

WAR IS NOT THE END OF THE WORLD: IT IS AN ATOMIC 'CHARCO'*

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** The word 'charco' used by the author in its Argentinian version of Spanish has been left untranslated here for lack of a sufficiently evocative English word. The context of the author's writings points to a traumatic quagmire, of a short duration. Editorial*

The question of the atomic war is one of the overriding themes that dominate the preoccupation of the human beings, of the proletariat. This preoccupation, however, is not the same as fear. The concern is: How are we to face this? What will happen before, during and after? How will humanity behave?

In the matter of the atomic war, as in any other situation of calamity and class struggle, one must cling with great firmness to the class analyses, class conclusions and class experiences that put their entire trust in the proletariat and in humanity.

Although the atomic war petrifies the bourgeoisie, the latter will launch it all the same. The bourgeoisie senses that the atomic war is 'curtains' for it – and this cripples it with fear. In the United States and other countries, it makes shelters for itself hundreds of meters belowground, with cinemas, generators, bathrooms and domestic servants' quarters. Bourgeois people may take refuge in there, but capitalist power will end, even if imperialism wins the war.

Imperialism winning the war would bring new conditions in history. Triumph and power would fall to military types who will oust the political leaders of private property. The retrogression will fling society back to the middle Ages, under a system of production inferior even to the middle Ages. The conditions will not exist to create a new form of property, and those in charge will have to fight in order not to be dispossessed. To live on, they will have to increase the use of science and technology, and today's problems will return. There is no perspective for those people, even if they win the war.

We reiterate that we do not want the atomic war. The Bolshevik programme was against war. To those who asked the Bolsheviks why they were fighting, the Bolsheviks answered that their fight was "war against war", to stop the oppression and the massacres of the class enemy. Did they have another option? Is there another option? Should someone discover another option, we will support it! But there is none. The atomic war is inevitable because imperialism is going to use all its weapons. Hence we prepare for it, counting on all the possible forces, like the 14 Workers States and 16 Revolutionary States that exist today.

As a class, the proletariat feels secure in history. It does not fear the atomic war. Its industrial and political preparation disposes it to revolutionary action, but it derives this disposition mainly from its role in society – regardless of Trade Union and political preparation. Through its function in the economy and in society, the proletariat sees that capitalism is unnecessary. The proletariat lives the daily reality of capitalism's social role making no contribution to the human relations. Within itself, the proletariat feels that it is producing, reproducing and contributing usefully, whether the capitalists stand over it or not. The proletariat sees its labour as part of human ingeniousness. It feels part of the intelligence that elaborates science and technology.

Although the proletariat realises that society depends upon it, it does not adopt the attitudes of superiority or arrogance to be found in the other social classes. In the other social classes, conservative and egoistical sentiments motivate their attitudes and social inclinations. The proletariat as a class cannot have such attitudes, motives or social inclinations, because it does not generate such sentiments.

The role that the proletariat plays in the economy guards it against conservatism and egoism. It knows that its effective labour is part of an endeavour that includes the technicians and scientists. It sees also that the capitalists operate right outside that endeavour, utilizing technology for themselves, just as they utilize science and human labour. The proletariat knows that society and production depend upon it, in a way that would not change if there were no capitalists. This is why those in power experience any Trade Union proposal as a power duality, a bid for power, a casting out of the capitalist.

Due to its function in society and the economy, the proletariat feels confident and secure. Production having become increasingly socialised, this inner confidence has grown over time into an unfettered communist consciousness. In Roman times, the proletariat played a role too, but not as a class. It is capitalist development and big industry that developed the proletariat as a class. Big capitalist industry and collective production have given rise to collective consciousness. Collective consciousness arises from the socialised process of capitalist production, where a collective form of participation became necessary.

The proletariat feels fundamentally part of this. In its historic class development, proletarian consciousness evolved through Workers Parties that eventually led to the Bolshevik Party. At the time of the First International – and later with the Socialist parties – partial and limited aspects of this consciousness emerged. With the triumph of the Russian Revolution, the proletariat came to full consciousness through Communist Parties aware now that progress demanded the transformation of society.

The structure of society as it stands, along with its relations of production and exchange, makes any new form of private property impossible. The centralisation of property has given rise to a great technical capacity where each new level of concentration generates more productivity. Matters have now reached the point where this great concentration and centralisation simply need planning. With planning, productivity will be a hundred times what it is now. The obstacle in the way is private property and competition – that is to say, the market.

The proletariat developed through those forms; and when Marxism arrived, it gave a consciousness that only the proletariat can have. The proletariat derives its ability from its function in society, as we said, but it derives it also from the Party⁸. The collective consciousness of the proletariat mounts from the established form of production up towards the Party. The Party then takes on the task of upholding it consciously and teaching it. The Party defends the historic notion and spreads the comprehension that the new society must start from the levels and structures attained in capitalism, i.e., from big and centralised production.

Human progress must start from the level of concentration and centralisation reached in capitalism. All it needs is a new form. What new form? The Workers State! And from the Workers State to Socialism! The proletariat is conscious; it feels secure. It does not fear catastrophes, economic mayhem or the destruction of the riches that humanity has produced. It feels like those who have nothing to lose. Its position in the economy clears its consciousness of egoistical conclusions.

