Taking *Leave* of their senses –
What does the Brexit vote mean?

The idea of holding a referendum on Britain's membership of the EU began as a promise by then Prime Minister Cameron to the "Eurosceptic" right wing of the Tory Party in January 2013[1]. The Tories won the general election in May 2015 with an overall parliamentary majority so they had to go through with it. On 23 June 2016, a majority of UK citizens who turned out to vote (certainly not a majority of registered voters, much less a majority of the adult population), 52%, voted in favour of leaving the European Union.

The most important thing to understand is that nobody expected the Leave vote to win, least of all the "Brexiteers" themselves! Britain's major political parties were not prepared for it, and neither were most big companies (despite the modern focus on "business continuity" and "disaster recovery"). The consequences of this are that the Tory Party, the Labour Party and even UKIP (the party whose whole *raison d'être* was Brexit) were thrown into crisis and the economy is sinking as uncertainty delays investment and complicates terms of trade.

The Leave vote can certainly be seen as a kind of "protest vote" – this was clearly demonstrated by the fact that the "Leavers" didn't expect to win and had no idea what to do when they did! It can be seen as part of the rise of "right-wing nihilism". In the 1970s it was anarchists, hippies and punks, who said "fuck the system" without caring too much about what to replace it with – now it's disaffected nationalists and social conservatives. Anti-globalisation is the modern "fool's socialism" (as leading German Social Democrat, August Bebel said of anti-Semitism)[2]. It's an ideology which really grew to prominence amongst the liberal left in the 1990s, but now it's increasingly the right – Trump, Putin, UKIP, and FN… – who are its standard-bearers

On a global level, victory for the Leave campaign is part of a wider tendency towards economic protectionism and isolationism (accompanied by bigger or smaller doses of racism and xenophobia) facilitated by a rise of political "populists[3]" –in the sense of just spouting a collection of crowd-pleasing slogans with no concrete programme addressing either the material concerns of their followers or the problems faced by capital accumulation.

This can be seen in both right-wing forms (Front National, Donald Trump…) and left-wing forms (Syriza, Sanders, Corbyn…). In the UK context it was also clearly a vote against foreign "others" and anybody who can be labelled as such. It was the starting gun for racists and xenophobes of every variety.

---

[1] See: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-21148282

[2] As we pointed out in a rather old leaflet: http://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/MC/Leaflets/tract0112_Imbecile.pdf

[3] It goes without saying that use, by media and politicians, of populism instead of reactionary is an insult towards Russian *narodniki*.

Who voted for Leave?

The newspapers have been filled with all sorts of speculation about why so many people voted Leave and who and where they are. The most detailed analysis is probably that published by Lord Ashcroft Polls[4] just after the referendum took place. None of the results are very surprising. The pattern of Leave voting is similar to that of people who voted UKIP in the 2015 general election[5], in terms of geography, income and age. For the age range 18-24, 73% voted Remain, for the over 65s, 60% voted Leave. Voting Leave was also strongly correlated with low income, low education level, and with not being in work[6]. On the question of education, we can note that amongst students the Remain vote was 85%[7]! Ashcroft's poll was about attitudes as well as demographics in the usual sense, but none of the other findings from the poll were particularly surprising either.

For example, amongst people living in the geographical region known as England, most people identifying as "English" (and not "British") voted Leave, whereas most self-identified Brits voted Remain. Self-identified "Christians" mostly voted Leave, self-identified "Muslims" overwhelmingly voted Remain. More interestingly, Leave voters are much more likely to think that life in Britain is worse than it was 30 years ago and that their children will be worse off than they are (see the Social Attitudes section of the Ashcroft poll).

The most serious analysis of people's *subjective reasons* for voting Leave or Remain (or, rather, what they were intending to vote) was done by the British Election Study, a body which has studied British voting behaviour for more than 50 years. Based on open-ended questions to potential voters about the issues that concerned them, BES created "word clouds" of notions that concerned Leave and Remain voters[8]. The results were stark. The word cloud for Leave voters has one big word in the middle: "Immigration". For Remain voters the biggest word is "Economy". Those who couldn't make up their minds were thinking about both "Immigration" and "Economy"… So, it looks like the referendum really was an "anti-immigrant plebiscite" as many EU immigrants to the UK instinctively felt it was!

