



# world revolution

## The deeper the crisis, the more they attack our living standards

*“Christine Lagarde, head of the International Monetary Fund, said the economic situation was entering a ‘dangerous place’. Earlier, the president of the World Bank, Robert Zoellick, said the world’s economy was ‘in a danger zone’. The comments came after the Federal Reserve warned that the US economy faced ‘significant downside risks’.”<sup>1</sup>*

Last week, this grim chorus from three of the most powerful economic organs in the world sent the markets into yet another tail-spin, compounding a summer already punctuated by volatile market swings. The FTSE-100 quickly posted its biggest one-day-drop (in percentage terms) in more than 2 years. Ever since we have been treated to a rollercoaster ride as the markets react to the latest drama in the long-running Euro-crisis. Markets have posted big quarterly falls, with the FTSE ending September with its biggest quarterly loss in 9 years.

### The world economy crumbles

Accompanying these warnings was a series of credit downgrades for banks across the US. This included Bank of America (the biggest bank in the US) but also Citigroup, another powerful player in the international banking sector<sup>2</sup>. The anaemic growth the US has managed to squeeze out of its ailing economy has done nothing to reduce stubbornly high unemployment, which remains stuck at over 9%. The economic situation was exacerbated even further over the summer by the drama over the Congressional dead-lock over the debt-ceiling - the legal limit on what the Federal Government can borrow. In the end, the US state decided to pay its bills, but still had its credit worthiness downgraded - essentially the worst of both worlds.

In Britain, debate continues over whether the Coalition government should halt its deficit reduction programme and consider a new stimulus to the economy. The IMF is also beginning to question whether the spending cuts should be delayed. Here, too, growth remains anaemic (0.7% over the last year) and unemployment stubbornly high (7.9%). But the UK is also experiencing inflation (5.2% RPI) in an environment of zero pay rises

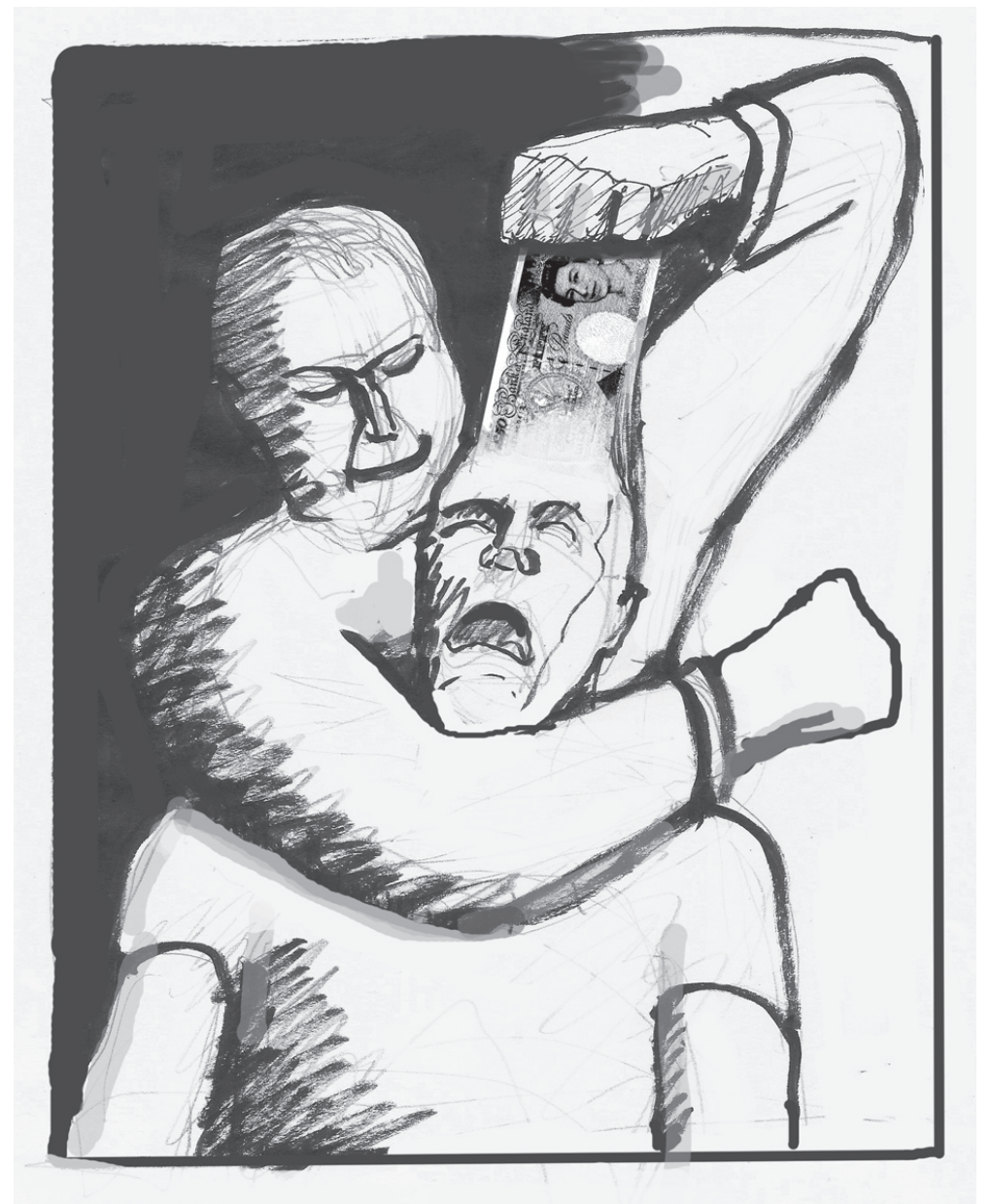
and sluggish demand, raising fears of stagflation. Even in China - recently cast in the role of riding to the rescue by purchasing European debt - things are taking a turn for the worse. China’s massive stimulus programme managed to prevent the economy entering recession, but has resulted in inflationary pressures and a huge construction boom. As the government moves to bring down inflation, the massive debt exposure of many local government bodies is coming into focus. Communist party economists are already talking about the Chinese version of “sub-prime”<sup>3</sup>.

