

A WORLD TOWARDS THE ABYSS

A THREAD TO FOLLOW AND A KNOT TO TIGHTEN

New blocs are being formed, competition intensifies, and conflicts spread. The working class is divided, and the revolutionary vanguard is fragmented: It's time to reweave an international path.

1. ControVento was born with the Russian invasion of Ukraine and its epochal turn. In these two years, we have faced a worsening of inter-imperialist competition, the creation of opposing spheres of influence, and the spread of wars (56 this year globally, the highest number since 1945). Consequently, we had to deepen our analyses and positions, collectively reassess the communist and revolutionary perspective in this new era of war, striving first and foremost to safeguard an independent viewpoint for the working class and a perspective for the revolutionary transformation of this mode of production. In this third national meeting of *ControVento*, we therefore confirm the overall framework of reflections and positions that we have expressed during this period.

An era of frictional imperialism. Over the past two years, we have often used this term: what do we mean by it? The main dynamic dominating the world today is the opening of a historical phase of acute confrontation between the main capitalist poles, which, however, does not immediately tend to escalate into a global war. This dynamic shapes the relations between different countries but also the overall social relations between classes. The Great Crisis and its management, with a radicalization of previous neoliberal policies, had already shaped, in the last decade, economic and political areas of reference for the main imperialist powers [NATO expansion; Belt and Road Initiative; US-China trade war; *Trans-Pacific Partnership* around the US and *Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership* around China]. This dynamic pushed Russia toward China (2014 pipeline agreements) and strained its fragile capitalist structure (energy conglomerates and remnants of the military-industrial apparatus). In an international landscape marked by China's new assertiveness, Europe's contradictions, and the US defeats (Iraq and Kabul), Putin's will to power believed it saw on the military front an opportunity to reverse its progressive confinement: thus, Russia started the war. A new era of world division began, reorganizing and tightening new alignments. We see it in the misalignments over sanctions on Russia (India, Arab countries, and South America), the anti-French coups in the Sahel, China's new protagonism with the expansion of BRICS and the Riyadh/Tehran mediation, the prospects of an Iran-Russia partnership, the Palestinian attack on October 7, the slaughter in Gaza, and Israel's attempt to reshape the region (downsizing Hezbollah, invasion of Lebanon, attack on Iran). A new global conflict is now on the *event horizon*: that is, it's not just one of the possible developments of the situation, but its mere possibility tends to drive political, economic, social, and military processes in that direction. Many signs point to this dynamic: the start of a generalized rearmament (although still far from the levels of the 1950s, between 6 and 10% of GDP in the US) focused on rebuilding large, modern, conventional, and potentially mass armies; the emerging trend toward protectionist policies and a recentralization of the productive system, even with a new state protagonism in a logic of bloc confrontation, if not outright war; the mobilization of society with processes of progressive nationalization and mass militarization; and the explosion of conflicts in border areas, which are, in any case, being circumscribed. Even though the deep interconnection of markets developed over the last forty years and the threat of possible nuclear holocausts currently prevent the outbreak of a world war, its shadow tends to reshape every conflict globally and imbue class struggle along the intricate international hierarchy of capital.

The role of the new Chinese imperialism. This new era is incomprehensible without considering the affirmation of capitalist production relations in China [matured in the Deng's era and dominant with the country's entry into the

WTO] and the recent shift to an accumulation system centered on national champions, infrastructural investments, and financial development. This is the structural basis of the new imperialist policy currently expressed by Xi Jinping. Over these decades, the Bonapartist structure of a deformed workers' state managed a capitalist transition without any clear break. That is, the party bureaucracy played the same Bonapartist role in two different mode of production, leading a *passive revolution* under the pressure of the uneven and combined dynamics of world markets. Now, in its emerging imperialism, it is mediating various capitalist interests and keeping the working class subordinate. Despite its profound imbalances, which make it difficult to control a concentrated yet still immature proletariat, China has managed to stabilize its *new moderation* (annual growth below 5% of GDP), counter the US technological competition (Huawei), support Russia's initiative with its depth, and secure a role in the Middle East. China has now reached the annual GDP of the European Union (\$18 trillion), and according to many, it may surpass that of the US between 2035 and 2045 (although the *great moderation* has slowed its pace today). This dynamic increasingly positions China as the new center of the hierarchical structures of world capitalism, competing with the previously hegemonic power of the United States. Beyond abstract historical comparisons (the *Thucydides trap*, referring to the tendency of a declining power to start a war before being overtaken, reminiscent of Athens and Sparta), we have already seen similar transitions in capitalist development within global wars that, however, saw the protagonists as allies (UK and USA). The productive and financial integration that supported globalization with US hegemony and Chinese development long sustained their close collaboration, with advocates within the CCP (coastal provinces) and in US capitalism (large Pacific coast ICTs). Other sectors of big capital (infrastructure and energy), the Great Crisis with its competitive dynamics, and China's new productive capacity in ICTs or the automotive sector are pushing in the opposite direction. It is not just the hypersensitive American politics seeking confrontation, from Obama's *Pivot to Asia* (the strategic shift to contain China) to Trump and Biden's *Indo-Pacific Axis* (political-military alliances around China). The global recession of 2009 fostered in China an accumulation regime less focused on exports and integration into international production chains, giving more weight to infrastructure investments (ports, cities, high-speed trains, cars, ICT) and the construction of large companies projected onto world markets (among the top 100 globally, examples include State Grid, Sinopec, China National Petroleum, China State Construction Engineering, Industrial & Commercial Bank of China; China Construction Bank; China Railway Engineering Group; Bank of China; China Railway Construction, China Baowu Steel Group, Ping An Insurance, Sinochem, SAIC Motor, China Communications Construction, Alibaba, Huawei: all larger than the Italian ENEL and ENI, except the latter, which is almost equivalent). This productive and financial structure, supported by the state, underpins China's new imperialist projection.