The capitalists cannot live outside accumulation and profit-making

Capitalist society has concentrated the means of production. This has brought about big industrial development, high technology and high productivity. Capitalism knows how to produce more, in less time and at the same costs. If this talent were applied to a collective society, production would triple at once. It is only that, in capitalism, property is concentrated through competition and through the capitalists' implacable need to profit and accumulate. No capitalist can change this without going bankrupt. Any attempt at changing this breaks the M-C-M cycle (money-commodity-money). It is to keep this cycle going that the capitalists must preserve the existing social and economic order.

Capital has reached the point where it can no longer boost its own capacity to expand. It reacts by turning in upon itself, increasing its financial centralisation. This lessens the number of capitalists because competition liquidates them. Meanwhile, the Workers States continue to advance. They are plagued by a lack of means, of traditions and of preparation, but they can still resolve in 20 years what capitalism never did in 200. The proletariat takes stock. It will start from that level of attainment when it finally breaks the bureaucratic yoke.

The proletariat is confident and secure in the notion that anything and everything can be rebuilt. Where the proletariat stands, society stands too, for society depends upon it. The proletariat occupies a place at the heart of production where there are no sentiments of egoism, appropriation, competition, vanity or selfishness. These sentiments are those of private property. When private property has gone, those sentiments will go too. The proletariat enters the war with these characteristics.

The proletariat has the historic and actual experience of 14 Workers States and 16 Revolutionary States. The Revolutionary States are influenced by the proletariat through the concept of the Workers State – i.e. State-owned property and the collectivised economy. That is to say, the world at large views the proletariat in light of the Workers States. The irrepressible confidence of the proletariat stems from its feeling socially irreplaceable. The proletariat is unafraid; it has nothing to lose “but its chains”, as Marx says.

Through its function as a class, the proletariat already feels itself to be organising history. It has no world Party, but it knows itself to be the decisive factor of social organisation. You get a measure of this when you look at its behaviour. Its conduct in the Workers States is of a very fine order when you consider how it resists bureaucracy and takes great care not to harm the Workers State. This has been the conduct of the proletariat at every turn: in Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1958 and in Stettin & Dantzig (Poland) this year⁹.

The proletariat enters the war with this ability and knowledge. It has nothing to lose and everything to gain. From where it has stood in history and in the economy, it has grown the sort of confidence, resilience and determination that makes the rest of the population wish to follow it.

The atomic war is going to produce disarray, horror and shock. There will be a loss of reasoning in many people, but the proletariat will be the least affected. Those most affected will be the bourgeois whom you already see futureless and perspective-less, seeing nothing but death ahead. The bourgeois hope to secure their future by burying themselves 100 meters below the ground – where they will stay.

A preview of how the proletariat is going to enter the nuclear war shows already in the conduct of the masses of Vietnam, of the Middle East, and of anywhere indeed. The proletariat gives constant demonstrations that it does not let itself be bullied, wiped out or debilitated. It is going to enter the atomic war with the all vigour it displays in the class struggle. The Yankees have threatened to use atomic weapons against Vietnam, but the proletariat did not quake. It went on supporting Vietnam and encouraged it to fight on.

The mayhem and monstrous capitalist crimes that will mark the start of the nuclear war will be immediately followed by the proletariat moving into action. The proletariat will embark upon social reorganisation. It will draw together what is left of the world populations and make a ruling class with it. In that process, its intervention will focus on the liquidation of every remnant, if any, of capitalism and bureaucracy.

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The First World War produced the Soviet Workers State. In spite of Stalin's best efforts to stop the extension of the Russian Revolution, the Second World War brought 8 more Workers States. There are now 14 Workers States and 16 Revolutionary States. The Third World War is the end of the capitalist system.

Mind that we do not seek the nuclear war. We do not reckon that such a war was the right way to get rid of the capitalist system, but this is how history has panned out. We just speak as we find. As far as we are concerned, we prepare to face this situation by treasuring every useful means that history creates along the way, determined to do everything and draw all the conclusions necessary for the construction of Socialism.

It is not that we are without feelings! From the most profound of our Communist emotions, we lament the tragedy which is coming to millions and millions of human beings. We are not those who are guilty or responsible for it. Capitalism is! Feeling this too, the proletariat is all the more determined not to feel intimidated.

The notion that the atomic war is going to crush so many millions of people fills us with appalling distress, but we do not feel responsible or guilty. Where we feel we have a responsibility, yes, is in proposing ways and means to help overcome the atomic 'charco' as fast as possible, and get Socialism under way.

At the start of, and during the atomic war, humanity will be penetrated by the collective sentiment of the proletariat – the very sentiment that helps the proletariat not to fear the atomic war and the consequences of capitalist barbarism. Observe how elevated the behaviour of humanity already is, in spite of finding itself without a class-and-mass revolutionary Party. It has mass parties, but they are not revolutionary.

Humanity is going to behave in the way made necessary by its need to face up. If someone could prove to us that postponing the Socialist Revolution by 20, 30 or 50 years could avoid the nuclear war, we would go along with the idea. The matter however stems from a historic necessity, not a number of years. The atomic war is inevitable. And it will be followed, immediately, during and afterwards, by the world triumph of the Socialist Revolution.

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