Nigel Farage (former leader of UKIP and important leader of the Leave campaign) said on more than one occasion that he would be willing to sacrifice economic growth to see less immigration[9]. This is rather too reminiscent of the old Afrikaner nationalist slogan "better poor and white than rich and mixed", and the British Election Study poll results seem to indicate that it is a view widely shared.

Essentially, the sections of society most likely to vote Leave corresponded almost precisely to the profile of the typical UKIP voter in the 2015 election. But we shouldn't get too carried away by the stereotype of the white, working class, middle-aged voter who doesn't like immigrants (but lives in a neighbourhood where there aren't any) and wears an England flag T-shirt well outside the football season (the "white van man" of UK newspaper mythology).

---

[4] Lord Ashcroft is an eccentric pro-Brexit Tory businessman, philanthropist, political publisher and pollster, who retired from the House of Lords because he was too busy with his other political projects. His poll results and analysis is here: http://lordashcroftpolls.com/2016/06/how-the-united-kingdom-voted-and-why/
There's also been an article on libcom offering some analysis of the data:
https://libcom.org/news/making-sense-brexit-tide-reaction-reality-racist-vote-andrew-flood-27062016
[5] See our Letter #41, "What does the May election result tell us that's useful to know?"
[6] Corroborated by the YouGov poll: https://yougov.co.uk/news/2016/06/27/how-britain-voted/
[7] See: http://www.youthsight.com/uk-students-brexit/

[8] "What mattered most to you when deciding how to vote in the EU referendum?", British Election Study, 11 July 2016:
http://www.britishelectionstudy.com/bes-findings/what-mattered-most-to-you-when-deciding-how-to-vote-in-the-eu-referendum/
[9] For example, *Independent*, 2 April 2015:
http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/nigel-farage-warns-a-cap-on-migrants-coming-to-britain-impossible-despite-advocating-it-10153018.html

See websites: www.mouvement-communiste.com and http://protikapitalu.org

The Leave vote was 52% of a voter turnout of 72%[10] - that makes more than 15 million people[11]. In *all categories* examined by the pollsters there was a significant Remain vote. Even amongst those over 65, 40% voted Remain, and in the lowest income bracket the Remain vote was 36% or 38% (depending on the income classification method used). The only part of the UK which we can say had a *really* decisive vote was Gibraltar, where the population (almost all dependent on jobs in tourism and finance) voted 95.9% for Remain!

Even the much talked about regional differences, which will very likely lead to the break-up of the UK (as Scotland re-runs its referendum and the vote goes for independence) are not *that* extreme – 38 % of votes in Scotland were for Leave (not exactly an insignificant minority) and in Northern Ireland 44% voted Leave. In short, the Leave/Remain division went right across British society, and so it's not surprising that there is no simple explanation for why people voted for one or the other. For a referendum in a state which is more or less a liberal democracy it is impossible to predict the outcome because there are so many forces pulling in different directions.

However, in addition to rising Europe-wide anti-immigrant sentiment, there are other very important UK-specific reasons why there was such a big Leave vote:

- Most people in Britain don't know much about the EU. In fact, they seem to know even less than most EU citizens[12].

- The power of right-wing anti-EU newspapers. The circulations of the main pro-Brexit rags speak for themselves: *Sun* (1.7 million); *Daily Mail* (1.5m); *Daily Telegraph* (0.5m); *Daily Express* (0.4m); *Daily Star* (0.5m)[13]. That's about 4.5m people who read these propaganda sheets every day, at a time when the circulation of printed newspapers is falling rapidly. It should also be pointed out that more than 14 million people (globally) look at the *Daily Mail* website every day. By contrast, the main anti-Brexit newspapers – the *Times*, *Financial Times* and *Guardian* – have a circulation of less than 0.9m between them.[14]

- Both the major parties were divided over Brexit and so their leaders could not campaign convincingly against it. This was particularly true in the case of the Labour Party, which was (and is at the time of writing) led by Jeremy Corbyn, an old-fashioned Left Labour "socialism in one country" protectionist who had a long history of being against the EU. He was against European Economic Community membership in the referendum, in 1975, and against the Maastricht Treaty in 1992.