The United States confirms its new fragility, also marked by the decomposition of its social structure and a deep division within its ruling classes. The productive and financial reorganization that developed during the long neoliberal depressive wave revived its global hegemony (*Washington Consensus*), culminating in the collapse of the USSR and so-called globalization. The US thus long delayed and concealed its progressive decline, thanks to dominance in financial markets, exorbitant military power, and growing debt (manageable due to the dollar's international role). However, the Great Crisis exhausted this precarious balance, disrupting its financial dominance, revealing its growing productive weakness and eroding its military power. This dynamic has international consequences but also opens deep fractures within American society itself. Today, we witness the radicalization of divergences between various economic-social areas (New England, Deep South, Midwest, Great Plains, Pacific Coast), between metropolitan and rural realities, and among different ethnic groups. Its proletariat is increasingly hard to control through redistributive imperial surplus (high salaries, agricultural subsidies, public funds, widespread debt management). In the last decade, social conflicts have resumed with large social movements [*Occupy Wall Street*, *Black Lives Matter*, *#MeToo*, *university student movements*, *#FreePalestine*], as well as a resurgence of labor struggles [new leadership in UAW, auto strikes, disputes among teachers and universities (Minneapolis, Pennsylvania, Colorado, California), the long actor and writer strikes, and the fight for a minimum wage]. These conflicts, however, are often marked by identity politics that compartmentalize specific oppressions, abstracting them from production relations and treating intersectionality as merely an overlap of different oppressions, resulting in divisions that hinder the generalization of different cycles of struggle and, on the other hand, mass movements without any class perspective. This radicalization of conflicts, fragmentation of

subjectivities, and disarticulation of the social structure have also led to a reactionary movement driven by fear and anger in the middle classes (including Asian, Latino, and even Black sectors), the revanchism of certain white proletariat sectors (especially rural), and fundamentalist religious movements, particularly evangelical. A movement capable of penetrating the lower classes, surviving electoral defeats, and reshaping the Republican Party (MAGA), while the US ruling class, and particularly its big capital, is divided between renewing accumulation strategies pursued through globalization and developing new aggressive nationalist arrangements focused on domestic territories. Hence, the upcoming US elections reproduce the opposition between these new reactionary trends (Trump) and a Democratic front anchored to liberal policies (Harris), without any significant political expression of a class alternative or even of the disjointed social conflicts of the last decade.

A European Union in tension and stalemate, with a power perspective minoritarian. The third protagonist is the weak, multipolar imperialism of the European Union. Its federalist project was born from the rubble of 1945, its economic and commercial cooperation spurred by the Cold War. The European area has nonetheless maintained, over the decades, a plurality of social formations subordinated to the Atlantic axis, with competing capitalist centers. The collapse of the USSR and the reunification of Germany produced an initial, incomplete federalist sketch, without unification of capitals, fiscal policies, or a sole military power, with confused institutions and cumbersome procedures. The Eurasian policy of Germany (exports to China, development of a possible autonomous axis from the USA) and the Atlantic containment of Russia led to the expansion eastward of the Union, complicating an already fragile institutional architecture. This federalist process nevertheless pushed for a deep productive restructuring of the continent, with the development of a central European core [now expanded beyond Germany into Scandinavia, Benelux, Paris and central-southern France, northern Italy, and Catalonia], a new proximal industrial area [Poland, Bohemia, Slovenia, and partly Romania], a peripheral belt [deindustrialization, tourism development, and debt: southern Italy and Spain, Portugal, Croatia, Greece, Cyprus], and some financial centers [Ireland, Malta, Estonia, Luxembourg, and in some respects the Netherlands]. The Great Crisis strained these structures, with the failure of the constitutional refoundation (the revision of the treaties collapsed in 2007), the divergence of economic dynamics, the exposure of the main financial institutions of the central European core, and the pressure on some peripheral sovereign debts. This led to an intensification of austerity policies: cuts to public spending, balanced budget in the Constitution, *exhaustion of the European social model* (Draghi, 2012). These processes opened the way to centrifugal forces within the Union. The labor movement's attempt at resistance (*general strikes* 2010/2012 and the Greek referendum 2015), disorganized and still anchored to reformist logics [an abstract social Europe, a hypothetical Keynesian regulation center with federal public spending]. These resistances were overwhelmed by their search for mediation, while the neoliberal logic imposed itself, and the ECB emerged as the only strategic institution (*Whatever it takes*, Draghi 2012). At the end of the decade, Brexit marked a resurgence of centrifugal dynamics, and the pandemic showed a first sign of federalist recovery (*Next Generation EU*). Now, the frictional imperialism has disrupted these arrangements: the prospect of Eurasian integration has broken (Nordstream); the export policy of its core has been questioned; a militarist front has developed in Scandinavia and at the eastern frontier (Sweden and Finland in NATO, Polish rearmament, mobilization of the Baltics, with positions also supported in the new left). Big capital, already divided along national lines and with little continental aggregation, has further fragmented between the prospect of tightening the ranks of the Atlantic axis and timid autonomist hypotheses. Thus, every logic of federal investments (renewal of Next Generation EU) has been shattered, and a new austerity has been imposed (renewal of the Stability Pact), while the Union's political core has weakened (governmental instability in France and Germany), the European Parliament has variable majorities, and the Commission is tempted by premature initiatives. In this context, the Draghi Plan emerges as the only phase agenda with the aim of developing continental capital around a productive core focused on defense, energy, ICT, supported by trade policies and large continental investments, backed by intergovernmental management (*Europe at various speeds*, even Prodi has now embraced it). A vision aimed at ensuring the survival of European capital in the division of the world, but which today clashes with the absence of a social or institutional subject capable of imposing it in the absence of an extraordinary emergency. It is also concerning to see the fascination with the federalist hypothesis from both the old and new reformist left, who fail to see the preparation and intervention needed in global conflict dynamics.