But it is Europe that is the current source of fear for the capitalists. The spectre of the Greek state defaulting on its debts would have serious implications for banks across the Eurozone, risking a re-run of the credit market seizure that nearly brought down the world economy in 2008. To make matters worse, the failure of the European powers to halt a Greek debacle would throw into doubt their ability to rescue other economies facing serious difficulties, especially Ireland and Portugal, resulting in enormous pressure on those two countries. Nor are Spain and Italy immune to serious concerns about their capacity to weather the coming storm. The fear is of a domino effect that could quickly spread across the Eurozone, threatening not only individual countries but the entire single-currency project. Were such a scenario to unfold, it would mean unprecedented catastrophe for a world economy already on its knees.

It was to try to prevent this that central banks acted in unison earlier this month to offer “unlimited dollars” to European banks. This was followed quickly by “Operation Twist”, a new bond-buying scheme by the Federal Reserve, and talk of a new round of quantitative easing from the Bank of England.

When these measures failed to calm the markets, talk immediately switched to reinforcing the European Financial Stability Facility. There was much hysteria in the media about whether the Germans would vote to bail out the Greeks again. In fact, there is no new money for the EFSF - it is simply the confirmation of a previous bail-out already agreed by governments back in July.

The ripples of the crisis are being felt far outside the Western economies: emerging markets (including China) are facing a new credit crunch, with corporate bond issuance (companies selling bonds in return for funds to invest) in Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe falling by around 75% in the last three months<sup>4</sup>.



As September draws to a close, it is impossible to say whether the ruling class has managed to bring even a temporary stabilisation to the current situation. Even if they achieve this, the roots of the crisis remain unresolved and will continue to shake the foundations of a thoroughly decadent social system.

What we can be certain of is that the new measures, like all the policies that have been resorted to since the onset of the “credit crunch”, will not stop the crisis; they are designed to make the working class pay the price a piece at a time. Wages are

telegraph.co.uk/finance/financialcrisis/8795416/Debt-crunch-threatens-China-and-emerging-markets.html

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## November 30 Union preparations and the need for a workers' response

The trade unions and the Left are preparing to make the 30 November strike over pensions something big. TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber said that it would be "the biggest trade union mobilisation for a generation" as more than a dozen major unions prepared to ballot their members. More generally, the media consensus was that it could be the biggest strike since the 1926 General Strike. Similar things were said around the time of the 30 June strike which involved 750,000 workers. Now there are predictions for 3 million to be on strike on 30 November. The PCS union thinks it could be "the largest day of strike action in UK history."

And the unions say they are determined that this will not just be an isolated day. The big demonstration of 26 March was not accompanied by significant strike action. The 30 June strike was a one-off with only hazy plans for something to follow in the autumn. Union leaders are now painting a picture of a substantial campaign. Brian Stratton of the GMB has said "We are not talking about a day out and a bit of a protest. We are talking about something that is long, hard and dirty as well. This is going to require days of action, running through the winter into next year and right into the summer." Elsewhere he emphasised that "We are talking about throwing everything at it that we can, rolling into next summer. We are not just looking to nudge this along. We are assuming that this will be a huge set piece conflict running for a long time."

Not only demonstrations and strikes but occupations are also envisaged. At a meeting at the Labour Party conference the GMB leader Paul Kenny said "If they close a library I think we should occupy it. If they close a hospital I think we should occupy it. I believe in direct action. If I have to go to jail, I'm prepared to go to jail." He said much the same at the TUC conference announcing that "We'll give them the biggest campaign of civil disobedience their tiny little minds can ever imagine."

All this rhetoric and proposed activity shows how the unions in Britain are responding in the face of substantial and increasing unemployment, of wage freezes and wage cuts while inflation grows along with cuts in services, higher retirement age, reduced pensions and all the other attacks on living and working conditions from the Coalition and its Labour predecessors. Workers are angry and the unions are doing something. The trouble is the effect of the unions' actions is to divide workers and undermine their attempts to

fight.

For a start, while 30 November is being promoted as The Big One, there are other major union-organised demonstrations on different dates which already show an attempt by the unions to divide workers by sectors. On 9 November there's a big student demo. On 26 October seven education unions are staging a lobby of parliament.

Overall, whether acting together or separately, what the unions provide are just so many outlets for the anger of the working class, blind alleys leading nowhere.

A demonstration can be a rallying point for discussion and organisation. In the hands of the unions it's just an impotent procession from one place to another.

A strike can be an important moment in the organisation and spread of working class struggles. Mass meetings can be part of the process of beginning to realise what potential power organised workers can have. In the strait jacket of the unions a strike becomes a formality without any potential for further development. Those planned by the unions for this year and next are intended to sap workers' energies, provide a dead-end for militancy, and maybe be part of a movement for the election of a future Labour government.

Occupations can provide a focus for meetings in which all questions facing the working class can be discussed, and act as a base for organising the extension of the struggle to other workers. The intention of the unions is for the most militant workers to take part in occupations as just one part of the campaign to put pressure on the Coalition to reverse the irreversible reality of capitalist austerity.

The demonstrations and strikes proposed by the unions (and their leftist supporters) get more and more dramatic as anger and frustration grows in the working class. Workers still participate in the unions' great spectacles, but there is a growing dissatisfaction with union actions. At the end of every one of the recent big demos you could have met people who are frustrated with their 'day out and a bit of protest'. There's a growing sense that a big demo every three or four months is just an empty ritual. It will only be when workers begin to take struggles into their own hands that they will be able to defend their own interests. When assemblies discuss the needs of the struggle, when workers start to question the union framework and look to forming their own organisations, then there is the possibility for anger to be turned into something effective. **Car 29/9/11**

## Harsh sentences on rioters prepares the repression of workers' struggles

Following the riots in August the British judicial system swung into action. Prime Minister Cameron pledged that all would face the courts and those found guilty would face stiff prison sentences. Whether rioters or so-called 'organisers' or people sentenced for receiving stolen goods or those found guilty of inciting rioting on Facebook, they could all expect to feel the full force of the law.

In the days after the riots, the police, often in dawn raids, arrested over 2700 people, the majority of whom were refused bail. Impromptu courts were set up, with some sitting all through the night.

