

The material base and the "great men"

When analyzing the development of capitalism in terms of the increase of military confrontation and militarism at world level, we must not lose sight of the fact that the actions, declarations and wills of He or She are determined by the development of the productive forces which imposes itself as an external and blind law, no matter how much it manifests itself in the heads of the intervening parties as if it were the fruit of their freely created will.

The inevitable character of war in capitalism is determined by COMPETITION for markets and the need to periodically DESTROY part of the productive forces already created in order to relaunch the cycle of accumulation as Marxism has always explained (see "The Internationalist Proletarian", No. 8, p. 21).

Therefore, the explosions and shocks that happen on the surface of the capitalist world, are explained by the movements in the economic subsoil of this world and not by the existence of this So-and-so. As our current has affirmed:

"In the course of a man's life it has been possible to witness three times the preparation of an armed conflict taking the whole earth as its scene.

The third world war is not yet underway, but surely nine people out of ten consider it certain. Even if the tenth were right, it is certain that we are in the period of open preparation; for once the old warning that war is avoided by preparing for it would come true. Such an event is not out of history; it is verified when one of the contenders is so overbearing and so armed that the other raises his hands high without a fight, or after brief attempts and skirmishes. Throws in the towel and picks up the bag, one would say in the ring.

It is not necessary then to engage in prophecies about the third war and subordinately about the possibilities of having a place around the ring during natural life, in order to have the right to draw conclusions from the direct experience of the developing "third preparation".

As always the guides of the great propagandas work, unfortunately with success, in such a way that in the foreground the masses recognize causes and faults of the danger of war in ideal, moral, above all national factors, in the fact that not only certain specific governments and ruling classes, but certain peoples, nations, even races, overwhelmed by an indomitable thirst for domination and blood, provoke, threaten, prepare to attack the rest of the world, where on the contrary masses, crowds, elites, statesmen would be prone to peace, to disarmament, to the moving general idyll.

They all make swords and cannons, but they all declare that, if there were no others, the bad, the cruel, the sons of the Evil One, they would be ready to devote themselves exclusively to the cultivation of olive branches, to the breeding of pigeons (...).

[The development of productive forces illustrated by the increase of iron production] *Can it not have an influence on the development of world events? Is not a cause of such magnitude, primary and significant but certainly not unique in the picture of the virulence of Capital, sufficient for the irruption of imposing effects?*

No, it must be the bogeyman, the bad guy, the tyrant of tragedy, the horde of barbarians coming, who knows how, from outside this magnificent world of bourgeois economy!" (His Majesty Steel, Battaglia Comunista No. 18, 1950).

What historical processes determine the situation?

In the previous articles of this review and in the previous issues, we have been able to see the main historical processes in whose intersection are located the military clashes and explosions in the present capitalist world. As we tried to summarize synthetically in "The Internationalist Proletarian" No. 9 (page 7):

"The center of gravity of world capitalism has been shifting and is shifting towards Asia (first the productive, then the commercial and finally the financial one), determining a gradual but inexorable loss of power of the winners of the 2nd world slaughter (USA in the first place).

The division of the world carried out at Yalta and Potsdam in 1945 among the victorious capitalist powers of the second world slaughter has long since ceased to correspond to the real balance of power between the various imperialisms.

The world order inaugurated with the atomic bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, by the bombings of Dresden and Hamburg, on the ashes of the incineration on the war fronts and in the rear of tens of millions of workers throughout the world for the greater glory of capital, has expired.

The development of capitalism to all corners of the world and the volcano of production in Asia have plunged capitalism since 2008 into a great crisis of overproduction of which the episodes are following one after the other. This crisis of capitalist overproduction is sinking the rate of profit, sharpening the trade war and imposing the need for the destruction of the productive forces as a capitalist way out of the crisis.

Both the rupture of the division of the world and the crisis of relative overproduction of capitals lead the capitalist world towards imperialist war; it is not a question of the madness of one or another puppet but of the essence of the capitalist solution to the crisis: (...)"

This is the context in which the war in Ukraine (with direct and indirect worldwide participation) and the other conflicts described below are framed, within the general struggle in which it is decided through "STRENGTH and CUNNING" (Capital, Volume III, Chapter XV, K. Marx) which capitalist powers will have to assume the greatest destruction of capital, which will conquer or lose markets.

Development of the imperialist war in Ukraine

The US carefully prepared a trap, accumulating a fortified powder keg in Ukraine, into which the Ukrainian bourgeoisie itself, Russia and, to a large extent, the EU have fallen. The objective retreat of the US at world level, the decline in the weight of fossil fuels, the steps of the EU to provide itself with energies alternative to the Russian ones, pushed Russian imperialism to attack first. The US was looking for the current scenario in which neither Russia consolidates the occupied territory nor Ukraine manages to recover it.

In several episodes it becomes clear that the war is not a war in Ukraine alone and there are sporadic clashes between Russian planes and American drones, or missiles fall in Poland or drones enter Russian territory. For the time being, the involved parties minimize these collateral clashes and avoid an escalation that would lead directly to the third world war. But at the same time, Russian imperialism is not disposed to lose and to go again through the dismantling it suffered after the fall of the wall. So, it has withdrawn from the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, it has mobilized tactical

nuclear weapons in Belarus and it has also placed them in front of Norway.