The instability of the peripheries around capitalist poles. The globalization era has impacted all semi-peripheral and peripheral countries. The spread of the green revolution, industrialization, and bioengineering of agriculture had formed vast international markets. These markets have on the one hand marginalized local economies, while on the other hand initiated extensive processes of commodification, integration into circuits of capital, and industrialization of these territories. These processes have led to an impressive reduction in extreme poverty (from 50% in 1970 to just over 10% of the world population today), a collapse in malnutrition (from 34% in 1970 to 12% today), a contraction of infant mortality from 100 per thousand live births in 1970 to 25.51 today, and an increase in average life expectancy from 57 years in 1970 to 73 today. However, these same processes have triggered enormous migrations, the formation of unprecedented *megacities* (often larger than those in imperialist metropolises), and an increase in exploitation and social marginalization. Today, peripheral and semi-peripheral countries are characterized by an extreme polarization between limited globalized bourgeois strata and destitute masses, often of very recent urbanization, with the development of a working class often thin and isolated. The Great Crisis and the era of frictional imperialism have multiplied the pressure on these social formations, which also bear the brunt of global warming (fragile environments and populations). Thus, we have seen repeated large social explosions, uprisings, and mass movements, which, however, tend to close with authoritarian clampdowns and nationalist shifts or ambiguous *caudillo experiences* with vague progressive traces. These countries are now structurally positioned within the international hierarchies of capital and labor: fragile middle classes, perpetually threatened by the abyss of downgrading, and a young, disorganized proletariat of recent migration are unable to develop any perspective for transforming the current mode of production. Over the last fifteen years, we have thus seen various Arab Springs (2010/12), in Iran the fuel revolts (2019/20) and the “Woman, Life, Freedom” movement (2023); the Gezi Park spring (2013); protests against the high cost of living in Sudan (2018/19); the Algerian Hirak (2019/20); the 17 October movement in Lebanon (2019/20); the social explosion in Chile (2019/20); the protests in Colombia (2019/20); the Tishreen (October) movement in Iraq (2019/21); the price revolt in Kazakhstan (2022); the bread revolt in Sri Lanka (2022); the revolt of the downtrodden in Peru (2022/23); and the student revolt in Bangladesh (2024).

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Gaza massacre. From October 7 to today, we have adopted a position on these events that differs from other forces: from the celebration of the Palestinian attack and the substantial support of the unity of the resistance by TIR-SiCobas to the absence of any public criticism of the methods of struggle and the unity of the resistance by PCL. We believe it is wrong to consider any national struggle reactionary. Theoretically, this would mean nullifying the current international hierarchy of capital and labor: there are not only imperialist poles and medium capitalist powers but also semi-peripheries and peripheries that are still subordinate today. We criticize the support for the Ukrainian resistance not because there are no national subordinations, but because Ukraine is a border area between multiple imperialisms, and that conflict is today subsumed into an inter-imperialist clash. Other modern wars, however, have an evident neo-colonial profile, from the Middle Eastern interventions (Iraq and Afghanistan) to those in North Africa (Libya and the Sahel). Israel has historically had a neo-colonial matrix, with the role of the Zionist state in subordinating the Arab population (within the country and in the occupied territories) and assuming imperialist interests in the area (first in relation to France and later to the USA). In the contemporary dynamics of frictional imperialism, within this international hierarchy of capital and labor, geopolitical dynamics and blocs are structured around the main imperialist poles, increasingly absorbing the social specificities of various conflicts into the logic and alignments of a potential upcoming global war. Thus, today, the competition between China and the USA, Russia’s and Europe’s roles, as well as Iranian and Turkish projections, play significant roles in the events and developments of October 7, the massacre in Gaza, potential new alliances between Arab states and Israel (*Abraham Accords*), and efforts to construct new regional balances. These dynamics must be monitored and considered for their potential to become decisive in an open global conflict. However, they don’t eliminate the existence of neo-colonial social relations that characterize certain populations in the region (from Palestine to Kurdistan). Politically, denying these neo-colonial subordinations leads to bilateral defeatism, which denies the progressive character of an imperialist defeat in these conflicts (Iraq, Afghanistan, and Israel). Defending the right of resistance of those subjected to occupation and discrimination is not only ethically right but also important because an imperialist defeat weakens its hegemony and control. In any political dynamic, including