A 'no holds barred' directive gave courts licence to imprison regardless of any previous government guidelines.

A month after the riots the *Guardian* (5/9/11) revealed that "More than 90% of the cases being sentenced at crown court are resulting in jail terms, compared with an average rate for custodial sentences of 46%. Data previously released by the Ministry of Justice revealed that 44.6% of rioters sentenced at magistrate courts were sent to

prison, almost four times the typical custody rate of 12.3% ...Magistrates courts have been delivering sentences about 25% longer than average."

The reason that these harsh sentences have been meted out is not primarily because the bourgeoisie believes that it will discourage future rioting, arson and looting, nor because the ruling class is having a fit of vindictiveness. The biggest threat to the rule of the capitalist class comes from the working class. In the future the bourgeoisie wants to know that it has at its disposal every possible repressive measure as part of its armoury against workers' struggles. The material situation of the working class has been so degraded that the bourgeoisie knows that future social disorder will not be limited to rioting but will involve conflict with the only class that can threaten its position. **Melmoth 1/9/11**

## Labour Party 'Social democracy' is still anti-working class

The operation that Ed Miliband had to tackle a deviated septum in his nose has not altered the nasal quality of his speech. The content of his speeches has not changed much either since he was elected Labour leader last year. Then we said (*WR* 338) that his lack of political baggage allowed him to "be all things to all people, and gives him a great deal of room for manoeuvre if the political and economic situation gets more difficult."

In attracting criticism from both Right and Left at the recent Labour Party Conference, he's probably achieved what he wanted. The *Daily Mail* (26/9/11) said "he failed to condemn coordinated strike action planned for November 30 – repeatedly suggesting it was up to the Government to give ground". As the *Sun* (26/9/11) put it, "Union leaders' joy as Mili goes soft on strikes." From the *Left Socialist Worker* (1/10/11) attacked him for calling for "cooperation not conflict in the workplace" and saying that "All parties must be pro-business today." And when he spoke to the TUC Conference he was booed and heckled because of his opposition to the 30 June strike.

Miliband is in a potentially difficult position. He can't criticise Coalition cuts with any conviction because they're in continuity with Labour policies. Some are saying that New Labour was finished with the collapse of Lehman Brothers. But, apart from saying he's not Brown or Blair, what can a Labour leader now do? It would be quite a feat to find something new to offer.

What is in fact on offer is a revival of old fashioned social democracy. Seumas Milne of the *Guardian* (28/9/11) was particularly impressed. "There's no question who was in Miliband's frame: the bankers and vested interests of the corporate world, rigged markets, rip-off energy

conglomerates, 'cosy cartels' that control executive pay, and the companies so powerful 'they can get away with anything'. But more importantly, he blamed the 'economic system' that governments of both main parties have overseen for decades – and called for a 'new economy' that rewarded 'producers' not 'predators', and 'wealth creators' instead of 'asset strippers'."

This is a traditional position for Labour to take. There's opposition to the 'excesses' of capitalism's 'unacceptable face', and support for healthy 'wealth creation.' At times during its party conference there was talk of 'Labour values.' No one spelt out whether this meant the rich getting richer and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as happened under Blair and Brown. But now they've put this behind them and can oppose the Coalition and 'casino capitalism' while still showing they could be a responsible bourgeois government when called upon.

At a time when the working class is increasingly angry with the austerity measures dished out by the bourgeoisie the unions have to put forward their 'fighting' side, and so it's to be expected that there will be divisions in the 'Labour family'. There are few left-wing voices in the Labour Party, so the unions have a responsibility for putting forward a 'real alternative' to the current government. For the future, there's a possibility that the LibDem vote might collapse at a future election through association with the current regime. Labour would stand to gain from this. And if the modest Miliband project is unsuccessful then Yvette Cooper is already being touted as the next Labour leader. However Labour is led it will continue to try and play an effective role for British capitalism. **Car 30/9/11**

## Electricians' actions hold the promise of class unity

The world economic crisis has hit the construction industry very hard. The Office of National Statistics Bulletin for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2011 says that the total volume of new orders for building contracts is at their lowest level since 1980. Faced with this slow-down, one of the major UK Construction companies, Balfour Beatty Engineering, issued 90 day notices of termination to some 890 employees on the 14<sup>th</sup> September. 7 other major electrical contractors also announced their intention to withdraw from the national industry agreement (the Joint Industry Board, JIB), proposing to split electricians from one grade – where they're paid £16.25 per hour – into 3 grades ranging from £10.50 to £14 per hour. For those downgraded to £10.50 this will amount to a 35% pay cut.

There was an immediate reaction from the workforce, with co-ordinated unofficial action taking place at several major construction sites across the UK, including the Olympic park, Lindsey oil refinery, the Tyne Tunnel, Farringdon Station and the Commonwealth Games stadium. So far, this has included actions such as blocking entrances to building sites, an invasion of the Farringdon Station site and a noisy demonstration inside Kings Cross station.

At all these actions there have been passionate speeches not only about present and past building workers' struggles, but the situation facing all workers. After all there is little doubt more and more of us are also going to be faced not only with massive redundancies, but with out-and-out pay cuts. The electricians have welcomed the participation of other workers in these actions, and there have been calls to join the public sector strikes planned for 30 November.

These examples of direct, collective action have already had an impact on the bosses. Since the fight began, one of the 7 contractors pulled back from its stated intention and has said it will 'hon-

our' the existing JIB contracts.

These actions have gone ahead despite the lack of official response from the national apparatus of UNITE, which now 'represents' the majority of the workers involved. In the demonstrations electricians have called for an immediate national ballot and have openly criticised the apparent sluggishness of the union leaders.

The question is though: if workers can organise so much without the national leadership, why waste time calling on them to act on their behalf? What's needed is not more 'co-ordination' from above, which is invariably designed to paralyse real militancy, but more direct participation from below, with real decision-making not in the hands of the local union structure, but of general assemblies of strikers, with strike committees responsible only to the assemblies.

