phase of communist society? According to which criteria will labour certificates be issued? How can we compare the three hours of a plumber repairing pipes with the three hours of a cook cooking, or with the three hours of a surgeon spent in the operating room? In other words, how will the different types of concrete labours be compared to each other? If such a comparison

¹⁴ Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 305, fn 19.

¹⁵ Karl Marx, "Marginal Notes on the Programme of the German Workers' Party", *Marx & Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 24, Lawrence & Wishart, 2010, p. 85-86.

cannot be made, and a “common measure” cannot be found, labour time calculation will not be possible.

The answer to this question comes from capitalist production itself. As emphasized above, there is also a tendency to equate all kinds of human labour in capitalist production. In socialism, it can be said that this tendency will reach its logical conclusion: as human labour, everyone’s labour will be treated as equal. Therefore, accepting the labour of the plumber, the chef, the surgeon, the secretary, the student and the miner as equal and equivalent will be the starting point for creating a planning system based on labour time accounting. The basis of the new planning system lies here. During a transitional period, it is certainly possible to develop a planning system based on labour time.¹⁶

Two warnings are necessary here: first, as noted above, the advance of the socialist construction process is conditioned by the advances of the world revolution. An isolated country can of course proceed and take some initial steps in the direction of socialism. However, this process can never be completed in a single country or in a small group of countries. Second, though the basic goal is to progressively adopt a system in which everyone’s labour time is considered equal, some tasks (such as, e.g., brain surgery) will always be “closed” in the sense that they will require well developed “skills” and qualifications. Thus, **pace** Marx, the distinction between skilled and unskilled labour is not purely illusory, and will be with us for a long time.

Yet this does not mean that different types of concrete labour cannot be treated as equal. The more “skilled” labourers will not earn more in socialism. Under capitalist conditions, the cost of “upskilling” usually falls to the individual; but, in socialism, where labour is directly social, the society will undertake this cost. Thus there will be no reason to pay more to “experts,” and over time, inequalities will be significantly eroded.

It is of course impossible to instantly eliminate the inequalities. Shortly after the October Revolution, there was an urgent need for trained experts, and therefore, these people were paid more. Under the backward conditions of Russia, expertise was of vital importance not only in industry but also in the Red Army. The need for experts paved the way for an unequal wage system. In the early days, this was perceived as a necessary and temporary measure. However, in parallel with the grabbing of power by the bureaucracy, it became a rule, and the dream of equality slowly withered away.

Today, a post-revolutionary society can determine some coefficients to com-

¹⁶ The details of such a planning system can be found in W. Paul Cockshott and Allin Cottrell’s *Towards a New Socialism*: http://ricardo.ecn.wfu.edu/~cottrell/socialism_book/new_socialism.pdf. This important book, dated 1993, was a source of inspiration for this paper in many ways.

pensate for the differences in skills, and the difficulties of different tasks. But, in the long run, the goal is to treat all types of concrete labour as equal. Over time, the system of division of labour which allocates everyone to a permanent lifelong “occupation” will also begin to change. Even in today’s capitalism, it is possible for an individual to study and work in several different areas within her life. The all-round individual of socialism will probably not spend her life in a single job. In short, differences between jobs and professions will begin to lose their meaning, and progress in this direction will facilitate the equal treatment of concrete labours.

In a planning system that recognizes everyone’s labour as equal, by keeping the record of labour time spent by everyone, the total amount of the labour content of each product can be calculated clearly. To be sure, it will take several years for the planning system to operate at full precision, since some products such as ships, buildings, etc. have a long production time. But, after a while, society will begin to see how many hours it takes to produce each product, and calculations will be easier. With existing communication and computation technologies, it is possible to create very sophisticated and robust calculation systems.

Another advantage of such a system is the ability to eliminate the use of money. Today, with tools such as credit cards, debit cards, etc., the use of money in daily life in retail trade is already limited. Moreover, money is neither used in wholesale trade nor in interbank money markets. In these areas, it serves just as a unit of account. As a matter of fact, from the standpoint of the socialist construction process, the main problem is not the use of money in everyday shopping, but, rather, the possibility that money will be transformed into capital. In the socialist construction process, this is a constant threat and takes place within market relations. Therefore, in parallel with the step-by-step removal of market relations, labour time calculation should be included in the planning process to eliminate the use of money. I’ll return to this theme below.

4. Wage, price and profit, and productivity

The plan is the form of organization of the economy, of the relations of production. But it is never a purely economic phenomenon in the narrow sense. Because it determines the allocation of resources in a society, it has a deeply political character. Therefore, the plan targets reflect the social balances of forces. In the Soviet model, the output amount (rapid growth) was taken as the main criterion; this was the result of the October revolution taking place in a backward country. The Soviet Union had to undertake many problems that are “normally” expected to be solved by capitalist development. As a consequence of this, some applications that are crucial in the progress to socialism were not applied at all, and some categories of the capitalist system continued to exist.

To be sure, the categories of wage, price and profit functioned differently in the Soviet system from what they are in the capitalist system. However, since a planning model based on labour time was not adopted, money relations continued to exist. This created a permanent tension within the system that was locked in a position, unable to advance towards socialism, and trying to hinder the development of capitalist relations by the use of force.

A second, and related, problem that persisted throughout the Soviet period was the low productivity of labour. The economic planning system, that is, the form of organization of the relations of production in the Soviet Union, did not by itself solve this problem. Especially during the formation phase of the system (roughly the years between 1930 and 1965), the bureaucracy forced the labourers and peasants to work and produce more. However, the passive resistance of the proletariat and the rural peasantry against the bureaucracy put clear limits to this path. The real solution could only be found by carrying the socialization of labour to higher levels, by connecting the various socialist attempts under a single economic plan, by forming a political unit that covered the whole geography of the socialist construction experiments, in short by taking new and real steps towards world revolution. But the system of bureaucratic domination became a fetter on the development of the forces of production.

Wages

It is almost certain that money relations will continue to exist during a transitional period. Yet it is also certain that money will not continue to serve the functions it assumes in capitalist society. In capitalist society, money is primarily the measure of value. In this context, “value” means that production is not directly but **indirectly** social. The value of a commodity is determined by its socially necessary labour time content, and the external measure of this is money. In capitalist society, money emerges as a necessary form of value. In an environment where production has a directly social character, the function of money as a measure of value will obviously suffer a great blow. This, on its own, opens the way to the elimination of monetary relations.

In Marx’s analysis, the second function of money is to provide a means of exchange. It may be necessary to allow the existence of markets for certain products in the socialist construction process. But in broad terms this will be on a much smaller scale than capitalist commodity circulation. Therefore, we may think that money as a means of circulation, and more specifically, the form of money as a unit of account, will continue to exist throughout the socialist construction period.

One of the most important forms of exchange in commodity circulation in the capitalist system is the exchange between capital and labour. In order for money to

be transformed into capital, it must be exchanged with wage labour. Therefore, one of the most fundamental problems of the socialist construction process is to prevent the transformation of money into capital. At this point, the development of a payment system based on labour time is of decisive importance.

In the Soviet Union, the preservation of the “wage” form has had some contradictory consequences. On the one hand, from the early 1930s onwards, with practically zero unemployment in the cities, a huge blow was dealt to the commodity character of labour power and a huge step was taken towards socialist relations of production. In Marx’s analysis, wages and the labour market are regulated in general by the expansion and contraction of the “industrial reserve army”. Since zero unemployment means the practical elimination of the industrial reserve army, in a sense, the commodity character of labour power had been “suspended”. However, on the other hand, keeping the monetary form of wages untouched, in other words maintaining monetary relations, has meant that the abolition of the money form has been left unfinished. As a result, legal measures had to be taken so that money was used only as a unit of account and not transformed into capital. For example, the number of workers that small businesses could employ was limited. In other words, relations of production have been tried to be restrained by law.

By contrast, as Marx has proposed in his critique of the Gotha program, a “payment” system based on labour time limits monetary relations and makes the problem of computation easier. In the socialist construction attempts of the 20th century, such a system never became part of the agenda. In the Soviet Union, during the civil war, in kind payments and barter etc. were widespread, but they were not sustainable and were quickly abandoned after the civil war. Thereafter, the rouble continued to dominate the payments system.

Marx had thought that labour certificates could be used if labour was directly socialized. Today, an electronic system can be employed to keep regular track of who worked where and how long. Such a system could also have been established through the old-fashioned book-and-pen method, but today’s computing technologies will be much more effective, with the advantage of instant updating.

This is the general framework of the planned economy: calculation and payments system based on labour time will make planning very clear and easy. But it should be emphasized that this is just the general framework.

Prices

The payments to workers in terms of labour time do not have to take the form of “chits” or “tokens”; a card similar to today’s credit cards can do the same job. Parallel to this, it is natural that the products have some price in terms of labour time.

In this system, regardless of whether it is a consumer good or a means of produc-

tion, the production period and the labour time content for each product is always known. Therefore, workers know what kind of a consumption package they can access in exchange for the labour time they spend.

The time price of each product will include a “tax” to be set aside for social use, since a portion of total production will be reserved for those who can’t work, children, the elderly, the sick etc. The rate of this tax will be decided by the workers themselves, not by the “experts”.

A question might come to mind: for example, an automobile consists of thousands of pieces, each of them containing tens, perhaps hundreds of inputs. Some are mutually involved in the production process of each other. In this case, how will the “price” of each individual product be determined? Will not such a complex system create computational difficulties?

The answer to this question was actually given long ago, in practice. In a system where products are involved in the production of each other, mutual effects can be determined on a sectoral or product basis by means of input-output tables. For example, the reduction in labour time required to produce a bolt as productivity increases will also reduce the labour time of the products produced using the bolt, which will make bolt production more efficient. Alternatively, the bolt can be grouped with similar products, and the mutual effects can be observed group-wise. Such instantaneous changes can be observed instantly in an electronic system, but it will probably be more practical to get monthly or yearly averages so that the workers can see their future. As productivity rises, in the long run it is very possible to shorten the compulsory workday. In the last thirty or forty years of the capitalist system, productivity has increased, but working hours has also increased – one of the clearest indicators of the irrational nature of the present system.

Another advantage of the planned economy over the market economy is the balancing of supply and demand of products. In the capitalist market supply and demand rarely balance. Manufacturers predict the demand for their products through price signals and make their production plans accordingly. But since they act independently of each other, it is often impossible for supply to coincide with demand. Hence, there is either over- or under- production. Moreover, this non-overlapping continues in the next period. Thus there is always a waste in terms of the use of social resources.

By contrast, the planned economy has the means to solve this problem much more easily. It is already clear from the start how much should be produced of which product, and what inputs will be needed for it, thanks to both the producers and the consumers determining their needs in advance and reporting them. In fact, there are similar processes at work in capitalism. For example, those who buy their airline tickets online usually pay less when they act earlier, because this allows the

airline companies to plan their flights better. In today's world, where the use of the Internet is very common in everyday life, it is not difficult for consumers to make purchases in "virtual shops" and then go and get their products. Moreover, there can be discounts in case of early reporting of demand, since this facilitates the planning of production. The same applies to production units. As a result, a significant part of the needs for both production and consumption can be pre-reported, and the plan can be easily adjusted accordingly, with today's possibilities.

Undoubtedly, needs change and new needs will always arise; some products will fall out of favor and the demand for some new products will increase. But it is also clear that this is a problem that can be solved more easily in a planned system than in a market economy. There are many alternative ways of adjusting the "time prices" of products.

Three important points need to be addressed here. The imbalance between the production of means of production and the production of consumption items was a problem in Soviet type planning throughout the 20th century. As mentioned previously, the plan is never a purely economic phenomenon, and the plan targets reflect the political balance of power. In the Soviet case, the priority given to the production of means of production was the result of the power of the bureaucracy over the workers and the peasants. Therefore, the needs of the Red Army and the plant managers were almost always satisfied, but some consumption items, apart from the basic ones such as bread and vodka, were usually in short supply. In this regard, for example, the housing problem in the Soviet cities was a continuous source of discontent.

In the new socialism, the composition of social production has to be determined socially and periodically. The planning agency can determine a few possible "growth routes", and the society may choose one of these. The share of, say, healthcare in total production will be decided collectively. These procedures need not be similar to the referendums of today. In a socialist society, groups and individuals may use very different and more efficient channels for reporting their preferences. A real, lively "public opinion" that is updated every moment can be created even with today's technology.

The second important point is foreign trade, that is, trade with the capitalist world. In terms of the socialist construction process, the trade between socialist countries must be viewed as an "internal" trade. When these countries are connected around a single economic plan, with the gradual elimination of monetary transactions, the material flows between the different units will be determined according to the plan objectives. On the other hand, during the period of socialist construction, trade with capitalist countries will continue, though the ratio of foreign trade to total production will probably be much less. (Nowadays, the ratio of foreign trade

to GDP is close to 50 percent for Turkey, and more than 80 percent for Germany. It is hard to imagine a socialist country with such high ratios.) Foreign trade will, of course, be monopolized by the workers' state. A general rule can be adopted to keep foreign trade always within certain limits and in balance. The foreign exchange reserves that are obtained by exporting at world prices will be used for imports. The type of products or product groups to be imported can be decided by public vote. Priority may be given to the means of production and to certain critical items such as medicine. Beyond that, foreign trade can be held at a low level.

The third problem is about product diversification. In the capitalist world, there is constant product diversification, and therefore new pricing, especially in consumer goods. Nowadays, in neuro-economic experiments it is observed that the presence of too many kinds of products causes a "decision paralysis" in consumers. No doubt, in the socialist construction process there will not be too many product types. However, there is no need to completely terminate the product development and diversification activity. As the needs of the people increase and develop, new products will have to be produced. Some of the social resources can be directed to this field of research and development.

Profits and productivity

In capitalist society, the driving force of production is profit. The competitive process forces each unit of capital to produce efficiently in order to get more profit, and the prospect of surplus profits is the foundation for continuous innovations. However, in a socialism that deserves the name, the profit motive has no place. Socialist enterprises do not make a profit. Thus a question immediately arises: What will be the engine of the new system when the profit factor, which has made capitalism so dynamic, is removed? Why should people innovate?

Many people see the success of capitalism in the enrichment possibility it offers to individuals. In principle, everyone can be rich in this system. In practice, things do not really work that way.

The most pointed out positive side of capitalism is its technological dynamism and the innovative culture it creates. However, the negative social consequences of the profit motive (exploitation, sheer crime, wars, ecological destruction, etc.) far outweigh the "positive" returns of it. Yet on closer inspection, one can see that these so-called positive aspects are also outright myths. As always, capital has contradictory tendencies on this score.

On the one hand, capitalist production has subsumed science and human creativity. During the Industrial Revolution, many innovations originated from craftsmen and workers. But, over time, with research laboratories, university-industry cooperation, and many other methods, the "collective intelligence" of humanity was

captured by capital.

However, this is a form of domination that can never be complete. Capital, on the other hand, has opened up new ways of improving social creativity and spreading knowledge. People who upload educational videos on Youtube, or contributing to Wikipedia etc. are (usually) not expecting a profit. In fact, we are probably on the verge of an extraordinary explosion in the collective intelligence of humanity. The “civilizing mission of capital,” which Marx praised in the *Grundrisse*, will be taken over by socialism. In this process, the profit motive will leave its place to more “natural” passions, perhaps ambitions, and the social individuals of communism will certainly find better ways than Youtube.

But, without adequate regulations, this expectation may come to nought. The point is: there must be intrinsic mechanisms in the organization of the relations of production that will provide continuous innovations, technological dynamism, and constant increases in labour productivity.

One may think that, in the absence of the profit motive, productivity will be very low in socialism. Yet the goal of socialism is to increase disposable time as much as possible, and for this, labour productivity is of crucial importance.

In production based on capital, the value of every commodity is determined by its socially necessary labour time content. This is, in essence, a social average. Independent production units within a branch of production converge around the socially necessary labour time for producing a specific commodity. The social average required to produce a commodity creates a permanent pressure on less efficient enterprises. In other words, while capital tends to constantly reduce the labour time content of each commodity, it at the same time forces each producer to catch up with this ever-decreasing social average. Therefore, increasing productivity in terms of labour time is the main target of each production unit.

It is clear that a similar (daily, monthly, annual, etc.) social average calculation can easily be done in a system based on labour time. As a matter of fact, this average is not a very healthy indicator in capitalism because it passes through market mediation. As explained above, no one can precisely calculate the labour time socially necessary to produce an item. Hence, in the capitalist system, businesses are like travellers trying to find their way in the fog. They only know approximately where and how they are going. At any moment, prices may decrease, a crisis may explode, there is the risk of bankruptcy etc. Moreover, whether the commodity they have produced is socially useful or whether they have been successful in catching up with the socially necessary labour time can only be understood through sales. By contrast, in socialist planning, it is possible to calculate more or less precisely how many hours each product takes **on average**.

The social average is about not only the products, but also the workers. People

working more productively than the social average get more free time. If the work-day is four hours, those who complete an average day's work in, say, three hours get an extra hour of free time (monthly or yearly targets can also be determined). Those who stand below the social average will have to spend more time. The continuous updating of the social average will force the producers to take productivity very seriously. Of course there will be differences between plants and among workers for a variety of reasons, but it is certainly possible to take these differences into account (after a few years of trial-and-error).

The social averages will probably decrease regularly in the beginning, and reach a state of "balance" after a while. That is, it will be more or less known which task requires how many hours a day, and producers will act accordingly. But even if an equilibrium situation is reached, over time, people or groups that pull the average further down will also appear. Their "formulas" for increasing productivity (a new labour organization, a different approach, or whatever) have to be shared with the public; this can be compulsory at first, but, over time, "sharing the secret" can turn into a tradition. In the capitalist system, a company that improves productivity gets surplus profit for a while, but, after some time, as new technology spreads, these profits cease to exist. In the planning system based on labour time, individuals or plants that increase productivity will get additional disposable time for a while, but after some time this advantage will cease to exist. However, while the worker gets nothing from increased productivity in the capitalist system, in socialism it is in the interest of both the worker and the society to increase productivity.

This system resembles piece work, which Marx regards as the wage form that best fits capitalism, but there is an important distinction: in piece work, more efficient workers earn more money, but in socialism, more efficient workers will have more free time.

Two possibilities can be considered for those who **constantly** stand below the social average. Either these workers can be shifted to other tasks, or there may be an effort to solve the problem with additional investments. In any case, a system can be created in which, within at most a few years, all the workers will be able to adapt themselves and determine their own working preferences.

5. Industrial relations in a planned economy

More than 160 years ago, the young Marx quoted the following sentence from Wilhelm Schulz's book titled *Die Bewegung der Produktion* (*The Production Movement*):

In France it has been calculated that at the present stage in the development of production an average working period of five hours a day by every person capable of work could suffice for the satisfaction of all the material interests of

society.¹⁷

More than 160 years have passed but the average of five hours a day is still a dream. This is despite the fact that during this one and a half century, the most important scientific discoveries in the history of humanity, innovations that increase productivity hundreds of times, automation systems, computers etc. have become available!

This example shows that capitalist production creates great potentials for the development of humanity as a whole, while at the same time constantly suppressing these potentials. The primary aim of socialism is to release these potentials.

It is possible to set a number of goals in terms of industrial relations in the socialist construction process. These are actually trends that are potentially emerging in capitalist production, but which are virtually unrealizable due to capitalist relations of property and production. Under today's circumstances, the major goals may be full employment, full automation, zero work accidents and the continuous shortening of working hours.

Full employment can be achieved in capitalism, but only in extraordinary situations such as war, because, capitalist production requires the constant existence of an "industrial reserve army". However, in a planned economy, full employment is the rule, not the exception. Indeed, this is evident in the experience of the Soviet Union. In the socialist labour planning of the 21st century, the public announcement and continual updating of existing projects and their labour requirements to everyone can provide workers to report their work preferences beforehand, and thus facilitate planning for supply. In an environment where working hours are reduced, people will choose by regular or irregular intervals from a large number of options in front of them, rather than having to cling to their first job. With a system similar to the "user evaluations" on the Internet, jobs can be separated into several main categories according to their difficulty ratings. For example, it may be more difficult to work on a power plant in a mountainous region than serving on a beach. The goal in the long run is to bring the degrees of difficulty of all jobs closer together and to reduce as much as possible the differences in attractiveness between regions. Various measures can be taken to make easier the jobs that are found "difficult" for a variety of reasons and to make zones with harsh climatic conditions more attractive. As a result, the real problem that must be solved in the new socialism will not be full employment, but distributing the work preferences of producers between existing tasks in a balanced way.

It can also be said that full or near automation in production is absolutely possible. This is also linked to the problem of work safety. In a socialist economy that

17 Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx & Engels Collected Works, Vol. 3, Lawrence & Wishart, 2010, p. 242.

increases mechanization and automation as much as possible, the safety of workers will also be achieved to a considerable extent. Today, it is virtually impossible in, say, Turkey, to reduce work accidents to zero, which are clearly “murders” under capitalist conditions. According to the figures that can be determined, the highest number of workers, 1.970 people, died due to work accidents in Turkey in 2016. In 2017, in the four months between May and September, when the Ministry of Labour had declared the goal of “zero work accident,” this figure was 753! Marx was not using a literary metaphor when he said that capital sucks the blood of workers, just like a vampire.

In socialism, “zero work accident” is a very realistic goal that can be reached in a short time. Moreover, it is possible not only to eliminate work accidents, but also to make working conditions as comfortable as possible. In the socialist construction period, inspection of working conditions and problem reporting can easily become a culture in a few years. A simple rule can be set, for example, to “create a work environment where even a pregnant woman can work”.¹⁸ If a job is so hard that a pregnant woman cannot do it, it can be classified as primarily a “difficult” job; then measures can be taken to increase mechanization and automation to make it easier.

The continuous shortening of working hours, which does not seem possible under existing relations of production and property in the capitalist system, is again a realistic goal in the socialist construction process. A workday of six hours at the beginning, which can be reduced to five or four hours within a few years, is not a dream at all in today’s conditions. In the long run, in communist society, the goal is to leave the question of working hours behind.

However, in the socialist construction process, it is necessary to take quick and effective measures to direct the increased free time to meaningful and developing activities. The share of artistic, sporting, scientific, cultural, social activities in people’s lives can be increased in a very short time. The capitalism-specific “star” system transforms such activities into an entertainment business, carried out by a small number of people, with the vast majority being passive viewers.

When working hours are reduced, the “income” in terms of labour time of the workers do not necessarily decrease. When working hours are reduced in parallel with increased productivity, it will be possible to access more products with that decreased income, since the “social average labour time” contents and therefore the time prices of products will decrease also. In general, with socialism, the needs of the people will multiply and diversify, which will increase the demand for consumption. The direction of this consumption to rational channels, such as develo-

18 See Özgür Öztürk, “Piyasa Ekonomisinin Sonuna Doğru” [“Towards the End of the Market Economy”], *İktisat*, no 529, 2015, p. 48. <http://www.devrimcimarksizm.net/sites/default/files/piyasa-ekonomisinin-sonuna-dogru-ozgur-ozturk.pdf>.

ping public transportation, is not only possible, but has become almost a necessity, given the consumer culture that prevails in today's advanced capitalist societies.

In terms of industrial relations, some new forms that have emerged in today's capitalism can be carried forward in the socialist construction process. In the modern capitalist world, project-based work is becoming widespread in sectors such as engineering, construction, finance, and information technology. Moreover, many NGO's submit various projects to the national or supra-national institutions, and many people are employed in these projects. In the context of the existing relations of production, project-based work is an oddity that firms have invented to avoid paying employees during the "intermediate" periods. But, in socialism, project-based work can find a much more widespread development. There is no need to keep the "company" or the enterprise form of capitalism. Any feasible project, designed by anyone, can be submitted to the planning body, and if it is accepted through a social decision-making process, a part of social resources, including labour power, can be allocated to it.

Here, the possibilities are limited only by our imagination. Once the capitalist forms and the waste associated with them are left behind, we will recognize how enormous resources we collectively have. For example, large resources can be transferred to construction projects that will change the social environment. New campuses can be built according to communal architectural principles instead of the current housing style that is based on family and private property. In order to discourage living in large metropolitan cities, lots of projects can be developed to make other residential areas more attractive. Many projects can be devised for renewable energy sources, primarily solar energy, fast and widespread train lines, nurseries, retirement homes, health centers and so on. Obviously, the projects need not be only about buildings. A concert, shooting of a movie, a tournament, etc. can also be encouraged to be submitted as a project. Instead of doing the same job, workers can find opportunities to work on different projects and improve themselves.

In short, even on the basis of the current possibilities created by capitalism, a society can take many steps towards the socialism of the 21st century. It is clear that, the creative potential of the masses will provide many simple solutions to the practical problems of the socialist construction process. However, in the final analysis, the fate of the socialist countries will be determined by the advance of the world revolution. Without an internationalist political line, the achievements will be limited and reversible, as the experiences of the 20th century proved.

Conclusions

Compared with the period of the October revolution, the world and the tasks in front of the world revolution are obviously very different today. Marxism conceives

communism on the basis of the tendencies created by capitalist production. Thus, the differences have to be taken into account when thinking about and acting for a new revolutionary breakthrough today.

In the last thirty or forty years, the capitalist world underwent fundamental transformations. On the one hand, the share of the worker population increased rapidly, doubling in itself. Today, the proletariat constitutes more than half of the world population, and an overwhelming majority in all capitalist countries. Therefore, the worker-peasant alliance, which became the source of so many problems in the experience of the Soviet Union, will probably not be of capital importance in many countries in the new period. Likewise, the scale of the problem of collectivization in agriculture will probably be much smaller. All these are signs that the path of socialism will be much clearer in the 21st century.

But, on the other hand, new forms of production and the neoliberal assault on the working class created new problems that must be addressed. The economic and political organizations of the working class have lost power throughout the world. Under these conditions, the importance and urgency of an internationalist and international leadership cannot be exaggerated.

A “feasible” socialism is not an intellectual exercise in utopia. On the contrary, the new forms of production emerge as potentialities within capitalist production. Socialism/communism is possible today. However, in the absence of a revolution, these potentials cannot become a reality. I tried to discuss the outlines of a new planning system based on labour time calculation. Such a system can be put into application within, say, a decade, or some better system may be developed. Everything will be decided by the political struggles of the masses, on a world scale. Indeed, the advance of the world revolution is perhaps the most important determining factor for the socialism of the 21st century. If confined within national borders, any attempt at socialist construction will almost certainly turn into a failure, sooner or later. But, given the lessons of the past century, and the inability of capitalism to provide solutions to the problems of humanity, we have all the reasons to think that there is a better and feasible alternative. Today, in fact, we are closer to communism than all the previous generations.

The land of the October revolution: a country of women walking on the road to emancipation

Armağan Tulunay

Take the position of women. In this field, not a single democratic party in the world, not even in the most advanced bourgeois republic, has done in decades so much as a hundredth part of what we did in our very first year in power. We really razed to the ground the infamous laws placing women in a position of inequality, restricting divorce and surrounding it with disgusting formalities, denying recognition to children born out of wedlock, enforcing a search for their fathers, etc., laws numerous survivals of which, to the shame of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism, are to be found in all civilized countries. We have a thousand times the right to be proud of what we have done in this field. But the more thoroughly we have cleared the ground of the lumber of the old, bourgeois laws and institutions, the clearer it is to us that we have only cleared the ground to build on but are not yet building.

Vladimir I. Lenin¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, “A Great Beginning”, 1919, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1919/jun/19.htm>.

2017 is the 100th anniversary of the October revolution, the greatest victorious revolution of the working class to date. After the October revolution, the young Soviet power immediately took steps to fulfill the demands of the working class and the oppressed. Not only it did meet the demands of them, but also in the direction of the socialist revolution program, recognized a series of rights, that the oppressed did not even imagine their existence and know their importance, and gave conscious effort to make sure that they were used. The young workers' power was trying to lay the stones of the emancipation of the working class along with the other oppressed. Women, with oppressed nations, were at the top of these groups.

At the beginning of the 1900s it was almost impossible to talk about women's political rights in the world. It was a period when women struggled not only for the right to stand for election but even for the right to vote. And in many countries this struggle has continued for many years. In countries like Switzerland, so-called cradle of democracy, women gained the equal right to vote and stand for election in 1971. Only after women in Saudi Arabia gained this right in 2015, even if limited to local elections, it became possible to say that women have this right all around the world. After the October revolution, the Soviet power became the first state that recognized this right to women by immediately granting the widest political rights on equal terms to men. Similarly, abortion in many Western countries has become a legal right only in the second half of the 20th century (England 1967, USA 1973, France 1975, Italy 1978). Even today, in many countries it is not legal or it can only be done depending on certain conditions. We haven't forgotten yet that Erdogan lashed out against abortion by saying "every abortion is like an Uludere"² in 2012 and his attack was repelled by the struggle of the women. And still we struggle for free access to safe and legal abortion under hygienic conditions. Although antiabortion was dominant in its own land and all around the world, the Soviet power recognized this right with the conditions that we are fighting for the sake of virtually even today. The young workers' state made a number of laws that changed the lives of women, signed decrees.

In this article, we will try to evaluate the effects of the October revolution on women's lives and what kind of consequences it has. Within the limits of this article, we will first try to provide a framework of practical steps have been taken in the Soviet power in different aspects from participation to work force to education, from laws regulating marriage and divorce to collectivization of the domestic house work and child care, from the leap in the political scene to the abortion, etc. We will then focus on the question if it was possible to preserve the continuity of these rights and if not, we'll try to explain the reasons for the emergence of new situation.

² Uludere/Roboski is a massacre where 34 Kurdish peasants were bombarded to death by the Turkish air force, not one single person has been prosecuted.

And finally we aim to draw lessons on the capacity of the working class program in terms of the emancipation of women in the Soviet experience. Before this, it will be useful to have a brief look at the conditions women had been living in Russia before the October revolution.

The Situation of Women during the Tsarist Period

During the tsarist period, women were first slaves of their fathers, then their husbands. They were getting married before they were 12. On the day of the wedding, the bride's father gave the groom a whip as a gift, and in almost every house there was a tradition that the whip was hung in bedrooms. Women did not have the right to divorce. If a woman abandoned her husband, she was handed back to her husband by police force. A married woman did not have her own passport. She was registered to her husband's passport.³ She did not have the right to have her own property. She did not have the right to make decisions on the family's properties. Not only on the properties, women did not have power on their children either.

Without the permission of her husband, a married woman could not even look for a job. The living and working conditions of women who were able to work with their husbands' permission were also very heavy. With the increase in mechanization, jobs that do not require physical power were creating an employment area for women, but women's salaries were only as half as men's salaries. There weren't rights such as maternity leave or breast-feeding permission. Many sources that describe the period tell that women have worked in factories by hiding their pregnancies until the beginning of severe birth pain, or even sometimes working women gave birth at their workbenches and then continue to their work. 95% of women were giving birth without any medical help, on average 30,000 women were dying every year during childbirth, Russia was leading the way among European countries in terms of child death.⁴ No methods were applied that a woman can access in order to prevent pregnancy. Because abortion was also forbidden, pregnant women were appealing to experienced women of the village who can end pregnancy with nails and hooks.⁵ Naturally, this procedure was putting women's lives under danger and causing diseases, injuries and the frazzling of women in young ages.

As in other capitalist countries; prostitution was a very serious problem in combination with male domination, economic difficulties, and making the female body a commodity that could be bought and sold. The fact that the women were in a pre-

³ Here, passport refers to a specific document used to travel within Russia.

⁴ Chanie Rosenberg, *Kadınlar ve Perestroika [Women and Perestroika]*, çev. Osman Akınhay, İstanbul: Pencere Yayınları, 1990, p. 88.

⁵ Sheila Rowbotham, *Kadınlar, Direniş ve Devrim [Women, Resistance and Revolution]*, çev. Nilgün Şarman, İstanbul: Payel Yayınları, 1994, p. 161.

carious position, to say it with their logic at the time, women being ownerless was imposing prostitution as a way of livelihood. A study conducted in 1889 confirms this fact by showing that 83.5% of the registered prostitutes in Russia are women in the worst-case strata, and 65% are women who were servants once in the bourgeois and aristocratic homes.⁶ In Tsarist Russia, a so-called struggle against prostitution was being carried out. In reality, prostitutes were registered and prostitution was institutionalized. On the other hand, women were convicted to prostitution in the rest of their lives by a kind of blacklisting.

Women were also very underdeveloped in education. According to the last census of 1913, made before the October revolution, 83% of women did not even know how to read and write. Almost all of the remaining women were women from the upper classes, and it is estimated that most of those women have been sent to exile with the revolution, so the proportion of literate women has fallen to 5% immediately after the revolution.⁷ In the case of the Peoples of the East, this is getting even worse, and it usually is not even possible to find a single woman who is literate.

The situation of women was relatively worse in this region which is under the influence of Islam and will contain Soviet Republics of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, than other parts of Russia. Women were considered as goods which were being bought and sold. There was a system called “kalim” which was an equivalent of bride wealth. Women were bought with this system by their husband, and then the husband had unlimited authority over the woman. If he wanted, a man could marry more than one woman. After her husband had died, a woman had no right to speak about her own life, and this time she became the property of her husband’s eldest brother. If he wanted, he could have kept the woman for himself or could sell her to another man.

Women living in the East had to cover themselves up. In addition to burqa, women in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan had to cover their faces with a special black veil which is woven from horse hair. “In this way a woman covered with paranjas (burqa) looks completely like a ghost, a dark room with feet. Her dark and amorphous image was forming a great, inconceivable contradiction with the luminous bazaars and palaces and colorfully dressed men of Samarkand, Tashkent and Bukhara.”⁸

Of course it is not possible to talk about political rights of women in a country

6 Gül Özgür, *Rusya’da 1917 Sosyalist Ekim Devrimi ve Kadınların Kurtuluşu Cilt:1 [Socialist October Revolution and Emancipation of Women in Russia Volume:1]*, İstanbul: Dönüşüm Yayınları, 1993, p. 394.

7 George St. George, *Sovyetler Birliğinde Kadın [Our Soviet Sister]*, çev. S. Özbudun- O. Yener, İstanbul: El Yayınları, 1987, p. 23.

8 Gül Özgür, *Rusya’da 1917 Sosyalist Ekim Devrimi ve Kadınların Kurtuluşu Cilt:2 [Socialist October Revolution and Emancipation of Women in Russia Volume:2]*, İstanbul: Dönüşüm Yayınları, 1993, p. 92.

where women are pushed into the background. During the oppressive era of Tsardom, women felt most of this oppression in political rights. Woman did not have the right to vote or stand for election. Women were completely excluded from political life because they were not allowed to work in many occupations and also not allowed to work in administrative areas.

That is to say, the October Revolution rose in the lands of an almost hellish country for women; Soviet power was struggling against the repressive, reactionary structures, habits, traditions, rules that have rooted for centuries for the salvation of women and the working class.

Women as an actor of the revolution

So, what did women do about their condition being so underdeveloped? Did they buckle under the difficulties and pressure or did they begin struggle? While answering this question, we need to go back to 1895 from 1917, we see that there were four women including Krupskaya as leaders of the organization named “Union of Struggle for the Liberation of Working Class” which was formed by Lenin. In the light of the experiences of this organization which can be considered as the first seeds of Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP), in 1900 Krupskaya wrote an illegal brochure named *Woman as a worker* which was addressing the situation of women and their political duties.⁹ In 1905, they were struggling in the ranks of the revolution alongside with men. Between 1905 and 1907, Bolsheviks were doing systematic agitation and organization work among woman workers, and organizing meetings where women problems were discussed and women’s demands were risen. Although the majority was intellectuals at that time, the rate of female members of the RSDLP was 15%, even higher than the German Social Democratic Party, which has a much longer history and stronger tradition.¹⁰

The period of repression and reaction between 1908 and 1912 led to the arrest of many female leaders, the expulsion of them to exile, and the movement retreated to a completely illegal area. After this period, as the working class movement revived and the opportunities of making legal demonstrations increased, the products of the systematic studies carried out among the women workers also started to show themselves. On 8 March 1913, RSDLP decided to celebrate International Working Women’s Day for the first time in St. Petersburg with a mass demonstration, and an enthusiastic meeting was held on the lead of woman workers, especially textile workers. International Working Women’s Day was celebrated with a special issue of *Pravda* which was published that day.¹¹ A year after the women’s letters to *Prav-*

⁹ Ibid., p. 103.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 109.

¹¹ Alexandra Kollontay, *Birçok hayat yaşadım*, çev. Saliha Nazlı-Süheyla Kaya, İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, 2010, p. 115.

da grew like an avalanche, on March 8, 1914, *Rabotnitsa* (*The Woman Worker*) which was Bolsheviks' first journal for women began to be published by a publishing committee of female revolutionaries such as Nadezhda Krupskaya and Inessa Armand.¹²

After publishing seven issues, *Rabotnitsa* was closed together with all other revolutionary publications, with the beginning of the World War I. With the effect of their position against the imperialist war, Bolsheviks' power within the peasant and working women who have suffered the most from the war increased. The biggest breakthrough until that time took place with the firing of women in the wake of the February revolution, which again took place in 8th of March Women's Day. As Trotsky tells in the *History of Russian Revolution*, one day before, no one thought "Women's Day" could start the revolution:

Thus the fact is that the February revolution was begun from below, overcoming the resistance of its own revolutionary organizations, the initiative being taken of their own accord by the most oppressed and downtrodden part of the proletariat – the women textile workers, among them no doubt many soldiers' wives. The overgrown breadlines had provided the last stimulus. About 90,000 workers, men and women, were on strike that day. The fighting mood expressed itself in demonstrations, meetings, encounters with the police. The movement began in the Vyborg district with its large industrial establishments; thence it crossed over to the Petersburg side. There were no strikes or demonstrations elsewhere, according to the testimony of the secret police. On that day detachments of troops were called in to assist the police – evidently not many of them – but there were no encounters with them. A mass of women, not all of them workers, flocked to the municipal дума demanding bread. It was like demanding milk from a he-goat. Red banners appeared in different parts of the city, and inscriptions on them showed that the workers wanted bread, but neither autocracy nor war. Woman's Day passed successfully, with enthusiasm and without victims. But what it concealed in itself, no one had guessed even by nightfall.¹³

After that first night, the soldiers had to join the revolution for the uprising to be successful. Women are involved also in this struggle, even forming the bravest, most heroic divisions of the struggle, and leading it. Trotsky tells like this:

A great role is played by women workers in relationship between workers and soldiers. They go up to the cordons more boldly than men, take hold of the rifles, beseech, almost command: "Put down your bayonets – join us." The soldiers

¹² Özgür, *Cilt 1*, p. 111.

¹³ Lev Trotskiy, *Rus Devrim Tarihi Cilt 1 Şubat Devrimi: Çarlığın devrilmesi* [*The history of Russian Revolution Volume I February Revolution: The overthrow of the Tsardom*], çev. Bülent Tanatar, İstanbul: 1998, p. 112

are excited, ashamed, exchange anxious glances, waver; someone makes up his mind first, and the bayonets rise guiltily above the shoulders of the advancing crowd. The barrier is opened, a joyous and grateful "Hurrah!" shakes the air. The soldiers are surrounded. Everywhere arguments, reproaches, appeals the revolution makes another forward step.¹⁴

When the Tsar, which seemed to be unshaken, fell after the February revolution which erupted due to women's struggle, the struggle of women was saluted in *Pravda* with such enthusiastic lines:

Salute to the women!

Salute to the International!

Women were the first to go out to the streets of St. Petersburg on Women's Day...

Salute to the women!¹⁵

After the February revolution, until the working class took power with the October Revolution, women took an active part both in protecting the achievements of the February revolution and in the struggle to organize the October revolution. They participated in factory committees and militia. *Rabotnitsa*, which was banned in 1914 after the great laundering strike in Petrograd, where 5,000 women workers joined, started to be published again. When they were repressed after the events of July 1917, the only legal publication in the hands of the Bolsheviks was *Rabotnitsa* published every 10 days and 40,000 copies were published.¹⁶

Despite all this aliveness, the prejudices, which have been deeply rooted for centuries, continued to exist. These prejudices did not affect only male workers, they had effects also on Bolsheviks' base. Women, without any tradition or experience, were organizing effective strikes, and forming strike committees themselves. But even women workers did not believe that women had the capacity to take part in soviets to represent all workers. For instance, even though textile workers were overwhelmingly female, only 2 of the 15 textile workers' unions' leaders were woman workers. While half of the workers of Petrograd were women workers, the proportion of female delegates in the soviet organs was only around 5%.¹⁷

When the working class took power with the help of peasants together with the lead of Bolsheviks, on 7 November, according to today's calendar, 25 October according to old calendar, women participated in the leading of the revolution.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 119.

¹⁵ Özgür, *Cilt I*, p. 113.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 116.

¹⁷ Rosenberg, p. 98.

And the Soviet power, the product of the greatest victorious worker's revolution of history, was facing a struggle to provide a future for women who have struggled for Soviets in all the toughest conditions, after hundreds of years of reactionary, oppressive traditions, under the dominance of the rules and turning their faces to Bolsheviks with the hope of salvation.

The steps and effects of Soviet power until the domination of the bureaucracy

The Soviet power, from the beginning of its earliest days, immediately passed enactments that annihilated the unjust legislations that kept women under control. However, they did not only give women the rights previously granted to men, they made decisions and laws that would remove the sexist social rules that shook the women and the men, cut the reactionary ties and open the way for the construction of a new society.

Marriage and divorce

Only two months after the October revolution, in December 1917 two enactments about divorce, marriage, women's and men's decree on children were published. Both marriage and divorce made entirely voluntary. Church marriage was not banned, but was invalidated in terms of the legal system. After that, only civil marriage was recognized by law. Registration of church marriages that was made before the revolution, was necessary for them in order to be recognized legally. In this way, the Soviet government attempted to break the influence of the church on the regulation of society's life, while on the other hand it was carrying out this struggle in a careful way, not to hurt people's beliefs.

Obligations for married women such as taking her husband's surname, needing her husband's permission to look for a job and work, were removed. The biggest change those two enactments brought was the provision of equality of marital and non-marital children before the law. Before the October revolution, women did not have a right to demand maintenance for non-marital children, this enactment recognized this right to women and children. Equal right of speak and authority was given to men and women in decisions about children.

Just like marriage, divorce was also monopolized by the church and was extremely difficult. Because it brought a very serious financial burden, it was almost impossible for men from the working classes to use, only men from the upper class could use that right. Women did not have this right anyway. The Soviet power immediately made divorce an equal and extraordinarily easy procedure for both women and men. Application of only one of the parties was enough for divorce. If all the issues were agreed between the parties, application was enough for divorce,

if not agreed, decisions taken at the local court in accordance with the lawsuits. The fact that the parties were not allowed to intervene in each other's life after the divorce can be regarded as one of the important measures of Soviet power against male dominance when the pressures faced by women who are divorced or want to divorce even today is considered.

On October 17, 1918 approximately one year after the revolution, "Code on Marriage, Family and Guardianship" was enacted. This code was based on the separation between the before marriage assets and after marriage assets of spouses. Adoption was banned in order to protect children's rights, especially in rural areas, because of the widespread adoption to be used as labor force and to prevent the craftiness of getting more share in the reorganization of the society by making the family population more crowded. It was declared that children who were adopted before the code, had equal rights with other children. It has been decided that decisions regarding children's education, custody should be taken with mutual agreement of the parents. To discipline children by physical sanction was banned.

This code, accepted in 1918, was valid until a new code was enacted on January 1, 1927, and in the period between the two codes, enactments were introduced which brought some secondary regulations on this area.¹⁸

Abortion right and birth control

By a decree of October 18, 1920, abortion was accepted as a free and legal right for all women on condition that they were performed in state hospitals in the first three months of pregnancy. Thus, **for the first time in the world, women had the right of legal abortion in the territories of the October revolution, under the workers' power.**

The Soviet power was providing an accessible abortion on healthy and hygienic conditions to women who had previously risked their health and took the risk of miscarriage. In the world where the church and the dominant opposition against abortion speaks of "the right to live of the fetus", the decree published by the workers' government puts the right to live and health of the woman at the center and punishes not the abortion but those who risk the woman by illegal abortion. These words were written in the Abortion Decree that claimed in 1920:

But as the moral survivals of the past and the difficult economic conditions

18 We stated that with a decree issued in December 1917, Soviet power abolished the necessity of using the man's surname as the common surname of the spouses. A decree issued in 1921 extended this right and allowed the spouses to use their own surnames or surnames of women/men as common surnames, to give their children their surnames. These kind of and similar resolutions, without making any fundamental changes, have brought new annexes to the law which called Family Code of 1918.

of the present still compel many women to resort to this operation¹⁹, the People's Commissariats of Health and of Justice, anxious to protect the health of the women and considering that the method of repressions in this field fails entirely to achieve this aim, have decided:

1. To permit such operations to be made freely and without any charge in Soviet hospitals, where conditions are assured of minimizing the harm of the operation.
2. It is absolutely forbidden for anyone but a doctor to carry out this operation.
3. Any nurse or midwife found guilty of making such an operation will be deprived of the right to practice, and tried by a People's Court.
4. A doctor carrying out an abortion in his private practice for the purposes of profit will be called to account by a People's Court.²⁰

The Soviet power, in recognition of this right, also carried out propaganda activities in order to state that abortion should not be used as a birth control method and that it is a serious operation involving various risks. The reason Soviet power ran those propaganda activities is because abortion actually became a birth control method due to inadequacy of other birth control methods. It was ordinary for a 30 year old Soviet woman to have abortion on average 5-7 times.²¹ At this point, when it is said that women have a lack of access to contraceptive methods, this point should be emphasized: Many birth control methods used today were not known at the time of the legalization of the abortion, even the birth control pill had not been found yet. Implementation of birth control methods, such as abortion, was prohibited not only in Russia but all over the world, it was a period when scientific work about this topic was banned around the world. In this sense, Soviet Union was the first country to conduct medical research with clear control and support of the state to develop birth control methods in order to minimize the number of abortions and wide-ranging researches to carry out the abortion with the least risks in terms of women's health.

Education

19 Here, the operation refers to hidden and illegal abortion

20 "Soviet Decree on Abortion (1920)", <http://alphahistory.com/russianrevolution/soviet-decree-on-abortion-1920/>

21 Georges Duby, Michelle Perrot, Françoise Thébaud, *Kadınların tarihi Cilt V: Yirminci Yüzyılda Kültürel Bir Kimliğe Doğru [A History of Women Volume V: Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century]*, çev. Ahmet Fethi, İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2005, p. 230.

In the tsarist Russia, 70 percent of the population was illiterate. This proportion was even higher among peasants and women. In 1920, the rate of illiteracy among the general population was 67% and among women it was 77.5%.²² The Bolsheviks embarked on a great mobilization of the whole society with the “Decree on Eradication of Illiteracy” published in Lenin’s signature on December 26, 1919. Women had to participate in social life and labor force in order to remove the oppression of women and this could only be provided with education. So Bolsheviks went over this topic with a more systematic way.

125 thousand reading and writing schools were established. Many women learnt how to write and read by writing the slogans of Bolsheviks on blackboards.²³ The proportion of illiteracy decreased quickly over the years. In 1932 only 9.2% of woman workers were illiterate, three years later this proportion fell below 6%.²⁴ In the tsarist period, even among women from the upper classes, the proportion of high education was very low. This was because girl students were not accepted in most of the universities, girls from rich families could only get higher education abroad. Ten years after the October revolution a completely different picture showed up. During 1927-28, 28% of the students who were studying at the university were girl students. Approximately a decade later, in 1939-40, this number rose to 49.3%.²⁵

It is necessary to say that the breakthrough in the field of education is the effect of tens of thousands of women coming to the cities from the villages and learning to read and write in the factories. At that time Education Committees were established in the factories. Not only literacy was taught in these committees, but also many activities in the field of culture and art were organized. Workers organized various theatrical works, poem reading nights, organized orchestras and performed concerts themselves. Effect of this situation is mentioned in a source as follows:

Both man and woman workers began to flock to theaters, ballets and concerts, which were formerly privileged areas of the upper classes. In the art, a situation such as this had arisen, as if every person was taking a brush and putting a picture. Experiments were being conducted in every area of life. In 1918, schools opened a month later than the summer holidays, as teachers had to search for solutions in a series of discussions and develop an arrangement to develop the new education of future founders of socialism according to the most modern methods of the most advanced educators in the world. At every corner, discussions were

22 Serebrennikov, G.N., “The position of women in the U.S.S.R”, 1937, p. 80. <http://revolutionarydemocracy.org/archive/womenUSSR.pdf>

23 Rosenberg, p. 104.

24 Serebrennikov, p. 80.

25 Nina Popova, *Sosyalizm diyarında kadın [Women in the Land of Socialism]*, çev. Murat Güneşdoğdu- İsmail Yarkın, İstanbul: İnter Yayınları, 1999, p. 70.

being held in every aspect of the world.²⁶

Family and care work

One of the prerequisites for the emancipation of women for the leadership of the October revolution was to join the social labor force, and the other was to collectivize the household affairs that keep them in the house. They were moving from the idea that without these two, it would not be possible for women to build their own future together with the new society. In this direction, a series of steps were taken after the revolution. Maternity houses, child care centers, laundry facilities, laundry repairs and sewing centers and dining halls were opened. House-communes were established for people living alone and married couples. These collective centers were opening up within opportunities, their numbers have only increased over time. For this reason, long-term steps were taken to collectivize housekeeping and care work, while ideologically struggling against sexist division of labor within the family. Domestic housework, sick, child, and elderly care were accepted as duties of women as a habit of a well-established male-dominated society; and these habits were continuing even in the homes of the party militants. Lenin insisted on this issue, generally within the working class, but especially within the party. Clara Zetkin quotes Lenin's words in *Reminiscences of Lenin*:

Unfortunately it is still true to say of many of our comrades, 'scratch a Communist and find a Philistine.' Of course, you must scratch the sensitive spot, their mentality as regards woman. Could there be a more damning proof of this than the calm acquiescence of men who see how women grow worn out in the petty, monotonous household work, their strength and time dissipated and wasted, their minds growing narrow and stale, their hearts beating slowly, their will weakened? Of course, I am not speaking of the ladies of the bourgeoisie who shove on to servants the responsibility for all household work, including the care of children. What I am saying applies to the overwhelming majority of women, to the wives of workers and to those who stand all day in a factory.

So few men – even among the proletariat – realize how much effort and trouble they could save women, even quite do away with, if they were to lend a hand in 'woman's work.' But no, that is contrary to the 'right and dignity of a man.' They want their peace and comfort. The home life of the woman is a daily sacrifice to a thousand unimportant trivialities. The old master right of the man still lives in secret.²⁷

In addition to this ideological struggle, it should be emphasized that even though

²⁶ Rosenberg, s. 105.

²⁷ Clara Zetkin, *Reminiscences of Lenin*, 1924, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/zetkin/1924/reminiscences-of-lenin.htm>

the steps taken for the collective centers were inadequate in terms of both quantity and quality and in terms of meeting the need, but that the young workers' state did not abandon these steps within the opportunities.

Between 1917 and 1926, the number of nurseries, first in the Soviet Russia (briefly RSFSR) and after in the Soviet Union as a whole was as follows:²⁸

Year	RSFSR	USSR
1917	14	-
1918	78	-
1919	126	-
1920	565	-
1921	668	769
1922	914	967
1923	447	535
1924	503	615
1925	536	708
1926	610	824

We see in this table that the number of nurseries was constantly increasing from 1917 to 1922, and the number has fallen between 1922 and 1923. While it is not possible to exactly explain the reason of this regression, it can be thought as a result of the application of the NEP period to the market or the change and/or centralization of the nursery system. After 1923, the continuous-rising tendency is reemerging. If we look at the longer term, we can say that the capacity in child care has reached a very high level in the USSR over the years.²⁹

	1914	1937
Number of beds in regular nurseries	550	627.817
Number of birth centers	9	4.175
Total number of visits per year in birth centers (thousands)	44	39.300
Number of baby nutrition centers (milk kitchens)	-	1.509

Dining halls were opened for the collectivization of house work. In 1919-1920

²⁸ Özgür, *Cilt 2*, p. 28.

²⁹ Popova, p. 81.

90% of the Petrograd population, 60% of the Moscow population, a total of 12 million people were eating in these dining halls.³⁰ When we look at the figures for 1932, this number was around 15 million in the Soviet Union and about 30 million cups of food were served every day.³¹

Despite these numbers, it is important to emphasize that women were also resisting the new system with their old habits. Because of the fact that the food in the collective centers were unsatisfactory, the careless use of common materials, the disorganized and inadequate conditions; women did not leave their individual pots.³² Trotsky explains the environment created by people who have not yet absorbed the collective life and have been kneaded by the old society like this: “Many houses which had been allotted to families living in communes got into filthy conditions and became uninhabitable. People living in them did not consider communistic housing as a beginning of new conditions. They looked upon their dwellings as upon barracks provided by the state.”³³

Regardless of the emerging picture, it should be emphasized here that, from the first day of the workers’ state, the state was aware of the double burden women carries on their shoulders, and has tried to socialize this burden by lifting it from the shoulders of women. The labor the woman spends in the house has never been invisible to the Bolsheviks.

Participation in the workforce

The policy of the October revolution and of its leaders, especially Lenin, was based on the idea that factors such as illiteracy which hinder women from being a part of the social production have to be abolished in order to open the way for the salvation of women. In this respect, the enactments issued immediately after the October Revolution brought regulations that enables women to have equal rights with men in this area instead of laws of pre-revolution Russia that was prohibiting women from participating in the labor force.

Of course, the primary of them was equal right to work and equal pay for equal work. In 1914, daily wage of women was only 44% of men’s daily wage.³⁴ With the October revolution, sex-based discrimination in wage classifications has been abolished and forbidden. Although this equality was provided in the law and different charges were not applied for the same job, when the year 1918 came, the

30 Rosenberg, p. 103.

31 Serebrennikov, p. 68.

32 Ibid., p. 170.

33 Ibid., p. 172.

34 Serebrennikov, p. 11.

average wage of women was only half of the average wage of men.³⁵ However, this did not arise from the fact that the principle of “equal pay for equal work” was not practically applied. This occurred because of the fact that women were working in less qualified jobs, in sectors that require less training, and because wages in these sectors were lower than in other areas.

Is it possible to say that the separation of women’s job and men’s job in the field of social production in the young workers’ state continues? Yes. Is it because the workers’ state has a sexist understanding of this issue? No. Bolsheviks were trying to attract women, who are mostly illiterate and have not received vocational training, to the social production and as a result women have been employed in fields where they can do their best known work in the direction of the centuries’ old sexist division of labor in society. In other words, since women were not competent enough to work in qualified jobs right after the revolution, discrimination between women’s work and men’s work was a necessity. But it is often repeated in decisions taken by Soviet organs that this is a situation that needs to be changed when building a new society, and more importantly, a conscious and organized struggle was carried out to make women’s labor more qualified. Only four days after the October Revolution, October 29, 1917, the decision to ban the employment of women in more than 50 jobs threatening their health can be considered as one of the reasons for this distinction. But this prohibition was abolished in the next period as mechanization increased in the industry, the decisiveness of physical power was reduced, and hygienic working conditions for women’s health were provided.³⁶ The Soviet Union has become the country where the female labor force was used the most in the professions which are seen as “male jobs”. The numbers in the mining sector, where almost only male workers are working even today, are striking, especially when compared to numbers from various Western countries in similar years:

Women play a very negligible role in capitalist mining industry. The proportion of women to the total numbers employed in the mining industries is, for France (1931), 2.7 per cent; for Italy (1931), 1.8 per cent; for Germany (1932), 1.0 per cent; USA (1930), 0.6 per cent; and in Great Britain, 0.6 per cent. In the USSR women represent 27.9 per cent of the total number of people working in the mining industry.³⁷

In order to make women’s labor more qualified, basic training and vocational training was carried out in the factories while women’s higher education was sup-

35 Özgür, *Cilt 1*, p. 49.

36 Serebrennikov, p. 6.

37 Tony Cliff, “Class Struggle and Women’s Liberation”, 1984, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/cliff/works/1984/women/09-revrus.htm>

ported at the same time. In the decade after the revolution, women were forming nearly one-third of the university students. Even though it was almost impossible to find a female engineer or technician before the revolution, and only 3 of 848 engineers in Petersburg were women in 1899, according to the 1939 census, 24.000 of 76.000 engineers in the country were women. More than 1 million women worked in the medical field, and 126.000 of them were doctors. However, before the revolution there were only 2.000 female doctors in Russia.³⁸

In Russia before the revolution, one of the biggest obstacles to women's participation in the labor force was pregnancy and childbirth. As mentioned above, female workers had to work by hiding their pregnancies, they were taken out of the job when they are noticed or worked at the workbench almost until birth. This situation caused woman and infant deaths during childbirth. Since women started to work immediately after birth, they could not get enough care and sometimes infant deaths were happening because of starving. One of the first enactments after the revolution was about this topic. It was forbidden for pregnant women to be employed in tiring jobs, to be removed from work, and to be sent to other work places without their own consent. Women were granted a 16-week mandatory pregnancy, birth and maternity leave. In some jobs or in twin infant pregnancies, this period could be extended. During this leave period, it was mandatory to pay the women in full rate. Thus, it was aimed that this right should not be left on paper, and that the necessity of actually working for the women not to emerge. Women who began to work after maternity leave and continued to breastfeed were given breastfeeding break every 3.5 hours that was excepted as work hours with no less than half an hour each. Mothers and children have the right to free health care in hospitals and clinics, and if there is no place for the sick child, the doctor will give the mother a paid leave during the illness of the child. The decisions that started immediately after the revolution and were taken at various times were systematized with the Labor Act, accepted in 1922; this represented the most developed rights that women had all around the world in this area.³⁹

Participation in political life

38 Popova, p. 73. (In the book, the author didn't write the exact year, instead wrote "50 years ago". Since it was published in 1949, 1899 was written as our assumption)

39 Rosenberg, p. 101. It can be said that these rights are highly advanced even after 100 years, even the rights of women in the most developed capitalist societies are taken into account. Even today, in many countries women are fighting for these rights. It cannot even be said that none of these countries can provide same state guarantee that can be provided by the workers' state. The only criticism to the workers' state may be that they cannot impose an inalienable paternity leave among all these decisions. However, this criticism can be made because we have had a 100-year more experience after the October revolution.

The October revolution has been a first in the world in terms of women's participation in politics. Many sources tell that after the October revolution, women were given equal rights to elect and be elected, adding that "these rights existed only in Norway and Denmark at that time." However, in those two countries, it was the right to vote which came to the agenda with the Suffragette movement rising all over the world. In 1913 in Norway, in Denmark in 1915, women had only the right to vote. **For the first time in the world, women in Russia have the equal right to vote and stand for election with men.**⁴⁰

Moreover, this right was obtained during the events of July after the February revolution, on the eve of the October revolution. And after the revolution, the young workers' state also made a great effort to use it in practice, not just a right written on paper.

In the summer of 21 February 1920, published in *Pravda* under the title "Women workers", Lenin said:

Where there are no landlords, capitalists and merchants, where the government of the toilers is building a new life without these exploiters, there equality between women and men exists in law.

But that is not enough!

It is a far cry from equality in law to equality in life.

We want women workers to achieve equality with men workers not only in law, but in life as well. For this, it is essential that women workers take an ever increasing part in the administration of public enterprises and in the administration of the state.

By engaging in the work of administration women will learn quickly and they will catch up with the men!

Therefore, elect more women workers, both Communist and non-Party, to the Soviet. If she is only an honest woman worker who is capable of managing work sensibly and conscientiously, it makes no difference if she is not a member of the Party--elect her to the Moscow Soviet!

Let there be more women workers in the Moscow Soviet! Let the Moscow proletariat show that it is prepared to do and is doing everything for the fight to victory, for the fight against the old inequality, against the old, bourgeois, humiliation of women!

The proletariat cannot achieve complete

⁴⁰ Finland is the first country in the world where women joined the parliament. In the elections held in 1907, 19 parliamentary deputies were elected to the 200-seat parliament. In Russia, the age of election started at 18, while in Finland it was 24. The principle of equal voting and the right to stand for elections, regardless of gender, applied only to parliamentary elections. Municipal elections were subject to property-based distinctions. More importantly, women did not have equal rights with men. It was only in 1930 that married women had equal rights with their husbands (Jason Lavery, *The History of Finland*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006, p. 77).

freedom, unless it achieves complete freedom for women!⁴¹

They were calling on women who were half of the society but who have been ignored for centuries to join the administration of the country. They were also struggling against the oppression of the educational traditions, and to the prejudices of the past. Of course the Bolsheviks were aware that this was a difficult task, but it was an irreplaceable task too. This perspective can be seen in its most striking form in Lenin's article, "Will the Bolsheviks be able to hold it in the hands of power?": "We are not utopians. We know that an unskilled labourer or a cook cannot immediately get on with the job of state administration... However, we demand that the task of managing the country be taught immediately to all cooks."⁴²

These efforts of the Bolsheviks at the level of propaganda and agitation were supported by educational groups established in factories and villages. This systematic work has begun to bear its fruits from the first years of the revolution. Thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of women were joining the ranks of the revolution. Here, delegate meetings were used as an important tool to ensure that women who had never been involved in politics, joins the soviets and the party. The delegate meetings system worked like this: In every factory, in every neighborhood, in every village, all women were invited to a meeting, an average delegate for every 40-50 women was selected for the centralization of the topics discussed at these meetings, these delegates were attending the district delegate meetings. After the women were selected, they were delegates for periods ranging from 3 to 6 months. Women who were elected as delegates were sent to politics schools. In 1922, every 10 women were represented by a delegate so that more and more women could be included in this system. In 1925, the organizational proposal presented at the 14th Congress of the party shows how massive the delegate meetings were:

The most important feature of the reporting period is - as in all other organizational fields - the development of delegate meetings to take a massive form. We note that during the reporting period women's electors of women delegates increased in the city and in the village. The number of female voters in the city increased by 30% during the reporting period, a total of 1,600,000. However, the number of female voters in the village has increased by 70%, a total of 7,000,000... Significant progress has been made in the participation of women in soviets, executive committees and congresses. The proportion of women in the village soviets increased from 2% to 9%, from 0.6% to 7% in provincial executive committees and from 4% to 7% in provincial executive committees. There is also an increase

41 V. I. Lenin, "To the working Women" 1920, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1920/feb/21.htm>.

42 St. George, p. 23.

in the percentage of women in the unions as well, unfortunately this is not a rapid progress. In the union enterprise commissions, from 14% to 16.5%, but there is a more remarkable increase in the central committees of unions, from 4% to 15%.⁴³

Vladimir Mayakovski tells the truth that women are becoming an increasingly larger part of political life, showing themselves in the organizational numbers that was presented in the congress:

From turning machines
from plows
hundreds of thousands of lean women
with red kerchiefs
learning to set up
and to manage⁴⁴

These developments are also confirmed by the increase in the proportion of women party members to number of total party members.⁴⁵

Year	Ratio of woman members (%)	
1898	15	I. Congress (RSDLP)
1918	7,8	VII. Congress (RCP/B)
1924	9	XIII. Congress (CPSU)
1925	10,3	XIV. Congress (CPSU)
1927	13	XV. Congress(CPSU)

The fact that the first congress has the highest percentage of female members, in 1918 this proportion would be almost half of the 1898 ratio and then it started to increase attracts attention. The reason for that is the fact that in its establishment phase, the party was formed mostly of intellectuals and could not access workers yet. During the revolution, and almost immediately after it, the party grew among the workers, and because men had to participate in much larger masses, in 1918 the women ratio was almost as half of the first congress, but then the party gained strength step-by-step among women.

Let's close this title by referring to a last point. Although the party carried out a

43 Özgür, *Cilt I*, p. 171.

44 St. George, p. 32.

45 Özgür, *Cilt I*, p. 149.

conscious effort to acquire women into politics before and after the October revolution, it is not possible to say that the same consciousness was achieved by all the party militants and all Soviet representatives. Even the party members did speak big when it came to the idiom about the emancipation of women, but in reality they were trying to prevent their spouses from participating in party activities and sometimes banned it. The words of a woman facing a similar situation are striking in terms of summarizing this situation:

Because he was afraid that I would become a real person - all he needed was a chef and a housewife-, who forbid me, and I had to sneak in secretly to the meetings, where he was talking about the function of the woman in thunderous remarks and urging women to take on more effective tasks.⁴⁶

Party leaders have approached this issue sensitively in the party and in the Soviets and struggled for men to abandon prejudices of the past, to end the oppression on women, to change the living conditions of women in the family. In his article “From the Old Family to the New” dated July 13, 1923, Trotsky said:

To institute the political equality of men and women in the Soviet state was one problem and the simplest... But to achieve the actual equality of man and woman within the family is an infinitely more arduous problem. All our domestic habits must be revolutionized before that can happen. And yet it is quite obvious that unless there is actual equality of husband and wife in the family, in a normal sense as well as in the conditions of life, we cannot speak seriously of their equality in social work or even in politics. As long as woman is chained to her housework, the care of the family, the cooking and sewing, all her chances of participation in social and political life are cut down in the extreme.⁴⁷

In the first years of the October revolution, as we have tried to convey in the general lines above, a very serious breakthrough has taken place. All of the necessary steps for the salvation of women were written in the program and the Bolsheviks tried to progress in this direction. If they put a goal and failed, it was because at those days the young workers’ state was struggling for existence, the period of war communism against the whites and the impossibilities caused by the civil war. We would like to touch on two specific topics below, before discussing what was going on in this area in the next period. One of these is the experience of Zhenotdel, the women’s organization of the party, which has a special

46 Rowbotham, p. 173.

47 Lev Trotsky, “From the Old Family to the New”, 1923, https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/women/life/23_07_13.htm.

place in the participation and organization of women in party activity. The other is the meaning of the October revolution and its product, the workers' state, for Muslim women.

Zhenotdel Experience

Actually the roots of Zhenotdel are based on a brochure named *Woman as a worker* written by Krupskaya at 1900. Since that date, with the conscious efforts of Krupskaya, Armand and Kollontai, activities among the woman workers continued. Various local workers' groups of women were created. *Rabotnitsa* was used as a center of attraction and tool of organization. After the October revolution, one of the objectives of the new society was to move this organized struggle one step forward, thus allowing the workers' power to take steps that will result with the salvation of women.

In 1918, Kollontai's proposal to organize the First All-Russia Congress of Women Workers and Peasants was accepted. A committee of names such as Armand, Kollontai, Sverdlov took on the task of organizing this congress. Although 300 delegates were expected to attend, over a 1.000 appeared, a motley array of red-kerchiefed women - mostly workers - wearing sheepskins, colorful local costumes, or army greatcoats.⁴⁸ After Kollontai and Armand, Lenin came out to the stage with applause from the crowd and after Lenin's speech women sang the International march with great enthusiasm. This congress was followed by commissions that would later become the local organs of Zhenotdel. Finally, at the 8th Congress of the party which held in 1919, Zhenotdel, which means "Women's Section", was founded as a women's organization affiliated to the central committee and Innesa Armand became the first president of Zhenotdel.