wars, revolutionary communists must always claim class autonomy: even in a movement and in a war of liberation, it is important to oppose any inter-class alliance, any national front, precisely to avoid the subordination of the working class to its own bourgeoisie, which would lead to disastrous consequences. This must be done with clarity and determination, even in the face of potential democratic and progressive leaderships: as has repeatedly occurred in history, they are often capable of carrying out brutal repression to prevent any temptation of social revolution, as well as severe clientelist and profit-driven deviations (from *Suharto* to *Arafat*). This must also be approached with equal strength and clarity in confronting fundamentalist and reactionary leaderships, as is currently the case in Arab and Middle Eastern countries, where religious and communal forces have played a direct role in establishing authoritarian regimes; suppressing social and civil rights; violently opposing large, inclusive youth social movements (*Hamas* in Palestine, *Hezbollah* in Lebanon, the theocratic regime in Iran, or Shia parties in Iraq). In the uneven and combined dynamics of capitalism, independence without social transformation would be merely formal: a potential Palestinian state in the current capitalist framework would still be integrated into neo-colonial relations with Israel (if it remains), the petromonarchies, the USA, or the EU. Precisely because of this, supporting the right to resistance and explicitly calling for the defeat of Israel requires the clear and firm opposition to the current nationalist, communitarian, and reactionary Palestinian leadership. In this particular social formation, moreover, neo-colonial subordination does not occur between two countries but between two peoples, *from the river to the sea*. The need for social transformation is thus even more evident because the destruction of that neo-colonial regime in a capitalist mode of production could only occur through ethnic cleansing or without addressing its structural inequalities, promoting a new bourgeoisie of the subordinated, as in South Africa. However, today's defeat of Israel could represent a progressive step capable of also challenging that communal hegemony that today imprisons its proletariat. For these reasons, it is necessary to oppose Hamas (and Hezbollah, which, although with social traits, has the same communal matrix) and to differentiate ourselves from that terrorist strategy of armed struggle (consequential to that political approach). For these reasons, today it is crucial, against the Palestinian massacre and repeated Israeli war crimes, to oppose the united front of resistance and the national unity government, sustained in the Beirut and Beijing declarations, also signed by the left (FDLP and PFLP). For these reasons, we oppose the two-state solution and have used the slogan of de-Zionization (historically used by *Matzpen*), calling for the construction of a united front of the Israeli and Palestinian working classes: only their unity can truly bring about the transformation of that socially stratified formation along national lines.

The rise of reactionary right-wing forces. As we recalled last year, the Great Crisis, the intensification of competition, and the wear and tear of the ruling classes (both in late capitalist countries and in peripheries and semi-peripheries where balances are collapsing) have seen the rise of a new mass right. The middle classes (threatened by financial collapses, recessions, and restructurings) have created movements that have confusedly blended anti-elite sentiments, nostalgia for *a past never lived*, communitarian temptations, the search for security, xenophobic reactions, and rejection of new social norms. These are the historical foundations of fascism, though today there isn't its use of violence [now inessential], but there is a new ability to penetrate the lower classes, even among sectors of the organized working class. A new right like the Polish PIS, Orbán in Hungary, BJP and Modi in India, Trump in the USA, Bolsonaro in Brazil, Erdoğan in Turkey, Netanyahu in Israel, Bukele in El Salvador, Khan in Pakistan, Abe in Japan, Le Pen in France, Vlaams Belang in Belgium, UKIP in the UK, and AFD in Germany. Movements that often allude to a new nationalistic, statist management of the crisis without the ability to build it, and which today can rely on frictional imperialism for their functional revival towards the framing and militarization that the new phase tends towards. It is the new season for Fratelli d'Italia, VOX, the Sweden Democrats, the True Finns, the resurgence of the German AFD, Milei in Argentina, and the religious right in Israel. In recent years, we have also seen some reactivity from broad containment coalitions, which, however, do not seem to block their drift (Biden and Harris in the USA, Sánchez in Spain, Lula in Brazil). At the core of this new reactionary matrix is often a religious nucleus capable of shaping communal identities and developing social roots through its apparatuses (churches, schools, volunteer associations, networks of welfare and protection for the faithful). These fundamentalist and reactionary political movements, especially in some social formations in the periphery and semi-periphery, are not only vehicles for organizing the middle classes and youth masses (often educated but without prospects) but also for a national bourgeoisie compressed by competition and the hierarchies of the world

market. We can see these processes in the Iranian revolution, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Da'wa and al-Sadr in Iraq, the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, the Taliban movement, the new religious Jewish right, the BJP in India, the Buddhist *Bodu Bala Sena* in Sri Lanka, or the *Ma Ba Tha* in Myanmar.