The wear and tear produced by the war is being unloaded on Russia, Ukraine and to a lesser extent the EU. The EU expects to take over the business of the reconstruction of Ukraine by requisitioning the frozen funds from Russia, but the very integration of Ukraine into the EU is very difficult, as shown by the protests that rural entrepreneurs of the neighboring states are leading, flooded with Ukrainian products (see page 18 of this review).

The irruption of the Russian bully in its backyard has forced European imperialism to further integration at the military level and to turn again to the military alliance with the US through NATO, which has expanded its membership (incorporating Finland) and has forced them to increase military spending.

Both sides have had to reduce the frequency of fire in order to economize on ammunition while the US and the EU continue to provide weapons to Ukraine so that the bloodbath and Russia's erosion may continue, leading to a progressive emptying of their weapon inventories. On the other hand, the heavy weaponry (tanks and airplanes) given to Ukraine is deficient and in bad conditions. The weapons industry has benefited greatly from the situation. In particular the US industry, which is the largest exporter, but also the German industry, which produces highly valued weapons. The Russian weapons industry cannot take advantage of the situation in the same way because it produces directly for the war front and not for export. Turkish and Iranian military equipment (drones) has also been widely used in the war.

The war is also being a business for the Wagner private army and for the Chechen mercenaries who have already stated that they are studying the creation of a similar private army. Prisoners have been provided to this company to go to the slaughterhouse as cannon fodder with the promise of being released after six months, more than half of them having already died. There have been major shortcomings in the supply of weapons, in the provisioning and deployment of Russian troops which have led Russian nationalist sectors to denounce even the president for high treason for not declaring a state of war and deploying maximum military power.

Within the Ukrainian government there have been several purges due to alleged cases of corruption and even the Western bourgeois press has not been able to hide the fact that on the Ukrainian side there have been purges and murders of soldiers who had already surrendered, exactly as on the Russian side.

The arrest warrant issued by the Hague Criminal Court against the Russian president is a demonstration of impotence on the part of the issuer, given that neither Russia nor half the world recognizes this court.

The proletariat – both Russian and Ukrainian – is the one who lays the dead in a war that only benefits the capitalist powers that support one side or the other. From both sides, the only thing the proletariat can expect is forced conscription, prison regime and overexploitation in the rear.

The only alternative that the Russian, Ukrainian and world proletariat can oppose in this situation is **REVOLUTIONARY DEFEATISM**, the struggle against the bourgeoisie itself for the rapid halt of the slaughter and the transformation of the imperialist war into **REVOLUTIONARY CIVIL WAR**.

Chinese imperialism, "world peacemaker"

Russia's strategy of isolation at the international level has not only failed to produce the desired effect, but rather

threatens to progressively isolate Western imperialism and the US in particular.

Thus, although the situation has been caused by the US, the main beneficiary will be Chinese imperialism which has the economic capacity to sustain Russia and, at the same time, to attract other powers to a business perspective. The US proposes to continue the war so that the rest destroy each other as a means to regain the lost hegemony. This allows China to present itself (checkbook in hand) as the world peacemaker.

The move of Chinese imperialism has been to announce a "peace plan" for Ukraine. It is not a plan as such but a series of more or less generic declarations which translate into a cease-fire which would consolidate the territory occupied by Russia. This approach is intended to take advantage of talking of stopping the war while the US appears to be interested in the war's continuation. After the visit of the Chinese president to Russia, Russian imperialism has declared itself in favor of the Chinese approach. The President of Ukraine has asked the Chinese President to visit Kiev, without getting a reply. In April the Chinese Minister of Defense also went to Russia.

Clashes continue in the Balkans and Caucasus

The EU is trying to regain control of its backyard in the Balkans. In addition, the pressure against immigration in Turkey reactivates the passage through the Balkans and the EU is interested in controlling the flow that has reached 22,300 arrivals in October (three times more than the previous year) by having the Balkan countries adopt the EU visa policy.

At a meeting in Tirana, it was agreed to integrate the universities of Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia into the Erasmus program, the integration of the Balkans into the joint purchase of gas and hydrogen and a plan for 1 billion in aid. *"The current community budget has 29,500 million euros reserved for the region"*. (La Vanguardia, 07-12-2022).

Although Serbia still does not comply with the sanctions regarding Russia, the most profound danger for the EU in the region is represented by China, which *"has invested billions of euros, with projects such as the Belgrade-Budapest railroad. (...) Beijing also keeps a tight grip on Montenegro, which is finding itself in serious difficulties to pay a loan of 1 billion dollars."* (El País, 07-12-2022).

The main source of instability that the EU is trying to control but which detonates again and again is in Kosovo. After the conflict between Kosovo and Serbia over license plates, the situation escalated again in December with road blockades to demand the release of a Kosovo Serb policeman and the withdrawal of the Kosovo special police sent to the north of the country.

In February 2023, the EU put forward a proposal for an agreement stating that Serbia would not object to Kosovo's participation in any international body and that they would not block each other's accession to the EU. Representatives of both countries verbally acknowledged the content of the proposal, although it has not been signed due to virulent internal opposition in both countries.

With this move, the EU is trying to use the promise of its future integration into it to lower tensions. In parallel, the EU and the US have also sent a strong message to the Kosovo Albanian side to come back into the fold that is also a concession to Serbia: the trial at the Hague Tribunal of Kosovo's prime minister in 2008 and president in 2016 and three other

Kosovar parliamentarians, all accused of committing war crimes when they were members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

Moldova is being pressured by Russia through Transnistria with reductions in the flow of gas and electricity. In the interior, there have been massive demonstrations by the pro-Russian sector leading to militarization of the country to counter them. The pro-EU faction, currently in power, proposes to renounce the status of neutrality that appears in the constitution and to initiate integration into NATO.