In fact, the electricians have already taken some vital steps forward from 'traditional' ways of organising, where the division into different unions keeps workers divided and therefore weak. Inspired by the example of taking over public spaces that has spread from Egypt to Spain, Greece, Israel and elsewhere, the electricians' actions create the possibility of street assemblies where all divisions break down and workers, unemployed, the retired, students and others can take part in the debate about spreading the struggle. **Graham 1/10/11**



# The movement of the 'Indignados': A report of the demonstrations in Madrid at the end of July

The movement of the 'Indignados' in Spain provides us with some rich lessons. It shows a gradual rise in the resistance of the exploited faced with the relentless deterioration of their living conditions, and a deepening reflection about how to struggle, how to respond collectively to the economic crisis and the attacks of Capital. The movement has moreover seen expressions across Europe, notably in Greece, but also further afield, in countries like Israel and in Chile.

And the recent events at the end of July have confirmed this deep social discontent and the maturation of working class consciousness. Indeed, while the international media have largely ignored the events that hit Madrid at the heart of the summer, preferring to shine their spotlight on the removal of the remaining camps of protesters and proclaiming the death of the movement, the militants of the ICC who were present in the square have found instead that the tens of thousands of 'Indignados' who occupied the streets were motivated by a genuine desire to continue the struggle, knowing that the crisis would only create further havoc and that the struggle would of necessity resume. But it was above all the quality of discussions about the real nature of bourgeois democracy, the trap of reformism, sabotage of the movement by "Real Democracy Ya" (DRY), the importance of the assembly debates... that have truly excited our comrades. They immediately reported their intervention to all the militants of the ICC around the world to inform them of what they had witnessed and experienced. We are publishing this text below as it is, almost in its entirety, which explains its very direct and sometimes telegram-like style.

## On the rallies in Madrid in July

**Friday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>:** The first columns of marching workers arrived from the working class towns on the outskirts of Madrid. According to many accounts, the arrival of these marchers resulted in massive assemblies and people being very happy together; they hugged, sang and discussed animatedly.

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup>:** Plaza Puerta del Sol and the surrounding streets were occupied. Maybe 10,000 or more, far more than was reported by the press and TV who spoke only of "hundreds of the Indignados". We were there and we distributed our supplement<sup>1</sup>. It was very well received. Small groups gathered around us. What was striking was the desire of people to talk and how they expressed themselves spontaneously against capitalism and in favour of the assemblies as the most valuable tool. The general assembly began after 10 o'clock at night and was devoted entirely to the accounts from the marches. There were some very moving moments as the speakers were very excited and almost all spoke of revolution, of denouncing the system, of being radical (in the sense "going to the roots of the problem" as one of them said).

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup>:** In the morning in Retiro Park, the assemblies were devoted to specific themes: international coordination, national coordination, political action, using the web ... In the international coordination assembly there were individuals from Italy, Greece, Tunisia, France and also some young Spanish expatriates. A 'European Day of Indignados' was proposed and there were also two interventions talking about a World Day, with the axis being on "the fight against the cuts in social spending that is taking place everywhere today." One of us intervened to insist on the fact that more and more people are "in the same boat". Someone else took up an initiative which arose in Valencia for an "international day of debate on the 15M" in which collectives would be invited not only from Spain but from other countries too<sup>2</sup>. This initiative was given explicit support by the moderator

of the assembly.

That said, in the general assembly that followed, there was some manipulation. The focus was solely on the reports from each of the "themed" assemblies, preventing any unscheduled interventions. In addition, the reports from the speakers were too long. The report from the International Coordinating Committee was relegated to last place when many participants had already left. The spokesperson - who we hadn't seen in the committee - didn't say anything about the proposed day and we weren't able to intervene to rectify this.

In the afternoon there was a massive demonstration (100,000 people). There was a lively atmosphere; we succeeded in distributing our press and there were many discussions. At a given point, the police erected a roadblock in the Paseo de La Castellana. Instead of choosing confrontation, the demonstrators divided themselves onto several adjacent streets and then regrouped, encircling the police. The police plan was made to look ridiculous as they found themselves surrounded on all sides with no possibility of reacting<sup>3</sup>.

In the evening there was an assembly dedicated to discussing "state and economy." A Catalan who seemed to clearly defend the positions of ATTAC<sup>4</sup>, made a very long speech of 30 minutes, in which he said we needed a "cooperative system", that the state was "disappearing" under the weight of the "markets" and also that nations were being "crushed". He suggested that the state and the nation were "revolutionary alternatives to capitalism today, that defending the state and the nation is revolutionary today." A number of interventions, including ours, vigorously opposed these views.

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup>:** There was a forum discussing several topics: ecology, feminism, politics, cooperatives. We had arranged a table for selling the press and decided to participate in one of these forums. We chose the one on *For or against a new constitution*. A woman gave a long presentation. She spoke about a development of "representative" democracy towards a "participatory" democracy that the assemblies were spearheading. There should be assemblies for everything: to select the candidates of the political parties, to elect the union leaders, to approve the municipal budgets ... It would be, in her words, "a new order, an order of assemblies". All this, she presented as a new contribution to "political science" (sic) ...

The assembly wasn't impressed by this "discovery". One young person said frankly that the problem was capitalism and that it was impossible to "reform" it or "democratise" it. Another spoke of revolution and wanted to return to the teachings of Lenin to form a revolutionary party. This provoked the anger of an anarchist who, while defending the need to destroy the state and establish the power of the assemblies (or, he added, Soviets) said that Lenin wanted to form a party without workers, with only intellectuals. Another speaker said that we need a revolutionary party which does not participate in the parliamentary or electoral game, but "only accepts the law of the assemblies."

Other interventions denounced the proposed new constitution. "We were wrong in 1978. Why fall into the same error today?" A youth from Ciudad Real spoke about "dual power": the power of the assemblies and the power of "so-called democracy" and he added that we should have "a strategy to achieve the triumph of the former." One girl expressed her thoughts thus: "They want to combine assemblies and constitution, but this is impossible, the assemblies have nothing to do with the constitution, they stand in total opposition to it". Some interventions were made in defense of a new constitution, but a guy who at first read a

long text on a "draft new constitution provided by a group from Granada" came back in a second intervention to say that he was only speaking on behalf of the group, but that he preferred "the power of the assemblies". Interventions on the impossibility of reforming capitalism were loudly applauded as was the need to talk not about democracy in general but about the state. One of our comrades responded by saying that the state was the organ of the ruling class, that it was its repressive and bureaucratic apparatus with its troops, its police, its courts and its prisons, and all hidden by the democratic facade: "We, the exploited, have nothing but the assemblies to unify us, to enable us to think collectively and to make decisions together; the power of the assemblies - even if it is a long struggle - is not a utopia if this fight is part of a world-wide process." Several people came to congratulate us for this intervention.