- On Saturday 2 July there was a "March for Europe" in central London of tens of thousands of people expressing dismay at the referendum result. It is significant that there were no political parties represented, except for the Liberal Democrats (who have always taken a clear pro-EU position). There were also no trade unions. The obvious explanation is that almost all the organisations normally involved in public politics were too divided to be

---

[10] "Brexit: All you need to know about the UK leaving the EU", BBC News, 10 Aug 2016:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-32810887
[11] Out of approximately 50 million adults in the UK, up to 9m may not be registered to vote. See: "British Politics and Policy" LSE blog, "The next generation of voters? Getting the 'Missing Millions' back on to the UK's electoral register",
http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/the-next-generation-of-voters-getting-the-missing-millions-back-on-to-the-uks-electoral-register/
[12] "Britons among least knowledgeable about European Union", *Guardian*, 27 Nov 2015:
https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2015/nov/27/brits-least-knowledgeable-european-union-basic-questions

[13] *PressGazette*, 21 July 2016:
http://www.pressgazette.co.uk/abc-figures-national-press-sees-june-brexit-vote-boost-in-print-and-online/ Although the position of the *Daily Star* was not so clear as the others… This most down-market of tabloids mostly consists of stories about sport and pictures of scantily-clad women, and didn't take a definite editorial stand on EU membership, but its choice of actual news stories indicated a clear choice for Brexit.
[14] Ibid.

See websites: www.mouvement-communiste.com and http://protikapitalu.org

there! This seems to have been repeated on the second "March for Europe" on 3 September – again, out of political parties, only the Lib Dems proudly participated.

At this point, let's take a look at some of the stupider reasons put forward to explain the size of the Leave vote:

"A revolt against the out-of-touch urban liberal elite". This was popular in the right-wing press, but not just there – take a look at the website of "Trade Unionists against the EU" if you want to see the "left" version. Of course, it is based on the assumption that the working class doesn't exist in the urban centres of the UK, particularly London. Most of what used to be called "inner city" London voted for Remain. The proponents of the "liberal elite" view might point out that all these areas now have pockets of "gentrification" and so, thanks to media stereotyping and estate agent propaganda, are no longer "working class neighbourhoods".

But the official figures on "indices of multiple deprivation" (measures used by government bodies to estimate the level of economic and social immiseration) tell a different story[15]. Despite its Blairite dinner parties (apparently…), Islington remains one of the poorest boroughs in London and ranks in the top ten local authorities nationally for all indices of deprivation (and consistently beats Liverpool, Manchester and Blackpool for officially measured crappiness). Islington voted 75% for Remain.

Tower Hamlets comes consistently top of the league for miserable social conditions – for example, *"Tower Hamlets has the highest income deprivation affecting children of any local authority in the country at almost 40 per cent of all children living in the borough"*[16]. Vote?: Over 67% for Remain. Other centres of the privileged elite across the UK included Manchester (60.4% for Remain) and Liverpool (58.2%).

"An expression of misery in post-industrial regions". It's certainly possible to find some parts of Britain that fit the bill. The media showed a real obsession with Sunderland, for example, which did have a strong Leave vote, 61.3%. Sheffield is another classic example of "post-industrialism", with plenty of industrial museum tourist attractions to prove it, and it's true that it voted for Leave… by a massive 51%!

Further figures can be found on the referendum results web page of any reputable British newspaper[17]. However, it could be pointed out that, of the top ten most declining cities in the UK (measured in terms of employment, skill level, population…), nine of them voted Leave by large margins, except for Dundee (in Scotland)[18].

"Really a vote against austerity" – This idea was popular with wishful-thinking liberals and leftists, including supporters of "Lexit"[19]. The British Election Study poll (referred to above) shows how implausible this idea really is.

The effects of the vote

Perhaps the worst effect of all the hot air generated by Brexit is the way that it creates all sorts of false polarisations. It's become easy to be convinced that a politician we previously despised is now "OK" because they defend the integrity of the EU and therefore (in principle) freedom of movement, or because they might have the power to veto Brexit in some way (the Scottish National Party looked like they could do it at one point!).

---

[15] "English Indices of Deprivation 2015", Greater London Authority, May 2016:
https://files.datapress.com/london/dataset/indices-of-deprivation-2015/2016-05-24T18:16:14/indices-deprivation-2015.pdf
[16] ibid., pg. 19.

