



PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY VIEWPOINT

INTER-IMPERIALIST RIVALRY

In the decades since the defeat of the first communist revolutions, the major imperialist powers have sharpened their attacks on each other. This rivalry between imperialists underlies and drives world events and will do so until the working class, under communist leadership, again takes the world stage to fight exploitation and racism and make revolution.

Capitalism

Capitalist society is an unstable tension between two great opposed social classes: the tiny capitalist class that owns everything important and runs the government and the huge international working class, whose members survive by selling their labor to a capitalist for a wage. Capitalists and workers constantly struggle over wage and social benefits versus profits; they are locked together in a class society until revolution destroys the bosses. This fundamental tension between unity and conflict in a class society is a *contradiction*, a unity of opposites that is by its very nature unstable.

Contradictions don't stay the same. They drive development, turn one thing into another, and get resolved. The contradiction in our class society gets on the side of *unity* in boss-worker relations, if workers are willing to take the class struggle only so far, if our unified ability to struggle is blunted and diverted by racist ideology or other pro-boss ideas. In that case capitalist society continues with all its horrors, because workers, however reluctantly, still accept capitalism because they feel they simply aren't strong enough to "fight city hall" or have no vision of an alternative to the capitalist snake pit.

The contradiction can get resolved on the side of the workers, on the side of *conflict* in boss-worker relations, with revolution to abolish the class of bosses, the racist divisions among the workers, and the entire exploitative system.

Today, *unity* between the two opposed classes prevails and capitalism continues despite its constant wars, racism, financial crises, and all our efforts for change. But conflict between the two classes will re-emerge and sharpen. Workers with communist leadership can resolve the contradiction in favor of the

working class and all humanity by abolishing capital itself and its many harsh conditions including poverty, racism, brutality, and war for profit, as our predecessors did for many decades in the Russian and Chinese revolutions.

Communist Revolution: Resolve the Contradiction

Communist revolution means that we workers form a new kind of government and use our new state power to abolish the capitalist class, the wage-and-profit system, and all aspects of racism, from material differences to ideology. Revolution abolishes capitalists and transforms the working class from the slaves to a wage into the creative producers of all social value building a new society of egalitarian communist sharing where all can contribute mightily to each other.

It may seem that capitalism will go on forever and survive every crisis. But the secret of class contradiction is that its resolution depends mainly not on the capitalist class but on us, the working class. The capitalist class is dominant now, but the working class, and only our class, does have the ability to break their grip and transform society. We do have a future without capitalism, "a world to win." We will have to pass through the fires of war and revolution to get there. We will have to make conflict with the bosses primary over unity with them. But if we succeed in winning millions of workers to this communist vision, we will have that future.

Imperialist Bosses Fight among Themselves

Right now we are a long way from our revolutionary goal because the working class is weak and disarmed, having lost much of its communist leadership and party organization when the Soviet and Chinese revolutions turned back to capitalism. The basic overall contradiction in capitalist society—bosses v. workers—has temporarily faded as the main thing driving world events. Now, the battle among the imperialists for profit and power (using workers for cannon fodder in their wars) has become the main contradiction in the world. Capitalists always compete (GM fights Ford). But what is really determining events now is the contradiction *between* the major capitalist countries (Ford/U.S. fight Toyota/Japan). That is *inter-imperialist rivalry*. Major capitalist powers became imperialists over 100 years

ago as they extended their power and control far beyond their own national borders seeking profits, markets, and sites for investment, dividing up the entire world into competing spheres of interest. They used to call these zones their colonies and empires (British, French, Japanese, or Russian). Now imperialists dominate whole economies and governments without making them into colonies, but it's the same thing: the biggest capitalists use their corporations, armies, and governments to win away from other capitalists as much of the world's resources, markets, and labor as they can. Workers won't remain quiet forever, but for now, the battle among imperialists conditions all world events.

Inter-Imperialist Rivalry Means World War

Imperialists try to limit their conflicts to economics and politics (e.g., through the UN and bilateral negotiations), but military conflict—all-out war to resolve their differences and redivide the world—is on the rise. The many wars being fought today mean that the major imperialists are more and more resorting to military means to secure their empires. It is likely that there will be a world-wide war with major groups of imperialists and their allies on opposing sides, just as happened in the 20th century. Such a third world war would end with yet another capitalist “new world order” if we workers fail to rearm ourselves with the international revolutionary communist party, PLP. But, if workers build the PLP internationally, a third world war will also see another great wave of the communist revolutionary movement, ending capitalism altogether. The end of the story of inter-imperialist rivalry therefore depends on us, on the working class rising again, restoring the primacy of that main contradiction in capitalist class society—workers' conflict with bosses—and resolving it by revolution.

The World of Imperialism—and How to Change It

The U.S. has been top dog among imperialists since they came out stronger than the others after World War II, and since communist anti-imperialism ended with Russia and China's return to capitalism. By 1999 the U.S. ruling class faced the fact that they were declining relative to their major rivals. The bipartisan Hart-Rudman Commission that year foresaw a 9/11-type attack and advised the ruling class to use it to build patriotism and support for permanent war and a centralized police state. The U.S. military budget, with

700 bases in 130 countries, is still more than that of the rest of the world combined. But though still top dog militarily, the U.S. is weakening rapidly, its military forces stretched thin without a draft and its economic power being challenged throughout the globe by the EU, China, Russia, Japan, and lesser opponents including Iran and Venezuela. The EU and NATO are no longer automatic supporters of U.S. imperialism. China and Russia have formed an alliance called the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which in 2001 linked them to four Central Asian states (and more in line to join), challenging U.S. and its allies' power in the oil-rich region. Capitalist states including Iran, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, India, South Africa, Australia, Argentina, and Pakistan, can now try to play one imperialist power or alliance off against another to their own advantage. Venezuela is beginning to sell more oil to China instead of to the U.S., and the EU, Japan, and China are rapidly increasing investment in South America at the expense of U.S. market share. Not so long ago, the U.S. might already have invaded Venezuela or changed its regime as they used to do all over South America as they did in Chile in 1973, for example, but they simply cannot take military action yet against Iran or Venezuela because they are too weak. Australia withdrew its tiny military support of the U.S. in Iraq and is growing ever more closely tied to China economically. South Africa has increased ties to China and India at the expense of the U.S. and the EU. Pakistan no longer automatically dances to the tune of the U.S. military. Saudi Arabia refuses to help out the U.S. by increasing oil supplies. This brief glance yields the same picture as our look at the major imperialists: an unstable, shifting, dangerous moment in history, when the U.S. is being driven back and will have to take desperate drastic action to stay on top.

The capitalist future is bleak, especially for the international working class, which suffers the brunt of war, racism, and economic crisis. So we return to the burning need of the moment. We must strengthen the working class side of the class contradiction by joining and building the PLP, fighting racism, struggling against the bosses, and heating the class struggle to a white hot intensity so that we can overthrow capitalism and create a communist world that meets the needs of our class.