Climate crisis and biological manipulation: the dystopias of the present. The dominance of current production relations over the world, with the full integration into capitalist valorization processes of enormous social formations (China, India, Africa), has in recent decades not only increased the exploitation of humans by humans but also the exploitation of humans over the planet's limited natural resources. Commodification and the pursuit of profit have led not only to the wild depredation of natural environments but also to an increase in pollution, waste production, and fossil fuel use, triggering a structural disruption of the ecosystem and global warming. This dynamic, after decades of warnings, has today reached a tipping point, a true turning point, triggering an unprecedented speed in climate change that not only produces extreme events, the spread of desertification, the disappearance of entire species, and the multiplication of vulnerabilities in many social formations but also threatens the very balance of the planet and thus the possibility of maintaining an ecological niche where humans can survive. The exit from extreme poverty of hundreds of millions of men and women, the accelerated industrialization of large social formations, the economic development of peripheral countries has led to the attempt to replicate predatory lifestyles and levels of well-being characteristic of the imperial metropolises' classes, from individual mobility to food consumption. A world agricultural and nutritional market dominated by large companies has thus developed, creating an unsustainable production chain of plant and animal products, with extensive manipulation of life and its very products. This has not only led to diseases from over-nutrition and food adulteration, with a global obesity pandemic, but has also produced sick supply chains based on uncontrolled exploitation, facilitating the spread of cross-species diseases and devastating pandemics. Social and technological capabilities in the healthcare field have made impressive leaps, not only in knowledge, monitoring, and treatment but also in the development of systems of control and care (as seen in the collapse of infant mortality and the management of the Covid pandemic). This science and technology today extend to understanding and manipulating the human genetic heritage, not only opening new breakthroughs in health policies (targeted pharmaceuticals) but also unlocking prospects for intentional biological mutation (from reparative intervention to the hybridization of new genetic traits). This achievement within a capitalist mode of production risks triggering new caste stratifications and apocalyptic drifts. Social awareness of these risks, both ecological and biological, has grown in recent years in response to the concrete experiences of climate change, the 2020 pandemic, and the penetration of scientific discoveries into everyday life. However, this awareness has not only led to greater political consciousness and new mass movements but also to the spread of anti-modernist drifts, scientific denial, conspiracies, anti-vax theories, primitivist movements, and reactionary ecological and antispeciesist tendencies (which aim to reconstruct an idealized natural balance, surpassed in the Anthropocene by human development itself). The struggle against these drifts by the working class and its political movements must, however, start from a radical critique of the productivist theories that marked the 20th century, where the development of productive forces was seen as a condition and determinant factor of socialization, not only for reformist currents but also in some revolutionary sectors. The need to reintroduce the critique of environmental exploitation within the framework of the analysis of production relations, with a view to constructing a collectivist transition, must also consider a critique of science and technology (its class directions) as well as the safeguarding of ecosystems and resources, primarily to ensure the social reproduction of humankind. For this reason, the environmental crisis and biological risks are part of today's political challenges, and the eco-socialist perspective is a fundamental component of the revolutionary program.

2. The Founding Statement of *ControVento* calls for the goal of developing an international and internationalist inclination. The communist and revolutionary programmatic framework on which we were founded has indeed required us to position our course also within an international framework since our inception. The *ControVento* Founding Statement ends with the following considerations, and in the face of the deviations and divisions of the international revolutionary vanguard, our activity has moved towards a logic of regroupment.

ControVento, in pursuing its goal and programmatic principles, while respecting its plurality of analyses, positions, and placements, recognizes the need to develop internationalist action and an international organization. Internationalist action is essential because, in the uneven and combined dynamics of capitalism, it is fundamental to place the perspective of labor and its antagonism with capital at the center of every social conflict, thus supporting the unity of the class and opposing, while respecting the right to defense and self-determination of oppressed peoples, every nationalist, campist, and sovereigntist temptation fueled by the structuring of international hierarchies between different countries and social formations. An international organization is essential because, to avoid the prevalence of national perspectives and interests, it is necessary to rebuild a revolutionary international starting from a general reference to the paths of Trotskyism and the Fourth International, of anti-Stalinism and the revolutionary Marxist movement: aware of the importance of their experience and programmatic definition but also conscious, on the one hand, of the degenerate movementist or sectarian trends that often characterize them and, on the other hand, of the proliferation in a limited political field of projects, strategies, and practices that are very different from one another. While waiting for historical development and international class struggle to outline new and more appropriate banners, this reference remains useful to programmatically define the field of revolutionary communists and to support the reconstruction of international structures. To this goal, it promotes, supports, organizes, and fosters initiatives of dialogue, connection, organization, solidarity, mutual aid, and common action with associations, organizations, or international groupings, as well as with social and trade union movements, disputes, and struggles from other nationalities, ethnicities, countries, and regions of the world.