Sensing that the wind was turning, the Catalan from the previous day changed his tune: he was in favour of "all the power to the assemblies" and for a "world government" and that "in this context, we would have enough force to establish new constitutions" (sic). A "marxist" speech, this? Maybe, but in the "Groucho tendency"<sup>5</sup>!

In the afternoon we went to Móstoles - an industrial town on the outskirts of Madrid - to visit the coordination of the assemblies of the South, the one that called the demonstration on June 19<sup>th</sup>. This was a very combative collective that had participated in 15M with a class approach. A youth who was a very active participant expressed his joy about the 15M movement and discussed with us the analysis he had made of it: the denunciation of democracy, the shenanigans of DRY on which he made some very specific points, the revolutionary perspective, the awakening of the proletariat, the trap of immediatism, the need to develop consciousness ... The only point on which he disagreed with us was the analysis of Spain in 1936 which he saw as a self-management revolution. He was very happy to welcome us and we decided we would send our press to this location; he was also going to propose to the collective that it should participate in the meeting in Valencia in October.

## Some thoughts

These three days were very intense, showing a movement of great depth.

It seems that there is still a large amount of discontent within the movement but there are other important aspects too: a desire to discuss and clarify, a sense of togetherness, a continual search for links ...

From the beginning, DRY and its satellites have done their best to keep the movement inside the straitjacket of a series of "specific demands" - the famous catalogue of democratic demands. There was always muted resistance in a large section and open opposition from a large minority.

However, two months have passed and "the confrontation between classes" has not yet come about<sup>6</sup>. Is this a weakness? Is it a sign that the movement is running out of steam? If we review the reasons why class movements have ended in recent decades, we see that one of the causes is the physical defeat but the most common cause was the ideological defeat. Led away from its class terrain, the class has found itself locked in a combat with no way forward, which eventually led to deep demoralisation. But the exhaustion of the movement in France in autumn 2010 was not exactly a result of any of these factors. It was mainly due to the fact that the government would not give way despite the massive protest and, faced with that, it was difficult for the core of the assemblies to confront the unions. What we find in Spain, is a characteristic that's even more "original" and certainly still a bit disorienting for some politicised minorities but also for the bourgeoisie itself: the movement avoids a direct confrontation and de-

5. Groucho Marx said: "These are my principles, and if you don't like them ... well, I have others."

6. As we explained in the editorial of *International Review* 146, the confrontation between the classes was present from the start but not explicitly on a political or economic terrain but more at what we might call the "subjective" level: the development of consciousness, solidarity, building a network of collective action.

votes itself to reflection and to developing links and solidarity ... We could say that the movement prefers to prepare for future confrontations by "building up its forces."

On the one hand, a degree of consciousness is emerging of the huge stakes on the immediate horizon<sup>7</sup>. But there is also a degree of consciousness of the class's own weaknesses, an awareness of its lack of confidence in itself, the need to rediscover its class identity, in short, a recognition of the lack of maturity in being able to react to the ongoing situation of brutal attacks and deteriorating living standards.

In this context, this attempt to "build up its forces" also shows a certain foresight. This is probably a necessary and inevitable phase in a period in which the perspective of widespread class confrontations is looming. The movement of the 15M renewed and developed a whole range of features that were present in embryonic form in the movement in 2006 against the CPE: assemblies, the emergence of a new generation, giving specific attention to ethical and subjective factors, wanting to establish new links, starting a conscious battle ...

**Reflecting on the days in Madrid**, a series of observations are striking:

- people spoke quite freely about "revolution", because they saw "the system" as the problem;
- "all power to the assemblies" emerged from the ranks of a small minority and became more widespread and popular<sup>8</sup>.
- The push for the "international expansion" of the assemblies was quite remarkable, as is indicated by growing support for a proposal for a "world day of assemblies."

It's true that this was all taking place in the midst of great confusion. All sorts of things were added to the cocktail of "revolution": self-management, cooperatives, nationalisation of the banks ... On internationalisation, we had a conversation with a young Valencian: he reproached us for our scathing denunciations of DRY and pointed to the proposal from DRY for a "European day of struggle that could become worldwide" as evidence against this. At the same time, he added: "I do have a problem with the agenda for that day. If the goal is democracy, why is it that no country has a true democracy?"

The proletariat suffers from the weight of the dominant ideology with DRY and other bourgeois forces<sup>9</sup> present in the assemblies supported by the politicians and the media. At the same time the communist minorities are small in size and influence. In this context how can we not expect a debate taking place in the midst of enormous confusion with a proliferation of the most diverse theories and the most ridiculous proposals? Consciousness has to forge a way through this chaotic and dizzying situation.

## The proletarian collectives

In the assemblies, we saw that DRY - the tentacle of the state in our midst - was confronted with muted resistance and by an increasingly active minority<sup>10</sup>. We should differentiate its two parts: the first one, much larger than anyone would imagine, passively resisted DRY's proposals, let it go ahead, not daring to remove it from its lead-

7. There are enormous attacks - particularly the many redundancies in the health and education sectors - that began at the end of September (in Catalonia, they've already happened)

8. In Rua Alcalá, very close to the Cortes (Parliament) there is graffiti which says: "All power to the assemblies". Indeed the attempt to write this message attracted the attention of the "commission of respect" - a kind of domestic police created by DRY - which considered such writing "too violent" and surrounded the three "guilty" youths but a large group of protesters surrounded these "officials" to ask them to let the youths "express themselves".

9. Alongside DRY there is IU (United Left, a front created by the Stalinists), UPYD (a liberal centre party), MPPC (a republican movement), and several leftist groups, including the Trotskyists.

10. Graffiti appeared in Valencia proclaiming "DRY does not represent us", which turns against DRY one of its own slogans that it used widely against the politicians: "They do not represent us."