Special forms of departments are created for the special forms of the Party (for national issues, for women, for youth etc.) These departments are formed at the level of Party committees and are directly connected to committees. The organization scheme of these departments is determined by specific guidelines approved by the Central Committee.⁴⁹

22 full-time women militants were stationed in the headquarters which is at

48 Richard Stites, "Zhenotdel: Bolshevism and Russian Women, 1917-1930", *Russian History*, Vol. 3, No: 2, 1976, p. 177.

49 From the statute accepted in 8th All-Russia Conference of the RCP(b) between 2-4 December 1919, Özgür, *Cilt 2, Belgeler Bölümü [Documents Section]*, p. 6. (The author has included several documents as a separate section at the end of the second volume of the book, which also starts with a page number from 1. In the following pages, the references belong to this section will be written as written in this reference.)

Moscow. Zhenotdel, cooperated with various organizations in the issues that concern women. Mother and Child Unit, health commissioner, Commissions against Prostitution, Komsomol and Soviet's sub-departments are only some part of the organizations that Zhenotdel cooperated. *Rabotnitsa* acted as the central media organ and the *Kommunistka* (Communist Woman) was published in the field of the theory, which was issued under the leadership of Krupskaya. Brochures in various topics, internal bulletins, magazines prepared by local organizations were published. For instance in 1930, *Peasant Woman*, *Delegate*, *Red Siberian Woman* and 18 more magazines were published 670 thousand times, and these magazines were used for propaganda purposes and used as an organization tool among the workers and villagers.⁵⁰

The party's expectation from Zhenotdel was divided into two. First, the acquisition of more women in the ranks of the revolution so that the needs of the workers' state can be fulfilled, and the second was the struggle against factors seen as obstacles for women's salvation in the newly established society.

In line with this perspective Zhenotdel worked for the Red Army and the mobilization of women to defend the revolution during the civil war. Zhenotdel's agitation and propaganda teams roamed almost all of Russia, with trains and trips on boats along the Volga River, where they settled in tents. They encouraged women to participate in subbotniks. After Armand's death in 1920, Kollontai took over the presidency of Zhenotdel and Zhenotdel's struggle to that time was extended especially to the geographical area where Muslim women lived. As mentioned above, we will try to explain the work done in these regions as a separate section below. It should be emphasized that Zhenotdel militants were fighting at the expense of their lives for the salvation of these women who suffered enormously because of the cruel and horrible customs in the Soviet territories. Zhenotdel militants carry on their activities even though they got beaten or massacred in the villages they visit.

From the very beginning Zhenotdel was the reason of a two-way debate and struggle within the party. On the one hand there was a tendency that believed Zhenotdel is unnecessary in transitional conditions and they believed Zhenotdel should be abolished. On the other side there was a tendency to turn Zhenotdel into an independent structure from the Party and both of these arguments had a counter argument which created a struggle within the Party.

Before the 16th Party Congress, held in 1930 which was after the domination of the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, Zhenotdel and its affiliated organizations were closed and the given reason was "reorganizing the party mechanism." The organizational report presented by the Central Committee to the party congress alleged that

⁵⁰ Stites, p. 183.

this decision didn't create any weakening among the women studies:

I have to underline here that the reorganization of the Party mechanism has led to a tendency for the elimination of women's branches and disassemble women work. In my view, this reorganization of the Party does not mean that it has to undermine the working of women at all. On the contrary, work among women has to be accelerated. If the work among women is a "special" task that "transferred" to the woman branches, then after the reorganization of the Party, the whole Party organization is obliged to deal with women, to work among women in order to add them to the Party.⁵¹

The result, however, is that the content of the work between women changes direction, and Zhenotdel's steps towards women's salvation are also fed to the bureaucracy's interests. Between 1917 and 1930, 301 articles were found in various decisions and resolutions concerning women's rights and demands; between 1930 and 1967, this figure was only 3.⁵²

The October revolution was also the revolution of the Muslim Women

Considering in terms of Russia in general, the women living in societies which were called as the People of East, were the women who lived under the toughest circumstances especially due to religious pressures and traditions before the revolution. The revolution's one assignment ahead was to make these women's lives livable, to ensure that they cease to be women waiting for rescue then become the subject of this struggle. The rights that were recognized to all women after the October Revolution, were also valid for women living in these lands, although women living in the East were not even aware of which rights they possessed let alone using these rights.

Workers' State first of all made a stride to specify the content and form of the work among these women. In 1921 "Conference of Communist Women and Organizers of the East" was arranged for the attendance of the women in the region who were going to carry on organizing activity. In the conference where provinces formed by Tatar, Bashkir, Turkistan, Azerbaijan, Crimea, Kirghizstan, Caucasia, Siberia, Turk, and other peoples from mountains were represented, 45 organizer women gathered.⁵³ Zhenotdel, which had been established a while before this conference had already begun its activities in the region. Unfortunately, communist

51 L.M. Kaganoviç, "*XVI. Parti Kongresi'ne Merkez Komitesi'nin Örgütsel Raporu*" [The Organizational Report of the Central Committee to the 16th Congress of the Party], Özgür, *ibid.*, p. 21.

52 Rosenberg, p. 124.

53 Kollontay, p. 365.

women paid the price of learning the region's circumstances and how the organizing activity should be carried out in the region with their lives. Among the years 1918-1919, hundreds of women who went from Russia's West to carry out activity in these regions, were killed due to the provocations of the mullahs in these regions. The passage in a Zhenotdel administrator's letter strikingly explains what kinds of difficulties the women have confronted but at the same time how much determination they have performed:

One afternoon we went to an Aul (smaller settlement from the village) around Poltorazk. Me, a girl student of East University and a woman from the militia. We went directly to the mukhtar's house, there were three men. They were drinking tea. After the mukhtar heard what we said, he said, 'You cannot have a meeting with our women, their husbands will not let you.' In the meantime, however, one of the men blinked at him and said in the Turkmen language: 'Do not send them back, they can be useful tonight.' I understand Turkmen language very well but I pretended like I did not understand. So we did a night watch all night, with guns in our hands. The mukhtar who saw our stubbornness and capability to protect ourselves, changed his mind the next day and called the women to the meeting.⁵⁴

Women who don't go outside their houses, who don't go to the marketplace in order not to run into men, of course were not attending to the meetings which Zhenotdels arranged. Thereupon, Zhenotdel began to try different methods. Established women's clubs. In order for women to attend easily, entrance of men to the club got strictly banned. Nevertheless, women under chador whose identities could not be understood, were waiting outside these clubs' doors prior to entering, watching around fearing that someone could see. In order to reach the women Zhenotdel members even ran grocery stores in these regions, in these grocery stores only women were working, "men are not allowed to enter" posters were hung on the grocery store's window and when there is a woman who enters the store for shopping, the communist women tries to inspire awareness through chatting with her.⁵⁵

The activities carried out in the East primarily was aimed at informing women about the new laws and the rights they possess. In addition to this, reading-writing courses, health services and various socio-cultural activities were being arranged. Differently from the rest of the country in the East ensuring women's participation to work force, hence integrating women into professional education was requiring a much more difficult and long struggle.

54 Fannina W. Halle, *Frauen des Ostens : vom Matriarchat bis zu den Fliegerinnen von Baku*, Zürich: Europa Verlag, 1938, p. 133, Özgür, *Cilt:2*, p. 111.

55 Ibid., p. 111.

Women's most basic demands were the forbiddance of getting young girls married off at a very little age, polygamy (in this case the man's ability to marry more than one woman) and bride wealth. It was relevant that they were prompted to accept polygamy due to the economic difficulties they confronted because it took time to break the traditions and women's participation to workforce was very limited. The ones who demand or pay bride wealth were being punished, were even being exposed in newspapers. In addition to this, as Zhenotdel's activities expanded, as it began to enhance its effect, the women had started to achieve the awareness of their rights and even if it was slowly they had started to use these rights. They were using their rights to divorce rising up against their husbands who beat them up and enforce polygamy.

Serious progress has been made in the field of literacy. They also came very far in terms of using their political rights, but they were closing the gap quickly. In 1924-25, 27% of women participated in city soviet elections. Only 2% of the selected delegates to the Soviet Congress in 1920 were women, but in 1931 it increased to 23.2%.⁵⁶

One of the important topics of struggle in the East was the struggle against chador and veil. They were approaching the topic with a great attention and rigor, considering that struggle against communist women's veiling themselves through law and forbiddance would not produce results, on the contrary it would hinder their progress. The approach towards the topic, found its best expression in these words of Lenin:

We must be extremely careful in fighting religious prejudices; some people cause a lot of harm in this struggle by offending religious feelings. We must use propaganda and education. By lending too sharp an edge to the struggle we may only arouse popular resentment; such methods of struggle tend to perpetuate the division of the people along religious lines, whereas our strength lies in unity.⁵⁷

With this perspective Zhenotdel carried out an activity against chador and veil because of reasons like it is a tradition that disregarded women's dignity, harmed their health, women could not work in factories because they wore chador therefore they could not use their rights against their husbands since they did not possess any economic power and although they wore or forced to wear chador or veil due to their religious beliefs, veiling oneself was not written in Quran, this tradition was

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 116.

⁵⁷ V. I. Lenin, "Speech at the First All-Russia Congress of Working Women", 1918 <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1918/nov/19.htm>.

brought afterwards. 8th March of 1926, with the slogan of “Down With Burqa and Paranja”, was a historical day for the worker women of the East. A woman who was experiencing this protest tells that day in this way:

Today, thousands of, ten thousands of women flowed through the streets of Middle Asia- Samarkand, Bukhara, Tashkent, Kokand etc.-with their burqas and paranjas - and their preparations had started several months in advance- like an enormous and dangerous avalanche. But there was a sea of flags on this dark and directionless crowd: A protest against a hatred tradition. And in the middle of this weird walk, just like a red flower parcel on a bare and weeded land, a group of women walked in with open faces, red-kerchiefs, and with determined steps: The one that already shown the courage to draw a line to their past and the ones that do not have to look to the sky behind the black cage anymore! The mass of people that cannot be unseen, accompanied by music, took their place in the square decorated with flags along with many men and children in their ranks, and women began to wait in a breathtaking thrill. Then the massive rally started. New, unconventional words were rising, enchanting but encouraging, spurring the tribune surrounding the square. Words that create an endless enthusiasm for the hearts... And when the strengthening storm was not able to calm down and the cries of ‘Live Long’ spread from the old, ruined city walls to the wilderness – that is when the attack began. Here, there, flying! Initially shaky and shy, but then with increasing enthusiasm, women throw out the symbols of slavery in front of the public - burqas and paranjas! They quickly stacked them up like a rising mountain, poured gasoline on them and suddenly flames started to be seen, flames of the liberation of the land from centennial tradition has begun to rise to the glittering sky... But in the face of this unprecedented fire, women’s hearts were flaming with fear, joy and shame those women who dare to show their faces for the first time since their childhood, who have survived from the prison...⁵⁸

In the days that prepared the October Revolution, throughout the revolution and even in the earlier stages after the revolution Eastern women were not part of this process. Nevertheless the October Revolution also became their voice and as it took steps to organize their liberation Eastern women also listened to this voice.

Two steps forward, one step back: Thermidor and after

After everything that been explained above, can we say that the Soviet woman, who had the most advanced rights in the world in many areas, had emancipated? There is one objective answer to this question: No! Why? Because some of the rights that have been given to women immediately right after the revolution, were withdrawn in the following years. The leap in the early years was a very important

⁵⁸ Özgür, *Cilt:2*, p. 135.

beginning, but it wasn't permanent. Reputation of some structures that fed by the oppression of women was restored. In this case, if socialism, unlike capitalism, don't get along with male domination and if this ideology believes in genderless society, it must be explained why some steps have been taken against women under the control of the workers' state and that some rights are withdrawn. Before we explain this situation, briefly let's see how and when changes are made.

The first step back was not just only about women, the NEP (New Economic Policy), which included mandatory steps back in the revolutionary program was accepted in order to keep the workers' state alive. The inadequacy of resources led to the closure of some of the dining halls, laundries, kindergartens, child and patient care centers that been opened for women's participation in social production and the collectivization of the invisible labor of women. Then, in 1928, with the First Five-Year Plan, the priorities of the community changed almost instantaneously.

In 1930 party's women department Zhenotdel was shut down because the party believed there is no need for a special work on this area. A number of arrangements related to birth have been changed. The principle of receiving full pay during maternity leave started to depend on various conditions. Women who worked in the last three years before birth, those who spent the last two years in their last job and the women who are members of a union had the right to take their full salary. The paid leave period, which was 8 weeks of prenatal care and 8 to 12 weeks after delivery, was reduced to 5 weeks and then to 4 weeks.

There was a need for a large controlled population in order to increase the production. For this a new way of thinking, a new ideology should be adopted to the society. The easiest way was to revitalize the old habits. In 27 June 1936, a decree called "Defense of the Mother and Child" was published and with this decree, family concept got promoted by the government, motherhood encouraged, therefore a special mission was given to the women. With this decree and further strengthening of this decree in 1944, the concepts and the prejudices of the tsarist era become an agenda again. The importance of family was emphasized again and again. Equality between officially registered relationships and actual relationships has been abolished. Concepts such as adultery, out-of-marriage and illegitimate children had been raised again. The idea that the family, not the society, was responsible for the child's education was propagated. Divorce has become a costly process that workers' families cannot afford. Homosexuality was banned, defined as a crime punishable by imprisonment. Abortion was also banned. However, the prohibition on paper, of course, posed a serious threat to women's health and life because prohibition did not prevent women from having an abortion. Of the 100 thousand women who died in the cities, the reason of 12.7 of them were abortion procedures

that were secretly conducted.⁵⁹

In line with the policy aimed at reaching a large population, it was difficult to divorce, homosexuality and abortion was prohibited and also government encourage society to have more children. Having lots of children was rewarded with medals and some financial support. Those with 5-6 children were given the “First and Second Class Motherhood Medal”, those with 7-9 children were given the “First, Second and Third Class Motherhood Honor”, and those with children over 10 had the title of “Mother Heroine.” Not only crowded families were rewarded, but at the same time, small families, individuals with no family, were being punished with additional taxes. Women’s right to demand the father to take on the care of non-marital children was omitted. The coeducation was ended in 1944 in order to consolidate the social role of girls and boys in the new “Soviet family”, and for 10 years girls and boys educated in separate schools.

It is not possible to understand how this change occurred from radical moves in order to ensure the freedom of all working class and the oppressed after the October Revolution to stagnancy, separately from the changes occurring within the Soviet Union. The bureaucratic counter-revolution that took place in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, that is, the bureaucracy that emerged from the working class, which developed its own privileges and which took political power into its hands then started to take actions against both women and workers under the rule of Stalin. The workers’ state which is now under the control of the bureaucracy, was degenerated while protecting its own existence at the expense of overthrowing the workers from power over time and finally opening the gateway to the return of capitalism.⁶⁰ The reestablishment and exaltation of the reactionary and sexist social relations, also took place parallel with this corruption. And under the rule of the bureaucracy, it is not just a little backward step of necessity like in the NEP period it goes beyond that. More importantly, the Stalinist bureaucracy presents them as values of the new society, not as “back steps”.

The sacrifice of the salvation of women along with the working class to the interests of the bureaucracy should not lead us to the conclusion that the October revolution did not have a program that can provide salvation to women. Because the October Revolution has shown it has the proper program with the decrees that been published only 4 days after the revolution. And since 1930’s the main subject was not the steps that taken backwards, but the steps that taken the program of

⁵⁹ Rosenberg, p. 123.

⁶⁰ It’s impossible to analyze the control of bureaucracy in Soviet Union and its betrayal to working class and revolution. *The Revolution Betrayed*, by Trotsky, is like a masterpiece to be read in this regard. Also see the articles written by Sungur Savran and Özgür Öztürk, published in *Devrimci Marksizm Volume 28/29*

revolution on completely different road. Trotsky is one of the two great leaders of the October revolution, the only defender of the Soviet state and the program of the October Revolution among the former staff against the bureaucratic corruption and we want to pass on some passages from Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*:

The draft of the law forbidding abortion was submitted to so-called universal popular discussion, and even through the fine sieve of the Soviet press many bitter complaints and stifled protests broke out. The discussion was cut off as suddenly as it had been announced, and on June 27th the Central Executive Committee converted the shameful draft into a thrice shameful law... In reality the new law against women—with an exception in favor of ladies—is the natural and logical fruit of an Thermidorian reaction.⁶¹

The retreat not only assumes forms of disgusting hypocrisy, but also is going infinitely farther than the iron economic necessity demands... The most compelling motive of the present cult of the family is undoubtedly the need of the bureaucracy for a stable hierarchy of relations, and for the disciplining of youth by means of 40 million points of support for authority and power.⁶²

The genuinely socialist family, from which society will remove the daily vexation of unbearable and humiliating cares, will have no need of any regimentation, and the very idea of laws about abortion and divorce will sound no better within its walls than the recollection of houses of prostitution or human sacrifices. The October legislation took a bold step in the direction of such a family. Economic and cultural backwardness has produced a cruel reaction. The Thermidorian legislation is beating a retreat to the bourgeois models, covering its retreat with false speeches about the sacredness of the “new” family. On this question, too, socialist bankruptcy covers itself with hypocritical respectability.⁶³

And with all these findings, Trotsky said that the women whom the Stalinist bureaucracy proclaimed as “free and equal girls of the peoples of the USSR” were “not yet free”.⁶⁴ There were steps taken for the salvation of women however under bureaucracy's rule these steps come to an end.

Here, we will not go into detail about the developments that happened on the following years and until the collapse of the Soviet Union. However it is necessary to emphasize that, after the Second World War and after the politics of large population target had changed, some new arrangements and improvements were made, starting in the late 1950's. After Stalin's death, abortion was legalized again. Even

61 Lev Trotsky, İhanete Uğrayan Devrim [*The Revolution Betrayed*], p. 207.

62 Ibid., s. 209.

63 Ibid., p. 212.

64 Ibid., p. 212.

though it is a part of the bureaucratic structure, a women's organization was established under the name Women Soviet. Instead of putting the perspective of building a better life for women in the center, the bureaucracy saw women as a source of power, in terms of the competition of the Soviet Union with the West. However, many of the steps that were taken for this purpose indirectly led to improvements in women's life. For example, they thought that for a stronger economy, it was necessary for women to participate more in the workforce. In World War II, the death of 20 million people, most of whom were men, made this participation a necessity. Along with this direction, since the second half of the 1950's, the number of nurseries, nursing homes, etc. had been increased.

More emphasis was placed on women's education. As a result, for example, in 1970, there were no women under the age of 50 who were illiterate. In Turkey according to TUIK's 2015 data, the rate of illiteracy in women over 25 years is 9%. After World War II, women's participation in the economy in the USSR rose to 70% which was about 50.5% in 1970 and remained at about the same rate for 20-year period. More than half of union members were women. In the same year in the USA this ratio was 20%. In the Soviet Union 72% of doctors were women. Even today this is a fascinating data.

Only 0.5% of high engineers and 3.5% of lawyers in the United States were women but in the Soviet Union more than 30% of high engineers and 35.4% of lawyers were women.⁶⁵ The principle of equal pay for equal work was implemented, and the difference between the average wages of men and women was due to their work in different sectors. On 8 March, and in various areas of the women's salvation struggle, the demand for "work for every woman who wants to work", which is impossible to meet in the capitalist society, was found to be a full job security for women under the roof of the Soviet Union. In the 1970 election, 463, or 31% of the members elected to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR were women. In the 1969-1971 period, only 2% of the 91st US Congress was made up of women members.⁶⁶ Many more comparisons can be made with examples. In short, despite the Thermidor, the Soviet Union had become a country with women athletes who have won worldwide successes in various sports, the first woman to go to space, and women who work in many professions with a rate above the world average for their period.

⁶⁵ St. George, p. 62.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 63.

Conclusion

The relationship between the October revolution and the salvation of women is a topic that deserves a much more detailed examination because of its specificities of different forms of oppression of women. As we mentioned earlier in this article, we tried to evaluate the working class program in terms of the emancipation of women in the light of the Soviet experience by considering the steps taken by the October Revolution towards the salvation of women. As we conclude, we are making the following determinations about the topics we discussed above, some of which are more detailed and some of which are more concise.

First, **oppression of woman and ending male domination were the priority topics of October Revolution.** After the revolution the young worker party, despite all the difficulties, tried to end male domination and made adjustments in order to end the oppression of woman and when the government had to make concessions to the old ruling and the male dominance, they expressed this with open heartedness.

Second, in the early years of October Revolution women's right were rapidly expanding and a new society was trying to be built, however this progress was not permanent because of the bureaucracy. On the basis of a contradiction between the interests of the working class and the salvation of women, the rights of women have not been sacrificed for the working class and for socialism. There is no contradiction between these two. The program, in which women's rights are sacrificed, is the "single-country socialism" program of the Thermidor bureaucracy. Trotsky explains the permanent revolution on three levels: continuity between the democratic revolution and socialist rebuilding of the society, continuity of the socialist revolution and continuity of the revolution worldwide in line with the international character of the socialist revolution. Since the Soviet Union did not maintain the continuity of the socialist revolution with Thermidor, there have been many field that goes backwards, and the breakthroughs that can lead to the salvation of the women follows the same backwards trend. The revolution had not been sustained around the world because the continuity of socialist revolution contradict with the interest of the Thermidor bureaucracy, therefore the bureaucracy applied "socialism in one country" program which aligned with their interest. Therefore it is necessary to emphasize that the October Revolution did not give some rights to women in order to attract women on their side and the October Revolution did not betray to women. The truth is bureaucracy betrayed to the October Revolution and to women. The inability to prevent the bureaucracy from being taken down by a political revolution had inevitably concluded with a regressive situation for women as well as for other areas.

Third, it is possible to say that **even under the rule of a bureaucratically corrupt workers' state, women are in a much better position than the advanced capitalist countries.** The removal(?) of private property, collectivization of women's

workload even though it is not fully satisfactory, unconditional job security, special studies in health and education fields in order to answer the needs of woman and other various practices indicate woman are in much better position in workers' state compared to advanced capitalist countries.

Fourth, mostly expressed on Lenin's speeches, and based on the necessity of participating in "labor" and "getting rid of the burden of domestic work" for the salvation of women, there is a criticism to the Bolsheviks and to Lenin and to October Revolution that they could not see the specific problems of women and that they reduced the women problem to an economic relationship and this criticism is not true. Lenin says that if all women cannot get out of the home, into the field of social production, women will be imprisoned in the house, and the salvation of women will not be possible. In Lenin's perspective, the road to women's salvation is more complex than the given reasons. The October Revolution had proved itself, by struggling against prostitution, abortion, violence to women and also by its struggle against social prejudice that insults women and its attempt to include women to politics. **These reasons prove that the October Revolution understands the specific problems that women experience and therefore the October Revolution forms a program accordingly.**

The October Revolution opened the door to a life that no other capitalist country can provide for women. Women did not only enter this door with great enthusiasm, they also recognized and understood their common interest with the working class and joined the struggle of building a new socialist society for their own salvation. If women cannot be free on Soviet territory, this is why the bureaucratic counter-revolution had opened the way for class-based collecting, rebuilding of capitalism, not only in terms of production relations but also in other social relations, as a whole, in the form of exploitation and oppression. This process, rebuilding of capitalism, lasted for decades but in the end it resulted with the return of capitalism just as Trotsky foresaw. Revolutionary Marxism, from the very first moment, preserves the legacy of the October Revolution and carefully studies the Soviet experience including the ideas of bureaucratic counter-revolutionaries, therefore today Revolutionary Marxism is the carrier of the program that will lead both workers and women to salvation.

The Muslim October

Sungur Savran

The October revolution is not a Russian revolution. It can more correctly be characterised as an unfinished world revolution. We have tried to explain this on other occasions.¹ This article will deal only with one aspect of this question, perhaps even a minor one, which is nonetheless of capital importance for the world of Islam, for those parts of the world where Muslims constitute a majority or (as in India) a sizeable minority of society. But before going into the specific topic of the article, it would be in order to briefly elaborate in more general terms why the October revolution is not solely a Russian revolution.

It is significant to note how the two foremost leaders of the revolution, Lenin and Trotsky, characterised the impending revolution as soon as they set foot in revolutionary Russia with a time lag of one month. When Lenin arrived from Switzerland in early April at the Finland Station in what was then Petrograd, he addressed a crowd of workers mobilised by the Bolsheviks to welcome the leader of the party. He ended a typically brief and to the point speech with the slogan: “Long live the world socialist revolution!” Trotsky, on the other hand, having been deported to

¹ We have done so in writing only in Turkish. See our “80 yıla bedel 8 ay: Büyük Ekim Devrimi”, (“8 months worth 80 years: The Great October Revolution”), *Devrimci Marksizm*, No. 32-33, Autumn-Winter 2017.

the United States by the French and subsequently the Spanish governments during the war, had a much longer route to traverse and, having been held captive en route by the British for a while, only arrived in Petrograd in early May. The first thing he did was to participate in a meeting of the Petrograd Soviet. As president of the same soviet in 1905, he was immediately given the floor as a guest of honour. It was impossible for him to know how Lenin had ended his welcoming speech a month before. Trotsky concluded with the following line: “Long live the Russian revolution, prelude to the world socialist revolution!” Those long accustomed to the wholly false idea that “world revolution” is a Trotskyist concept may be aggrieved to see that, if anything, Lenin was more “Trotskyist” than Trotsky himself! However that may be, there is no denying that the two revolutionaries that were going to play the decisive part as leaders of the coming October revolution manifestly concurred in considering the future taking of power by the Russian proletariat as the anti-chamber of world revolution. This was no coincidence: for both leaders, this was **the only possible programme** that could be put forth by anyone standing firmly on the ground of revolutionary Marxism.²

Hence the October revolution, which was very closely associated with the Bolshevik leadership, was expressly carried out to bring about a world revolution, not a locally delimited revolution confined to the territory and the peoples of a single country, albeit the largest one in the world in geographical terms. This alone is sufficient reason to refrain from using the epithet “Russian revolution” for what occurred during and in the wake of the October revolution. It is, of course, true that in the narrowest sense the revolution was a palpably Russian event. Witness, for instance, the fact that even Trotsky himself titled his monumental historical account *The History of the Russian Revolution*. But we should remember that the subject matter of the *History* was the analysis of the events that culminated in the taking of power on 25th October 1917 by the Russian proletariat, supported by the peasantry. **That**, undeniably, is the Russian revolution. However, when we speak retrospectively of the October revolution, this is not the only thing that we mean: the October revolution as a phenomenon of historic significance can only be fully assessed with the entire gamut of consequences that flowed from that event. And that is what makes the October revolution an unfinished world revolution.

What did happen as a sequel is a world revolution in more than one sense. For

2 I cite these two incidents obviously not as conclusive evidence for this idea, but only as a colourful symptom. For a collection of endless quotations from Lenin in this respect one can consult Appendix II, titled, “Socialism in a Separate Country?”, of Trotsky’s *The History of the Russian Revolution* (London: Pluto Press, 1979, pp. 1219-1257). There is no need to cite the same evidence for Trotsky as Stalinist mythology has only cast doubt on Lenin’s attitude on this question, claiming, on the basis of extremely flimsy evidence, that Lenin believed that class society could be done away within a single country.

one thing, the “Russian revolution” in the strict sense of the term had an electrifying impact on the rest of the world. Revolutions erupted in Germany and Austria-Hungary, resulting in short-lived Soviet republics in Bavaria and Hungary. There was also a revolution in Finland that was defeated, as well as quasi-revolutionary movements in the industrial heartland of Italy and in Scotland. This was immediately followed by revolutions in the Middle East, through a succession of insurrections in Egypt, Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Palestine, as well as one in distant Morocco. These remained limited to an anti-colonial, anti-imperialist programme, but their affinity to the Russian revolution is manifest.³ The revolution then moved further to the east to reach China, with proletarian insurrections in the industrially developed regions of the country, crushed as a result of the disastrous policy of the rising Stalinist leadership of the Comintern.⁴ The last gape of this round of world revolution was in Spain, a rising of the proletariat and the poor peasantry of that country with tremendous potentialities that was drowned wilfully in blood by the Stalinist bureaucracy.⁵

The second sense in which the Russian revolution was of universal import pertains to the fact that both the capture of power and the new socio-economic structures that sprang into being as a result had much more than was specifically Russian about them: they had everything to do with **a showdown on the scale of a country between the two constitutionally international fundamental classes of modern capitalist society**. This was the first experiment in abolishing capitalist private property and the establishment of a planned economy on the basis of public property. All this had universal significance for humanity at large, by no means confined to the frontiers of Russia alone. So did the state form established by the first instance of proletarian dictatorship (leaving aside the ephemeral existence of the Paris Commune): the name and the structure of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the brain child of that accomplished defender of the rights of oppressed nations, Lenin, is immensely significant in the sense that it bears no reference to any geographic territory, let alone a nation, and is, thereby, the kernel of the future world federation that is the necessary transit point to a stateless society in the future. Thus was born a new epoch in the development of revolutions: **the age of proletarian revolutions** increasingly replacing the epoch of bourgeois revolutions.

Further, this state as well the society that accompanied it, born of the October revolution, became a powerful actor on the world stage that left its imprint on de-

3 See my article “Revolution as the driving force of modern Middle Eastern history” in this issue of *Revolutionary Marxism*.

4 See the voluminous writings of Trotsky on China in this period. There are many different collections, among which *Leon Trotsky on China*, Les Evans and Russell Block (eds.), New York: Monad Press, 1976.

5 See Pierre Broué/Emile Témime, *La révolution et la guerre d’Espagne*, Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1961.

cisive aspects of the evolution of the totality of human affairs not only briefly but throughout the entire 20th century or, to be more precise, for three quarters of a century, until the demise of the USSR in 1991. Not a single aspect of socio-economic, political or ideological processes throughout the entire world would have been the same had the October revolution not taken place. To put it more forcefully, the October revolution had a **decisive** impact on other revolutions of the 20th century that ended up abolishing capitalism, on the defeat of the scourge that befell humanity in mid-century called fascism, on the anti-colonial struggle and the practically complete demise of the odious colonial system established by capitalism, and even on the so-called welfare state in the imperialist heartlands of capitalism, in ways which would take us too long to discuss here.⁶

We finally come to the seemingly much less important reason why the October revolution is not exclusively a Russian revolution. To understand this, one would do well to remember that the Soviet Union, that “nation-less” state form, so to speak, comprised at least six republics, in Transcaucasia and Central Asia, the autochthonous population of which was Muslim in its majority before the revolution (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan). Add to this the peoples inside Russia proper, such as the Tatars, the Bahskir, the Kalmuk, the Chechens, the Dagestani etc. and one will come to realise that these peoples, some of whom had been conquered only several decades before the October revolution, not only could in no sense be considered “Russian” in the strict sense of the term, but were also different from all the other non-Russian peoples of the Western borderlands (Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, the Baltic states etc.) and of Transcaucasia (Georgia and Armenia) regarding their historical background, cultural and ideological formation, mores and lifestyles, and even the development of socio-economic relations and class structure (of which more below). The October revolution was also a revolution of Muslim peoples!

And this has world-historic significance. It is one thing to say that October was not only Russian but also Georgian and Armenian and a completely different thing to say that October was also a revolution of Muslim peoples. To put it bluntly, received opinion nowadays regards Muslim peoples not capable of acceding to the wonderful world of modernity because of the antiquated, even hopelessly bigoted, nature of their religion (whereas, presumably, Judaism and Christianity are wonderfully progressive religions). The fact that a socialist revolution was joined by Muslim peoples over a vast expanse of territory extending all the way from the Volga to the Chinese frontier of the Soviet Union is a gauntlet thrown on the face of such narrow-minded and prejudiced views of an entire population. And when one

⁶ Our article in Turkish discusses these questions at length (see footnote 1).

remembers that the entire Muslim population of the planet exceeds a billion souls, on the most conservative estimate, then choosing one or the other view of these people makes an immense difference for the prospects of world socialism.

The trajectory of Muslims in the course of the October revolution sheds light on this question. This is an aspect of the October revolution that has been neglected in its significance. We intend to bring this aspect to the fore in this article.

The national policy of the Bolsheviks

We should start out by observing that, after their initial victory in the centres where they have proven to be strongest, revolutions spread or are blocked in their development through very complex and variegated factors, among which questions of nationality and faith play a decisive part. This is all the more true if the direction in which the revolution promises to spread brings together societies that possess radically different socio-economic and class structures, which was the case of the different regions of the Russian empire. The October revolution obviously originated in the industrial heartlands of Tsarist Russia, first and foremost Petrograd and Moscow, and only spread to the borderlands later. I will assume here, for obvious reasons, that when we speak of the October revolution as a political and military event, this extends between the taking of power by the Bolsheviks and the soviets all the way to, at least, the formation of the USSR at the end of 1922.⁷ In this aspect, the spread of the October revolution depended heavily on matters of national and religious difference. Hence Bolshevik policy on this question of nationality and faith forms the background to everything that happened throughout this period.

It is no secret that Tsarist Russia was a “prison house of peoples”. Great Russian (as opposed to Ukrainian and Belarus) chauvinism was rampant. This is why Lenin was adamant, through thick and thin, on the principle of self-determination as the ultimate guarantee for equality among nations. One cannot exaggerate the importance of this attitude, not only for the peaceable fusion of nations in the future socialist commonwealth, i.e. the world socialist federation, an aspect of paramount importance for Lenin,⁸ but also for its immediate democratic import: in a world of

⁷ This is obviously also the opinion of the most eminent historian of the revolution, Edward Hallett Carr. The first instalment of his monumental *A History of Soviet Russia* (which itself extends from 1917 all the way to 1929) covers the period 1917-1923. This is not, or not exclusively, because these dates correspond to Lenin's presence as the overpowering personality within the leadership. They also stand for the years of the revolution in its wider meaning. Witness the title of the first instalment: *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923* (which, in its turn, is incidentally divided into three tomes covering, respectively, domestic affairs, the economic sphere, and international relations).

⁸ The national question is too often confined to a “bourgeois democratic” task. Not so in Lenin. For him the question of self-determination is, even more importantly, related to the success of the future integration and fusion of peoples in the socialist commonwealth. We have discussed this question at length in Turkish. See our *Kod Adı Küreselleşme. 21 Yüzyılda Emperyalizm*, (Code Name Globalisation: Imperialism in the 21st Century), Istanbul: Yordam Kitap, 2nd printing, 2008, pp. 315-346.

unequal status and power for nations, such a radical attitude on the national question is as important to establish democratic relations in society as what are usually regarded as decisive such as the freedom of expression or “free” elections. It is this policy that prepared the ground for the spread of the socialist revolution to climes where one would not have expected to see one under other circumstances. So let us now pass to a summary discussion of this policy.

It is a well-known fact that on the national question, two of the most important revolutionary Marxists of the first quarter of the 20th century clashed constantly. Rosa Luxemburg untiringly opposed Lenin’s policy of national self-determination on many grounds, the decisive one probably being that the integration of nations into the world market made obsolete for all practical purposes aspirations to nationhood. During World War I, others within the Marxist movement picked up this thread, arguing for the impossibility of solving any political question except at world level in the imperialist epoch, a position labelled “imperialist economism” by Lenin and castigated for its absolute determinism and reductionism.⁹ After the war, during the 1919 congress of what now was becoming the Russian Communist Party, a congress where a new programme was adopted, the national question set Lenin against Bukharin and Pyatakov pretty much along the lines of the earlier debate between Lenin and Rosa.¹⁰ Lenin won over the majority of the party to his position, thus overcoming this vein of abstract internationalism.¹¹ The policies pursued by the new Soviet government thus bore the mark of Lenin’s approach to the national question throughout the decisive period of 1917-1922.

The February revolution had already electrified the Muslim communities of Russia. May Day 1917 saw the First All Russia Congress of Muslims gather approximately 900 delegates from around the country. A second such congress would convene in Kazan, capital city of Tatarstan in the Volga region, in July and August. There were other, more local initiatives throughout 1917. These were just the beginnings, with the bourgeois-democratic element largely dominating the minority socialist-communist current.

In the wake of the October revolution, the new government, Sovnarkom, published two successive declarations in the course of the month of November 1917.

9 See his “A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism” (1916) in *Collected Works*, volume 23, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977, pp. 28-76.

10 For Lenin’s views on the national question, the most important texts date from the world war period: see “The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination. Theses” (1916), *Collected Works*, op. cit, volume 22, pp. 143-156 and “The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up”, *ibid*, pp. 320-360.

11 See E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923*, volume 1, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971, pp. 274-76, for details of the provisions on the national question in the new programme adopted at the 1919 congress.

The first was a general one titled “Declaration on the Rights of the Peoples of Russia”, while the second was specifically addressed “To the Muslim Toilers of Russia and the East”, which recognised the right of Muslim peoples to live according to their own mores and traditions. Then came, in January 1918, the “Declaration on the Rights of the Toiling and Exploited People”. All this culminated in the setting up of a Central Muslim Commissariat, abbreviated “Muscom”, in addition to the Commissariat for National Affairs already established on the heels of the October revolution, headed by Stalin. It was Muslim revolutionaries that were appointed to head Muscom.

In certain parts of Russia, in particular in what was then called Turkestan in Central Asia, Bolshevism was hijacked by the Russian element, including the colonisers in person. These opportunistically passed over to the victorious Bolshevik side in order to sustain their interests. There were bureaucrats and merchants and well-to-do farmers (*kulaks*), and even Orthodox priests, alongside the less surprising railroad and other workers among those newly coming over to Bolshevism. Thus Central Asian Bolshevism was markedly colonial in its composition.

The central Soviet authorities did not yield to this *fait accompli*, but rather tried to redress the wrongdoing of Russian settlers against the indigenous Muslim population. They warned the Russian element that ruled in the name of Bolshevism against discrimination vis-a-vis the Muslim population. In October 1919, the Executive Committee of the All Russia Soviet (VTsIK) and Sovnarkom published a joint resolution that addressed the issue of Turkestan. This included the following crystal clear passage:

The self-determination of the peoples of Turkestan and the abolition of all national inequality and all privileges of one national group over another constitute the foundation of all the policy of the Soviet government of Russia and serve as a guiding principle in all the work of its organs... It is only through such work that the mistrust of the native toiling masses of Turkestan for the workers and peasants of Russia, bred by many years’ domination of Russian Tsarism, can be finally overcome.¹²

Not contenting himself with the formal decrees and instructions put out by the soviet and the government, Lenin penned a letter to the communists of Turkestan, in his capacity not of the Chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars (the counterpart of Prime Minister), but as a party member, taking them to task for discrimination against the indigenous population and entreating them to behave themselves. For Lenin it was “no exaggeration to say that the establishment of proper relations

12 Cited in Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, v. 1, op. cit., p. 339.

with the peoples of Turkestan [was] now of immense, **epochal importance** for the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic.” He then urged them

to devote the closest to this question, to exert every effort to set an effective example of comradely relations with the peoples of Turkestan, to demonstrate to them by your actions that we are sincere in our desire to wipe out all traces of Great-Russian imperialism and wage an implacable struggle against world imperialism, headed by British imperialism.¹³

The “epochal importance” and the last point about “world imperialism” are suggestive of something that surpasses the domestic relations between nations. For Lenin the relevance of this was not confined to the question of relations within the new Soviet system. Important as that was, the attitude meted out to the local population was also significant in that it would have repercussions for the reputation of the new Soviet state in the eyes of the colonial world at large. This is how Lenin put the question in a letter written to Adolf Joffe, a Central Committee member of the party, on a later occasion, in September 1921:

I have strong suspicions regarding the “Tomskey line”... of relaying Greta-Russian chauvinism or, more precisely, of being tilted in that direction. For our entire Weltpolitik, it is devilishly important to win the confidence of the indigenous population and to win it three or four times, to prove to them that we are not imperialists, that we will not display any deviation in that direction. This is a **worldwide** question and I am not exaggerating, worldwide. One has to be extremely rigorous on this question. It will have repercussions in India, in the East.¹⁴

It is important to note that on the question of respect and recognition for the Muslim peoples Lenin and Trotsky were of one mind (of which more later). The two foremost leaders of the October revolution were also in agreement on the necessity of a sensitive attitude to Muslim institutions. The Bolsheviks displayed a startling flexibility on this question. On the basis of the recognition of the Muslim peoples as the oppressed nations of Russia, they conceded a considerable space to institutions proper to Muslim society. This included, at its most extreme, a dual court system, with Sharia courts existing side by side with the regular Soviet system in matters arising in the area of civil law.¹⁵

13 “To the Communists of Turkestan”, *Collected Works*, v. 30, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977, p. 138, emphasis added.

14 Pierre Broué, *L’histoire de l’Internationale Communiste 1919-1943*, Paris: Fayard, 1997, p. 269, emphasis added.

15 See Adeb Khalid, *Islam after Communism. Religion and Politics in Central Asia*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014, pp. 60-62; Dave Crouch, “The Bolsheviks and Islam”, *International Socialism*, 2:110, Spring 2006.

acceptance of the federal principle as a more flexible and adaptable form that would cater to the dual requirements of unity and equality.

His last political victory is, in fact, the establishment of the USSR as a federal union among equal nations.¹⁷ While fighting different manifestations of Great Russian chauvinism, not only towards Muslim peoples but also others, and in particular in the context of Georgia, he came more and more openly into conflict with the Commissar for National Affairs, Stalin, and his cohort. He became keenly aware of the problem of disregard for full equality among Soviet nations as one of the aspects of the rising bureaucratisation of the Soviet state. In the context of the so-called debate of “autonomisation”,¹⁸ he fought against the conception of Stalin for the new union, which was predicated on the autonomous adherence of the new soviet republics in Transcaucasia, in the western and eastern borderlands and in Central Asia to the Russian Federative Soviet Socialist Republic. His own solution, ingenious in its farsightedness, was what we have known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. This appellation is singularly progressive in the relationship it establishes among the nations of the federal state, in that it contains, as we have already pointed out, no reference to any component nation or even to a geographic area. It is unique in modern history for lack of a national denomination. Thanks to the genius of Lenin, the first socialist state was, despite the coexistence of around 200 ethnic and national groups inside the new state, was “nation-less” in its façade to the rest of the world. This was a Union that could, without prejudice to any national qualms, grow further and further as revolutions triumphed in other parts of the world to finally end up as the world socialist federation.

Such was the overall structure of the policy that proved to be so accommodating to the nations formerly oppressed by the Tsarist state, in particular to Muslim peoples.

Diverse social structures, different paths

We can now move to an account of how the Muslim peoples of the former Tsarist territories tied their fate to the new state born of the October revolution. The first aspect to note as we move into this domain is that these Muslim peoples came

17 See Moshe Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle*, Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 2005, and the collection of documents and Lenin's writings brought together in *Lenin's Final Fight*, George Fyson (ed.), New York: Pathfinder Press, 2010.

18 See Lenin's own take on this question in “The Question of Nationalities or ‘Autonomisation’” and “The Question of Nationalities or ‘Autonomisation’ (*Continued*)”, *Collected Works*, v. 36, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971, pp. 605-611. This text was for long decades censored in the Soviet Union under Stalin and only published in the 4th Edition of Lenin's *Collected Works* after Stalin's death.

to join the new Soviet state through different paths. This was in the nature of things for these peoples lived under a wide array of modes of production and hence under different class structures, had different relationships to the Great Russian oppressor nation and were thus affected quite diversely by the revolutionary process of 1917. There is also the fact that the revolution found these different peoples at different levels of the development of the bourgeois-democratic and the socialist-communist movements, depending not only on their social development, but their geographic location as well.

With regard to the latter, it should be pointed out that the Muslims of Russia lived in three distinct geographic regions. The first was inner Russia, the Volga region and the eastern borderlands, including the mountainous areas of northern Caucasus. There were, then, the Muslims of Transcaucasia, those Muslim peoples living in the south of the Caucasian mountains, in what is today Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia. There was finally the vast expanse of land extending from the Caspian Sea to the Chinese border, generally known as Central Asia but sometimes also called Inner Asia.

However, these three regions were not necessarily internally homogeneous with respect to their social and political level of development. Overall, there were four different socio-economic structures to be found in the Muslim world of Russia. There was first the specific case of the Volga Tatars.¹⁹ This was a society where commercial capitalism had advanced quite far, with some accumulation even of local industrial capital. There was a very advanced commercial bourgeoisie, playing a role akin to the one played by the Jews and Armenians in long-distance trading within the Russian empire, with a corresponding diaspora in different cities, which formed the basis of merchant activities. The Tatars acted as the agents of Russian interests among other Turkic peoples, in particular in Central Asia, until that area was finally militarily conquered in the decades of the 1860s and the 1870s. From then on, Russian merchants had no longer need of the services of the Tatar tradesmen. This resulted in a swift awakening of national consciousness in Tatar society.²⁰ The *Jadid* (renewal) movement developed a kind of interpretation of Islam that was accommodating for the rising bourgeois society and the economic imperatives of capitalism. In late 19th and early 20th centuries, Jadidism and its Tatar ideologues, such as Gasprinski and Akçura, had a profound impact on the birth of a Turkish nationalism and a bourgeois-democratic movement in other Turkic Muslim societies (see below), including the Ottoman Empire. Hence the revolution, from February

¹⁹ As distinct from the Tatars of Crimea on the Black sea coast, a community that was at a much earlier stage of development.

²⁰ Osman Tiftikçi, *İslamcılığın Doğuşu* (The birth of Islamism), Istanbul: Akademi, 2011, pp. 27-29.

on, found a very advanced bourgeois-democratic movement among the Tatars of the Volga region. There were even the first beginnings of a social democratic movement before the revolution. Two short-lived socialist parties had been formed in the heat of the 1905 revolution. Then Mirseyit Sultangaliev, a prominent future communist leader among the Muslim population of Russia, established what was called the Combat Organisation of Tatar Socialists in 1913.²¹ However, socialism became an effective force among the Tatars only after the February revolution, as we shall see further on.

In a kind of complementary opposition to Volga Tatar society stood Azerbaijan in Transcaucasia. Here it was not the bourgeoisie, as in the Tatar case, that was advanced, but the proletariat. The presence of this class was decisive especially in Baku, today the capital of Azerbaijan, deriving from the simple fact that this region had vast reserves of oil discovered very early on. The autochthonous bourgeoisie, on the other hand, was relatively speaking less developed, since oil companies were run by foreigners and Russians. On the other hand, both within the bourgeoisie and the oil proletariat, the dominant indigenous element was the Armenians. Transcaucasia in early 20th century was a mixed bag of different peoples living together. It was only through the developments of the new century that more homogeneous nation-states were built in the form of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. Yet although the proletariat was Armenian, social democracy took hold within the Muslim population as well. This movement was even more advanced here than in Volga Tatar society when the hour of the revolution struck.

There was next the inheritors of a medieval sedentary and urban civilisation in what was then called Turkestan (now divided between Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) in Central Asia, where capitalism has penetrated to a much lower level than in either Tatar society or Transcaucasia. Tashkent, Bokhara, Hiva (or Hworezm), Samarkand, Kokand, and other cities and their hinterland were ruled by khans and emirs. The sedentary society of Turkestan was early enough brought under the influence of Jadidism.²² Tatar Jadidism was here combined with the influence of the Ottoman revolution of 1908, a multinational and truly popular revolution, led by the so-called Young Turk movement of the Committee of Union and Progress.²³ The result of this cross-pollination was the Young Bokhara movement (an obvious reference to its Young Turk namesake), which was to play a prominent part in the events that unfolded in this region after the October revolution. As opposed to this quite advanced bourgeois-democratic movement, there was almost no trace of a

21 Hamit Erdem, *Mustafa Suphi*, Enlarged 3rd Edition, Istanbul: Sel Yayıncılık, 2010, p. 74.

22 Tiftikçi, *İslamcılık*, op. cit., pp. 31-32.

23 See Sungur Savran, "The Heritage of the 20th Century", in *The Politics of Permanent Crisis*, N. Balkan/S. Savran (eds.), New York: Nova, 2002, pp. 5-6.

socialist or communist movement in Turkestan and anything that did appear was, as we have already seen, Russian and not autochthonous in the true sense of the term.

Finally, there was the pastoral society of nomadic tribes. These tribes had communal property over their pastures and meadows. But in certain regions, in particular today's Kazakhstan (the Kazakhs were called "Kyrgyz" by the Russians at the beginning of the 20th century²⁴), Russian settlers grabbed land from these tribes to set up farms, which led to perhaps the most decisive social conflict of that period in Kazakh society, pitting Kazakhs in their entirety against the figure of the Russian settler. This kind of nomadic tribal society was also present in the eastern end of Central Asia, in what is today's Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (the latter being the only Persian speaking people of Central Asia of a sizeable population), although evidence for this type of conflict between the pastoral tribe and the Russian settler was evidently much less conspicuous. One point of considerable importance is that for these nomadic populations, Islam was much less of a guiding influence than it was in the sedentary, urban societies of Tatarstan, Azerbaijan and Turkestan. There were also the mountain people of northern Caucasia, i.e. the part of Caucasia inside what is today the Russian Federation as opposed to Transcaucasia in the south, with a diverse ethnic background (the Chechens, the Ingush, the Abkhaz etc. as well as the Turkic nomad tribes). Overall in nomadic tribal society, socialism or communism had had practically no chance to develop before the revolutionary year 1917.

Given these divergent socio-economic and class structures and the accompanying ideological and political development of the different societies in the last third of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th, these different societies came to join the revolutionary maelstrom after the October revolution in sometimes totally different ways. But before going into those different paths we should very briefly dwell on a most significant but almost universally ignored social event in pre-revolutionary Russia.

The forgotten insurrection

It very often happens that Western historiography, with its strong bias towards Judeo-Christian society, culminating in the bourgeois society of Western Europe and later North America, disregards even some of the most important events that unfold in societies that fall outside of the orbit of its own culture of preference. Consider the following fact: alongside the mutinies in the various armies and the navies of the nations that fought out World War I,²⁵ the only serious instance of social unrest on the home front all over the Eurasian continent before the February

24 See Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, v. 1, op. cit., p. 321n. Incidentally Azerbaijan Muslims, commonly known as Azeris today, were called Tatars at that time.

25 See Broué, *L'Internationale Communiste*, op. cit., pp. 39-41.

revolution is still considered to be the Easter rebellion of the Irish in 1916, which led ultimately to the formation of the Republic of Ireland as a separate entity from Great Britain.

There is not the slightest doubt that both the mutinies in the military and the Easter rebellion are of great import for the subsequent unfolding of the war. But it is almost incredible that hardly any general history of the war or, for that matter, of the October revolution, mentions, so much as in passing, the immensely extensive 1916 revolt in Central Asia. This was a social uprising of millions of people suppressed cruelly by the Tsar's armies. The number of people participating in the revolt is counted in the millions.²⁶ The number of casualties, a variegated sum of different kinds of elimination, indigenous people massacred by the Tsar's forces, the much smaller number of Russian settlers killed by the rebels, and the very high number of (mostly Kyrgyz) men, women and children who perished trying to cross over into China over unyielding mountain passes are, for their part, counted between 200 to 300 thousand souls. There can be no doubt that a revolt and a tragedy on this scale must have had a terrible impact on the fighting power of Tsarist Russia and contributed to the October revolution both directly and in roundabout ways. This historic event is waiting to be resuscitated, after the long silence it has had to endure for many a decade.²⁷

The immediate cause of the revolt was the decision by the government to conscript Central Asian subjects of the Tsar to the war effort. Because there was no confidence in these populations, they were regimented in unarmed labour battalions, in strikingly similar fashion to what the Ottoman government did with its Armenian subjects (the infamous "*amele taburları*"²⁸). This led to a very extensive rebellion on the part of the locals. However, the fact that the revolt was not exclusively against conscription *per se*, but Russian colonialism across the board is demonstrated by the fact that at the outset of the revolt, Russian settler farmers were killed in a rampage by the rebels. Let the following judgment be tentative since the incident

26 Adeeb Khalid, *Islam after Communism*, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

27 It is to the pride of the Bolshevik rule of the early 1920s before the bureaucratic onslaught that the 1916 revolt and its brutal suppression were unflinchingly scrutinised by early Russian Marxist historiography as a shameful episode in the process of Russian colonisation of the Muslim peoples of Central Asia. This honest attitude apparently changed as Great Russian nationalism took hold of Soviet society as a result of the progressive bureaucratisation of party and state. See Alexander Morrison, "Central Asia: Interpreting and Remembering the 1916 Revolt", <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/80931>, retrieved on 17th September 2017.

28 On the capital importance of these as a war ploy, see Sungur Savran, "Sınıf Mücadelesi Olarak Ermeni Soykırımı" (The Armenian Genocide as Class Struggle), *Devrimci Marksizm*, No. 23, Spring 2015, pp. 83-86.

has been so little studied and since we are not yet sufficiently knowledgeable to reach conclusive results, but it can probably be said that this was a perfect counterpart to the Irish Easter rebellion in the westernmost part of Great Britain arising in the easternmost provinces of the Tsarist ally of Great Britain!

Hence, in opposition to a stubborn prejudice regarding the submissiveness of Muslim peoples, which posits the aversion of these populations towards rebellion and insurrection and revolution, the Muslim peoples of the Russian empire were **the first** to rebel against the consequence of the massive carnage that World War I represented. There is no doubt that the tremors that resulted from this revolt contributed both to the increasing vulnerability of Russian troops at the front and to the October revolution. It also probably resulted in the peoples of Central Asia considering the new state born of the October revolution in a positive light since it was the Bolsheviks that finally put an end to that savage power structure called Tsarism. We need more research on this revolt of immense importance in order to connect the threads in more concrete fashion.

Muslim communism after the October revolution

The February revolution gave an impetus to the communist movement among Muslim peoples. The first to take up the challenge were the Volga Tatars, who established, as early as April 1917 the Muslim Socialist Committee of Kazan (now capital to the Autonomous Republic of Tatarstan inside the Russian Federation). Three of the leaders were of great significance: Mollanur Vahidov (the president of the committee) would become a leading star of the Muslim communist movement until he was killed while defending Kazan against the Whites in August 1918. Aminna Muhiddinova's presence as secretary of the committee was of great symbolic value as a woman in a society where women in general were heavily oppressed. The third name is, of course, the most illustrious among Muslim communists of the period: Mirsaid Sultangaliyev rose to become the most prominent leader of the movement, but was accused of the heresy of national communism, hounded and finally executed by the Stalinist bureaucracy in 1940.²⁹ The Socialist Committee attended the impressive First All Russia Congress of Muslims, convened on May Day 1917, but only as a minority, since the overriding presence there was that of Jadidism. In the wake of the October revolution, in January 1918, Vahidov was appointed the Commissar of Muslim Affairs by the Sovnarkom, with Galimcan İbrahimov and Sharif Manatov his deputies and Sultangaliyev in charge of the division of the commissariat in Kazan.

March 1918 saw the convening of the Conference of the Muslim Toilers of

²⁹ The main source on this important historic figure is Alexandre Bennigsen/Chantal Lemerquier-Quelquejay, *Sultangaliyev. Le père de la révolution tiers-mondiste*, Paris: Fayard, 1986.

Russia. With this conference, the communists were thus distinguishing themselves from the bourgeois-democratic movement within the Muslim population. This conference elected an executive of 12 members, with the purpose of establishing an independent Muslim Socialist Communist Party, which soon enough came to be labelled the Muslim Communist Party (b), in complete parallel with the Russian Communist Party (b), the “b” of course standing for “Bolshevik” lest there be any confusion with the Mensheviks. The Muslim Communist Party (b) held its first conference in June 1918 and elected a Bureau (called “Musbureau” for short). Thus, parallel to the focus on Muslim affairs in the bosom of the Soviet state (Muscom), there was a nascent Muslim communism as well (Musbureau). This movement was apparently regarded by the Bolsheviks as an incubator for Muslim communism all over Russia as well as in other countries where Muslims were either a majority or a sizeable minority, such as India. The greatest testimony to this latter aspect is the presence of Turkish communists inside this Muslim communist entity. Mustafa Suphi, the main leader of the Turkish communists inside Russia, was also a leader of this movement until his death at the hands of the Turkish bourgeoisie in 1921. This probably is at least one of the reasons why the organisation of Muslim communists was at first conceived as a party independent of the RCP (b).

However, this idea proved to be ephemeral. In September, the Muslim Communist Party was turned into a section of the RCP (b). We are not yet in possession of sufficient research into and documentation on either the reason for the initial decision of forming an independent party for Muslim communists or that for the subsequent one of abandoning this idea in such a brief lapse of time. On the other hand, the autonomy of the movement and its distinct organisational form were not abolished. The Congress of Muslim Communists convened only two months later, on 4th November 1918 in Moscow, where a great rally was also held the next day, with Zinoviev participating. A Second Congress of Muslim Communists was convened precisely one year later (November 1919) and addressed by none less than Lenin (and well as Stalin).

The organising of Muslim communists changed tack after the founding of the Communist International at year end 1919. Immediately in the wake of the establishment of Comintern, an Eastern Section, which went under the name of the International Eastern Propaganda and Executive Soviet, was formed. We see here that the appellation “Muslim” has disappeared and the umbrella for the Muslim movement subsumed under a more general label “Eastern”, obviously including the Christian elements in the region such as the Georgians and the Armenians etc. The Baku Congress of Eastern Peoples also takes the same road of including Muslim peoples within the more general concept of “Eastern”. This progression from the vision of an independent party through a Muslim section within the party of Russian

communism to the assimilation of Muslims within an overarching conception of the East is indicative of certain debates between and within the Russian and Muslim communist movements. Revolutionary Marxist historiography has to delve into this question seriously, for considerable material points to a growing unease among communists of Muslim countries and communities over this question of assimilation into larger entities.

The Communist Party of Turkey, a decisive presence in this movement early on, was finally formally established in September 1920, immediately after the Baku Congress, in the self-same city of Baku, with plenipotentiary delegates from within Turkey also present. However, as mentioned earlier, a delegation of 15 leaders of the party, headed by Mustafa Suphi himself, travelled in December 1920 to Anatolia, only to be harassed and heckled in different cities and finally to be drowned intentionally, in a tragic incident, in the Black Sea outside Trabzon on the night of 20th to 21st January 1921. Had the leadership, and in particular its beacon Mustafa Suphi, of the Communist Party of Turkey not been eliminated by the forces of the Turkish bourgeoisie, it would be worthwhile to ask, what would have happened to the relations between the Russian and Muslim elements is an undecided question. This is particularly true of the alleged Muslim nationalist bias of Sultangaliev. Since Mustafa Suphi was a Leninist of the first order, it would have been interesting to see what his position would have been in the confrontation between Stalin and Sultangaliev.

The Sovietisation of Muslim Russia: the Tatars and the Bashkir

This development of the Muslim communist movement, in addition to the Bolsheviks' policy on the national question, led, in successive stages to the spread of communism into the Muslim regions of what was formerly the Russian empire and ended up with the establishment of Soviet Socialist Republics (either union republics or autonomous republics in the Russian federation, hereafter SSR's) over several years after the October revolution. As we have already suggested, the difference in socio-economic structures and pre-revolutionary political developments in the diverse regions led to a differentiated type of transition in concrete cases towards the Soviet state. It would be useful to identify the various sources of this transition and the differences in the constellation of forces since this would teach us lessons for the future dissemination of revolutionary regimes in times of revolutionary upheaval.

One route was the establishment by the central state of SSR's in agreement with the local forces. The earliest instance of this, an impressive show of good will by the new government born of the October revolution, was the proclamation of the Tatar-Bashkir Soviet Republic as early as March 1918, that is, only four months

after the revolution. This was a clear recognition of the right of Muslim peoples to self-government, in complete contrast to the outlook dominant under Tsarist rule. Yet this republic was in a certain sense stillborn, not due to any fault of the Soviet government, but because of frictions existing between the two component nations of this newly-born political entity. The Bashkir, less advanced and more tribal than the Tatars, were suspicious of the supremacy of the latter within a common political entity and decided to stay aloof to the new republic. It was under a nationalist figure, Zeki Validov, that a majority of Bashkir threw their lot with the white army of Kolchak. However, here we come across one of the decisive factors in the choice made by the Muslim and Turkic peoples of the former empire of the Tsar: Kolchak, as well as other commanders among the Whites, were ruthless defenders of Great Russian chauvinism and did not intend to grant the slightest concession to the oppressed nations of Russia. This stood in stark contrast to Lenin's policy. Hence, with his six thousand troops, Validov defected from the Whites to join the Red Army in return for the proclamation of the Autonomous Soviet Republic of Bashkortostan. Thus was born a Soviet state within the FSRSR with a counter revolutionary leader at its head! Irony of ironies!

This incident is full of lessons to be learned for future situations that may arise in revolutionary upheavals. Let us first briefly recapitulate the events. Bashkortostan was established in March 1919, a full year after the stillborn Tatar-Bashkir Autonomous Republic. However, the two sides soon fell apart over many questions, including the level of integration of Validov's forces into the Red Army, with Validov resisting integration and the central authorities obviously insisting on full integration. After much haggling and friction, Validov finally defected to the so-called *Basmachi* movement (a semi-bandit movement that fought for Muslim independence, also joined at a certain stage by the former Ottoman strongman in exile, Enver Pasha). Notwithstanding the defection of Validov, Bashkortostan remained an autonomous republic.

The first lesson to be learned is, of course, the truth of Lenin's assertion that the recognition by the proletariat of the oppressor nation of the right to self-determination for oppressed and smaller nations, far from instigating the latter to search for independence and thus fragmenting the territory of the revolution as Rosa Luxemburg, and Bukharin and Pyatakov in their turn, claimed it would, will attract those nations magnetically to the proletariat of the oppressor nation. The Bashkir case is just an extreme instance of how, even under a reactionary leadership, the oppressed nation will side with the revolutionary government if that government has a correct attitude to the national question.

The second significant aspect of this interesting episode is that, in politics, many a different kind of manoeuvre can succeed if you are in a strong, in this case a he-

gemonically superior, position. Many Bolshevik leaders protested against the pact between Lenin and Validov, pointing to the incontrovertible fact that the latter was a reactionary nationalist. This was obvious to Lenin himself. But there were two hitches here. For one thing, the other party was a nation that had been oppressed for centuries and one had to deal with it in very sensitive manner to win it over after that centuries-long brutality. In this Trotsky was totally in agreement with Lenin, following Bashkir developments closely and crossing swords with the critics of Lenin in the latter's defence on occasion. In a 1920 telegram, for instance, he asserted the following:

In determining relations with the Bashkir republic one must consider the harmful feelings in Ufa. There they openly speak of the Bashkir republic as a temporary charitable gift, which annoys the Bashkirs extremely. Preobrazhenskii spoke at the party meeting about the need to review the nationality program at the party congress and blamed the Central Committee for offering Ufa's workers as a sacrifice to its Eastern policy. The narrow-mindedness of [Ufa party leader] El'tsin, the hysteria of Artem, the philosophy of Preobrazhenskii will soon turn our Bashkir policy into its opposite.³⁰

The other aspect of the matter is that once your party is in control of the overall situation, the other side has very little room for manoeuvre. Lenin knew this and this is precisely why Validov ended up fleeing his home base for a hopeless adventure while the Autonomous SR of Bashkortostan continued to live on.³¹

It has become customary to attack the Bolshevik leadership for divide-and-rule policies in the Muslim regions of Russia and in particular in Central Asia. In its truly revolutionary period, i.e. under Lenin and, on a number of questions, into the late 1920s, the Bolshevik government did not commit such a crime. The separation of the original Tatar-Bashkir Republic into two autonomous SR's is a perfect example. On the face of it, one could easily say that the Soviet government divided two peoples of very close parenthood. The truth of the matter is the contrary. It was the division between the Tatars, a more dominant nation, and the Bashkir, full of fear for their future in the face of Tatar supremacy, that led to the division and the Soviet government simply had to concede to the will of the Bashkir. Thus the earlier unified Tatar-Bashkir Republic was dissolved soon afterwards and an Autonomous

30 Cited in Daniel E. Schafer, "Local Politics and the Birth of the Republic of Bashkortostan", in Ronald Grigor Suny/Terry Martin (eds.), *A State of Nations. Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 177. See pp. 179-180 for further similar interventions of Trotsky in Bashkir matters.

31 Validov subsequently abandoned his original country to become a famous right-wing professor of history in Germany and Turkey.

Soviet Republic of Tatarstan established in spring 1920. However, the Tatar-Bashkir contradiction is only exemplary of a wider set of contradictions between the Muslim peoples of Russia and the proposition advanced here is true for many other cases, such as the separation of Turkestan into Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The Transcaucasian Federation, a project envisioned by Stalin and his cohort, was later dissolved into three different Union SSR's (Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan). This was positively progressive in its content, since the purpose of this federation was to reduce the stature of each of the three republics vis-a-vis the Russian big brother.

The Baku Commune and the birth of socialist Azerbaijan

Things were more complicated in Transcaucasia because of the Armenian genocide that was perpetrated by the now totally politically degenerate Young Turk Triumvirate of Enver-Talat-Cemal (pronounced Djemal). Once the Russian army was discharged after the October revolution, the war in Eastern Anatolia turned into a free-for-all fighting between the Armenian bands, who had earlier served as officers and soldiers in the Tsar's army, and the now deeply bruised Turkish army. In an effort to benefit from the collapse of the Russian front, the Turkish army tried to advance towards Transcaucasia, where the Armenians, including those who had fled the 1915 massacre, constituted a considerable part of the population in all three countries and naturally feared for their lives. There were consequently clashes between the Armenian population and the Azerbaijani Turks. This led, in March 1918, to what has been termed the "Baku atrocities" ("*Bakû faciaları*" in Turkish) perpetrated against the Azerbaijani Turks by forces close to the Dashnak Armenian Federation, which had by now become a nationalist party quite distinct from its earlier peasant socialist roots. These left a bitter memory in the relationship between the Armenians and Turks of Transcaucasia.

However, in the same month of March, there arose in Baku what has gone down in history as the Baku Commune. This was the first Soviet regime in Transcaucasia. And although it was established in Baku, it was not an exclusively, nor even dominantly, Muslim affair. It was multinational in its setup and a coalition of different political forces. Its foremost leader was Stepan Schaumyan, the most prominent Armenian Bolshevik, a long-time friend of Lenin's and at that time also a member of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party. Among the other commissars that led the Commune, the role of second fiddle, so to speak, fell to Neriman Nerimanov, a Muslim Bolshevik, who may be considered the historic leader of Azerbaijani communism. Here, in the long shadow of the bloodbath of the 1915 genocide and the subsequent mutual carnage that knew no bounds in the final stage of the war, was a miraculous instance of friendly cooperation between Armenian and Turk that

only communism in its lofty internationalism could bring about. And to top it all, the Dashnak Party was a member of the coalition government, alongside the Bolsheviks and the Left Social Revolutionaries!