Georgia has seen a series of demonstrations blocking the passage of the so-called "foreign influence transparency law" aimed *"at non-profit organizations and media outlets that receive more than 20% of their funding from abroad. Had the law been passed, those organizations would have been obliged to register on a blacklist or otherwise face fines."* (La Vanguardia, 10-03-2023). The demonstrations have logically had the support of the US and the EU, which operate their state interests through their network of NGOs in the world.

The Nagorno-Karabakh enclave is being strangled by Azerbaijan by cutting off road access, threatening to shoot down any aircraft landing or taking off from Stepanakert airport and cutting electricity through power lines. Russia remains in its position of considering that it is not bound by its agreement with Armenia and the EU has doubled its gas contract with Azerbaijan.

US tries to enter Russia's backyard

The US has gone on a tour of Central Asian states proclaiming to want to help these economies "not be dependent on a single country." And, to this end, the US Secretary of State *"announced a new aid of 25 million dollars for the economic development of Central Asia, which joins a previous contribution of the same amount."* (La Vanguardia, 02-03-2023). It must be said that with these ridiculous ALMS we can be sure that the US is not going to succeed in removing these countries from the Russian area of influence, to whose economy they are completely integrated.

The visit also had the objective of *"joining efforts to strengthen security in Central Asia"* but, although the Uzbek government kept its manners, in Kazakhstan they did not hesitate to reply to the US that: *"We do not see or feel any risk or threat from the Russian Federation"*. (La Vanguardia, 02-03-2023). As we have seen in Africa, the reality is that the European and American representatives who walk around the world are receiving a good dose of rebuffs from the countries they are going to "help".

Capitalist management of Afghanistan

The trickle of attacks by the Islamic State against Shiite centers continues, promoted by the US to hinder the stabilization of the area.

But, despite these attempts, the process of bourgeois domination is developing through the Taliban government which has begun to receive foreign direct investment (Chinese): *"a Chinese firm signed a 25-year-long, multimillion-dollar contract to extract oil. (...) On January 6, the Taliban signed with Xinjiang Central Asia Petroleum and Gas Company (CAPEIC), a subsidiary of the state-owned China National Petroleum Company (CNPC), a contract to extract oil from the Amu Darya basin (...) The deal will see an investment of \$150m in the first year in Afghanistan and \$540m over the next three years, a Taliban spokesperson said (...)." (Al Jazeera, 27-02-2023). For the time being, the exploitation of the copper mines by China has still not begun.*

The development of the role of managers of Afghan capitalism played by the Taliban takes place in the midst of contradictions in relation to the incorporation of women into the workplace and, more particularly, into positions of management and class domination. In any case, there has been strong opposition, even within the Taliban, to the ban on university access for women and it is known that the daughters of Taliban leaders are actually allowed to study, albeit in Pakistan or Qatar. If the daughters of the current rulers all go to universities, it is an unmistakable sign that in a prudential time the Afghan bourgeoisie will follow the process that the world bourgeoisie has followed in allowing women of their social class to occupy the same leadership positions.

Pakistan, hollowed by China

Pakistan, a historic US ally, has been hollowed by Chinese investment for years. China is investing \$62 billion in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) infrastructure plan, which links China overland with the port of Gwadar on the Arabian Sea, crossing all of Pakistan from its northern border.

This trend towards economic integration with China was outwardly manifested in the openly pro-China and anti-US stance of the cricketer Imran Khan's government. This situation was accentuated by the withdrawal policy executed by the administration of the buffoon Trump that led to a further reduction of American investments in Pakistan. The US retreat from Afghanistan only increased this rift and the tightening of US-India collaboration within the Quad did not help bridge these differences either.

The potential rapprochement with the US under the administration of decrepit Biden and the need for its support for the approval of IMF loans, explain why the army withdrew its support and unleashed the persecution of the former government and its supporters, and help up the current one. Anyway, *"on April 11, 2022, a day after the overthrow of Imran Khan, China announced, (...), that it would maintain the policy of friendly relations with Pakistan"* (Al-Estiklal, 11-05-2022) and in one of the first trips of the Foreign Minister of the new government, on May 21st, 2022, he openly declared that China was his "second home". The development of productive forces tends towards greater integration between Pakistan and China, regardless of who rules.

Iran-Saudi Arabia Agreement

For the role of world peacemaker that China is trying to play, it has been a great strategic victory to appear as the promoter and guarantor of the restoration of diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran in March 2023.

Saudi Arabia, which had opposed the US rehabilitation of the nuclear agreement with Iran which would have meant the flooding of the oil market with Iranian oil (see "The Internationalist Proletarian" No. 10, p. 13), has reached an agreement with Iran. And this agreement was reached in Beijing, the day after the meeting in Moscow between the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and Russia. It also came just a few days after Iran announced that it had found a lithium reserve of 8.5 million tons on its soil, which would make it the second largest in the world.

This agreement deepens the process of Saudi Arabia's distancing from the US and comes a few months after the positioning of China as its first trade partner, with the signing of some thirty agreements on December 9th. It is one of the few visits outside China by the Chinese president, who met in Riyadh with thirty leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council. They also

discussed making part of the oil payments in yuan instead of dollars and Saudi Arabia's request for observer status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

This agreement is not the result of China's diplomatic wizardry but the result of a historical process whereby the development of the productive forces in Asia has been winning the day over the US, which can no longer prevent its growing interconnection around the new center of gravity of capitalism (see "The Internationalist Proletarian" No. 7, p. 14) or even control its supposed allies.

