

**SOME THESES ON THE QUESTION
OF THE PANDEMIC AND THE FIGHT
AGAINST FASCISM AND REFORMISM**



NUOVA EGEMONIA



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The pandemic continues to rage in most imperialist countries. Despite high percentages of vaccinated persons in the population, a new wave is unfurling. The vaccines are being confirmed, on the one hand, as a useful and indispensable measure, but on the other as highly insufficient. The same vaccines are still at a stage that requires significant improvements in order to deliver the requisite degree of efficacy against new mutations that are now emerging at ever-smaller intervals. The risk is that of witnessing an endless series of vaccinations with a possible multiplication of adverse effects, concurrent with an extension, if not an outright worsening, of the pandemic crisis.

The said crisis, being combined with the economic and institutional crises stemming from the decomposition of the so-called parliamentary democracies, becomes a favourable condition and an easy pretense for further economic, political and ideological attacks against the proletariat and the popular masses. In this context, the imperialist bourgeoisies are operating not only from the reactionary governments in office, but also by fomenting the populist opposition of the Right and “Left”. While the governments in office from periodically accentuate the processes of fascist corporatisation of the State, the populist movements forge on with the prospect of developing a mass fascist movement centred on a pseudo-

revolutionary rebellion at the service of great monopolistic capital. The No Vax/No Green Pass movements, which have murky ties – now demonstrated – to broad swathes of alternative syndicalism and Left-wing populist forces, to the point of involving some anarchist sectors, should be read as an integral and advanced part of this outlook.

The proletariat today is fragmented politically, ideologically and organisationally. The proletarians entering the battle on the economic front are generally doing so by joining confederal or alternative unions, which are now part of the problem rather than a possible solution. The proletariat is therefore not at present in a position to exercise any kind of independent initiative and cannot at all act as a tendentially hegemonic force towards the most exploited and oppressed sectors of the petty bourgeoisie.

On the agenda, then, is the problem of the construction of the party of the proletariat. To discuss the matter concretely, however, requires pointing out the direction in which to go, explaining how one can and should move forward and setting oneself apart from mistaken, opportunistic and reactionary theories, conceptions and political lines, prompting the most advanced workers to do the same.

The subjective forces actually interested in proceeding in this direction are few today and clearly in the minority in the face of the black and red-brown tidal wave of populism, and the decomposition of alternative syndicalism, movementism, and the radical and “antagonist” Left.

With regard to the question of the pandemic itself, a central aspect of the work for the development of class consciousness and for the construction of the party of the proletariat has to do with how to correctly assess its causes.

A mistaken and reformist assessment gives rise to political, ideological and organisational confusion, in which individuals often succumb and find themselves powerless in the face of the developing tendencies toward the “corporate State” and the fascism deployed, which will come into clearer focus with time. This tendency will strive more and more to mask its counter-revolutionary nature behind populist and pseudo-socialist forms, that is, arising from the implementation of a set of measures (occasional, partial, initially instrumental, but ultimately inevitably illusory) in defence of the popular masses, on the economic-social terrain and on that of social services of public interest with a probable resumption of more direct forms of State capitalism.

What are the causes of the pandemic? In the radical and “revolutionary” Left, as in alternative syndicalism and the movements, the confusion is at its height, but implies a common

denominator: reformism. The prevailing theories, both in the sense that they are the most widespread and in the sense that they are the only ones exposed with a minimum of organicity, are those of eco-socialist nature. Rob Wallace argues, as indeed do the theories universally spread by bourgeoisies and reactionary classes around the world, that the pandemic was caused by a “pathogen jumping the species barrier” (or spillover). What Rob Wallace adds, however, to applause from social-reformists, pseudo-communists and anarchists all over the world, is that the jump made by the pathogen Sars-Cov-2 definitely occurred as a result of “capitalism”. None of the supporters of this theory bother to go see what exactly Rob Wallace means by capitalism. They all rest on innumerable empirical representations, accumulated by Wallace himself in support of his theses, ignoring the fact that with such representations, the concept of capitalism that is introduced under the table is antagonistic to that advanced by Marx and involves a reactionary, Social-Democratic and Trotskyist assessment of the processes around the construction of socialism in the USSR at the time of Stalin, and in China when there was Mao.