1. This includes extracts from the editorial of the *International Review* 146 that provided a balance sheet of the "15M movement" (available on our website).

2. In Valencia there was an "Assembly of Equals" regrouping 5 collectives with a strong anarchist component. A collective of youths has notably proposed holding a day of debate on the 15M in September or October. We supported this proposal by adding the possibility of inviting collectives from outside Spain, which was approved. In our opinion this is an important initiative.

3. The sensitivity to repression and the will to respond massively are still very alive in the movement. On July 27<sup>th</sup>, there was a protest outside the parliament and the police attacked the participants. That afternoon, a spontaneous demonstration of solidarity took place bringing together 2000 people who went through the city centre shouting "If you attack one of us, you attack all of us!"

4. Association pour la Taxation des Transactions Financières et l'Aide aux Citoyens ("Association for a tax on financial transactions and aid to citizens")



# The answer is not financial regulation but overthrowing capitalism

"There's going to be a crash and it will be a hard one" "Absolutely no one believes in the rescue plans. They know that the market is screwed and the stock exchange is finished". "Traders don't give a damn about how the economy can be saved; our job is to make money in this situation". "Every night I dream of a new recession". "In 1929 a few people made money from the crash; today everyone can do it, not just the elites". "This economic crisis is like a cancer". "Prepare yourselves! It's not the moment to hope that the government will solve the problem. Governments don't rule the world. Goldman Sachs rules the world. This bank doesn't care about rescue plans". "I predict that in less than 12 months the savings of millions of people are going to vanish and that's just the beginning". These are all from a talk on the BBC on 26 September by the London trader Alessio Rastani. This video has since created a real buzz on the internet<sup>1</sup>.

Obviously we agree with the dark perspective drawn up by this economist. Without trying to make equally precise predictions, we can still affirm without hesitation that capitalism is going to continue its nosedive, that the crisis will get worse and more devastating, and that a growing part of humanity is going to suffer the consequences.

The declaration by Alessio Rastani is feeding one of the biggest lies of recent years: that the planet is in trouble because of finance, and only because of finance: "It's Goldman Sachs that rules the world". And all the voices of the left, of the extreme left, of the 'anti-globalisation' brigade join the chorus: 'This is awful! Here is the cause of all our troubles. We have to take back control of the economy. We have to put limits on the banks and on speculation. We have to fight for a stronger and more humane state!' This kind of talk has been going on non-stop since the collapse of the US banking giant Lehman Brothers in 2008. Today, even part of the classical right wing has bought into this 'radical' critique of 'wild' finance, calling for a more moral approach and for a greater role for the state. All this propaganda is nothing but a desperate ideological smokescreen to hide the real causes of the contemporary cataclysm: the historic bankruptcy of capitalism. This is not a matter of nuances or terminology. Accusing neo-liberalism and accusing capitalism are fundamentally different. On the one hand, you have the illusion that this system of exploitation can be reformed. On the other hand you have the understanding that capitalism has no future, that it has to be destroyed from top to bottom and replaced by a new society. We can therefore understand why the ruling class, its media and its experts use up so much energy pointing the finger at the irresponsibility of finance and blaming it for all the current economic ills: they are trying to divert attention from the system, to derail all the reflection going on about the need for a radical change, i.e. for a revolution.

## 'It's the financial traders' fault' or, the search for scapegoats

For the last four years, each stock market crash has been accompanied by a tale of dodgy trading. In January 2008, the Jerome Kirviel scandal hit the headlines. He was found responsible for the fiasco at the French bank Société Générale after losing 4.82 billion euros through bad investments. The real reason for this crisis, the housing bubble in the US, was pushed into the background. In December 2008, the investor Bernard Madoff was investigated for a 65 billion dollar fraud. He became the biggest crook of all time, which conveniently distracted attention from the downfall of the US giant Lehman Brothers. In September 2011, the trader Kweku Adoboli at the Swiss bank UBS was accused of a 2.3 billion dollar fraud. This affair, 'by chance', came to light when the world economy was again in full disarray.

Obviously, everyone knows that these individuals are just scapegoats. The strings being pulled by the banks to justify their own crimes are just a bit too thick not to be noticed. But the intense media propaganda does make it possible to focus everyone's attention on the rotten world of high finance. The image of these speculating sharks is being used to fill our heads and fog our thoughts.

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-15059135>

Let's step back and think for a moment: how can these various events in themselves explain why the world economy is on the brink of collapse? However revolting these billion dollar frauds may be at a time when millions are dying of hunger all over the world, however cynical and shameful the words of Alessio Rastani when he says he hopes that he can get rich by speculating on stock market crashes, none of this explains the scale of the world economic crisis which today is hitting every sector and every country. The capitalists, whether they are bankers or captains of industry, have always sought for the maximum of profit without the slightest concern for the welfare of humanity. None of this is new. From its inception, capitalism has always been a system of inhuman exploitation. The barbaric and bloody plunder of Africa and Asia in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries is tragic proof of that. The kleptocracy of the traders and the bankers therefore tells us nothing about the current crisis. If crooked financial dealings are now resulting in colossal losses and sometimes threaten to tip banks over the edge, it's really a result of the fragility brought about by the crisis and not the other way round. If, for example, Lehman Brothers went bust in 2008 it wasn't because of its irresponsible investment policies but because the American housing market collapsed in the summer of 2007 and because this bank found itself holding masses of valueless debts. With the subprime crisis, the households of America were shown to be insolvent and the loans given to them would never be repaid.

## 'It's the fault of the credit rating agencies' or, blaming the thermometer for the fever

The credit ratings agencies are also under fire. At the end of 2007, they were accused of incompetence because they neglected the weight of the sovereign debts of states. Today they are being accused of the opposite, of giving too much emphasis to sovereign debt in the Eurozone (for Moody's) and the USA (for Standard and Poor's).

It is true that these agencies have particular interests, that their judgement is not neutral. The Chinese ratings agencies were the first to downgrade the creditworthiness of the American state, and the American agencies are more severe towards Europe than towards their own country. And it's true that with each downgrade, the financiers seized the opportunity to speculate, further accelerating the deterioration of the economic situation. The specialists can then talk about 'self-fulfilling prophecies'.