If the US has been surpassed as the first importer of oil from Saudi Arabia by China, India and Japan, if the US tries by all means to reduce the price of oil that Saudi Arabia needs to keep high to obtain the corresponding income while fossil fuels still play a relevant role, if the US has not been able to prevail militarily in the region (neither in Syria, nor in Iraq, nor in Afghanistan) while Iran intervenes in the whole area, if the US does not intervene when the Houthis attack Saudi oil installations, if at any moment the US can carry out a false flag attack or leave its allies stranded, etc., it is normal that Saudi Arabia has been determined by the material circumstances to consider that the alliance with Iran, Russia and China has better prospects.

This agreement is an admission by Saudi Arabia – a historic US ally in the region – that the US is losing the game in the Middle East and that it'd rather reach agreements with the side in a position of strength.

This does not mean that the US has completely renounced or lost its position, nor does it mean that Saudi Arabia renounces to have agreements with the US and to play as many sides as it can for its interest, such as the *"construction of a military mega-city in Saudi Arabia, northwest of the capital Riyadh. It is one of the largest military installations in the world with an estimated investment budget of 13 billion dollars (about 12 billion euros)." (Expansión, 11-04-2023), commissioned to the US Army Corps of Engineers.*

The first result of the agreement between Saudi Arabia, Iran and China has been the start of negotiations between Saudi Arabia and Oman and the Houthis: *"A delegation of representatives from Saudi Arabia and Oman arrived last night in Yemen's capital, Sana'a, to discuss with the leaders of the Houthi insurgency the possibility of launching a peace process to end nearly a decade of civil war in the country, as confirmed by sources in the Supreme Political Council, the highest political body of the rebels." (Europa Press, 09-04-2023).* This has been followed by joint photographs of the three delegations, the agreement for the *"massive exchange of 887 prisoners of war from both sides" (El País, 14-04-2023)* and declarations in pursuit of a "comprehensive political agreement".

In Oman, in the town of Duqm, Chinese imperialism is building an industrial park on a 2,000 km² site (port, dry dock, refinery, airport, industrial areas, as well as heavy industries) with an investment of 10.7 billion dollars. The agreement was reached in 2011 and it was in 2022 that construction of the infrastructure began. Oman also reached several agreements in 2018-2019 for the UK, US and India to make use of these ports and airports (which are under construction). From Duqm, several maritime trade routes would depart that have to pass through Yemen, which is in the process of pacification.

Syrian reintegration process

With the earthquake that has devastated parts of Turkey and Syria, several states have found the excuse to break the taboo

of having relations with the hitherto pariah Al-Assad, receiving visits from representatives of Egypt, Jordan, Oman and the USA. Following the restoration of relations with Iran, *"Saudi Arabia (...) is taking steps that would allow the Arab League grouping of regional states to end a suspension of Syria's membership in time for a summit in Riyadh in mid-May (...)." (Bloomberg, 05-04-2023).*

The US is still trying to maintain its position in Syria in order to oppose – with decreasing success – the integration of the zone, under the cover of China. It has the support, for the moment, of Israel which in February 2023 bombed several areas of Damascus and in March bombed Aleppo airport. The US itself has bombed Iranian-backed militia targets with drones. *"The United States maintains an occupation force of about a thousand soldiers in northeastern Syria, in close collaboration with the Syrian affiliate of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). (...) The area is also home to the Syrian oil fields." (La Vanguardia, 25-03-2023).*

The US need to rely on the Kurdish militias in Syria puts it in contradiction with Turkey and leads the latter to seek an agreement with the Syrian government, Iran and Russia that will allow it to eliminate the Kurdish bases and return the 3 million Syrian refugees, also eliminating the permanent danger of the entry of the 2 million refugees accumulated in Idlib. All the declarations swearing that the other adversary was the devil personified vanish when the material reality imposes them to embrace each other again. For the time being, Turkey and Syria have held meetings in December 2022 and April 2023. US contradictions with Turkey go back a long way and have previously materialized with the failed coup in 2016 and more recently with the US ambassador's meeting with the representative of the Turkish opposition. The response of the president of the country with NATO's second army has been: *"we have to teach the US a lesson in these elections."*

The movement to reintegrate Syria and proceed with the reconstruction business also includes the European bourgeoisie that is trying to reintroduce itself in the area: *"The European Commission and the Swedish presidency of the EU yesterday pledged a total of 7 billion euros in aid for the reconstruction of the area devastated by the worst natural disaster in decades in the region. (...) In total, Von der Leyen stressed, almost half of the pledged donations, 3.3 billion, come from Europe. "We have shown the world that we support those who need us. And that we are always with our partners," she asserted." (El País, 21-03-2023).*

This Syrian reintegration process bears the hallmark of the Silk Road: *"Syria on Wednesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding on China's Belt and Road Initiative, (...) it came amid the intensive visits of six other Middle East countries' foreign ministers to China: foreign ministers from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain along with the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) (...) kicked off a five-day visit to China since Monday and foreign ministers of Turkey and Iran are also scheduled to visit China (...) Chinese investment in Syria totaled \$135.7 billion by 2019. The two sides' trade totaled \$1.3 billion in 2019, a year-on-year increase of 33 percent." (Global times, 13-01-2022).*

Upheavals and escalations inside and outside Israel

As for Israel, the other historical pawn of the US, the social situation is becoming increasingly tense within it, in its relationship with the US and with Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian militias.