The most important point, however, is that, in speaking of the allegedly capitalist character of the species jump, eco-socialism diverts attention from the real problem, which is not the result of “spill-over”, but the pandemic and its actual causes. In principle, in fact, the species jump can take place for purely natural reasons or arise from simple production activity or the introduction of systems aimed at increasing productivity in agriculture, in animal rearing or the circulation of products on a large scale. In other words,

the “species jump” is tendentially linked to nature and “value of use”. Conversely, in the current state of development of science and technology and with the level of organisation and concentration of productive and human resources available on a world scale, a pandemic such as the one in progress can only be due, on the one hand, to the character taken on by capitalist relations in a terminal phase of imperialism and, on the other, to the policies and related strategic interests of the imperialist bourgeoisies and the ruling classes.

In socialism and communism, there will inevitably still be species-jumping by pathogens, just as there will still be earthquakes or changes in the natural environment induced by the work of man – but not for this will there be pandemics like the one still in motion.

The imperialist bourgeoisies and reactionary States around the world deliberately ignored the initial manifestations of the pandemic. For a few months, the line initially followed was that of minimalism and negationism. But when the situation threatened to bring down the existing health systems, with dangerous possible consequences from the point of view of the hegemonic hold of the imperialist states (including China, at least initially) then the answer was blanket lockdowns. This time, in the name of the fight against a pandemic which until then had in fact been fostered, we have witnessed an operation aimed at unloading the burden of the pandemic crisis on individual families. Specifically, SARS-Cov-2 sufferers, who are no longer treated in hospitals and have to remain shut in their homes, in addition to suffering a criminal situation of abandonment, are in

the horrendous situation of having to put the lives of their immediate family members at risk.

The Left and Far Left in Italy, after sharing the dominant minimalism and negationism, found themselves largely supporting the blanket lockdowns of the spring of 2020. They did so in the name of containing the pandemic, but forgetting that the reasons and aims of containment of an epidemic implemented in a socialist country, possibly also through blanket lockdowns, are very different from that implemented by the imperialist bourgeoisie and reactionary classes, which practice systems similar to those which the feudal lords and ecclesiastical hierarchies imposed on the people in the Middle Ages during the plague.

Once the first wave of the pandemic had passed, the bourgeoisie returned, with the so-called “Phase 2”, to guaranteeing some elementary constitutional freedoms and fully espoused the same logic as previously, marked by minimization and denial of the problem. Specifically, it launched an indiscriminate policy of reopening activities and services, including schools and transport, which obviously laid the foundations for a new wave that turned out to be even worse, extended through the last months of 2020 and continued to throb even in the months thereafter.

The roll-out of vaccines has come to pass and has continued up to now in the worst possible way. Never before in the history and

development of capitalism had a competition so stark and brazen been witnessed on the foundation of producing vital drugs for the survival of humanity. Imperialism, as an economic system characterised by an ever-deeper terminal general crisis, has overcome, with regard to the issue of the production and marketing of vaccines, events related to the Cold War, which itself did not preclude forms of cooperation between scientific communities belonging to different and opposing economic-social and political systems.

The issue of vaccines has been implemented and used as a chapter in a real phase of preparation for an imperialist war on a global scale. Every possible means, including corruption and the co-optation of scientists from other imperialist powers, was adopted. This, while an intensely-pounding campaign of denigration, combined with opportune phases of information blackouts, was conducted against vaccines developed by opposing imperialist powers. In Europe, and thus in Italy, the first vaccines imposed were Astra Zeneca, which proved a half-failure, followed by those based on mRNA-science, never tested previously in a mass vaccination.

The question of vaccines has thus also become a weapon of the hegemonic war both on the foreign front, relating to competition with other imperialist powers (Russia and China), and domestically, as a means of

preventing and calming possible democratic and progressive mass reactions and movements against the criminal management of the pandemic carried out by reactionary ruling classes.

At the same time, the No Vax/No Green Pass movements were fuelling up, again for preventive purposes, against the proletariat and the popular masses, guaranteeing them broad media coverage and ample room for manoeuvre, also in a clear derogation from the restrictions imposed by law, as circumstances may require.