The Baku Commune was to survive only four short months. The unwinding of the Commune was in fact a result of the self-same Turco-Armenian animosity. Fearing the advance of Turkish-Ottoman forces, Dashnak started to advocate the idea of taking refuge under the protective umbrella of the British army, which by now was making its presence felt in Transcaucasia after Soviet Russia had withdrawn from the war and discharged its army. The Bolsheviks and the Social Revolutionaries naturally refused this option, as this would have meant taking a hostile position towards the Soviet government in Moscow, an enemy unto death for British imperialism. A fiery debate ensued with the Bolsheviks and the Social Revolutionaries losing the vote taken in the Soviet by a very narrow margin. 26 Commissars fled the city, to be shortly captured by counter revolutionary forces and brought before the firing squad. Evidence of British complicity with this summary execution is available. There is an ironic poignancy in the fact that the elimination of Schaumyan, the top Armenian Bolshevik, almost presaged in its unfolding the killing of Mustafa Suphi, the father of Turkish communism, and his 14 comrades!

After a brief interlude following the fall of the Baku Commune, the end of October saw this time the collapse of the Turkish armies as a result of the tremor of revolution in Turkey's leading ally Germany. The lapse of time from end 1918 to early 1920 was the heyday of bourgeois nationalism in Transcaucasia, under the protection of the British army. The Dashnak in Armenia, the Musavat (Equality) Party in Azerbaijan, and the Mensheviks in Georgia dominated as long as the British stayed in Transcaucasia. But immediately after the British withdrew from the region in January 1920, there was a communist uprising in Azerbaijan and, with help from the Red Army, Soviet Azerbaijan was established in April of the same year. This was the first soviet republic in a country outside of Russia proper with a Muslim majority.

The Sovietisation of Central Asia

Central Asia harboured the Muslim societies within the borders of Russia that were the most difficult to win over to socialism. For one thing, the objective obstacles to be surmounted were formidable: all of Central Asia, whatever the diversity between the different societies it consisted of, was living in a pre-capitalist stage and a working-class that deserved the name was almost absent among the indigenous population. Then there was the fact that the hatred of the Russian, traditionally owing to the pillage of the land of the locals by Russian settlers and recently fanned by the brutality of the suppression of the 1916 revolt, caused the indigenous popula-

tion to disregard at first the attitude of the Bolsheviks, with their appeal to the rights of the oppressed nations. Finally, the quasi inexistence of a socialist or communist movement naturally worked against a quick rallying of the Central Asian peoples to the Bolshevik cause.

All of these adverse conditions were raised to a power under the specific circumstances in which the region found itself almost immediately after the October revolution. There were two factors at play. On the one hand, as we have already pointed out, the Russian element in Central Asia, in particular in Turkestan, opportunistically passed over to the victorious Bolshevik side in order to sustain their interests. Thus Central Asian Bolshevism was markedly colonial in its composition. This led to a strange sort of situation where communism almost signified colonialism to the indigenous peoples.

Ironically, the locality where the first Soviet government (though not under Bolshevik hegemony yet) appeared in September 1917, in other words, before the October revolution was victorious, was Tashkent, a city usually considered at that time the capital of Turkestan. But that was an exclusively Russian affair, with no involvement of the indigenous population. When, three months later, in December 1917, Tashkent and Kokand engaged in a war with each other, the supposedly Bolshevik Tashkent stood for Russian hegemony while the Kokand counter revolutionary side represented the colonised Muslim. Because Kokand lost, Muslim forces were forced to retreat to the mountains, which then led to the eruption of the *Basmachi* movement, already mentioned above in connection to the nationalist Bashkir leader Validov.

On the other hand, a counter revolutionary insurgency by Cossacks led to an almost absolute isolation of Central Asia from the rest of Russia, thus making it impossible for the central Soviet government in Moscow to intervene in the affairs of the region for nearly two long years. This led to the consolidation of the power of the Russian element, a system of government with features of blatant discrimination against the Muslim autochthonous element. Thus the opportunism of the Russian colonial forces in their easily adopted new garb, Bolshevism, was only able to play itself out because Central Asia was isolated as if in laboratory conditions and thus became immune to the influence of real internationalist Bolshevism.

It was only in 1919 that, with the turnaround of the military situation, Moscow acquired the means to intervene in Central Asian affairs. A significant watershed came in the form of the so-called "Revolutionary Committee" decree regarding Kazakhstan, in June 1919, through which the Soviet central government tried to redress the wrongdoing of Russian settlers against the indigenous Muslim population. Given that the major grievance of the nomadic tribal society of Kazakhstan had long been the expropriation they suffered with respect to their communal lands at

the hand of the Russian settler and given, further, that the cutting edge of the 1916 Central Asian revolt was turned against these self-same settlers, the Kazakh decree was of epoch-making importance, far beyond the immediate practical measures it contained. Here, at last, a “Russian” power structure promised to refrain from colonial pillage of traditional Kazakh society, a move that represented a complete turnaround in central policy.

Parallel to this came the intervention in Turkestan. As explained above the Soviet government warned the Russian element that ruled in the name of Bolshevism against discrimination vis-a-vis the Muslim population and Lenin wrote a letter to the communists of Turkestan.

The Bolshevik policy of national self-abnegation from the point of view of Russian interests paid off handsomely again. In Turkestan the revolution had admitted the limits to its power by granting the Emir of Bokhara and the Khan of Hiva their sovereignty over their respective traditional territories through treaties signed in March 1918. With the turn in Bolshevik policy after the isolation of Central Asia was overcome, the Young Bokhara movement crossed very quickly over from its earlier bourgeois-democratic positions to a new revolutionary communist orientation. The alliance between this movement and the Red Army, in turn, led to the demise of the Emir of Bokhara and opened the way to the Sovietisation of Turkestan and Central Asia at large.³²

Lessons of the Muslim October

The diffusion of the October revolution to the territories of the earlier Tsarist empire where Muslims were the indigenous peoples teaches us at least three different invaluable lessons. The first is that Muslim peoples are neither full of aversion toward revolt and revolution in their religious submissiveness, nor unable to move beyond a medieval clinging to the old and traditional. In effect, it is a striking fact that Muslims, who are today belittled for not being able to climb to the level of modernity, lived under a socio-economic order that went beyond that modernity, afflicted with class conflict and congenital inequality among nations, adapting themselves to a society with at least a nominal subscription to eradication of class distinction and national oppression was the rule. This lesson obviously does not only concern the West, with its prejudices on Islam and Muslims, but also the Westernised elites and even communists of the Islamic world, who have a view of their own society closely shaped by those prejudices. It teaches the communists of the 21st century that the Islamic world of over a billion souls should definitely not be abandoned to tradition and bigotry, but actively be won to the cause of revolution.

³² Adeeb Khalid, “Nationalizing the Revolution in Central Asia: The Transformation of Jadidism, 1917-1920”, in Ronald Grigor Suny/Terry Martin (eds.), *A State of Nations*, op.cit.

A second and priceless lesson is the burning importance of the Leninist nationalities policy. If socialism or communism, using these terms interchangeably in this context, is an international phenomenon that can only be created by proletarian internationalists, then filling this internationalism, as Lenin did, with the self-determination of nations is an imperative. The Soviet experience proves beyond doubt that, far from leading to a breakup of the lands where revolution has triumphed, this Leninist policy acts as a cement that rebinds together nations and nationalities that, under class society had become enemies due to inequality between nations.

Third, one has to be very clear about the sources of nascent communist movements. Some Marxists, in their internationalist zeal, denigrate and depreciate nationalism and bourgeois-democratic movements and personalities as promising antecedents to the formation of communist movements and leaders. The historical experience teaches the exact opposite. It is extremely rare that liberals should evolve to become communists, but a commonplace for bourgeois nationalists to move towards communism and become leaders of nascent communist movements. The reason is not the superiority of nationalism as an ideology over liberalism. At root, both are ideologies of the bourgeoisie. Nationalism further infests the petty-bourgeoisie, while liberalism is, to a certain extent, condemned to remain confined to upper bourgeois circles. The decisive difference, however, is not this. After all, we do not ask for petty-bourgeois leadership in the communist movement! The decisive difference lies in the imperialist nature of our epoch. Liberalism implies, by definition, deference to the imperatives of the world market and hence to the most powerful forces of that market, imperialism. Nationalism, on the other hand, may come into conflict with imperialism at a certain stage of its development, depending on the circumstances that obtain in each specific situation. That is why liberals cannot ordinarily become communists as long as they remain true to themselves while nationalists can join communism in its anti-imperialist resolution and move on to a higher stage of internationalism from that moment on.

The experience of the early communist movement in the land of the October revolution and in the surrounding territories exemplifies this clearly. Mustafa Suphi and Ethem Nejat, the chairman and general secretary respectively of the Communist Party of Turkey, had been nationalists before they became communist internationalists. The Jadidism of Tatarstan provided the environment in which the first Muslim communists of Russia flourished. The Young Bokhara movement of Turkestan turned to communism en masse under the political hegemony of Bolshevism and opened the gates for the Sovietisation of Central Asia. Let no one be a purist on questions of the genesis of the communist movement. Where we need to be purists is to struggle against all bourgeois influences, liberal, nationalist or other, once a communist movement or organisation has been formed. Then only Leninism can lead the movement forward.

Bulgaria in the trap of neoliberalism

Daniela Penkova

In 1989 the Berlin Wall fell and the so-called “transition period” for Central and Eastern Europe began. The goal pursued was a radical change of society at economic, political and social level. In relation to this, Bulgaria endorsed a variety of development programs, which were manipulated by the two supranational institutions – the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The country was quickly encompassed by a wide network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) whose number amounts nowadays to 38,000. The UN agencies, supranational authorities and NGOs organized and coordinated Bulgaria’s transition through the same methods, ideas and language, which were being used for the Third World Countries by that time.

From the “development” to the “democratization” of Eastern Europe

The concept of “development” was born on the 20th of January 1949. It was the day when Harry Truman held before the American Congress his inaugural presidential speech, in which he defined a wide number of countries as “underdeveloped”

and entrusted the “developed” countries with the task to “work on the development”:

Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace ... We must carry out our plans for reducing the barriers to world trade and increasing its volume. Economic recovery and peace itself depend on increased world trade ... More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery ... Their economic life is primitive and stagnant ... The United States is pre-eminent among nations in the development of industrial and scientific techniques ... In cooperation with other nations, we should foster capital investment in areas needing development.¹

Concealing the American interests behind the mask of benevolence, Truman did not hesitate to announce a program for technical assistance, which “with the cooperation of the American business, private capital, agriculture, and labour in this country, ... can greatly increase the industrial activity in other nations and can raise substantially their standards of living.” The world has vastly changed since then but there was no change in the condition of the developing countries, labelled to this day as “The Third World”.

After the Second World War the supranational twin institutions – the IMF and the World Bank – were born. During the same period were also founded most of the UN’s agencies – FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation) in 1945, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and UNICEF (The United Nations Children’s Fund) in 1946, followed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 1951. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which is today’s greatest world network in the sphere of development, was founded in 1966.

The development supporting projects are characterized by a wide range of activities carried out by NGOs. Their propagation is a new phenomenon gaining force in the context of a real boom of the “industry of development”. This evolution began with the change of the policies of the World Bank after 1973 under the leadership of Robert McNamara who raised the credit volume thirty fold and made the bank a real intellectual operator supporting purposive social and cultural projects. During the 1980s the neoliberal economists reorganized the World Bank to become a global agent of the “Washington Consensus” striving to impose policies of deregulation and privatization in the indebted countries. The NGOs number made a headlong increase. They were expected to create their own niche of funds for social investments whose purpose was to soften the immediate consequences of the Struc-

¹ http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/50yr_archive/inagural20jan1949.htm.

tural Adjustment Programs (PAS). They were encouraged to become channels for support of the poor people and those facing social exclusion in the context of the new economic policy. Some NGOs were financed by American governmental agencies such as USAID (American Agency for International Development) with the sole purpose of disseminating the neoliberal ideas, thus becoming think tanks. They engaged in analysing the social policies in areas spreading out from social programs to political strategy, from the economy to science and technology, from commercial and industrial policies to military consultation. Since 1989 think tanks have found a new field for development in Eastern Europe where pragmatic experts and romantic intellectuals were attracted by the idea of autonomous citizen society overseeing the actions of governments, aiding the advance of the liberal democracy and protecting against “the return of communism”. Thus the problematic of development coincided to a great extent with that of the democratization and was no more confined to the Third World only but extended also to the Eastern countries and even the whole Western world where lots of think tanks had developed since the end of the 1990s, which were already participating in planning reforms demanding sacrifices such as the ones in pension and health insurance. The social state was sacrificed first.²

There is a great similarity between the two terms – *transition* (used to denote the economic and political changes in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall) and *development*, since both assume export and adaptation of the political and economic models of the Western democracies.

The situation in Bulgaria in 1989

When on the 10th of November 1989 the evening news announced Todor Zhivkov’s resignation from the country’s leadership, the Bulgarian people were sincerely surprised. Although the Berlin Wall had fallen the day before, the Wind of Change had not yet been felt in Bulgaria. But the news evoked great hopes within people – perhaps the moment for democracy had finally come. Soon the Union of the newborn Democratic Parties was proclaimed and the date for the first free elections was set.

Hopes concerned mostly the political freedom. Until that day it was practically impossible to express any right-wing ideas in Bulgaria since capitalism was branded as an unjust and exploiting system. The ownership of the means of production in industry was entirely in the hands of the state. Only the agricultural cooperatives and the craftsmen were independent but their sole client was again the state. Those who would insist on private ownership of the means of production were persecuted. Only a handful of people dared to openly claim such thing. The only

² Dostena Lavergne, *The Experts of the Transition*, 2010.

exception were the dissidents, collaborating with forbidden in Bulgaria Western media. One such media was radio “Free Europe” financed since 1950 by the US Congress through CIA with the official purpose of “popularizing the democratic institutions and values by propagation of information and ideas.”³ One of the most exploited arguments of the radio supporting the capitalistic way of production was the so-called “poverty” in the Socialist countries which were being compared to the Western countries and foremost to the US. That is why it is necessary to take a look at the available data in order to better understand the economic condition of Bulgaria on the eve of the transition.

Most appropriate for the purpose are the World Bank’s and FAO’s statistics for 1989:

Population of 8.878 million people with GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of 2449 dollars per capita.⁴ A positive trade balance of + 877.1 million dollars. The hospital beds were 970.2 per each 100 thousand citizens, which surpassed substantially the average of the European Union with 15 member countries which was 777.4 per each 100 thousand citizens.

Manufacture was industrialized and over 80% (per cent) of the production came from industry. Only 10% of the whole production came from the so-called traditional economy – agriculture.⁵ While according to the West the main reason for poverty in the Third World countries was the lack of industrialization, the same was not true for Bulgaria. However it did not stop the supranational institutions from demanding from the country the same reforms which they had been imposing on the developing countries for decades.

Structural Adjustment Programs (PAS)

The four key reforms required by the neoliberal doctrine and encouraged by the World Bank, the IMF, the UNDP and the think tanks were privatization, liberalization, deregulation (regulations removal) and dramatic cut-offs of the government spending. These reforms were already imposed on the developing countries in the 1980s through the so-called Structural Adjustment Programs. These are a series of macroeconomic measures proclaimed as necessary so that these countries could gain the trust of the private investors. The main goal of the structural adjustment programs was to make all the world’s economies capitalistic ones, thus placing them into a common system controlled by the international capital.

During the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s it was widely assumed that the economies of the poor countries were structurally different from those of the advanced industrial

3 https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radio_Free_Europe.

4 <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?page=5>

5 http://www.omda.bg/public/biblioteka/dimitar_ivanov/ot_9_do_10_statistika_b.htm.

ones because they had been victims too long of the colonization from the Western imperialistic states. In order to get rid of poverty the economically underdeveloped countries needed to get modernized through a transition from the traditional agriculture based economy to industrialization – the so-called Modernization Theory. At that time it was commonly assumed that in order to achieve such a result it was imperative to follow policies of Keynesian type which were applied in all Western countries during that period. “The Development Economics” was considered a “special” instance of Keynesian economics where the main role for the social and economic modernization had been entrusted to the state.

During the 1980s with the ascent of the neoliberal theory also changed the ideas concerning the methods for accomplishing economic development. The approach still remained Euro-centered but this time it was about following the decrees of the neoliberal economic theory which was already making its way into the Western countries. The international institutions were lending loans to the developing countries through the Structural Adjustment Programs under strict conditions. In case the country did not abide to the conditions it had signed up for, the financing was cut off. The World Bank in 2005 and the IMF in 2002 proclaimed the beginning of a process of revising the method of loan lending. In spite of this, to this day every signed agreement still goes with up to 67 economic requirements to the indebted countries concerning privatization and liberalization of sensitive sectors such as the key spheres of education, health services and aquatic resources management.

Bulgaria applied for its first loan from the World Bank in 1990 starting off from a totally different economic position compared to the developing countries – it was broadly industrialized with developed infrastructures along its whole territory. In addition to that the country had built stable health, pension and educational systems functioning excellently and had a positive trade balance of almost 900 million dollars.⁶ In spite of the big differences from the Third World countries, the loan lenders imposed on the country the same conditions that were imposed on the poorest of the countries: Bulgaria had to quickly start the process of privatization of most of its economic sectors including the banking sector. In addition to that the country had to liberalize all the prices and liberalize and deregulate its markets. The officially stated goal was to increase the Gross National Product – the index adopted as the measure for economic development. In 1991 Bulgaria signed with the World Bank its first loan requiring structural reforms. Since then were signed 17 agreements with the World Bank⁷ and 13 agreements with the International Monetary Fund⁸ -

6 http://www.omda.bg/public/biblioteka/dimitar_ivanov/ot_9_do_10_statistika_b.htm.

7 <https://finances.worldbank.org/Loan-and-Credit-Administration/IBRD-Statement-of-Loans-Latest-Available-Snapshot/sfv5-tf7p?#column-menu>.

8 <http://www.bnb.bg/AboutUs/AUAboutBNB/AUInternationalRelations/AUIRInternFinInstitutions/index.htm>.

all of them with conditions for reforms. Both institutions did not ask themselves the question how to keep the positive results achieved in the country's economy and social sphere until 1989. If anyone still thinks that today's economic condition is caused by the short-sighted Bulgarian politicians led by wrong policies, it would be better to get rid of this conviction. All reforms carried out during the last 25 years were worked out, imposed and approved by the two mightiest global institutions.

What kind of improvement? GDP is losing calories

Too much and for too long, we seemed to have surrendered personal excellence and community values in the mere accumulation of material things ... Gross National Product counts air pollution and cigarette advertising, and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage. It counts special locks for our doors and the jails for the people who break them. It counts the destruction of the redwood and the loss of our natural wonder in chaotic sprawl. It counts napalm and counts nuclear warheads and armored cars for the police to fight the riots in our cities ... and the television programs which glorify violence in order to sell toys to our children ... it measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.

Robert Kennedy

The adopted index measuring development is the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) – the market value of the produced end products and services in a country in the course of one year. But the GDP has never been able to describe the real prosperity of a certain society. Many researches show that economic growth is not lastingly accompanied by an improvement of the people's well-being.

GDP was adopted by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in 1990 replacing the index Gross National Product (GNP). The difference between the two indexes is important and explains the reason for the substitution: GDP measures what was produced within a country's territory, while GNP measures the income considering the **citizenship** to a certain country. When a privatization is carried out, the production is being performed on a country's territory (and thus is being reported as GDP) but a great part of the profit from this production is being exported abroad thanks to the movement of the capital. For example, if a foreign citizen buys the rights to exploitation of a mine, he will pay only a small fee to the state (in Bulgaria the Canadian company Dundee Precious Metals pays only 1% royalties), exporting abroad a big part of the profit. When the mine's profits increase, the GDP is going to rise, while GNP will show a drop in the state's income because the company is Canadian. The Bulgarian national product is decreasing while at the same time Canada's GNP is increasing.

There are lots of other problems with the acceptance of the economic growth

as a measure of prosperity. For example, GDP includes expenses made because of natural and human caused catastrophes which in turn are considered to be good for the economy while in fact these catastrophes are tragic for the society. An example of this could be the ecological catastrophe in the Mexican Gulf in 2010 when 11 people died in the ocean and over a billion liters of petrol were poured into the sea: this raised the GDP with tens of millions of dollars. Each flood in Bulgaria during the last years has led to expenses for rescuing and restoration activities, which make the GDP rise. This might sound unbelievable but each natural catastrophe is highly welcome for the economic growth. The same way the increase of illnesses among the population leads to more expenses for drugs and hospital services which is again registered as economic growth.

The way GDP is being calculated is also debatable. Since 1953 countries adopt the methods recommended by the SNA⁹ – The System for National Accounts adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission. By the end of the 1980s only the end products produced in the real economy were measured. In 1987 Italy was the first European country that followed the new recommendations by the SNA and included in its GDP the estimated production of the grey sector and thus registering a raise of 18% literally for a day. Since then other countries gradually include in their calculations the “estimates” of the undeclared activity. To what extent are they real, no one could say. It is a real scandal that from September 2014 the European Union started registering even the black sector activity. Drugs, contraband, prostitution and corruption officially became part of the measure for economic growth and hence for the “development”. Until then the weapons production was considered an “intermediate product” while since September 2014 it became an “investment”. It is a rhetorical question whether these activities really create welfare for the society.

I would like to complete my critic at the index for economic growth and development by emphasizing that it does not show in any way how the wealth is being distributed within the society and how it is being used. A country with a strong social inequality may register the same GDP as another country in which wealth is distributed more uniformly.

In 1989 the wealth in Bulgaria was distributed comparatively uniformly – there were no proprietors of big capital and poverty was practically non-existent. But since many services were free of charge (public health, education, textbooks, transportation of students and pensioners) and other services and goods were sold at state-fixed prices which sometimes did not exceed the costs for their production (groceries, transportation, electricity, water-supply and so on), the GDP was comparatively low then. After the privatization and price liberalization they increased

⁹ SNA <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/sna2008.asp>.

beyond measure thus increasing the GDP as well. That is why GDP is hardly the measure helping us depict correctly the condition of any economy.

The witnesses to the economic catastrophe in Bulgaria, observing the spreading poverty stifling the country, are probably deeply confused by the claims of the economists of development according to whom the life in Bulgaria is nowadays much better than that in 1989 because the GDP has almost tripled (from 2449 dollars to 7498 dollars per capita)¹⁰.

But which index could be used in order to make a correct comparison between the economic condition of the people in 1989 and the one today? While examining the international statistics we come upon one very interesting index used by FAO for decades – the consumption of groceries per capita, measured in kilocalories per day. This seems a very appropriate measure especially having in mind that no one could consume kilocalories greatly exceeding the daily consumption because of the simple physiological restriction itself. From the FAO data we can see that in 1989 in Bulgaria were consumed 3623 kilocalories per capita daily and the country was fourth in the world before all the Western countries (France was 8th, Italy – 9th, Austria – 11th, USA – 14th, and the average daily consumption of the world was 2635 kilocalories per capita). FAO's last available data are from 2011, from which is seen that **Bulgaria has fallen from 4th to the 81st position** with an average daily consumption of 2877 – which is 25% less (the survival minimum is 2400 kilocalories). In comparison, Ghana is on 65th position.¹¹

The rhetoric

Although the supranational institutions of development declare as their fundamental purpose “the struggle against poverty”, they keep on demanding economic reforms which have proved to be totally inefficient. The leading assumption is that only the free market and strongly restricted government intervention are able to guarantee prosperity. Instead of nations to be allowed to act at their own discretion in order to increase the welfare of their people, they are forced to adopt neoliberal policies. After that no one measures whether the life conditions have improved, but only to what extent the recommended policies have been implemented.

The advertising of the reforms imposed outside is a job of the think tanks, hiding behind the disguise of NGOs. Their projects are being financed by big development agencies among which the American USAID stands out. The foundation representing USAID in the country is “America for Bulgaria”. Think tanks use the same rhetoric they have been using until now in the Third World countries. They

10 http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?order=wbapi_data_value_1990%20wbapi_data_value%20wbapi_data_value-first&sort=asc.

11 <http://www.fao.org/statistics/en/>.

speak about democracy, reforms, good governance, citizenship formation, freedom, development and so on. The loans imposing the above listed “reforms” are being called “aid”. The World Bank and other agencies are being described as “donors” and every political idea in the interest of the population is being straightforwardly qualified as “populism”. The goal is to manipulate the public opinion using the methods described by Pierre Bourdieu:

The one reproducing the official knows how to produce, i.e. to manufacture, making theatre (in the etymological sense of the term **producere**, which means bring to the light), something which does not exist (in the sense of sensory, visible), and speak for it. He has to produce that in which name he has the right to produce. There is no way that he does not make theatre, create forms, perform miracles. The most ordinary miracle for a speech artist is the verbal miracle, the rhetorical success. He has to present that what justifies his words, that is, the authority for which he has the right to speak.¹²

An important example of the rhetoric used is the book “The Bottom Billion” by the director of the Development Research Group of the World Bank Paul Collier.¹³ Collier is a typical neoliberal economist totally devoted to the policies of the development agencies from the last decades. He encourages the “shock therapies” using in his book the usual language of “freedom, democratization, aids, transition, struggle against poverty” and proclaims the politicians who dared to impose these policies as “brave reformers”. Everyone who dares to follow a different economic path and use the available funds for building state social services is being branded as “dictator”, while the adversaries of these reforms are called “politically motivated” and “Marxists”. For example, he praises the neoliberal policies of Blaise Compaore:

“For more than a decade the governments of Uganda and Burkina Faso have demonstrated satisfactory development rates partially fixing the damages caused by their horrible predecessors.” The “horrible predecessor” in this case is Thomas Sankara who implemented policies of Keynesian type and was eliminated in 1987 by Blaise Compaore with a coup aided by France, the USA and Liberian militaries.¹⁴

Besides, Collier claims that economic growth is the means to reduce poverty, but he fails to mention the fact that the profits of this growth are being exported beyond the state borders (remember the convenient swap of GNP with GDP) and

¹² <http://bg.mondediplo.com/article848.html>.

¹³ Paul Collier was the director of the Development Research Group from 1998 to 2003. Nowadays he is the director of the International Growth Centre.

¹⁴ See Silvestro Montanaro’s documentary “... e quel giorno uccisero la felicità” ” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPCNq-T7yDY>.

he also dodges the question about the way the remaining in the country income is being distributed among its population. The same two omissions are being made by all neoliberal economists and think tanks in Bulgaria. Collier even comes to deny reality by claiming that neoliberal policies have reduced poverty. And in those cases when the denial of their failure is impossible, he attributes the blame to bad luck: “Nigeria’s best phase of economic policy was the reform phase of the late 1980s, but the benefits of these reforms were completely swamped by the coincident crash in the world price of oil.”¹⁵ Collier supports the most radical “reformist” line of action, calling for a total and instantaneous acceptance of the packet of neoliberal prescriptions (“necessary albeit very painful at times”), which are very well depicted by Naomi Klein in her book *The Shock Doctrine. The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*.

Collier never stops praising the American interventions in Africa, calling them “truly magnificent”. From him we also learn that “spread of democracy is an explicit agenda – indeed even the overarching agenda of the United States in the Middle East”. It is hard to find any connection between democracy and the US support for the brutal regimes in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar of Bahrain. Having made the argument that the US and Britain are “morally compelled” to intervene in countries of the “bottom billion,” he notes that peacekeeping also provides “reformers” with a vital opportunity:

There is the odd looking result that reform is more likely after civil war... How can these two seemingly contradictory results be reconciled? I think that they are telling us that post conflict situations are highly fluid... This suggests that our policy interventions to help failing states need to differentiate between types of situations, treating post conflict situations as major opportunities.

This is a pragmatic example of a “shock doctrine”, depicted by Naomi Klein as follows:

The shock doctrine, like all doctrines, is a philosophy of power. It’s a philosophy about how to achieve your political and economic goals. And this is a philosophy that holds that the best way, the best time, to push through radical free-market ideas is in the aftermath of a major shock. Now, that shock could be an economic meltdown. It could be a natural disaster. It could be a terrorist attack. It could be a war. ... These crises, these disasters, these shocks soften up whole societies. They discombobulate them. People lose their bearings. And a window opens up, just like the window in the interrogation chamber. And in that window, you can push through what economists call “economic shock therapy.” That’s sort of extreme country makeovers. It’s everything all at once. It’s not, you know, one re-

¹⁵ Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, 2007.

form here, one reform there, but the kind of radical change that we saw in Russia in the 1990s, that Paul Bremer tried to push through in Iraq after the invasion.¹⁶

From Collier's book we can understand that behind all the rhetoric for liberalization, democratization and struggle against poverty there lies the only intent to implement the neoliberal policies of the free market in all countries, using all the necessary methods, one of which is military force, considered to be totally justifiable.

The results

“Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell.”

Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*

For 25 years of democratization the Bulgarian population has melted by over 1,600,000 – in 2013 the population was 7,245,677 people. Most capable of working citizens leave the country looking for jobs abroad. One of the biggest problems the country is facing is the brain drain – lots of university graduates emigrate to the West. Despite the strong emigration there are still 433,200 unemployed in Bulgaria – 13% according to the official data from 2013.

In 2013 the trade balance was negative by 4,794,578 dollars¹⁷, as it has been negative through all the years since 1991. Yet, GDP has tripled reaching 7498 dollars per capita.¹⁸

The number of hospital beds decreases, reaching 606.9 per 100,000 citizens. The restructuring of the health and education systems, carried out according to the conditions of the loans from the World Bank and the IMF, depicts extremely well the negative effect of the “aid” of the financial institutions on the social sector and the human resources working there. Even if we accept that they have been in the need to be improved and modernized, the radical changes in these sectors have totally devastated all the positive results achieved by that moment. In addition, the personnel in these sectors consisting of 70-80% women was drastically reduced. In this case as well as in many other cases of restructuring and privatization, the reforms have had an extremely negative effect mostly on women. The international institutions and the national governments do not take into consideration the influence of the reforms on the human aspect. In the years of the transition since 1989 the health status of the Bulgarian population has been worsening, the death rate has been increasing (especially among capable of working men because of cardiovascu-

¹⁶ http://www.democracynow.org/2007/9/17/the_shock_doctrine_naomi_klein_on.

¹⁷ http://www.trademap.org/Product_SelCountry_TS.aspx.

¹⁸ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>.

lar diseases), the demographic growth has been diminishing (and now is negative, -0.8) and the social inequality has been deepening.¹⁹

It is obvious that the neoliberal measures, imposed on the developing countries with catastrophic results, achieve the same effect of impoverishment in the countries of the former Socialist Block. But in this case it is impossible to put in motion the usual excuses for lacking industrialization, having in mind that it was very well developed in Bulgaria at the dawn of transition. In Bulgaria's case we are not talking about some "inherent" poverty, which the policies of development were unable to eradicate. We are talking here about a full dismantling of well functioning industry and social structures. Hunger and poverty have been brought by those neoliberal policies "of development" and now we should ask ourselves: Is it not high time to get rid of them already? And if so, what economic policies do we have to undertake?

¹⁹ http://www.publichealthreviews.eu/upload/pdf_files/9/Georgieva.pdf.

***Das Kapital*: the book of communism**

Sungur Savran

14 September 2017 was exactly the 150th anniversary of the publication of Volume I of Karl Marx's *Capital*. It is fitting that this rounded anniversary also coincides with the centenary of the October revolution, the greatest proletarian revolution so far in history. The former was an attempt to make the working class conscious regarding the basis and the final solution of its daily struggle against capital. The latter was the embodiment of the moment of reckoning that *Capital* predicted would come. One relates to the other as theory to practice in a one to one correspondence. This article will try to show, among other things, that *Capital* is not only about capitalism: it is also the book of communism.

Invaluable though may be many of Karl Marx's writings, *Capital* certainly deserves pride of place within the corpus of his work. It is indisputably Marx's **chef d'oeuvre**. But more than that: it is the central instrument for understanding the modern world and therefore indispensable reading for even scholars that belong to schools of thought totally opposed to Marxism. It may rightfully be considered as one of the greatest achievements of the human mind not only in the modern age

but throughout all history, to be compared only to a handful of other masterpieces.

Yet it is also the case that there has never been another work upon which so much abuse has been heaped, which has been so grossly misunderstood, and which has been deliberately or unsuspectingly subjected to misrepresentation of such inconceivable proportions. Trying to understand certain modern-day debates on *Capital* requires the informed reader to clear up massive debris before even being able to start a discussion on the real question at hand. The epitome of this kind of systematic misunderstanding and misinterpretation is the voluminous literature on the notorious debate concerning the so-called “transformation problem”, which we will have a chance to touch upon further on.

Capital is certainly not easy reading. Marx himself apparently had mixed feelings about this: on the one hand, in his wildest moments, he imagined working class people studying his masterpiece and regarded the prospect of the French edition to be published in the form of a serial as an advantage since it would make the book “more accessible to the working class”; on the other hand, it is he who concluded the preface to that very same French edition of *Capital* with the following remark: “There is no royal road to science, and only those who do not dread the fatiguing climb of its steep paths have a chance of gaining its luminous summits.”

This is about *Capital* volume I, which was prepared for publication by the author himself. (Given that this famous remark is in the French edition, one should perhaps add that the translation into French was personally authorised by Marx.) Nonetheless even for volume I, there is a lot of difficulty that arises not only from the complexity of the subject matter, but also because this volume was the end result of a long series of drafts and sketches that culminated, at a first stage, in the *Grundrisse* (1857-58), which itself was published only posthumously, and the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859). Then there was constant writing and rewriting in the 1860s, interrupted in this second stage by the burden of Marx’s political work in the First International. And even after volume I was published in 1867, Marx took the liberty of changing certain passages extensively, especially but not exclusively in the first part on value. Apart from Marx’s notorious perfectionism regarding his writing, which sometimes became the subject of well-meaning jibes from his friend and collaborator Friedrich Engels, the fundamental reason is not difficult to detect: *Capital* broke such new ground that in order to make the argument intelligible to as wide an audience as possible, the author had to wrestle unendingly with the form of presentation.

If this is the case for volume I, then one can imagine what problems volumes II and III would pose. These were not texts given final form by their author. It was Engels who went through the drafts that Marx had penned, deciphered his notoriously illegible handwriting, selected the relevant passages, reordered and edited and

finally published them, respectively, in 1885 and 1894. No other person would have been as authoritative an editor as Engels and we all owe him great debt for having completed this titanic task at the expense of his own original work that, as ever, waited to be written. However great our gratitude may be, though, it is nonetheless not to be forgotten that after all these were books produced out of texts left uncompleted by their author.

This is as true, if not even more so, for the so-called volume IV of *Capital*, edited and published by Karl Kautsky after Engels' death, on the basis of the incomplete notes that Marx left behind. The three tomes of the *Theories of Surplus Value* first saw the light of day between 1905 and 1910. However, this work has gone through successive reediting, to be republished in new form again and again in its original German and concomitantly its English translation.

Perhaps a minor point with respect to the difficulty of *Capital* has to do with the German censorship of the time. Marx lived his life as a revolutionary; more to the point, he had, along with Engels, fought the **ancien régime** during the 1848-1849 revolution on the continent and was no darling of the German state even well into the 1860s. This required him to be wary of explicit and extreme formulations regarding communism in the book. He had to have recourse to euphemisms and cryptic formulations in order to bypass the censorship, something he excelled in, especially because he had had a long-lasting tug-of-war with the German censors in 1842-43, when he was editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, and again during the revolution when he managed single-handedly the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, the main organ of the revolution. So, to take but the most salient example, the unsuspecting reader of *Capital* may construe the expression "community of associated producers" to mean something totally different when in fact it is a euphemism for "communism".

Finally, *Capital* presents difficulties to a certain type of educated reader. Being first and foremost an analysis of the capitalist economy, *Capital*, one might have assumed, will be more accessible to people who have studied economics than to readers who come from other walks of life. In truth, the more a reader is well-versed in standard bourgeois economics, the harder it may prove at the beginning for them to come to grips with the analysis presented in *Capital*, especially as far as the labour theory of value is concerned (this is the theory that holds that the value of a good or service is determined by the amount of labour socially necessary to produce that particular good or service). Accustomed, not to say conditioned, to think in terms of a multitude of "factors of production" all alike in contributing to the production of commodities and hence both adding value to those goods and, in the process, receiving in return as remuneration an amount equal to their marginal productivity, the economist reared in bourgeois economics has difficulty in coming to terms with the labour theory of value and, consequently, with the theory of surplus value that

is predicated on that very theory. Economists reading these lines would be well-advised to cast their well-entrenched received ideas in order to be able to view Marx's own procedure with fresh eyes.

Having dwelled on the difficulties of *Capital* for the lay reader, one should then hasten to add two caveats lest the potential reader give up the idea of reading that seminal work. First, it is a fact commonly agreed upon that the real difficulty lies at the beginning. Perhaps it was not fortuitous that Marx contrasted, in the above-quoted passage, "the fatiguing climb of its steep paths" with "its luminous summits". It is important to realise that Part 1 on "Commodities and Money", and in particular the discussion on "the form of value" and on the fetishism of commodities, presents the most serious problems in understanding the argument. Once the reader has tackled those sections and successfully appropriated the conclusions, the rest is really much easier reading, even before Marx's "luminous summits".

Secondly, it is probably a universal experience for teachers who teach courses on *Capital* or guide others in reading the book to witness how much more easily working class people will understand what Marx means than students or people of other backgrounds. This is, of course, once they get past the dialectical intricacies of Part 1 and goes especially for the comprehension of how surplus value is produced by the worker and pocketed by the capitalist.

The final counterpoint is this: for those who persevere despite the difficulties, the gratification is immense. Having grappled with the intricate structure and sophisticated conceptual framework of *Capital*, the reader will come out of the experience with a radically different vision of the modern capitalist world. Things that were perhaps difficult to make sense of or even seemed impenetrable before the appropriation of the insights provided by *Capital* will now seem ordinary aspects of the everyday functioning of modern society. Hence, whatever difficulty one experiences during the reading of *Capital* itself will be overly compensated by the ease offered in the comprehension of social phenomena in the aftermath of that reading.

A revolutionary science

Capital is certainly one of the peaks in the development of modern economic thinking, but is unlike any other work by any economist that has had a lasting impact. It is different in its aim, as well as in its scope as we shall see in the next section, from the writings of Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Léon Walras, Alfred Marshall, John Maynard Keynes, Joseph Schumpeter, or Piero Sraffa, to cite some of the giants of economic thinking. These thinkers all conduct an inquiry into the functioning of the economy, trying to construct a scientific theory that explains the mechanisms through which the modern economy works. *Capital* was conceived as something beyond this. For its author, it is, first and foremost, an instrument of re-

volution, a work that provides the working classes with the consciousness necessary to carry through to victory the struggles they undertake. One should hasten to add that, for all this, the work is the product of a mind that does not permit an inch of deviation from a truthful depiction of the society at hand, i.e. capitalism. Marx had great contempt for others who bent and distorted the truth wilfully in order to be able to criticise the existing system and never resorted to such ploys in his critique of capitalism. His was a wholesale condemnation of the true system as it really was.

Despite this cool-headed approach to the object at hand, the reader is advised to understand well that the whole activity of Marx and his co-thinker Engels were devoted, from very early on, from around 1844 at the latest, to the end of their lives, to revolution, to proletarian power, to the abolition of private property, to the transition to a classless society, i.e. communism. This is true for their literary work as well as their practical efforts. Their return to Germany from exile in the heyday of the 1848 revolution was the epitome of this revolutionary work. Once the revolution was over, Marx turned to his research in the field of political economy, but he made it clear that this was in preparation for the next wave of the revolution, which he expected to erupt as a result of a new economic downturn, pretty much as the 1848 revolution, he thought, was a consequence of the 1847 crisis. That is why he was frantically trying to bring out a first product of his economic studies when confronted with the crisis of 1857, which, as it turned out, did *not* generate a new revolutionary wave, but was nonetheless instrumental in the composition of the *Grundrisse* in 1857-58 and the publication of the *Contribution* in 1859. Revolution did not in effect erupt until the Paris Commune of 1871, but Marx nonetheless did return to active politics in 1864 as one of the leaders of the International Workingmen's Association, which was to go down into history as the First International.

So the struggle for socialism (this word and communism were used interchangeably in the nineteenth century) was in the centre of everything that Marx and Engels did throughout their lives. What distinguished their brand of socialism from the prominent socialist thinkers that came before them was, however, that they were against detailed blueprints for socialism conceived by idealistic thinkers. They refused the voluntaristic programmes devised by great minds, whether these were democratic projects produced by the so-called young Hegelians of Germany or the forerunners of socialism such as Owen in Britain, or Fourier and Saint-Simon in France, or Proudhon and his so-called mutualism. Socialism, to their mind, was not going to be the product of the vision of any superior intellect, but of the struggle of that class of modern society, the proletariat, that was deprived of any means of survival and therefore had no other chance but to revolt against all existing conditions and to alter them radically. And so what really was necessary to make revolution self-conscious of the course it was bound to take was to understand the **real move-**

ment. *Capital* is the product of that very attempt to understand the real movement of society so as to help the demise of private property and establish communism.

Hence it is science and revolution simultaneously. It is an effort to understand capitalism so as to better strive to bring it down. It is perhaps one of the most elaborate systems in the social sciences to have been constructed, but becomes lifeless if divorced from the revolutionary import of the ideas put forth. It should thus not be counterposed to, but seen as part and parcel of, the criticism of the oppression and alienation suffered by the human being and the fight for total emancipation.

A critique of political economy

There has been considerable debate on the relation of Marx's work on the capitalist economy to the school of thought that preceded him, commonly labelled "classical political economy", the main representatives of which were Adam Smith, best-known for his work *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), and David Ricardo, whose main work is *The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (1817). The relation is a complicated one and can best be characterised as one of **aufhebung**, a central concept of the dialectic in Hegel and Marx, where there is a movement of supersession but also conservation. This relationship of Marx to classical political economy also bears a kinship to another debate on *Capital*, i.e. whether this work is one of economics in the proper sense of the term or has to be characterised differently.

In situating *Capital* within the history of ideas, one has to remember that Marx himself attributed great value to classical political economy. It was in the above-mentioned works that the labour theory of value, the cornerstone of the whole edifice of *Capital*, was developed. Moreover, as opposed to what Marx referred to as "vulgar economics" in his day and to the dominant school of thinking within the academia in our own day, that is, the so-called neoclassical school, classical political economy examined the capitalist economy as a series of relationships between the different social classes. These two alone would suffice to set classical political economy apart from all subsequent economics.

Nonetheless, it is also a fact of the highest importance that the two works Marx published in his lifetime on economics bear the concept "critique of political economy" in their title. Not only is his first work of 1859 directly called *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. *Capital* also bears the subtitle *A Critique of Political Economy*. At first sight, this is intriguing. *Capital*, after all, is a study of the anatomy of modern society and not a simple exercise in the critique of a school of thinking. And so one suspects there is something more to the concept of "critique of political economy" here than simply a critical evaluation of a school of economics. Let us dwell, then, a bit more on this concept.

The starting point must be Marx's assessment of classical political economy as a

science that reflects the true economic relations under capitalism, but one that does so within the limits of bourgeois thinking. These limits find their expression, first and foremost, in the manner in which classical political economy treats capitalism as an unchanging, even eternal form of production. Marx, on the contrary, **historicises** capitalism. He takes it up as one mode of production among many that humanity has developed throughout its history. This, in fact, is the main object of *Capital*. It seeks to understand and present the laws of motion of capitalism as a particular period of human history, as transitory as were others before it, such as the mode of production based on slavery or feudalism.

Having assumed the perennial nature of capitalism, classical political economy takes the economic forms and relations to be found under capitalism as **given**. These do not form an object of enquiry for the political economist. Marx, on the contrary, turns these forms and relations into a central focus of attention. He questions these forms and relations (the commodity, value, the commodity labour-power, surplus-value, capital itself, and all the more concrete forms), shows under what conditions they arise in the history of humanity, how they are reproduced, and how the laws of motion of capital itself undermine them and prepare the ground for the supersession of the capitalist mode of production. The whole analysis in *Capital* is suffused through and through with this analysis of the historically limited nature of capitalist forms and relations, not to the detriment of the study of the concrete forms of functioning of the capitalist economy, but in effect **through** the very study of these forms themselves. To cite a single example so as to clarify for the reader what we mean by this, the analysis of the accumulation of capital, a central aspect of the capitalist economy and therefore a focus of attention of the classicals as well, of course receives all the attention that it deserves from Marx. But this analysis is, simultaneously, an analysis of how the capital relation, i.e. the relationship between the capitalist and the wage-worker, is reproduced. Thus a central functioning mechanism of the capitalist economy becomes the site of developing an insight into the life process of the relations under capitalism.

Having disclosed through this analysis of forms and relations the specific nature of capitalist relations, Marx is then able to expose the manner in which the production of commodities creates a world turned upside down (a movement called by Marx “inversion”). The section on the fetishism of commodities, Part 1, volume I, shows that, due to the specific nature of the relations between the producers in this society, it is the products of labour that dominate the relations between the producers themselves. Relations between human agents necessarily take the form of relations between their products, i.e. commodities. This may not be immediately comprehensible, but if one remembers the very widespread contemporary line of the markets “buying” this or not “buying” that, one can understand what Marx meant by the

fetishism of commodities. A crystallisation of certain relations between the producers, the market, i.e. the sum total of the entire series of exchange of commodities and money and its derivatives in a given society at a given moment and all the institutions that serve as channels in all this exchange, dominates over the human element **as if** it were a product of natural laws. By reflecting this inversion as a most natural phenomenon, classical political economy reproduces in thought this upside down world. Marx then goes on, in later parts of *Capital*, to show that this fetishism appears in even more complex forms under the successive avatars of capital itself (reaching its apogee in the so-called category of “fictitious capital” in volume III).

Proceeding from the analysis of the commodity to that of capital, Marx arrives, through his exposition on the production of surplus-value and of capital itself, at conclusions almost diametrically opposed to those of political economy. The analysis makes clear that capital, far from leading an independent existence, is but the product of the surplus labour of the wage worker. Viewed as a series of successive rounds of the conversion of surplus-value into capital, accumulation lays bare the fact that capital is in fact surplus-value, the embodiment of the surplus labour of the worker, which then **confronts the worker as an alien force**. Marx’s discussion of alienation and alienated labour in the chapters on capital accumulation belies the idea that alienation was simply a youthful romantic idea which was then dropped by the mature Marx in favour of more “scientific” concepts. “Alienation” in Marx does not refer to some fleeting emotion, as some construe it, but is a perfectly scientific concept with a definite meaning. We also refer the reader to the idea that *Capital* is at once science and revolution.

This then forms the basis of the proposition put forward by Marx to the effect that the accumulation of capital, seen as reproduction, overturns the law of appropriation posited by political economy, i.e. that all property is the fruit of one’s labour, and converts this law, under capitalist relations, into its opposite, i.e. all property is the fruit of the labour of others.

Thus, the critique of political economy is not only a critique of a certain school of thinking. It is, in addition, a critique of a certain science, i.e. economics. Given the fact that classical political economy was, historically, the most honest and advanced school within economics, this science cannot but remain imprisoned within the confines of capitalist relations of production.

But not only that. **The critique of political economy is also a critique of the capitalist mode of production**, since political economy, in Marx’s opinion, simply reflects capitalist reality in a loyal manner. It is not, the reader should be warned, political economy that is guilty of perceiving an otherwise transparent system through fetishistic lenses, but capitalist reality itself that imposes its inverted perversity on political economy. It is not political economy that attributes the power born of the

labour of some to a separate entity called capital, but the existence of capital objectively as alienated labour that captivates political economy into thinking that the two are congenitally separate and distinct.

What has been said so far regarding *Capital* being a critique of political economy in particular and of economics in a more general sense should not be construed as meaning there is no economic analysis in Marx. The concept “critique of political economy”, so important in understanding Marx’s *oeuvre*, has often been misinterpreted in a manner that reduces *Capital* to an exclusive analysis of forms, the value-form to begin with, without due regard to the laws under which the capitalist economy functions and to the determination of quantitative magnitudes. This approach also errs through negligence of the concrete forms to be found in particular in volume III of *Capital*. It cannot be over-emphasised that Marx’s economic work is also very much down-to-earth. It is possibly the theory that can most successfully predict the concrete trajectory of the process of capital accumulation in the real world through its journey from boom to bust and from recovery to overheating.

The dialectical method of *Capital*

Capital owes as much debt to the German philosopher Hegel as it does to Smith and Ricardo. In a certain sense one can say that Marx utilised Hegel’s dialectical method to historicise and revolutionise classical political economy, while at the same time using political economy to lay a materialist basis to what is in Hegel an idealistic dialectics and thus to “discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell” (Afterword to Second German Edition of *Capital*). In that same Afterword, Marx pays his clearest tribute to Hegel. He also adds that he has “coquetted” in the chapter on value with “modes of expression peculiar to him”. It is true that this may have been a bit overdone in the chapter on value, but to conclude from this remark of Marx’s, as some have done, that dialectics is a relic in *Capital*, at most a rhetorical ploy, is to forget that the whole book is woven with the thread of dialectics. Let us try to see, briefly of course in the context of this introductory article, how this is so.

The main category of the dialectic, **contradiction**, that is to say the idea that an entity involves within itself its opposite, is the red thread that connects the whole book from beginning to end. *Capital* opens with the analysis of the commodity which is characterised as the unity of use value and value. This contradiction then assumes different forms such as the successive dualities between concrete labour and abstract labour, the commodity and money, production and circulation, the labour process and the valorisation process (or, what is the same thing in a different English translation, the process of the self-expansion of value), between the formal subsumption of labour to capital and its real subsumption etc. It is the tension

between and the interpenetration of these pairs that inevitably push the analysis forward at every stage. That this is not a merely formal procedure but relates to the whole content of *Capital* can only be made clear on the basis of an overall comprehension of the argument of the book.

The concept of **totality**, central to Hegel's dialectics, is also indispensable as a cornerstone of *Capital*. It is only on the basis of all three volumes that the pieces all fall together. Any treatment of any of these volumes or parts thereof that neglects its relations to the rest simply impoverishes, distorts or at times even leaves devoid of meaning the part thus isolated from the whole.

The contradictory relationship between **essence and appearance** is vital to understanding the true nature of the capitalist mode of production. Marx's whole treatment of capitalism is predicated upon the seeming incongruity between the true relations (e.g. value and surplus-value) and their forms of appearance or, what is the same thing, their phenomenal forms (e.g. price of production and profit). It is precisely this surprising divergence between essence and outward form that mystifies capitalist relations and hence stands in need of scientific demystification. Volume III (we will have opportunity to come back to this point) is replete with these phenomenal forms that conceal the essence of the relationship they represent. And yet these phenomenal forms are not at all figments of the imagination or phantoms created by ideology. They are the necessary outward forms of appearance of the inner forms that reveal the true nature of the relations in a society of commodity producers and in a mode of production that is based on wage labour.

The concepts of **mediation and immediacy**, so central to the Hegelian dialectic, are also vital to the analysis in *Capital*. Without the operation of these concepts, one cannot for instance understand how crisis is at once a disruption for capital accumulation, but at the same time the preparation of the conditions of another round of robust expansion of capital. Or, to take another example, without the concept of immediate unity, one cannot comprehend how the process of production under capitalism is **at once** a labour process and a valorisation process.

Last but certainly not least, the concept of **aufhebung** is operative in its fullest sense in Marx's work. From the *Communist Manifesto* through the *Grundrisse* to *Capital*, Marx elucidates how the material forces built up by capitalism and the "civilising mission" (*Grundrisse*) that it undertakes in its very process of development (e.g. by creating a unified world economy and politics) prepares the ground for communism. How it does this can only be studied in full on a reading of Marx's work, but what is important here is that communism **à la Marx** cannot be established but on the ground already prepared by capitalism. The abolition of capitalist private property and the establishment of new consciously ordained relations between the producers will certainly and irreversibly consign capitalism to the dustbin

of history, but the material achievements of capitalism and its civilising aspects will be preserved under the new mode of production. Thus the transition from capitalism to communism is in fact simultaneously supersession **and** conservation, in one single word **aufhebung**.

Denying the importance of the dialectical method that Marx employs in laying bare the secret of capitalism and explaining its powerful tendency to create a communist society will inevitably lead, at a certain stage, to a renunciation of the major insights of Marx into capitalism.

The subject matter of *Capital*

We have already established the particularity of *Capital* as a critique of political economy, that is to say, as a radical rejection of any theoretical stance that implies capitalism is immortal and eternal. Nonetheless, we also insisted on that occasion that *Capital* does subject capitalism to the most minute scrutiny in trying to find out how it works in practice, which immediately implies that the book comprehends an economic analysis as well, but one that differs from political economy in that it treats capitalism as still another transient mode of production in human history. But this still does not give us a full idea what the subject matter of *Capital* is. Is it economics? Is it a study of technological development? Is it sociology? Or is it political science?

The most correct answer to this series of questions would be all of them together. *Capital* is in fact the basis for a unified social science in the modern era. Of course, all of its propositions have to be elaborated upon and in all areas where it has remained silent new ideas have to be developed. However, *Capital* provides the framework within which all such theories can be developed and the basis on which can be erected a fuller social science of the modern world.

As a corrective to the widespread idea that *Capital* is a work of economics, full stop, let us remind the reader that when he first set out to study capitalism in the late forties and the early fifties, Marx clearly had a plan for a book which he characterised as a “critique of economics and politics”. The more elaborate plan of the period 1857-58 (when he was also feverishly preparing the manuscript that later was named the *Grundrisse*) included not only the subject matter of what we now have as *Capital*, but the state and the international system. The book was projected to consist of six volumes of which the last three necessarily had to take into consideration the state and politics. It was only the realities of life (in particular political engagements) and Marx’s extremely perfectionist character that convinced him to settle down with the plan that we have now, which was formulated in the period 1865-66, in the period immediately prior to the publication of volume I. It is true that *Capital* in the form we have it is focused mostly on what can justifiably be

called the economic sphere, but that is only due to practical necessity. Although the plan changed due to realism, there is nothing at all to imply that Marx did not, to the end of his life, consider it equally important to study the state and the international system. On the contrary, the importance of the analysis of crises to that of capitalism would require Marx to turn to the world market, for crises as the condensation of the contradictions of capitalism can, in his opinion, only be comprehended at the level of the world market (the “world economy” would sound more meaningful in our day and age). If that is granted, this means that *Capital* is really an unfinished work. And it can only be finished on the basis of the marriage of economics and politics.

What is even more important for us to understand than this discussion of whether it is a book of economics is that *Capital* is not solely an analysis of the capitalist mode of production. Perhaps even more importantly, and definitely more originally, it is **a book on communism**. We do not say this in the sense that Marx here draws out his blueprint for the communist society. He does not. As opposed to the Utopian Socialists, he carefully refrains from setting up lofty plans for the future society for reasons that we have already explained. But in a different sense the whole object of *Capital* is to show that in the womb of capitalist society there unfolds a process of gestation of a different society with a different set of relations of production, based not on private property and the market, but on communal property and conscious planning on the part of the “freely associated producers”. Thus the whole historical movement of capitalist society leads to the laying of the foundations of communist society. The proposition that capitalism leads inevitably to communism unless some historical factors hinder the transition is peculiar to Marx and is a wholesale challenge to the idea of all economic science that capitalism conforms to human nature and is, therefore, unalterable and eternal.

The architecture of *Capital*

The uninitiated reader may feel awed by the three thick volumes of *Capital*, even not counting the three additional tomes that go under the name *Theories of Surplus Value*. It is true that the task of comprehending a work of what adds up to several thousand pages seems overbearing—until one has a plan of the edifice that leads us from the ground floor of the abstract up the stairs all the way to the attic of the concrete. *Capital* has a structure akin in its rigour to a mathematical treatise and if the reader is aware of the different storeys that make up the different levels of abstraction, then the initial panic leaves its place to a serene kind of stroll through what becomes a much more familiar building with an admirable structure.

It is then very important to understand, in deciphering what Marx has to say in *Capital*, to understand the concept of abstraction and the relationship between the abstract and the concrete. But even before that, it is necessary to understand the

distinction that Marx makes between the **method of investigation** and the **method of presentation**. This is explained clearly in what is known as the “1858 Introduction”, which is a methodological preface of a kind written around the same time as the *Grundrisse* and published therein. The method of investigation is applied at that stage when scientific research has yet to collect, sort out, classify, categorise, put in order and relate to each other all the different elements of the endless empirical data that is there for the attention of the scholar. Only when scientific research has found out how and on the basis of what kind of logic to order and relate the different elements can the scholar then pass on to the procedure of abstraction. Given the sometimes abusive meanings heaped on the concept “abstract”, it is advisable to define it rigorously. Abstraction is the method used in the study of the forms or relationships that turn out, in the phase of investigation, to be determining for the totality in isolation from all incidental, extraneous, arbitrary, secondary or derivative elements so as to bring out the innermost structure of those central forms and relationships.

Hence, contrary to popular misperceptions, an abstract concept or statement is not necessarily good or bad in itself. It is only the context that determines whether it is good or bad. If the abstraction comes at the right moment and the object of study is chosen well, then an abstract category is not only an advantage, it is indispensable. For instance, *Capital* starts out with the commodity. This is because during his investigation into the empirical material available, Marx has hit a central truth: in a society based on the capital-wage labour relationship (the very gist of capitalism) labour power, i.e. the capacity to do work, has become a commodity, bought and sold in a certain specialised market (the so-called “labour market”) in the same manner as any other commodity. If that is true, this means that before one can understand the capital-wage labour relation, one has to understand the commodity as an economic category. This is what brings Marx to the commodity as the point of departure for an analysis of the capitalist mode of production. So a commodity is, in the first chapters of *Capital*, both a very concrete category (“the wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails, presents itself as —an immense accumulation of commodities”), but also very abstract in that it isolates the commodity even from the decisive relationship between capital and wage labour at a first stage.

This then is how the method of presentation works. Once abstract categories have been firmly grounded, the scientific presentation then moves on to more concrete categories, “rises from the abstract to the concrete” in Marx’s own words. Were one then to take into consideration only the presentation, one might be entitled to wonder how everything was in a certain sense deduced as from first principles. This is especially true in the case of Marx’s *Capital* because the analysis moves on the basis of contradictions, these then being solved by the only logically possible

resolution of the problem which takes us to a higher stage of concreteness. This is forgetting the phase of investigation, at which stage all the relations that are now presented in a seemingly deductive manner were really discovered in their true essence.

Capital is an edifice based on four grand levels of abstraction. (It is because within every level there may be other, more minor abstraction levels that we speak about “grand levels”.) Let us go through these in summary form.

1) **Production in general:** This level really lies outside the analysis of the capitalist mode of production proper, but is like a substratum on which that analysis rises. Production in general is a concept that represents the shared attributes of the production process under all modes of production in the history of humanity. As such, it forms the rock solid base of the materialist conception of history, most clearly elucidated in *The German Ideology* and the “Preface” to the *Contribution*. Since these attributes are necessarily present in every society, whatever its mode of production, capitalism also has to contain them. However, in trying to come to grips with the specific nature and laws of particular modes of production, production in general **in itself** provides us with no clue at all. So the relationship of this level of abstraction is like the foundation of a building. It is part of the building, but nonetheless outside of the habitable space. By itself it does not serve any immediate purposes, but without it the whole edifice would collapse.

2) **Exchange in general:** This is the first level of abstraction proper to *Capital*. It represents the conceptual counterpart to Marx’s analysis of the commodity. We have already indicated that the reason why Marx takes the commodity as his point of departure in analysing capitalism is that without an analysis of the commodity one simply cannot understand the more complex relationship of the purchase of labour power by capital. In other words, in order to understand the exchange (i.e. sale and purchase) of labour power, one needs to understand what exchange in general is and what laws apply to it as it becomes a systemic aspect of socio-economic life. This is what the analysis of exchange in general achieves for Marx in the first part of volume I on “Commodities and Money”. It isolates the relations that grow out of a situation where an advanced social division of labour coexists with private property in the means of production. This leads to a contradictory situation where the labours of the producers who make production decisions and carry them out independently from each other can only be socially validated on the market. Hence, the value relation and its multifarious forms. This is where Marx discovers the basis for the law of value (shorthand for the labour theory of value) and the inseparable ties between the commodity form and money as a universal equivalent. In other words, this level

of abstraction is the basis for Marx both of his theory of value and his theory of money, but only the basis, as these theories will receive further elaboration in subsequent parts and volumes of *Capital*.

3) **Capital in general**: Having studied the commodity or exchange at a level of abstraction that shuts out all disturbances outside of that relationship itself, Marx then passes to the study of the capital relation (short term for the relationship between the capitalist and the wage worker). Except for Part I, which, we have said, operates at the level of exchange in general, and Part II which acts as a transition from the former towards the next level of abstraction, Volumes I and II of *Capital* operate on the level of “capital in general”. By this is meant the study of the relationship between capital and wage labour **under isolation from all disturbing or secondary factors**. Foremost among the latter are relations between different fractions and units of capital. As opposed to some mistaken conceptions that imply that in Volumes I and II Marx assumes capitals of identical organic composition (that is an identical proportion of machines to living labour), what really makes it possible for Marx to study the capital-wage labour relationship in isolation is that he abstracts from the impact of competition between capitals. Once this is shunned, there remains no basis for the struggle between different fractions (industrial, commercial, financial, landed property etc.) of capital or between units of the same fraction. It is not that these are denied. They simply are held constant, frozen so to speak through the use of the instrument of abstraction. Hence, the relationship between the two main **dramatis personae** of the capitalist mode of production, that is, of the two major classes, can be studied **as if in a laboratory**, in isolation from every other relationship.

4) **Many capitals**: Once having completed the study of the production (volume I) and circulation (volume II) of capital **in its sole relation to** wage labour, Marx then relaxes in Volume III the constraint posed on the analysis. Competition between the different fractions and units of capital are brought into the analysis in Volume III of *Capital*. That is why he names this new level of abstraction “many capitals”, because as soon as that constraint is relaxed, there come into the picture a variety of relations, a variety of struggles even, between different fractions and units of capital. It is the interaction of the struggle between capital and wage labour, on the one hand, and the multitude of different forms and units of capital, on the other, that give us the concrete functioning of a capitalist society. That is why Marx can only now claim to be presenting “the process of capitalist production as a whole” (the title of volume III).

One aspect of this architecture is of vital importance, a point without which

one may fail, as many have before, to understand anything of *Capital* even if one has studied each and every section separately over and over again. In proceeding from volume I's abstract to volume III's concrete level, Marx does not abandon the former in favour of the more "realistic" depiction of the latter. The notorious "value system" and "price system" duality of the so-called "transformation problem" debate is a perfect example for this kind of misunderstanding of Marx's procedure. In this approach, two different realities, almost made up of two different substances, are posited. This is an entirely false representation of Marx's dialectical rise from the abstract to the concrete. Having brought in competition between capitals, volume III shows that this necessarily modifies the qualitative as well as quantitative relations analysed in volume I, established as these were in laboratory conditions, so to speak. Values determined by the amount of abstract labour socially necessary to produce commodities are now converted into "prices of production". Surplus value, identical to profit in volume I, resolves itself into profit of enterprise, commercial profit, interest, ground rent etc. These new forms conceal the relations established in volume I from the unsuspecting eye. This is the visible form of capitalist relations. Hence, we find out that it is only through a scientific analysis of capitalism that we can arrive at an understanding of the commodity and of capital and surplus value.

But that does not mean, quite the opposite, that the finished phenomenal forms are independent of the original more simple forms, which reveal the essential relations. The phenomenal forms are simply the modified forms of the essential ones. By tracing the law-bound modification undergone by each form, Marx has shown that it is the metamorphosis of the essential forms that generate the phenomenal forms. However, the transformation, the passage from the earlier forms to the more phenomenal ones does not abolish or repeal the essential ones. It subsumes them, conserves them (*aufhebung*), which grow thereby into another appearance.

Many bourgeois thinkers, to begin with some illustrious economists, attacked Marx by saying that after having posited the determination of values by labour time in volume I, Marx realised that, given the divergence of the composition of capitals regarding the proportion of machines to living labour, this would not do. So his transformation algorithm from values to prices of production, it was held, was an exercise in saving face. The pity of it all is that Marx wrote whatever sections of volume III in 1864-65, **before** publishing volume I in 1867. So he had full knowledge of the divergence of values and prices of production. This he knew from the beginning, but was bold enough to attempt to explain on the basis of the very structure of capitalism. The distinction between the different levels of abstraction gave him the opportunity to solve this problem, upon which the labour theory of value in Smith's and to a lesser extent Ricardo's work shipwrecked.

For Marx, this was not a “difficulty” in his theory. It was the contradictory structure of capitalist reality, where the completed forms dissimulate the essential ones. As Marx said, “if essence and appearance coincided, then all science would be superfluous”!

A work for the benefit of the 21st century

A small digression would be in order here to point out that *Capital* is not a study of capitalism as it was in the 19th century, but is really a work that has become more and more relevant to the analysis of capitalism as it has grown and developed over the centuries. This is necessary because liberals have always pointed to the fact that when *Capital* was written, capitalism was very different in its concrete forms from what it is today. On this 150th anniversary of the publication of volume 1, it is all the more necessary to counter these arguments.

We cannot, of course, enter into a discussion of substantive matters here. We do not, for instance, have space to refute the idea that the much trumpeted rise of “immaterial” labour has done away with the basis of the law of value. We do not, likewise, have the space to delve into a discussion of how to treat novelties such as software programming, informatics at large or working from the home within the terms of the labour theory of value and rebut the idea that these shun any talk of exploitation or the converse idea that all are now equally subject to exploitation, whether they work for capital or not. We will have to content ourselves by making two methodological comments, lest the reader be led astray by the many voices that proclaim “the end of capitalism as we knew it”.

First, one has to remember that, although he paid the utmost attention to the smallest empirical detail about the concrete functioning of capitalism in his day, i.e. in mid-nineteenth century England, reading an immense amount of material and drawing from the first-hand experience of his friend Engels, who worked at a factory in Manchester, Marx did not confine his analysis, and, less so his prognosis of the future tendencies of capitalism, to the concrete forms of manifestation the latter displayed at a certain moment in time. He was no empiricist. On the contrary, his legendary perceptiveness and predictive power lay in his thoroughgoing analysis of the potentials wielded by the categories he studied. That is how, for instance, he was able to foresee, at a very early stage of his analysis of capitalism, at the initial phase of his study of classical political economy in the 1840s, that capitalism was going to unify the world market more completely than ever seen in human history or that this mode of production had the propensity to turn everything it came into contact with, including moral values such as honour, into a saleable commodity. It was not his empirical observations but his approach of pushing to the very end, to their logical conclusions, so to speak, the tendencies displayed by the relations he

studied which permitted him to make so many startling predictions. Hence, as he was never tied down by the momentary appearance of things, there is no ground to say that his theory was only true for his day and must now have been superseded.