Israel was making progress in its recognition by several Arab states (with the so-called "Abraham accords", to which we will return later) and had met with Egypt, the Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco to discuss security, intelligence and technology cooperation. Saudi Arabia had given permission for Israeli aircrafts to fly over the Arabian Peninsula and a gas deal was reached with Lebanon. Meetings of the EU-Israel Council, which had not met since 2012 although the EU is Israel's main trading partner and the two have a free trade agreement, had resumed. Diplomatic relations were also resumed with Turkey with the visit of the President of Israel (trade relations have never stopped and in 2021 reached \$8.4 billion). The national unity government to oust Likud included an Arab party but this coalition faltered and called for new elections (for the fifth time since 2019), in a sign of the fractioning and instability of the bourgeoisie within Israel.

The November elections were won by Likud (23% of the votes) forming a government with a coalition of five other ultra-Orthodox and anti-Arab parties (with 64 of the 120 seats). Among the material reasons that have tipped the balance there is the plastic tax with which 930,000 euros had been collected but which represents a blow to the already low purchasing power of a large part of the ultra-Orthodox population (12% of the population and growing) mostly dependent on tax exemptions and subsidies, the maintenance of which constitutes an unproductive expense that Israeli capitalism will be forced to overcome.

The new government's first step, in addition to eliminating the plastic tax, has been to legalize the 65 settlements in the West Bank and pave the secondary roads linking Jewish settlements in the area.

Reciprocal attacks and raids between the Israeli army and Palestinian militiamen have been ongoing since November, all causing civilian casualties, prompting the government to announce that it would unblock thousands of applications for weapon permits. January saw an Israeli drone strike on an Iranian military facility.

In the midst of escalating tensions came the visit of the US Secretary of State and discussions revolved around Saudi Arabia joining the so-called "Abraham accords." In reality, *"informal ties with Riyadh have been brewing for years, the Israeli premier himself secretly flew to Jeddah in 2020."* (La Vanguardia, 31-01-2023). In its official statements the US insisted on the two-state solution, although its real interest is to maintain the situation of instability in the area as long as possible.

Protests against the judicial reform began in February. The core of the opposition to the reform is made up of the technology companies that bring with them their workers. These companies *"contribute more than 10% of employment, around 15% of GDP and 25% of income tax revenue. They generate half of the exports, ranging from cybersecurity to cyberespionage to artificial intelligence. Israel grew by 6.4% last year, boosted by these exports and the defense ones. (...) Some businessmen involved in the protests have already announced the withdrawal of funds."* (El País, 20-03-2023).

The judicial reform was toned down after a phone call between the President of the United States and the President of Israel. However, this reduction did not stop the demonstrations and the declarations of air force reservists began: *"(...) hundreds of reservists have announced in open letters that they will perform only the minimum duties or will not participate in training. (...) 37 of the 40 F-151 fighter pilots who make up the 69th squadron announced last week in a letter that they would*

skip training flights (...) The last ten living former heads of the Air Force who have held the post since 1953, five years after the birth of Israel, until last April have published an open letter (...) in which they claim to follow "with great concern the processes in the State of Israel and in the Air Force"." (El País, 08-03-2023).

The pilots' concern is to be judged by international courts for the crimes they actually commit by shooting and bombing defenseless populations. This led the Minister of Defense to: *"publicly call for it to stop. (...) "The growing schism in our society is penetrating the Armed Forces and the security forces, which poses a clear, immediate and tangible threat to the security of the State. I will not allow it," he sentenced."* (El País, 26-03-2023). The minister was dismissed the following day, Sunday. On Monday, the inter-class strike called by the employers began: *"Histadrut (General Organization of Workers in Israel), entered fully into the struggle for the reform yesterday, with a general strike that kept part of the take-offs from the main airport (Ben Gurion, near Tel Aviv) and the strategic ports of Haifa and Ashdod paralyzed during the day. The staff of embassies abroad, the main banks, the national electricity company, large hotel, fashion and food chains, and the Tel Aviv City Hall (whose mayor, Ron Huldai, belongs to the opposition Labor Party) also joined the strike"* (El País, 28-03-2023).

To prevent the protests from escalating into a major conflict, involving the army itself, the Prime Minister announced the postponement of the reform and the second day of the employers' strike scheduled for Tuesday was suspended. In exchange, a new corps called the national guard was created, controlled by an ultra-Orthodox, and a law was passed making it more difficult to disqualify the prime minister.

In addition to the increased tension within Israel, there has been increased tension with the US ruling faction: *"A journalist asked Biden if he planned to invite him [Netanyahu]. The answer was as improvised as it was curt: "No, not in the near term"".* (El País, 02-04-2023). The rejection on the Israeli side is also evident: *"Gvir, clarified that his country "is not another star on the American flag". A deputy from Netanyahu's party, Nissim Vaturi, went so far as to blame the Obama administration for the death of 74 Israeli soldiers during the 2014 Gaza offensive."* (El País, 02-04-2023).

Despite the halt of the reform, protests resumed, albeit on a smaller scale, with US flags at the demonstrations.