ControVento was also founded with the awareness of the fragmentation and withdrawal that marks the international communist and revolutionary vanguard. The reasons for this condition are certainly linked to the broader dynamics of a season of division and disorganization of the working class but also rooted in the historical processes and subjective limitations that have marked the communist revolutionary movement. This condition is thus the result of the difficulty of *fighting against the stream* for decades, opposing the hegemonies over the workers' movement. On the one hand, the hegemony of the reformist currents supported by workers' aristocracies and by the general tendency of some sectors of the class to see themselves as variable capital. On the other hand, the hegemony of Stalinist currents supported by the persistence of a degenerate workers' state after its victory in the Second World War and the construction of an international pole of deformed states during the Cold War. However, this condition is also the result of a political drift of Trotskyist currents, a method and tradition that have focused on the crisis of political leadership with little attention to class dynamics and the development of a councilist method, cultivating thus vanguardism and leadership degeneration. In other words, it was not just the fact that we are in a small boat in a tremendous current or the consequences of organize intelligent people of bad character who have never been disciplined, who have always sought a more radical or more independent tendency (all of them more or less detached from the general current of the workers' movement [*Fighting Against the Stream*, Trotsky 1939]). In this drift, a subterranean and detrimental component of the Bolshevik tradition also weighed, which tends to focus only on the role of the vanguard. A component that has long opposed the Councils and the protagonism of the working class (*men of committees*), that did not understand the April Theses, that supported the July Theses, that did not grasp the centrality of workers' control and council democracy, that incubated the subsequent bureaucratic degeneration.

Developing a praxis and logic of regroupment. The Trotskyist movement has thus historically fragmented into different paths centered on individual national and international-fraction organizations [i.e., structures founded on interpretations of the phase and its political priorities]. This fragmentation has not been overcome in the political cycle opened by the collapse of the USSR, by the neoliberal offensive, by the overcoming of the mass hegemonies of Stalinist or social-democratic nature. The Great Crisis and the acceleration of frictional imperialism, which on the one hand shook the global hegemony of the ruling classes and, on the other hand, opened a phase of intensification of inter-imperialist confrontation, make it increasingly urgent to reconstruct an international and internationalist subjectivity. A structure that, on the one hand, reorganizes a revolutionary political vanguard against the antagonistic, anti-capitalist, centrist, and neo-reformist trends currently dominant in the class and anti-

systemic movements, and on the other hand, opposes those nationalist pressures that will inevitably develop with the escalation of inter-imperialist conflicts. The reference to the *Fourth International* is a concise reference to these objectives: a reference that today encompasses different approaches, but as history teaches us, the eventual new banners will be defined based on discriminating events, not by mere subjective will. *ControVento* has thus operated in this historical context, deeming it necessary to initiate a process of international programmatic regroupment: that is, identifying a core of foundational programmatic objectives (opposing the ruling classes and their governments, safeguarding class independence; the prospect of a workers' government, i.e., building a socialist transition from this mode of production; the relationship between partial conflicts and anti-capitalist perspective, i.e., adopting a transitional method; a real democratic centralism in which the pursuit of the program is developed through free debate of analyses and political proposals, even organized). This proposal should be able to address the broader revolutionary vanguard today divided into various structures and organizations, proposing a path of progressive convergence and programmatic unification, even developed over time: aware that, as mentioned, the real qualitative leap in the development of an international subjectivity will be produced by the compositions and recompositions determined by the dynamics of things, by crises, and by the emergence of new revolutionary explosions. Precisely in the face of these crises, it is indeed useful for the very limited vanguards organized today to reach a critical mass that enables them to follow and influence the dynamics of events.

3. Based on this framework, over these two years, we have developed dialogue paths with various international subjects. First, we supported the proposal of comrades from *ControCorrente*, picked up and relaunched by *Lotta Comunista*, to build internationalist conferences aimed at the perimeter of the communist, Trotskyist, Bordighist, and anarchist, spaces for free debate on the analysis of the imperialist dynamic and the prospects for class struggle. Although we considered it more useful to initiate this dialogue starting from a shared analysis of the inter-imperialist conflict in Ukraine to weave an international disarmament and anti-militarist pole [still essentially non-existent], we welcomed and accompanied the hypothesis of a forum as a place to verify possible convergences, in which it would be possible to freely conduct steps of potential recomposition between subjects. Thus, the two internationalist conferences in Milan (2023 and 2024) were held, and it will be followed by an appointment in Paris in 2025, involving over twenty subjects, including some of the main international Trotskyist structures. In this context, beyond the obvious differences over the role of the party and its praxis of action, significant divergences were noted on Ukraine, the imperialist profile of China, and the Palestinian conflict. In this context emerged different processes: the tendency towards isolation of the *International Marxist Tendency* (SCR in Italy), which has gone so far as to proclaim itself as the reconstruction of the International and Revolutionary Communist Parties; the progressive convergence on Ukraine, China, and Palestine between PCL, the League for the Fifth International, and ILS (an international grouping that includes, among others, the Argentine MST and *The Struggle* in Pakistan), which have started a unification process that should conclude in December 2025; the formation by the *Partido Obrero* first of a tactical regrouping attempt on defeatist positions on Ukraine and then on supporting the Palestinian resistance (today it includes, beyond the PO and some South American organizations linked to it, the Italian TIR with its leadership of *SiCobas*, the NAR in Greece, and sometimes OKDE Spartacus and the SAP in Turkey). The CWI and ISA, however, revealed progressive leadership and coherence problems, with little participation in these meetings (alongside other organizations from the LIT to French *Lutte Ouvrière*, which remained outside). In this context, as *ControVento*, we deepened relations, particularly with three subjects:

- **The Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste - Revolutionnaires [NPA-r].** The NPA's Fifth Congress (the anti-capitalist party founded by the LCR in 2009, gathering around the core of the Unified Secretariat and other tendencies and currents of the French internationalist left) in December 2022 saw the departure of its historical core (without a majority at the assembly) and the takeover of the party by various currents of the left, starting with the two main ones (*Anticapitalisme et Revolution*, *Enticelle*). The long debate over the NPA's political and material legacy thus led to the formation of two political entities: *NPA-Anticapitaliste* (the historical core allied to *NUPES* and later to the Popular Front) and, indeed, *NPA-Revolutionnaires*. As *ControVento*, we have had relations with both main currents of NPA-r (participating in an international camp of the international faction of *AeR*; meeting multiple times with the *Enticelle* tendency), considering positive and important the existence of an independent internationalist and revolutionary organization in the French context, where one of the main mass labor

movements of recent years has taken place. The new leadership of the NPA, able to rely on the mass projection of that political tradition and the momentum of a revival of social conflict, could have played a significant role in potential re-aggregation across the continent and possibly at a global level. This has not been the case, at least so far. The defeat of the French mass movement and its weak dynamics of self-organization have limited the development of NPA-r, which, among other things, found itself squeezed between the *LO* lists and the revival of the Popular Front in the recent political elections. Above all, the uncertainties and changes in position on the Ukraine issue (also due to the evident differences in inclinations between its two main components) have prevented it from playing a polarizing and recomposition role for the internationalist left in the continent. The apparently incomprehensible choice to open the European election campaign with *Lotta Comunista*, a subject that proposes strategic abstentionism, did not lead it to play an aggregation role against the European Union's logic and its new austerity policy. The positive decision to engage in organizing the internationalist conference in Paris does not substitute for the uncertainties revealed in these dynamics, while the proposal of its summer camp as the only substantial moment of debate, without subsequent common paths in events and political practices, substantially reduces the possibility of concretely verifying potential convergences. Beyond this, however, we confirm the political importance of this force and hope for its development in the French context, which would also lead it to play a role in fluidifying and re-aggregating the European internationalist left.

- **The Argentine Partido Obrero.** The PO has built a mass projection and a capacity for political aggregation over the past two decades, starting from the 2001 crisis (*Argentinazo*), building the *Frente de Izquierda y de los Trabajadores* (FIT) with the PTS (*Fracción Trotskista*) and *Izquierda Socialista* (UIT) and then FIT-Unitad (since 2019) with the MST. This electoral political coalition has now become the main subject of the Argentine left, with results between 2% and 5% and constant parliamentary representation since 2013. Beyond political differences and occasional sectarianism that nonetheless mark relationships within the Front, beyond the difficulty in developing strategic unification paths (which could play a significant role in the worldwide recomposition of the revolutionary left), the Front today is one of the few revolutionary subjects with mass dimensions, playing a central role in building opposition to Milei's reactionary government. One of the main subjects in the international landscape. Under the leadership of Altamira, the PO participated with the PCL in the long regroupment path of the MRQI and then the CRQI (1997-2015): during that experience, it not only evidenced politically debatable positions (such as on China or catastrophic readings of the crisis) but also verticalist and undemocratic management practices. The minority position of Altamira and then the departure of *Política Obrera* in 2019, effectively leading to the dissolution of the CRQI, did not change the political orientation of the PO, although the new leadership has developed more respectful practices and attitudes in relationships. In recent years, the PO has sought to develop a new international projection, deciding to start from partial tactical groupings based on major international political events. In this framework, during the first Milan conference (2023), we verified significant convergence with the PO on the war in Ukraine and the need to develop an international defeatist polarization, meeting with its international commission and verifying further convergences on the intervention front, participating in Italian assemblies and mobilizations with TIR, Brescia Anticapitalista, and other subjects (assembly in Milan and Aviano march). The October 7 attack, the Gaza massacre, and the development of an international solidarity movement for Palestine (broader and more significant than the defeatist movement on Ukraine) led the PO to focus on building its international projection on this theme, recording on this a clear divergence with our positions (paralleling what happened with TIR and SiCobas on the Italian front). Relations have thus stalled, although on the one hand, our interest in one of the main subjects of the current revolutionary left remains (also materialized in interviews and articles in our magazine), and on the other hand, a respect and substantial correctness in the dialogue persist.
- **Internationalist Standpoint** is a small international grouping starting from the Greek organization *Xekinima* [Socialist Internationalist Organization with 2/300 militants] and other realities, particularly in Turkey (*Sosyalist Alternatif*), Cyprus (*Neda*—New International Left), Romania (*GAS*—Group of Socialist Action), Nigeria (*Revolutionary Socialist Movement*), Taiwan (*International Socialist Forward*), and others, as well as individual militants in other countries. *ISp* was formed by splitting from *International Socialist Alternative*, an international organization that in turn emerged from the split of the majority of the CWI coordination (*Committee for a*

