

Some critical thoughts from an AW comrade on the limitation of the supply chain discussion and [Sergio Bologna's text on the current crisis](#).

"In the 1970's I don't think many people in the working class saw what was coming in terms of moving production from the old industrial centres (Europe, UK US) as capital sought to overturn the post-war settlement (welfarism, status quo,) We just saw asset stripping and not the emergence of a whole new phase of capital's mode of reproduction. Working classes in the industrial centres with their national isolation and reformists outlooks could not respond to this rapid change in capital's activities.

Sergio Bologna says that the 'left' didn't really study the concrete developments. That's partially true but the real problem was that whatever analysis they did make (some of it quite accurate – ie ending of gold standard) the only strategic conclusions they were going to draw from it was ' the urgent need to build the party'. ie the strategic outcome of analysis was made prior to any analysis which was only used in its 'catatrophism' form to reinforce the already chosen path.

It was only after the event that people started to talk about globalisation – really a wrong term but lets not bother about that now.

I thought that what was wrong with our meeting is that in the first chance to get together for some time, we're starting with a discussion about one aspect of the present moment (certainly important and needing discussion) and not trying to get to grips with the totality. By this kind of approach we will be behind events and taken by surprise.

I don't pretend I can write at all usefully about the 'whole'. This needs a lot of work. But not to identify it is to be blind. I am saying that just as capital's response to the militancy of the working class in the 70's led to a dramatic new world so today we are living in a period that is going to be qualitatively different from what we have been living through for the last 30 – 40 years. There is a rupture.

The phase of 'globalisation'is coming to an end. Why? This is the kind of thing we should be looking at. This doesn't seem to be a repeat of the past, not a new way of overcoming working class resistance. To me it appears more that while in the last 40 years most of the competing sections of capital mutually benefited from the vast movement of capital and the collapse of the stalinist regimes, they reach certain limits and have now to begin the old game of who knocks who out.

Secondly, while most sections of capital had a heyday, large sections of the working class in the old industrial nations have suffered and without any avenue of working class resistance, move towards the 'anti-globalisation' popularists. This starts a political direction that has its own logic – ie trumpism.

The Chinese economy which to some extent was a powerful factor in the last period's successes for capital shows signs of hitting the buffers.

Covid has exacerbated the underlying tensions.

Etc Etc -

So a new world is opening up. The unquestioned supremacy of the US military and economic empire is coming to an end. Iran defeated the US in Syria and Pakistan beat it in Afghanistan.

It is not possible to know if Russia will invade Ukraine or when/if China will press its claim to control Taiwan. More immediately relevant is the fact that it is now quite reasonable to think that both of these things are now possible which would have been unthinkable previously.

The US military might, technically is overwhelming still, but what it's rivals now sense is that, ideologically, its military are no longer cohesive or know what their strategic goal is. The US domestically is starting to implode. The parallel with the last days of Rome is striking in many ways. And in this situation of growing tension and political instability we know that the Trumps, the Johnson's, the Putin's etc are liable to take the road of growing nationalism and roads to war. (I mean a tendency towards this – not a certainty but even the drum beatings have a big impact on the outlook of the working class).

Now as I say, this is a woefully inadequate picture of things. But this is the work that has to be done if any kind of political perspectives are not going to be completely washed away by events. I made the point at the meeting how all the various schemas of the working class were turned upside down by Thatcher's war in the south Atlantic.

Of course what we don't want is to repeat the method of the sects. To have discussions about these things where everyone tries to outdo each other in predicting calamity/catastrophe and then really draws no real conclusions from it in terms of a change to our work.

But I think it will be a real problem if we just go on 'work as usual', looking to see if anything bears fruit. We miss the chance and necessity to propose radically new initiatives/campaigns which might take root in the working class, above all in trying to rebuild a practical internationalism in the working class."