At that time there was an intervention by the Israeli army in the Al-Aqsa Mosque after which several attacks and missile launches from Lebanon and Syria have followed. Military tension is high: *"The US military took the rare step on Saturday of announcing that it has deployed a nuclear-powered submarine in the region to counter rising tensions."* (Bloomberg, 09-04-2023). However, the missile launch from Lebanon has not been claimed by any organization: *"The Lebanese government said its troops (...) had launched an investigation to find the perpetrators. (...) Hamas representative in Lebanon, (...) told Lebanese An-Nahar newspaper the group does not have "any information concerning the rockets" that were launched towards Israel. (...) caretaker Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati warned against Lebanon's territory being used for acts that could threaten security in the country."* (Al Jazeera, 07-04-2023). *"Hezbollah passed messages to Israel through several international mediators that it wasn't part of the attack and didn't know about it in advance, according to one Israeli defense official."* (Axios, 07-04-2023). The decision taken by Israel has been not to bomb Hezbollah targets.

The dilemma facing Israel and the uncertainty of the various prospects explain the internal and external turmoil. As a pawn of the US, Israel has fewer and fewer prospects. But in order to play an autonomous role from the US, it needs to deepen its dependence on China, with whom it has been negotiating a free trade agreement since 2016 that seems close to being finalized but that has not done so yet. This agreement, or its further development, could bring China closer to the high computer technologies developed by Israel. In "The Internationalist Proletarian" No. 7 (p. 13), one can see the US misgivings about Israel's rapprochement with China.

In order to play an autonomous role from the US, it also needs to obtain the recognition of at least the Arab states and reduce the tension with Iran. Is this recognition possible? Material circumstances will dictate it. With the so-called "Abraham Accords", four Arab states have already recognized Israel without having created a Palestinian state and have recognized it more concretely as one more state of the same Arab-Jewish family, descended from the same common trunk. It is not unlikely that the rest of the Arab states will let the Palestinians down after having used them as pawns and cannon fodder for decades, force them to accept a state-like entity or a complete integration into a Jewish-Arab state that would facilitate Israel's integration into the region as just another Arab state.

Saudi Arabia proposed in early March to the US the recognition of Israel in exchange for *"developing a civilian nuclear program and fewer restrictions on US arms sales (...)"* News of the Saudi proposal emerged hours before a separate agreement, brokered by China, which paved the way for Riyadh to restore diplomatic relations with Iran for the first time in seven years." (New York Times, 09-03-2023). In reality, the main opposition to this agreement comes from the US itself, given that the normalization of the situation and effective integration of Israel with the rest of the Arab states would end up taking away its capacity of influence in the region.

After the signing of the agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran, there have been some timid statements in Israel, such as those of the former head of the Mossad in favor of trying to reach an agreement even with Iran: *"Only recently, Israel celebrated the opening of Saudi airspace to Israeli traffic. This is an achievement of considerable diplomatic and economic significance for all Israelis now flying to Southeast Asia and China."*

(...) In view of the accumulation of the above open source data, this should be the moment for Israel to analyze the situation and, inter alia, to determine whether this is an opportune moment to launch a very careful positive probe in the direction of Tehran. (...) Only the other day, Iran and Saudi Arabia were at loggerheads. And lo and behold, China has managed to bring these two bitter enemies to a resumption of relations." (Haaretz, 13-03-2023).

In these statements by the former head of the Israeli secret services, three elements stand out: the economic importance for Israel of normalizing relations with neighboring states, the breaking of the taboo of establishing an agreement with Iran, and the identification of China as the possible mediator.

Late last year, the vice-president of the World Council of Imams stated, *"The people of Iran have seen the fruits of the Abraham Accords, they have witnessed how fast peace can be built and many remember the days of Israeli tourists visiting Tehran and long for those days to return."* (The Jewish Chronicle, 08-12-2022).

At the time when the nuclear agreement with Iran was being negotiated by the US, the EU and Russia, there had already been pronouncements in Israel about the possibility or not of preventing it and even about its convenience: *"Israel notes the progress in the talks and realizes that the ball is no longer in its court"*, recognizes former General Tamir Hayman, who was head of the Military Intelligence Directorate between 2018 and 2021". *"(...) lately it has been reported that high commanders of the Armed Forces, including the current head of the Directorate of Military Intelligence, have expressed themselves in favor of the agreement."* (El País, 19-08-2022).

The integration of the productive forces of the area has been boycotted by the US since 1980 with the Iranian-Iraqi war and has effectively succeeded in slowing down its development and turning large areas into a wasteland for a long time. However, within the general context of its withdrawal, the US is being swept aside and this opens up the possibility of the development of interrelation between the different regional capitalist powers of the area, which will not for that reason cease to be competitors.

If the US cannot block this integration, but also fails to implement it under its control and conditions, this integration will take place under the auspices of China, which is the capitalist power capable of carrying out the investments and reconstruction of the entire region.

"The issue is whether the US threat to drop Israel can be hollowed out to the extent that China can prop it up on the other side, imposing its conditions on it. Something similar happens with another traditional US ally in the region: Saudi Arabia. (...) In any case, the US ability to keep its "allies" on a short leash is somewhat weakened by the existence of China, which is waiting with open arms for anyone the US wants to punish by "breaking relations"." (The Internationalist Proletarian No. 7, p. 14).

Within the framework of negotiations with the US, Saudi Arabia has launched its proposal for an agreement to normalize diplomatic relations with Israel, making its demands to the US in exchange for this recognition. It has then publicly reached an agreement with Iran under the auspices of China. The message is quite clear: if the US does not accede to the demands, there are others who can provide equivalent conditions.