The concern about the possible effects of mRNA vaccines on health, until such vaccines have been recognised as sufficiently stable and effective and, therefore, made mandatory by the major countries of the world, appears legitimate today, thus making adequate protection a necessity in terms of the effective provision of swabs on a mass scale. Swabs need to be made available alongside vaccines and be imposed, as an alternative to the latter, on all citizens, including the age group excluded from vaccination today.

That being said, we do not yet have sufficiently-effective vaccines. The risk, then, with the demand for compulsory vaccination from sectors of the Far Left (e.g. some Trotsky groups, the Communist Youth Front, Communist Proletarians-PCM, etc.), also in step with the CGIL in this case, is that of losing sight of the basic fact that the government's campaign for mRNA vaccines instrumentally emphasises, for hegemonic purposes, the terms

relating to their actual effectiveness. In other words, the imperialist bourgeoisies and the reactionary classes first worked to amplify the pandemic, to unload its costs on the popular masses and now would like to present themselves as those who solved the problem, when in reality the solution is a long way off, and perhaps now, in the context of general and terminal crisis for capitalism, not even a foregone conclusion. This is also taking into account the fact that, in addition to the continuing emergence of new variants and the enormous shortage of vaccines in most countries of the world, several species jumps by pathogens have already been established, and can result in pandemics all the more easily than was the case with SARS-Cov-2.

Only those who are able to nip a possible epidemic in the bud by preventing its propagation and transformation into a pandemic can then effectively resolve a pandemic or prevent others that are foreseeable in the short term.

In the general crisis of imperialism, the imperialist bourgeoisies and reactionary classes are not truly able to cope with these problems. The reasons are as much economic as political. The increasingly acute general crisis does not enable them to expand the economic and social base of their power with the usual systems of exploitation of wage labour and the extortion of imperialist superprofits at the expense of oppressed peoples. To the contrary, the very crisis accentuates the demands, often conflicting,

of the middle classes and the working class aristocracy and services sector. This results, on the one hand, in the drastic containment of public spending on health and, on the other, in an increasingly openly classist character of the latter. As a result, the funds for scientific research in the medical-pharmacological field are being reduced and while their character is being changed, as they are increasingly directed towards maximising profit. The disastrous state of health and scientific research is therefore determined by the fact that the revenue from public expenditure is plundered by the different types, old and new, of rents inextricably linked to the system of exploitation of wage labour. Subsidising and remunerating such parasitic rents is a vital political necessity for the imperialist bourgeoisie of the major countries of the world, and all the more so for countries such as Italy which are particularly burdened by rents, given the historical backwardness and marginal character of their imperialism. Without unity with rents, the dominant bloc represented by the various monopolistic capitals are destined to fall apart in favour of the opening up of a potentially revolutionary process. That is why the political choice to safeguard and favour annuities inevitably results in a situation in which not only are the conditions for the proper health and economic-social management of a pandemic lacking, but also, the temptation to let the same pandemic run its course, or at any rate to manage it in an occasional and approximate

manner, in order to be able to use it in the most effective way at every level against the proletariat and the popular masses prevails continuously.

In one case as in the other, on the stage set by the general crisis of capitalism, the causes of the pandemic are political in nature and can be traced back to the absolute primacy today of the concerns of the imperialist bourgeoisie and the reactionary classes all over the world seeing the rise of the global proletarian revolution. Its centre lies in the countries oppressed by imperialism, where the Maoist forces leading them are well-positioned for conducting the popular wars for New Democracy (one need only look at the exemplary Indian revolution in progress). In the imperialist countries, instead, there is the need of a qualitative leap in the direction of the formation of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties. This is becoming increasingly urgent in order to advance the fight for a New Democratic Antifascist People's State with a view towards socialism.

In the midst of all this, only a New Democratic and Popular State is truly able to ensure priority to political, economic and health measures which it is illusory and thoughtless to expect from the reactionary bourgeoisie. Today, the struggle for a new conception of public health and the safeguarding of the living and working conditions of the proletariat as well as the layers of the impoverished petty bourgeoisie, detached from the programme of a New Antifascist Resistance for a New State, is nothing but economicism, reformism and movimentism, with the aggravating condition already emphasised above, that all this objectively paves the way for

confusion with populist movimentism (as occurred in the general strike of grassroots syndicalism last October) the result of which is the advancement of a middle-class movement, directed by big capital, masquerading as pseudo-revolutionary anti-system and even “anti-capitalist”.

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