Secondly, it is the distinction between essential and phenomenal forms that Marx makes which makes it possible for *Capital* to survive the plethora of transformations that capitalism has experienced since his day. There is a very easy guide for the reader to ascertain whether a certain contemporary phenomenon that did not exist in Marx's time would impair the explanatory and predictive value of the theory exposed in *Capital*. The test is to see whether the novelty in question can be taken up in terms of volume I or volume III. (Bringing in volume II would divert us from the main task, but in principle that is no different.) If any new type or form of labour is organised under a capitalistic relationship, that is to say, on a large scale and on the basis of a wage contract, then whatever secondary modifications this may make necessary at the level of analysis of appearances, the essence of the relationship analysed by Marx can be said to have remained unchanged. It is only if the novelty radically alters the capital-wage labour relation that Marx studies in volume I that the validity of *Capital* can be called into question. Hence the beauty of the architecture of *Capital* in explaining the distinction between essential and phenomenal forms also facilitates the assessment of the evolution of capitalist forms with reference to the capitalist mode of production. So long as large-scale private property in the means of production and distribution and a class of direct producers of goods and services who have to sell their labour power because they themselves are deprived of the means to realise their labouring activity are the twin bases of the mode of production, capitalism rules OK and *Capital*, this monumental effort to understand it, is alive and well, despite all claims to the contrary.

The laws of motion of capital

In his Preface to the first edition of volume I, Marx writes explicitly that "it is the ultimate aim of this work to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society." This is both revealing and intriguing. It is revealing because it makes clear unambiguously that what Marx is interested in is really the overall historical movement of capitalist society rather than the functioning of the economy in minute detail. But then it is intriguing that Marx should be talking about "**the** economic law of motion of modern society", as if there were only one law of motion. As a matter of fact, it would not be very difficult through a careful study of the three volumes to establish **many** laws of motion of capital. These are not explicitly characterised as such: there are no signposts to show us that such is the "law of motion no. 1" etc. But some effort would show that there are certain trends and tendencies of development of capitalist society that Marx establishes that may rightfully be called "laws

of motion of capital”. Such, for instance, to name but a few, are the tendency of capital to transform all products of labour into commodities; the tendency towards the proletarianisation of the working population; the tendency towards the concentration and centralisation of capital; the formation and reformation of a reserve army of labour (i.e. the creation of unemployment as a mechanism to ensure the unhampered development of capital accumulation); the tendency of the rate of profit to fall; the periodical recurrence of crises etc. etc.

All these and many others, clearly formulated in *Capital* as tendencies that flow from the nature of capitalist production, have been confirmed as real laws of motion of capital throughout the history of modern capitalist society. Let us go back to our original question then: why is it that Marx talks about “**the** economic law of motion of modern society”?

The only interpretation that makes sense in tune with the spirit of Marx’s work is that the author is here talking about that law of motion of capital which renders capital itself superfluous and creates the basis for a new society. This is the tendency of capitalist production to create an ever-increasing **socialisation of the production process**, defined as the growing technical and social interdependence of all producers upon each other. This ever-increasing socialisation comes into ever sharper contradiction with private appropriation in the sphere of relations of production. To put it differently, private decision-making concerning production comes into ever-increasing contradiction with a structure of production that cries out for planning. Let us now finish off by quoting from *Capital* itself.

The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.

This is towards the end of Chapter 32 of Volume I of *Capital* called the “Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation” (the penultimate chapter of the volume). Capitalism lays the basis for communism. This, then, is for Marx “**the** economic law of motion of modern society”. That is also why *Capital* is as much a book about communism as it is about capitalism.

Ev Hejmar

Hejmara yekem a kovara *Devrimci Marksizm* weşana îngilîzî *Revolutionary Marxismê* di dawiya sala 2016'an de hatibû weşandin. Ji Beyrûd û Bakûyê ta Bûenos Aîresê, ji San Petersbûrgê ta Uskupê, ji Mîlanoyê ta Montevîdeoyê li hemû cîhanê belavkarî û firotana wê hat kirin. Dibe ku bi hezaran nefiroto, bes di vê pîvana bisînordar de, peywira xwe bi layikî bi cih anî: Di nav teoriya milîtan Marksîstê de tevkarîya ji bo enternasyonalîzmê. Encama vê ya xwezayî jî di qadên siyasî û rêxistinî yên li Rojhilata Navîn, Bakurê Afrîkayê, Balkanan û Kafkasyayê, Behraspî û Avrasya û bi giştî yên hemû cîhanê de tevkarîya ji bo enternasyonalîzma proleter bû. Bi mebesta vê armancê me gawekî nû avêt û ev sernivîsa ku niha hûn dixwînin, me wergerî hin zimanên din kirin û me di dawiya vê hejmarê de bi cih kir. Bi vî awayî, em ê karibin li hemû cîhanê kesên ku eleqeya wan li ser Marksîzma enternasyonalîst û şoreşger heye û nikarin bi îngilîzî bixwînin cewherê peyama xwe bigihînin wan.

Ev hejmara duyem, yanî *Revolutionary Marxism 2018*, pêşiyê bala xwe dibe ser Rojhilata Navîn, bi du nivîsên pêvek li ser tevgerên paşmayî yên li welatên emperyalîst û rewşa cîhanê, di salvegera sedemîn de, li ser Şoreşa Cotmehê ya ku cejna mezin a gel e, bi dosyeyeke taybet, bi gotareke ku heta Dîwarê Berlînê xera bû welatekî karkeran bû, hilweşîna Bulgaristanê vedikole û bi gotareke din ku di

salvegera 150. de, şahberhema roja îro û siberoja mirovahiyê *Das Kapîtal* digire rojeva xwe ve di heman mebestê de dixwaze xebatên xwe bidomîne.

Hejmara yekem, di nivîsa xwe ya destpêkê de û di gelek gotarên din de, qeyrana aborî a ku bi 2008'an hilweşîna finansalê dest pê kir û deh sal e didome, wek paşxaneyê gelek pêvajoyên ku bi hev re didome girt navendê. Ev pêvajo, di hemû cîhanê de wek faşîzma pêş bilind bû, ya ku hevgeriya wê dike û mînakê balkêş jî bilindbûna DAÎŞ an jî ÎŞÎD ku wek tevgera mezhebî-tekfîrî ya Îslamî derket pêş, şerên herêman wek gefeke şerê cîhanê her çû zêde bû û mirov dikare bilindbûna serhildanên gel jî 2011'an ve wek raperîna (Misir, Tûnûs, Yemen, Bahreyn, Wall Street, Yewnanistan, Îspanya, Turkiye, Brezîlya, Balkan û hwd.) wek di bin awayê parlamenteriyê de jî (Podemos, Syrîza, Sanders, Corbyn û ya herî girîng jî li Arjantînê Frente de Izquierda (FIT)) rêz bike.

Ji ber ku hejmara yekem hema piştî hilbijartina Donald Trump ya ji bo welatê herî hêzdar yê emperyalîst yê cîhanê û ji bo mewkiya herî bilind hat hilbijartin derket, ev bûyerê tekane di nava nîqaşa di der barê bûyerê paşvemayî ya navnetewî wek “populîzm”, “rastgiriya pirole”, “neteweperestî” tê qalkirin xala me ya tevgerê pêk anî. Me Donald Trump wek “faşîstê mayîna aware”, faşîstek ku partiyeke wî ya rûniştî û yekîneyên wî yên paramîlîter tune ye, yanî bi vegotîna wek pêş-faşîst bi awayekî lez tehlîl kiribû. Di pêvajoya salekê de di encamên bûyerên ku qewimîna de em dibînin ku bê em çî qas mafdar derketine. Peyva “faşîst”, bi taybet piştî bûyerên Charlottesvîlle, çalakiya kesên ku navê nîjadperestên spî û Neonaziyan bêtî ku bikevin fikarê bi kar dianîn, em dibînin ku Trump bi dilekî rehet û bi carekê de erê dike, ji bo ku wî helwesta wî were pênasekirin hat bikaranîn. Îdeologê sereke yê ku navê “*alt-right*” yanî rastgiriya alternatîf li xwe danîne Steve Bannon êdî ne li ser kar e, lê bes hîn jî bi serokê DYA'ê re wekî goşt û neynûk e, wek burokratekî dewletê diçe welatên wekî Çînê û berî ku serokê DYA'ê were bingehe amade dike. Li derveyî sînorên DYA'ê, di plana nawnetewî de, “establishment” a lîberal, encamên (bi awayekî xelet) hilbijartinên Ewropa, hêza ku wek “populîzm” bi nav dikir neserkefî tespîtkirin bi awayekî lez bû: Li Fransa'yê, nûnera herî zelal a we-baya pêş-faşîst Marine Le Pen, di dora duyem a hilbijartinan de ji sê hemwelatîyên fransiyan dengê yekî wergirt. Li Elmanyayê jî partiya *Alternative für Deutschland*, li gel ku Angela Merkel di polîtîkaya xwe ya koçkirinê de 180 derece vegeriya jî di welatê de bû partiya sêyemîn. Ger ev bin ketibin, ev tevgera navnetewî ku hîn di demeke kin ya berê de bi çavên kesên hişavêtî yên ku li kêlekekê dimînin li wan dihat nêrîn, gelo hîn serketina wan ew ê çawa bûya, mirov merak neke nikare di cihê xwe de bisekine!

Ji aliyê lîberalan di rûyê din yê madalyonê de serketina Emmanuel Macron cih digire. Piştî binketinên yekser yên ku bi Brexit û Trump ve jiyan vê serkeftinê wek paşvegera kûreweriyê şîrove kirin û vê rewşê li gorî dilê xwe şîrove kirin.

Li Fransayê muxalîfên çepgir, ji ber ku bi awayekî kralî û bi KHK'yan (em bi bîr bînin ku ev yek wekî ku ji aliyê estabîlîmentên lîberal ve dişibînin despotekî ku li Tirkiyeyê jî Erdogan di vê riyê de û hema hema dişibin hev, em vê bi bîr bînin) bi vê atfê navê ku lê kirine kerameta Emmanuelê Yekem piştî ku di raya giştî populeratiya wî hat dîtin serobin bû û her tişt heliya. Ligel radestbûna hin konfederasyonên sendîkayan, serkeftina du grevên ku di deh rojan de pêk hatin (12 û 21 Îlon), wekî ku me di hejmara xwe ya yekem de jî destnîşan kiribû "bihara fransiyan" a ku me ji bo tevgera "sosyalîst" ya li hember Zagona Kar ya hikumeta François Hollande derketibû ew ê berdeyam bike. Wekî ku me di hejmara xwe ya yekem de jî binê wê xêz kiribû, Fransa li Ewrûpayê hîn jî dibe welatê di rola mifteyê de. Riya Macron ya kûreyî û neo-lîberal li hember Trump û Le Penan nikare bibe derman. Encax têkoşîna yekbûyî û serxwebûna çîna karkeran dikare bilindbûna vê melanetê vegeirîne. Asoya cîhanê hîn bi Modiyan, Duterteyan Putinan, Erdoganan, Aliyevan, Orbanan û Trumpan ve tije ye.

Piştî ku me di hejmara xwe ya yekem de binê gefa şerê cîhanê xêz kiribû vir ve, dibêtiya şerekî li hemû rûyê cîhanê bi awayekî aşkere li holê ye. Ji bo kêliyekî em çîleyên bi dawî nabin ên ku li Suriyeyê, Irakê, Yemenê, Libyayê tîn jiyîn û dîsa şerê ku ji kûrahî ve li Ukraynayê dişewite em deynin aliyekî jî, Asya bi cure pevçûnên di navbera herêma jeo-strajîk a emperyalîzmê û Çînê de tijî ye. Mînaka vê ya herî girîng helbet di navbera DYA û Koreya Bakur de pêş dikeve ku ev polîtîka bilindkirina gefa rageşiyiyê û ev yek piştî ji 70 sal berê ji Hîroşîma û Nagazakî cara yekem e. Trump, bi mehdê xwe yê em pê dizanin ê pêş-faşîst, gefên ku ew ê li Koreya Bakur "bi milyonan kesan bikuje" û hemû welat bi erdê re bike yek avêt. Tam li dijî tabloyên ku "civaka navnetewî" (bi navê din emperyalîzm) û çapemeniya kapîtalîst bi daneyên çêkirî xêz kirine, amadekariyên nukleer yên Koreya Bakur, li hember DYA'ya ku dixwaze li Pasîfikê serweriya xwe ya leşkerî ava bike, li hember 80 hezar leşkerên DYA yên li Japonya û Koreya Bakur û bi giştî li hember gefa ku şerê li Asyayê xwe di asoyê de nîşan dide bergiryeke parastinê ye. Dewleteke karkeran a ku wek burokratîk dejenere bûye gava ku bi emperyalîzmê re rûhev were, heta di karîkatura ku dewleta karkeran xwe spartîye "yek xanedana sosyalîzmê" de jî, divê Marksîstên Şoreşger li pişt dewleta karkeran cih bigire.

Di xaleke nêzîktirî welatê me de, li herêma me Rojhilata Navîn û Efrîkaya Bakur, pêla paşverû ya ku Trump nûneriya wê dike rêzîkirina hêzan guhert. Trump li Washingtonê di serdana Bonapartê Misirê el-Sîsî de piştgiyîyeke mezin dayê û piştî vê jî bi şatafateke mezin çû serdana Erebiştana Suudî. Kêliya herî pespaye ya serdanê, gava ku figuran di plana dawî de nobetê digirtin sêyîneyên qeşmer yên ku ji Trump, Kral Selman û Serokkomarê Misirê pêk dihat kureyeke erdê ya dibiriqe bi destê xwe miz didan pêk hat. Tunebûna du aktorên vê kêliyê watedar dikir. Ji aliyekî ve, Îsraîla Siyonîst, aqilmendê vê tifaka nû ye ku bi çavan nedihat dîtin bû.

Hat dîtîn ku beralîbûna siyasî ya Trump a li hember Îranê û wek alîgiriya Îsraîl, hemû nakokî û têkilheviya di polîtîkayên ji bo herêmê dikarî derbas bike. Trump, ligel hewldanên vekirî yên ji bo nêzîkî Putîn bibe û di sa ligel tifaka ku hema hema ne mimkun e xera bibe ya Rûsyaya Putîn û Îran, wekî ku di axaftina wî ya dawî ya di NY'ê de kirî hat dîtîn bi mebesta Îranê îzole bike û serî li vî welatî bitewîne ji bo ku tifaqeqê di navbera hêzên paşverû yên Rojhilata Navîn de ava bike di nava hewldaneke mezin de ye. Heman cihê wê hatiye, divê em vê jî diyar bikin ku sedema ku dixwazin Hamas serî li ber Misir û Îsraîlê bitewîne jî ev e. Kesê ku tunebûna wî balê dikşîne jî, sedemeke nakokiya polîtîkaya Trump ya Rohilata Navîn û Efrîkaya Bakur Erdogan bû. Hinceta fermî, serdana Trump, bi kongreya partiya Erdogan a ku piştî referandûma 16'ê Nîsanê hevsarê partiya xwe ji nû ve bixe destê xwe pêk dihat li hev rast hatin. Lê bes di demeke kurt de derket holê ku sedema rastî cuda bû.

Suudiyan, ji bo ku Trump pêşwazî bikin çî ereb çî jî ne ereb gazî gelek welatan kir, bi vî awayî dixwestin hêza mezhebî ya Sunnî mezin bikin û derxin pêş, lê ev yek kurt demî çêbû. Hema piştî pîrozbahiyên yekîtiya ku bi helwesta generalê serketî kirin qeyrana Qetare teqîya û navbera kampa serokatîya Suudî û kampa Rabîayê vekir. Ji bo ku gotina me were famkirin li honaka vê bûyerê binirên. 2013: Derbeya Bonapartî ya Sîsî, bi piştigiriya Erebiştana Suudî li Misirê hikumeta Birayên Misli-man (Îhvan) û Mûrsî hildiweşînin û bi awayekî xwînsarî bi sedan alîgirên Îhvanê li Kahîre li meydana Rabîya-tul Adeviyye qetil dike. Bi vî awayî, ji ber ku Erdogan hemû stratejiya xwe bi Îhvanê re bi tifaka gelek welatan re (Tûnûs, Sûriye, Fas, Fîlîstîn yanî Hamas, Misir) li ser serokatîya cîhana Sunnî ava kiribû di navbera Erebiştana Suudî û Tirkiyeyê de qetandinekê ava dike. 2015: Erdogan ligel xêza xwe ya vekirî ya Rabîayî, piştî mirina kralê berê yê Erebiştana Suudî bi kralê nû Selman re têkilî datîne, di ser de jî di dawîya 2015'an de beşdarî Tifaka Îslamî ya li Hember Terorê dibe ku ev tifak bi pêşengîya suudiyan pêş dikeve û 34 welatên sunnî tîne gel hev û bi Suudî û Qatarê re (li van her du welatan baldar bin!) di Sibata 2016'an de li Sûriyeyê ji ketina şerekî vedigere. Tîrmeh 2016: Kampa Suudî, Erdogan li hember hewldana derbeyê ji qedera xwe re terk dîkin. 2017: Di nav 13 şertên ku koalîsyona li hember Qatarê ku pêşengîya wê Erebiştana Suudî dike ji bo li hev kirinê pêşkêş kirin de kişandina leşkerên tirk yên ji Qatarê jî cih digire. Ev daxwaz ji aliyê Tirkiyeya ku bi stratejiya xwe ya Rabîayî sadîk dimîne û alîgiriya Qatarê dike ve tê redkirin. Piştî hewldana derbeyê ya 15 Tîrmehê, Tirkiye ji bo ku di qada navnetewî û siyaseta hundirîn de tehdeyên ku ji aliyê DYA û YE'yê werin hevsenga wê çêbike berê xwe da kampa Rûsya û Îranê.

Ev hemû nîşan didin ku, hêzên mezhebî yên Sunnî yên li Rojhilata Navîn û Efrîkaya Bakur li hember kampa Şîî ya ku pêşengîya wê Îran dike koalîsyoneke qewî û yekgirtî ava nekiriye. Lê bes ev yek, nayê wê wateyê ku gefa şerê mezhebî ya ku ew ê li hemû rûyê Rojhilata Navîn belav bibe di rabirduyê de maye. Wateya

vê ev ev, kampa Sunnî wekî ku demekê dixuya ne yekgirtî ye, qada manewrayê ya Îranê heye û bi hindikayî be jî dikare hin welatên ku di kampa Sunnî ya paşverû de cih digirin bêalî bikin. Gef hîn jî berdewam dike û gengaz e ku bi polîtîkayên Îsraîl û Trump ve ew ê emrê wê dirêj bibe, bi şerên bêdawî yên wekaletan yên ku li Sûriye, Irak û Yemenê tîn meşandin tê dîtin. Tenê bloka serbixwe û yekgirtî ya çîna karkeran û hêzên sosyalîst yên li Rojhilata Navîn û Efrîkaya Bakur bi hêzên dişibin hev yên li Balkan û Behraspî ya Bakur re tifaqê bikin, dikarin li hember gefên ku ew ê bibe sedema qetilkirina civakan û windabûna qetilkirina çanda gelan yên şerê mezhebî yên Sunnî û Şîî bibin asteng. Wekî ku di encamnameya 4. Konferansa Ewropa-Behraspî (26-28 Gulan 2017) ku li Atînayê pêk hat de -Ev encamname di vê hejmarê xwe de em jî cih didinê- hatiye gotin: “Qetlîam encax dikare bi saya eniyeke fireh a hêzên antî-emperyalîst, antî-Siyonîst yên ku li welatên xwe bi hêzên paşverû re di têkoşînê de ne dikare were astengkirin. Tenê Federasyoneke Sosyalîst ya di pîveka Rojhilata Navîn û Efrîkaya Bakur dikare dawî li pirsgirêkên herêmê bîne.”

Li vê gerînekê, serokê Kurdistana Irakê Mesût Barzanî referandûma serxwebûnê ya ku ji bo werin ser dikê gazî şeytanê sedsalî yên hêzên herêmê û manewrayên emperyalîzmê dike zêde kir. Marksîstên Şoreşger alîgirê mafê tayîna qedera xwe ya kurdan e. Mesele ew e ku referandum ne ji bo mafê xwe yê tayîna qedera xwe ye, Barzanî ji bo xwe û ji bo cûzdanê alîgirên xwe yên rantxurên petrolê dagire hatiye kirin. Barzanî li hember azadiya kurdên li parçeyên din (Tîrkiye, Îran, Sûriye) şer kiriye û wisa nişan dide ku di siberojê de jî di neyta şerkirinê de ye. Yanî serkeftina referandûmê, li gel ku ew ê li Rojhilata Navîn ji emperyalîzmê re eniyeke nû veke, bi awayekî îronîk, ew ê were wateya binketina doza rizgariya netewî ya Kurdistanê. Marksîstên Şoreşger bê dudilî li hember mudaheleyeke leşkerî ya hêzên herêmê ji bo Kurdistana Irakê ye, lê bes li hember Barzanî û li gel rizgariya hemû gelê kurd disekine.

Dosyeya me ya yekem, him li maweya kin him jî li maweya dirêj dinêre, bi aliyên cuda yên têkoşîna li herêma Rojhilata Navîn û Efrîkaya Bakur ve eleqedar dibe. Gotara yekem a vê dosyeyê şerê hundirîn yê Sûriyeyê û bandora navnetewî ya vî şerî paye bi paye vedikole. Gotara Levent Dolek ya sernavê “Li Sûriyeyê şerê hundirîn: Merhele, ders û siberoja şerê hundirîn yê Sûriyeyê”, bi teşhîsa ji ber ku serhildana gel ya li hember dîktatoriya Esad dest pê kiribû nekarî çerçoveyeke siyasî ya proleter bigire, di demeke kurt de ji manîpulasyonên emperyalîzm û dewletên paşverû yên herêmê re vekirî ma, dest pê dike. Emperyalîzm, Siyonîzm, û (wek Erebiştana Suudî, Qatar, Tîrkiye û Îran) hêzên herêmê bi mudaxeleyan serhildana gel vedigerîne şerê mezheb-olî yên di navbera Sunnî û yên din de (Elewî, Durzî, Xiristiyan û hwd.) Di vê gotarê de, di şerê hundirîn de analîza berfireh ya faalîyetên leşkerî yên hemû aktorên girîng (DYA, Rûsya, DAES, OSO û hwd.) tê kirin. Be-

şeke gotarê jî ji pêşketinên li Kurdistanê Sûriyeyê re hatiye veqetandin. Dolek tîne ziman ku bingeheke hêzdar û pêşkefî ya tevgera kurd li Rojava heye, bes hevkarîya leşkerî ya ku bi DYA'yê re dikin him xelet û him jî xetere dibîne. Em wisa difikirin ku ew ê gotara Dolek, di salên pêş de jî li ser şerê hundirîn yên Sûriyeyê çavkaniyeke biqîmet be.

Gotara Kûtlû Dane ya bi navê “Dagirkeriya Sîyonîst û Deklarasyona Balfoûr”, perdeya paş ya mêtîngerkirina Fîlîstînê bi awayekî berfireh lêkolîn dike. Dane, ji pozîsyona guhertî ya hemû aktorên ku rol lîstine (tevî emperyalîzmên Brîtanya û Fransa û Dewleta Osmanî) ronahiyekê pê dixê (ên ku ji bo avakirina dewleta Îsraîl çeka vekirî dane) û girêdana dîrokî ya Deklarasyona Balfoûr ya sala 1917'an radixîne ber çavan.. Gotara Dane, nîşan dide ku di sala 1948'an de avakirina Îsraîlê him emperyalîzma DYA'ê û him jî (di wê demê de politîkaya bi “emperyalîzmê re di nav aşitiyê de bijî” dimeşand) Yekîtiya Sovyetan piştgirî daye. Binê wê xêz dike ku di fîlatê de hemû hêzên paşverû yên li herêmê jî piştgiriya Îsraîlê kiriye. Wekî ku Dane destnîşan kiriye, li Tirkîyê hikumeta heyî AKP (Bi Îsraîlê re di gelek qadan de hevkarîyê kiriye û hîn jî dike û doza Fîlîstînê tu carî jidil nepejirandîye) jî piştgiriya Îsraîlê dike.

Sûngûr Savran, ji destpêka sedsala bîstemîn heta roja me şoreşên Rojhilata Navîn lêkolîn dike û ji van encamên giştî derdixîne. Li gorî Savran, Rojhilata Navîn di sedsala bîstemîn de gelek şoreş hatine jiyîn û şoreşên yekemîn yên sedsala bîst û yekemîn jî li vê herêmê hatin jiyîn (Misir û Tûnûs). Gotar, destnîşan dike ku di sedsala bîstemîn de li Rojhilata Navîn çar pêl şoreş hatine jiyîn û di sala 2011'an de şoreşên ereban jî wek pêla pêncemîn tê nîrxandin. Wekî ku Savran jî destnîşan dike, piraniya pêlên şoreşî, xeletîya bawerîya ku bi awayekî hêsan û oryantalîst ya ku “Civakên misliman, ji ber bawerîya Îslamê îteatkar in û ji ber vê jî şoreşê nakin” derdixîne holê. Ev yek, di heman demê de ji bo teza Marksîzmê ya ku dîrok ne bi awayê peresanê bi hingavtinên şoreşî pêş diçe delîleke hêzdar pêşkêş dike. Herî dawî, gotara Savran, nîşan dike ku dîroka Rojhilata Navîn di xalên şoreşî de hatiye diyarkirin, îddîaya ku reformîst (dibêjin şoreş dibêtiyeke dûr e û divê siyaseta çepgir guhertinên biçûk bike hedef) dibêjin “rasteqîn” e bêbingehbûn û lawazbûna wê teşhîr dike. Di eslê xwe de, ger şoreş nebin (biçûk an jî mezin) ne gengaz e ku hedef bi dest bikevin. Bi vegotîneke din, dîrok nîşan dike ku şoreş ji reformê bêhtir armanceke “rasteqîn” e.

Dosyeya pêvek, meylên paşverû yên aliyên din yên cîhanê û bersivên ku divê ji wan re were dayîn hildigire dest. Di gotara xwe ya bi navê “Azîneyên famkiriya ‘Hemdem’ê: Nîqaşek li ser populîzm û faşîzmê” Cenk Saraçoğlu, diyar dike ku ji bo van tevgerên paşverû werin famkirin têgeha faşîzm ji têgeha (di çepgiriya navnetewî de têgeheke gelek populer e) “rastgiriya populîst” bêhtir guncantir û bikarînantir e. Saraçoğlu, wek taybetîya ji hev veqetîne ya di heyne navbera her

du şerên cîhanê ya tevgerên faşîst û rejîman “hilweşîneriya şoreşî- hember” û “ne hemdemî”yê diyar dike û tevgerên paşverû yên roja me bi bikaranîna van têgehan birawird dike. Saraçoğlu, diyar dike ku tevgerên paşverû yên wek Macaristan û Tirkiye ku hinekî li derdorê cih digirin, li gorî welatên rojavayî yên pêşketî bêhtir dişibin faşîzma klasîk.

Nêzîkatîyeke hinekî cuda ya ji bo rewşa Ewrûpa û cîhanê, di dawîya Gulana 2017'an, ji 18 welatan milîtan û rewşenbîr bi taybet di çarçoveya Ewrûpa û Rojhilata Navîn-Efrîkaya Bakur, ji bo ku riya were şopandin nîqaş bike çalakiya navnetewî ya ku beşdar bibin, di Encamnameya Konferansa Ewrûpa-Behraspî ya 4. de hatiye pêşkêşkirin.

Îsal sedemîn salvegera Şoreşa Cotmeha 1917'an e. Ev bûyera ku azîne vedike, tenê ne ji bo gelên Rûsyaya Çarî, ji bo hemû mirovatîyê û bi taybet jî ji bo hemû karker, kedkar û bindestên cîhanê asoyên nû vekirin. Em vê bûyera cîhanî-dîrokî pîroz dikin û azîneyên wê yên cuda bi çar gotaran digirin dest.

Bi gotara xwe “Cotmeh 1917: Bûyereke di asta cîhanî de” Savas Mîhaîl, bi gotara feylozofê fransî Alaîn Badîou ku piştî hilweşîna Yekîtiya Sovyetan demeke kurt nivîsandibû di nava diyalogê de têkilî û cudahiyên di navbera 1917 û 1991'ê de nîqaş dike. Savas Mîhaîl tîne bîra me ku 1917 bûyereke di asta cîhanê de ye û ji aliyê her kesî ve wek destpêka şoreşa cîhanê ya sosyalîst tê dîtin. Şoreşa civakî ji Rûsyayê ber bi Ewrûpaya Rojhilat û Navîn ve belav bû û bandora wê ji Ewrûpa dirêjî Asyayê û DYA'yê bû. Wekî ku Keynes jî wê demê hay ji vê heye, Bolşevîzm û Şoreşa Cotmehê ji bo pergala kapîtalîst a kureyî gefeke rasteqîn pêk dianî. Di vê babetê de, Şoreşa Cotmehê teqez interfereke ku hîn dema wê nehatî û qewimîye nîn bû. Tam li dijî vê, “bûyer”eke ku di giringiya cîhanî-dîrokî ku ji bo mirovahiyê serdemeke nû daye destpêkirin. Li dijî vê, 1991, wek bûyereke ku ne “bûyer” e hatiye kirin: Ji bo mirovahiyê serdemeke nû nedaye destpêkirin. Savas Mîhaîl, dibêje hîn dewra ku Şoreşa Cotmehê vekirîye nehatiye girtin û gotara xwe bi dawî dike. Em hîn jî di serdema Cotmehê de dijîn û di sedsala nû de divê em şoreşê domdar bikin.

Gotara Ozturk ya bi navê “Di sedsala 21. de planlamaya sosyalîst”, potansiyela sosyalîzmê, bi referansa derfetên roja me nîqaş dike. Ozturk, ji niha de, hewl dide ku pêşnumayeke pergala plankirina aboriyê ya ku piştî şoreşê di nava çend salan de dikare were avakirin derbixîne. Li gorî Ozturk, di sedsala 21. de, dikare planlamayeke ji sedsala borî di bingeha xwe de cuda bêhtir bi bandor were avakirin. Gotar, destnîşan dide ku yek ji pîrsgirêkên herî sereke yên avakirina sosyalîzma sedsala 20. nekariye pêşiya ku pere bibe wek sermayeyê bigire. Bes (wekî ku em di “Rexneya Bernameya Gothayê” ya Marks de dibînin) pergaleke “dayînê” û planeke ku li ser ked-demê were avakirin ew ê têkiliyên pereyî û bi vê yekê ve girêdayî gefa ku sermaye derxîne holê bi sînor bike. Jê zêdetir, pergaleke wisa ew ê pîrsgirêka hesabkirinê jî bi awayekî hêsan çareser bike. Ozturk di heman demê de têkiliyên

enduristiyê yê nû ku dibêtiya wan heye jî nîqaş dike û derdixîne pêş ku di şertên roja me de, rejîmeke sosyalîst bi awayekî rasteqînî dikare îstihdama tam, otomasyona tam, sifir qezayên kar û bi awayekî payeyî kurtkirina saetên kar wek hedef bigire pêşiya xwe. Oztürk, diyar dike ku ev di bin banê têkiliyên kapîtalîst de tu demê bi temamî ew ê rasteqîniyê pêk neyên.

Armagan Tûlûnay, aliyekî din ê Şoreşa Cotmehê digire dest ku ev yek ji aliyê hin derdoran ve bi awayekî kêr hilgirtiye dest.. Ji 1980'ê vir ve di nava çepgiran de piştî ku vegereke anti-Lenînîst û heta anti-Marksîst dest pê kiriye, di meseleya rizgariya jinan de girîngiya Marksîzm wek ramanê yekgirtî û bername, komunîzm jî wek lêgerîneke civakî ya cuda her diçe tê redkirin. Derman di siyaseta nasnameyê de bû. Tevgera komunîst hay ji bindestiya jinê tune bû û ji bo rizgariya jinan tiştekî ku pêşniyaz bike tune bû. Tûlûnay, polîtîkayên ku Bolşevîkan piştî şoreşê xistine meriyetê lêkolîn kiriye, Bolşevîzma di pêşengtiya Lenîn û Trotskîy de bernamayeke begiriyê ya ku di welatê herî pêşketî yê kapîtalîst de jî nikare were xeyalkirin xistine meriyetê, di navbera zayendan de ne tenê formel xwestine wekhevîyeke rasteqîn ava bikin. Wisa dixuyê ku ji bo bindestiya jinan, qandî ku bi “establishment”a liberal a ku herikînen roja me yê anti-Marksîst û post-modernîst heyanê wê ne neyê muqayesekirin hestiyar e, qandî jî nîqaşê re ne vekirî be nîşanê me dide. Wekî ku Tûlûnay di gotara xwe de destnîşan dike, burokrasiya ku îktîdara siyasî rapêçandiye ji holê rakirina wan ya van meriyetan nikare wek delîla ku komunîzm ji bo bindestiya jinê nehestiyar tevgeriyaye nîşan bide. Axir di dawiyê de, burokrasi dev ji komunîzmê berda, ji ber vê jî tu faaliyetên burokasiyê nikare komunîzmê di bin tawanbariyekê de bihêle.

Gotara me ya bi babeta Şoreşa Cotmehê, li ser qadeke ku Marksîzma Rojava her gavê paşguh kiriye xwar dibe. Demeke dirêj, îktîdara proleterya cara ewil ji aliyê rûsan ve, yanî bi dibêtiyeke mezin ji aliyê neteweyên Ewrûpaya mezin yê herî paşmayî ve ketiye meriyetê, her gavê tê gotin. Lê bes şîrovekerên ku bi berçavka Rojava dinêrin, her gavê ji bîr kirin ku Şoreşa Cotmehê, ji vê wêdetir şoreşa gelên musulman e. Bi beralîkirina Lenîn ve Yekîtiya Sovyetan a ku di 31 Berfanbar 1922'an hat avakirin beşeke wê ya girîng ji gelên musulman û turk yê ku li sînorên rojhilatê Rûsyaya Navîn (Tatar, Başkir, Kalmuk, Daxistan, Çeçen û hwd.), Transkafkasya (Azerî, Abhaza û hwd.) û Asyaya Navîn (Kazakistana îroyîn, Turkmenistan, Ozbekistan, Kîrgîzistan û Tacîkistan û hwd.) cih digirin pêk dihatin. Sûngûr Savran, di vê gotara orjînal ya ku girtiye pênûsê de, bi awayekî cewherî behsa piştî serkeftina şoreşa komunîzm/Bolşevîzmê bê çawa dilê gelê musulman kifş kiriye û çawa gel û erdên gelê musulmanên komunîst bi dest xistiye vedibêje. Wek bûyera Şovenîzma Mezin a Rûsyaya ku di serdema Stalîn de bilind bû tê binavkirin çawa jiyanê gelên musulman bandor kiriye ev yek jî dikare bibe mijara xebateke din.

Nivîseke ku bi awayekî fetlokî bi gotarên ku di der barê Şoreşa Cotmehê de

hatine nivîsandin girêdayî ye, li xerabûna avakirina sosyalîst ya sedsala 20. ji aliyê Bulgaristanê ve dinêre. Gotara Danîela Penkova ya bi navê “Di Kemîna Neo-liberalîzmê de Bulgaristan”, pêvajoya restorasyona kapîtalîst ya piştî 1989’an ya li welat lêkolîn dike. Nivîskar, destnîşan dike ku saziyên sermayeya navnetewî, bi taybet ÎMF û Benkaya Cîhanê, ji Bulgaristanê re, reçeteyeke ku ji bo Welatên Sêyemîn yên Cîhanê derxistine tê spartin. Bulgaristan bi 1989’an ve welatekî senayiya wê pêşketî û standerdeke berbiçav ya jiyanê hebû, piştî 1989’an reçeteyên noe-liberal (taybetîkirin û bêrêgezîkirin) gelê Bulgaristanê feqîr kir. Gotar, destnîşan dike ku her çî qas Bulgaristan li ser kaxezê mezin dibe were dîtîn jî nikare pêdiviyên jirêzê yên gelê xwe jî bi cih bîne. Penkova, di dawîya nivîsa xwe de dibêje; ji bo ku Bulgaristan karibe bigihêje senaiyeke rêk û pêk û civakeke girseyî, divê dev ji politikayên neo-liberal berde û ev yek pêwistiyeke mezin e.

Ev sal ne tenê sedemîn salvegera Şoreşa Cotmehê ye, di heman demê de salvera sed û pêncîyemîn çapkirina cilda yekem ya *Kapîtalê* ye. Ji ber vê sedemê jî me di gotara xwe ya dawî de cih da rêbaz, naverok û giringiya vê şahberhema ramana mirovahiyê ye ku senteza şoreş û zanyariya civakî ye.

Kapîtal, di dahûrana dawî de, şewaza hilberînê ya kapîtalîst derfetên ku mirovahiyê ragirîne siberojeke baştir bi awayekî payeyî bi dawî bûye, ji bo ku enerjîya hemû karkerên cîhanê ji bo mebestên pêşketî derxîne holê di der barê hilweşîna vê azîneya hilberînê de ye. Gava ku em li qeyrana aborî ya navnetewî ya kûr, li gefa şerê cîhanê yê nukleer ku li ser serê me radiheje û li tekane çavkaniya ji nû ve hilberînê ya mirov û jîndarên ku li ser rûyê erdê dijîn tune kirina xwezayê binêrin bi awayekî vekirî em dibînin ku em gihîştine vê merheleya dîrokî. Parastina mirovahiyê û heta bi giştî parastina jiyanê, bi mulkiyeta kolektîf ya navgînên hilberînê û bi hatina şewaza nû ya hilberîneke ku li ser planlameya navendî û demokratîk hatibe avakirin û bi pevgîna biratiyê ya hemû netewên cîhanê ve girêdayî ye. Bi kurtî, ya ku hewcedarî pê heye sosyalîzmeke enternasyolîst e. Ev jî encax dikare bi hêzên proleterayê, bi têkoşîna çînî ya şoreşgerî ve bikeve meriyetê. Hewcedarî bi partiyên şoreşger û Enternasyoneleke şoreşgerî heye. Marksîzma Şoreşgerî ev e û kovara me jî ji ber vê sedemê vî navî bi şanazî pejirandiye.

Translated by: Mehmet Çakmak

Arabic

في هذا العدد

ظهر عدد "الماركسية الثورية" الأول، الإصدار السنوي من الصحيفة التركية *Devrimci Marksizm* (الماركسية الثورية) باللغة الإنجليزية، في نهاية عام ٢٠١٦. تم توزيعه وبيعه في مختلف أنحاء العالم من بيروت حتى بيونس آيريس، ومن سانت بطرسبرغ حتى سكوبيه، ومن ميلان حتى مونتفيدو. قد لا تكون بيعت منه آلاف النسخ، لكن على نطاقه المتواضع، قد أوف بالمهمة الموجهة إليه: للمساهمة في النزعة الدولية في النظرية الماركسية المتطرفة، مما أدى بطبيعة الحال إلى النزعة الدولية البروليتارية في المجالات السياسية والتنظيمية، في الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا، في البلقان والقوقاز، في مناطق البحر المتوسط والمناطق الأوروبية-الآسيوية، وفي العالم بأسره.

يهدف هذا العدد الثاني من، الماركسية الثورية ٢٠١٨، إلى متابعة العمل تجاه الهدف ذاته، مع التركيز بشكل أساسي على الشرق الأوسط، مع مقال مصاحب يستند إلى مسألة الحركات الرجعية في البلدان الإمبريالية، مع ملف خاص بشأن ثورة أكتوبر عن الذكرى المئوية وهي مهرجان كبير للشعب، مع مقال يبحث في زوال أحد البلدان (بلغاريا) حيث تواجدت دولة العمال حتى سقوط حائط برلين، ومع مقال يحول انتباهنا إلى حاضر ومستقبل البشرية، *Das Kapital* (رأس المال)، في الذكرى ١٥٠ لإصدار المجلد الأول.

يصف العدد الأول، في مقدمته وفي العديد من المقالات الموضوعية، الوضع العالمي من خلال وضع الأزمة الاقتصادية المستمرة منذ عقود إلى الآن بعد الانهيار المالي عام ٢٠٠٨ في المركز إثر عدة عمليات متوازية: ظهور الفاشية الأولية حول العالم؛ والظهور المصاحب للحركة التكفيرية الطائفية الإسلامية، مع أبرز مثال لها في داعش أو تنظيم الدولة الإسلامية في العراق والشام (ISIL)؛ مع التهديد المتزايد للحروب الإقليمية التي تتحول إلى حرب عالمية، وصعود ثورة الشعب بأشكال التمرد سواء في (مصر وتونس واليمن والبحرين وول ستريت واليونان وإسبانيا وتركيا والبرازيل والبلقان وغيرها) والثورات البرلمانية التي شملت (بوديهوس، وسيريزا، وساندرز، وجيرمي كوربين، وأبرزها الجبهة اليسارية (FIT) في الأرجنتين) منذ عام ٢٠١١.

كما صدر هذا العدد مباشرة بعد انتخاب دونالد ترامب، حيث شكل هذا الحدث المفرد نقطة الدخول في مناقشة للظاهرة اليمينية المتطرفة الدولية الجديدة التي تسمى "النزعة الشعبوية" أو "اليمين المتطرف" أو "القومية" وما إلى ذلك. وكان

تشخيصنا المبكر أن دونالد ترامب "فاشي متمرد على التقاليد والأعراف"، فاشي دون حزب راسخ وقوات شبه عسكرية، أو، بعبارة أخرى، فاشي مبتدئ، تم تأكيده بشكل وافي عن طريق حقائق العام الماضي. وقد كانت كلمة "الفاشية" واسعة الانتشار، لا سيما في أعقاب أحداث شارلوتسفيل، لتصور موقف ترامب بعد أن تغاضى عن طيب خاطر مرارًا وتكرارًا عن عمل المتطرفين البيض والنازيين الجدد المعلنين ذاتيًا. وبعيدًا عن حدود الولايات المتحدة، على الساحة الدولية، كانت المؤسسة الليبرالية سريعة جدًا في توصيف نتائج الانتخابات في أوروبا بأنها سلسلة من الهزائم لما تمت تسميته بشكل خاطئ "النزعة الشعبوية". في فرنسا، مارين لوبان، الممثلة الأكثر وضوحًا لطاعون الفاشية الأولية الصاعد، حصلت في الجولة الثانية من الانتخابات صوت مواطن فرنسي من كل ثلاثة فرنسيين وفي ألمانيا أصبح "البديل من أجل ألمانيا" ثالث أكبر حزب في البلاد على الرغم من تغيير اتجاهه أنجيليا ميركل في سياستها المتعلقة بالهجرة. إذا كانت هذه هي الهزيمة، يتساءل المرء ماذا كان النصر سيكون حليفًا لحركة دولية تم اعتبارها، فقط حتى الآونة الأخيرة، حركة متطرفة حد الهوس!

وما لا يقل وضوحًا هو احتمال اندلاع الحرب على كوكبنا لأننا شددنا على تهديد الحرب العالمية في عددنا الأول. وبغض النظر عن المعاناة التي لا نهاية لها في سوريا والعراق واليمن وليبيا، والحالة التي لا تزال متوهجة للحرب في أوكرانيا، تتميز المنطقة الجيوستراتيجية الآسيوية بالجوانب المختلفة للصراع الناشئ بين الإمبريالية والصين. ومن أبرز هذه الظاهرة سياسة حافة الهاوية بين الولايات المتحدة وكوريا الشمالية التي تهدد بنقل العالم إلى أول كارثة نووية منذ هيروشيما وناغازاكي قبل ثلاثة أرباع قرن من الزمان.

وقد أدت هذه الموجة الرجعية، أقرب إلى الوطن، في منطقتنا في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا (MENA)، إلى إعادة تنظيم جديدة للقوات. وأعقب تأييد ترامب البونابرت المصري السيسي خلال زيارته الأخيرة لواشنطن زيارته المنظمة إلى المملكة العربية السعودية. وكانت لحظة الميلودراما لتلك الزيارة، عندما كان الثلاثي المثير للسخرية من ترامب، والملك سلمان والرئيس المصري قد لامسوا عالمًا مشرقًا مع حراسة ثابتة إضافية في الخلفية، وكان هامًا قبل كل شيء الغياب الرمزي لاثنتين من الممثلين. فمن ناحية، كانت الإسرائيلية الصهيونية eminence grise غائبة عن التحالف الجديد الذي كان يجري إنشاؤه. وكان توجه ترامب المناهض لإيران والمؤيد لإسرائيل عرضة لتجاوز كل تعقيدات وتناقضات سياسته تجاه المنطقة. وعلى الرغم من الجهود الملموسة التي يبذلها ترامب لمحكمة بوتين، إلا أن ترامب، كما يشهد مرة أخرى في خطابه بالأمم المتحدة، يدفع بقوة إلى تشكيل تحالف بين جميع القوى الرجعية الأخرى في الشرق الأوسط من أجل عزل وإحضار إيران خاضعة، على الرغم من تحالف شبه غير قابل للكسر بين الأخير وروسيا التي يمثلها بوتين. وهذا، بالمناسبة، هو أيضًا السبب في الضغط الذي تعرضت له حماس مؤخرًا للاستسلام أمام مصر وإسرائيل. أما الغياب الواضح الآخر فهو غياب أردوغان، وهو مصدر آخر للتناقضات لسياسة ترامب في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا. وكان السبب الرسمي هو أن زيارة ترامب تزامنت مع مؤتمر حزب العدالة والتنمية داخل الدولة، حيث عاد أردوغان للسيطرة على حزبه بعد الاستفتاء الذي أجري في نيسان/أبريل في تركيا، الذي أرسى الطريق للانتقال إلى نظام رئاسي أكثر. ومع ذلك، سرعان ما تبين أن السبب الحقيقي يكمن في مكان آخر.

إن عرض السلطة الطائفية السنية التي كان السعوديون يعتزمون التدريب عليها بدعوتهم مجموعة كاملة من الدول العربية وغير العربية لتحية ترامب أثبتت سرعة زوالها. اندلعت أزمة قطر في أعقاب هذا الاحتفال الانتصاري للوحدة، مما أقحم إسفين بين المعسكر الذي تقوده السعودية وكتلة الراجعية. لفهم ما نعينه بهذا، لننظر في التسلسل التالي للأحداث. ٢٠١٣: الانقلاب البونابرتي من السيسي يطيح بمرسي وحكومة الإخوان المسلمين (الإخوان) في مصر، بدعم من المملكة العربية السعودية، حيث يقتلون بدم بارد مئات من أنصار الإخوان في ميدان رابعة العدوية بالقاهرة، مما أدى إلى تداعيات بين المملكة العربية السعودية وتركيا، منذ أن ركز أردوغان على استراتيجيته الكاملة في أن يصبح "الرئيس" (قائد) في العالم السني بالتحالف مع الإخوان في سلسلة من البلدان شملت (تونس، سوريا، المغرب، فلسطين، أي حماس، بالإضافة إلى مصر)؛ عام ٢٠١٥: على الرغم من تضامنه الصريح مع معتصمي رابعة (حركة تقوم على موقف انتقائي بشأن حادثة رابعة)، وطد أردوغان العلاقات مع الملك سلمان الجديد بالمملكة العربية السعودية في أعقاب وفاة الملك السابق، وحتى قام بالانضمام في نهاية عام ٢٠١٥ إلى التحالف العسكري الإسلامي لمكافحة الإرهاب، وهي مبادرة سعودية تجمع ٣٤ دولة سنية، وكان على وشك شن حرب على سوريا في فبراير ٢٠١٦ جنبًا إلى جنب مع السعوديين وقطر (وهو الثنائي

الذي ينبغي ملاحظته بعناية!)؛ ١٥ يوليو ٢٠١٦: تخلى المخيم السعودي عن حكومة أردوغان في مواجهة مصيرها لمحاولة الانقلاب؛ في عام ٢٠١٧: من بين ١٣ من الشروط التي طرحها الائتلاف المناهض لقطر بقيادة السعودية في ظل شروط المصالحة التي برز فيها ضرورة انسحاب القوات العسكرية التركية من قطر، وهو شرط رفضه الجانب التركي، الذي، هو موالٍ لاستراتيجيته المتأثرة ببيعة، جنباً إلى جنب مع قطر. وعلينا أن نسارع إلى إضافة أنه بعد فشل الانقلاب في يوليو ٢٠١٦، تسعى تركيا للحصول على مصدر تعويضي للسلطة في المخيم الروسي الإيراني لتحقيق التوازن بين ضغط الولايات المتحدة والاتحاد الأوروبي على توجهها الدولي وسياساتها الداخلية.

يدل كل هذا على أن القوى السنية الطائفية في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا غير قادرة على تشكيل تحالف اتحادي دائم ضد المعسكر الشيعي بقيادة إيران. لا يعني هذا أن تهديد الحرب الطائفية على نطاق الشرق الأوسط برمته أصبح الآن شيئاً من الماضي. هذا يعني فقط أن المعسكر السني ليس متحداً كما بدا في لحظة معينة وأن إيران لديها مجال للمناورة وقد تكون قادرة على تحييد بعض البلدان في المعسكر السني الرجعي لأقل درجة ممكنة. وأن التهديد لا يزال موجوداً، ومن المرجح أن يحصل على روحاً جديدة للحياة من سياسات ترامب وإسرائيل الموضحة من قبل الحروب المتواصلة بالوكالة في دول مثل سوريا والعراق واليمن. يمكن فقط لكتلة موحدة ومستقلة من الطبقة العاملة والقوى الاشتراكية في جميع أنحاء منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا، تحالف نفسها مع القوات المناظرة في البلقان وشمال البحر الأبيض المتوسط، أن توقف هذا التهديد بالحرب الطائفية السنية الشيعية، وهو احتمال من المؤكد سيؤدي إلى هلاك الشعوب وتدمير التراث الثقافي التاريخي للمنطقة. وبما أن القرار النهائي للمؤتمر الرابع الأوروبي - المتوسطي للطوارئ الذي عقد في أثينا في ٢٦-٢٨ مايو ٢٠١٧، والذي نشره في هذا العدد كوثيقة بنص على: "لا يمكن وقف المذبحة إلا من قبل جبهة واسعة من القوى المناهضة للإمبريالية ومناهضة للصهيونية التي تقاوم أيضاً ضد الأنظمة الرجعية في بلدانها. يمكن فقط للاتحاد الاشتراكي في الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا أن يوفر الحل النهائي لكل العلل في المنطقة".

وفي ظل هذا الاضطراب أضاف مسعود بارزاني، زعيم كردستان العراق، استفتاء الاستقلال، الذي استحضر كل الشياطين القديمة من القوى الإقليمية ومكائد الإمبرياليين. يؤيد الماركسيون الثوريون حق تقرير مصير للأكراد. والمشكلة هي أن هذا الاستفتاء لا يستتبع من أجل تقرير المصير ذلك، إذ أنه يكمن في التعظيم الذاتي لبارزاني وخزانات مؤيديه أصحاب النفط. وقد خاض بارزاني حرباً واضحة، ويعتزم بوضوح أن يقاوم في المستقبل ضد حرية الأكراد في أجزاء أخرى من كردستان (أي في تركيا وإيران وسوريا). لذلك فإن الانتصار في هذا الاستفتاء ينطوي بشكل مثير للسخرية على هزيمة لقضية التحرر الوطني في كردستان، على رأس إعطاء الإمبريالية رأس شاطئ آخر في الشرق الأوسط. إن الماركسيين الثوريين ثابتون في موقفهم ضد التدخل العسكري من قبل أي سلطة إقليمية في كردستان العراق، لكنهم يقفون ضد بارزاني ومع تحرير السكان الأكراد بأكملهم.

إن ملفنا الأول في هذا الموضوع يسير على مختلف جوانب الصراع في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا، مع منظور قصير الأجل وطويل الأجل. المادة الأولى من هذا الملف هي مقالة تحليل الحرب الأهلية السورية وتداعياتها الدولية في مراحلها المتعاقبة. تبدأ مقالة ليفنت دولك بعنوان "مراحل ودروس ومستقبل الحرب الأهلية السورية" بتشخيص أنه منذ اندلاع الثورة الشعبية ضد ديكتاتورية الأسد مع مطالب الحرية والعدالة لم تتمكن من اكتساب إطاراً سياسياً بروليتارياً، وسرعان ما أصبحت مفتوحة لتلاعب الإمبريالية والدول الرجعية في المنطقة. يجري مقال كوتلو دان بعنوان "الذكرى المئوية لإعلان بلفور ومذكرة النكبة والاحتلال الصهيوني" تحقيقاً مفصلاً في الخلفية التاريخية لاحتلال فلسطين. يستعرض سونغور سافران الثورات في الشرق الأوسط منذ بداية القرن العشرين حتى اليوم ويستمد استنتاجات عامة منه.

يتناول الملف المصاحب الاتجاهات الرجعية والاستجابة اللازمة لها في أجزاء أخرى من العالم. يناقش جينك ساراتش أغلو بأن الفاشية هي مفهوم أكثر ملاءمة وفائدة من "اليمن الشعبي" (وهو مفهوم يشيع حالياً بين اليسار الدولي) لفهم هذه الحركات الرجعية. ويستعرض الإعلان الختامي للمؤتمر الأوروبي المتوسطي الرابع، من جانبه، الوضع العالمي ككل.

هذا العام هو الذكرى المئوية لثورة أكتوبر ١٩١٧. وكان هذا حدثاً تاريخياً صنع أفاقاً جديدة ليس فقط لشعوب روسيا القيصرية سابقاً، بل بالنسبة للإنسانية عامةً، وعلى وجه الخصوص، للعمال والمثابرين والمضطهدين في العالم. إننا نحفل

بهذا الحدث التاريخي العالمي ونخوض جوانبه المختلفة في أربع مقالات مختلفة. في مقالته، "أكتوبر ١٩١٧: حدث عالمي"، يناقش سافاش مايكل العلاقات والاختلافات بين عامي ١٩١٧ و ١٩٩١، في حوار مع مقال أعده الفيلسوف الفرنسي آلان باديو بعد فترة وجيزة من زوال الاتحاد السوفيتي. تناقش مقالة أوزغور أوزتورك، "التخطيط الاشتراكي في القرن الحادي والعشرين" إمكانيات الاشتراكية مع الإشارة إلى إمكانيات الحاضر. تتناول أرماغان تولوناي جانبًا من ثورة أكتوبر تم تجاهله عمدًا من قبل بعض الدوائر، وهو مساهمة الثورة في تحرير المرأة من القمع. في مقالنا الأخير عن ثورة أكتوبر، يشرح سونغور سافران، في شكل موجز، كيف أن الشيوعية / البلشفية احتلت قلب الشعوب الإسلامية على الفور في أعقاب انتصار الثورة وكيف فتح الشيوعيون المسلمون أرضهم وقلوب شعبيهم.

ويركز مقال مرتبط بطريقة دائرية إلى حد ما على ثورة أكتوبر، على انهيار تجربة القرن العشرين في البناء الاشتراكي من خلال منظور بلغاريا. تقوم مقالة دانيلا بينكوف بالتحقيق في عملية إحياء الرأسمالية في بلغاريا بعد عام ١٩٨٩.

هذا العام ليس فقط الذكرى المئوية لثورة أكتوبر، ولكن أيضًا الذكرى ١٥٠ لنشر المجلد الأول من *Capital* (رأس المال). وبالتالي يكرس مقالنا النهائي لمحة عامة عن أسلوب هذه التحفة من التفكير البشري ومحتواها وأهميتها الذي هو توليف للعلوم الاجتماعية والثورة.

في نهاية المطاف يمثل *Capital* (رأس المال) الانهك التدريجي لإمكانيات أسلوب الإنتاج الرأسمالي لنقل الإنسانية إلى مستقبل أفضل وضرورة انقلابها لإطلاق الطاقة من السكان العاملين في هذا الكوكب لأغراض تدريجية. وجود الأزمة الاقتصادية الدولية العميقة، والتهديد المحدق بالحرب النووية، وحتى الحرب العالمية، وتدمير الطبيعة التي هي المصدر الوحيد لإنجاب البشرية وغيرها من الأنواع الحية يوضح أننا بالفعل في تلك المرحلة من التطور التاريخي. إن الدفاع عن الإنسانية، حتى عن الحياة عمومًا، يتطلب ظهور أسلوب جديد للإنتاج يقوم على الملكية الجماعية في وسائل الإنتاج والتخطيط المركزي الديمقراطي، فضلاً عن الاندماج الأخوي لجميع أمم العالم. وباختصار يتطلب الأمر الاشتراكية الدولية. ولا يمكن تحقيق ذلك إلا من قبل قوى البروليتاريا، من خلال نضال الطبقة الثورية. هذا هو ما نتحدث عنه الماركسية الثورية ولماذا تحمل مجلتنا هذا الاسم بكل فخر.

در این شماره

اولین شماره از نشریه «مارکسیسم انقلابی»، سالنامه ای از ترجمه ی ترکی به انگلیسی نشریه ی «دئوریمجی مارکسیسم»، اولین بار در پایان سال ۲۰۱۶ به چاپ رسید. این نشریه در سراسر دنیا از بیروت گرفته تا بوئنوس آیرس از سن پترزبورگ تا اسکوپیه، از میلان تا مونته ویدئو، پخش و به فروش رسیده است. اگرچه هزاران نسخه از آن به فروش نرسیده است ولی در حجم کم هم توانسته به هدف خود به نحو احسن برسد: گسترش انترناسیونالیسم در چهارچوب تئوری مارکسیست مبارز، در نتیجه، گسترش انترناسیونالیسم در ساحه ی مبارزه ی سیاسی و سازماندهی شده ی پرولتاریا، از خاورمیانه گرفته تا آفریقای شمالی، از منطقه ی بالکان و قفقاز و تا منطقه ی یوروآسیا. در راستای این هدف، در یک اقدام جدید، تصمیم به انتشار این سرمقاله به زبانهای مختلف گرفتیم، که در صفحات پایانی این شماره به چاپ خواهد رسید. با این اقدام حداقل خواهیم توانست اساس پیغام خود را به گوش مردم سراسر دنیا، که علاقمند به انترناسیونالیسم و مارکسیسم انقلابی هستند، ولی قادر به خواندن متون انگلیسی نیستند، برسانیم.

در دومین شماره، یعنی مارکسیست انقلابی ۲۰۱۸، در دومقاله، با تمرکز به مسئله ی خاورمیانه، به جنبش های ارتجاعی در کشورهای امپریالیست و موضع جهانی پیرامون آن پرداختیم. همچنین مجموعه مقالاتی پیرامون صدمین سالگرد انقلاب اکتبر، جشن توده ها، با موضوعاتی همچون فروپاشی حکومت کارگری بعد از شکست دیوار برلین در بلغارستان و مقاله ای در باب صدوپنجاهمین سالگرد چاپ جلد اول کتاب سرمایه، این شاه اثر همیشگی انسانیت، در راستای هدف اصلی امان قدم برداشتیم.

در شماره ی اول، در مقدمه و مقالات دیگر، با در مرکزیت قرار دادن بحران اقتصادی ده سال اخیر که از سال ۲۰۰۸ آغاز شده است به تحلیل فرایندهای موازی مختلف پرداخته شده است. گسترش پیش فاشیسم وهمزمان با آن رشد داعش به عنوان جنبش تکفیری-مذهبی اسلامی، تهدید جنگهای منطقه ای به جنگ جهانی و عصیان خلق در سال ۲۰۱۱ تا به امروز به صورت تظاهرات گسترده ی خیابانی در مصر، تونس، یمن، بحرین، وال استریت، یونان، اسپانیا، ترکیه، برزیل، منطقه ی بالکان و سایر کشورها رخ داده و چه به صورت اعتراضات پارلمانی (پودمس، سیریزا، سندرز، کوربین و از همه مهمتر خیزش حزب فرنته ده ایزگویرا در آرژانتین) از نمونه های این فرآیندها به شمار می آید.

در شماره ی اول، در پی انتخاب دونالد ترامپ به مهمترین سمت در قدرتمندترین کشور امپریالیست، به موضوعاتی همچون «پوپولیسم»، «راست افراطی»، «ناسیونالیسم» به عنوان نموده‌های ارتجاعی دنیا پرداختیم. حقایق سال گذشته به راستی گویای تحلیل درست و پیشگویانه ی ما از دونالد ترامپ به عنوان «فاشیست غیر قابل پیشبینی»، فاشیستی بدون حزب جای افتاده و پیشتیبانی پارلمنتری و یا به عبارتی یک پیش فاشیست، است. مشخصا بعد از اتفاقات شارلوت ویل، تأیید بی محابانه و مکرر ترامپ از تظاهرات کنندگانی که خود را بی شرمانه «نژادپرستان سفید پوست» و «نئونازیها» معرفی می کردند، کلمه ی «فاشیست» در شرح رفتار ترامپ به کار برده شد. در حالیکه استیو بانن، ایدئولوگ پیش قدم گروه فاشیستی که نام «آلت رایت» به معنی راست آلترناتیو را برگزیده اند، از سمت خود در دولت برکنار شده است ولی همچنان با ترامپ همانند گوشت و استخوان هستند و قبل از خود رئیس جمهور سرفرایی به کشورهایی مهم از جمله چین داشته است که این سفر کمی از سفر رسمی دولتمردان ندارد. فرای مرزهای آمریکا، در سطح بین المللی، «استقرار» لبرال، عجالتا نتایج انتخابات در اروپا را شکست قدرتی که به اشتباه «پوپولیسم» نامیده اند، تفسیر کردند: در فرانسه، نماینده بارز طاعون پیش فاشیست، مارین لو پن، در دوره ی دوم انتخابات توانست یک سوم از رای هموطنان فرانسوی را بدست آورد. در آلمان حزب «آلترناتیو برای آلمان» برخلاف تغییر ۱۸۰ درجه ای خط و مشی آنجلا مرکل از سیاست پذیرش مهاجر، سومین حزب بزرگ کشور شد. به طور شگفت انگیزی اگر تمام این اتفاقات شکست تلقی شود از منظر این سیاستمداران تند و افراطی پیروزی این حرکات جهانی به چه شکل می شد!

از دید لبرالها، روی دیگر سکه پیروزی امانوئل ماکرون است. بعد از شکست عجیب بریخت در مقابل ترامپ، لبرالها در تفکری پوچ و واهی این پیروزی را مصداق برگشت «جهانی شدن» تفسیر کردند. محبوبیت امانوئل اول، لقبی که مخالفان چپ فرانسه به سبب طرز پادشاه مآبانه اش و درخواست حکومت با احکامش (این دقیقاً شبیه طرز حکومت اردوغان در ترکیه است که از نظر استقرار لبرال بدرستی استبداد تلقی می شود) به ماکرون داده اند، در نزد مردم رو به کاهش است. برخلاف تسلیمیت برخی کنفدراسیون های سندیکاها پیروزی دو اعتصاب طی ۱۰ روز ۲۱ تا ۳۰ شهریور، نشان از ادامه ی اعتراضات ضد اصلاح قانون کار فرنچیس هلند به اصطلاح «سوسیالیست» است که در شماره ی اول در بهار ۲۰۱۶ از این اعتراضات به عنوان «بهار فرانسه» یاد شد. همان طور که در شماره ی اول تأکید کردیم، فرانسه هنوز نقش کلیدی در اروپا دارد. خط و مشی نئولیبرالیستی و جهانی سازی ماکرون راه حل چاره سازی در مقابل ترامپ ها و لو پن ها نیست. تنها، استقلال سیاسی و مبارزه ی متحد طبقه ی کارگر می تواند زوال این دیو رو به رشد را فراهم سازد. افق هنوز از مودی ها، دوترها، پوتین ها، اردوغانها، علی یو ها، لوربان ها و ترامپ ها پر است.

احتمال جنگ جهانی تمام عیاری که در شماره ی اول بر آن تأکید شد روز به روز آشکارا افزایش می یابد. حتی اگر از رنج بی پابانی که در سوریه، عراق، یمن، لیبی در جریان است و جنگی که هنوز از درون در اوکراین شعله ور است بگذریم در منطقه ی ژئواستراتیک آسیا بین چین و امپریالیسم وجوه متفاوتی از تنش دیده می شود. مهمترین نمونه از این سیاست، افزایش تنش بین آمریکا و کره شمالی است که می تواند بعد از هفتاد و اندی سال منجر به تکرار فلاکت بمب اتمی هیروشیما و ناکازاکی شود. ترامپ با اشتیاقی که برخاسته از شخصیت پیش فاشیستی اوست کره شمالی را به «کشتن میلیونها» انسان و با خاک یکسان کردن تهدید کرد. برخلاف آنچه جامعه ی جهانی (نام دیگر امپریالیسم) و رسانه های سرمایه داری منعکس می کنند، فعالیتهای هسته ای کره شمالی تدبیری است در راستای دفاع در مقابله با تهدید جنگ در افق آسیا و نفوذ ارتش آمریکا در منطقه پاسیفیک با بیش از هشتاد هزار سرباز آمریکایی حاضر در ژاپن و کره جنوبی. در چنین رویارویی، مارکسیست انقلابی طرف حکومت کارگری را می گیرد حتی اگرچه در این مورد حکومت مذکور حکومتی است که با قدرتمند شدن بوروکراسی، رو به انحطاط و کاریکاتوری از «سوسیالیزم در یک خاندان» است.

در منطقه خاورمیانه و شمال آفریقا، موج ارتجاعی ترامپ منجر به پیدایش نیروهای جدید شد. بعد از حمایت و تأیید بناپارت مصر یعنی ال سی سی در واشنگتن، متعاقبا ترامپ در سفری پر طمطراق از عربستان سعودی دیدار کرد. کیچترین صحنه از مراسم پر زرق و برق، صحنه مضحک به دست گرفتن کره درخشانی توسط ترامپ، شاه سلمان و رئیس جمهور مصر در ردیف جلوی سپاهی لشکری از نگهبانان بود که در غیاب دو عامل دیگر، این صحنه پر معنا جلو کرد. در یک طرف، اسرائیل صهیونیست مشاور فکری غایب این ائتلاف جدید بود. در حالیکه، طرفداری ترامپ از

اسرائیل و مخالفتش با ایران نشانگر نادیده گرفتن منافع و تناقضات و عوارضات سیاسی از طرف ترامپ است. تلاش ترامپ برای نزدیکی با پوتین، همانگونه که در سخنرانی او در سازمان ملل متحد دیدیم، تلاشی است در جهت گسستن روابط بین روسیه و ایران (رابطه‌ای ناگسستی) و همچنین برای به زانو در آوردن ایران و ایزوله کردن آن و در این راستا حاضر به ائتلاف با دیگر نیروهای ارتجاعی منطقه است. اتفاقاً فشار بر حماس برای تسلیم شدن در برابر اسرائیل و مصر هم تلاشیست از این دست. غایب دیگر در مراسم که یکی از مسببین سیاستهای متناقض ترامپ در خاورمیانه و آفریقا است، یعنی اردوغان بود. گویا دلیل رسمی این غیبت، همزمانی کنگره ی آک پ بود که بعد از انتخابات ۱۶ آوریل و گذر به سیستم جدید ریاست جمهوری، اردوغان برای تمدید قدرت خود در حزبش در این کنگره حضور یافته بود. ولی همان طور که در کوتاه مدت مشخص شد سبب این غیبت چیز دیگری بود.