Therefore, if the process of development of the productive forces in the region pushes for the integration of Israel with the rest of the states (competitors) in the region, this integration will take place even without the approval of the US, which will at the same time highlight and deepen the relative loss of power of the US in the Middle East.

The regional capitalist powers need a stabilization of the region in order to develop their business. As an example, the planned train to link the ports of Eilat and Haifa needs stability in order to eventually consolidate as a trade route.

However, under the boot of the USA, China or any of the capitalist powers in conflict, A CAPITALISM WITHOUT WARS AND EXPLOITATION IS IMPOSSIBLE.

In the development of the inter-imperialist conflict, the dead are always laid by the proletariat, subjected in Gaza and Israel to the two tendencies of bourgeois nationalism in dispute, the Zionist and the Islamist of the concentration camp jailers. It will only be possible to develop the situation in the Middle East in the sense of a class conflict through the rupture with all the contending bourgeoisies, both local and international ones.

The trend towards Chinese unification

In the context of the harsh living and working conditions of the Chinese proletariat, which are materialized in numerous labor murders such as that of the 38 workers killed in a fire in Anyang, a wave of protests developed at the end of 2022, starting with revolts in workers' districts in Guangzhou, followed by the strike at the Foxconn factory with violent clashes against the police and health personnel. During the lockdowns accidents in transport to the quarantine centers occurred. At the end of November 10th people died in the capital of Xinjiang when the fire department could not access the building due to the limitations imposed by the lockdowns. Foodstuffs were also being destroyed on farms because they could not be transported to the cities. As a media corollary, there were several student demonstrations in different parts of the country that went so far as to explicitly call for the resignation of the great puppet-leader Xi Jinping. Faced with this situation of growing out-of-control situation, added to the deepening of the real estate crisis, the Chinese bourgeoisie began to eliminate the policy of restriction by Covid-19 and to undertake the reopening of the borders and the general resumption of productive activity.

At the congress of the anti-communist Chinese Communist Party, the third consecutive term of office of the puppet Xi Jinping as President of the Republic and of the Central Military Commission has been approved. The true content of this party falsely called "communist" is clearly expressed by the new prime minister of China: *"Governments at all levels should make friends with entrepreneurs, create a favorable business environment and care about private entrepreneurs."* (Expansión, 14-03-2023).

The economic interrelationship between China and Taiwan makes the integration of the latter within the former inevitable. This is manifested in the electoral victory in the December 2022 municipal elections by the Kuomintang, a supporter of unification with the People's Republic of China.

In the first visit since 1949 of a former Taiwanese president to mainland China, former president Ma Ying Jeou – a member of the Kuomintang – declared: *"The inhabitants of both sides of the Taiwan Strait are Chinese and share the same ancestry."* (La Vanguardia, 29-03-2023). These are practically the same words that the outgoing Premier, Li Keqiang, had pronounced three weeks earlier at the Congress of the fake Chinese Communist Party: *"the Chinese on both sides of the strait are one family united by blood"* (La Vanguardia, 06-03-2023). The only difference is that the latter had earlier advocated the need to *"intensify military training to boost combat readiness"*. *"We have to put into practice the strategy of the Communist Party (CCP) on the Taiwan issue, that is, to fight resolutely against its independence and for the reunification of the homeland."* (La Vanguardia, 06-03-2023).

The former president of Taiwan, during his visit to mainland China, also visited the mausoleum of the founder of the Kuomintang, Sun Yat-sen, which is precisely in the People's Republic and whose government, led by the fake Chinese Communist Party, also has as its ideological reference. Both historical tendencies of the Chinese nationalist bourgeoisie, that of Mao's Party and that of Chiang Kai-shek's already established agreements during the Japanese occupation and, although confronted during the civil war and the following years, they actually share the same ideology of Sun Yat-sen.

Since the early 1990s the Kuomintang governments established several initial contacts and agreements with

mainland China, suspended from 2000 to 2008 and briskly renewed until the current Taiwan government aborted them in 2016, again staging a rapprochement with the US.

The rise of the Kuomintang, which could reach the government in the next elections (scheduled for January 2024) to try to carry out another phase of rapprochement with the Beijing government, is a manifestation of the unstoppable trend towards the economic integration of both parties, embracing each other again both tendencies of the Chinese bourgeoisie in pursuit of their joint business and against the interests of the US and Western imperialisms.

The US, which keeps trying unsuccessfully to escalate this conflict, is not in a position either to prevent this integration or to slow it down significantly, and the promised 2 billion in aid has not yet arrived.

The different Chinese reaction to the recent visit of the President of Taiwan to the US compared to the visit of the Speaker of the US Congress in August 2022 is symptomatic.

In both cases it was a provocation on the US side and China had to make a military display to match the militaristic and nationalistic rhetoric it propagates at home.

But in the first case China reacted on the spot and with great military showboating, with the largest military exercises that it prolonged for several days and reiterated in the weeks that followed.

In the second case, it has had a more cautious reaction and has not reacted to the current visit of the President of Taiwan to the US until she has returned to the island and the visits of the Presidents of France and the European Commission have already left.

This is explained by the role of world peacemaker that China is trying to play in order to attract the EU (and the rest) to its fold and isolate the US, by the imminence of the elections in Taiwan and by the confidence that it will achieve its goal. Likewise, upon the return of Taiwan's president to the island, China has made a show of military might with live ammunition used around the island.