Workers'International, founded in 1974 by the *Militant group*, from which in 1991, when this tendency left Labour and formed independent organizations, Ted Grant and the IMT split). This group has historical relations with *ControCorrente*, although the latter does not collectively adhere to *ISp*, not conducting continuous political activity. We met *ISp* at the Milan conferences and verified a profound convergence of analysis and positions on the three main issues that animated those conferences and somehow mark the present times: the assessments of China's capitalist transformation and the development of its imperialism; the inter-imperialist characterization of the Ukrainian conflict and the adoption of a bilateral defeatist position; the reading of the October 7 attack, the right to Palestinian resistance but the opposition to its reactionary leadership, the prospect of de-Zionizing Israel and transforming that social formation through the unity of the Palestinian and Israeli working classes. This was not a given: indeed, on these very issues, we register the greatest difficulties in engaging with other subjects, as we saw with NPA-r and PO. With *ISp*, we also share other programmatic aspects and political proposals, from the reading of the conditions of the international vanguard to the prospect of initiating its recomposition through the regroupment method (a very important element) to the attention to the importance of developing free debate within the vanguard, even between positions and experiences organized within the party. In recent months, we have participated as guests in *ISp*'s international conference in Athens (March 2024), have been invited to the online meetings of its coordination, and have organized a debate on the European elections (June 2024). A small delegation of ours participated in the *Antinazi Zone/Youth Against Racism in Europe* (YRE) camp in southern Peloponnese at the end of July/early August, where we contributed with a discussion on the militarization of schools and coordinated a debate on the right in Italy. In these paths and experiences, beyond the general correctness of relations, we have been able to verify and even produce further convergences, starting from the analysis of the reactionary right in the world.

4. Rethinking regroupment in the era of frictional imperialism: testing a first step of regroupment with *Internationalist Standpoint*. In these years, through the experience of the internationalist conferences in Milan and relationships with various subjects, we have tried to verify and pursue paths of regroupment based on the analyses and indications we have previously reported, starting from the shared recognition of some general programmatic principles and the need to overcome the fragmentation of the revolutionary vanguard, which weakens it as an international reference point for an already divided and disorganized working class. The acceleration of frictional imperialism and the verification of the extent of the divisions that today cross international dialogue, in addition to the usefulness of maintaining broad forum spaces, suggest the opportunity to open a reflection on the regroupment method itself in this new era. The goal of recomposing factional and sectarian fragmentation remains, but the point is that, in the face of the horizon of a new global conflict, recomposition paths cannot only be positioned on a general programmatic level but perhaps must also take into account the importance of some central analytical fractures today, which lead to developing different alignments and inclinations precisely in the tumultuous development of events in these years: first of all, the awareness of China's imperialist inclination and its centrality in the new inter-imperialist conflicts; defeatism and anti-militarism in the face of ongoing conflicts (starting with Ukraine); the defense of the right to liberation but the rigorous and explicit opposition to any logic of national front (starting with Palestine); the importance of the mass and class united front in the development of class initiative. As we have already mentioned, we are aware that the real recomposition of an international revolutionary vanguard will not be a linear process and will hardly develop from a single core, but will be determined by real events (wars, revolutionary processes, their failures, and their possible victories) and by consequent alignments, breaking down and recomposing the current subjects even beyond the current programmatic perimeters or Trotskyist traditions. However, today, in the face of the pulverization of international subjects and the weakness of the working class, we must make every effort possible to reverse the direction and bring out theoretical and political reference points on the international stage to avoid that discouragement prevails and, above all, the risk of nationalist and neo-campist drifts. For this reason, despite the very limited dimensions of *ControVento* and even the evident limits of action that characterize us, we believe it is important not to shy away from the goal of developing internationalist and international relations. For this reason, we consider it important to collectively decide at this assembly to become an observer subject in *Internationalist Standpoint*, verifying this path of progressive convergence at their next international conference (spring 2025).

Participation and full involvement in *ISp*'s discussions will allow us to concretely verify the respective political approaches and methodologies, considering the different traditions and past affiliations, as well as to deepen some important elements of conceptions and action practices. We consider it important to address in the coming months and in the debate with *ISp* four elements:

- ***The conception of the party***, i.e., the evaluation of the role of the vanguard, the program, its political and organizational independence in relation to the traditions of mass parties and the practices of broad parties, also taking into account the limits and conditions of specific contextual situations (starting with the one we live as CV).
- ***Democratic centralism***, i.e., the complex balance between building a political line through free debate within the party, the usefulness and risks of public debate between different positions, the need to make decisions, and thus to develop coherent and consistent actions.
- ***The re-evaluation of a Popular Front and even Democratic Front policy***, which has found in the recent French experience a new life and mass impact, to which the revolutionary vanguard in general but also *ISp* in particular seems to have had difficulty reacting.
- ***The resistance and opposition to reactionary governments***, even with the leadership of mass movements by revolutionary forces, which today finds its first concrete testing ground in Argentina, even with differences and possibly conflicts between the different subjects of FIT-U: a dynamic that also seems underestimated and on which greater reflection seems necessary.

In the dialogue over the coming months, also in relation to the Paris conference, we hope that, within the framework of the method and critical reflections on regroupment paths, the path we initiate with *ISp* can further expand, collectively developing these elements of reflection, but also continuing regroupment experiences with other subjects and experiences of the international revolutionary vanguard.

Against the current, on small boats, we therefore continue in a stubborn and contrary direction our navigation.