[17] For example, *Guardian*, "EU referendum: full results and analysis":
http://www.theguardian.com/politics/ng-interactive/2016/jun/23/eu-referendum-live-results-and-analysis
[18] See the report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on declining city:
https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uneven-growth-tackling-city-decline
[19] Lexit is a fantasy put forward by some Leftists in UK advocating for all countries to leave EU (see: http://www.leftleave.org/)

Whatever the final outcome – and it is still perfectly possible that Brexit won't happen[20] – the immediate effects of the vote will continue to be grim:

Continuing slow-down in the economy as investment is delayed. There is already a significant slow-down in the construction industry (which makes up around 6% of GDP), although this has been in "recession" (two successive quarters of contraction) since well before the referendum[21]. Spending on infrastructure has declined sharply, with spending in July down by 23% relative to July 2015. There were also 2000 less houses started than in the previous month[22].

Fall in real wages as the pound falls. An obvious point, but we still have to make it… Britain is a country where most wage goods are imported so a fall in the pound always translates into falling real wages. It's been that way since at least the 1970s, but is much more marked today.

Effects on the NHS and other public services as staff consider leaving. Around 5% of all NHS staff, including 10% of doctors, come from other EU countries. The NHS Confederation (an association of health managers) has warned that recruitment of EU staff is already slowing down and that this could seriously exacerbate NHS staff shortages[23]. Both uncertainty over the status of EU workers and the falling pound will make it harder to attract staff. There is already evidence of staff wanting to leave the NHS for better jobs abroad[24], with Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the US being as popular as ever.

Rise in racism and xenophobia. There was an immediate rise in reported "hate crimes" after the referendum result. In the second half of July 2016 the level was 40% higher than in the same period in July 2015[25]. In many cases, verbal aggression was directly referendum-related.

There were recently two attacks on Polish men in Harlow within 12 hours of each other. The first, on 27 August, was fatal for one of the victims. It's still not clear what the motivations were (there were no reports of xenophobic verbal abuse, for example) but the fact that these attacks are widely assumed to be hate crimes shows the kind of atmosphere that exists in many parts of the UK. There is also some evidence that the increase in racist and xenophobic attacks is particularly high in areas that voted strongly for Leave[26].

---

[20] Theresa May (the PM at the time of writing) has already stated that Article 50 will not be invoked until at least the end of 2016. Meanwhile there is law suit, brought by, among others, an online investment manager, to try to force a parliamentary debate on Brexit before Article 50 can be invoked. It appears to have some legal merit and could yet provoke a "constitutional crisis" in a country with no constitution.
http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-08-08/how-a-hairdresser-s-lawsuit-could-spell-trouble-for-brexit

[21] "Construction in recession even before Brexit vote, official figures show", *Independent*, 12 Aug 2016:
http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/construction-in-recession-even-before-brexit-vote-official-figures-show-a7186486.html

[22] "Brexit: Infrastructure spending falls by 20% after EU referendum", *Independent*, 23 Aug 2016:
http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/brexit-eu-referendum-economy-eu-referendum-infrastructure-spending-falls-a7204101.html

[23] "Brexit 'will make NHS staff shortages worse'", BBC News, 30 June 2016:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-36664094

[24] "Brexodus: 'Brain drain' fears as NHS workers seek to emigrate after Leave vote*", Sunday Post*, 3 July 2016:
https://www.sundaypost.com/news/political-news/brexodus-disillusioned-nhs-staff-wanting-leave-brexit-vote-spark-fears-brain-drain/

[25] "In numbers: Has Britain really become more racist?", BBC News, 10 Aug 2016:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-36964916
Of course, we always have to be a bit sceptical about reporting of "hate crimes". Not only does the level of reporting vary enormously relative to the actual level of the crime (generally there is under-reporting), but the definition of the crimes as "hate crimes" (in the UK at least) is entirely subjective. If a victim says that someone attacked them because of their race, for example, then the crime is recorded as a racial attack, even if there was no verbal racial abuse. This policy is set out in the College of Policing's "Hate Crime Operational Guidance".