But the reality is that all these agencies completely underestimate the gravity of the situation: the ratings they hand out are far too high in relation to the real capacity of the banks, the enterprises, and certain states to repay their debts. It's in the interest of these agencies not to be too critical of the economic essentials because that would create panic, and the world economy is the branch they are all sitting on. When they downgrade the ratings, it's in order to maintain a minimum of credibility. To totally deny the seriousness of the situation facing the world economy would be grotesque and no one would believe them: from the standpoint of the ruling class, it is more intelligent to recognise certain weaknesses in order to cover up the basic problems of the system. All those who are currently blaming the ratings agencies are well aware of this. If they complain about the quality of the thermometer, it is to prevent us thinking about the strange illness affecting world capitalism, out of fear of admitting that the illness is incurable and is getting worse.

## 'It's the fault of finance' or, confusing the symptom with the disease

The criticisms of the traders and the ratings agencies is part of much bigger propaganda campaign about the madness and hypertrophy of the financial sector. As always, this lying ideology is based on a grain of truth; it cannot be denied that in the last few decades the world of finance has indeed become an obese and increasingly irrational monstrosity.

Proof is legion. In 2008, the sum total of global financial transactions rose to 2,200,000 billion

dollars, as against a world GNP of 55,000 billion<sup>2</sup>. The speculative economy is therefore around 40 times bigger than the so-called 'real' economy! And these billions have over the years been invested in increasingly crazy and self-destructive ways. One edifying example: the short sale mechanism. What is this about? "In the short sale mechanism, we begin by selling an asset which we don't possess in order to buy it back later on. The aim of this trick is obviously to sell an asset at a certain price and buy it back at a lower price in order to pocket the difference. As we see, the mechanism is the complete opposite of buying something and then selling it"<sup>3</sup>.

Concretely, short selling involves a huge flow of speculative finance around certain assets, betting on a fall in their price, and this can sometimes lead to the collapse of the targeted asset. This has now become a scandal and a lot of economists and politicians even tell us that this is the main problem, THE cause of the bankruptcy of Greece or the fall of the euro. Their solution is therefore simple: forbid short selling and all will go well in the best of all possible worlds. It's true that short selling is utter madness and that it is accelerating the destruction of whole swathes of the economy. But that's the point: it is merely 'accelerating' and is not the cause. You need a raging economic crisis in the first place for such deals to be so profitable. The fact that the capitalists are gambling not on a rise in the market but on its fall shows how little trust they have in the future of the world economy. This is also why there are less and less long-term, stable investments: investors are out for a killing in the very short term, without any concern for the longevity of enterprises and especially of factories, since there are almost no industrial sectors than can ensure long term profits. And here, finally, we are getting to the heart of the problem: the so-called 'real' or 'traditional' economy' has been in a mess for decades. Capital is in flight from this sphere because it is less and less profitable. The world economy is saturated and commodities can't be sold, the factories are not producing and accumulating. Result, the capitalists invest their money in speculation, the 'virtual' economy. Hence the hypertrophy of finance, which is just a symptom of the incurable disease of capitalism: overproduction.

## 'It's the fault of neo-liberalism' or, how to tie the exploited to the state

Those who see the problem as neo-liberalism also agree that the real economy is in deep trouble. But they don't for one moment attribute this to the impossibility of capitalism to go on developing. They deny that the system has become decadent and is in its death agony. The anti-globalisation ideologists blame the destruction of industry since the 1960s on bad political choices and thus on neo-liberal ideology. For them as for our trader Alessio Rastani, "it's Goldman Sachs which rules the world". So they fight for more state, more regulation, more social policies. Beginning from the critique of neo-liberalism, they come up with a new mirage to lead us on: statism. "With more state control over finances, we can build a new economy, more social and more prosperous".

But a bit more state won't make it possible to resolve capitalism's economic problems. Let's say it again: what undermines this system is its tendency to produce more commodities than the markets can absorb. For decades, they have managed to avoid the paralysis of the economy by creating an artificial market based on debt. In other words, since the 1960s capitalism has been living on credit. This is why, today, households, companies, banks and states are all groaning under a vast mountain of debts and why the current recession is called the 'credit crisis'. Now, since 2008, and the failure of Lehman Brothers, what have the states been doing via their central banks, in particular the Fed and the European Central Bank? They have been injecting billions of dollars to prevent further bankruptcies. And where do these billions come from? From new debts! All they are doing is displacing private debt onto the public sphere,

2. [http://www.jacquesbelinas.com/index\\_files/Page3236.htm](http://www.jacquesbelinas.com/index_files/Page3236.htm)

3. [http://www.abcbourse.com/apprendre/1\\_vad.html](http://www.abcbourse.com/apprendre/1_vad.html)

so preparing the ground for bankruptcies of entire states, as we are already seeing with Greece. The economic storms that lie ahead threaten to be of unprecedented violence<sup>4</sup>.

'But if it can't control the crisis, the state could at least protect us and be more social' says the whole chorus of the left. This is to forget that the state has always been the worst of bosses. Nationalisations have never been good news for the workers. After the Second World War, the big wave of nationalisations had the aim of reviving the apparatus of production that had been destroyed in the war, and were accompanied by a much intensified pace of work. At the time, Thorez, the general secretary of the French Communist Party and vice-president of the De Gaulle government, launched his famous appeal to the working class of France, especially the workers of the nationalised enterprises: "If miners die at their posts, their wives will replace them"; or again: "pull in your belts for national reconstruction" and "strikes are a weapon of the trusts". Welcome to the wonderful world of the nationalised enterprise! There is nothing unexpected or surprising in all this. Since the experience of the Paris Commune in 1871, communist revolutionaries have always insisted on the viscerally anti-working class function of the state: "The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more it actually becomes the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage workers - proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head". Friedrich Engels wrote these lines in 1878, which showed that even at that time the state was beginning to spread its tentacles to the whole of society, to take over the whole of the national economy, public enterprises as well as the big private firms. Since then, state capitalism has only got stronger: each national bourgeoisie is ranged behind its state to wage the merciless commercial war that goes on between all countries.