نمایشی از اتحاد فرقه‌ای سنی با شرکت کشورهای عربی و غیرعربی که عربستان سعودی در پی خوش آمد گویی به ترامپ ترتیب داده بود دیری نپایید. بحران قطر به این اتحاد پیروز مآبانه پایان بخشید و شکافی بین جناح تحت کنترل سعودی و جناح رابعه به وجود آورد. برای تفهیم بیشتر به این اتفاقات جعبه‌های توجه کنید:

۲۰۱۳: کودتای بن‌پارتنیست سی سی، با حمایت عربستان سعودی، حکومت مرسى و اخوان مسلمین را در مصر بر می‌چیند و با خون‌سردی تمام صدها تن از اعضای اخوان مسلمین را در قاهره در میدان ربیعت لعدویه به قتل می‌رساند. بدین ترتیب، شکافی بین روابط عربستان سعودی با اردوغان که با همکاری اخوان اتحاد سنی در چندین کشور از جمله (تونس، سوریه، مراکش و فلسطین یعنی حماس و مصر) برقرار کرده بود اتفاق می‌افتد.

۲۰۱۵: برخلاف خط و مشی صریح رابعه‌ایسم، بعد از مرگ پادشاه عربستان سعودی اردوغان با پادشاه جدید یعنی سلمان رابطه برقرار می‌کند، طوری که در پایان سال ۲۰۱۵، در اتحاد متفقین اسلامی ضد ترور با شرکت ۳۴ کشور سنی جای می‌گیرد و در سال ۲۰۱۶ همراه با عربستان سعودی و قطر (به این دو کشور دقت کنید) تا لبه شرکت در جنگ در سوریه پیش می‌رود.

در ۱۵ ژوئیه ۲۰۱۶: جناح سعودی، اردوغان را در برابر کودتای ناکام به تقدیر خویش رها می‌کند.

۲۰۱۷: در ۱۳ شرط مصالحه کوالیسیون ضد قطری به رهبری عربستان سعودی با قطر، عقب نشینی نیروهای مسلح ترکیه از قطر درج می‌شود. این شرط در راستای اهداف رابعه ایسم ترکیه در قبال قطر پذیرفته نمی‌شود. بعد از کودتای نافرجام ۱۵ ژوئیه در مقابل فشارهایی که از طرف آمریکا و اتحادیه اروپا به دولت ترکیه اعمال می‌شود ترکیه به جناح ایران-روسیه نزدیکتر می‌شود.

تمامی این تلاشها حاکی از شکست اتفاق سنی در خاورمیانه و آفریقای شمالی در برابر جناح شیعی به رهبری ایران است. با تمام این وجود هنوز تهدید جنگ فرقه‌ای در خاورمیانه به قوت خود باقی است. این نشانگر تضعیف جناح سنی در اثر مانورهای سیاسی ایران است که حد اقل توانسته است بعضی کشورها در جناح ارتجاعی سنی را بیطرف سازد. تهدید این جنگ با سیاستها و رابطه ترامپ با اسرائیل هنوز به طول خواهد انجامید و در کشورهایی همچون سوریه، عراق و یمن به شکل جنگهای نیابتی بی پایان دیده خواهد شد. تنها با اتحاد مستقل نیروهای سوسیالیست در خاورمیانه و آفریقای شمالی و منطقه بالکان و مدیترانه است که مردم منطقه از کشتار حتمی شیعه-سنی و نابودی میراث فرهنگی و تاریخی‌اشان به امان خواهند ماند.

همان طور که چهارمین قطعنامه کنفرانس اضطراری اروپا-مدیترانه بین تاریخهای ۲۸-۲۶ می ۲۰۱۷ در آتن برگزار شد و ما در اینجا سندی را منتشر می‌کنیم که بنابر آن، قتل عام را می‌توان تنها با جبهه گسترده نیروهای ضد امپریالیست و ضد صهیونیست که در عین حال بر علیه رژیم های مرتجع خود نیز می‌جنگند متوقف نمود. فقط فدراسیون سوسیالیسم در خاورمیانه و آفریقای شمالی راه حل نهایی را به این مناطق بیمار فراهم خواهد ساخت.

در این گپرو دار، مسعود بارزانی رهبر کردستان عراق، با برگذاری همه پرسی استقلال، حضور همه قدرتهای شیطانی منطقه ای و دسیسه گران امپریالیست را در منطقه فراهم نموده است. مارکسیست های انقلابی طرفدار تعیین سرنوشت کردها هستند. مشکل این است که این همه پرسی نه برای تعیین سرنوشت کردها بلکه برای تحکیم قدرت بارزانی و اعتبار شرکای نفتی ایشان طرح ریزی شده است. بارزانی تا کنون مبارزه کرده و به وضوح قصد دارد در آینده نیز در مقابل آزادی کردها در سایر نقاط کردستان (یعنی در ترکیه، ایران و سوریه) بایستد. پس این پیروزی از قضا یک شکست برای آرمان آزادی ملی در کردستان تلقی می‌شود وعلاوه بر این جبهه جدیدی را برای امپریالیسم

مستقر در خاورمیانه باز نموده است. مارکسیست های انقلابی بدون وادادگی در برابر هر نوع مداخله ی نظامی توسط هر گونه قدرت منطقه ای در کردستان عراق ایستاده اند. و در عین حال در مقابل بارزانی برای آزادی همه جمعیت های کرد خواهند ایستاد.

اولین بررسی ما در این شماره با یک چشم انداز کوتاه مدت و بلند مدت و با تکیه بر واقعیت های مختلف به کشمکش های موجود در منطقه خاورمیانه و شمال آفریقا می پردازد. اولین مقاله این شماره یک تحلیل و بررسی درباره جنگ داخلی سوریه و چند شاخگی بین المللی آن در مراحل مختلف است. لوند د وُلک در مقاله ای تحت عنوان «جنگ داخلی سوریه: مراحل، درسها و آینده جنگهای داخلی سوریه» موضوعی را مطرح می کند. با این تجزیه و تحلیل از آنجا که شورش های عمومی علیه دیکتاتوری بشار اسد با خواست های آزادی و عدالت طلبانه نتوانست زمینه یک حرکت سیاسی کارگری فراگیر را ایجاد کند، در نتیجه بزودی زمینه برای سؤ استفاده از این شورش ها توسط قدرت های مرتجع منطقه و امپریالیسم فراهم گردید. این نشان می دهد که مداخلات امپریالیسم، صهیونیسم و قدرت های منطقه ای (مانند عربستان سعودی، قطر، ترکیه و ایران) شورش های مردمی را به یک جنگ خونین مذهبی فرقه ای میان سنی ها و دیگران تبدیل کرد (علوی ها، در یوزها، مسیحیان، و غیره). این مقاله در طول جنگ داخلی یک تحلیل دقیق از فعالیت های نظامی تمام بازیگران اصلی (ایالات متحده، روسیه، داعش، ارتش آزاد سوریه و غیره) را به میان می گذارد. بخش جداگانه ای نیز به تحولات در کردستان سوریه اختصاص دارد. دؤلک اذعان می کند که جنبش کرد با یک پیشروی اساسی و قوی در روژوا به همراه است اما استدلال می کند که همکاری نظامی فعلی با امپریالیسم آمریکا هم اشتباه و خطرناک است. ما معتقدیم که در سال های آتی مقاله دؤلک بعنوان یک منبع ارزشمند در جنگ داخلی سوریه باقی خواهد ماند.

مقاله کوتلو دانه، با عنوان «صد سالگی اعلامیه بلفور، یادداشت تفاهم نکبت» (خروج فلسطینی ها سال ۱۹۴۸) و اشغال صهیونیست ها، با یک بررسی دقیق جزئیات پیشینه تاریخی استعمار در فلسطین را بررسی می کند. این مقاله محتوای اعلامیه بالفور (که یک چک سفید برای بنیان گذاری دولت اسرائیل بود) و با چراغ سبز همه کشورها ی بازیگر در این روند برای تغییر موقعیت به همراه بود را بررسی می کند. (از جمله امپریالیسم انگلیس و فرانسوی و دولت عثمانی).

مقاله دانه نشان می دهد که هم امپریالیسم آمریکا و هم اتحاد جماهیر شوروی (که در آن زمان سیاست همزیستی صلح آمیز با امپریالیسم را دنبال می کردند) از بنیانگذاری اسرائیل در سال ۱۹۴۸ حمایت کردند. همچنین به این واقعیت اشاره می کند که همه رژیم های ارتجاعی منطقه در عمل از اسرائیل حمایت کردند. همانطور که دانه نشان می دهد، دولت کنونی عدالت و توسعه ترکیه نیز (که همواره با اسرائیل در بسیاری از زمینه ها همکاری کرده است و هرگز فلسطینی ها را با صمیمیت به آغوش نگرفته است) از این مورد مستثنا نمی باشد.

سونگور ساوران به بررسی انقلاب های وقوع یافته در خاورمیانه از آغاز قرن بیستم تا به امروز و نتیجه عمومی حاصل از آنها پرداخته است. بنا به نظر آقای ساوران، خاورمیانه تعداد زیادی انقلاب را در قرن بیستم را تجربه کرده و اولین انقلاب پیروز قرن بیست و یکم نیز در منطقه (مصر و تونس) صورت گرفته است. این مقاله بیانگر این واقعیت است که خاورمیانه چها ر موج انقلابی در قرن بیستم تجربه کرده است و انقلاب بهار عربی سال ۲۰۱۱ می تواند به عنوان موج پنجم در نظر گرفته شود. همانطور که ساوران یادآور می شود، فراوانی موج های انقلابی، این نظریه ساده (شرق شناسی) را که بر این باور است «جوامع مسلمان به دلیل اعتقاد به اسلام، مطیع هستند و بنابراین انقلاب نمی کنند» را رد می کند. این همچنین یک عدله قوی مارکسیستی را که پیشرفت های تاریخی تنها با تحول تکاملی بوقوع نمی پیوندد بلکه از طریق حرکت و جهش های انقلابی نیز شکل می گیرد را بیان می کند. در نهایت نشان می دهد که تاریخ خاورمیانه با نقطه عطف های انقلابی تعیین شده است. همچنین مقاله ساوران، ویژگی های کم عمق و بی پایه ادعای اصلاح طلبان را در مورد «واقع گرایی» (مبنی بر اینکه که انقلاب یک احتمال بعید است و سیاست چپ باید تغییرات در مقیاس کوچک را هدف خود قرار دهد) را رد می کند چرا که در واقع تغییرات (کوچک یا بزرگ) بدون انقلاب امکان پذیر نیست. به عبارت دیگر، تجربیات تاریخی ثابت می کند که انقلاب یک هدف واقع گرایانه تر از اصلاحات است.

در مقاله ای از یکی از رفقا، روندهای ارتجاعی و واکنش لازم در مقابل این گونه روندها در نقاط مختلف جهان،

بحث شده است. جنک ساراچ اوغلو در مقاله خود تحت عنوان «روش های درک معاصر: بحث در مورد پوپولیسم و فاشیسم» استدلال می کند که برای درک این حرکات ارتجاعی کلمه فاشیسم یک مفهوم بسیار مناسب تر و مفید تر از «راستگرایی پوپولیستی» است. مفهوم می که در حال حاضر در میان چپ گرایان بین المللی رایج است. ساراچ اوغلو «غلبه بر ضد انقلابی» و «غیر معاصر» را، دو ویژگی کلیدی متمایز جنبش های فاشیسم و رژیم های دوران جنگ می داند و جنبش های ارتجاعی معاصر را با استفاده از این مفاهیم مقایسه می کند. او استدلال می کند که جنبش های ارتجاعی کشورهای نسبتاً توسعه یافته مانند مجارستان و ترکیه شباهت هایی به فاشیسم کلاسیک زمان جنگ های داخلی را بیشتر از همتایان خود در کشورهای پیشرفته غربی دارند. وضعیت تا حدودی متفاوت اروپا و جهان در اعلامیه نهایی چهارمین کنفرانس اروپایی و مدیرانه ای، که یک رویداد بین المللی است، مطرح گردید و در اواخر ماه مه سال ۲۰۱۷ مبارزین و روشنفکران ۱۸ کشور در سطح بین المللی در این کنفرانس شرکت نموده و راههای پیش رو در سطح جهانی بویژه در مورد خاورمیانه و شمال آفریقا را به بحث گذاشته اند.

امسال صدمین سال انقلاب اکتبر ۱۹۱۷ است. رویدادی تاریخ ساز، که دیدگاهی جدید نه تنها برای مردم روسیه تزاری، بلکه برای تمام بشریت و به ویژه برای کارگران و ستمدیدگان جهان به ارمغان آورد. ما این رویداد تاریخی جهان را جشن گرفته و در چهار مقاله مختلف به نکات مختلف آن می پردازیم. ساواس میکائیل در مقاله خود تحت عنوان «اکتبر ۱۹۱۷: یک رویداد جهانی» در قالب دیالوگی بین نوشته ی فیلسوف فرانسوی آلن بادیهو که بعد از مدت کوتاهی از فروپاشی اتحاد جماهیر شوروی نوشته شده است، روابط و تفاوت های بین سال های ۱۹۱۷ و ۱۹۹۱ را به بحث می گذارد. ساواس میکائیل یادآوری می کند که ۱۹۱۷ یک رویداد جهانی بود و همه آن را به عنوان آغازگر یک انقلاب جهانی سوسیالیستی به رسمیت شناخته اند. این انقلاب اجتماعی از روسیه به اروپای شرقی و مرکزی گسترش یافت و اثراتی را ایجاد کرد که دامنه گسترش و محدوده اثر آن از اروپا تا آسیا و ایالات متحده آمریکا قابل مشاهده بود. همانطور که کینز در آن زمان کاملاً آگاهانه می دانست، بلشویسم و انقلاب اکتبر تهدیدی بود برای نظم جهانی سرمایه داری. به این معنی که، انقلاب اکتبر قطعاً یک تلاش زودگذر نبود، بلکه، رویداد تاریخی جهانی بود که گستره و دوره ای کاملاً جدید برای بشریت را باز کرد. در مقابل، ۱۹۹۱ «یک رویداد» نبود، بلکه یک «رویداد شبیه سازی شده» بود: که عصر جدیدی را برای بشریت باز نکرد. ساواس میکائیل تأکید می کند بر اینکه چرخه ای که توسط انقلاب اکتبر باز شده هنوز بسته نشده است و نتیجه می گیرد که ما هنوز در اواخر ماه اکتبر زندگی می کنیم و باید قرن جدید را به انقلاب تبدیل کنیم.

مقاله اوزگور اوژتورک، «برنامه ریزی سوسیالیست در قرن ۲۱» مبحثی است در مورد نیروی بالقوه سوسیالیسم در ارجاع به امکانات امروزی. اوژتورک سعی در تدوین یک طرح اجمالی از برنامه ریزی اقتصادی، درست بعد از مدت کوتاهی از انقلاب جدید دارد. از دیدگاه اوژتورک در قرن ۲۱ امکان تأسیس یک سیستم برنامه ریزی اقتصادی اساساً متفاوت و بسیار مؤثرتر از قرون قبل وجود دارد. در این مقاله، به اساسیترین مشکلات پی ریزی سوسیالیسم در قرن ۲۱ یعنی خودداری از تبدیل پول به سرمایه اشاره شده است.

فقط همانطور که مارکس در «نقد برنامه گوتا» پیش بینی کرده است، یک سیستم برنامه ریزی و «پرداخت» مبنی بر رابطه زمان و کار می تواند روابط پولی و در نتیجه تهدید سرمایه را کاهش دهد. در نتیجه چنین سیستمی مسئله حساب کردن را هم به راحتی حل خواهد کرد. اوژتورک هم زمان در مورد روابط احتمالی صنعتی بحث می کند و در شرایط امروزی به صورت واقع گرایانه از چگونگی حل مشکل استخدام کامل، اتوماسیون کامل، به صفر رساندن تصادفات کار و کاهش مرحله ای ساعت کار در یک رژیم سوسیالیستی بحث می کند. اوژتورک، از موارد بالا به عنوان روندهای بالقوه که در نظام سرمایه داری هیچوقت امکان به وقوع پیوستنشان نیست یاد می کند.

ارمغان تولونای، به انقلاب اکتبر از زاویه ای متفاوت که به صورت مغرضانه در برخی جناح ها نادیده گرفته میشود می پردازد. بعد از سال ۱۹۸۰ تا به امروز در مخالفت چپ با پیدایش برخی جریان های ضد-لبنی حتا ضد-مارکسیستی، در عرصه آزادی زنان، مارکسیسم به عنوان یک برنامه و تفکر کل و کمونیسم به عنوان یک شکل متفاوت از جامعه، جایگاه خود را در مقیاس بزرگی از دست داده است. راه حل در سیاست هویت بوده است. جنبش کمونیستی از پایمال شدن حق زنان بیخبر بود و در مورد رهایی زنان راه حل پیشنهادی نداشته است.

تولونای، با بررسی سیاست های بلشویک ها بعد از انقلاب، نشان می دهد که برنامه های بلشویک ها در حمایت از زنان

امروزه حتی در تخیل هیچ کشور سرمایه‌داری مدرن نمی‌گنجد. حساسیت بلشویک‌ها به رهبری لنین و تروتسکی در مورد تساوی جنسیتها در مقایسه با استقرار لیبرالها، که آن‌تی-مارکسیستها و پست‌مدرنیستها شیفته آن هستند، بی‌هیچ شکی عملی‌تر و واقعیت‌ر بوده است. همانطور که تولونای در مقاله اش به آن اشاره دارد، به هیچ وجه ممکن تضعیف این برنامه‌ها با غصب سیاسی بوروکراسی نمی‌تواند مدرکی برای بی‌توجهی کمونیسم در زمینه حقوق زنان باشد. در نهایت با ترک بوروکراسی از کمونیسم هیچ تهمتی بر اساس اشتباهات بوروکراسی بر کمونیسم وارد نیست. آخرین مقاله در این شماره با موضوع انقلاب اکتبر، به مبحثی می‌پردازد که مارکسیسم غربی همیشه آنرا نادیده گرفته است. به مدت طولانی تفکر رایج بر آن بود که اقتدار پرولتاریا اولین بار توسط روسا، به عنوان عقب مانده‌ترین ملت در بین ملت‌های بزرگ اروپایی، تاسیس شد. بدین ترتیب مفسرهای غربی نقش ملت‌های مسلمان را در انقلاب اکتبر نادیده گرفتند. مهمترین عنصر اتحاد جماهیر شوروی با دستور العمل لنین در ۳۱ دسامبر سال ۱۹۲۲، مسلمانان و بیشتر، ترک‌های ساکن روسیه داخلی در مرزهای شرقی بودند (تاتارها، باشقیرها، کالموک، داغستانی، چچن و غیره)، در قفقاز جنوبی (آذربایجان، آبخازها و غیره) و در آسیای میانه (امروز شامل قزاقستان، تورکمنستان، ازبکستان، قرقیزستان و تاجیکستان). در مقاله‌ای بدیع از قلم سونگور ساوران، از چگونگی جلب رضایت خلق مسلمان توسط کمونیسم/بلشویسم و از چگونگی مفتوح شدن سرزمین و خلق مسلمان توسط خود کمونیست‌های مسلمان به صورت چکیده سخن به میان آورده شده است. گسترش شووونیسم روس بزرگ در دوران استالین می‌تواند موضوع مقاله‌ای دیگر باشد.

مقاله‌ای در حیطه انقلاب اکتبر، در کل، همه مقاله‌ها در این مورد نسبتاً به هم مربوط هستند، نوشته‌ای از چشم‌انداز بلغارستان به فوروپاشی سوسیالیسم پی‌ریزی شده در قرن ۲۰ام می‌پردازد. دانیلا پنکوا در مقاله‌ای با موضوع «بلغارستان در دام نئو-لیبرالیسم» به بررسی مراتب بازسازی نظام سرمایه داری بعد از سال ۱۹۸۹ می‌پردازد. نویسنده معتقد است که سازمان‌های جهانی سرمایه، مخصوصاً صندوق بین‌المللی پول و بانک جهانی، نسخه‌ای مشابه کشورهای جهان سوم برای بلغارستان تحمیل کرده اند. در حالی که بلغارستان در سال ۱۹۸۹ کشوری صنعتی و از لحاظ استاندارد معیشتی کشور مرفه‌ای به حساب می‌آمده، بعد از ۱۹۸۹ راه حل‌های نئو-لیبرالیستی، همچون خصوصی‌سازی و بی‌قانونی، منجر به فقیر شدن خلق بلغارستان شد. این مقاله گویای این حقیقت است که اگرچه بلغارستان روی کاغذ در حال رشد نشان داده می‌شود، مردم معمولی حتی از امرار معاش و احتیاج‌های اولیه خود محروم هستند. پنکوا، با تأکید به شرط مطلق ترک سیاست‌های توسعه نئو-لیبرالیستی برای به روی کار آمدن صنایع و ساختار اجتماعی فعال نوشته خود را به پایان می‌رساند.

امسال نه تنها صدمین سالگرد انقلاب اکتبر است بلکه همزمان صدوپنجاه امین سالگرد چاپ جلد اول کتاب سرمایه است. به همین سبب آخرین مقاله به بررسی کلی روش، محتوا و اهمیت این شاه اثر تفکر انسانی که تلفیقیست از علوم اجتماعی و انقلاب، اختصاص داده شده است.

سرانجام، کتاب سرمایه کتابی در مورد ناتوانی نظام تولید سرمایه داری برای پیشبرد انسانیت و زوال مرحله‌ای امکان پیشرفت در این سیستم و تحلیل انرژی طبقه کارگر در قبال اهداف پیشرو و ضرورت دگرگونی این نظام است. امروز ما در مرحله پیشرفت تاریخی با بحرانهای اقتصادی عمیق، با تهدید سلاح‌های اتمی، حتی تهدید جنگ جهانی و تخریب طبیعت که منبع بازتولید انسان و مابقی موجودات زنده است مواجه هستیم. دفاع انسان حتی به طور کلی زندگی، مستلزم ظهور نوع جدیدی از تولید بر اساس مالکیت جمعی ابزار تولید و برنامه ریزی مرکزی دموکراتیک و برادری تمامی خلق‌های جهان است.

به طور مختصر مستلزم سوسیالیسم بین‌المللی است. این امر تنها توسط نیروهای طبقه کارگر و از طریق مبارزه طبقاتی انقلابی امکان پذیر است و نیازمند احزاب انقلابی و مستلزم انترناسیونال انقلابی است. این مارکسیست انقلابی است و به همین سبب نشریه ی ما این نام را با افتخار برگزیده است.

Translated by : Behnan Tebrizi

Bu Nömrədə

Devrimci Marksizm jurnalının illik ingiliscə nəşri *Revalutionary Marxism*in ilk nömrəsi 2016-cı ilin sonunda yayınlanmışdır. Beyrutdan və Bakıdan Buenos Ayresə, Sankt-Peterburqdan Skopyeyə, Milandan Montevideoya qədər bütün dünyada paylandı və satıldı. Minlərlə satılmaya bilər, lakin bu məhdud ölçüdə vəzifəsini mükəmməl formada yerinə yetirdi: mübariz marksist nəzəriyyə daxilində internasionalizmə yardım etmək və təbii olaraqsiyasi və təşkilati sahələrdə, Orta Şərq və Şimali Afrikada, Balkanlarda və Qafqazlarda, Aralıq dənizi və Avrasiya regionlarında və ümumilikdə dünyada proletar internasionalizminə liderlik etmək. Bu məqsədlə yeni bir addım atmış və oxumaqda olduğunuz bu önsözü digər müxtəlif dillərə də tərcümə edərək bu nəşrin sonuna əlavə etdik. Beləliklə, bütün dünyada ingiliscə oxuya bilməyən, lakin internasionalist və inqilabçı marksizmin sözü ilə maraqlanan insanlara da mesajımızın məğzini çatdırma biləcəyik.

Bu ikinci nömrə, yəni *Revalutionary Marxism 2018* ilk öncə Orta Şərqə fokuslanaraq, imperialist ölkələrdəki irticaçı hərəkatlar məsələsi və dünyadakı vəziyyət haqqında iki əlavə yazı ilə, xalqın böyük bayramı olan yüz yaşlı Oktyabr inqilabı haqqında xüsusi bir sənəd ilə, Berlin divarının yıxılışına qədər işçi dövlətinin mövcud olduğu ölkələrdən birinin, Bolqarıstanın tənəzzülünü araşdıran bir məqalə ilə və ilk cildinin nəşr edilməsinin yüz əllinci ildönümündə, bəşəriyyətin bu gününün və gələcəyinin böyük şah əsəri olan *Das Kapital*dan bəhs edən bir başqa məqalə ilə eyni hədəf yolunda işləməyə davam etmək məqsədi güdür.

Birinci nömrə giriş yazısında və müxtəlif məqalələrdə, 2008 maliyyə çöküşü ilə başlayan və on ildir davam edən iqtisadi böhranı, müxtəlif paralel proseslərin arxa planı olaraq mərkəzə qoydu: bütün dünyada proto-faşizmin yüksəlişi; ən bariz nümunələri DAİŞ və İŞİD olan islami təkfirçi-məzhəbəçi hərəkatın yüksəlişi; regional müharibələrin bir dünya müharibəsinə çevrilməsi təhlükəsinin get-gedə artması və xalq üsyanlarının 2011-ci ildən bəri həm qiyam formasında (Misir, Tunus, Yəmə, Bəhreyn, Wall Street, Yunanıstan, İspaniya, Türkiyə, Braziliya, Balkanlar və s.), həm də parlamentar formada (Podemos, Syriza, Sanders, Corbyn və ən önəmlisi də Argentinada Frente de Izquierda (FIT)) yüksəlişi.

Birinci nömrə Donald Trampın dünyadakı ən güclü imperialist ölkədəki ən yüksək mövqeyə seçilməsindən dərhal sonra yayınlandığına görə, bu bənzərsiz hadisə “populizm”, “ifrat sağ”, “milliyyətçilik” və s. olaraq adlandırılan beynəlxalq mürtəcə fenomenə dair bir mübahisə üçün də hərəkat nöqtəmizi təşkil etdi. Donald Trampın bir “sərsəri faşist”, qurulmuş bir partiyası və paramilitar birlikləri olmayan bir faşist, yəni başqa sözlə desək, bir proto-faşist olduğu şəkildə erkən etdiyimiz təhlil keçən il yaşananlar nəticəsində tamamilə təsdiq olundu. “Faşist” sözü, xüsusilə Charlottesville hadisələrindən sonra, Trampın ağ irqçilərin və hətta neo-nasist adından istifadə etməkdən belə çəkinməyənlərin hərəkatlarını ürəkdən qəbul etməsi nəticəsində bu yanaşmanı təyin etmək üçün istifadə edilməyə başlandı. Özlərinə “alt-right”, yəni alternativ sağ adını qoyan faşistlərin baş ideoloqu Steve Bannon artıq vəzifədə deyil, lakin hələ də ABŞ prezidenti ilə olduqca yaxın münasibətdə olduğu, Çin kimi dövlətlərə dövlət xadimlərini xatırladacaq formada səyahətlər edib ABŞ prezidenti gəlməzdən qabaq vəziyyəti öyrəndiyi aşkardır. ABŞ sərhədlərindən kənarda, beynəlxalq planda, liberal “establishment”, Avropadakı seçkilərin nəticəsini, (səhv bir formada) “populizm” adlandırdıqları qüvvənin bir sıra məğlubiyyətlərlə üzləşməsi olaraq xarakterizə etməkdə tələsdi: Fransada proto-faşist vəbanın ən aşkar nümayəndəsi olan Marine Le Pen seçkilərin üçüncü turunda üç fransız vətəndaşından birinin səsini qazandı. Almaniyada isə *Alternative für Deutschland* partiyası, Angela Merkelin miqrant siyasətində reallaşdırdığı 180 dərəcəlik dönüşə baxmayaraq, ölkədəki üçüncü böyük partiya çevrildi. Bunlar məğlubiyyət hesab edilə bilsə, insan, hələ son zamanlara qədər bir qrup fanatiklər gözü ilə baxılan beynəlxalq hərəkatın qələbəsinin nəyə bənzəyəcəyi ilə maraqlanmaya bilmir!

Liberallar tərəfdən medalyonun digər üzündə Emmanuel Macronun qələbəsi yer alır. Brexit və Tramp ilə yaşadıkları əzici məğlubiyyətlərdən sonra bu qələbəni globalaşmanın geri dönüşü olaraq şərh edən açıq bir yelbeyinlik nümunəsi nümayiş etdirdilər. Fransada soldakı tənqidçilərinin, onun krallıqvari təntənəsi və dərəcəyə görə idarə etmək üçün müraciətinə (bunun eyni liberal establishment tərəfindən, haqlı formada, bir despota çevrildiyi deyilən Erdoğanın Türkiyədə tətbiq etdiyi me-

todlarla az qala tamamilə eyni olduğunu xatırladaq) işarə olaraq, onu lağa qoyduqları adla desək, Birinci Emmanuelin kəraməti, ictimaiyyət arasındakı populyarlığı alt-üst olduqdan sonra əriyib getdi. Bəzi həmkarlar ittifaqları konfederasiyalarının təslimiyyətinə rəğmən, on günlük bir müddətdə (12-21 sentyabrda) reallaşan iki tətilin uğuru, ilk nömrəmizdə 2016-cı ilin baharında “sosialist” Fransua Olland hökumətinin Əmək Qanunu reformuna əks olaraq inkişaf edən hərəkata istinadla bəhs etdiyimiz “Fransız baharı”nın davam siqnalları verdiyini göstərir. İlk sayımızda da vurğuladığımız kimi, Fransa Avropadakı açar ölkə olmağa davam edir. Macronun qlobalist və neo-liberal yolu Tramlara və Le Penlərə qarşı cavab ola bilməz. Yalnız işçi sinfinin siyasi müstəqilliyi və birləşmiş mübarizəsi bu şeytanın yüksəlişinin qarşısını qəti formada kəsə bilər. Dünyanın üfuku hələ də Modilər, Putinlər, Erdoğanlar, Əliyevlər, Orbanlar və Tramlar ilə doludur.

İlk sayımızda dünya müharibəsi təhlükəsini vurğuladığımızdan bu yana, bütün Yer üzündə böyük bir hərbi olması ehtimalı da meydandadır. Bir anlığa, Suriyadakı, İraqdakı, Yəməndəki, Liviyadakı bitib-tükənməz əzabları və Ukraynada müharibənin dərinlərdə yanmaqda olan közünü bir kənara qoysaq belə, Asiya geo-strateji regionu imperializm və Çin arasında inkişaf etməkdə olan münafişinin fərqli aspektləri ilə doludur. Buna ən bariz nümunə, əlbəttə, ABŞ və Şimali Koreya arasında formalaşan və dünyanı 75 il əvvəlki Xirosima və Naqasakidən sonra ilk nüvə fəlakətinə aparma təhlükəsini ehtiva edən gərginliyi artırma siyasətidir. Tramp öz tipik proto-faşist iştahı ilə Şimali Koreyada “milyonlarla insanı öldürmək”lə və bütün ölkəni yerlə yeksan etməklə hədə-qorxu gəldi. “Beynəlxalq cəmiyyət”in (digər adı ilə imperializm) və kapitalist medianın təqdim etdiyi uydurma informasiyaların göstərdiyinin əksinə, Şimali Koreyanın nüvə hazırlıqları, Sakit okeanda hərbi hökmlər qurmaq arzusunda olan ABŞ-a, Yaponiya və Cənubi Koreyadakı 80 mindən çox ABŞ əsgərinə və ümumilikdə Asiyada üfukdə görünən müharibə hədəsinə qarşı bir müdafiə tədbiridir. Bürokratik olaraq pozğunlaşmış bir işçi dövləti imperializm ilə qarşı-qarşıya gəldiyində, hətta işçi dövlətinin “tək ölkədə sosializm”ə əsaslanan bu karikaturasında belə, inqilabçı marksistlər işçi dövlətini müdafiə etməlidir.

Ölkəmizə daha yaxın bir nöqtədə, regionumuz olan Orta Şərq və Şimali Afrikada, Trampın təmsil etdiyi mürtəce dalğa güclərin yenidən bölüşdürülməsinə yol açdı. Trampın Misir Bonapartı Əl-Sisiyə Vaşinqton səfəri zamanı verdiyi dəstəyi, Səudiyyə Ərəbistanına etdiyi təntənəli səfəri davam etdirdi. Səfərin ən bayağı anı, əlavələr arxa planda gözətçilik edərkən, Tramp, Kral Selman və Misir prezidentindən ibarət gülünc üçlük parıldayan bir qlobusu sıgallayaması anı idi. Bu anı mənalı edən iki aktorun yoxluğu idi. Bir tərəfdən, sionist İsrail qurulmaqda olan yeni ittifaqın gözə görünməyən ağıl müəllimi idi. Gördüyümüz kimi, Trampın İranın əleyhinə, İsrailin isə lehinə olan siyasi meyli, regiona dair siyasətindəki bütün

komplikasiyalar və ziddiyyətləri aşsın bilər. Tramp Putin ilə yaxınlaşmaq üçün açıq-aşkar göstərdiyi cəhdlərə və Putin Rusiyasının İran ilə pozulması az qala mümkün olmayan ittifaqına baxmayaraq, son BMT nitqində də gördüyümüz kimi, İranı təcrid etmək və bu ölkəyə diz çökdürmək məqsədi ilə Orta Şərqdəki digər bütün mürtəce qüvvələr arasında bir ittifaq qurmaq üçün cəhd göstərməkdədir. Yeri gəlmişkən, Həmasın yaxın dövrdə Misir və İsrailə boyun əyməsi üçün təzyiq altına alınmasının səbəbinin də bu olduğunu qeyd edək. Yoxluğu diqqət çəkən ad isə Trampın Orta Şərq və Şimali Afrika siyasətindəki ziddiyyətlərin digər bir səbəbi olan Erdoğan'dır. Rəsmi səbəb, Trampın səfərinin E(Ə)rdoganın, prezidentin əhəmiyyətinin daha da artacağı sistemə doğru keçidin təməllərini qoyan 16 Aprel referendumundan sonra partiyasının cilovlarını əlinə almaq üçün, geri qayıtmaqda olduğu partiyasının Şurası ilə eyni tarixlərə təsadüf etdiyi formada idi. Lakin qısa müddət ərzində ortaya çıxdığı kimi, əsl səbəb başqa idi.

Səudiyyələrin (Suudilerin) Trampı qarşılamaq üçün, ərəb olsa da, olmasa da, bir çox ölkəni dəvət edərək sünni məzhəbə qüvvəyə etdirməyə çalışdığı güc nümayişi qısa ömürlü oldu. Qələbə qazanmış general ədası ilə birlikdə təntənələrindən dərhal sonra Qətər böhranı baş verdi və Səudiyyə liderliyindəki blok ilə Rəbiaçıbloğun arasını vurdu. Nə demək istədiyimizi başa düşmək üçün bu hadisələr zəncirinə bir nəzər salın. 2013: Sisinin bonapartist çevrilişi, Səudiyyə Ərəbistanının dəstəyi ilə Misirdə Mürsini və Müsəlman Qardaşlar (İxvan) hökumətini devirir və soyuqqanlı formada yüzlərlə İxvan tərəfdarını Qahirənin Rəbia-tül-Ədəviyyə meydanında qətl edir. Beləliklə, Erdoğan bütün strategiyasını İxvan ilə bir çox ölkədə ittifaq quraraq (Tunusiya, Suriya, FAS, Fələstin, yəni Həmas və Misir) sünni dünyanın rəisi olmaq üzərində qurmuş olduğu üçün Səudiyyə Ərəbistanı ilə Türkiyə arasında bir ayrılıq yaradır. 2015: açıq-aşkar rəbiaçı xəttinə baxmayaraq, Erdoğan Səudiyyə Ərəbistanının köhnə kralının ölümündən sonra yeni kral, Salman ilə əlaqə qurur, hətta 2015-ci ilin sonunda 34 sünni dövlətini birləşdirən bir Səudiyyə təşəbbüsü olan Terrora Qarşı İslam İttifaqına üzv olur və Səudiyyəyə Qətər (bu iki ölkəyə diqqət!) ilə birlikdə 2016-cı ilin fevralında Suriyada bir müharibəyə daxil olmağın kənarından qayıdır. 15 İyul 2016: Səudiyyə bloku Erdoğanı çevrilisə təşəbbüsü qarşısında taleyi ilə təkbətək qoyur. 2017: Səudiyyə Ərəbistanı liderliyindəki anti-Qətər koalisiyasının uzlaşmaq üçün təqdim etdiyi on üç şərtin içərisində türk hərbi qüvvələrinin Qəterdən çəkilməsi də var. Bu tələb Rəbiaçı strategiyasına sadiq qalaraq, Qəterin yanında olan Türkiyə tərəfindən rədd edilir. 15 İyul çevrilisə təşəbbüsündən sonra türkiyənin beynəlxalq orientasiya və daxili siyasətdə ABŞ və Avropa İttifaqından gələn təzyiqi balanslaşdıracaq bir güc olaraq Rusiya-İran blokuna üzünü çevirdiyini də əlavə etməliyik.

Bütün bunlar, Orta Şərq və Şimali Afrikadakı sünni məzhəbə qüvvələrin İranın liderliyindəki şia blokuna qarşı dözümlü və kombinə bir koalisiya təşkil edə

bilmədiyini göstərir. Lakin bu, bütün Orta Şərq səthinə yayılacaq bir məzhəb müharibəsi təhlükəsinin keçmişdə qaldığı mənasına gəlmir. Bunun yeganə mənası, sünni blokun bir dövr göründüyü kimi kombinə olmadığı, İranın manevr sahəsinin mövcud olduğu və ən azından, mürtəcə sünni blokda olan bəzi ölkələri bitərəfləşdirməsinin mümkün olduğudur. Hədənin hələ də davam etdiyi və böyük ehtimal, Tramp ilə İsrailin siyasətləri ilə ömrünün uzanacağı həqiqəti, Suriya, İraq və Yəmən kimi ölkələrdəki fasiləsiz vəkalət müharibələri ilə müşahidə olunur. Yalnız Orta Şərq və Şimali Afrikadakı işçi sinifi və sosialist qüvvələrin, Balkanlar və Şimali Aralıq dənizindəki (Kuzey akdeniz) oxşar qüvvələr ilə ittifaq daxilində formalaşdıracağı kombinə və müstəqil blok, regiondakı xalq kütlələrinin qətl edilməsinə və tarixi-mədəni mirasın məhvinə yol açacağı qəti olan sünni-şiə məzhəb müharibəsi təhlükəsinə maneə ola bilər. 2017-ci il 26-28 may tarixləri arasında Afinada reallaşan IV Avropa-Aralıq dənizi Konfransının bizim də bu nömrədə yayınladığımız hesabat sənədində deyildiyi kimi: “Qətlə qarşısı ancaq öz ölkələrində mürtəcə rejimlərlə mübarizə aparan anti-imperialist, anti-sionist qüvvələrin geniş cəbhəsi sayəsində alınə bilər. Yalnız Orta Şərq və Şimali Afrika miqyasında bir Sosialist Federasiya regionun problemlərini sona çatdırə bilər.

Üstəlik, bəburulğana, İraq Kürdüstanının lideri Məsud Bərzani region qüvvələrinin yüz yaşlı şeytanlarını və imperializmin manevrlərini səhnəyə çağırən müstəqillik referendumunu əlavə etdi. İnqilabçı marksistlər kürdlərin öz müqəddəratını təyin etməyinin tərəfdarıdır. Problem, referendumun öz müqəddəratını təyin üçün deyil, Bərzaninin özünü və neft rentaçısı digər hissələrindəki (Türkiyə, İran, Suriya) kürdlərin azadlığına qarşı döyüşmüşdür və gələcəkdə də döyüşməyə davam etmək niyyətində olduğunu nümayiş etdirir. Yəni referendumun qələbəsi, imperializmə Orta Şərqdə başqa bir mövqe verəcək olması ilə yanaşı, ironik formada, Kürdüstan milli qurtuluş hərəkatının da məğlubiyyəti mənasına gələcək. İnqilabçı marksistlər hər hansı bir regional qüvvənin İraq Kürdüstanına yönəlmiş hərbi müdaxiləsinin tərəddüdsüz şəkildə əleyhinədir, lakin Bərzaninin qarşısında və bütün kürd xalqının qurtuluşunun yanında durmaqdadır.

İlk sənədimiz, həm qısa vədədə, həm də uzun vədədə Orta Şərq və Şimali Afrika regionunda mübarizənin fərqli tərəfləri ilə maraqlanır. Bu sənədin ilk məqaləsi Suriya daxili müharibəsini və bu müharibənin beynəlxalq təsirlərini mərhələ-mərhələ araşdırır. Levent Dölekin “Suriyada daxili müharibə: Suriya daxili müharibəsinin mərhələləri, dərsləri və gələcəyi” başlıqlı məqaləsi, Əsəd diktatorluğuna qarşı başlayan xalq üsyanının bir proletar siyasi çərçivə qazanmadığı üçün qısa müddət içərisində imperializmin və regiondakı mürtəcə dövlətlərin manipulyasiyalarına açıq vəziyyətə gəldiyi diaqnozu ilə başlayır. İmperializmin, sionizmin və (Səudiyyə Ərəbistan, Qətər, Türkiyə və İran kimi) regional qüvvələrin müdaxilələrinin, xalq üsyanını, sünnilər ilə digərləri (ələviləri, dürzilər, xristianlar və s.) arasında qan-

lı bir din-məzhəb müharibəsinə çevirdiyini göstərir. Bu məqalədə, bütün önəmli əsas aktorların (ABD, Rusiya, DAİŞ, ÖSO və s.) daxili müharibə ərzindəki hərbi fəaliyyətlərinin ətraflı analizi edilir. Məqalənin bir hissəsi isə Suriya Kürdüstanındakı hadisələrə arılıb. Dölek, Rojovadakı kürd hərəkətinin güclü bir mütərəqqi təməlinin mövcud olduğunu ifadə edir, lakin ABŞ imperializmi ilə daxil olduğu hərbi əməkdaşlığın həm yanlış, həm də təhlükəli olduğunu müdafiə edir. Dölekin məqaləsinin, qarşımızdakı illərdə də Suriya daxili müharibəsinə dair dəyərli bir mənbə olacağı qənaətinəyik.

Kutlu Danenin “Sionist işğal və Balfur deklarasiyası. Nakbanın memorandumu Balfur deklarasiyasının 100-cü ildönümü və sionist işğal” başlıqlı məqaləsi Fələstinin müstəmləkələşdirilməsinin tarixi arxa planını ətraflı şəkildə araşdırır. Dane, prosesdə rol oynayan bütün aktorların (Britaniya və fransız imperializmləri və Osmanlı dövləti daxil olmaqla) dəyişən mövqelərini işıqlandıraraq (İsrail dövlətinin qurulması üçün açıq çek verən) 1917-ci il Balfur deklarasiyasının tarixi əlaqəsini ortaya qoyur. Danenin məqaləsi, 1948-ci ildə İsrailin qurulmasını həm ABŞ imperializminin, həm də (o dövrdə imperializmlə “dinc yanaşı yaşamaq” siyasəti izləyən) SSRİ-nin dəstəklədiyini göstərir. Regiondakı bütün nisbi rejimlərin də israili praktikada dəstəklədikləri həqiqətini də vurğulayır. Danenin göstərdiyi kimi, Türkiyədəki (İsrailə bir çox sahədə əməkdaşlıq etməyə davam edən və Fələstin hərəkətinin əsla ürəkdən mənimsəməyən) mövcud AKP hökuməti də İsraili dəstəkləyənlər arasındadır.

Sungur Savran, 20-ci əsrin əvvəllərindən bu günə qədər Orta Şərqdəki inqilabları araşdırır və bunlardan ümumi nəticələr çıxarır. Savrana görə, Orta Şərq 20-ci əsrdə bir çox inqilab yaşadı və 21-ci əsrin ilk inqilabları da regionda (Misir və Tunus) meydana gəldi. Məqalə, Orta Şərqin 20-ci əsrdə dörd inqilabi dalğa yaşadığını və 2011-ci ildəki ərəb inqilablarının da beşinci dalğası hesab edilə biləcəyini göstərir. Savranın ifadə etdiyi kimi, inqilabi dalğaların sıxlığı “müsəlman cəmiyyətlər, islam inancı gərəyincə itaətkardır və buna görə də inqilab etməzlər” şəklində, bəsit (və orientalist) inancın yanlışlığını ortaya qoyur. Bu, eyni zamanda marksizmin, tarixin təkamül formasını alan inkişaflarla deyil, inqilabi sıçramalarla irəlilədiyinə dair tezisində də güclü bir sübutdur. Son olaraq, Savranın məqaləsi, Orta Şərq tarixinin inqilabçı dönüş nöqtələrində müəyyən edildiyini göstərərək, reformistlərin (inqilabın uzaq bir ehtimal olduğunu və sol siyasətin kiçik miqyaslı dəyişikliklər hədəfləməsinin lazım olduğunu müdafiə edərək) “realist” olduqları yönündəki iddianın da dayazlığını və əsassızlığını ifşa edir. Əslində, inqilablar olmasa (kiçik və ya böyük) dəyişikliklər əldə etmək qeyri-mümkündür. Başqa sözlə desək, tarix inqilabın reformdan daha “realist” bir hədəf olduğunu göstərir.

Əlavə sənəd, dünyanın digər hissələrindəki mürtəcə meylləri və bunlara verilməli olan cavabı ələ alır. “Müasiri başa düşməyin metodları: populizm və faşizmə dair

bir mübahisə” başlıqlı məqaləsində Cenk Saraçoğlu, bu mürtəcə hərəkətləri başa düşmək üçün faşizmin (beynəlxalq solda çox populyar bir anlayış olan) “populist sağ” dan daha çox münasib və praktik bir anlayış olduğunu ifadə edir. Saraçoğlu iki dünya çüharibəsi arasındakı dövrdə faşist hərəkət və rejimlərin özünəməxsus xüsusiyyətləri olaraq “əks-inqilabi pozuculuq” və “müasir olmamaq”ı müəyyən edir və günümüzdəki mürtəcə hərəkətlərini bu anlayışlardan istifadə edərək müqayisə edir. Saraçoğlu Macarıstan və Türkiyə kimi nisbətən ətrafda yerləşən ölkələrdəki mürtəcə hərəkətlərin, inkişaf etmiş Qərb ölkələrindəkilərə nisbətən klassik faşizmə daha çox oxşadığını bildirir.

Avropa və dünyadakı vəziyyətə dair bir miqdar fərqli bir yanaşma, 2017-ci ilin may ayının sonunda, 18 ölkədən nümayəndələrin və ziyalıların beynəlxalq planda və xüsusilə də, Avropa və Orta Şərq – Şimali Afrika kontekstində, izləniləcək yolu müzakirə etmək üçün iştirak etdiyi beynəlxalq bir fəaliyyət olan IV Avropa-Aralıq dənizi Konfransının hesabat sənədində təqdim olunur.

Bu il, 1917-ci il Oktyabr inqilabının yüz illiyidir. Bu tarixi hadisə yalnız köhnə Çar Rusiyasının xalqları üçün deyil, bütün bəşəriyyət, amma xüsusilə də, bütün dünyanın işçiləri, zəhmətkeşləri və əzilənləri üçün yeni üfqlər açdı. Bu dünya-tarixi hadisəni bayram edir və fərqli tərəflərini dörd fərqli məqalə ilə ələ alırıq.

“Oktyabr 1917: dünya miqyasında bir hadisə” məqaləsində Savas Mixail, fransız filosofu Alain Badiounun Sovet ittifaqının çöküşündən bir müddət sonra yazdığı bir məqalə ilə dialoq içərisində 1917 və 1991 arasındakı əlaqə və fərqləri müzakirə edir. Savas Mixail 1917-nin dünya miqyasında bir hadisə olduğunu və hər kəs tərəfindən dünya sosialist inqilabının başlanğıcı olaraq görüldüyünü xatırladır. İctimai inqilab Rusiyadan Şərqi və Mərkəzi Avropaya yayıldı və Avropadan Asiyaya və ABŞ-a uzanan təsirləri də oldu. Keynsin də o dövrdə fərqi nə verdiyi kimi, bolşevizm və Oktyabr inqilabı qlobal kapitalist sistemə real bir təhlükə təşkil edirdi. Bu mənada, Oktyabr inqilabı, qətiyyət, vaxtından əvvəl reallaşdırılan bir təşəbbüs deyildi. Əksinə, bəşəriyyət üçün yeni bir dövr açmış olan dünya-tarixi önəmdə bir hadisə idi. Əksinə, 1991, bir “hadisə” deyil, “-mı” kimi yapılan bir hadisə idi”: bəşəriyyət üçün yeni bir dövr başlatmadı. Savas Mixail Oktyabr inqilabının açdığı çevrənin hələ bağlanmadığını vurğulayaraq bitirir. Hələ Oktyabrın dövründə yaşayırıq və yeni əsrdə inqilabı permanent etməliyik.

Özgür Öztürkün məqaləsi “XXI əsrdə sosialist planlama”, sosializmin potensialını, dövrümüzün imkanlarına istinad edərək müzakirə edir. Öztürk dərhal, ən uzağı inqilabdan sonrakı bir neçə il içərisində inşa edilə biləcək olan iqtisadi planlama sisteminin bir qaralamasını çıxarmağa çalışır. Öztürkə görə, XXI əsrdə, əvvəlki əsrdəkindən əsaslı şəkildə fərqli və daha çox təsirli bir planlama sistemi qurula bilər. Məqalə XX əsrdə sosialist inşanın əsas problemlərindən birinin, pulun kapitala çevrilməsinin qarşısını almaq olduğunu bildirir. Lakin (Marksın “Gota proqramı-

nın tənqidi”ndə proqnoz verdiyi kimi, əmək-zaman əsasında qurulacaq bir planlama və “ödəmə” sistemi pul münasibətləri və bilavasitə kapitalın yaratdığı təhlükəni məhdudlaşdıracaq. Beləliklə, belə bir sistem hesablama məsələsini də daha asan bir formada həll edəcək. Öztürk, eyni zamanda mümkün yeni sənəyə münasibətlərini də müzakirə edir və müasir şəraitdə, sosialist rejimin realist formada, tam iş, tam avtomatlaşdırma, sıfır iş qəzası və iş saatlarının mərhələli formada qısaldılmasını hədəf ala biləcəyini önə sürür. Öztürk bunların kapitalist münasibətlər altında heç bir vaxt tamamilə reallaşmayacaq, potensial meyllər olduğunu ifadə edir.

Armağan Tulunay Oktyabr inqilabının, bəzi çevrələrdə qəsdən nəzərdən qaçılıran başqa bir tərəfini ələ alır. 1980-ci illərdən bu yana sol içərisində anti-leninist və hətta anti-marksist bir dönüş başladığından bəri, qadınların qurtuluşu məsələsində marksizmin bir düşüncə sistemi və bir proqram, kommunizmin isə fərqli tipdə bir cəmiyyət axtarışı olaraq əhəmiyyəti, artan miqyasda rədd edilməyə başladı. Dərman şəxsiyyət siyasətində idi. Kommunist hərəkət qadınların əzilməsindən bixəbər idi və qadın qurtuluşu üçün təklif edəcəyi bir şey yox idi. Tulunay bolşeviklərin inqilabdan dərhal sonra tətbiq etməyə keçdikləri siyasətləri araşdıraraq, kapitalist dünyanın ən inkişaf etmiş ölkələrində belə təsəvvür edilə bilməyəcək bir konkret tədbirlər proqramını həyata keçirib, cinslər arasında sadəcə formal deyil, əsl bərabərlik yaratmağa Lenin və Trotski liderliyindəki bolşevizmin qadınların əzilmişliyinə, dövrümüzün anti-marksist və post-modernist cərəyanlarının heyran olduğu liberal establishmentlə müqayisə edilməyəcək şəkildə, daha həssas olduğunu, müzakirəyə yer buraxmadan göstərir. Tulunayın məqaləsində qeyd etdiyi kimi, siyasi iqtidarı qəsb edən bürokratiyanın bu tədbirləri ləğv etmiş olması heç bir vəchlə kommunizmin qadınların əzilmişliyinə yönəlmiş sözdə laqeydliyinə sübut olaraq göstərilə bilməz. Nəhayət ki, bürokratiya kommunizmi tərk etdi, dolayısı ilə, bürokratiyanın fəaliyyətlərinin heç biri kommunizmi töhmət altında qoya bilməz.

Oktyabr inqilabı mövzulu son məqələmiz, Qərb marksizminin həmişə nəzərdən qaçırdığı bir sahəyə toxunur. Uzun müddət boyunca, proletariat iqtidarını ilkin olaraq ruslar, yəni böyük ehtimal, böyük Avropa millətlərinin ən geri qalmış olanı tərəfindən həyata keçirildiyi sıx-sıx ifadə edilib. Lakin Qərb eynəyi ilə baxan şərhçilər, Oktyabr inqilabını, bunun da xaricində müsəlman xalqların inqilabı olduğunu həmişə nəzərdən qaçıırıblar. Leninin yönləndirməsi ilə 31 dekabr 1922-ci ildə qurulan Sovet ittifaqının vacib bir ünsürü daxili Rusiyanın şərq sərhədlərindəki (tatarlar, başqırdlar, kalmıqlar, dağıslanlılar, çeçenlər və s.), Transqafqaziyaadakı (azərilər, abxazlar və s.), Mərkəzi Asiyadakı (bu günün Qazaxıstan, Türkmənistan, Özbəkistan, Qırğızıstan və Tacikistan sərhədlərindəki xalqlar) müsəlman və əksəriyyətlə türk xalqlarıdır. Sungur Savran, qələmə aldığı bu original məqalədə, kommunizm/bolşevizmin inqilabın qələbəsindən sonra müsəlman xalqlarının könlünü necə fəth etdiyini və müsəlman kommunistlərin necə torpaqlarını və xalqlarını

qazandığını qısa şəkildə izah edir. Böyük rus şovinizmi kimi anılan ünsürün Stalin dövründə necə yüksəldiyi və Sovet ittifaqındakı müsəlman xalqların həyatına necə təsir etdiyi isə başqa bir işin mövzusu ola bilər.

Oktyabr inqilabı haqqındakı məqalələrə nisbətən dolayı formada bağlı olan bir yazı isə XX əsrin sosialist inşa təcrübəsinin yoxumana Bolqarıstan tərəfindən yanaşır. Daniela Penkovanın “Neo-liberalizm tələsində Bolqarıstan” başlıqlı məqaləsi ölkədəki 1989-dan sonrakı kapitalist restorasiya müddətini araşdırır. Yazar beynəlxalq kapitalın qurumlarının, xüsusilə də, İMF-nin və Dünya Bankının, Bolqarıstana, 3-cü Dünya ölkələrinə diktə etdiklərinə bənzər bir resepti diktə etdiyini bildirir. Bolqarıstan 1989-dan etibarən sənayeləşmiş və diqqətəlayiq həyat standartına sahib bir ölkə ikən, 1989-dan sonra dövrün (özəlləşdirmə və qanunsuzlaşdırma kimi) neo-liberal reseptləri Bolqarıstan xalqını yoxsullaşdırdı. Məqalə, Bolqarıstan kağız üzərində böyüyür kimi görünə də, sadə xalqın təməl tələbatını təmin etməkdə belə çətinlik çəkdiyini empirik olaraq göstərir. Penkova yazısını işləyən bir sənaye və ictimai struktura qovuşa bilmək üçün neo-liberal “inkişaf” siyasətinin tərک edilməsini mütləq bir vacibliyyət olduğunu vurğulayaraq bitirir.

Bu il təkcə Oktyabr inqilabının yüz illiyi deyil, *Kapital*ın ilk cildinin yayınlanmasının da 150-ci ildönümüdür. Son məqaləmizi bu səbəblə, sosial elm və inqilabın bir sintezi olan, insan düşüncəsinin bu şah əsərinin metodu, məzmunu və önəminə dair ümumi bir araşdırmaya ayırdıq.

Kapital, son təhlildə, kapitalist istehsal tərzinin bəşəriyyəti daha yaxşı bir gələcəyə aparma ehtimallarının mərhələli olaraq tükənməsi və bütün dünyadakı işçi kütlələrinin enerjisini mütərəqqi məqsədlər yolunda aşkar etmək üçün bu istehsal üsulunu məhv etməyin zərurəti haqqındadır. Tarixi inkişafın bu mərhələsinə hələ hazırda çatmış olduğumuz, dərin beynəlxalq böhrana, başımızın üzərindəki nüvə müharibəsi, hətta dünya müharibəsi təhlükəsinə və insanların və digər canlı növlərin yenidən istehsalının tək mənbəyi olan təbiətin məhvinə baxaraq açıq-aşkar görülə bilər. İnsanlığın və hətta, ümumiyyətlə, həyatın müdafiəsi, istehsal vasitələrinin kollektiv mülkiyyəti və demokratik mərkəzi planlama əsasında qurulmuş yeni istehsal üsulunun gəlişinə və dünyadakı bütün millətlərin qardaşca qaynaşmasından asılıdır. Qısaı, zəruri olan sosializmdir. Bu da yalnız proletariatin qüvvələri ilə, inqilabi sinfi mübarizəsi ilə həyata keçirilə bilər. İnqilabçı marksizm budur və jurnalımız da bu səbəblə bu adı qürurla mənimsəyib.

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French

Dans ce numéro

Le premier numéro du *Revolutionary Marxism*, la publication annuelle en langue anglaise du Journal turc *Devrimci Marksizm*, est apparu à la fin de 2016. Il a été distribué et vendu dans le monde entier de Beyrouth à Buenos Aires, de San Petersbourg à Skopje, de Milan à Montevideo. Il n'a certes pas été vendu par milliers mais a parfaitement rempli sa mission: contribuer à l'internationalisme dans le domaine de la théorie militante marxiste, conduisant certes à l'internationalisme prolétaire dans les domaines politique et organisationnelle aussi au Moyen-Orient et l'Afrique du Nord, dans les Balkans et le Caucase, dans les régions méditerranéennes et eurasienne et dans le monde entier. Nous venons maintenant de franchir une nouvelle étape dans ce débat en incluant les traductions de l'éditorial que vous êtes en train de lire dans plusieurs langues. Ainsi, nous pouvons transmettre au moins l'essentiel de notre message à tous ceux qui ne peuvent pas lire l'anglais mais qui s'intéressent à la voix du marxisme internationaliste et révolutionnaire.

Ce dernier numéro, *Revolutionary Marxism 2018*, continue de poursuivre ce but en mettant l'accent sur le Moyen-Orient, par un article complémentaire sur la question des mouvements réactionnaires dans les pays impérialistes, par un dossier spécial sur la révolution d'Octobre célébrant cette grande fête du peuple

à l'occasion de son centenaire et par un article sur la disparition de l'un des pays (Bulgarie) où un Etat ouvrier existait jusqu'à la chute du mur de Berlin ainsi que par un article qui attire l'attention sur le grand chef d'œuvre sur le présent et sur l'avenir de l'humanité, *Das Kapital*, à son 150e anniversaire.

Le premier numéro a caractérisé, en introduction et dans plusieurs de ses articles, la situation mondiale en plaçant la crise mondiale, qui a suivi le krach financier et qui dure depuis maintenant une décennie, au centre en tant que toile de fond de plusieurs processus parallèles : la montée du proto-fascisme dans le monde entier associée à celle concomitante du mouvement takfiri-sectaire islamique dont l'exemple le plus visible est Daesh ou ISIL, la menace croissante des guerres régionales se transformant en une guerre mondiale, l'accroissement d'une révolte populaire aussi bien sous forme insurrectionnelle (comme celle de l'Egypte, de la Tunisie, du Yémen, du Bahreïn, du Wall Street) que parlementaire (de Podemos, de Syriza, de Sanders, de Corbyn et, en particulier, de Frente de Izquierda en Argentine) depuis 2011.

Un événement singulier, ce qui est l'élection de Donald Trump à la plus haute instance du pays impérialiste le plus fort du monde, a lancé la discussion sur le nouveau phénomène réactionnaire internationale sous ses diverses appellations comme "le populisme", "l'extrême droite" ou "le nationalisme". Notre diagnostic de bonne heure selon lequel Donald Trump est un fasciste totalement imprévisible sans un parti politique établi ni des troupes paramilitaires, ou autrement dit un proto-fasciste, a été confirmé par les faits de l'année dernière. Le mot "fasciste" a été largement diffusé, en particulier à la veille des événements de Charlottesville, pour décrire l'attitude de Trump prenant maintes fois à la légère dans ses déclarations l'action des tenants de la suprématie de la race blanche et les néo-nazis. Steve Bannon, le principal idéologue de "l'alt-droite" (l'abréviation de la droite alternative américaine) n'est plus en poste. Pourtant, il est évident qu'il continue à être l'alter-ego du Président des Etats-Unis en effectuant des visites d'homme d'Etat aux pays comme Chine pour sonder les opinions avant que le Président lui-même visite le pays. Au-delà des frontières des Etats-Unis, sur la scène internationale, l'institution libérale a trop vite caractérisé les résultats des élections d'Europe comme défaites successives de ce qu'il a dénommé "populisme" : En France, Marine Le Pen, la représentante la plus illustre du fléau proto-fasciste croissant, a gagné au deuxième tour des élections le soutien de chaque citoyen français sur trois et en Allemagne, *Alternative für Deutschland* est désormais le troisième plus grand parti politique malgré le demi-tour politique d'Angela Merkel en matière d'immigration. Si celles-ci doivent être considérées comme des défaites, on ne peut se demander à quoi aurait ressemblé la victoire de ce mouvement international qui était perçu jusqu'à récemment comme du fanatisme extrémiste.

Pour les libéraux, c'est la victoire d'Emmanuel Macron qui se trouve dans l'autre revers de la médaille. En interprétant cette victoire comme le retour de la mondialisation après les défaites écrasantes qu'ils avaient vécues avec Brexit et Trump, ils n'ont fait qu'affirmer un vœu pieux. À la suite du déclin de sa popularité dans les enquêtes d'opinion publique, la magie d'Emmanuel I s'est réduite. Ce dernier est le nom ironique qui lui avait été donné par des opposants gauchistes en raison de son style royal et du fait qu'il gouverne le pays avec des décrets-lois. On peut noter aussi que ces méthodes sont presque les mêmes que celles utilisées en Turquie par Erdoğan, considéré comme un vrai despote par le même *liberal establishment*. La réussite des deux premières grèves dans un intervalle de dix jours (les 12 et 21 septembre), et ce malgré la soumission de certaines confédérations syndicales, montre que le "printemps français", qui faisait allusion dans notre premier numéro au mouvement qui s'opposait à la réforme du Code du travail du gouvernement du "socialiste" François Hollande au printemps 2016, semble continuer. Comme on l'avait souligné dans notre premier numéro, la France continue à être le pays clé en Europe. La voie pro-mondialiste et néolibérale de Macron ne peut être une réponse contre des Trump et Le Pen. Seules l'indépendance politique et la lutte unifiée de la classe ouvrière peuvent renverser la montée en puissance du diable. L'horizon du monde est encore rempli par des Modi, des Duterte, des Putin, des Erdoğan, des Aliyev, des Orban et des Trump.

Depuis qu'on avait souligné le danger d'une guerre mondiale dans notre premier numéro, le risque d'une guerre affectant le monde entier est nettement présent. Même si on met provisoirement de côté les souffrances interminables en Syrie, en Iraq, au Yémen ou en Libye ainsi que la braise de la guerre en Ukraine qui brûle encore; la région géostratégique de l'Asie est marquée par de différents aspects de la lutte se développant entre l'impérialisme et la Chine. L'exemple le plus flagrant de ce fait est bien évidemment la stratégie de la corde raide qui est en cours entre les États-Unis et la Corée du nord et qui implique le risque de ramener le monde à une catastrophe nucléaire après 70 ans d'Hiroshima et de Nagasaki. Avec son appétit proto-fasciste habituel, Trump a lancé des menaces pour "tuer des millions de gens" en Corée du nord et pour détruire totalement le pays.

Contrairement à la présentation mensongère des faits par la "communauté internationale" (alias "impérialisme") et les médias capitalistes, le programme nucléaire nord-coréen est une mesure défensive contre les États-Unis qui cherche la domination militaire dans le Pacifique, contre la présence d'un total de plus de 80000 soldats américains au Japon et en Corée du Sud et contre la menace croissante de la guerre à l'horizon en Asie en général. Dans son affrontement avec l'impérialisme, les marxistes révolutionnaires devraient soutenir un État ouvrier bureaucratiquement dégénéré, même dans le cas de cette caricature de l'État ouvrier fondé sur le

“socialisme dans une dynastie”.

Cette onde réactionnaire a conduit à un nouveau réaligement des forces plus près de chez nous, au Moyen-Orient et en Afrique du Nord. Après avoir donné son soutien au Bonaparte égyptien Al-Sisi lors de la visite de ce dernier à Washington, Trump a réalisé une visite pompeusement organisée en Arabie Saoudite. Le moment le plus kitsch de cette visite a eu lieu lorsque le ridicule trio de Trump, le Roi Salman et le président égyptien ont caressé un globe terrestre brillant en compagnie des figurants qui montaient la garde derrière. Celui-ci était significatif avant tout pour l'absence symbolique de deux acteurs. D'une part, l'Israël sioniste était l'éminence grise absente de la nouvelle alliance qui était en train de se mettre en place. Malgré son effort manifeste pour s'approcher de Poutine et malgré l'alliance presque indissoluble entre l'Iran et la Russie de Poutine, comme son discours aux Nations Unies l'atteste une fois de plus, Trump s'efforce énergiquement de former une alliance entre toutes les autres forces réactionnaires du Moyen-Orient afin d'isoler l'Iran et de le faire mettre à genoux. D'ailleurs, c'est aussi la raison pour laquelle le Hamas a récemment été contraint de capituler devant l'Egypte et Israël. L'autre absence flagrante était celle d'Erdoğan, une autre source de contradictions pour la politique du Moyen-Orient et de l'Afrique du Nord de Trump. La raison officielle était que la visite de Trump avait coïncidé avec le congrès de l'AKP en Turquie lors duquel Erdoğan revenait pour prendre le contrôle de son parti après le référendum d'avril en Turquie, ce dernier ayant jeté les bases d'une transition vers un système qui penche plus qu'avant vers un système présidentiel. Cependant, il s'est rapidement avéré que la vraie raison se trouvait ailleurs.