[26] "Brexit: Surge in anti-immigrant hate crime in areas that voted to leave EU", *Independent*, 31 July 2016:
http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/brexit-hate-crime-racism-immigration-eu-referendum-result-what-it-means-eurospectic-areas-a7165056.html

Unspecified restrictions on freedom of movement. We don't know what they'll be yet, but let's not forget that they could well affect the right to study and retire, as well as the right to work where we want to! We can be sure that the Tories' 2015 manifesto commitment to reducing annual net migration to the UK to "the tens of thousands, not the hundreds of thousands" will not be met – May is a pragmatist, not a UKIP suicide bomber who wants to blow up the UK economy – but there will have to be some nasty readjustments to the rights of migrant workers, particularly less skilled ones.

Stoking of tensions in Northern Ireland. The vote for remain in Northern Ireland (56%) is not as simple as it looks. Historically Protestant neighbourhoods strongly voted for Leave – that is, to keep a separate identity for the UK, within which Protestants can keep their privileged status, or even for religious reasons[27]. A cornerstone of the 1998 peace agreement which has held so far was that the UK and Ireland would both be members of the EU, and the border between the two countries (once enforced by barbed wire and machine guns) has become as nominal as the one between France and Belgium.

All that could change as the UK tries to control immigration and unregulated trade from the EU. Immediately after the vote, Martin McGuinness (Sinn Féin) Deputy First Minister called for a referendum on united NI with the Irish republic. Straight afterwards, First Minister Arlene Foster (a member of the generally Protestant DUP) said it was not on the agenda[28]. On the ground, Protestant and Catholic neighbourhoods remain strongly divided, with "peace walls" (anti-pogrom fortifications) still in place and still needed, and opening up the question of a united Ireland could reignite the bloody and bitter conflict

which was never really resolved and which has divided the working class for many decades.

Separation of Scotland from the UK. Scotland strongly voted (62%) for Remain. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon quickly called not only for Scotland to stay in Europe but for it to adopt the euro. Scotland's slightly-more-generous-than-England welfare system mostly based on oil rent can't last forever, so it makes sense to accept the euro as a more stable currency than the increasingly shaky pound. Joining the EU will give a signal to foreign investors to invest in Scotland rather than England, as a rumour about Nissan in Sunderland may indicate. But an independent Scotland would be fiercely opposed by Spain, because independence for one small nation could well give ideas to others, starting with Catalonia… The potential "domino effect" of small-country nationalism will not be pretty for the working class, as yet more divisions open up.

Increasing cracks appearing between the EU countries. At the recent emergency EU summit held in Bratislava on 16 September (without the UK) three positions emerged on the question of migrants:

- Italy and Greece, who actually receive almost all the migrants, pushed for a mutual sharing and management of migration flows. Italian PM Matteo Renzi a accused France and Germany of letting the Mediterranean "frontier" countries fend for themselves.
- France and Germany, who have to deal with their problematic internal politics and who try to continually put off the sharing of migrants across the EU, previously supported by a good number of northern EU countries and Spain, which has for a long time put up its own wall, with the complicity of Morocco.
- The Visegrád group of four ex-Eastern Bloc countries (Hungary, Poland, Czechia and Slovakia) openly call for nation to block migration. They made their break from the rest of the EU clear and official by publishing their own statement at the end of the summit.

Certainly, this polarisation existed before the Brexit vote but its formalisation is a clear by-product of it.

---

[27] "For hard-line Protestants, leaving Europe is a matter of eschatology", *Economist*, 24 June 2016.
http://www.economist.com/blogs/erasmus/2016/06/ulster-evangelicals-brexit

[28] "EU referendum: Martin McGuinness calls for referendum on united Ireland", *Daily Telegraph*, 24 June 2016:
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/06/24/eu-referendum-martin-mcguiness-calls-for-referendum-on-united-ir/

See websites: www.mouvement-communiste.com and http://protikapitalu.org

By way of a conclusion

As communists and class fighters it is clear that we have to oppose the most coherent myth peddled by the protectionists of left and right – the idea that the state restraining the functioning of the market can make life better for the working class, whether it's by restricting the freedom of movement of "job-stealing" migrants or by restricting the import of goods or the export of capital.