Within the general militaristic dynamic the ruling faction in Taiwan *"has increased compulsory military service from four months to one year."* (El País, 08-03-2023). On the other hand, propaganda has intensified inside Taiwan in favor of integration within the People's Republic of China. In terms of international recognition, one of the four countries that still recognized Taiwan in Latin America (Honduras) has broken off relations and only Guatemala, Haiti and Paraguay remain for Taiwan in this area.

US and Philippines get closer

In February, the umpteenth incident occurred in the area over the territorial delimitation of the waters, this time between Chinese coastguards and a Philippine vessel.

The US has achieved greater rapprochement with the Philippines, which has been materialized in the resumption in 2022 of the annual military exercises that had been suspended. This year's annual version will mobilize 17,600 troops and involve observers from Japan and Australia. The Philippines has also given the US access to four more military bases.

It is in the US interest to maintain a certain instability in the area while China needs to minimize these tensions in order to gradually trap the various countries in the area in its economic networks. To bring order and minimize these incidents, China is attempting diplomatic action with the ASEAN countries on the basis of common commercial interests.

Exercises and missiles in the two Koreas

Military maneuvers continue in South Korea as well, with North Korea's customary reaction of launching missiles with ever greater range: *"A few weeks away from military maneuvers between the United States and South Korea, the northern neighbor has already given a severe warning blow on the table by launching an intercontinental ballistic missile that traveled 900 kilometers and fell in the waters of Japan's exclusive economic zone."* (La Vanguardia, 19-02-2023).

The continuous launching of missiles into the sea recalls the saying "his bark is worse than his bite": *"In 2022, North Korea broke its record, with more than 90, 23 of them in a single day"* (La Vanguardia, 19-02-2023), with the not insignificant difference that in this case the bites can be with atomic charge in the event of a conflict on a global scale. South Korea has also joined in the missile launches, although to a lesser extent.

Separately, a series of US intelligence documents have been leaked for the umpteenth time. In one of them it is stated that: *"When news emerged late last year that South Korea had agreed to sell artillery shells to help the United States replenish its stockpile, it insisted that its "end user" should be the US military. But internally, (...) [they] feared their US ally would divert them to Ukraine."* (The Wall Street Journal, 08-04-2023). The point is that the leaked report shows that the information was obtained through espionage by the US. It is no secret at this point that the US spies on all its allies, as all others also do to the extent that they can, but that it is made public makes relations between South Korea and the US more difficult.

Japan's rearmament trend

In July 2022, Japan's former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was assassinated. He was the driving force behind Japan's participation in the Quad military alliance and the reform of the Japanese constitution, the article 9 of which stipulates that its military may only use force to defend itself and renounces war as a means of resolving conflicts.

A two-thirds majority in parliament was required to reform the constitution, and this assassination immediately resulted in a landslide victory for his party, which, together with other supporters of the reform, exceeded the required threshold. Subsequently, "security lapses" and the "improvised" nature of the visit in which such a convenient assassination took place have been admitted. For the time being, Japan's defense budget has been doubled, incorporating among the objectives the ability to counterattack and hit targets outside the archipelago.

In February, Japan and the US held the annual military exercises called "Iron Fist" in the southwest of the Japanese archipelago which *"are being held for the first time outside California (USA) since they were launched in 2006, and in this edition have a total of 1,700 troops"*. (La Patilla, 23-02-2023).

Chinese military development and maneuvers

China continues its development also on the military level: *"According to the United States, China already has the largest aviation force in the Indo-Pacific, with more than half of its fighter planes of fourth or fifth generation"*. (La Vanguardia, 06-03-2023). The downing of a Chinese balloon by the US has highlighted the existence of a Chinese program *"of so-called lighter-than-air (LTA) vehicles, which Beijing is rapidly deploying around the world, including for military purposes, after years of research and pilot projects."* (Expansión, 07-02-2023).

China also conducts military maneuvers and deploys its military in other parts of the world, such as the naval exercises conducted with Russia and Iran in the Arabian Sea in March

2023 or the movement of the surveillance ship for tracking rockets and spacecraft that docked in South Africa in April.

South Africa's rapprochement with Russia and China is taking place militarily, economically and diplomatically: *"On April 3, the DA [opposition party] criticized the decision to allow Iranian warships to dock in Cape Town. (...) South Africa has courted criticism from the US and its allies for refusing to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine and holding the naval exercise with several Russian and Chinese vessels off its east coast in February over the first anniversary of the outbreak of the conflict. Pretoria is currently contemplating whether to allow Russian President Vladimir Putin to attend a BRICS bloc summit that it will host in August. (...) On March 15, South African Defence Minister, Thandi Modise, defended the government's decision to sign a memorandum of understanding with Poly Technologies Inc, a Chinese military trade company. Partnerships with foreign companies would boost South Africa's own defense industry, she told lawmakers."* (Bloomberg, 05-04-2023).

For the international communist revolution

This bourgeois world is only capable of producing death and destruction in order to survive as a system. We have no patches or mends to apply to it but a new society to fight and live for. And not a caricature of it with changed names but **a truly communist society**: without wage labor, without market, without anarchy of production, without private property, without State, without crisis or wars... in which **"the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."** (Manifesto of the Communist Party).

In order to carry out this task, the working class needs a Party with a scientific understanding of history and a program that is not one of reform or conservation of the present society: **this party is the International Communist Party which must gather the most advanced and determined part of the proletariat, unifying the efforts of the working masses by directing them in the struggle for contingent interests and results, to the general struggle for the REVOLUTIONARY EMANCIPATION OF THE PROLETARIAT.**

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