

*Preface to the seventh Italian edition*

In 2003, the “war of choice” waged by the United States in Iraq had proved to be the definitive confirmation that a “new strategic phase” had opened up in the imperialist development and in the confrontation between powers. The war – decided by Washington to condition the times of Beijing’s imperialist rise – followed China’s entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the decisive steps taken by the European Union with the introduction of the euro and the creation of its federal monetary power.

As we argued in the foreword to the sixth edition of *Class Struggles and the Revolutionary Party*, this situation of the contention configured a “strategic unprecedentedness”, compared to the entire previous 50-year period, which had been framed in the *1957 Theses* as the prediction of a long cycle of capitalist development:

“The contradictions of the imperialist powers continue – at the moment – to find a solution in the struggle over world markets, but China’s imperialist rise is a qualitative change that prospectively puts a conceptual end to the strategic cycle of the *1957 Theses*.”

The fact that that process was not yet completed at a practical level, and that its times would require “a generation”, demanded “scientific precision” and “political attention” in evaluating the progress of the world contention, in order to reveal more sharply the manifestation of its contradictions and the consequent tasks for the revolutionary party. Even if a *rupture of the order* among the powers of imperialism was not imminent, the unchanging continuation of the *cycle of imperialist liberism* was no longer conceivable:

“In a very broad quantitative evaluation, the rise of Europe and Japan in relation to the United States had the same proportion in the 1950s and 1960s as China’s emergence today in relation to Europe and the USA together. The crucial difference is that, in the 1950s and 1960s, the background of that imperialist development was to be found in the ‘two thirds’ of the world population of Asian

backwardness; today that space has been reduced to approximately *one third*.

“The ‘partial crises’ that will emerge from this combination of *continuity* and *change* in the strategic framework of the 1957 *Theses* will reflect this unprecedented nature of the confrontation. The continental dimensions of the new state actors, and the no longer unlimited area for a further expansion, will make the re-composition of the crises in the ‘world web of imperialist interests’ that today is the cartel of imperialist liberalism much more vexed.”

Under those new conditions, “demographic size and state force” would give China, and then gradually other emerging powers such as India, “a growing capacity to condition access to its own domestic market and to demand a new division of the world market.”

From the new condition of the contention, two conclusions followed at the theoretical and political level for the tasks of the party in its rooting in Europe. Firstly, “for the revolutionary party, the questions of state and strategy, i.e., of the imperialist dynamic that – through uneven development – leads to a rupture of the equilibrium”, had to be faced “at the new level of the confrontation, which is precisely the balance and breakdown of order among continental powers.” Secondly, “the nature of class struggles and of social and political change in Europe” would increasingly depend “on continental correlations”: “to contrast the ideologies of imperialist Europeanism so as to install the science-party, the organisation centred on strategy, inside the European metropolis” became “the new practical task on the agenda.” As for the prospects of the world proletariat, imperialist development in China and other areas would see “the pool of labour-force of a vast peasant hinterland [...] metabolised”, but this would radically change “the world relations of force among the classes.” At the same time, the repercussions on the world order among the powers would be increasingly affected by “Chinese pressure on the world balance.”

This was stated in the autumn of 2004. More than fifteen years later, it is easy to see how much that system of analysis is fully confirmed by the tightening of the *crisis of the order* in international relations. Two global crises – what we referred to as the *crisis in global relations* in 2007-2008 and the crisis of *the pandemic of the century* in 2020, respectively – have dramatically accelerated the whole process. Indeed, the Chinese irruption characterised the world contention,

with Beijing's plans for a world-class military force triggering an arms race. And really the problem of how to confront Chinese imperialism, as well as to escape the pincer movement of Washington and Beijing, is confirmed as the strategic torment for European imperialism. Together with rearmament, in all the metropolises of imperialism colossal state intervention plans then mark *the second half of the new strategic phase*, which presages the next fifteen years as even more stormy.

In 2004 we argued that the new features of the contention required special attention to the third chapter of *Class Struggles and the Revolutionary Party*, the chapter on strategy. In the *science-party*, as well as in the *strategy-party*, lies the solution to facing the unprecedented conditions of the global confrontation, and to fighting the poisoned ideologies with which the masses will be mobilised and fanaticised: the liberal democracy of the West against Chinese authoritarianism, a *Europe that protects* against Beijing's technological threat, and even an *environmental social-imperialism* against the giants of Asia devouring the environment.

The experience of the *crisis of the pandemic of the century*, however, has added a further confirmation to the Leninist theory of the party, that of the *plan-party*. In our book *Their Politics and Ours*, the conclusions of that battle were drawn: indeed, seizing the link in the organisational chain turned out to be the solution to facing a sudden and unpredictable crisis; indeed, that crisis has “educated” and “tempered” the militants, allowing us to collect and direct the unexpected energies that have emerged in our class. With that crucial experience behind them, the new generations will be able to face an increasingly tormented era. *Class Struggles and the Revolutionary Party* is confirmed as a vital text in the new battles that are already heralded.

G.L. – December, 2021