It is not "globalisation" that has caused wages to fall for large numbers of workers across Europe and the US. It is the fact that the balance of class forces is so much in favour of the bosses. It is an expression of the lack of political independence of the proletariat. Fortunately, history has shown that this state of affairs is neither inevitable nor permanent. If wages and conditions begin to improve it will be because of collective struggle by the workers, and not because a right-wing government restricts immigration or a left-wing one renationalises privatised companies.

But we also have to oppose *any* idea that a particular arrangement of capitalist society makes the working class stronger or better off. It's tempting to say that we prefer the "globalised" world of free movement and a "cosmopolitan" working class continually in communication and cooperation with each other across continents (and we do, of course!). But the freedoms apparently granted by globalisation to the proletariat are never guaranteed, as the migrants from Syria and elsewhere quickly found out about "freedom of movement".

Similarly, the growth of proletarian internationalist consciousness is not guaranteed by globalisation. The same world market which makes workers cooperate with each other across borders and supply chains also sets them in competition with each other. It's nice to think that the EU facilitates solidarity between workers in neighbouring European countries, particularly given the almost nominal nature of many borders. But there have been very few instances of this. At the time of writing, there has recently been a strike by train managers on the Eurostar train service linking the UK and France… but only on the UK side!

Pessimists often claim that, this side of a revolution, the domination of the working class by nationalism is inevitable. This is used to justify the whole package of social democratic class compromise – a separate socialist party and "socialist programme" for each country. But even in the "reformist" struggles of today nationalism can be fought. In the Lindsey Refinery strike in 2009[29] we saw a clear conflict between nationalist and internationalist tendencies within the striking workers, and the internationalists won (at least for a while).

The fact that so many proletarians voted Leave is a sign of the weakness of our class but so is the fact that so many felt they had to participate in the referendum at all, and care about the result. We have to stress that there is no such thing as a "correct" vote here – a vote for Leave was a vote against immigrants (as the Leave voters themselves openly stated) but a vote for Remain was a vote for capitalist order, for a strong economy in which the workers supposedly had their place. And it's not just the referendum itself… In the absence of any political independence of the class it's hard not to get drawn into the stupidities of bourgeois politics.

This is particularly true now that the rise of "populist" parties of the right and left, together with "anti-Establishment" politicians inside the "Establishment" parties, has created *so* much more (apparent) choice. There's now a whole supermarket shelf of political products, from the "fair-trade, organic" Left to the "locally produced" Right. Corbyn-mania is just the latest manifestation of this tendency in the UK (something like 300,000 people have joined the Labour Party in the last year – 183,000 of them in one week in July). The ease with which traditional cynicism towards politicians is being swept aside only shows how this cynicism was never an expression of class consciousness.

Nor do we think it is positive that the British ruling class (and to some extent the ruling class across Europe), not just the politicians, has been thrown into chaos. Chaos

---

[29] See: "The strike at Lindsey Refinery: a struggle entangled in nationalism", http://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/MC/Letters/LTMC0930EN.pdf

does not create opportunities for the working class to act. Chaos is just chaos, for all classes.

The political independence of the proletariat has nothing to do with giving a radical spin to the positions of the bosses' politics, whether "Lexit" or a "Workers' Europe", but must always base itself on the struggle against the material conditions of capitalist exploitation and oppression. The politics of our class is that of extending and deepening the class struggle, not that of proposing the best way to manage capital, supposedly in our favour.

As communists we are against any state, whatever colours it drapes itself in, for now and forever. But today having an efficient and strong state (that is, one able to valorise capital within the area it rules), able to overcome conflicts within its ruling elite, forces the proletariat it is facing to be cleverer and more efficient. Of course, for us, all nations (small or big) are fake communities.

We are "indifferent" towards any national question, and we have no "dogma" regarding the revamping of states. If separation takes place (like in the case of Czechia and Slovakia) based on a common agreement with no civil war, we don't take sides. Where civil wars take place we oppose all sides, as in any capitalist war. Where rearrangements of states take place there is no inherently "good" or "bad" result, and we always have to pay attention to what's really happened and to study the economic consequences, the attitude of the working class and the possibilities for resurgence in class struggle.

"The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got. Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself the nation, it is so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word."

"National differences and antagonism between peoples are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto.

The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster. United action, of the leading civilised countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat."

- Marx Engels *Communist manifesto*, 1848, Chapter 2, "Proletarians and Communists"[30]

---

[30] See: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch02.htm