La démonstration du pouvoir sectaire sunnite que les Saoudiens avaient voulu mettre en œuvre en invitant la gamme complète des pays arabes et non-arabes à accueillir Trump a été de courte durée. La crise du Qatar a éclaté à la suite de la célébration triomphaliste de l'unité, entraînant une division entre le camp dirigé par l'Arabie Saoudite et le camp Rabia. Pour mieux comprendre ce qui vient d'être dit, la séquence d'événements suivante peut être prise en considération :

2013 : Avec le soutien de l'Arabie Saoudite, le coup d'Etat bonapartiste de Sisi renverse Morsi et le gouvernement des Frères musulmans (Ikhwan) en Egypte et tue des centaines de partisans d'Ikhwan sur la place Rabia-t-ul Adawiya au Caire. Cela conduit ainsi à une rupture entre l'Arabie saoudite et la Turquie, dans la mesure où Erdoğan avait construit toute sa stratégie pour devenir le “Raïs” (leader) du monde sunnite en s'alliant avec Ikhwan dans une série de pays (Tunisie, Syrie, Maroc, Palestine- c'est-à-dire Hamas- ainsi que l'Egypte).

2015 : En dépit de son attachement explicite au mouvement de Rabia (un mouvement basé sur une attitude revanchiste à propos de l'incident de Rabia), Erdoğan entre en relation avec le nouveau roi Salman d'Arabie Saoudite après la mort de

l'ancien roi. Encore plus, à la fin de l'année 2015 il a même adhéré à l'Alliance militaire islamique pour combattre le terrorisme (une initiative saoudienne réunissant 34 nations sunnites), et entre presque en guerre en Syrie en février 2016 en compagnie des Saoudiens et du Qatar (attention à ces deux pays!).

15 juillet 2016: Le camp saoudien abandonne le gouvernement Erdoğan à son sort face à la tentative de coup d'Etat.

2017: Le retrait des forces armées turques de Qatar figure parmi les 13 conditions posées par la coalition anti-Qatar menée par l'Arabie Saoudite pour la réconciliation. Cette condition est rejetée par la Turquie, qui, fidèle à sa stratégie de Rabia, se place aux côtés du Qatar. On peut ajouter également qu'après le coup d'Etat raté du juillet 2016, la Turquie a cherché une source de pouvoir compensatoire dans le camp russo-iranien pour équilibrer la pression des États-Unis et de l'UE sur son orientation internationale et sa politique interne.

Tout cela montre que les forces sunnites sectaires au Moyen-Orient et en Afrique du Nord sont incapables de former une coalition unitaire durable contre le camp chiite dirigé par l'Iran. Cependant, cela ne signifie pas qu'actuellement, une menace de guerre sectaire à l'échelle de l'ensemble du Moyen-Orient appartiendrait seulement au passé. Cela signifie seulement que le camp sunnite n'est pas aussi uni qu'il semblait l'être à un certain moment, que l'Iran a une marge de manœuvre et qu'il pourrait neutraliser au moins certains des pays du camp réactionnaire sunnite. Les guerres par procuration incessantes dans des pays tels que la Syrie, l'Irak et le Yémen attestent le fait que la menace continue d'exister et que les politiques de Trump et de l'Israël auront probablement effet de la prolonger dans le temps. Seul un bloc unifié et indépendant formé par une alliance entre la classe ouvrière et des forces socialistes dans toute la région du Moyen-Orient et de l'Afrique du Nord et des forces correspondantes dans les Balkans et dans le nord de la Méditerranée peut arrêter cette menace de guerre sectaire sunnite-chiite. À défaut, une telle perspective de guerre conduirait certainement à l'anéantissement de la population et à la destruction du patrimoine culturel et historique de la région. Comme la résolution finale de la 4e Conférence euro-méditerranéenne, tenue à Athènes du 26 au 28 mai 2017 et dont nous publions le document dans ce numéro, déclare : "Le carnage ne peut être arrêté que grâce à un large front de forces anti-impérialistes et antisionistes qui se battraient aussi contre les régimes réactionnaires dans leurs propres pays. Seule une Fédération socialiste du Moyen-Orient et de l'Afrique du Nord pourra offrir une solution définitive à tous les problèmes de la région".

Massoud Barzani, le chef du Kurdistan irakien, a introduit le référendum sur l'indépendance dans ce tourbillon. Celui-ci a conjuré tous les démons âgés des puissances régionales et les machinations des impérialistes. Les marxistes révolutionnaires sont pour l'autodétermination des Kurdes. Le problème est que ce

référendum est conçu non pas pour une telle autodétermination, mais pour l'auto-agrandissement de Barzani et l'enrichissement de ses partisans appartenant au domaine du rentier du pétrole. Barzani a lutté et a clairement l'intention de continuer à lutter à l'avenir contre la liberté des Kurdes dans d'autres régions du Kurdistan (à savoir en Turquie, en Iran et en Syrie). Ainsi, en plus de donner à l'impérialisme une autre tête de pont au Moyen-Orient, une victoire dans ce référendum impliquerait ironiquement une défaite pour la cause de la libération nationale au Kurdistan. Les marxistes révolutionnaires sont indubitablement contre l'intervention militaire par n'importe quelle puissance régionale dans le Kurdistan irakien, mais se tiennent contre Barzani et sont pour la libération de toute la population kurde.

Notre premier dossier dans ce numéro porte, par des perspectives de court terme et de long terme, sur les différentes facettes de la lutte dans la région du Moyen-Orient et de l'Afrique du Nord. En tenant compte de ses étapes successives, le premier article de ce dossier analyse la guerre civile syrienne et ses ramifications internationales. L'article de Levent Dölek intitulé "La guerre civile en Syrie : Les étapes, les leçons et l'avenir de la guerre civile syrienne" commence par un diagnostic selon lequel, comme la révolte populaire contre la dictature d'Assad, laquelle se fondait sur des revendications de liberté et de justice, n'a pas pu acquérir un cadre politique prolétarien, elle serait rapidement devenue ouverte aux manipulations de l'impérialisme et des États réactionnaires de la région. Cela démontre que les interventions de l'impérialisme, du sionisme et des pouvoirs régionaux (comme l'Arabie saoudite, le Qatar, la Turquie et l'Iran) ont transformé la révolte populaire en une sanglante guerre religieuse et sectaire entre les sunnites et autres (les Alévis, les Druzes, les chrétiens, etc.). L'article fait une analyse détaillée des activités militaires de tous les acteurs majeurs (États-Unis, Russie, l'État islamique d'Iraq et du Levant, Armée Syrienne Libre, etc.) pendant la guerre civile. Une section distincte est consacrée à l'évolution du Kurdistan syrien. Dölek reconnaît la puissante base progressive du mouvement kurde à Rojava mais fait valoir que sa coopération militaire actuelle avec l'impérialisme américain est à la fois erronée et dangereuse. Nous croyons que l'article de Dölek restera comme une source précieuse sur la guerre civile syrienne également dans les années à venir.

L'article de Kutlu Dane intitulé "L'occupation sioniste et la Déclaration de Balfour. Le mémorandum de Nakba, le centenaire de la Déclaration de Balfour et l'occupation sioniste" fait une étude détaillée du contexte historique de la colonisation de la Palestine. Il traite du contexte historique de la Déclaration de Balfour de 1917 (qui avait accordé un chèque en blanc pour la fondation de l'État d'Israël) en éclairant les positions changeantes de tous les acteurs impliqués dans le processus (y compris les impérialismes britanniques et français ainsi que l'État ottoman). L'article de Dane démontre que l'impérialisme américain et l'Union soviétique (qui

suivait la politique de “coexistence pacifique” avec l’impérialisme à l’époque) avaient soutenu la fondation d’Israël en 1948. Cela souligne également que tous les régimes réactionnaires de la région avaient soutenu l’Israël en pratique. Comme le montre Dane, l’actuel gouvernement AKP en Turquie (qui a continué à coopérer avec l’Israël dans de nombreux domaines et qui n’a jamais embrassé sincèrement la cause palestinienne) ne fait pas exception.

Sungur Savran examine les révolutions au Moyen-Orient depuis le début du XXe siècle jusqu’à aujourd’hui et en tire des conclusions d’ordre général. Selon Savran, le Moyen-Orient a connu un grand nombre de révolutions au XXe siècle et les premières révolutions victorieuses du XXIe siècle ont également eu lieu dans la région (en Egypte et en Tunisie). L’article montre que le Moyen-Orient a connu quatre vagues de révolution au XXe siècle et que la révolution arabe de 2011 pourrait être considérée comme la cinquième vague. Comme le souligne Savran, la fréquence élevée des vagues révolutionnaires réfute la croyance simpliste (et orientaliste) selon laquelle “les sociétés musulmanes sont obéissantes en vertu de la croyance de l’Islam et ne font donc pas de révolutions”. Il expose également une forte preuve en faveur de la thèse marxiste selon laquelle l’histoire progresse non seulement par des progrès évolutifs, mais aussi par des sauts révolutionnaires. Enfin, en démontrant que l’histoire du Moyen-Orient a été déterminée lors des tourments révolutionnaires, l’article de Savran expose le caractère superficiel et infondé de l’affirmation de “réalisme” des réformistes (il s’agit de la croyance selon laquelle la révolution serait d’une possibilité lointaine et que les politiques de la gauche devraient viser des changements à petite échelle). En effet, qu’il s’agisse des petits ou grands changements, il est impossible de les atteindre sans révolutions. En d’autres termes, l’expérience historique prouve que la révolution est un objectif plus “réaliste” que la réforme.

Un dossier complémentaire examine les tendances réactionnaires dans d’autres parties du monde et la réponse à donner à celles-ci. Dans son article intitulé “Méthodes de la compréhension du “contemporain” : discussion sur le populisme et le fascisme”, Cenk Saraçoğlu soutient que le fascisme est un concept beaucoup plus approprié et utile que la « droite populiste » (un concept actuellement populaire parmi la gauche internationale) pour comprendre ces mouvements réactionnaires. Saraçoğlu identifie la “subversivité contre-révolutionnaire” et la “non-contemporanéité” comme les deux caractéristiques distinctives des mouvements et régimes fascistes de la période d’entre deux guerres et compare les mouvements réactionnaires contemporains en utilisant ces concepts. Il soutient que les mouvements réactionnaires des pays relativement périphériques tels que la Hongrie et la Turquie ressemblent plutôt au fascisme classique de la période d’entre deux guerres qu’à leurs homologues dans les pays occidentaux avancés.

Un point de vue quelque peu différent sur la situation en Europe et dans le monde est présenté par la Déclaration finale de la 4e Conférence euro-méditerranéenne (il s'agit d'un événement international auquel des militants et intellectuels de 18 pays ont participé à la fin de mai 2017 en vue de discuter de la voie à suivre au niveau international et en particulier dans les contextes de l'Europe, du Moyen-Orient et de l'Afrique du Nord).

Cette année, c'est le centenaire de la révolution d'Octobre de 1917. Il s'agit d'un événement qui avait ouvert de nouvelles perspectives non seulement pour les peuples de la Russie tsariste d'autrefois, mais aussi pour l'humanité en général et plus particulièrement pour les ouvriers, les prolétaires et les opprimés du monde. Nous célébrons cet événement historique mondial et nous approfondissons ses différents aspects dans quatre articles différents.

Dans son article "Octobre 1917 : un événement mondial", Savas Michael discute des relations et des différences entre 1917 et 1991, en entrant en dialogue avec un article du philosophe français Alain Badiou, écrit peu de temps après la disparition de l'Union soviétique. Savas Michael rappelle que 1917 était un événement à l'échelle mondiale et qu'il avait été reconnu par tous comme le début d'une révolution socialiste mondiale. La révolution sociale s'est répandue de la Russie à l'Europe centrale et orientale, et a produit des effets allant de l'Europe à l'Asie et aux États-Unis. Comme Keynes l'avait bien remarqué à l'époque, le bolchevisme et la révolution d'Octobre représentaient une menace pour l'ordre capitaliste mondial. En ce sens, la révolution d'Octobre n'était certainement pas une tentative prématurée. Il s'agissait plutôt d'un "événement" historique à l'échelle mondiale qui avait ouvert une époque entièrement nouvelle pour l'humanité. En revanche, 1991 n'était pas un "événement", mais un "événement simulé" : Il n'a pas ouvert un nouvel âge pour l'humanité. En concluant, Savas Michael souligne que le cycle ouvert par la révolution d'Octobre n'est pas terminé. Nous vivons encore à l'époque d'Octobre, et nous devons rendre la révolution permanente dans le nouveau siècle.

L'article d'Özgür Öztürk, "Planification socialiste au 21e siècle", traite des potentiels du socialisme en référence aux possibilités du présent. Öztürk essaie de décrire le type de système de planification économique qui peut être construit au plus tard dans quelques années après une nouvelle révolution. Selon lui, au 21e siècle, un système de planification fondamentalement différent et beaucoup plus efficace que le siècle précédent peut être établi. Il souligne qu'au 20e siècle, l'un des principaux problèmes de la construction socialiste a été d'empêcher la transformation de l'argent en capital. Or un système de planification et de paiement basé sur le temps de travail - tel que présagé par Marx dans sa "Critique du programme de Gotha" - limitera les relations monétaires et, par conséquent, la menace posée par le capital. En outre, un tel système résoudra le problème du calcul plus facile-

ment. Öztürk discute également des formes possibles de nouveaux rapports industriels et affirme que, dans les conditions actuelles, un régime socialiste peut viser de manière réaliste le plein emploi, l'automatisation complète, le zéro accident du travail et le raccourcissement continu des heures de travail. Selon lui, ce sont des tendances potentielles qui ne peuvent jamais être entièrement réalisées dans le contexte des rapports capitalistes.

Armağan Tulunay examine un aspect de la révolution d'Octobre qui avait été délibérément ignoré par certains milieux. Depuis que le tournant anti-léniniste, voire anti-marxiste, a émergé dans les années 1980 dans la gauche, on a commencé à rejeter, de manière croissante, l'importance du marxisme en tant qu'ensemble de pensée et programme, et celle du communisme en tant que recherche d'une différente forme de société quant à la question de la libération de la femme. La politique de l'identité était la panacée. Le mouvement communiste aurait été inconscient de l'oppression des femmes et il n'aurait rien à proposer pour assurer la libération de la femme. Tulunay examine les politiques que les bolcheviques avaient mises en œuvre immédiatement après la révolution. Il expose de manière indiscutable que le bolchevisme mené par Lénine et Trotsky qui s'efforçait de mettre en œuvre un programme de mesures concrètes, inimaginable pour les pays les plus avancés du monde capitaliste, afin d'assurer une égalité réelle et non seulement formelle, était incomparablement plus sensible à l'oppression des femmes que l'*establishment* libéral qu'admirent les courants anti-marxiste et postmoderniste contemporaines. Comme Tulunay l'indique dans son article, le fait que la bureaucratie, qui avait usurpé le pouvoir politique, avait abandonné la plupart de ces mesures ne peut en aucun cas être considéré comme une preuve à la soi-disant insensibilité du communisme vis-à-vis de l'oppression des femmes. Après tout, la bureaucratie avait abandonné le communisme. Par conséquent, aucune de ses activités ne peut mettre en cause le communisme.

Notre dernier article, qui porte sur la révolution d'Octobre, aborde un domaine qui avait toujours été ignoré par le marxisme occidental. On a longtemps noté que le pouvoir prolétarien avait été réalisé pour la première fois par les russes, autrement dit par probablement la plus arriérée des grandes nations de l'Europe. Cependant, il a échappé aux commentateurs occidentaux de la révolution d'Octobre que cette dernière était encore plus une révolution des peuples musulmans. L'un des éléments importants de l'Union soviétique, qui avait été fondé finalement selon les lignes directrices de Lenin, était constitué par des peuples musulmans et souvent turcs qui se trouvaient aux frontières de la Russie de l'intérieur (les Tatars, les Bachkirs, les Kalmouks, les Dagestanais, les Tchétchènes etc.), dans la Transcaucasie (les Azéris, les Abazines etc.) et en Asie centrale (les peuples qui étaient aux frontières du Kazakhstan, du Turkménistan, de l'Ouzbékistan, du Kirghizistan et du Tadjikis-

tan actuels). Dans son article original, Sungur Savran résume comment le communisme/bolchevisme a conquis le cœur des peuples musulmans immédiatement après la victoire de la révolution et comment les communistes musulmans ont conquis leurs propres terres et peuples. La question de l'essor de ce qui est considéré comme le chauvinisme grand-russe dans l'ère stalinienne et ses impacts sur les peuples musulmans de l'Union soviétique peut faire l'objet d'une autre étude.

Un autre article, qui est lié aux articles relatifs à la révolution d'Octobre d'une manière relativement détournée, aborde l'effondrement de l'expérience de la construction socialiste du 20e siècle sous le prisme de la Bulgarie. L'article de Daniela Penkova intitulé "La Bulgarie dans le piège du néolibéralisme" étudie le processus de la restauration capitaliste qui est apparu dans le pays après 1989. L'auteur soutient que les institutions du capital international, en particulier le Fonds monétaire international et la Banque mondiale, ont imposé à la Bulgarie une prescription très semblable à celle qu'ils avaient imposée aux pays du tiers monde. Alors que la Bulgarie était un pays industrialisé avec des standards de vie convenables en 1989, les prescriptions néolibérales de la période d'après 1989 (telles que la privatisation et la déréglementation) ont appauvri les Bulgares. L'article démontre empiriquement que, si l'économie bulgare semble se développer sur le papier, les gens ordinaires sont obligés de lutter pour satisfaire leurs besoins fondamentaux. Penkova conclut que l'abandon de la politique néolibérale de "développement" est absolument nécessaire pour atteindre une industrie et une structure sociale qui fonctionnent correctement.

Cette année n'est pas seulement le centenaire de la révolution d'Octobre, mais aussi le 150e anniversaire de la publication du livre I du Capital. Par conséquent, notre dernier article est consacré à un exposé général de la méthode, du contenu et de l'importance de ce chef-d'œuvre de la pensée humaine qui est une synthèse des sciences sociales et de la révolution.

Le Capital porte, en fin de compte, sur l'épuisement graduel des possibilités du mode de production capitaliste d'amener l'humanité dans un avenir meilleur et sur la nécessité de son renversement pour pouvoir libérer l'énergie des travailleurs dans le monde vers des fins progressifs. Vu la profonde crise économique, la menace imminente de guerre nucléaire voire celle d'une guerre mondiale et la destruction de la nature- laquelle est la seule source de reproduction pour les êtres humains et les autres espèces vivantes- on peut affirmer qu'il est manifeste qu'on se trouve déjà dans ce stade du développement historique.

La défense de l'humanité et même celle de la vie en général nécessitent l'avènement d'un nouveau mode de production, basé sur la propriété collective des moyens de production et sur la planification centrale démocratique, ainsi que la fusion fraternelle de toutes les nations du monde. Autrement dit, c'est le socialisme

international dont on a besoin. Cela ne peut être réalisé que par les forces prolétaires et grâce à la lutte de classe révolutionnaire. Ce n'est qu'en construisant de partis prolétaires et un International révolutionnaire qu'on peut l'accomplir. C'est ce qu'est le marxisme révolutionnaire et c'est pourquoi notre journal a consacré fièrement ce nom.

Translated by: Sinem Feral

Σε αυτό το τεύχος

Το πρώτο τεύχος του *Επαναστατικού Μαρξισμού*, της Αγγλόφωνης ετήσιας έκδοσης της Τουρκικής επιθεώρησης *Devrimci Marksizm*, εμφανίστηκε στα τέλη του 2016. Διανεμήθηκε και πωλήθηκε σε όλο τον κόσμο από τη Βηρυτό ως το Μπουένος Άιρες, από την Αγία Πετρούπολη ως τα Σκόπια, από το Μιλάνο ως το Μοντεβιδέο. Μπορεί να μην πούλησε χιλιάδες, αλλά στην ταπεινή του κλίμακα, εκπλήρωσε ιδανικά την αποστολή για την οποία προοριζόταν: να συμβάλει στο διεθνισμό μέσα στη στρατευμένη Μαρξιστική θεωρία, οδηγώντας φυσικά στον προλεταριακό διεθνισμό στην πολιτική και οργανωτική σφαίρα, στη Μέση Ανατολή και στη Βόρεια Αφρική, στα Βαλκάνια και στον Καύκασο, στις περιοχές της Μεσογείου και της Ευρασίας και στον κόσμο γενικότερα. Ευθυγραμμισμένοι με αυτόν τον στόχο, κάνουμε τώρα ένα νέο βήμα και συμπεριλαμβάνουμε μεταφράσεις του σημειώματος της σύνταξης που διαβάζετε τώρα σε πολλές άλλες γλώσσες, τις οποίες δημοσιεύουμε στο τέλος της έκδοσης. Μ' αυτόν τον τρόπο μπορούμε τουλάχιστον να μεταδώσουμε την ουσία του μηνύματός μας προς ανθρώπους σε όλο τον κόσμο που δεν μπορούν να διαβάσουν Αγγλικά, αλλά ενδιαφέρονται για τη φωνή του διεθνιστικού και επαναστατικού Μαρξισμού.

Αυτό το δεύτερο τεύχος, *Επαναστατικός Μαρξισμός 2018*, επιδιώκει να συνεχίσει να εργάζεται για τον ίδιο στόχο με πρωταρχική εστίαση στη Μέση Ανατολή, με ένα σχετικό άρθρο το οποίο στρέφεται στο ζήτημα των αντιδραστικών κινημάτων

στις ιμπεριαλιστικές χώρες, με έναν ειδικό αφιέρωμα για την Οκτωβριανή επανάσταση στην εκατονταετηρίδα της εορτάζοντας το μεγάλο αυτό πανηγύρι του λαού, με ένα άρθρο που εξετάζει τη διάλυση μιας από τις χώρες (Βουλγαρία) όπου υπήρχε ένα εργατικό κράτος μέχρι την πτώση του Τείχους του Βερολίνου και με ένα άρθρο που στρέφει την προσοχή μας στο μεγάλο αριστούργημα για το παρόν και το μέλλον της ανθρωπότητας, *Το Κεφάλαιο*, στην 150^η επέτειο από τη δημοσίευση του πρώτου του τόμου.

Το πρώτο τεύχος, στην εισαγωγή του και σε αρκετά από τα επίκαιρα άρθρα του, χαρακτήρισε την παγκόσμια κατάσταση, τοποθετώντας την πλέον δεκάχρονη οικονομική κρίση, μετά το οικονομικό κραχ του 2008, στο κέντρο ως φόντο πολλών παράλληλων διαδικασιών: την άνοδο του πρωτοφασισμού σε όλο τον κόσμο· τη συνακόλουθη άνοδο του ισλαμικού τακφίρι – του κινήματος του θρησκευτικού σεχταρισμού, με το πιο χαρακτηριστικό παράδειγμα του στο Daesh ή ISIL· την αυξανόμενη απειλή των περιφερειακών πολέμων να μετατραπούν σε παγκόσμιο πόλεμο· και την άνοδο των λαϊκών κινήματων τόσο με εξεγερσιακές μορφές (Αίγυπτος, Τυνησία, Υεμένη, Μπαχρέιν, Wall Street, Ελλάδα Ισπανία, Τουρκία, Βραζιλία, Βαλκάνια κλπ.) όσο και με κοινοβουλευτικές (Ποδέμος, Συρία, Σάντερς, Κόρμπιν, και στην πιο περίοπτη θέση το Μέτωπο της Αριστεράς (FIT) στην Αργεντινή) από το 2011.

Καθώς το τεύχος βγήκε αμέσως μετά την εκλογή του Ντόναλντ Τραμπ στο υψηλότερο αξίωμα της πιο ισχυρής ιμπεριαλιστικής χώρα του κόσμου, αυτό το μη αναμενόμενο συμβάν αποτέλεσε το εναρκτήριο σημείο μιας συζήτησης για το νέο διεθνές αντιδραστικό φαινόμενο που ονομάζεται ποικιλοτρόπως «λαϊκισμός», «ακροδεξιά», «εθνικισμός» κλπ. Η έγκαιρη διάγνωση μας ότι ο Ντόναλντ Τραμπ ήταν ένας «ανεξέλεγκτος φασίστας», ένας φασίστας χωρίς ένα παραδοσιακό φασιστικό κόμμα και παραστρατιωτικές δυνάμεις ή, με άλλα λόγια, πρωτοφασίστας, επιβεβαιώθηκε σε μεγάλο βαθμό από τα γεγονότα της περασμένης χρονιάς. Η λέξη «φασίστας» έχει κυκλοφορήσει ευρέως, ιδίως μετά τα γεγονότα του Charlottesville, για να απεικονίσει τη στάση του Τραμπ, αφού διαρκώς παρέβλεπε εσκεμμένα και απροκάλυπτα τη δράση των λευκών ρατσιστών και αυτοαποκαλούμενων νεοναζί. Ο Στηβ Μπάνον, ο κορυφαίος ιδεολόγος της λεγόμενης «εναλλακτικής δεξιάς», δεν είναι πλέον στην εξουσία, αλλά εξακολουθεί να είναι ολοφάνερα το alter ego του προέδρου των ΗΠΑ, πραγματοποιώντας κρατικές επισκέψεις σε χώρες όπως η Κίνα για να εκμαιεύσει την κατάσταση πριν επισκεφτεί τη χώρα ο ίδιος ο πρόεδρος. Πέρα από τα σύνορα των ΗΠΑ, στη διεθνή σκηνή, το φιλελεύθερο κατεστημένο βιάστηκε να χαρακτηρίσει τα αποτελέσματα των εκλογών στην Ευρώπη ως μια σειρά ηττών γι' αυτό που εσφαλμένα ονόμασαν «λαϊκισμό»: στη Γαλλία, η Μαρίν Λε Πεν, η σαφέστερη εκπρόσωπος της αυξανόμενης πρωτοφασιστικής πανώλης, έλαβε στο δεύτερο γύρο των εκλογών την ψήφο του 33% των Γάλλων υπηκόων

και στη Γερμανία η Alternative für Deutschland έγινε τώρα το τρίτο μεγαλύτερο κόμμα, παρά την 180 μοίρες στροφή της πολιτικής της Άνγκελα Μέρκελ για τη μετανάστευση. Εάν αυτό είναι ήττα, αναρωτιέται κανείς ποια θα ήταν η νίκη για ένα διεθνές κίνημα που θεωρήθηκε, μέχρι πρόσφατα, ως ακραίο περιθώριο!

Στην άλλη όψη του ίδιου νομίσματος για τους φιλελεύθερους ήταν η νίκη του Εμμανουέλ Μακρόν. Σε μια ξεκάθαρη περίπτωση ευσεβών πόθων, ερμήνευσαν αυτό το γεγονός ως την επιστροφή της παγκοσμιοποίησης μετά τις εκπληκτικές ήττες του Brexit και του Τραμπ. Ο Εμμανουήλ ο Α', όπως τον έχουν ονομάσει σαρκαστικά οι εξ αριστερών επικριτές του στη Γαλλία λόγω του βασιλικού του στυλ και της καταφυγής του στο να κυβερνάει με διατάγματα (σχεδόν μίμηση των μεθόδων που χρησιμοποιεί ο Ερντογάν στην Τουρκία, ο οποίος ορθώς θεωρείται ότι γίνεται ολοένα και περισσότερο δεσποτικός από το ίδιο το φιλελεύθερο κατεστημένο), έχει δει τα μαγικά του να μετατρέπονται σε στάχτη με μια ιλιγγιώδη πτώση της δημοτικότητας στις δημοσκοπήσεις. Η επιτυχία που επιτεύχθηκε με δύο απεργίες εντός δέκα ημερών (12 και 21 Σεπτεμβρίου), παρά τη συνθηκολόγηση της ηγεσίας ορισμένων από τις εργατικές συννομοσπονδίες, δίνει το μήνυμα πως η «γαλλική άνοιξη», όπως αναφέραμε στο πρώτο μας τεύχος το κίνημα της Άνοιξης του 2016 κατά της προηγούμενης αντιμεταρρύθμισης του Εργατικού Νόμου υπό τη λεγόμενη «σοσιαλιστική» κυβέρνηση του Φρανσουά Ολάντ, πρόκειται να συνεχιστεί. Η Γαλλία παραμένει η χώρα-κλειδί στην Ευρώπη, όπως υπογραμμίστηκε στο πρώτο μας τεύχος. Ο παγκοσμιοποιημένος και νεοφιλελεύθερος δρόμος του Μακρόν δεν αποτελεί απάντηση στους Τραμπ και στις Λε Πεν. Μόνο η πολιτική ανεξαρτησία και ο ενωμένος αγώνας της εργατικής τάξης μπορούν να απωθήσουν οριστικά το αυξανόμενο κακό. Ο ορίζοντας είναι ακόμα γεμάτος με τους Μόντι και τους Ντουτέρτε και τους Πούτιν και τους Ερντογάν και τους Αλίγιεφ και τους Ορμπαν και τους Τραμπ του κόσμου.

Δεν είναι λιγότερο εμφανής η προοπτική του ολοσχερούς πολέμου επί του πλανήτη αφότου υπογραμμίσαμε την απειλή του παγκόσμιου πολέμου στο πρώτο μας τεύχος. Αφήνοντας στην άκρη για μια στιγμή τα ατέρμονα δεινά στη Συρία, στο Ιράκ, στην Υεμένη και στη Λιβύη και στη φλεγόμενη ακόμα στάχτη του πολέμου στην Ουκρανία, η ασιατική γεωστρατηγική ζώνη χαρακτηρίζεται από τις διαφορετικές όψεις της αναδυόμενης σύγκρουσης μεταξύ του ιμπεριαλισμού και της Κίνας. Το σημαντικότερο μεταξύ αυτών είναι προφανώς οι ριψοκίνδυνες σχέσεις μεταξύ ΗΠΑ και Βόρειας Κορέας που απειλεί να φέρει τον κόσμο στην πρώτη πυρηνική καταστροφή από τη Χιροσίμα και το Ναγκάσακι πριν από τρία τέταρτα του αιώνα. Χαρακτηριστικά με τον πρωτοφασιστικό του ζήλο, ο Τραμπ έχει απειλήσει με «εκατομμύρια θανάτους» τη Βόρεια Κορέα και σε ολοσχερή εξόντωση ολόκληρη τη χώρα. Παρά την αναληθή παρουσίαση των γεγονότων από την «διεθνή κοινότητα» (ένα διαφορετικό όνομα για τον ιμπεριαλισμό) και τα καπιταλιστικά μέσα μαζι-

κής ενημέρωσης, η πυρηνική προετοιμασία της Βόρειας Κορέας είναι ένα αμυντικό μέτρο κατά των ΗΠΑ οι οποίες πασχίζουν για στρατιωτική κυριαρχία στον Ειρηνικό, στην παρουσία στο σύνολο των πάνω από 80 χιλιάδες αμερικανών στρατιωτών στην Ιαπωνία και στη Νότια Κορέα, και στην αυξανόμενη απειλή του πολέμου στον ορίζοντα στην Ασία γενικότερα. Στην αντιπαράθεσή του με τον ιμπεριαλισμό, οι επαναστάτες Μαρξιστές πρέπει να σταθούν αλληλέγγυοι σε ένα γραφειοκρατικά εκφυλισμένο εργατικό κράτος, ακόμη και στην περίπτωση αυτής της καρικατούρας εργατικού κράτους βασιζόμενο στο «σοσιαλισμό σε μια δυναστεία».

Πιο κοντά σε εμάς, στην περιοχή μας της Μέσης Ανατολής και της Βόρειας Αφρικής (MENA), το αντιδραστικό αυτό κύμα έχει οδηγήσει σε μια νέα αναδιάρθρωση δυνάμεων. Η στήριξη από τον Τραμπ του Αιγύπτου Βοναπάρτη αλ Σίσι κατά την επίσκεψή του τελευταίου στην Ουάσιγκτον ακολούθησε τη στομφωδώς οργανωμένη επίσκεψή του στη Σαουδική Αραβία. Η *γκροτέσκα* στιγμή αυτής της επίσκεψης, όταν το γελοίο τρίο του Τραμπ, του βασιλιά Σαλμάν και του Αιγυπτίου προέδρου να χαϊδεύουν μια λαμπερή υδρόγειο τη φρουρά στο φόντο να είναι πάντα σε επιφυλακή, ήταν σημαντική κυρίως για τη συμβολική απουσία δύο παραγόντων. Από τη μία πλευρά, το σιωνιστικό Ισραήλ ήταν η απύσχατος *φαιά εξοχότης* της νέας συμμαχίας που δημιουργήθηκε. Ο αντι-ιρανικός, υπέρ του Ισραήλ πολιτικός προσανατολισμός του Τραμπ εκτίθεται για να παρακάμψει όλες τις επιπλοκές και αντιφάσεις της πολιτικής του προς την περιοχή. Παρά την προφανή προσπάθειά του να κοντράρει τον Πούτιν, ο Τραμπ, όπως επιβεβαίωσε και πάλι στην ομιλία του στον ΟΗΕ, επιδιώκει να σχηματίσει επιθετικά μια συμμαχία μεταξύ όλων των άλλων αντιδραστικών δυνάμεων της Μέσης Ανατολής προκειμένου να απομονώσει και να γονατίσει το Ιράν, ειδικά τώρα που είναι σύμμαχος(το Ιράν) της Ρωσίας του Πούτιν. Αυτός, παρεμπιπτόντως, είναι και ο λόγος που η Χαμάς έχει πιεστεί πρόσφατα να συνθηκολογήσει ενώπιον της Αιγύπτου και του Ισραήλ. Η άλλη εμφανής απουσία ήταν αυτή του Ερντογάν, μια άλλη πηγή αντιφάσεων για την πολιτική του Τράμπ για το MENA. Ο επίσημος λόγος ήταν ότι η επίσκεψη του Τραμπ συνέπεσε με το συνέδριο του ΑΚΡ στην Τουρκία, στο οποίο ο Ερντογάν επέστρεψε για να πάρει τον έλεγχο του κόμματός του μετά το δημοψήφισμα του Απριλίου, το οποίο έβαλε τις βάσεις για τη μετάβαση σε ένα πιο προεδρικό σύστημα. Ωστόσο, πολύ σύντομα έγινε αντιληπτό ότι ο πραγματικός λόγος βρισκόταν αλλού.

Η επίδειξη της συνυφισμένης σχέσης, μιας δύναμης που οι Σαουδάραβες σκόπευαν να δοκιμάσουν προσκαλώντας μια πλήρη σειρά αραβικών και μη αραβικών χωρών να χαιρετήσουν τον Τραμπ, αποδείχθηκε εφήμερη. Η κρίση του Κατάρ ξέσπασε αμέσως μετά απ' αυτή τη θριαμβευτική γιορτή ενότητας, μπιήγοντας μια σφήνα ανάμεσα στο στρατόπεδο υπό την ηγεσία της Σαουδικής Αραβίας και στο ραμπινιστικό μπλοκ. Για να κατανοήσετε τι εννοούμε μ' αυτό, εξετάστε την παρακάτω ακολουθία συμβάντων. 2013: το βοναπαρτιστικό πραξικόπημα του Σίσι ρίχνει

την κυβέρνηση του Μόρσι και της Μουσουλμανικής Αδελφότητας (Ikhwan) στην Αίγυπτο με την υποστήριξη της Σαουδικής Αραβίας και σκοτώνει εν ψυχρώ εκατοντάδες υποστηρικτές του Ikhwan στην πλατεία Rabia-t-ul Adawiya στο Κάιρο, οδηγώντας έτσι σε ρήξη τη Σαουδική Αραβία και την Τουρκία, καθώς ο Ερντογάν έχει στηρίξει ολόκληρη τη στρατηγική του στο να γίνει ο «Ραΐς» (ηγέτης) του σουνιτικού κόσμου σε μια συμμαχία με την Ikhwan σε μια σειρά χωρών (Τυνησία, Συρία, Μαρόκο, Παλαιστίνη, δηλαδή τη Χαμάς, καθώς και στην Αίγυπτο)· 2015: παρά τον ρητό ραμπιτισμό του, ο Ερντογάν συνδέεται με το νέο βασιλιά Σαλμάν της Σαουδικής Αραβίας μετά τον θάνατο του πρώην βασιλιά, ακόμη στο τέλος του 2015 εντάσσεται στην Ισλαμική Στρατιωτική Συμμαχία για την Καταπολέμηση της Τρομοκρατίας, μια σαουδική πρωτοβουλία που συγκεντρώνει 34 σουνιτικά έθνη και σχεδόν έφτασε να εμπλακεί σε πόλεμο στη Συρία το Φεβρουάριο του 2016 μαζί με τους Σαουδάραβες και το Κατάρ (ένα δίδυμο που πρέπει χρήζει προσοχής!)· 15 Ιουλίου 2016: το σαουδικό στρατόπεδο εγκαταλείπει την κυβέρνηση Ερντογάν στη μοίρα της ενόψει της απόπειρας πραξικοπήματος· 2017: ανάμεσα στις 13 προϋποθέσεις που θέτει ο σαουδικός συνασπισμός εναντίον του Κατάρ ως όρους συμφιλίωσης, εμφανίζεται η απόσυρση των τουρκικών στρατιωτικών δυνάμεων από το Κατάρ, η οποία απορρίφθηκε από την τουρκική πλευρά και η οποία, πιστή στη ραμπική στρατηγική της, τάσσεται ξεκάθαρα στο πλευρό του Κατάρ. Σε αυτό το σημείο πρέπει να προσθέσουμε ότι μετά το αποτυχημένο πραξικόπημα του Ιουλίου του 2016, η Τουρκία αναζητά μια αντισταθμιστική πηγή εξουσίας στο στρατόπεδο Ρωσίας-Ιράν για να εξισορροπήσει την πίεση των ΗΠΑ και της ΕΕ στο διεθνή προσανατολισμό και στην εσωτερική πολιτική.

Όλα αυτά δείχνουν ότι οι θρησκευτικές σχεταριστικές σουνιτικές δυνάμεις του MENA αδυνατούν να σχηματίσουν ένα σταθερό ενιαίο συνασπισμό ενάντια στο στρατόπεδο των Σιιτών του οποίου ηγείται το Ιράν. Αυτό όμως δε σημαίνει ότι η απειλή ενός θρησκευτικού πολέμου εξτρεμιστών στην κλίμακα ολόκληρης της Μέσης Ανατολής είναι πλέον παρελθόν. Σημαίνει απλώς ότι το σουνιτικό στρατόπεδο δεν είναι τόσο ενωμένο όπως φάνηκε σε μια ορισμένη στιγμή και ότι το Ιράν έχει περιθώριο ελιγμών και μπορεί να καταφέρει να εξουδετερώσει τουλάχιστον κάποιες από τις χώρες εντός του αντιδραστικού σουνιτικού στρατοπέδου. Το ότι η απειλή εξακολουθεί να υφίσταται και μπορεί να αναζωπυρωθεί από τις πολιτικές του Τραμπ και του Ισραήλ φαίνεται από τους αδιάκοπους πολέμους δι' αντιπροσώπων σε χώρες όπως η Συρία, το Ιράκ και η Υεμένη. Μόνο ένας ενιαίος και ανεξάρτητος συνασπισμός της εργατικής τάξης και των σοσιαλιστικών δυνάμεων σε όλη την περιοχή του MENA, σύμμαχος με τις αντίστοιχες δυνάμεις στα Βαλκάνια και στη βόρεια Μεσόγειο, δύναται να σταματήσει αυτή την απειλή του σουνιτικού πολέμου, μια προοπτική που είναι βέβαιο ότι θα οδηγήσει σε αποδεκατισμό του πληθυσμού και σε καταστροφή της ιστορικής πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς

της περιοχής. Όπως λέει η τελική απόφαση της 4^{ης} Έκτακτης Ευρωμεσογειακής Συνδιάσκεψης που πραγματοποιήθηκε στην Αθήνα στις 26-28 Μαΐου 2017, την οποία δημοσιεύουμε σ' αυτό το τεύχος ως ντοκουμέντο: «Το μακελειό μπορεί να σταματήσει μόνο από ένα ευρύ μέτωπο αντιιμπεριαλιστικών και αντισιωνιστικών δυνάμεων, οι οποίες αγωνίζονται επίσης ενάντια στα αντιδραστικά καθεστώτα στις δικές τους χώρες. Μόνο μια Σοσιαλιστική Ομοσπονδία της Μέσης Ανατολής και της Βόρειας Αφρικής θα δώσει την τελική λύση σε όλα τα δεινά της περιοχής.»

Μέσα σ' αυτή τη δίνη ο Μασούντ Μπαρζανί, ο ηγέτης του Ιρακινού Κουρδιστάν, προσέθεσε το δημοψήφισμα για την ανεξαρτησία, το οποίο έχει ξυπνήσει όλους τους πανάρχαιους δαίμονες των περιφερειακών δυνάμεων και τις μηχανορραφίες των ιμπεριαλιστών. Οι επαναστάτες Μαρξιστές είναι υπέρ της αυτοδιάθεσης των Κούρδων. Το πρόβλημα είναι ότι αυτό το δημοψήφισμα δεν επινοήθηκε για την αυτοδιάθεση, αλλά για την αυτο-ενίσχυση του Μπαρζανί και των θησαυροφυλακίων των πετρελαϊκών εταιριών υποστηρικτών του. Ο Μπαρζανί αγωνίστηκε και προφανώς σκοπεύει να αγωνιστεί στο μέλλον ενάντια στην ελευθερία των Κούρδων σε άλλες περιοχές του Κουρδιστάν (δηλαδή στην Τουρκία, στο Ιράν και στη Συρία). Έτσι, μια νίκη σε αυτό το δημοψήφισμα ειρωνικά συνεπάγεται μια ήττα του σκοπού της εθνικής απελευθέρωσης στο Κουρδιστάν, επιπρόσθετα στο ότι δίνει στον ιμπεριαλισμό άλλο ένα προγεφύρωμα στη Μέση Ανατολή. Οι επαναστάτες Μαρξιστές αντιτίθενται ανεπιφύλακτα στη στρατιωτική παρέμβαση οποιασδήποτε περιφερειακής δύναμης στο ιρακινό Κουρδιστάν, αλλά είναι ενάντια στο Μπαρζανί και υπέρ της απελευθέρωσης ολόκληρου του κουρδικού πληθυσμού.

Το πρώτο αφιέρωμα μας στο θέμα αυτό επικεντρώνεται στις διαφορετικές πτυχές του αγώνα στην περιοχή του MENA, με βραχυπρόθεσμη και μακροπρόθεσμη προοπτική. Το πρώτο άρθρο αυτής του αφιερώματος είναι ένα κομμάτι που αναλύει τον εμφύλιο πόλεμο της Συρίας και τις διεθνείς του συνέπειες στα διαδοχικά του στάδια. Το άρθρο του Λεβέντ Ντολέκ με τίτλο «Τα στάδια, τα μαθήματα και το μέλλον του εμφυλίου πολέμου στη Συρία» ξεκινάει με μια διάγνωση που αναφέρει ότι εφόσον η λαϊκή εξέγερση κατά της δικτατορίας του Άσαντ με απαιτήσεις ελευθερίας και δικαιοσύνης δεν μπόρεσε να αποκτήσει ένα προλεταριακό πολιτικό πλαίσιο, σύντομα έγινε ανοικτή στους χειρισμούς του ιμπεριαλισμού και των αντιδραστικών κρατών της περιοχής. Αποδεικνύει ότι οι παρεμβάσεις του ιμπεριαλισμού, του σιωνισμού και των περιφερειακών δυνάμεων (όπως η Σαουδική Αραβία, το Κατάρ, η Τουρκία και το Ιράν) μεταμόρφωσαν τη λαϊκή εξέγερση σε έναν αιματηρό θρησκευτικό πόλεμο μεταξύ των Σουνιτών και των άλλων (Αλαουίτες, Δρούζοι, Χριστιανοί, κλπ.). Το άρθρο κάνει μια λεπτομερή ανάλυση των στρατιωτικών δραστηριοτήτων όλων των σημαντικών παραγόντων (ΗΠΑ, Ρωσία, ISIL, Ελεύθερος Συριακός Στρατός κλπ.) στη διάρκεια του εμφυλίου πολέμου. Ένα ξεχωριστό κεφάλαιο είναι αφιερωμένο στις εξελίξεις του συριακού Κουρδιστάν. Ο

Ντολέκ αναγνωρίζει την ισχυρή προοδευτική βάση του κουρδικού κινήματος στη Ροζάβα, αλλά υποστηρίζει ότι η σημερινή στρατιωτική συνεργασία με τον αμερικανικό ιμπεριαλισμό είναι τόσο λάθος όσο και επικίνδυνη. Πιστεύουμε ότι το άρθρο του Ντολέκ θα μείνει μια πολύτιμη πηγή για το συριακό εμφύλιο πόλεμο τα επόμενα χρόνια.

Το άρθρο του Κουτλού Ντάνε με τίτλο «Η εκατονταετηρίδα της Διακήρυξης Μπάλφουρ, το μνημόνιο της Νάκμπα και η Σιωνιστική κατοχή» κάνει λεπτομερή έρευνα για το ιστορικό υπόβαθρο του αποικισμού της Παλαιστίνης. Συζητά το ιστορικό πλαίσιο της Διακήρυξης Μπάλφουρ του 1917 (η οποία χορήγησε λευκή επιταγή για την ίδρυση του κράτους του Ισραήλ) ρίχνοντας φως στις μετατοπίσεις θέσεων όλων των εμπλεκόμενων φορέων στη διαδικασία (συμπεριλαμβανομένων του Βρετανικού και του Γαλλικού ιμπεριαλισμού και του Οθωμανικού κράτους). Το άρθρο του Ντάνε καταδεικνύει ότι τόσο ο ιμπεριαλισμός των ΗΠΑ, όσο και η Σοβιετική Ένωση (που ακολουθούσε την πολιτική της «ειρηνικής συνύπαρξης» με τον ιμπεριαλισμό εκείνη την εποχή) υποστήριξε την ίδρυση του Ισραήλ το 1948. Υπογραμμίζει επίσης το γεγονός ότι όλα τα αντιδραστικά καθεστώτα της περιοχής στήριζαν το Ισραήλ στην πράξη. Όπως δείχνει ο Ντάνε, η σημερινή κυβέρνηση του ΑΚΡ στην Τουρκία (η οποία συνέχισε να συνεργάζεται με το Ισραήλ σε πολλούς τομείς και ποτέ δεν αγκάλιασε ειλικρινά την παλαιστινιακή υπόθεση) δεν αποτελεί εξαίρεση.

Ο Σουνγκούρ Σαβράν ερευνά τις επαναστάσεις στη Μέση Ανατολή από τις αρχές του εικοστού αιώνα μέχρι σήμερα και αντλεί γενικευμένα συμπεράσματα απ' αυτές. Σύμφωνα με τον Σαβράν, η Μέση Ανατολή γνώρισε μεγάλο αριθμό επαναστάσεων στον εικοστό αιώνα και οι πρώτες νικηφόρες επαναστάσεις του εικοστού πρώτου αιώνα πραγματοποιήθηκαν επίσης στην περιοχή (Αίγυπτος και Τυνησία). Το άρθρο δείχνει ότι ο 20^{ος} αιώνας στη Μέση Ανατολή γνώρισε τέσσερα κύματα επανάστασης και η αραβική επανάσταση του 2011 μπορεί να θεωρηθεί ως το πέμπτο κύμα. Όπως σημειώνει ο Σαβράν, η υψηλή συχνότητα των επαναστατικών κυμάτων διαψεύδει την απλοϊκή (και Οριενταλιστική) πεποίθηση ότι «οι μουσουλμανικές κοινωνίες είναι πειθήνιες λόγω της πίστης τους στο Ισλάμ και ως εκ τούτου δεν κάνουν επαναστάσεις.» Παρέχει επίσης μια ισχυρή απόδειξη της μαρξιστικής άποψης ότι η ιστορία δεν προχωρά απλώς με εξελικτική πρόοδο, αλλά στην πραγματικότητα μέσα από επαναστατικά άλματα. Τέλος, αποδεικνύοντας ότι η ιστορία της Μέσης Ανατολής έχει χαρακτηριστεί από επαναστατικά σημεία καμπίς, το άρθρο του Σαβράν αποκαλύπτει τον ρηχό και αβάσιμο χαρακτήρα της πολιτικής των “ρεαλιστικών” μεταρρυθμίσεων (η πεποίθηση ότι η επανάσταση είναι μια μακρινή πιθανότητα και η αριστερή πολιτική θα πρέπει να στοχεύει σε αλλαγές μικρής κλίμακας). Στην πραγματικότητα, είναι αδύνατο να επιτευχθούν (μικρές ή μεγάλες) αλλαγές χωρίς επαναστάσεις. Με άλλα λόγια, η ιστορική εμπειρία αποδεικνύει ότι

η επανάσταση είναι ένας πιο «ρεαλιστικός» στόχος από τη μεταρρύθμιση.

Ένα άλλο συνοδευτικό αφιέρωμα περιλαμβάνει τις αντιδραστικές τάσεις και την απαραίτητη απάντηση σ' αυτές σε άλλα μέρη του κόσμου. Στο άρθρο του με τίτλο «Μέθοδοι κατανόησης του «σύγχρονου»: μια συζήτηση για το λαϊκισμό και το φασισμό», ο Τζενκ Σαράτσογλου υποστηρίζει ότι ο φασισμός είναι μια πολύ πιο κατάλληλη και χρήσιμη έννοια από το «λαϊκίστικη δεξιά» (μια έννοια που είναι σήμερα δημοφιλής μεταξύ της διεθνούς αριστεράς) για να κατανοήσουμε αυτά τα αντιδραστικά κινήματα. Ο Σαράτσογλου αναγνωρίζει την «αντεπαναστατική ανατρεπτικότητα» και τον «συντηρητισμό» ως τα δύο βασικά διακριτικά χαρακτηριστικά των φασιστικών κινήματων και καθεστώτων της μεσοπολεμικής περιόδου και συγκρίνει τα σύγχρονα αντιδραστικά κινήματα χρησιμοποιώντας αυτές τις έννοιες. Υποστηρίζει ότι τα αντιδραστικά κινήματα των σχετικά περιφερειακών χωρών όπως η Ουγγαρία και η Τουρκία, μοιάζουν με τον κλασικό φασισμό της μεσοπολεμικής εποχής περισσότερο από τους ομολόγους τους στις προηγμένες δυτικές χώρες.

Μια κάπως διαφορετική λύση για την κατάσταση στην Ευρώπη και στον κόσμο παρουσιάστηκε από την Τελική Διακήρυξη της 4^{ης} Ευρωμεσογειακής Διάσκεψης, μιας διεθνούς εκδήλωσης στην οποία συμμετείχαν αγωνιστές και διανοούμενοι από 18 χώρες στα τέλη Μαΐου 2017, ώστε να συζητήσουν την πορεία προς τα εμπρός σε διεθνές επίπεδο και ειδικότερα, στο πλαίσιο της Ευρώπης και του MENA.

Αυτό το έτος είναι η εκατονταετηρίδα της Οκτωβριανής Επανάστασης του 1917. Ήταν ένα κοσμοϊστορικό γεγονός που ανοίγει νέες προοπτικές, όχι μόνο για τους λαούς της πρώην τσαρικής Ρωσίας, αλλά και για την ανθρωπότητα στο σύνολό της και, ειδικότερα, για τους προλετάριους του κόσμου. Γιορτάζουμε αυτό το κοσμοϊστορικό γεγονός και εμβαθύνουμε στις διάφορες πτυχές του σε τέσσερα διαφορετικά άρθρα.

Στο άρθρο του, «Οκτώβρης του '17: Ένα παγκόσμιο γεγονός», ο Σάββας Μιχαήλ συζητά τις συγγένειες και τις διαφορές μεταξύ 1917 και 1991, σε διάλογο με ένα άρθρο του Γάλλου φιλόσοφου Αλαίν Μπαντιού που γράφτηκε λίγο μετά τη διάλυση της Σοβιετικής Ένωσης. Ο Σάββας Μιχαήλ υπενθυμίζει ότι το 1917 ήταν ένα παγκόσμιο γεγονός και αναγνωρίστηκε από όλους ως η αρχή μιας παγκόσμιας σοσιαλιστικής επανάστασης. Η κοινωνική επανάσταση επεκτάθηκε από τη Ρωσία στην Ανατολική και Κεντρική Ευρώπη και παρήγαγε αποτελέσματα που κυμαίνονται από την Ευρώπη ως την Ασία και τις ΗΠΑ. Όπως πολύ καλά γνώριζε ο Κέυνς τότε, ο Μπολσεβικισμός και η επανάσταση του Οκτώβρη αποτελούσαν απειλή για την παγκόσμια καπιταλιστική τάξη. Με αυτή την έννοια, η επανάσταση του Οκτώβρη δεν ήταν μια πρόωγη απόπειρα. Αντίθετα, ήταν ένα παγκόσμιο ιστορικό «γεγονός» που άνοιξε μια εντελώς νέα εποχή για την ανθρωπότητα. Αντιθέτως, το 1991 δεν ήταν «γεγονός», αλλά «προσομοίωση γεγονότος»: δεν άνοιξε μια νέα

εποχή για την ανθρωπότητα. Ο Σάββας Μιχαήλ καταλήγει τονίζοντας ότι ο κύκλος που άνοιξε με την Οκτωβριανή Επανάσταση δεν έχει κλείσει. Ζούμε ακόμα στην εποχή του Οκτώβρη και πρέπει να κάνουμε την επανάσταση διαρκή στο νέο αιώνα.

Το άρθρο του Οζγκούρ Οζτούρκ, «Σοσιαλιστικός σχεδιασμός στον 21^ο αιώνα» συζητά τις δυνατότητες του σοσιαλισμού αναφορικά με τις δυνατότητες του παρόντος. Ο Οζτούρκ προσπαθεί να περιγράψει το είδος του συστήματος οικονομικού σχεδιασμού που μπορεί να χτιστεί άμεσα, το πολύ σε λίγα χρόνια μετά από μια νέα επανάσταση. Σύμφωνα με τον ίδιο, στον 21^ο αιώνα, μπορεί να δημιουργηθεί ένα σύστημα σχεδιασμού που είναι θεμελιωδώς διαφορετικό και πολύ πιο αποτελεσματικό από τον προηγούμενο αιώνα. Επισημαίνει το γεγονός ότι τον 20^ο αιώνα ένα από τα σημαντικότερα προβλήματα της σοσιαλιστικής οικοδόμησης ήταν τα εμπόδια και οι φραγμοί που μπήκαν στη μετατροπή του χρήματος σε κεφάλαιο. Ωστόσο, ένα σύστημα σχεδιασμού και «πληρωμής» που βασίζεται στο χρόνο εργασίας – όπως προβλέπεται από το Μαρξ στο έργο του *Κριτική του Προγράμματος της Γκότα* – θα περιορίσει τις νομισματικές σχέσεις και, ως εκ τούτου, την απειλή που δημιουργεί το κεφάλαιο. Επιπλέον, ένα τέτοιο σύστημα θα λύσει πιο εύκολα το πρόβλημα του υπολογισμού. Ο Οζτούρκ συζητά επίσης τις πιθανές μορφές νέων εργασιακών σχέσεων και ισχυρίζεται ότι υπό τις παρούσες συνθήκες ένα σοσιαλιστικό καθεστώς μπορεί να στοχεύσει ρεαλιστικά στην πλήρη απασχόληση, στην πλήρη αυτοματοποίηση, στα μηδενικά εργατικά ατυχήματα και στη συνεχή μείωση του χρόνου εργασίας. Σύμφωνα με τον ίδιο, αυτές οι δυνητικές τάσεις δεν μπορούν να αποκτήσουν πλήρη πραγματικότητα κάτω από τις καπιταλιστικές σχέσεις.

Η Αρμαάν Τουλουνάι εξετάζει μια πτυχή της Οκτωβριανής Επανάστασης που έχει σε κάποιο βαθμό αγνοηθεί σκόπιμα από ορισμένους κύκλους. Από τη στιγμή που ξεκίνησε η αντιλενινιστική, μάλιστα αντιμαρξιστική στροφή στην αριστερά από τη δεκαετία του '80, η σημασία του Μαρξισμού ως κορμού σκέψης και προγράμματος και του Κομμουνισμού ως αναζήτηση ενός διαφορετικού τύπου κοινωνίας για το ζήτημα της γυναικείας απελευθέρωσης έχει απορριφθεί σε αυξανόμενο βαθμό. Οι πολιτικές της ταυτότητας ήταν η πανάκεια. Το κομμουνιστικό κίνημα αγνοούσε την καταπίεση των γυναικών και δεν είχε τίποτα να προσφέρει στο δρόμο της απελευθέρωσης των γυναικών. Η Τουλουνάι μελετά τις πολιτικές που εφαρμόστηκαν από τους Μπολσεβίκους, αμέσως μετά την επανάσταση για να αποδείξει αναμφισβήτητα ότι ο Μπολσεβικισμός υπό τον Λένιν και τον Τρότσκι ήταν ασύγκριτα πιο ευαίσθητος στη γυναικεία καταπίεση από το φιλελεύθερο κατεστημένο που τόσο λάτρεψαν τα αντιμαρξιστικά μεταμοντέρνα ρεύματα της εποχής, έθεσε σε εφαρμογή ένα συγκεκριμένο πρόγραμμα μέτρων αδιανόητο στις πιο προχωρημένες κοινωνίες του καπιταλιστικού κόσμου και προσπάθησε να δημιουργήσει όχι μόνο τυπική ισότητα μεταξύ των φύλων αλλά πραγματική. Το ότι τα περισσότερα από τα μέτρα αυτά αργότερα αναιρέθηκαν από τη γραφειοκρατία που σφετερίστηκε

την πολιτική εξουσία, γεγονός που υποδεικνύεται εξίσου από την Τουλουνάι στο άρθρο της, δε μπορεί με κανένα τρόπο να αναφέρεται ως αποδεικτικό στοιχείο για την υποτιθέμενη αδιαφορία του Κομμουνισμού για την καταπίεση των γυναικών. Η γραφειοκρατία εξάλλου, εγκατέλειψε τον Κομμουνισμό και έτσι καμία από τις δραστηριότητές της δεν ενοχοποιεί κατ' ανάγκη αυτό το κίνημα.

Το τελευταίο μας άρθρο σχετικά με την Οκτωβριανή επανάσταση εκτίνεται σε μια περιοχή που πάντα παραβλέπεται στο δυτικό Μαρξισμό. Από καιρό είναι συνηθισμένο να παρατηρείται ότι η προλεταριακή εξουσία επιτεύχθηκε για πρώτη φορά από τους Ρώσους, ίσως το πιο καθυστερημένο μεταξύ των μεγάλων εθνών της Ευρώπης, αλλά ξέφυγε από τους δυτικά-προκατειλημμένους σχολιαστές της Οκτωβριανής επανάστασης ότι, ακόμη περισσότερο, αυτή η επανάσταση ήταν επίσης, μια επανάσταση των μουσουλμανικών λαών. Ένα σημαντικό στοιχείο της Σοβιετικής Ένωσης, όπως καθιερώθηκε τελικά, σύμφωνα με τις κατευθυντήριες γραμμές του Λένιν στις 31 Δεκεμβρίου 1922, ήταν οι μουσουλμανικοί και κυρίως τουρκικοί λαοί της εσωτερικής Ρωσίας στα ανατολικά της σύνορα (Τάταροι, Μπασκίρ, Καλμίκι, Νταγκεστάνι, Τσετσένοι κλπ.), της Υπερκαυκασίας (Αζέροι, Αμπχάζιοι κ.λπ.), και της Κεντρικής Ασίας (σε αυτό που είναι σήμερα το Καζακστάν, το Τουρκμενιστάν, το Ουζμπεκιστάν, το Κιργιζιστάν και το Τατζικιστάν). Σε ένα πρωτότυπο άρθρο, ο Σουνγκούρ Σαβράν εξηγεί συνοπτικά πώς ο Κομμουνισμός/Μπολσεβικισμός κατέλαβε την καρδιά των μουσουλμανικών λαών αμέσως μετά τη νίκη της επανάστασης και πώς οι Μουσουλμάνοι Κομμουνιστές κατέκτησαν τη δική τους γη και λαούς. Η μετέπειτα άνοδος κάτω από τον Στάλιν του λεγόμενου μεγαλορωσικού σοβινισμού και η επίδρασή του στη ζωή των μουσουλμανικών λαών στη Σοβιετική Ένωση, είναι υλικό για περαιτέρω μελέτη.

Ένα άρθρο που σχετίζεται με έναν κάπως έμμεσο τρόπο με αυτά της επανάστασης του Οκτώβρη, επικεντρώνεται στην κατάρρευση της εμπειρίας του 20^{ου} αιώνα στη σοσιαλιστική οικοδόμηση μέσω του πρίσματος της Βουλγαρίας. Το άρθρο της Ντανιέλα Πένκοβα με τίτλο «Η Βουλγαρία στην παγίδα του νεοφιλελευθερισμού» διερευνά τη διαδικασία της καπιταλιστικής παλινόρθωσης στη χώρα μετά το 1989. Η συγγραφέας υποστηρίζει ότι οι θεσμοί του διεθνούς κεφαλαίου, ιδιαίτερα το Διεθνές Νομισματικό Ταμείο και η Παγκόσμια Τράπεζα, επέβαλαν στη Βουλγαρία μια συνταγή η οποία ήταν πολύ παρόμοια μ' εκείνη που επιβλήθηκε στις χώρες του Τρίτου Κόσμου. Αν και η Βουλγαρία ήταν μια βιομηχανοποιημένη χώρα με αξιοσέβαστο βιοτικό επίπεδο μέχρι το 1989, οι νεοφιλελεύθερες συνταγές της περιόδου μετά το 1989 (όπως η ιδιωτικοποίηση και η απορύθμιση) οι οποίες υποβάθμισαν τη ποιότητα ζωής του βουλγαρικού λαού. Το άρθρο αποδεικνύει μέσα από εμπειρικά δεδομένα ότι παρόλο που στα χαρτιά η βουλγαρική οικονομία φαίνεται να αναπτύσσεται, οι απλοί άνθρωποι αγωνίζονται να καλύψουν τις βασικές τους ανάγκες. Η Πένκοβα ολοκληρώνει το άρθρο της, υπογραμμίζοντας ότι η εγκατάλειψη της

νεοφιλελεύθερης «αναπτυξιακής» πολιτικής είναι απολύτως απαραίτητη για την επίτευξη μιας εύρυθμης βιομηχανίας και κοινωνικής δομής.

Αυτό το έτος δεν είναι μόνο η εκατονταετηρίδα της Οκτωβριανής Επανάστασης, αλλά και η 150^η επέτειος της δημοσίευσης του 1^{ου} Τόμου του *Κεφαλαίου*. Το τελικό μας άρθρο αφιερώνεται συνεπώς σε μια γενική επισκόπηση της μεθόδου, του περιεχομένου και της σημασίας αυτού του αριστουργήματος της ανθρώπινης σκέψης, το οποίο είναι μια σύνθεση κοινωνικής επιστήμης και επανάστασης.

Το *Κεφάλαιο* ουσιαστικά αναφέρεται στην προοδευτική εξάντληση των δυνατοτήτων του καπιταλιστικού τρόπου παραγωγής για να οδηγήσει την ανθρωπότητα σε ένα καλύτερο μέλλον και στην αναγκαιότητα της ανατροπής του, προκειμένου να απελευθερώσει την ενέργεια του εργαζόμενου πληθυσμού του πλανήτη για προοδευτικούς σκοπούς. Το γεγονός ότι βρισκόμαστε ήδη σ' αυτή τη φάση ιστορικής ανάπτυξης είναι ολοφάνερα σαφές από τη βαθιά παγκόσμια οικονομική κρίση, την επικείμενη απειλή πυρηνικού πολέμου και ακόμη και παγκόσμιου πόλεμου και καταστροφής της φύσης, της μοναδικής πηγής αναπαραγωγής για τον άνθρωπο και τα άλλα έμβια όντα. Η υπεράσπιση της ανθρωπότητας, ακόμα και της ζωής εν γένει, απαιτεί την έλευση ενός νέου τρόπου παραγωγής που να βασίζεται στη συλλογική ιδιοκτησία στα μέσα παραγωγής και στο δημοκρατικό κεντρικό σχεδιασμό, καθώς και στην αδελφική ένωση όλων των εθνών του κόσμου. Εν ολίγοις, απαιτεί διεθνιστικό σοσιαλισμό. Αυτό μπορεί να επιτευχθεί μόνο από τις δυνάμεις του προλεταριάτου, μέσω της επαναστατικής ταξικής πάλης. Σ' αυτό αναφέρεται ο επαναστατικός Μαρξισμός και γι' αυτό το περιοδικό μας φέρει υπερήφανα αυτό το όνομα.

В този брой

Първият брой на *Революционен марксизъм*, годишното издание на английски език на турското списание *Devrimci Marksizm*, излезе в края на 2016 г. Той се разпространяваше и продаваше по целия свят – от Бейрут до Буенос Айрес, от Санкт Петербург до Скопие, от Милано до Монтевидео. Не се продаваше с хиляди, но по свой скромнен начин изпълни идеално целта си: да допринесе за интернационализма в революционната Марксистка теория, водейки по естествен път до пролетарски интернационализъм в политическата и организационната сфера: в Близкия Изток и Северна Африка, на Балканите и в Кавказ, в Средиземноморския и Евразийския региони, и в света като цяло. Следвайки тази цел предприехме нова стъпка, която описваме в края на броя. Най-малкото така ще предадем същината на нашето послание към хората по света, които не могат да четат на английски, но искат да чуят гласа на интернационалистическия и революционния марксизъм.

Този втори брой, *Революционен марксизъм 2018*, се стреми да продължи работата към същата цел, включвайки: анализ на въпроса за Близкия Изток; статия относно реакционните движения в империалистическите страни; специална доза Октомврийска революция по повод стогодишнината от този велик народен празник; статия, хвърляща светлина върху разпада на България, където до падането на Берлинската стена съществува държава на работниците;

статия, която насочва вниманието ни към великия шедьовър на настоящето и бъдещето на човечеството, *Капиталът*, и 150-годишнината от публикуването на неговия първи том.

В своето въведение и в няколко от основните си статии, първият брой описва световното положение през призмата на продължаващата вече почти десетилетие икономическа криза, започнала през 2008 г., и конкретно няколко паралелни процеса: новият възход на фашизма по света, съпътстван от този на ислямистките такфири групировки с най-ярък представител Ислямска държава; засилващата се опасност регионалните конфликти да се разраснат до световна война и зачестилите народни бунтове след 2011 г. под формата както на масови демонстрации (Египет, Тунис, Йемен, Бахрейн, Уолстрийт, Гърция, Испания, Турция, Бразилия, Балканите и т.н.), така и на гласуване за леви движения (Подemos, СИРИЗА, Сандърс, Корбин и най-вече Ляв работнически фронт в Аржентина).

Броят излезе веднага след избирането на Доналд Тръмп за президент на най-силната империалистическа страна в света и това събитие беляза началото на обсъждане на новия интернационален реакционен феномен, наричан предимно „популизъм“, „крайно дясно“, „национализъм“ и т.н. Първоначалната ни диагноза, че Доналд Тръмп е „непредвидим фашист“, който няма партия или паравоенна организация, или протофашист, бе потвърдена от фактите от изминалата година. Думата „фашист“ бе често употребявана, особено около събитията в Шарлътсвил, за да опише поведението на Тръмп, който почти опрости действията на белите националисти и самоописващите се като неонацисти. Стив Банън, най-висшият идеолог на т.нар. „Алт-дясно“, вече не е в кабинета, но все още е очевидно алтер-егото на американския президент и извършва нещо подобно на държавни посещения в страни като Китай, за опипване на почвата преди самият президент да посети страната. Отвъд границите на САЩ, на международната сцена либералното статукво прекалено бързо характеризира резултатите от изборите в Европа като „поредица от поражения“ на това, което погрешно бива наричано „популизъм“: във Франция Марин Льо Пен, най-яръкият представител на разрастващата се протофашистка чума, получи във втория тур на изборите гласа на всеки трети френски гражданин, а в Германия Алтернатива за Германия се превърна в третата по големина партия в страната, въпреки обрата в имиграционната политика на Ангела Меркел. Ако това е „поражение“, човек се чуди каква ли би могла да бъде победата на едно международно движение, което се считаше до последния момент за лудост!

Обратната страна на медала за либералите беше победата на Емануел Макрон. В един ясен пример на пожелателно мислене, те я тълкуват като

завръщане на глобализма след поразителните му поражения с Брекзит и Тръмп. Емануел I, както неговите френски критици вляво са го нарекли саркастично заради кралския му стил и управлението му чрез укази (самият той подражава на методите, използвани от Ердоган в Турция, за които с право същото либерално статукво смята, че стават все по-деспотични), видя как магията му се превърна в пепел – популярността му, според проучванията на общественото мнение, бързо се сри. Успехът, постигнат чрез две стачки в рамките на десет дни (12 и 21 септември 2017 г.), въпреки капитулацията на ръководството на някои профсъюзни конфедерации, е свидетелство, че “френската пролет”, за която писахме в нашия първи брой във връзка с пролетта на 2016 г. срещу предишната контрареформа на трудовия закон от страна на така нареченото “социалистическо” правителство на Франсоа Оланд, обещава да продължи. Франция остава ключовата страна в Европа, както подчертахме в първия си брой. Глобалистичният и неолиберален път на Макрон не е решение на “Тръмп” и “Льо Пен”. Само политическата независимост и обединената борба на работническата класа могат категорично да отблъснат нарастващото зло. Световният хоризонт все още е изпълнен с Модивци, Дутертовци, Путинци, Ердоганци, Алиевци, Орбанци и Тръмповци.

Не по-малко забележима е перспективата за глобална война и подчертахме за тази заплаха още в първия си брой. Като оставим настрана безкрайните страдания в Сирия, Ирак, Йемен и Либия и все още горящата пепел на войната в Украйна, в азиатската геостратегическа зона се наблюдават различни аспекти на възникващия конфликт между империализма и Китай. Най-изтъкнатият сред тях е очевидният авантюризм на САЩ и Северна Корея, който заплашва да вкара света в първата ядрена катастрофа след Хирошима и Нагазаки отпреди 75 години. Както е характерно за неговия протофашистки жар, Тръмп заплашва Северна Корея с “милиони жертви” и да изравни цялата страна със земята. Въпреки лъжливото представяне на фактите от “международната общност” (друго име за империализма) и от капиталистическите медии, ядрената подготовка на Северна Корея е отбранителна мярка срещу американския стремеж за военно господство в Тихия океан, наличието на общо над 80 хиляди американски войници в Япония и Южна Корея и нарастващата заплаха от война на азиатския хоризонт като цяло. В конфронтацията си с империализма, революционните марксисти трябва да застанат зад бюрократично деградиралата работническа държава, дори и в случая на тази карикатура на работническа държава под формата на “династичен социализъм”.

По-близо до дома, в нашия регион на Близкия изток и Северна Африка, тази реакционна вълна доведе до ново преподреждане на силите. Одобрението

от страна на Тръмп на египетския Бонапарт ал Сиси по време на последното му посещение във Вашингтон беше последвано от помпозното му посещение в Саудитска Арабия. Кичозният момент на това посещение, когато нелепото трио Тръмп, крал Салман и египетския президент се снима как гали светещ глобус с бодигарди на фона, беше значимо преди всичко заради символичното отсъствие на двама герои. От една страна, ционисткият Израел беше забележително отсъствие от новия съюз, който се създава. Неприкритата про-израелската и анти-иранската политическа ориентация на Тръмп надхвърля всички усложнения и противоречия на политиката му спрямо региона. Независимо от осезаемите му усилия да ухажва Путин, Тръмп, както се потвърди още веднъж в речта му пред ООН, агресивно настоява за обединение на всички реакционни сили в Близкия изток, за да се изолира и постави на колене Иран, въпреки неговия почти неразрушимия съюз с Русия на Путин. Това, между другото, е и причината, поради която наскоро Хамас беше натиснат да капитулира пред Египет и Израел. Другото видно отсъствие беше това на Ердоган, друг източник на противоречия за политиката на Тръмп в Близкия изток и Северна Африка. Официалното обяснение бе, че посещението на Тръмп съвпада с конгреса на ПСР у дома, където Ердоган се върна, за да поеме контрола над партията след референдума в Турция, който постави началото на прехода към още по-президентска система. Обаче съвсем скоро стана ясно, че истинската причина е друга.

Сунитската религиозна сила, която Саудитците искаха да демонстрират пред света като поканиха цялата гама от арабски и неарабски държави, за да поздравят Тръмп, се оказва ефимерна. Катарската криза счупи точетата на това триумфално отбелязване на единството, като вкара клин между лагера, воден от Саудитска Арабия, и рабисткия блок. За да разберете какво имаме предвид, помислете за следната поредица от събития. 2013: бонапартистският преврат на ал Сиси сваля в Египет правителството на Морси и Мюсюлманските братя (Икхуан) с помощта на Саудитска Арабия и и хладнокръвно убива стотици поддръжници на Икхуан на площад Рабия ал-Адауия в Кайро, което води до криза между Саудитска Арабия и Турция, тъй като Ердоган е заложил цялата си стратегия да се превърне в “Раис” (лидер) на сунитите в съюз с Икхуан в редица страни (Тунис, Сирия, Мароко, Палестина, т.е. Хамас, както и Египет); 2015: въпреки изявения си рабизъм (реваншистско движение спрямо клането на площад Рабия), Ердоган се обвързва с новия крал Салман от Саудитска Арабия след смъртта на бившия крал, присъединявайки се към края на 2015 г. дори към Ислямския военен съюз за борба с тероризма, една саудитска инициатива, обединяваща 34 сунитски народа, и почти отиде да воюва със Сирия през февруари 2016 г., заедно със Саудитска Арабия и

Катар (двойка, заслужаваща внимание!); 15 юли 2016 г. : Саудитският лагер изоставя правителството на Ердоган на съдбата му при опита за преврат; 2017: сред 13-те условия за помирение, поставени от водената от Саудитска Арабия анти-катарска коалиция, е включено оттеглянето на турските военни сили от Катар - условие, отхвърлено от турската страна, която, лоялно на своята рабистка стратегия, остава категорично на страната на Катар. Трябва да побързае да добавим, че след неуспешния преврат от юли 2016 г. Турция търси балансираща сила в лагера Русия-Иран срещу натиска на САЩ и ЕС върху международната си ориентация и вътрешната си политика.

Всичко това показва, че религиозните сунитски сили в Близкия изток и Северна Африка не са в състояние да формират трайна единна коалиция срещу шиитския лагер, воден от Иран. Това обаче не означава, че заплахата от сектантска война в целия Близък изток сега е останала от миналото. Означава само, че лагерът на сунитите не е толкова обединен, колкото изглеждаше в определен момент, и че Иран има възможност за маневра и може да бъде в състояние поне да неутрализира някои от страните в реакционния сунитски лагер. Това, че заплахата продължава да съществува и вероятно ще се възроди от политиките на Тръмп и Израел, се вижда от непрекъснатите войни в страни като Сирия, Ирак и Йемен. Само единният и независим фронт на работническата класа и социалистическите сили в целия регион, обединявайки се със съответните сили на Балканите и северното Средиземноморие, може да спре тази заплахата от сунитско-шиитска религиозна война - перспектива, която със сигурност ще доведе до покосяването на населението и унищожаването на историческото културно наследство на региона. Както се казва в заключителната резолюция на Четвъртата извънредна евро-средиземноморска конференция, проведена в Атина на 26-28 май 2017 г., която публикуваме в този брой като документ: “Касапницата може да бъде спряна само от широк фронт на антиимпериалистическите и анти-ционистките сили, които се борят и срещу реакционните режими в своите собствени страни. Само една Социалистическа федерация в Близкия изток и Северна Африка ще сложи окончателното край на всички страдания в региона.”

В този водовъртеж Масуд Барзани, лидер на иракски Кюрдистан, добавя референдума за независимост, който призовава всички стари демони на регионалните сили и машинациите на империалистите. Революционните марксисти са за самоопределение на кюрдите. Проблемът е, че този референдум не е разработен за такова самоопределение, а по-скоро за самоиздигането на Барзани и за пълненето на касите на неговите петролни поддръжници. Барзани се бори и очевидно възнамерява да се бори и в бъдеще срещу свободата на кюрдите в други части на Кюрдистан (т.е. в Турция, Иран и Сирия). Така

че победата в този референдум иронично означава поражение за каузата за национално освобождение на Кюрдистан, освен че дава на империализма още един плацдарм в Близкия изток. Революционните марксисти са непоколебими срещу всяка военна намеса на регионални власти в иракски Кюрдистан, но се противопоставят на Барзани и подкрепят освобождението на цялото кюрдско население.

Първата ни тема в този брой е свързана с различните аспекти на борбата в региона на Близкия изток и Северна Африка, както в краткосрочна, така и в дългосрочна перспектива. Първата статия по тази тема анализира сирийската гражданска война и международните последици от нея в последователните ѝ етапи. Статията на Левент Дьолек, озаглавена “Етапите, уроците и бъдещето на сирийската гражданска война”, започва с констатацията, че след като народният бунт срещу диктатурата на Асад с искания за свобода и справедливост не успява да придобие пролетарска политическа рамка, той бързо става инструмент на империалистките манипулации и реакционните държави в региона. Това показва как намесата на империализма, ционизма и регионалните сили (като Саудитска Арабия, Катар, Турция и Иран) превръща народния бунт в кървава религиозно-сектантска война между сунитите и другите (алауити, друзи, християни, и т.н.). В статията се прави подробен анализ на военните действия на всички основни участници в гражданската война (САЩ, Русия, Ислямска държава, Свободната сирийска армия и др.). Отделен раздел е посветен на еволюцията на Сирийски Кюрдистан. Дьолек разпознава силната прогресивна основа на кюрдското движение в Рожава, но твърди, че сегашното му военно сътрудничество с американския империализъм е грешно и опасно. Смятаме, че статията на Дьолек ще остане ценен източник относно гражданската война в Сирия през следващите години.

Статията на Кутлу Дане, озаглавена “Стогодишнината от Балфурската декларация, меморандумът на Накба и ционистката окупация”, прави подробно изследване на историческия контекст на колонизацията на Палестина. Обсъжда историческия контекст на Балфурската декларация от 1917 г. (която дава картбланш за основаването на държавата Израел), като хвърля светлина върху променящите се позиции на всички участници в процеса (включително британския и френския империализъм и Османската империя). Статията на Дане показва, че както американският империализъм, така и Съветският съюз (който по онова време следва политиката на “мирно съжителство” с империализма) подкрепят основаването на Израел през 1948 г. Авторът също така подчертава факта, че всички реакционни режими в региона на практика подкрепят Израел. Както показва Дане, сегашното правителство на ПСР в Турция, което продължава да си сътрудничи с Израел в много области и

никога не е прегръщало искрено палестинската кауза, не е изключение.

Сунгур Савран изследва революциите в Близкия изток от началото на XX век до днес и от това извлича обобщени изводи. Според Савран Близкият изток преживява голям брой революции през XX век, а в региона (Египет и Тунис) се извършват и първите победоносни революции на XXI век. Статията показва, че в XX век Близкият изток изживява четири революционни вълни и арабската революция от 2011 г. може да се счита за пета вълна. Както отбелязва Савран, честотата на революционните вълни опровергава опростеното западно убеждение, че “мюсюлманските общества са покорни поради вярата си в исляма и следователно не правят революции”. Съща така се дава силно доказателство за марксистката теза, че историята прогресира не само чрез еволюционно развитие, но и чрез революционни скокове. И накрая, като демонстрира, че историята на Близкия изток е определена от революционни повратни точки, статията на Савран разкрива плиткия и неоснователен характер на твърдението на реформаторите, че са “реалисти” (вярвайки, че революцията е далечна възможност и левите политики трябва да се борят за малки промени). Всъщност е невъзможно да се постигнат малки или големи промени без революции. С други думи, историческият опит доказва, че революцията е по-реалистична цел от реформите.

Друга тема разглежда реакционните тенденции и необходимия за тях отговор в други части на света. В своята статия, озаглавена “Методи за разбиране на” съвременното”: дискусия за популизма и фашизма”, Ценк Сарачоглу твърди, че фашизмът е много по-подходящ и полезен термин от “популистко дясно” (популярен днес термин сред международната левица) за разбирането на тези реакционни движения. Сарачоглу идентифицира “контрареволюционната подриваемост” и “не-съвременността” като двете ключови отличителни характеристики на фашистките движения и режими в периода между двете световни войни и ги сравнява със съвременните реакционни движения, използвайки тези концепции. Той смята, че реакционните движения в сравнително периферните държави като Унгария и Турция наподобяват класическия фашизъм от междувоенния период повече от техните аналози в развитите западни държави.

По-различна оценка на положението в Европа и света е представена в заключителната декларация от Четвъртата евро-средиземноморска конференция - международно събитие, в което участници от 18 държави се срещнаха в края на май 2017 г., за да обсъдят бъдещето на международно равнище и по-специално ситуацията в Европа, Близкия изток и Северна Африка.

Тази година е стогодишнината от октомврийската революция от 1917 г.

Това е епохално събитие, открило нови визии не само за народите от бившата царска Русия, но и за човечеството като цяло, и по-специално за работниците и потиснатите по света. Ние чествуваме това световно историческо събитие и се задълбочаваме в различни негови аспекти в четири различни статии.

В своя “Октомври 1917: Световно събитие” Савас Майкъл обсъжда връзките и разликите между 1917 и 1991 г., позовавайки се на статия на френския философ Ален Бадиу, написана малко след разпада на Съветския съюз. Савас Майкъл припомня, че 1917 г. е световно събитие и е признато от всички за начало на глобална социалистическа революция. Социалната революция се разширява от Русия към Източна и Централна Европа и произвежда ефекти, засягащи от Европа до Азия и САЩ. Както Кейнс тогава идеално си дава сметка, болшевизмът и октомврийската революция представляват заплахата за световния капиталистически ред. В този смисъл, революцията със сигурност не е преждевременен опит. По-скоро е световно историческо “събитие”, което открива нова епоха за човечеството. За разлика от нея, 1991 г. не е “събитие”, а “симулирано събитие” – то не открива нова епоха за човечеството. Савас Майкъл стига до извода, че цикълът, започнал с Октомврийската революция, не е приключил. Ние все още живеем в епохата на октомври и трябва да направим революцията постоянна през новия век.

Статията на Йозгюр Йозтюрк, “Социалистическото планиране през 21-ви век”, обсъжда потенциала на социализма според възможностите на настоящето. Йозтюрк се опитва да очертае една система за планова икономика, която би могла да бъде изградена веднага, най-много за няколко години след новата революция. Според него в XXI век може да се създаде планова система, която да бъде фундаментално различна и много по-ефективна от онези в предишния век. Той посочва факта, че през XX век един от основните проблеми на социалистическото строителство е било предотвратяването на превръщането на парите в капитал. Обаче, една системата за планиране и “плащане”, основаваща се на работното време - както предвижда Маркс в своята “Критика на Готската програма” - ще ограничи паричните отношения и оттам заплахата, идваща от капитала. Освен това подобна система ще реши проблема с изчисляването по-лесно. Йозгюр Йозтюрк обсъжда и възможните форми на нови индустриални отношения и твърди, че при сегашните условия социалистическият режим може реалистично да постигне пълна заетост, пълна автоматизация, нулеви трудови злоупотреби и непрекъснато съкращаване на работното време. Според него, това са потенциални тенденции, които никога не могат да бъдат реализирани при капиталистически отношения.

Армаган Тулунай взима един аспект от октомврийската революция, която до известна степен целенасочено бива игнорирана от някои кръгове. След

като анти-ленинистският завој, който по същността си е антимакистски, тръгва отляво през 80-те години на миналия век, отслабвайки значението на марксизма като начин на мислене и на комунизма като стремеж към различен тип общество, въпросът за женското освобождение се отхвърля в нарастващ мащаб. Панацея става политиката на идентичността, самоопределението. Комунистическото движение забравя за потисничеството над жената и не предлага никакъв път за освобождение на жените. Тулунай изрежда политиките, изпълнени от болшевиките непосредствено след революцията, за да докаже неопровержимо, че болшевизмът при Ленин и Троцки е несравнимо по-чувствителен към женското потисничество от либералното статукво, така обожавано от днешните антимакистски постмодернистични течения. Болшевизмът реализира конкретна програма от мерки, които не са и сънувани в най-напредналите общества на капиталистическия свят, и се опитва да създаде не само формално равенство между половете, но и истинско такова. Фактът, че повечето от тези мерки по-късно са премахнати от бюрократията, узурпирала политическата власт, което също Тулунай доказва в своята статия, по никакъв начин не може да се използва като доказателство за предполагаемото безразличие на комунизма към потискането на жените. В края на краищата бюрократията изоставя комунизма и затова никое от нейните действия не е необходимо да се приписва на комунистическото движение.

Последната ни статия за Октомврийската революция засяга тема, която винаги е оставала незабелязана от западния марксизъм. Отдавна е обичайно да се наблюдава, че пролетарската власт за пръв път е установена от руснаците, може би най-изостаналата сред големите нации в Европа, но западните пристрастни коментатори не си дават сметка, че Октомврийската революция е също и революция на мюсюлманските народи. Важна част от Съветския съюз, както е окончателно създаден според насоките на Ленин от 31 декември 1922 г., стават мюсюлманските и предимно тюркски народи във вътрешната част на Русия, на източните ѝ граници (татари, башкири, калмуци, дагестанци, чеченци и др.), в Транскавказия (азери, абхазци и др.) и в Централна Азия (в днешните Казахстан, Туркменистан, Узбекистан, Киргизстан и Таджикистан). В своя оригинална статия Сунгур Савран обяснява накратко как комунизмът/болшевизмът завладява сърцето на мюсюлманските народи непосредствено след победата на революцията и как мюсюлманските комунисти спечелват собствената си земя и народи. По-късно по времето на Сталин се ражда така нареченият Велик руски шовинизъм, чието влияние върху живота на мюсюлманските народи в Съветския съюз е тема за по-нататъшно изучаване.

Една статия, свързана косвено с тези за Октомврийската революция, се фокусира върху провала през XX век на опита за изграждане на социализъм

в България. Статията на Даниела Пенкова, озаглавена “България в капана на неолиберализма”, изследва процеса на възстановяване на капитализма в страната след 1989 г. Авторката твърди, че институциите на международния капитал, особено Международният валутен фонд и Световната банка, налагат на България рецепта, много подобна на вече наложените в страните от Третия свят. Въпреки че България до 1989 г. е индустриализирана страна с достойни условия на живот, неолибералните предписания в периода след 1989 г., като приватизация и дерегулация, водят до обедняване на българския народ. Статията емпирично доказва, че макар и на хартия българската икономика да нараства, обикновените хора се мъчат, за да посрещнат основните си нужди. Пенкова завършва своя анализ, като подчертава, че изоставянето на неолибералната “политика на развитие” е абсолютно необходимо, за да се постигне добре работеща индустрия и социална структура.

Тази година не е само стогодишнината от октомврийската революция, но и 150-годишнината от публикуването на първи том на „*Капиталът*”. Нашата последна статия е посветена на общ преглед на метода, съдържанието и значимостта на този шедевър на човешкото мислене, който е синтез на социалната наука и революцията.

Капиталът в крайна сметка е книга за прогресивното изчерпване на възможностите на капиталистическия начин на производство да въведе човечеството в по-добро бъдеще и за необходимостта от неговото премахване, за да се освободи енергията на трудоспособното население на планетата за прогресивни цели. Това, че вече сме в тази фаза на историческо развитие, става очевидно от дълбоката международна икономическа криза, от надигащата се заплаха от ядрена и световна война, и от унищожаването на природата, единственият източник на възпроизводство на човешкия и другите видове. Опазването на човечеството и дори на живота като цяло, изисква налагането на нов начин на производство, основан на колективна собственост върху средствата за производство, демократично централно планиране, както и братското сливане на всички народи по света. Накратко, изисква интернационалистически социализъм. Това може да се постигне само от силите на пролетариата чрез революционна класова борба. Точно това е Революционен марксизъм и затова нашето списание гордо прие това име.

Translated by: Daniela Penkova

В этом выпуске...

Первый выпуск брошюры *Revolutionary Marxism* (Революционный марксизм), англоязычный ежегодный выпуск турецкого журнала *Devrimci Marksizm*, появился в конце 2016 года. Он был распространен и продан по всему миру; от Бейрута до Буэнос-Айреса, от Санкт-Петербурга до Скопье, от Милана до Монтевидео. Конечно, он не был распродан тысячами, но в политических и организационных областях на Среднем востоке и Северной Африке, на Балканах и на Кавказе, на Средиземном море и в районах Евразии и во многих других точках земного шара, он прекрасно выполнил свою задачу: внес вклад в интернационализм с помощью теории Маркса. Мы сделали новый шаг по направлению к этой цели и добавили к выпускам переведённый на другие языки текст, который вы читаете сейчас. Таким образом мы можем хотя бы передать суть нашего сообщения людям по всему миру, которые не могут читать по-английски, но которые интересуются революционным марксизмом и являются интернационалистами.

Второй выпуск, *Revolutionary Marxism 2018*, стремится продолжить работу над той же целью, что и два текста о реакционных движениях в империалистических странах и ситуации в мире; что и специальное досье об Октябрьской революции, выпущенном на своём столетнем юбилее; что и статья, изучающая распад являющейся рабочим государством до падения Берлинской

Стены Болгарии, а также что и статья на тему великого шедевра+ человечества, настоящего и будущего, «*Das Kapital*», выпущенном на своём стопятидесятилетнем юбилее.

Первый выпуск, в своём введении и в своих некоторых актуальных статьях, охарактеризовал мировую ситуацию, помещая нынешний десятилетний экономический кризис, образовавшийся после финансового краха 2008-ого года, в центре, в качестве задника некоторых параллельных процессов: таких как увлечение протофашизмом во всем мире и одновременное увлечение исламского такфири-сектанского движения, с его наиболее ярким примером в ИГИЛе; таким как растущая угроза превращения региональных войн в мировую войну, а также таких, как рост народного восстания с 2011-ого года, как и с помощью бунтов (в таких странах как Египет, Тунис, Йемен, Бахрейн, Уолл-стрит, Греция, Испания, Турция, Бразилия, Балканы и т.д.), так и в парламентских формах (Подemos, Сириза, Сандерс, Корбин и, самое главное, Фронт де Искьерда (FIT) в Аргентине).

Так как первый выпуск был опубликован сразу же после выбора Дональда Трампа на высший пост в самой мощной империалистической стране в мире, это отдельное событие стало начальной точкой обсуждения нового международного реакционного явления, который называют «популизмом», «крайней правой», «национализмом» и т. д. Наш ранний вывод о том, что Дональд Трамп является фашистом без установленной партии и военизированных формирований, или, другими словами, протофашистом, был полностью подтвержден фактами прошлого года. Слово «фашист» широко распространилось, в частности, после событий в Шарлоттсвилле, когда Трамп беззаботно и неоднократно потворствовал действиям белых расистов и самопровозглашенных неонацистов.

Стив Бэннон, главный идеолог называющих себя «alt-right», то есть берущих на себя правое имя, фашистов, больше не находится в должности, но это очевидно, что он не только все еще не разлей вода с президентом США, но и то, что он проводит нечто напоминающее государственные визиты в такие страны, как Китай, чтобы «прощупать почву» раньше, чем сам президент посетит страну.

За пределами США, на международном плане, либеральный «establishment» слишком быстро охарактеризовал результаты выборов в Европе как ряд поражений за то, что они ошибочно назвали «популизмом»: во Франции Марин Ле Пен, самый яркий представитель растущей профашистской чумы, во втором туре выборов проголосовала за каждого третьего гражданина Франции, а в Германии «*Alternative für Deutschland*» стала третьей по величине партией страны, несмотря на разворот Ангелы Меркель в своей иммиграционной

политике. Невольно задаешься вопросом, если это считать поражением, то какой бы была победа задвинутого до этого времени в угол международного движения!

Для либералов, обратной стороной медали является победа Эммануэля Макрона. В ярком примере принятие желаемого за действительное, они объяснили эту победу после поразительных поражений Брексита и Трампа, как возвращение глобализма.

Эммануэль I, называемый так своими критиками во Франции из-за своего королевского стиля и управления с помощью постановлений (напомним, что почти такие же методы были применены в Турции тем же либеральным “establishment”-ом Эрдоганом, который начинает считаться всё более и более деспотичным), в результате опроса общественного мнения увидел, что его магия привела к головокружительному краху популярности.

Успех, достигнутый двумя забастовками в течении десяти дней (12 и 21 сентября), несмотря на капитуляцию руководства некоторыми из трудовых конфедераций, свидетельствует о том, что «французская весна», вызванная в нашем первом выпуске в связи с весной 2016 года против предыдущей контрреформы закона о труде, под так называемым «социалистическим» правительством Франсуа Олланда, обещает продолжить.

Франция остаётся ключевой страной в европе, как подчёркнуто в нашем первом выпуске. Глобальный и неолиберальный подход Макрона не сможет противостоять ни Трампу, ни Ле Пен. Только политическая независимость и объединённая борьба рабочего класса может окончательно оттеснить поднимающегося зло. Горизонт по-прежнему наполнен Модии и Дутерте, Путиным и Эрдоганом, Алиевым, Орбанами и Трампами.

Не менее заметной была перспектива войны на всей планете, ведь не зря мы подчёркивали угрозу мировой войны в нашем первом выпуске. Оставляя в стороне на мгновение бесконечные страдания в Сирии, Ираке, Йемене и Ливии, и все еще пылающем следе войны в Украине, азиатская геостратегическая зона отмечена различными аспектами возникающего конфликта между империализмом и Китаем. Наиболее заметным из них, очевидно, является британско-северокорейская политика, которая угрожает перенести мир на первую ядерную катастрофу со времен Хиросимы и Нагазаки, случившуюся три четверти века назад. С характерным для него протофашистским рвением, Трамп угрожал «смертью миллионов» в Северной Корее, а так же сравнению её с землей. Несмотря на лживое изложение фактов «международным сообществом» и капиталистическими СМИ, северокорейская ядерная подготовка является защитной мерой против стремления США к военному господству в Тихом океане, 80 тысяч американских войск в Японии и Южной Корее, а

так же, в общих чертах, растущей угрозе войны на горизонте в Азии. В своей конфронтации с империализмом революционные марксисты должны стоять за бюрократически вырожденным рабочим государством, даже в случае существующих карикатур на него, основанных на «социализме в одной династии».

В более близкой части к нашей стране, в регионах Ближнего Востока и Северной Африки (БВСА), эта реакционная волна привела к новой перегруппировке сил. После одобрения Трампом египетского Бонапарта аль-Сиси во время его визита в Вашингтон последовал его пышно организованный визит в Саудовскую Аравию. Китч-моментом этого визита стало отсутствие двух актёров на заднем плане, когда смехотворное трио Трампа, короля Салмана и египетского президента ласкало светящийся глобус. С одной стороны, невидимый советник сионистского Израиля, создающего новый альянс. Становится ясно, что Трамповская анти-иранская и про-израильская политическая ориентация может пройти через все осложнения и противоречия по отношению к политике региона. Несмотря на его заметную попытку сблизиться с Путиным, Трамп, как он еще раз подтвердил свою речь в ООН, агрессивно продвигается, чтобы сформировать союз между всеми другими реакционными силами Ближнего Востока, - делает он это для того, чтобы изолировать и поставить на колени Иран, несмотря на почти нерушимый союз между последним и путинской Россией. К слову сказать, это та же причина, по которой на Хамас оказали давление для того, чтобы тот склонил голову перед Египтом и Израилем. Другим заметным отсутствием являлся Эрдоган, еще один источник противоречий по отношению к политике Трампа к БВСА. Официальная причина его отсутствия заключалась в том, что визит Трампа совпал с Конгрессом ПСР (Партия справедливости и развития), куда Эрдоган и вернулся, чтобы взять под контроль свою партию после апрельского референдума в Турции, заложившего основу для перехода к более президентской системе. Однако вскоре выяснилось, что настоящая причина была совсем другая.

Отображение суннитской сектантской власти, которую саудиты планировали продемонстрировать, пригласив полный спектр арабских и неарабских стран для приветствия Трампа, оказалось кратковременным. Катарский кризис, последовавший сразу после торжествующего празднования единства, расстроил отношения между саудовским лагерем и блоком рабистов. Чтобы понять, что мы имели в виду под этим, рассмотрим следующую последовательность событий. 2013 год: бонапартистский переворот Сиси сбивает с власти Мосси и мусульманское братство (Ikhwan) в Египте при поддержке Саудовской Аравии, и хладнокровно убивает сотни сторонников Ичвана на площади Рабия-т-уль Адавия в Каире. Таким образом, Эрдоган, создавая альянсы с мусульманскими братствами и рядом других стран (Тунис, Сирия,

Марокко, Палестина, т.е. Хамас, а также Египет), делает разрыв между Саудовской Аравией и Турцией с целью стать «раисом» (лидером) суннитского мира. 2015 год: несмотря на его явный рабизм (движение, основанное на реваншистском отношении к инциденту Рабии), Эрдоган поддерживает отношения с новым Королем Салманом из Саудовской Аравии после смерти предыдущего короля. Он даже присоединяется к исламскому военному альянсу по борьбе с терроризмом, включающего в себя 34 суннитские нации, к концу 2015-ого года, и почти вступает войну в Сирии в феврале 2016-ого года вместе с Саудовской Аравией и Катаром (обратите внимание на эти страны!). 15 июля 2016 года: саудовский лагерь бросает Эрдогана на произвол судьбы перед попыткой государственного переворота. 2017 год: среди 13 условий, требуемых коалицией против Катара, возглавляемой Саудовской Аравией, есть и вывод турецких вооруженных сил из Катара. Это требование было отвергнуто со стороны Турции, стоящей на стороне Катара и верной своей стратегии рабизма. Мы не можем не добавить, что после неудачного государственного переворота в июле 2016-ого года Турция искала компенсационный источник власти, чтобы сбалансировать давление США и ЕС на свою международную ориентацию и внутреннюю политику, в российско-иранском лагере.

Все это говорит о том, что сектантские суннитские силы БВСА не могут сформировать прочную унитарную коалицию против лагеря шиитов во главе с Ираном. Однако, это не означает, что угроза сектантской войны в масштабах всего Ближнего Востока ушла в прошлое. Это означает только то, что лагерь суннитов не такой единый, как казалось в определенный момент, и что у Ирана есть место для маневра, и он может хотя бы нейтрализовать некоторые из стран в реакционном суннитском лагере. То, что угроза продолжает существовать и, вероятно, получит новую жизнь от политики Трампа и Израиля, проявляется в непрекращающихся войнах за власть в таких странах, как Сирия, Ирак и Йемен. Только сгруппированный блок рабочего класса и социальных сил во всем регионе БВСА, объединенный с соответствующими силами на Балканах и на северном Средиземном море, могут прекратить эту угрозу сектантской войны суннит-шиитов; перспективы, которая, несомненно, приведёт к уничтожению населения и разрушению исторического культурного наследия региона. Как и сказано в итоговом документе четвертой чрезвычайной евро-средиземноморской конференции, состоявшейся в Афинах 26-28 мая 2017 года и которую мы публикуем в этом выпуске: «Кровопролитие может быть остановлено только широким фронтом антиимпериалистических и сионистских сил, которые борются также против реакционных режимов в своих странах. Только социалистическая федерация Ближнего Востока и Северной Африки обеспечит окончательное решение всех бедствий в регионе.»

В этой пучине Масуд Барзани, лидер иракского Курдистана, добавил референдум о независимости, в котором вызвал всех вековых демонов региональных держав и все махинации империалистов на сцену. Революционные марксисты - за самоопределение курдов. Проблема в том, что этот референдум разрабатывается не для самоопределения, а для самообогащения самого Барзани и казны его нефтяных сторонников. Барзани боролся и явно намерен бороться в будущем против свободы курдов в других частях света (т. е. В Турции, Иране и Сирии). Таким образом, победа на этом референдуме подразумевает не только то, что империализм станет еще одним видом мышления на Ближнем Востоке, но и – иронично - поражение в деле национального освобождения в Курдистане. Революционные марксисты неуклонно выступают против военного вмешательства любой региональной державы в иракский Курдистан, но выступают против Барзани и за освобождение всего курдского населения.

Наше первое досье рассказывает о различных аспектах борьбы в регионах БВСА, разбирая краткосрочные и долгосрочные перспективы. Первая статья этого досье анализирует Сирийскую гражданскую войну и её международные последствия на последующих этапах. Статья Левента Дёлека «Этапы, уроки и будущее сирийской гражданской войны» начинается с объяснения, что народное восстание против диктатуры Асада с требованиями свободы и справедливости привело к тому, что страна не смогла обрести пролетарскую политическую основу и вскоре стало открытой для манипуляции и империализма. Это демонстрирует, что интервенции империализма, сионизма и региональных держав (таких как Саудовская Аравия, Катар, Турция и Иран) превратили народное восстание в кровавую религиозно-сектантскую войну между суннитами и другими (алавиты, друзы, христиане, и т.д.). В статье подробно анализируется военная деятельность всех основных действующих лиц (США, Россия, ISIL, Свободная сирийская армия и т. Д.) во время гражданской войны. Отдельное внимание посвящено событиям в Сирийском Курдистане. Дёлек признает сильную прогрессивную основу курдского движения в Рожаве, но утверждает, что его нынешнее военное сотрудничество с американским империализмом ошибочное и опасное. Мы считаем, что статья Дёлека останется ценным источником сирийской гражданской войны в ближайшие годы.

Статья Кутлу Дане, «Столетие Декларации Бальфура, записка о оккупации Накбы и Сиониста», подробно исследует исторический фон колонизации Палестины. Дане проливает свет на исторический контекст Декларации Бальфура 1917 года (которая в открытую показывает то, что она существовала для создания государства Израиль) и изучает сдвигающие позиции всех участников процесса (включая британских и французских империалистов, а так же

Османское государство).

Статья Дане демонстрирует, что и американский империализм, и Советский Союз (который следовал политике «мирного сосуществования» с империализмом того времени) поддерживали основание Израиля в 1948 году. Это также подчеркивает тот факт, что все реакционные режимы региона поддерживали Израиль на практике. Как показывает Дане, нынешнее правительство ПСР в Турции (которое продолжало сотрудничать с Израилем во многих областях и никогда не принимало палестинское дело искренне) не является исключением.

Сунгур Савран рассматривает революции на Ближнем Востоке с начала двадцатого века до сегодняшнего дня, и делает из них обобщенные выводы. По мнению Саврана, у Ближнего Востока есть опыт большого количество революций в двадцатом веке, и первые победоносные революции 21. века также произошли в этом регионе (Египет и Тунис). В статье показано, что Ближний Восток двадцатого века испытал четыре волны революции, а арабскую революцию 2011 года можно рассматривать как пятую волну. Как отмечает Савран, высокая частота революционных волн опровергает упрощенную (и ориенталистическую) веру в то, что «мусульманские общества покорны из-за своей веры в ислам и поэтому не совершают революций». Это также даёт убедительное доказательство марксистского тезиса о том, что история развивается не просто эволюционными успехами, а фактически через революционные скачки. Наконец, продемонстрировав, что история Ближнего Востока была определена в революционных поворотных моментах, статья Саврана раскрывает мелкий и необоснованный характер заявления реформистов о том, что он «реалистичен» (убеждение в том, что революция - это дальняя возможность, а левые политики должны ориентироваться на мелкие, масштабные изменения). На самом деле невозможно добиться (маленьких или больших) изменений без революций. Иными словами, исторический опыт доказывает, что революция является более «реалистичной» целью, чем реформа.

Сопутствующее досье берет на себя реакционные тенденции и ответ, необходимый для них в других частях мира. В своей статье, озаглавленной «Методы понимания» современности: дискуссия о популизме и фашизме», Дженк Сарачоглу спорит, что фашизм является гораздо более подходящим и полезным понятием, чем «популистские правые» (понятие, которое в настоящее время пользуется популярностью среди международных левых), чтобы понять эти реакционные движения. Сарачоглу опознаёт «контрреволюционную подрывную деятельность» и «несостоятельность» как две основные отличительные характеристики фашистских движений и режимов межвоенного периода и сравнивает современные реакционные движения с использовани-

ем этих понятий. Он спорит, что реакционные движения относительно периферийных стран, таких как Венгрия и Турция, напоминают классический фашизм межвоенного периода больше, чем их коллеги в развитых западных странах.

Несколько иное отношение к ситуации в Европе и мире представлено Заключительной декларацией 4-й Евро-средиземноморской конференции, международным мероприятием, в котором в конце мая 2017 года участвовали боевики и интеллектуалы из 18 стран, чтобы обсудить пути продвижения вперед на международном уровне и, в частности, в контексте Европы и БВСА.

В этом году - столетие Октябрьской революции 1917 года. Это было эпохальное событие, открывшее новые перспективы не только для народов бывшей царской России, но и для человечества в целом и, в частности, для рабочих, трудящихся и угнетенных мира. Мы празднуем это всемирное историческое событие и углубимся в его различные аспекты в четырех разных статьях.

В своей статье «Октябрь 1917: мировое событие» Савас Майкл обсуждает отношения и различия между 1917 и 1991 годами в диалоге со статьей французского философа Алена Бадиу, написанной вскоре после распада Советского Союза. Савас Майкл напоминает, что 1917 год был всемирным событием и был признан всеми как начало глобальной социалистической революции. Социальная революция расширилась от России до Восточной и Центральной Европы и произвела эффекты, которые варьировались от Европы до Азии и США. В то время как Кейнс прекрасно понимал, что большевизм и октябрьская революция представляли угрозу глобальному капиталистическому порядку. В этом смысле октябрьская революция, безусловно, не была преждевременной попыткой. Скорее, это было всемирно-историческое «событие», открывшее для человечества совершенно новую эпоху. В отличие от этого, 1991 год не был «событием», а «симулированным событием»: он не открыл новую эпоху для человечества. Савас Майкл заключает, подчеркивая, что круг, открытый Октябрьской революцией, не закрылся. Мы еще живем в эпоху Октября, и нам нужно сделать революцию постоянной в новом столетии.

В статье Озгура Озтюрка «Социалистическое планирование в 21-ом веке» обсуждается потенциал социализма в сегодняшних реалиях. Озтюрк пытается описать систему экономического планирования, которая может быть построена незамедлительно спустя несколько лет после новой революции. По его словам, в 21-ом веке можно установить систему планирования, которая принципиально отличается от предыдущих систем и является намного более эффективной, чем в прошлом столетии. Он указывает на то, что в XX веке одной из главных проблем социалистического строительства было предотвращение

превращения денег в капитал. Однако система планирования и «оплаты», основанная на трудовом времени, как это предусмотрено Марксом в «Критике Готы», ограничит денежные отношения и, следовательно, угрозу капитала. Более того, такая система будет легче решать проблему вычислений. Озтюрк также обсуждает возможные формы новых производственных отношений и утверждает, что в современных условиях социалистический режим может реалистично ориентироваться на полную занятость, полную автоматизацию, нулевые несчастные случаи на производстве и непрерывное сокращение рабочего времени. По его словам, это потенциальные тенденции, которые никогда не могут получить полной реальности при капиталистических отношениях.

Армаган Тулунай рассматривает аспект Октябрьской революции, который в определенной степени был специально проигнорирован некоторыми кругами. Поскольку антиленинский, действительно антимарксистский поворот, начатый слева от 1980-х годов, был связан с тем, что марксизм как совокупность мысли и программы, а также коммунизм как стремление к разному типу общества по вопросу о женском освобождении становится все более отвергаемым. Панацея была политикой идентичности. Коммунистическое движение не обращало внимания на женское угнетение и ничего не предлагало для его решения.

Тулунай, углубившись в политику, проводимую большевиками сразу после революции, доказывает, что большевизм при Ленине и Троцком был более чувствителен к женскому угнетению и пытался создать не только формальное равенство между полами, но и реальное, в отличие от либерального «establishment», столь обожаемого антимарксистскими постмодернистскими течениями в самых передовых обществах капиталистического мира. То, что большинство из этих мер были позднее отменены бюрократией, которая узурпировала политическую власть, что в равной степени продемонстрировал Тулунай в своей статье, никоим образом не может быть приведено в качестве доказательства относительно предполагаемого безразличия коммунизма к женскому угнетению. Бюрократия, в конце концов, отказалась от коммунизма, и поэтому ни одна из ее деятельности не имеет влияния на это движение.

Наша последняя статья об Октябрьской революции затрагивает область, которая всегда оставалась незамеченной в западном марксизме. Долгое время было замечено, что пролетарская власть была впервые достигнута русскими, может быть, самой отсталой среди больших стран Европы, но она избегала западных предвзятых комментаторов октябрьской революции, даже больше, эта революция была а также революцией мусульманских народов. А другая деталь о Советском Союзе, который был окончательно установлен по указанию Ленина в 31 декабря 1922 года, - это то, что он включал Мусульманские и в

основном тюркские народы внутренней России и в её восточных окраинах (татары, башкиры, калмыки, дагестанцы, чеченцы и т. д.), Закавказье (Азербайджанцы, абхазы и т. д.) и Центральной Азии (в настоящее время Казахстан, Туркменистан, Узбекистан, Кыргызстан и Таджикистан). В необычной статье, Сунгур Савран вкратце объясняет, как коммунизм/большевизм сразу завоевал сердца мусульманских народов след за победой революции и как мусульманские коммунисты завоевали свою землю и своих людей. То, как возвысился так называемый великорусский шовинизм во времена Сталина, и его влияние на жизнь мусульманских народов в Советском Союзе могут стать материалами уже для дальнейшего изучения.

Статья, которая относительно связана с теми, что относятся к октябрьской революции, смотрит на крах в социалистическом строительстве 20-ого века со стороны Болгарии. Статья Даниэлы Пеньковы под названием «Болгария в ловушке неолиберализма» исследует процесс капиталистического восстановления в стране после 1989 года. Автор утверждает, что институты международного капитала, особенно Международный валютный фонд и Всемирный банк, наложили рецепт на Болгарию, который был очень похож на те, которые были введены в отношении стран третьего мира. Хотя Болгария была индустриализированной страной с достойным уровнем жизни к 1989 году, неолиберальные предписания периода после 1989 года (например, приватизация и дерегулирование) заставили болгарский народ обнищать. В статье практически показано, что, хотя на бумаге болгарская экономика, похоже, растёт, обычные люди борются за удовлетворение своих основных потребностей. Пенькова завершает свою работу, подчеркивая, что отказ от неолиберальной политики «развития» абсолютно необходим для достижения хорошо работающей промышленности и социальной структуры.

В этом году исполняется не только столетие октябрьской революции, но и 150-летие публикации тома I *«Капитала»*. Таким образом, наша заключительная статья посвящена общему обзору метода, содержания и значимости этого шедевра человеческого мышления, который является синтезом социальной науки и революции.

«Капитал» в конечном счёте связан с постепенным исчерпанием возможностей капиталистического способа производства, чтобы привести человечество в лучшее будущее и необходимость его свертывания, чтобы освободить энергию рабочего населения планеты для достижения прогрессивных целей. То, что мы уже находимся на этом этапе исторического развития, отчетливо видно из глубокого международного экономического кризиса, надвигающейся угрозы ядерной войны и даже мировой войны, а также уничтожения природы, единственного источника воспроизводства для людей и других живых

существ. Защита человечества, даже жизни в целом, требует появления нового способа производства, основанного на коллективной собственности на средства производства и демократического централизованного планирования, а также братского слияния всех народов мира. Короче, это требует интернационального социализма. Это только может быть вызвано силами пролетариата, через революционную классовую борьбу. Вот что такое революционный марксизм и почему наш журнал с гордостью принял это имя.

Translated by: Selda Çelik

Spanish

En este número

El primer número de *Revolutionary Marxism*, la publicación anual en lengua inglesa de la revista turca *Devrimci marksizm*, apareció hacia fines de 2016. Fue distribuida y vendida en todo el mundo de Beirut a Buenos Aires, de San Petersburgo a Skopje, de Milán a Montevideo. Puede que no haya vendido miles, pero en su escala modesta, cumplió perfectamente la misión para la que fue hecha: contribuir al internacionalismo en la teoría marxista militante, llevando naturalmente al internacionalismo proletario en las esferas políticas y organizacionales, en el Medio Oriente y el Norte de África, en los Balcanes y el Cáucaso, en las regiones mediterráneas y euroasiáticas, y a la larga en el mundo. En línea con este objetivo, ahora tomamos un nuevo paso e incluido traducciones de la pieza editorial que ahora están leyendo en varios idiomas, las que publicaremos al final de la edición. De este modo podemos al menos transmitir la esencia de nuestro mensaje a la gente alrededor del mundo que no puede leer en inglés, pero están interesados en la voz del marxismo internacionalista y revolucionario.

Este segundo número, *Revolutionary Marxism 2018*, apunta a continuar trabajando por el mismo objetivo, con foco primario en el Medio Oriente, con un artículo de compañía sobre la cuestión de los movimientos reaccionarios en países imperialistas, con un dossier especial sobre la revolución de octubre en su centenario

celebrando ese gran festival del pueblo, con un artículo examinando la caída de uno de los países (Bulgaria) donde el Estado obrero existió hasta la caída del muro de Berlín, y con un artículo que gira nuestra atención a aquella gran obra maestra sobre el presente y el futuro de la humanidad, *Das Kapital*, en el 150° aniversario de la publicación de su primer volumen.

El primer número, en su introducción y en varios de sus artículos temáticos, caracterizó la situación mundial ubicando la crisis económica -de ahora una década, luego del derrumbe financiero de 2008 en el centro como un telón de fondo de varios procesos paralelos: el ascenso del proto-fascismo alrededor del mundo; el concomitante asenso del movimiento islámico sectario- takfiri, con su ejemplo más saliente en Daesh o ISIS; el riesgo creciente de guerras regionales convirtiéndose en una guerra mundial: y el ascenso de las revueltas populares en ambas formas- insurreccionales (Egipto, Túnez, Yemen, Bahrein, Wall Street, Grecia, España, Turquía, Brasil, los Balcanes, etc) y parlamentarias (Podemos, Syriza, Sanders, Corbyn, y más prominentemente el Frente de Izquierda (FIT) en Argentina) desde 2011.

Como el número salió inmediatamente después de la elección de Donald Trump al cargo más alto en el más poderoso país imperialista del mundo, este singular evento formó el punto de entrada a una discusión del nuevo fenómeno reaccionario internacional variadamente llamado “populismo”, “extrema derecha”, “nacionalismo”, etc. Nuestro pronóstico temprano de que Donald Trump era un “fascista de cañon suelto”, un fascista sin un partido establecido ni tropas paramilitares, o, en otras palabras, un proto-fascista, fue ampliamente confirmado por los hechos del año pasado. La palabra “fascista” ha estado en amplia circulación, en particular en el despertar de los eventos de Charlottesville, para describir la actitud de Trump luego que el condonó liviana y repetidamente la acción de supremacistas blancos auto declarados neo nazis. Steve Bannon, el ideólogo supremo de la así llamada “alt-right” (derecha alternativa) no está más en función, pero es aún palpablemente el alter ego del presidente de EEUU, llevando adelante visitas como si fuera hombre de Estado a países como China para sondear la situación antes que el mismo presidente visite el país. Más allá de las fronteras de EEUU, en la escena internacional, el establishment liberal ha sido muy rápido en caracterizar los resultados de las elecciones en Europa como una serie de derrotas por lo que ellos erróneamente han apodado “populismo”: en Francia, Marine Le Pen, la más clara representante de la plaga proto-fascista en ascenso, recibió en la segunda vuelta de las elecciones el voto de cada tercer ciudadano francés y en Alemania la Alternative Für Deutschland (Alternativa para Alemania ahora se convirtió en el tercer partido más grande del país a pesar de la vuelta en U de Ángela Merkel en su política de migración. Si eso es derrota, uno se pregunta qué victoria hubiera sido para un movimiento internacional que fue considerado, solo hasta tiempos recientes, ¡la franja lunática!

El reverso de la misma moneda para los liberales fue la victoria de Emmanuel Macron. En un instancia clara de expresión de deseo, interpretaron esto como la vuelta del globalismo después de las resonantes derrotas del Brexit y Trump. Emmanuel I, como sus críticos de izquierda lo han llamado sarcásticamente en Francia debido a su estilo real (monárquico) y su recurso a gobernar por decretos (en sí mismos un remedo de los métodos empleados por Erdogan en Turquía, quien es considerado correctamente de convertirse más y más en un déspota por el mismo establishment liberal), ha visto su magia reducirse a cenizas en un vertiginoso colapso de popularidad en las encuestas de opinión. El éxito alcanzado por dos huelgas en cuestión de unos diez días (12 al 21 de septiembre), a pesar de la capitulación de la dirección de algunas de las confederaciones del trabajo, es testimonio que la “primavera francesa”, evocada en nuestro primer número en referencia a l movimiento de primavera de 2016 contra la temprana contra reforma de la Ley Laboral bajo el así llamado gobierno “socialista” de François Hollande, promete continuar. Francia sigue siendo el país clave en Europa como fue resaltado en nuestro primer número. La ruta globalista y neoliberal de Macron no es respuesta a los Trumps y Le Pens. Es solo la independencia política y la lucha unitaria de la clase obrera que puede hacer retroceder definitivamente el mal en ascenso. El horizonte esta aún lleno de Modis y Dutertes y Putines y Erdoganes y Alievs y Orbans y Trumps del mundo.

No menos conspicuo ha sido el prospecto de guerra en todo el mundo desde que enfatizamos la amenaza de guerra mundial en nuestro primer número. Dejando a un lado por un momento el sufrimiento interminable en Siria, Irak, Yemen y Libia y la ceniza aún brillando de la guerra en Ucrania, la zona asiática geoestratégica está marcada por las diferentes facetas del conflicto emergente entre el imperialismo y China. Más prominente entre estos es obviamente la política al-filo de EEUU-Corea del Norte que amenaza llevar al mundo a la primer catástrofe nuclear mundial desde Hiroshima y Nagasaki tres cuartos de siglo atrás. Característicamente con su celo proto-fascista, Trump ha amenazado con “millones de muertes” en Corea del Norte y arrasar el país hasta los cimientos. A pesar de la presentación mendaz de los hechos por la “comunidad internacional” (otro nombre del imperialismo) y los medios capitalistas, la preparación nuclear de Corea del Norte es una medida defensiva contra los esfuerzos Norteamericanos por la dominación militar en el Pacífico, y la creciente amenaza de guerra en el horizonte en Asia en términos generales. En su confrontación con el imperialismo, los revolucionarios marxistas deben ponerse del lado de un estado obrero burocráticamente degenerado, incluso si esta caricatura de estado obrero basada en el “socialismo en una sola dinastía”.

Más cerca de casa, en nuestra región del Medio Oriente y África del Norte (MENA, su sigla en inglés), está ola reaccionaria llevó a un nuevo realineamiento de fuerzas. La aprobación de Trump al Bonaparte egipcio Al Sisi durante su última

visita a Washington fue seguida por su pomposamente organizada visita a Arabia Saudita. El momento cursi de esa visita, cuando el ridículo trío de Trump, el rey Salman y el presidente egipcio acariciaron un globo brillante con extras manteniendo la guardia de fondo, fue significativo sobre todo por la ausencia simbólica de dos actores. De un lado, el Israel sionista fue la *eminencia gris* ausente de la nueva alianza que se estaba armando. La orientación política anti-Irán, pro-Israel de Trump ha sido expuesta para ignorar todas las complicaciones y contradicciones de su política hacia la región. No obstante su esfuerzo palpable en cortejar a Putin, Trump, como testimonio una vez más en su discurso en la ONU, está agresivamente empujando para formar una alianza entre todas las otras fuerzas reaccionarias del medio oriente para asilar y arrodillar a Irán, no obstante la casi indestructible alianza entre el último y la Rusia de Putin. Eso, incidentalmente, es por lo que también Hamas ha recientemente sido presionado para capitular antes que Egipto e Israel. La otra ausencia conspicua fue la de Erdogan, otra fuente de contradicción para la política de Trump para la MENA. La razón oficial fue que la visita de Trump coincidía con el congreso del AKP en casa, donde Erdogan volvió a tomar el control de su partido luego del referendo de Abril en Turquía, el que ha preparado el terreno para una transición a un sistema más presidencial. Sin embargo, bastante pronto trascendió que la razón real estaba en otro lado.

La muestra de poder sectario sunita que los sauditas intentaron ensayar invitando toda una gama de países árabes y no árabes a saludar a Trump se probó efímera. La crisis de Qatar se rompió en los talones de esta triunfal celebración de la unidad, metiendo una cuña entre el campo dirigido por los árabes y el bloque rabiista. Para comprender lo que queremos decir con esto, considera la secuencia de los siguientes eventos. 2013: el golpe bonapartista de Sisi tira a Morsi y al gobierno de la Hermandad Musulmana (Ikhwan) en Egipto, con el apoyo de Arabia Saudita, y asesina a sangre fría cientos de simpatizantes de Ikhwan en la plaza Rabia-t-ul Adawiya en Cairo, llevando así a un caída de las relaciones entre Arabia Saudita y Turquía, ya que Erdogan había basado toda su estrategia de convertirse el “Rais” (líder) del mundo sunita sobre una alianza con los Ikhwan en una serie de países (Túnez, Siria, Marruecos, Palestina, esto quiere decir Hamas, tanto como Egipto); 2015: a pesar de su explícito rabiismo (un movimiento basado en una actitud revanchista concerniente al incidente de Rabia), Erdogan se enlaza con el nuevo rey Salman de Arabia Saudita al despunte de la muerte del viejo rey, incluso uniéndose al final del 2015 a la Alianza Militar Islámica para la Lucha contra el Terrorismo, una iniciativa saudita reuniendo 34 naciones sunitas, y casi yendo a la guerra en Siria en febrero de 2016 junto con los sauditas y Qatar (¡algo que se debe ver cuidadosamente!); 15 de julio de 2016: el campo saudita abandona al gobierno de Erdogan a su suerte frente al intento de golpe; 2017: entre las 13 condiciones planteadas por la coalición diri-

gida por los sauditas anti-qataríes como términos de reconciliación aparece el retiro de las fuerzas militares turcas de Qatar, una condición rechazada por el lado turco, el cual, leal a su estrategia rabiista, cierra filas con Qatar. Debemos apresurarnos a agregar que luego del golpe fallido de julio de 2016, Turquía ha estado buscando la fuente de poder compensatoria en el campo ruso-iraní para balancear la presión de los EEUU y la UE en su orientación internacional y política doméstica.

Todo esto viene a mostrar que las fuerzas sectarias sunitas de MENA son incapaces de formar una coalición unitaria duradera con el campo de la Shia (chiitas) dirigido por Irán. Esto no significa, sin embargo, que la amenaza de guerra sectaria en la escala de todo el Medio Oriente sea ahora una cosa del pasado. Solo significa que el campo sunita no está tan unido como parecía en un cierto momento y que Irán tiene espacio para maniobrar y tal vez pueda al menos neutralizar algunos de los países dentro del campo reaccionario sunita. Que la amenaza sigue existiendo y probablemente podrá tener una nueva oportunidad de vida por las políticas de Trump e Israel lo muestran las incesantes guerras de poder en países como Siria, Irak, y Yemen. Solo un bloque unificado e independiente de la clase obrera y las fuerzas socialistas de toda la región MENA, aliándose ésta misma con fuerzas correspondientes en los Balcanes y mediterráneo norte, puede parar ésta amenaza de guerra sectaria chiita-sunita, un prospecto que es seguro lleve a una declinación en la población y la destrucción de la herencia histórico-cultural de la región. Como la Resolución Final de la 4ta Conferencia de Emergencia Euro-Mediterránea reunida en Atenas del 26 al 28 de mayo de 2017, la cual estamos publicando en éste número como un documento dice: “La carnicería sólo puede ser detenida por un frente amplio de fuerzas antiimperialistas y antisionistas que luchen también contra los regímenes reaccionarios en sus propios países. Sólo una Federación Socialista del Medio Oriente y el Norte de África proveerá la solución final a todos los males de la región.”

En este remolino, Massoud Barzani, el líder del Kurdistán Iraquí, ha añadido el referéndum de la independencia, el que conjuró todos los viejos demonios de los poderes regionales y las maquinaciones de los imperialistas. Los revolucionarios marxistas están por la auto-determinación de los kurdos. El problema es que éste referéndum está ideado no para esa auto-determinación, sino para el auto-engrandecimiento de Barzani y los cofres de sus partidarios rentistas petroleros. Barzani ha peleado y claramente intentará pelear en el futuro contra la libertad de los kurdos en otras partes del Kurdistán (Esto quiere decir en Turquía, Irán, y Siria). Así que una victoria en éste referéndum irónicamente implica una derrota de la causa de liberación nacional en el Kurdistán, más allá de darle al imperialismo otra cabeza de playa en el Medio Oriente. Los revolucionarios marxistas están inquebrantablemente en contra de una intervención militar por cualquier poder regional en el

Kurdistán iraquí, más se mantienen contra de Barzani y por la liberación de toda la población kurda.

Nuestro primer dossier en éste número gira alrededor de las diferentes facetas de la lucha en la región MENA, con ambas perspectivas de corto y largo plazo. El primer artículo de ese dossier es una pieza que analiza la guerra civil siria y sus ramificaciones internacionales en sus etapas sucesivas. El artículo de Levent Dölek titulado “las etapas, las lecciones, y el futuro de la guerra civil siria” abre con un diagnóstico que dado que la revuelta popular contra la dictadura de Assad con demandas de libertad y justicia no pudo adquirir un marco político proletario, pronto se tornó abierto a las manipulaciones del imperialismo y los Estados reaccionarios de la región. Demuestra que las intervenciones del imperialismo, sionismo, y los poderes regionales (tales como Arabia Saudita, Qatar, Turquía e Irán) transformó la revuelta popular en una guerra sectaria-religiosa sangrienta entre los sunitas y otros (Alawis, los Drusos, cristianos, etc.). El artículo hace un análisis detallado de las actividades militares de todos los grandes actores (EEUU, Rusia, ISIS, Ejército Sirio Libre, etc.) durante la guerra civil. Una sección separada está dedicada a los desarrollos en el Kurdistán sirio. Dölek reconoce la fuerte base progresista del movimiento kurdo en Rojava pero discute que su cooperación militar actual con el imperialismo yanqui es tanto errada como peligrosa. Creemos que el artículo de Dölek permanecerá como una valiosa fuente sobre la guerra civil siria en los años venideros.

El artículo de Kutlu Dane titulado “El centenario de la Declaración de Balfour, el memorando de la Nakba y la ocupación sionista” hace una investigación detallada de los antecedentes históricos de la colonización de Palestina. Discute el contexto histórico de la Declaración de Balfour de 1917 (que entregó un cheque en blanco para la fundación del Estado de Israel) al echar luz sobre las posiciones cambiantes de todos los actores involucrados en el proceso (incluyendo los imperialismos británico y francés y el Estado otomán). El artículo de Dane demuestra que tanto el imperialismo yanqui como la Unión Soviética (que seguía la política de “coexistencia pacífica” con el imperialismo por aquel momento) apoyaron la fundación de Israel en 1948. También subraya el hecho que todos los regímenes reaccionarios de la región apoyaron a Israel en la práctica. Como muestra Dane, el actual gobierno AKP en Turquía (que ha continuado cooperando con Israel en muchas áreas y nunca abrazó la causa palestina sinceramente) no es excepción.

Sungur Savran estudia las revoluciones en Medio Oriente desde el comienzo del siglo veinte hasta hoy y deriva conclusiones generalizadas de esto. De acuerdo a Savran, el Medio Oriente experimentó un gran número de revoluciones en el siglo veinte y la primeras revoluciones victoriosas del siglo veintiuno también tomaron lugar en la región (Egipto y Túnez). El artículo muestra que el siglo veinte de Me-

dio Oriente experimentó cuatro olas revolucionarias y la revolución árabe de 2011 puede considerarse la quinta. Como nota Savran, la alta frecuencia de olas revolucionarias contraprueba la creencia simplista (y orientalista) que “las sociedades musulmanas son sumisas debido a su creencia en el Islam y por tanto no hacen revoluciones.” También provee una fuerte prueba de la tesis marxista que la historia progresa no simplemente por avances evolutivos sino de hecho a través de saltos revolucionarios. Finalmente, al demostrar que la historia de Medio Oriente ha sido determinada por puntos de quiebre revolucionarios, el artículo de Savran expone el carácter chato y sin bases de las afirmaciones reformistas de ser “realistas” (la creencia que la revolución es una posibilidad distante y los políticos de izquierda deber apuntar a cambios de pequeña escala). De hecho, es imposible obtener cambios (pequeños o grandes) sin revoluciones. En otras palabras, la experiencia histórica prueba que la revolución es un objetivo más “realista” que la reforma.

Un dossier de compañía toma las tendencias reaccionarias y la respuesta necesaria a éstas en otras partes del mundo. En su artículo titulado “Métodos de comprender lo “contemporáneo”: una discusión sobre populismo y fascismo”, Cenk Saraçoğlu identifica “subversión contra-revolucionaria” y “no-contemporaneidad” como las dos características claves distintivas de los movimientos y regímenes fascistas del período de entre-guerras y compara los movimientos reaccionarios contemporáneos usando estos conceptos. Él discute que los movimientos reaccionarios de los países relativamente periféricos tales como Hungría y Turquía se parecen al fascismo clásico del período de entre-guerras más que sus contrapartes en los países occidentales avanzados.

Una toma algo diferente sobre la situación en Europa y el mundo es presentada por la Declaración Final de la 4ta Conferencia Mediterránea, un evento internacional donde militantes e intelectuales de 18 países participaron a fines de mayo de 2017 para discutir camino por delante en el nivel intencional y, en particular, en los contextos europeos y el de la MENA.

Este año es el centenario de la revolución de octubre de 1917. Este fue un evento hacedor de era que abrió nuevos puntos de vista no solo para los pueblos de la antigua Rusia zarista, sino para la humanidad a lo largo y, en particular, para los obreros y trabajadores y los oprimidos del mundo. Celebramos este evento histórico mundial y ahonda en sus diferentes facetas en cuatro diferentes artículos.

En su nota, “Octubre de 1917: Un evento mundial”, Savas Michael discute las relaciones y las diferencias entre 1917 y 1991, en diálogo con un artículo del filósofo francés Alain Badiou escrito poco después de la caída de la Unión Soviética. Savas Michael recuerda que 1917 fue un evento mundial, y fue reconocido por todos como el comienzo de una revolución socialista global. La revolución social se expandió desde Rusia a la Europa del Este y Central, y produjo efectos que

abarcan de Europa a Asia y los EEUU. Como Keynes muy bien toma conciencia en aquel tiempo, el bolchevismo y la revolución de octubre plantearon una amenaza al orden global capitalista. En este sentido, la revolución de octubre no fue un intento prematuro ciertamente. Más bien, fue un “evento” histórico mundial que abrió una época enteramente nueva para la humanidad. Savas Michael concluye enfatizando que el ciclo abierto por la revolución de octubre no se ha cerrado. Aún vivimos la época de octubre, y necesitamos hacer la revolución permanente en el nuevo siglo.

El artículo de Özgür Öztürk, “planificación socialista en el Siglo XXI” discute los potenciales del socialismo con referencia a las posibilidades del presente. Öztürk trata de delinear el tipo de sistema de planificación económica que puede ser construido inmediatamente, dentro de a lo mucho unos pocos años luego de una nueva revolución. De acuerdo a él, en el siglo XXI, un sistema de planificación que es fundamentalmente diferente y mucho más efectivo que el que el siglo previo podía establecer. Apunta al hecho que en el siglo XX, uno de los mayores problemas de la construcción socialista ha sido prevenir la transformación de dinero en capital. Sin embargo, un sistema planificado y “de pago” que está basado sobre el tiempo de trabajo –como previó Marx en su *Crítica al Programa de Gotha*– limitara las relaciones monetarias, y por ende la amenaza planteada por el capital. Es más, tal sistema resolverá el problema del cálculo más fácilmente. Öztürk también discute las posibles formas de nuevas relaciones industriales, y afirma que bajo las condiciones presentes, un régimen socialista puede realísticamente alcanzar el pleno empleo, plena automatización, cero accidentes de trabajo y la continua reducción de la jornada laboral. De acuerdo a él, estas son tendencias potenciales que nunca podrán completarse bajo relaciones capitalistas.

Armagan Tulunay toma un aspecto de la revolución de octubre que ha sido en una cierta extensión ignorado adrede por algunos. Desde que los anti-leninistas, de hecho anti-marxistas que partieron de la izquierda desde los 80 en adelante, la relevancia del marxismo como corpus de pensamiento y programa y del comunismo como una búsqueda de un tipo de sociedad diferente para la cuestión de la liberación de la mujer ha llegado a ser rechazado en una escala creciente. Las políticas de la identidad fueron la panacea. El movimiento comunista se olvidó de la opresión de la mujer y no tuvo nada que ofrecer como camino a la liberación de la mujer. Tulunay ahonda en las políticas implementadas por los bolcheviques inmediatamente después de la revolución para demostrar incontrovertiblemente que el bolchevismo bajo Lenin y Trotsky era incomparablemente más sensible a la opresión de la mujer que el establishment liberal tan adorado por las corrientes anti-marxistas posmodernas de hoy, implementaron un programa concreto de medidas jamás soñadas en las sociedades más avanzadas del mundo y trataron de crear no solo equidad formal entre géneros sino una real. Que la mayoría de éstas medidas fueron más tarde

deshechas por la burocracia que usurpó el poder político, un hecho igualmente demostrado por Tulunay en su artículo, no puede ser citado de ninguna manera como evidencia concerniente a la alegada indiferencia del comunismo a la opresión de la mujer. La burocracia, después de todo, abandonó el comunismo y entonces ninguna de sus actividades necesariamente implica a este movimiento.

Nuestro último artículo sobre la revolución de octubre ataca un área que ha sido siempre desapercibida en el marxismo occidental. Hace tiempo es un lugar común observar que el poder proletario primero alcanzado por los rusos, tal vez la más atrasada dentro de las grandes naciones de Europa, pero se les ha escapado a los comentaristas occidentalmente parciales de la revolución de octubre que, incluso más allá, esta revolución fue también de pueblos musulmanes. Un importante elemento de la Unión Soviética como fue finalmente establecido según las líneas maestras de Lenin el 31 de diciembre de 1922 fueron los pueblos musulmanes y mayormente turcos del interior de Rusia en sus fronteras orientales (tártaros, bashkires, kalmukos, daguestaníes, chechenos, etc.), de transcaucasia (azeríes, abkazos, etc.), y Asia Central (en lo que hoy es Kazajistán, Turkmenistán, Uzbekistán, Kirguistán, y Tayikistán). En un artículo original, Sungur Savran explica, en forma sumaria, como el comunismo/bolchevismo conquistó el corazón de los pueblos musulmanes inmediatamente al despertar de la victoria de la revolución y como los comunistas musulmanes conquistaron su propia tierra y pueblo. El posterior ascenso bajo Stalin del así llamado chovinismo gran-ruso y su impacto en la vida de los pueblos musulmanes en la Unión Soviética son material de análisis para estudios posteriores.

Un artículo que está relacionado de alguna manera rondando a esos sobre la revolución de octubre se enfoca en el colapso de la experiencia del siglo XX en la construcción socialista a través del prisma de Bulgaria. El artículo de Daniela Penkova titulado “Bulgaria en la trampa del neoliberalismo” investiga el proceso de restauración capitalista en el país después de 1989. El autor discute que las instituciones del capital internacional, especialmente el Fondo Monetario Internacional y el Banco Mundial, han impuesto una proscripción sobre Bulgaria que fue muy similar a la impuesta sobre los países del Tercer Mundo. Aunque Bulgaria era un país industrializado con estándares de vida respetables para 1989, las prescripciones neoliberales del período post-1989 (tales como la privatización y desregulación) han empobrecido al pueblo búlgaro. El artículo demuestra empíricamente que a pesar de que en los papeles la economía búlgara parece crecer, la gente común lucha para alcanzar sus necesidades básicas. Penkova concluye su pieza enfatizando que abandonar la política de “desarrollo” neoliberal es absolutamente necesario para alcanzar una industria y estructura social en buen funcionamiento.

Este año no es solo el centenario de la revolución de octubre, sino también el 150° aniversario de la publicación del Volumen I del *Capital*. Nuestro artículo final

es así dedicado a un repaso general del método, contenido y significancia de esta obra maestra del pensamiento humano que es una síntesis de ciencia social y revolución.

El *Capital* en última instancia es sobre el agotamiento progresivo de las posibilidades del modo de producción capitalista para llevar a la humanidad a un futuro mejor y la necesidad de su superación para liberar la energía de la población trabajadora del planeta por propósitos progresistas. Que estamos ya en esa fase de desarrollo histórico es palpablemente claro desde la profunda crisis económica internacional, la acechante amenaza de guerra nuclear a incluso guerra mundial, y la destrucción de la naturaleza, la única fuente de reproducción para la humana y las otras especies vivientes. La defensa de la humanidad, incluso de la vida en general, requiere el advenimiento de un nuevo modo de producción basado en la propiedad colectiva en los medios de producción y planeamiento centralizado democráticamente, así como una fusión fraternal de todas las naciones del mundo. En breve esto requiere del socialismo internacionalista. Esto solo puede ser llevado a cabo por las fuerzas del proletariado, a través de la lucha de clases revolucionaria. Eso es de lo que el marxismo revolucionario se trata y del porqué nuestra revista ha orgullosamente asumido su nombre.

Translated by: Rubén Tuseddu

Italian

In questo numero

Il primo numero di *Revolutionary Marxism*, la versione annuale in lingua inglese della rivista turca *Devrimci Marksizm*, è apparso alla fine del 2016. È stato distribuito e venduto in tutto il mondo, da Beirut a Buenos Aires, da San Pietroburgo a Skopje, da Milano a Montevideo. Non ne sono state vendute migliaia di copie, ma per una rivista della sua entità, ha assolto pienamente alla missione per cui era stata ideata: contribuire alla diffusione di un approccio internazionalista nella teoria marxista militante - ciò che implica naturalmente l'internazionalismo proletario anche in campo politico ed organizzativo - nel Medio Oriente e in Nord Africa, nei Balcani e nel Caucaso, nell'area mediterranea ed euroasiatica. In tutto il mondo. In linea con questo obiettivo, abbiamo deciso di compiere un ulteriore passo avanti, includendo le traduzioni in diverse altre lingue dell'editoriale che state leggendo in questo momento, pubblicate nella parte finale del numero. In questo modo possiamo trasmettere la sintesi del nostro messaggio a tutti coloro che nel mondo non leggono l'inglese ma sono interessati alla voce del marxismo internazionalista e rivoluzionario.

Questo secondo numero, *Revolutionary Marxism 2018*, intende continuare il lavoro verso lo stesso obiettivo, incentrandosi innanzitutto sul Medio Oriente, proseguendo poi con un articolo introduttivo alla questione dei movimenti reazionari nei paesi imperialisti, con uno speciale dossier sulla Rivoluzione d'ottobre nel suo

centenario, che celebrerà questa grande festa dei popoli; con un articolo che indaga sulla fine di uno dei paesi (la Bulgaria) dove è esistito uno Stato operaio fino alla caduta del Muro di Berlino; e con un articolo che riporta la nostra attenzione a quel grande capolavoro del presente e del futuro dell'umanità che è *Das Kapital*, nel centocinquantenario della pubblicazione del primo volume di quest'opera.

Il primo numero della rivista, nell'introduzione e in molti dei suoi articoli d'attualità, caratterizzava la situazione mondiale mettendo al centro l'ormai decennale crisi economica iniziata con il crollo finanziario del 2008, sullo sfondo di diversi processi paralleli: il sorgere di ciò che abbiamo definito un proto-fascismo nel mondo; il concomitante sorgere del movimento islamico confessionale-takfirista, con il suo esempio più saliente nell'ISIS; la crescente minaccia di guerre locali che si stanno trasformando in guerra mondiale; l'aumento della rivolta popolare sia nella sua forma insurrezionale (Egitto, Tunisia, Yemen, Bahrain, Wall Street, Grecia, Spagna, Turchia, Brasile, Balcani, etc.) sia in quella parlamentare (Podemos, Syriza, Sanders, Corbyn, e soprattutto il Frente de Izquierda (FIT) in Argentina) a partire dal 2011.

L'uscita del primo numero è stata immediatamente successiva all'elezione di Donald Trump alla massima carica del più potente paese imperialista del mondo, evento che segnò il momento d'inizio della discussione sul nuovo ed internazionale fenomeno reazionario variamente identificato come "populismo", "estrema destra", "nazionalismo", etc. La nostra diagnosi iniziale, che vedeva in Donald Trump una "mina fascista vagante" ("loose cannon fascist", letteralmente: cannone scappato di mano, ndt), un fascista senza un partito ufficiale e truppe paramilitari, o, detto in altre parole, un proto-fascista, è stata ampiamente confermata dai fatti dell'anno trascorso. La parola "fascista" è ampiamente circolata, in particolare in seguito alla strage di Charlottesville, a rappresentare l'attitudine di Trump nel condonare con leggerezza e ripetutamente l'azione dei suprematisti bianchi ed autoproclamati neonazisti. Steve Bannon, il massimo ideologo della cosiddetta "alt-right" non è più in carica, ma manifestamente rimane ancora l'alter ego del presidente statunitense, a tal punto da effettuare visite da statista a paesi come la Cina per sondare la situazione prima che vi si rechi in visita lo stesso presidente. Oltre i confini degli USA, sullo scenario internazionale, l'establishment liberal è stato troppo affrettato nel vedere i risultati delle elezioni in Europa come una serie di sconfitte per ciò che essi hanno erroneamente rinominato "populismo": in Francia, Marine Le Pen, il massimo rappresentante della crescente piaga proto-fascista, ha ricevuto al secondo turno delle elezioni il voto di un cittadino francese su tre, e in Germania Alternative für Deutschland è ormai diventato il terzo maggior partito del paese, nonostante l'inversione di marcia di Angela Merkel sul tema dell'immigrazione. Se questa è una sconfitta, ci si potrebbe chiedere quale sarebbe stata una vittoria per un movimento

internazionale considerato, fino a poco tempo fa, alla stregua di frange estremiste!

Il rovescio della medaglia, per l'establishment liberal, è stata la vittoria di Emmanuel Macron. In un chiaro esempio di wishful thinking, essa è stata da esso interpretata come il ritorno del mondialismo dopo le sorprendenti sconfitte della Brexit e di Trump. Emmanuel I, come i suoi critici di sinistra in Francia lo hanno sarcasticamente chiamato per via del suo stile regale e del suo ricorso a governare per mezzo di decreti (in ciò, quasi un'imitazione dei metodi impiegati da Erdoğan in Turchia, il quale viene invece giustamente considerato sempre più come un despota da parte dello stesso establishment), ha visto il suo incantesimo ridursi in cenere in ciò che è stato un vertiginoso crollo di popolarità dei sondaggi. Il successo ottenuto da due scioperi nel giro di dieci giorni (il 12 e il 21 settembre), malgrado la capitolazione delle dirigenze di alcuni sindacati, è testimonianza del fatto che la "primavera francese", evocata nel primo numero della nostra rivista con riferimento al movimento della primavera del 2016 contro la prima controriforma della legge sul lavoro del governo sedicente "socialista" di François Hollande, promette di continuare. La Francia rimane in Europa il paese chiave, come sottolineato nel nostro primo numero. La via globalista e neoliberale di Macron non è una risposta ai Trump e alle Le Pen. È solamente l'indipendenza politica e la lotta unitaria della classe lavoratrice ciò che può respingere con forza i demòni nascenti. L'orizzonte è ancora affollato dei tanti Modi e Duterte e Putin ed Erdoğan ed Aliev ed Orban e Trump di tutto il mondo.

Non meno evidente è stata la prospettiva di una guerra totale in tutto il pianeta, fin da quando abbiamo evidenziato, nel primo numero, la minaccia di una guerra mondiale. Tralasciando per un momento i patimenti interminabili della Siria, dell'Iraq, dello Yemen e della Libia, e la brace ancora ardente della guerra in Ucraina, la zona geostrategica asiatica è segnata dalle diverse sfaccettature del conflitto in ascesa fra l'imperialismo e la Cina. La più rilevante fra queste è ovviamente la strategia del rischio calcolato fra USA e Corea del Nord, che minaccia di trascinare il mondo alla prima catastrofe nucleare dai tempi di Hiroshima e Nagasaki, tre quarti di secolo fa. Con zelo tipicamente proto-fascista, Trump ha minacciato di mietere in Corea del Nord "milioni di morti" e di radere al suolo l'intero paese. Nonostante ciò che viene diffuso dalla mendace rappresentazione dei fatti della "comunità internazionale" (un altro nome per dire imperialismo) e dei media capitalisti, il programma nucleare nordcoreano è una misura difensiva contro i tentativi di dominazione militare USA nel Pacifico, contro la presenza di un totale di più di ottantamila uomini dell'esercito statunitense in Giappone e Corea del Sud, e contro la crescente minaccia di guerra che aleggia nell'orizzonte asiatico in generale. Nella loro contrapposizione all'imperialismo, i marxisti rivoluzionari devono appoggiare uno Stato operaio burocraticamente degenerato, persino nel caso di questa caricatu-

ra di Stato operaio basata sul “socialismo in una sola dinastia”.

Più vicino a noi, nella nostra regione del Medio Oriente e Nord Africa (MENA), questa fase reazionaria ha portato ad un nuovo riallineamento delle forze. L'endorsement di Trump al Bonaparte egiziano al Sisi in occasione della visita di quest'ultimo a Washington è stata seguita dalla sua pomposa visita in Arabia Saudita. Il momento kitsch di quella visita, con il ridicolo trio composto da Trump, da Re Salman e dal Presidente egiziano che accarezzavano un globo luminoso, con le comparse a far da guardia sullo sfondo, è stato significativo soprattutto per l'assenza simbolica di due attori. Da una parte Israele, assente eminenza grigia della nuova alleanza che si stava preparando. Nell'aggirare tutte le complicazioni e le contraddizioni della sua politica nella regione, l'orientamento anti-Iran e pro-Israel di Trump si è palesato. Nonostante l'evidente tentativo di corteggiare Putin, Trump, come attestato ancora una volta dal suo discorso all'ONU, sta tenacemente spingendo per formare un'alleanza fra tutte le altre forze reazionarie del Medio Oriente allo scopo di isolare e mettere in ginocchio l'Iran, malgrado la quasi indistruttibile alleanza fra quest'ultimo e la Russia di Putin. È questo il motivo, per inciso, delle recenti pressioni su Hamas per capitolare all'Egitto e ad Israele. L'altra singolare assenza era quella di Erdoğan, altra causa di contraddizioni della politica regionale di Trump. La ragione ufficiale dell'assenza risiedeva nella coincidenza della visita di Trump con il congresso dell'AKP, con Erdoğan impegnato a riprendere il controllo del suo partito dopo il referendum di aprile in Turchia, che ha posto basi di una transizione verso un sistema maggiormente presidenziale. In ogni caso, è emerso molto presto che il motivo reale dell'assenza risiedeva altrove.

Lo sfoggio di potere sunnita che i sauditi hanno inteso mettere in campo invitando il completo assortimento di leader arabi e non per salutare Trump si è rivelato effimero. La crisi del Qatar ha rovinato questa trionfalistica celebrazione di unità, segnando una frattura tra il campo a guida saudita e il blocco rabiista (erdoganiano). Per capire cosa intendiamo con questo, si consideri la sequenza di questi eventi. 2013: il golpe bonapartista di al Sisi abbatte Morsi e il governo dei Fratelli Musulmani (Ikhwan) in Egitto, con il sostegno dell'Arabia Saudita, e uccide a sangue freddo centinaia di sostenitori dei Fratelli Musulmani in piazza Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya al Cairo, causando ripercussioni fra Arabia Saudita e Turchia, dal momento che Erdoğan ha basato la sua intera strategia per diventare il “Rais” (leader) del mondo sunnita su un'alleanza con la Fratellanza Musulmana in una serie di paesi (Tunisia, Siria, Marocco, Palestina - Hamas - ed Egitto). 2015: nonostante il suo esplicito rabiismo (un movimento basato su una posizione revanscista che prende spunto dal massacro di piazza Rabi'a), Erdoğan si lega al nuovo Re saudita Salman appena salito al trono, fino a far entrare la Turchia, alla fine del 2015, nell'Alleanza Militare Islamica per la lotta al terrorismo, un'iniziativa saudita che mette insieme

34 nazioni sunnite, e fino a sfiorare l'entrata in guerra in Siria nel febbraio 2016, insieme all'Arabia Saudita e al Qatar (un duo che va seguito con attenzione!). 15 luglio 2016: lo schieramento a guida saudita abbandona Erdoğan al suo destino di fronte al tentativo di colpo di stato. 2017: fra le tredici condizioni poste dalla coalizione anti-Qatar a guida saudita per la riconciliazione con Doha, c'è il ritiro dei militari turchi dal Qatar, condizione respinta dalla Turchia, che, fedele alla sua strategia rabiista, si schiera interamente con il Qatar. Bisogna aggiungere a tutto ciò che dopo il fallito golpe del luglio 2016 la Turchia ha cercato una leva di potere compensativa nel campo russo-iraniano per bilanciare la pressione di USA e UE sulla sua politica internazionale ed interna.

Tutto questo sta ad indicare che i settori sunniti confessionali del Medio Oriente e Nord Africa sono incapaci di formare una stabile coalizione unitaria contro il campo sciita guidato dall'Iran. Ciò non significa, comunque, che la minaccia di una guerra su basi confessionali, che coinvolga l'intero Medio Oriente, sia una eventualità che abbiamo lasciato alle nostre spalle. Significa solo che il campo sunnita non è così unito come sembrava ad un certo momento, e che l'Iran dispone di margine di manovra e potrebbe riuscire quantomeno a neutralizzare alcuni dei paesi appartenenti al campo reazionario sunnita. Che la minaccia sia tuttora in corso e che probabilmente possa ricevere nuovo impulso dalle politiche di Trump e di Israele è dimostrato dalle incessanti guerre per procura in paesi come Siria, Iraq e Yemen. Solo uno schieramento unificato ed indipendente della classe operaia e delle forze socialiste di tutta la regione mediorientale e nordafricana, in alleanza con le forze omologhe dei Balcani e del Mediterraneo del Nord, può fermare la minaccia di guerra fra sunniti e sciiti, prospettiva, questa, che condurrebbe certamente alla decimazione della popolazione e alla distruzione del patrimonio storico e culturale della regione. Come dice la risoluzione finale della quarta Conferenza di emergenza euromediterranea, svoltasi ad Atene il 26-28 maggio 2017 (risoluzione pubblicata in questo numero della rivista): "Il massacro può essere fermato solamente da un ampio fronte di forze ant imperialiste e antisioniste, in lotta allo stesso tempo contro i regimi reazionari nei loro paesi. Solamente una Federazione socialista del Medio Oriente e del Nord Africa offrirà una soluzione definitiva a tutti i mali della regione."

All'interno di questo vortice, il leader del Kurdistan iracheno Massoud Barzani ha inserito il referendum per l'indipendenza, che ha evocato tutti i dèmoni secolari dei poteri regionali e le macchinazioni imperialiste. I marxisti rivoluzionari sono per l'autodeterminazione dei curdi. Il problema è che questo referendum è stato concepito non per l'autodeterminazione, ma per l'autocelebrazione di Barzani e degli scrigni dei suoi supporter petrolieri. Barzani ha combattuto e intende chiaramente combattere, in futuro, contro la libertà dei curdi in altre parti del Kurdistan

(ad esempio in Turchia, in Iran e in Siria). Quindi una vittoria in questo referendum comporterebbe ironicamente una sconfitta per la causa della liberazione nazionale in Kurdistan, e per di più fornendo all'imperialismo un'altra testa di ponte in Medio Oriente. I marxisti rivoluzionari sono risolutamente contrari all'intervento di qualsiasi potenza regionale nel Kurdistan iracheno, ma si oppongono a Barzani e sono per la liberazione di tutto il popolo curdo.

Il primo dossier di questo numero si sofferma sui differenti aspetti della lotta nella regione mediorientale e nordafricana, in una prospettiva sia di breve che di lungo termine. Il primo articolo del dossier analizza la guerra civile siriana e le sue ramificazioni ed implicazioni nel corso delle sue tappe successive. L'articolo di Levent Dölek dal titolo "Le fasi, le lezioni e il futuro della guerra civile siriana" si apre con la diagnosi secondo cui dal momento che la rivolta popolare contro la dittatura di Assad, che chiedeva libertà e giustizia, non riuscì ad assumere un'inneratura politica proletaria, divenne fin da subito aperta alle manipolazioni dell'imperialismo e dei paesi reazionari dell'area. L'articolo dimostra come l'intervento dell'imperialismo, del sionismo e dei vari poteri regionali (come l'Arabia Saudita, il Qatar, la Turchia e l'Iran) abbia trasformato la rivolta popolare in una sanguinosa guerra religioso-confessionale fra sunniti e altri (alauiti, drusi, cristiani, etc.). Prosegue poi con una dettagliata analisi delle azioni militari di tutti i principali attori (USA, Russia, ISIS, Esercito Libero Siriano, etc.) nel corso della guerra civile. Una sezione specifica è dedicata agli sviluppi del Kurdistan siriano. Dölek riconosce le forti basi progressive del movimento curdo in Rojava, ma obietta che la sua attuale cooperazione militare con l'imperialismo USA è al tempo stesso sbagliata e pericolosa. Riteniamo che l'articolo di Dölek rimarrà per i prossimi anni una preziosa fonte sul tema della guerra civile siriana.

L'articolo di Kutlu Dane intitolato "Il centenario della Dichiarazione Balfour, la memoria della Nakba e l'occupazione sionista" compie un'indagine dettagliata sul background storico della colonizzazione della Palestina. Discute il contesto storico della Dichiarazione Balfour del 1917 (che concesse carta bianca alla fondazione dello Stato di Israele) facendo luce sul mutamento delle posizioni di tutti gli attori coinvolti nel processo (compresi gli imperialismi britannico e francese e lo Stato ottomano). L'articolo di Dane ricorda che sia gli Stati Uniti imperialisti sia l'Unione Sovietica (all'epoca impegnata a seguire la politica di "coesistenza pacifica" con l'imperialismo) sostennero nel 1948 la fondazione di Israele, ponendo in rilievo anche il fatto che tutti i regimi reazionari regionali hanno appoggiato, all'atto pratico, Israele. Come Dane mostra, l'attuale governo dell'AKP in Turchia (che ha continuato a cooperare con Israele in molti ambiti, e non ha mai sinceramente abbracciato la causa palestinese) non fa eccezione.

Sungur Savran indaga le rivoluzioni in Medio Oriente dall'inizio del XX secolo

fino ai nostri giorni, tracciando dall'analisi conclusioni generali. Secondo Savran, il Medio Oriente ha sperimentato nel corso del secolo scorso un ampio numero di rivoluzioni. E sempre nella stessa regione si sono avuti i primi vittoriosi tentativi rivoluzionari del nuovo secolo (Egitto e Tunisia). L'articolo mostra che il Medio Oriente del XX secolo ha vissuto quattro distinte ondate rivoluzionarie, e che le rivoluzioni arabe del 2011 possono essere considerate la quinta ondata. Come Savran nota, l'elevata frequenza delle ondate rivoluzionarie smentisce la convinzione semplicistica (e tipica dell'Orientalismo) secondo cui "le società musulmane sono sottomesse per via del loro credo islamico, e che quindi non fanno rivoluzioni". L'analisi, inoltre, fornisce una forte prova della tesi marxista per cui la storia progredisce non semplicemente attraverso un avanzamento evolutivo ma in realtà attraverso balzi rivoluzionari. Infine, dimostrando che la storia del Medio Oriente è stata determinata da punti di svolta rivoluzionari, l'articolo di Savran espone il carattere superficiale e privo di fondamento della pretesa di riformisti della necessità di essere "realisti" (la convinzione che la rivoluzione sia una eventualità lontana e che la sinistra debba mirare a cambiamenti di portata limitata). In realtà è impossibile raggiungere cambiamenti (grandi o piccoli) senza rivoluzioni. In altre parole, l'esperienza storica dimostra quanto la rivoluzione sia un obiettivo molto più "realistico" delle riforme.

Un dossier illustrativo riprende le formulazioni sulle tendenze reazionarie e sulla risposta necessaria da indicare in altre parti del mondo. Nel suo articolo, intitolato "Metodi di comprensione del 'contemporaneo': una discussione su populismo e fascismo", Cenk Saraçoğlu ritiene che il concetto di fascismo sia molto più appropriato ed utile di quello di "destra populista" (concetto attualmente in voga all'interno della sinistra internazionale) ai fini della comprensione di queste tendenze reazionarie. Saraçoğlu identifica nel "sovversivismo controrivoluzionario" e nella "non-contemporaneità" le due caratteristiche chiave distintive dei movimenti e dei regimi fascisti nel periodo fra le due guerre mondiali, e mette a confronto i movimenti reazionari attuali utilizzando questi concetti. La sua conclusione è che i movimenti reazionari di paesi relativamente periferici, come Ungheria e Turchia, assomiglino al fascismo classico più dei movimenti omologhi nei paesi occidentali avanzati.

Un approccio in certo senso differente della situazione in Europa e nel mondo è presentato dalla Dichiarazione finale della IV Conferenza euromediterranea, appuntamento internazionale nell'ambito del quale, a fine maggio 2017, militanti e studiosi di diciotto paesi hanno discusso le prospettive per il futuro e la strada da seguire a livello internazionale, e, in particolar modo, nei contesti dell'Europa e dell'area del Medio Oriente e Nord Africa (MENA).

Quest'anno ricorre il centenario della Rivoluzione di ottobre del 1917. Si è trat-

tato di un avvenimento storico epocale, che ha aperto nuovi orizzonti non solo per le genti del passato Impero zarista, ma per l'intera umanità, in particolare per i lavoratori e gli oppressi di tutto il mondo. Celebriamo questo accadimento storico mondiale, scavando a fondo nei suoi differenti aspetti, in quattro diversi articoli.

Nel suo studio "Ottobre 1917: un evento mondiale", Michael Savas esamina le relazioni e le differenze fra il 1917 e il 1991, in dialogo con un articolo del filosofo francese Alain Badiou scritto poco dopo la fine dell'Unione Sovietica. Savas ricorda la portata mondiale del 1917, all'epoca riconosciuto da tutti come il momento d'inizio di una rivoluzione socialista su scala mondiale. La rivoluzione sociale si espanse dalla Russia all'Europa orientale e centrale, producendo effetti che si ripercossero dall'Europa all'Asia agli Stati Uniti d'America. Come Keynes notò bene all'epoca, il bolscevismo e la Rivoluzione di ottobre costituirono una seria minaccia all'ordine capitalista mondiale. L'Ottobre non rappresentò sicuramente un tentativo prematuro, in questo senso. Al contrario, si trattò di un "evento" storico mondiale che dischiuse per l'umanità un'epoca interamente nuova. Per converso, il 1991 non fu un "evento", ma un "evento simulato": non aprì alcuna età nuova per il genere umano. Michael Savas conclude sottolineando che il ciclo aperto dalla Rivoluzione d'ottobre non si è affatto chiuso: viviamo ancora all'interno dell'epoca dell'Ottobre, ed è necessario rendere permanente la rivoluzione in questo nuovo secolo.

L'articolo di Özgür Öztürk "La pianificazione socialista nel XXI secolo" discute il potenziale di cui disporrebbe il socialismo con riferimento alle possibilità del presente. Öztürk cerca di illustrare le specificità di un eventuale sistema economico pianificato di cui si potrebbe disporre immediatamente, entro al massimo pochi anni da una nuova rivoluzione. A suo parere, nel ventunesimo secolo è possibile istituire un sistema di pianificazione fundamentalmente diverso e molto più efficiente di quello del secolo passato. L'autore sottolinea il fatto che nel XX secolo uno dei maggiori problemi dell'edificazione socialista è stato evitare la trasformazione di moneta in capitale. Ma una pianificazione ed un sistema di "pagamento" basato sul tempo di lavoro - secondo quanto previsto da Marx nella sua Critica al programma di Gotha - verrebbero a limitare le relazioni monetarie, e quindi in questo senso la minaccia del capitale. Inoltre, un tale sistema faciliterebbe il problema del calcolo. Öztürk affronta anche le possibili forme di nuove relazioni industriali, e deduce che allo stato attuale un regime socialista potrebbe realisticamente conseguire l'obiettivo della piena occupazione, di una completa automazione, dell'azzeramento degli infortuni sul lavoro, e della progressiva costante riduzione delle ore lavorative. Secondo l'autore, si tratta di tendenze potenziali che non potranno mai essere conquistate in un sistema di relazioni capitaliste.

Armağan Tulunay si occupa di un aspetto della Rivoluzione d'Ottobre che è stato per certi versi intenzionalmente ignorato da alcuni ambienti. Da quando il corso

antileninista, ma in realtà antimarxista, prese piede nella sinistra, dagli anni Ottanta in poi, è stata via via sempre più abbandonata la rilevanza del marxismo come corpus di pensiero e programma, e del comunismo come sfida per tutti i diversi tipi di società anche per ciò che riguarda la questione della liberazione della donna. La politica identitaria è diventata la panacea. Il movimento comunista è divenuto estraneo al problema dell'oppressione delle donne, e nulla aveva da offrire sul piano della liberazione delle donne. Tulunay esplora le politiche attuate dai bolscevichi immediatamente dopo la rivoluzione dimostrando incontrovertibilmente che il bolscevismo di Lenin e Trotsky fu incomparabilmente più sensibile al tema dell'oppressione femminile di quanto non lo siano l'attuale sinistra istituzionale di marca *liberal*, così adorata dalle correnti postmoderne antimarxiste del momento. Fu quel bolscevismo che realizzò un concreto programma di misure inimmaginabile nelle più avanzate società del mondo capitalista, e cercò di ottenere un'uguaglianza fra i generi che non fosse solo formale, ma sostanziale. Che la maggior parte di queste misure furono poi annullate dalla burocrazia che usurpò il potere politico - una realtà dimostrata dallo stesso articolo - non può in nessun modo costituire un'evidenza della presunta indifferenza del comunismo verso l'oppressione delle donne. La burocrazia, del resto, abbandonò il comunismo, e perciò si può dire che nessuna delle sue azioni chiami in causa il comunismo.

Il nostro ultimo articolo sulla Rivoluzione di ottobre affronta un ambito che è sempre stato inosservato all'interno del marxismo in Occidente. È sempre stato del tutto ordinario osservare che i primi a conquistare il potere proletario furono i russi, forse i più arretrati fra le grandi nazioni d'Europa, ma è sfuggito ai prevenuti commentatori occidentali che questa rivoluzione fu, ancor più, anche una rivoluzione dei popoli musulmani. Una componente significativa dell'Unione Sovietica, così come essa venne alla fine costituita secondo gli orientamenti di Lenin il 31 dicembre 1922, fu quella delle popolazioni musulmane e soprattutto turciche della Russia interna nei suoi confini orientali (Tartari, Baschiri, Calmucchi, Daghestani, Ceceni, etc.), della Transcaucasia (Azeri, Abcasi) e in Asia centrale (in ciò che oggi sono il Kazakistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kirghizistan e Tagikistan). In un articolo originale, Sungur Savran spiega sinteticamente come il bolscevismo, sull'onda della rivoluzione, seppe conquistare il cuore delle nazionalità islamiche, e come i comunisti musulmani a loro volta furono in grado di conquistare la loro terra e il loro popolo. Il successivo emergere, con Stalin, del cosiddetto sciovinismo grande-russo, e l'impatto di questo sulla vita delle popolazioni musulmane in Unione Sovietica, sarà materia di ulteriori studi.

Un successivo articolo, collegato in modo indiretto agli articoli sulla Rivoluzione d'ottobre, mette a fuoco il collasso dell'esperienza di costruzione novecentesca del socialismo attraverso la lente della Bulgaria. L'articolo di Daniela Penkova "La

Bulgaria nella trappola del neoliberalismo” investiga il processo della restaurazione del capitalismo in quel paese dopo il 1989. L’autrice sostiene che le istituzioni del capitale internazionale, in particolare il Fondo Monetario Internazionale e la Banca Mondiale, imposero alla Bulgaria prescrizioni molto simili a quelle imposte ai paesi del Terzo mondo. La Bulgaria, paese industrializzato e con un considerevole tenore di vita fino al 1989, vide i propri cittadini impoverirsi a causa delle ricette post-1989 (come privatizzazioni e deregulation). L’articolo dimostra empiricamente che, sebbene oggi sulla carta l’economia bulgara sembri crescere, la gente comune fatica a soddisfare i propri bisogni primari. Penkova conclude sottolineando quanto l’abbandono delle politiche neoliberali di “sviluppo” sia una condizione assolutamente necessaria al ripristino di un settore industriale funzionante e alla ricostruzione di un tessuto sociale.

Quest’anno ricorre non soltanto il centenario dell’Ottobre, ma anche il centocinquantenario anniversario della pubblicazione del primo libro del *Capitale*. L’articolo finale della rivista è quindi dedicato ad una panoramica generale sul metodo, sul contenuto e sul significato di questo capolavoro del pensiero umano, sintesi di scienza sociale e scienza rivoluzionaria.

In ultima analisi, *Il Capitale* ci parla del progressivo esaurimento delle possibilità del modo di produzione capitalista di condurre l’umanità in un futuro migliore, e della necessità di rovesciare questo modo di produzione in modo da liberare l’energia della popolazione lavoratrice del pianeta e indirizzarla a scopi progressivi. Che ci si trovi già in tale fase dello sviluppo storico è reso palesemente chiaro dalla profonda crisi economica internazionale, dall’incombente minaccia di una guerra nucleare, persino mondiale, così come dalla distruzione della natura, unica fonte di riproduzione per gli umani e per le altre specie viventi. La difesa dell’umanità, e della vita biologica in genere, richiede l’avvento di un nuovo modo di produzione, fondato sulla proprietà collettiva dei mezzi di produzione e su una sua pianificazione democratica e centralizzata, così come di un’unificazione fraterna di tutte le nazioni del mondo. In breve, richiede il socialismo internazionalista. Tutto ciò può essere determinato solamente dalle forze del proletariato, attraverso la lotta di classe rivoluzionaria. Tale è l’essenza del marxismo rivoluzionario, ed è questo il motivo per cui la nostra rivista porta con orgoglio questo nome.

Translated by: Ottaviano Lalli

Bu sayı

Devrimci Marksizm dergisinin yıllık İngilizce yayını *Revolutionary Marxism*’in ilk sayısı 2016 yılının sonunda yayımlanmıştı. Beyrut’tan ve Bakû’dan Buenos Aires’e, San Petersburg’dan Üsküp’e, Milano’dan Montevideo’ya kadar tüm dünyada dağıtımı ve satışı yapıldı. Binlerce satmamış olabilir, fakat bu sınırlı ölçü içerisinde, görevini layıkıyla yerine getirdi: militan Marksist teori içerisinde enternasyonalizme katkıda bulunmak. Bunun doğal sonucu da Ortadoğu’daki ve Kuzey Afrika’daki, Balkanlardaki ve Kafkasya’daki, Akdeniz ve Avrasya bölgelerindeki ve genel olarak tüm dünyadaki siyasi ve örgütsel alanlarda proleter enternasyonalizmine katkıda bulunmaktır. Bu hedef doğrultusunda yeni bir adım attık ve okumakta olduğunuz bu başyazıyı, çeşitli başka dillere de çevirip bu sayının sonuna ekledik. Böylelikle, tüm dünyada İngilizce okuyamayan fakat enternasyonalist ve devrimci Marksizmin sözüne ilgi duyan insanlara da mesajımızın özünü iletebileceğiz.

Bu ikinci sayı, yani *Revolutionary Marxism 2018*, öncelikle Ortadoğu’ya odaklanarak, emperyalist ülkelerdeki gerici hareketler ve dünya durumu üzerine iki ek yazı ile, yüzüncü yıldönümünde, halkın büyük bayramı Ekim Devrimi üzerine özel bir dosya ile, Berlin Duvarı’nın yıkılışına kadar bir işçi devletinin bulunduğu ülkelerden birinin, Bulgaristan’ın çöküşünü inceleyen bir makale ile ve ilk cildinin yayımlanmasının 150. yıldönümünde, insanlığın bugününün ve geleceğinin büyük başyapıtı *Das Kapital*’i konu alan bir başka makale ile aynı hedef doğrultusunda

çalışmaya devam etmeyi amaçlıyor.

Birinci sayı, giriş yazısında ve çeşitli makalelerde, 2008 finansal çöküşüyle başlayan ve on yıldır süren ekonomik krizi yan yana ilerleyen çeşitli süreçlerin arka planı olarak merkeze koydu. Bu süreçler, tüm dünyada ön-faşizmin yükselişi, buna eşik eden ve en çarpıcı örneği DAİŞ ya da İŞİD olan İslami tekfiri-mezhepçi hareketin yükselişi, bölgesel savaşların bir dünya savaşına dönüşmesi tehdidinin gitgide artması ve de halkın isyanının 2011’den bu yana hem ayaklanma şeklinde (Mısır, Tunus, Yemen, Bahreyn, Wall Street, Yunanistan, İspanya, Türkiye, Brezilya, Balkanlar vb.) hem de parlamenter biçimler altında (Podemos, Syriza, Sanders, Corbyn ve en önemlisi de Arjantin’de Frente de Izquierda (FIT)) yükselişi olarak sıralanabilir.

Birinci sayı Donald Trump’ın dünyadaki en güçlü emperyalist ülkedeki en yüksek mevkiye seçilmesinin hemen ardından yayınlandığı için, bu tekil olay “popülizm”, “aşırı sağ”, “milliyetçilik” vs. olarak anılan yeni uluslararası gerici olguya dair bir tartışma için de hareket noktamızı teşkil etti. Donald Trump’ın bir “serseri mayın faşisti”, oturmuş bir partisi ve paramiliter birlikleri olmayan bir faşist, yani başka bir ifadeyle bir ön-faşist olduğu şeklinde erkenden yaptığımız tahlil geçtiğimiz yıl yaşananlar neticesinde fazlasıyla doğrulandı. “Faşist” kelimesi, özellikle Charlottesville olaylarının ertesinde, beyaz ırkçıların ve Neonazi ismini kullanmaktan bile çekinmeyenlerin eylemini Trump’ın gönül rahatlığıyla ve defaatle onaylaması üzerine, bu tavrı tanımlamak için kullanılmaya başladı. Kendilerine “*alt-right*” yani alternatif sağ adını takmış olan faşistlerin baş ideoloğu Steve Bannon artık görevde değil, fakat hâlâ ABD başkanı ile etle tırnak gibi olduğu, Çin gibi devletlere devlet adamlarını andırır seyahatler yapıp, ABD başkanı gelmeden ağız yokladığı oldukça aşikâr. ABD sınırlarının ötesinde, uluslararası planda, liberal “establishment”, Avrupa’daki seçimlerin sonucunu, (hatalı bir biçimde) “popülizm” olarak adlandırdıkları gücün bir dizi yenilgi yaşaması olarak nitelemekte aceleci davrandı: Fransa’da, ön-faşist vebanın en net temsilcisi olan Marine Le Pen, seçimlerin ikinci turunda üç Fransız vatandaşından birinin oyunu aldı. Almanya’da ise *Alternative für Deutschland* partisi, Angela Merkel’in göçmen politikası konusunda gerçekleştirdiği 180 derece dönüşe rağmen ülkedeki üçüncü büyük parti haline geldi. Bunlar yenilgiden sayılıyorsa, daha kısa süre öncesine kadar kenarda köşede kalmış meczuplar gözüyle bakılan bu uluslararası hareketin zaferi neye benzerdi, merak etmeden yapamıyor insan!

Liberaller açısından madalyonun diğer yüzünde Emmanuel Macron’un zaferi yer alıyor. Brexit ve Trump ile yaşadıkları ezici yenilgiler sonrası bu zaferi küreselleşmenin geri dönüşü olarak yorumlayarak, açık bir hüsnükuruntu örneği sergilediler. Fransa’da soldaki muhaliflerinin, kralvari tarzına ve KHK’larla (bunun, aynı liberal establishment tarafından, haklı biçimde, iyiden iyiye bir despota döndüğü

değerlendirmesi yapılan Erdoğan'ın Türkiye'de uyguladığı metotların neredeyse tipatıp aynısı olduğunu hatırlatalım) yönetmesine atıfla taktığı alaycı isimle Birinci Emmanuel'in kerameti kamuoyu yoklamalarındaki popülerliğinin tepetaklak olması sonrası eriyip gitti. Bazı sendika konfederasyonlarının teslimiyetine rağmen, on günlük bir süre zarfında (12 ve 21 Eylül'de) gerçekleşen iki grevin başarısı, ilk sayımızda 2016 baharında "sosyalist" François Hollande hükümetinin İş Yasası reformuna karşı gelişen harekete atıfla bahsettiğimiz "Fransız baharı"nın devam etme sinyalleri verdiğini gösteriyor. İlk sayımızda da vurguladığımız üzere, Fransa Avrupa'daki kilit ülke olmaya devam ediyor. Macron'un küreselci ve neo-liberal yolu Trump'lara ve Le Pen'lere karşı derman olamaz. Bu melanetin yükselişini tersine çevirebilecek olan yalnızca işçi sınıfının siyasi bağımsızlığı ve birleşik mücadelesi olabilir. Dünyanın ufku hala Modi'ler, Duterte'ler, Putin'ler, Erdoğan'lar, Aliyev'ler, Orban'lar ve Trump'lar ile doludur.

İlk sayımızda dünya savaşı tehdidinin altını çizmemizden bu yana, tüm dünya sathında bir topyekûn harp olasılığı da gayet belirgin olarak ortada.. Bir anlığına Suriye'deki, Irak'taki, Yemen'deki, Libya'daki bitmez tükenmez çileleri ve Ukrayna'da savaşın derinden derine yanmakta olan korunu bir yana bıraksak dahi, Asya jeo-stratejik bölgesi emperyalizm ve Çin arasında gelişmekte olan çatışmanın farklı veçheleriyle doludur. Bunun en önemli örneği elbette ABD ve Kuzey Kore arasında gelişen ve dünyayı 70 küsur yıl önceki Hiroşima ve Nagazaki'den sonra ilk nükleer felakete sürüklenme tehdidini barındıran gerilim yükseltme politikasıdır. Trump, alışlageldik ön-faşist iştahıyla, Kuzey Kore'de "milyonlarca kişiyi öldürme" ve tüm ülkeyi yerle yeksan etme tehditleri savurdu. "Uluslararası toplum"un (nam-ı diğer emperyalizm) ve kapitalist medyanın sunduğu uydurma verilerin çizdiği tablonun aksine, Kuzey Kore'nin nükleer hazırlıkları, Pasifikte askeri bir egemenlik kurma arzusundaki ABD'ye, Japonya ve Kuzey Kore'deki 80 binden fazla ABD askerine ve genel olarak Asya'da ufukta beliren savaş tehdidine karşı bir savunma tedbiridir. Bürokratik olarak yozlaşmış bir işçi devleti emperyalizm ile karşı karşıya geldiğinde, hatta işçi devletinin "tek hanedanda sosyalizm"e dayanan bu karikatüründe dahi, devrimci Marksistler işçi devletinin arkasında durmalıdır.

Ülkemize daha yakın bir noktada, bölgemiz olan Ortadoğu ve Kuzey Afrika'da, Trump'ın temsil ettiği gerici dalga güçlerin dizilimini değiştirdi. Trump'ın, Mısır Bonapartı el-Sisi'ye Washington ziyareti sırasında verdiği desteği, Suudi Arabistan'a gerçekleştirdiği şatafatlı ziyaret izledi. Ziyaretin en bayağı anı, figüranlar arka planda nöbet tutarken Trump, Kral Selman ve Mısır Cumhurbaşkanı'ndan oluşan gülünç üçlü parıldayan bir yerküreyi okşadığında gerçekleşti. Bu anı anlamlı kılan iki aktörün yokluğuuydu. Bir yandan, Siyonist İsrail, kurulmakta olan yeni ittifakın göze görünmeyen akıl hocasıydı. Görüldü ki Trump'ın İran karşıtı ve İsrail yanlısı siyasi yönelimi, bölgeye yönelik politikasındaki tüm çapraşıklıkla-

rı ve çelişkileri aşabiliyormuş. Trump, Putin ile yakınlaşmak için gösterdiği bariz çabalara ve Putin'in Rusya'sının İran'la bozulması neredeyse mümkün olmayan ittifakına rağmen, son BM konuşmasında da görüldüğü üzere İran'ı yalıtma ve bu ülkeye diz çöktürmek amacıyla Ortadoğu'daki diğer bütün gerici güçler arasında bir ittifak kurmak için büyük bir çaba içerisinde. Yeri gelmişken, Hamas'ın yakın zamanda Mısır ve İsrail'e boyun eğmesi için baskı altına alınmasının sebebinin de bu olduğunu belirtelim. Yokluğu dikkat çeken diğer isim ise, Trump'ın Ortadoğu ve Kuzey Afrika politikasındaki çelişkilerin bir diğer sebebi olan Erdoğan'dı. Resmi gerekçe, Trump'ın ziyaretinin, Erdoğan'ın, cumhurbaşkanının öneminin daha da artacağı bir sisteme doğru geçişin temellerini atan 16 Nisan referandumundan sonra partisinin dizginlerini eline almak için geri dönmekte olduğu partisinin kongresi ile aynı tarihlere denk geldiği şeklindeydi. Fakat kısa süre içinde ortaya çıktığı üzere, gerçek sebep başkaydı.

Suudilerin, Trump'ı karşılamak için Arap olsun olmasın birçok ülkeyi davet ederek Sünni mezhepçi güce yaptırmaya çalıştığı gövde gösterisi kısa ömürlü oldu. Zafer kazanmış general edasıyla yapılan birlik kutlamalarının hemen ardından Katar krizi patlak verdi ve Suudi liderliğindeki kamp ile Rabiacı kampın arasını açtı. Ne demek istediğimizi anlamak için şu olay örgüsüne bir bakın. 2013: Sisi'nin Bonapartist darbesi, Suudi Arabistan'ın desteğiyle Mısır'da Mursi'yi ve Müslüman Kardeşler (İhvan) hükümetini deviriyor ve soğukkanlı biçimde yüzlerce İhvan taraftarını Kahire'nin Rabiya-tül Adeviyye meydanında katlediyor. Böylelikle, Erdoğan bütün stratejisini İhvan ile birçok ülkede ittifak kurarak (Tunus, Suriye, Fas, Filistin yani Hamas ve Mısır) Sünni dünyanın reisi olmak üzerine kurmuş olduğu için Suudi Arabistan ile Türkiye arasında bir kopuş yaratıyor. 2015: kendi açık Rabiacı çizgisine rağmen Erdoğan, Suudi Arabistan'ın eski kralın ölümünün ardından yeni kral Selman ile ilişki kuruyor, hatta 2015 sonunda 34 Sünni devleti bir araya getiren bir Suudi girişimi olan Teröre Karşı İslam İttifakı'na katılıyor ve Suudiler ve Katar (bu iki ülkeye dikkat!) ile birlikte Şubat 2016'da Suriye'de bir savaşa girmenin ucundan dönüyor. 15 Temmuz 2016: Suudi kampı, Erdoğan'ı darbe girişimi karşısında kaderine terk ediyor. 2017: Suudi Arabistan liderliğindeki Katar karşıtı koalisyonun uzlaşısı için sunduğu 13 şartın arasında Türk askeri güçlerinin Katar'dan çekilmesi de yer alıyor. Bu talep Rabiacı stratejisine sadık kalarak Katar'ın yanında yer alan Türk tarafınca reddediliyor. 15 Temmuz darbe girişiminden sonra, Türkiye'nin uluslararası yönelim ve iç siyasette ABD ve AB'den gelen baskıyı dengeleyecek bir güç olarak Rusya-İran kampına yüzünü döndüğünü de eklemeliyiz.

Bütün bunlar, Ortadoğu ve Kuzey Afrika'daki Sünni mezhepçi güçlerin İran liderliğindeki Şii kampa karşı dayanıklı ve birleşik bir koalisyon oluşturamadığını gösteriyor. Fakat bu, bütün Ortadoğu sathına yayılacak bir mezhepçi savaş tehdidinin geçmişte kaldığı anlamına gelmez. Bunun tek anlamı, Sünni kampın bir dönem

gözüktüğü kadar birleşik olmadığı, İran'ın manevra alanının bulunduğu ve gerici Sünni kampta yer alan bazı ülkeleri en azından tarafsızlaştırmasının mümkün olduğudur. Tehdidin halen sürdüğü ve muhtemelen Trump ile İsrail'in politikalarıyla ömrünün uzayacağı gerçeği, Suriye, Irak ve Yemen gibi ülkelerdeki kesintisiz vekâlet savaşlarıyla görülmektedir. Yalnızca Ortadoğu ve Kuzey Afrika'daki işçi sınıfı ve sosyalist güçlerin, Balkanlar ve Kuzey Akdeniz'deki benzer güçler ile ittifak içerisinde oluşturacağı birleşik ve bağımsız blok, bölgedeki halk kitlelerinin katledilmesine ve tarihi-kültürel mirasın mahvına yol açacağı kesin olan Sünni-Şii mezhep savaşı tehdidine engel olabilir. 26-28 Mayıs 2017 tarihleri arasında Atina'da gerçekleşen 4. Avrupa-Akdeniz Konferansının, bizim de bu sayıda yayınlamakta olduğumuz sonuç bildirgesinde söylendiği gibi: “Katliam ancak kendi ülkelerinde gerici rejimlerle mücadele eden anti-emperyalist, anti-Siyonist güçlerin geniş bir cephesi sayesinde engellenebilir. Yalnızca Ortadoğu ve Kuzey Afrika ölçeğinde bir Sosyalist Federasyon bölgenin sorunlarını sona erdirebilir.”

Bu girdaba, Irak Kürdistanı'nın lideri Mesut Barzani bir de bölge güçlerinin asırlık şeytanlarını ve emperyalizmin manevralarını sahneye çağırarak bağımsızlık referandumunu ekledi. Devrimci Marksistler Kürtlerin kendi kaderini tayininden yanadır. Mesele referandumun kendi kaderini tayin için değil, Barzani'nin kendisini ve petrol rantçısı taraftarlarının cüzdanlarını şişirebilmesi amacıyla yapılmış olmasıdır. Barzani Kürdistan'ın diğer parçalarındaki (Türkiye, İran, Suriye) Kürtlerin özgürlüğüne karşı savaşmıştır ve gelecekte de savaşmaya devam etme niyetinde olduğunu göstermektedir. Yani referandumun zaferi, emperyalizme Ortadoğu'da bir başka mevzi verecek olmasının yanı sıra, ironik biçimde, Kürdistan ulusal kurtuluş davasının da yenilgisi anlamına gelecektir. Devrimci Marksistler herhangi bir bölgesel gücün Irak Kürdistanı'na yönelik askeri müdahalesine tereddütsüz biçimde karşıdır, fakat Barzani'nin karşısında ve tüm Kürt halkının kurtuluşunun yanında durmaktadır.

İlk dosyamız, hem kısa vadeye hem uzun vadeye bakarak Ortadoğu ve Kuzey Afrika bölgesinde mücadelenin farklı veçheleriyle ilgileniyor. Bu dosyanın ilk makalesi Suriye iç savaşını ve bu savaşın uluslararası etkilerini aşama aşama inceliyor. Levent Dölek'in “Suriye'de iç savaş: Suriye iç savaşının aşamaları, dersleri ve geleceği” başlığını taşıyan makalesi, Esad diktatörlüğüne karşı başlayan halk ayaklanmasının bir proleter siyasi çerçeve edinemediği için kısa süre içerisinde emperyalizmin ve bölgedeki gerici devletlerin manipülasyonlarına açık hale geldiği teşhisi ile başlıyor. Emperyalizmin, Siyonizmin ve (Suudi Arabistan, Katar, Türkiye ve İran gibi) bölgesel güçlerin müdahalelerinin halk isyanını Sünniler ile diğerleri (Alevileri, Dürziler, Hristiyanlar vb.) arasında kanlı bir din-mezhep savaşına çevirdiğini gösteriyor. Bu makalede, tüm önemli ana aktörlerin (ABD, Rusya, DAES, ÖSO vb.) iç savaş sırasındaki askeri faaliyetlerinin ayrıntılı bir analizi ya-

pılıyor. Makalenin bir bölümü ise Suriye Kürdistanı'ndaki gelişmelere ayrılmış. Dölek Rojava'daki Kürt hareketinin güçlü bir ilerici temeli bulunduğunu belirtiyor, fakat ABD emperyalizmi ile içinde bulunduğu askeri işbirliğinin hem yanlış hem de tehlikeli olduğunu savunuyor. Dölek'in makalesinin, ilerleyen yıllarda da Suriye iç savaşı üzerine kıymetli bir kaynak olacağı kanaatindeyiz.

Kutlu Dane'nin "Siyonist işgal ve Balfour Deklarasyonu. Nakba'nın memorandumu Balfour Deklarasyonu'nun yüzüncü yıldönümü ve Siyonist işgal" başlıklı makalesi Filistin'in sömürgeleştirilmesinin tarihsel arka planını detaylı biçimde inceliyor. Dane, süreçte rol oynamış olan tüm aktörlerin (Britanya ve Fransız emperyalizmleri ve Osmanlı devleti dâhil) değişen pozisyonlarına ışık tutarak (İsrail devletinin kurulması için açık çek veren) 1917 Balfour Deklarasyonu'nun tarihsel bağlamını ortaya koyuyor. Dane'nin makalesi, 1948'de İsrail'in kurulmasını hem ABD emperyalizminin hem de (o dönemde emperyalizmle "barış içinde bir arada yaşama" politikası izleyen) Sovyetler Birliği'nin desteklediğini gösteriyor. Bölgedeki tüm gerici rejimlerin de İsrail'i fiiliyatta destekledikleri gerçeğinin de altını çiziyor. Dane'nin gösterdiği üzere, Türkiye'deki (İsrail'le birçok alanda iş birliği yapmaya devam eden ve Filistin davasını asla içten bir biçimde benimsemeyen) mevcut AKP hükümeti de İsrail'i destekleyenler arasında bulunuyor.

Sungur Savran, yirminci yüzyılın başlarından günümüze kadar Ortadoğu'daki devrimleri inceliyor ve bunlardan genel sonuçlar çıkarıyor. Savran'a göre, Ortadoğu yirminci yüzyılda birçok devrim yaşadı ve yirmi birinci yüzyılın ilk devrimleri de bölgede (Mısır ve Tunus) meydana geldi. Makale, Ortadoğu'nun yirminci yüzyılda dört devrimci dalga yaşadığını ve 2011'deki Arap devrimlerinin de beşinci dalga sayılabileceğini gösteriyor. Savran'ın belirttiği üzere, devrimci dalgaların sıklığı "Müslüman toplumlar, İslam inancı gereği itaatkârdır ve bu sebeple devrim yapmazlar" şeklindeki basit (ve Oryantalist) inanışın yanlışlığını ortaya koyuyor. Bu, aynı zamanda Marksizm'in, tarihin evrim biçimini alan gelişmelerle değil devrimci sıçramalarla ilerlediğine dair tezine de güçlü bir kanıt sunuyor. Son olarak, Savran'ın makalesi, Ortadoğu tarihinin devrimci dönüm noktalarında belirlendiğini göstererek, reformistlerin (devrimin uzak bir ihtimal olduğunu ve sol siyasetin küçük ölçekli değişimler hedeflemesi gerektiğini savunarak) "gerçekçi" oldukları yönündeki iddianın da sığlığını ve temelsizliğini teşhir ediyor. Aslında, devrimler olmaksızın (küçük ya da büyük) değişimler elde etmek imkânsızdır. Başka bir ifadeyle, tarih, devrimin reformdan daha "gerçekçi" bir hedef olduğunu gösteriyor.

Ek dosya, dünyanın diğer kesimlerindeki gerici eğilimleri ve bunlara verilmesi gereken cevabı ele alıyor. " 'Çağdaş'ı anlamının metotları: popülizm ve faşizm üzerine bir tartışma" başlıklı makalesinde Cenk Saraçoğlu, bu gerici hareketleri anlamak için faşizmin (uluslararası solda çok popüler bir kavram olan) "popülist sağ"dan çok daha uygun ve kullanışlı bir kavram olduğunu belirtiyor. Saraçoğlu,

iki dünya savaşı arasındaki dönemde faşist hareket ve rejimlerin ayırt edici özelliği olarak “karşı-devrimci yıkıcılık” ve “çağdaş olmama”yı saptıyor ve günümüz gerici hareketlerini bu kavramları kullanarak karşılaştırıyor. Saraçoğlu, Macaristan ve Türkiye gibi nispeten çevrede yer alan ülkelerdeki gerici hareketlerin, gelişmiş Batı ülkelerindekilere kıyasla klasik faşizme daha çok benzediğini belirtiyor.

Avrupa ve dünyadaki duruma dair bir miktar farklı bir yaklaşım, 2017 Mayıs’ının sonunda, 18 ülkeden militanların ve aydınların uluslararası planda ve özellikle de Avrupa ve Ortadoğu-Kuzey Afrika bağlamlarında, izlenecek yolu tartışmak için katıldığı uluslararası bir etkinlik olan 4. Avrupa-Akdeniz Konferansı’nın Sonuç Bildirgesi’nde sunuluyor.

Bu yıl 1917 Ekim Devrimi’nin yüzüncü yıldönümü. Bu çılgır açıcı olay, sadece eski Çarlık Rusya’sının halkları için değil, tüm insanlık ama özellikle de tüm dünyanın işçileri, emekçileri ve ezilenleri için yeni ufuklar açtı. Bu dünya-tarihsel olayı kutluyor ve farklı veçhelerini dört farklı makale ile ele alıyoruz.

“Ekim 1917: Dünya çapında bir olay” makalesinde Savas Mihail, Fransız filozofu Alain Badiou’nun Sovyetler Birliği’nin yıkılmasından kısa süre sonra yazdığı bir makale ile diyalog içerisinde 1917 ile 1991 arasındaki ilişkiyi ve farkları tartışıyor. Savas Mihail 1917’in dünya çapında bir olay olduğunu ve herkes tarafından dünya sosyalist devriminin başlangıcı olarak görüldüğünü hatırlatıyor. Toplumsal devrim Rusya’dan Doğu ve Orta Avrupa’ya yayıldı ve Avrupa’dan Asya’ya ve ABD’ye uzanan etkileri oldu. Keynes’in de o dönem farkında olduğu üzere, Bolşevizm ve Ekim Devrimi küresel kapitalist düzene gerçek bir tehdit oluşturuyordu. Bu anlamda, Ekim Devrimi kesinlikle zamanı gelmeden gerçekleştirilmiş bir girişim değildi. Bilakis, insanlık için yeni bir çağ açmış olan dünya-tarihsel önemde bir “olaydı”. Aksine, 1991, bir “olay” değil “-mış gibi yapılan bir olaydı”: insanlık için yeni bir çağ başlatmadı. Savas Mihail, Ekim Devriminin açtığı çevrimin henüz kapanmadığını vurgulayarak bitiriyor. Hala Ekim’in çağında yaşıyoruz ve yeni yüzyılda devrimi sürekli kılmalıyız.

Tamás Krausz’un yazısı, tanınmış yapıtı *Reconstructing Lenin*’den bir bölümün kısaltılmış ve kısmen gözden geçirilmiş bir versiyonu. Krausz burada Lenin’in en etkili yapıtlarından biri olan, devrimin hemen öncesinde –Ağustos-Eylül 1917’de– yazılıp ertesi yıl yayımlanan *Devlet ve Devrim*’i yorumluyor. Krausz’a göre, bu küçük, yüz sayfayı zar zor bulan broşür Ekim Devrimi’nin felsefesini içermektedir. Bu metinde Lenin devlet sorununu, “her devriminin bu merkezi sorunu”nu ele alır ve toplumsal devrimin birinci evresi olarak devletin tasfiyesini tartışır. Krausz, Lenin’in vizyonunun hiç de ütopyacı olmadığını vurguluyor. “Devrim perspektifinden bakıldığında, bu incecik kitap, özünde, metodolojik ve siyasi düzlemde, parlamentarizmle ve Bernsteinçi revizyonizmle iç içe geçen ‘oporTunusiatik yanılısamalar’ın da ütopyacı, anarşist yaklaşımların da hepsinin birden işini aynı

anda bitirdi.”

Özgür Öztürk’ün makalesi “21. yüzyılda sosyalist planlama”, sosyalizmin potansiyelini, günümüzün olanaklarına referansla tartışıyor. Öztürk, hemen şimdi, en fazla devrimden sonraki birkaç yıl içerisinde inşa edilebilecek olan ekonomik planlama sisteminin bir taslağını çıkartmaya çalışıyor. Öztürk’e göre, 21. yüzyılda, bir önceki asırdakinden temel biçimde farklı ve çok daha etkili bir planlama sistemi kurulabilir. Makale, 20. yüzyılda sosyalist inşanın temel problemlerinden birinin paranın sermayeye dönüşmesinin önüne geçmek olduğuna işaret ediyor. Fakat (Marx’ın “Gotha Programı’nın Eleştirisi”nde öngördüğü üzere) emek-zamanı üzerine kurulacak bir planlama ve “ödeme” sistemi parasal ilişkileri ve dolayısıyla sermayenin yarattığı tehdidi sınırlayacaktır. Dahası, böyle bir sistem hesaplama sorununu da daha kolay biçimde çözecektir. Öztürk aynı zamanda olası yeni endüstriyel ilişkileri tartışıyor ve günümüz koşullarında, sosyalist bir rejimin gerçekçi biçimde tam istihdam, tam otomasyon, sıfır iş kazası ve çalışma saatlerinin aşamalı biçimde kısıtılmasını hedefleyebileceğini öne sürüyor. Öztürk, bunların kapitalist ilişkiler altında hiçbir zaman tamamıyla gerçeklik kazanamayacak potansiyel eğilimler olduğunu belirtiyor.

Armağan Tulunay, Ekim Devrimi’nin, kimi çevrelerce kasıtlı biçimde göz ardı edilen bir başka yönünü ele alıyor. 1980’lerden bu yana sol içerisinde anti-Leninist ve hatta anti-Marksist bir dönüş başladığından beri, kadınların kurtuluşu meselesinde Marksizm’in bir düşünce bütünü ve bir program, komünizmin ise farklı tipte bir toplum arayışı olarak önemi artan ölçüde reddedilmeye başladı. Derman kimlik siyasetindeydi. Komünist hareket kadınların ezilmesinden bihaberdi ve kadın kurtuluşu için önerebileceği hiçbir şey yoktu. Tulunay, Bolşeviklerin devrimin hemen ardından uygulamaya geçirdikleri politikaları inceleyerek, kapitalist dünyanın en gelişmiş ülkelerinde dahi hayal edilemeyecek bir somut önlemler programını hayata geçirip, cinsler arasında sadece formel değil gerçek bir eşitlik yaratmaya çalışan Lenin ve Trotskiy liderliğindeki Bolşevizmin kadınların ezilmişliğine, günümüzün anti-Marksist ve post-modernist akımlarının hayran olduğu liberal “establishment”la kıyaslamayacak biçimde daha duyarlı olduğunu, tartışmaya yer bırakmaksızın gösteriyor. Tulunay’ın makalesinde işaret ettiği üzere, siyasi iktidarı gasp eden bürokrasinin bu uygulamaların çoğunu ortadan kaldırmış olması hiçbir biçimde komünizmin kadınların ezilmişliğine yönelik sözde duyarsızlığına kanıt olarak gösterilemez. En nihayetinde, bürokrasi komünizmi terk etti, dolayısıyla bürokrasinin faaliyetlerinin hiçbirisi komünizmi töhmet altında bırakmaz.

Ekim Devrimi konulu son makalemiz, Batı Marksizmi’nin hep göz ardı ettiği bir alana eğiliyor. Uzun süre boyunca, proletarya iktidarının ilk olarak Ruslar, yani muhtemelen büyük Avrupa uluslarının en geri kalmış olanı tarafından hayata geçirildiği sıkça belirtilegeldi. Fakat Batı gözlüğüyle bakan yorumcular, Ekim

Devrimi'nin, bunun da ötesinde, Müslüman halkların devrimi olduğunu hep gözden kaçırdılar. Lenin'in yönlendirmesi uyarınca 31 Aralık 1922'de kurulan Sovyetler Birliği'nin önemli bir unsuru İç Rusya'nın doğu sınırlarındaki (Tatarlar, Başkırlar, Kalmuklar, Dağıstanlılar, Çeçenler vb.), Transkafkasya'daki (Azeriler, Abhazlar vb.), Orta Asya'daki (bugünün Kazakistan, Türkmenistan, Özbekistan, Kırgızistan ve Tacikistan sınırlarındaki halklar) Müslüman ve çoğunlukla Türki halklardı. Sungur Savran, kaleme aldığı bu orijinal makalede, komünizm/Bolşevizm'in devrimin zaferinin ardından Müslüman halklarının gönlünü nasıl fethettiğini ve Müslüman komünistlerin nasıl topraklarını ve halklarını kazandığını, özet biçimde açıklıyor. Büyük Rus Şovenizmi olarak anılan olgunun Stalin döneminde nasıl yükseldiği ve Sovyetler Birliği'ndeki Müslüman halkların hayatını nasıl etkilediği ise başka bir çalışmanın konusu olabilir.

Ekim Devrimi hakkındaki makalelere nispeten dolambaçlı biçimde bağlı olan bir yazı ise, 20. yüzyılın sosyalist inşa tecrübesinin yıkımına Bulgaristan açısından bakıyor. Daniela Penkova'nın "Neo-liberalizm tuzağında Bulgaristan" başlıklı makalesi ülkedeki 1989 sonrası kapitalist restorasyon sürecini inceliyor. Yazar, uluslararası sermayenin kurumlarının, özellikle de İMF'nin ve Dünya Bankası'nın, Bulgaristan'a, Üçüncü Dünya ülkelerine dayattıklarına bezer bir reçeteyi dayattığını belirtiyor. Bulgaristan 1989 itibarıyla sanayileşmiş ve kayda değer bir yaşam standardına sahip bir ülkeyken, 1989 sonrası dönemin (özelleştirme ve kuralsızlaştırma gibi) neo-liberal reçeteleri Bulgaristan halkını fakirleştirdi. Makale, Bulgaristan kağıt üzerinde büyüyor gözüke de sıradan halkın temel ihtiyaçlarını karşılamakta dahi zorlandığını ampirik olarak gösteriyor. Penkova, yazısını, işleyen bir sanayi ve toplumsal yapıya kavuşabilmek için neo-liberal "kalkınma" politikasının terk edilmesinin mutlak bir gereklilik olduğunu vurgulayarak bitiriyor.

Bu yıl yalnızca Ekim Devrimi'nin yüzüncü yılı değil, aynı zamanda *Kapital*'in birinci cildinin yayımlanmasının da yüz ellinci yıldönümü. Son makalemizi bu sebeple, sosyal bilim ve devrimin bir sentezi olan, insan düşüncesinin bu başyapıtının yöntemi, içeriği ve önemi üzerine genel bir incelemeye ayırdık.

Kapital, son tahlilde, kapitalist üretim tarzının insanlığı daha iyi bir geleceğe taşıma olanaklarının aşamalı olarak tükenmesi ve tüm dünyadaki işçi kitlelerinin enerjisini ilerici amaçlar doğrultusunda açığa çıkarabilmek için bu üretim tarzını devirmenin gerekliliği hakkındadır. Tarihsel gelişimin bu aşamasına hâlihazırda varmış olduğumuz, derin uluslararası ekonomik krize, tepemizde sallanan nükleer savaş hatta dünya savaşı tehdidinde ve insanların ve diğer yaşayan türlerin yeniden üretiminin tek kaynağı olan doğanın mahvına bakarak açıkça görülebilir. İnsanlığın ve hatta genel olarak hayatın savunulması, üretim araçlarının kolektif mülkiyeti ve demokratik merkezi planlama üzerine kurulu yeni bir üretim tarzının gelişine ve dünyadaki tüm ulusların kardeşçe kaynaşmasına bağlıdır. Kısacası, gerekli olan

sosyalizmdir. Bu da yalnızca proletaryanın güçlerince, devrimci sınıf mücadelesi ile hayata geçirilebilir. *Devrimci Marksizm* budur ve dergimiz de bu sebeple bu adı gururla benimsemiştir.

Translated by: Burak Sayım