## 'The BRICS will save us', or praying for an economic miracle

Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (the BRICS) have in the last few years shown a remarkable degree of economic success. China in particular is now seen as the world's second biggest economic power, and many think it will soon dethrone the USA. This flamboyant achievement has led economists to hope that this group of countries could become the new locomotive of the world economy, just like the USA after the Second World War. Recently, given the risk of the Eurozone exploding as a result of the sovereign debt crisis, China has even proposed partly filling Italy's coffers. The anti-globalisation crew see a reason for rejoicing here: since they argue that the American supremacy of neo-liberalism is the worst of all scourges, the rise of the BRICS will result in a more balanced, fairer world. This hope in the development of the BRICS, shared by the big bourgeoisie and the 'anti-capitalists', is not only comical: it also shows how deeply they are attached to the capitalist world.

This hope is going to be dashed. There's a touch of déjà-vu about this 'economic miracle' business. Argentina and the Asian tigers in the 80s and 90s, or, more recently, Ireland, Spain and Iceland, were all at various times put forward as 'economic miracles'. And like all miracles it turned out to be a con. All these countries owed their rapid growth to unbridled debt. They therefore all came to the same sticky end: recession and bankruptcy. It will be the same for the BRICS. Already there is growing concern about the level of debt in the Chinese provinces and about the rise of inflation. The president of the sovereign fund China Investment Corp, Gao Xiping, has recently said that "we are not saviours. We have to save ourselves". It couldn't be put more clearly!

4. The idea of 'more Europe' or 'more world government' is yet another dead-end. Whether they act alone or with others, states have no real and lasting solution. Coming together might allow them to slow down the advance of the crisis just as their divisions accelerate it.

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## The deeper the crisis, the more they attack our living standards

brought down by inflation and increased taxes, or by open pay cuts as faced by electricians in Britain today; state services are cut, threatening hundreds of thousands of jobs.

For the working class, there is no escape from the crisis, only the necessity to defend ourselves, to struggle. In Egypt, where workers in several sectors have taken strike action (see page 5); in Spain, with the movement of the Indignados (page 3); in Britain with the electricians' struggle (page 2), we see workers starting to develop their struggles. These struggles are vital experiences that hold the promise for the future – that the working class will find the only way out of this intractable crisis through an intractable struggle to end this crisis-ridden, dead-end system once and for all. **Ishamael 30/9/11**

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## The truth is that capitalism has no solution and no future

Capitalism can no longer be reformed. To be a realist, you have to admit that only the revolution can prevent catastrophe. Capitalism, like slavery and serfdom before it, is a system of exploitation which is condemned to disappear. Having developed and expanded for over two hundred years, above all in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, having conquered the planet, capitalism entered loudly into its period of decline when it unleashed the First World War. The Great Depression of the 1930s, then the terrible slaughter of the Second World War, confirmed the obsolescence of this system and the necessity to put an end to it if humanity is to survive. But from the 1950s on there have not been crises as violent as the one in 1929. The bourgeoisie has learned how to limit the damage and revive the economy, which has left many believing that today's crisis is yet another in a series of downturns and that growth will once again come back, as it has done over the last 60 or so years. In reality, the successive recessions of 1967, 1970-71, 1974-75, 1991-93, 1997-98 (in Asia) and 2001-2002 merely paved the way for today's drama. Each time the bourgeoisie only managed to get the world economy going again by opening up the sluice-gates of credit. It has never succeeded in getting to the root of the problem: chronic overproduction. All it has done is put off the day of reckoning by the resort to credit and today the system is suffocating under the weight of all this debt. No sector, no state is spared. This headlong plunge into debt is reaching its limits. Does this mean that the economy is going to grind to a total halt? Obviously not. The bourgeoisie will debate the options it has before it, which boil down to a choice between cholera and the plague: draconian austerity or a monetary re-launch. The first leads to brutal recession, the second to uncontrollable inflation.

From now on, the alternation between short phases of recession and long periods of revival financed by credit is behind us: unemployment is going to explode and poverty and barbarism are going to spread dramatically. If there are phases of recovery (as in 2010), they will be no more than very fleeting gasps of air followed by new economic disasters. All those who claim the contrary are a bit like the suicide who jumped from the top of the Empire State Building and at each stage of his descent declared that 'it's all going well so far'. Let's not forget that at the beginning of the Great Depression, US president Hoover also told us that "prosperity is just around the corner". The only uncertainty is what will be the fate of humanity. Will it go down with capitalism? Or will it be able to construct a new world of solidarity and mutual aid, without classes or state, exploitation or profit? As Frederick Engels wrote more than a century ago: "bourgeois society is faced with a dilemma: transition to socialism or a relapse into barbarism". The key to this future is in the hands of the working class, of its struggles uniting workers, the unemployed, the retired and young people in precarious jobs. **Pawel 29/9/11**

## ICC online

### War and famine in the Horn of Africa

Article arguing that there is nothing 'natural' about the famine facing millions in the Horn of Africa

### Solidarity with striking Verizon workers

From the ICC's US section, written on the basis of discussion with striking workers

### Change of regime in West Bengal: a mystification of change!

Article from the ICC's section in India, exposing the emptiness of the idea that elections can change anything for the working class.

### Drug trafficking and the decomposition of capitalism

Article written by the ICC's Mexican section, showing the intimate relationship between the murderous drug mafias and an equally murderous capitalist state.

### Marxism and science: Podcast with Chris Knight

During the ICC's 19th Congress, the anthropologist Chris Knight took some time out for a wide-ranging discussion around his theory of the origins of human culture. We have recorded the discussion and are publishing it here as our first Podcast.

## From the ICC's forum

### 'Occupy Wall Street protests' thread

"...So back in June at the beginning of M15 and before that even I've been wondering if a "Tahrir moment" would ever materialize here. Back in August, I got my answer:

*I've been following the Occupy Wall St. stuff very closely since day one. In my heart I have a great feeling about it, in my mind - not quite as much, but close. Personally I see a strong proletarian character arising from these occupations, here's why.*

*Check this out (<http://youtu.be/Ccazpyz0RyQ>) as well as this (<http://www.occupytogether.org>). I've never seen anything spread this quickly and spontaneously but bear with me that's not what is so convincing to me.*

*There is some seriously critical and pervasive thought processes flying around in the air right now. Who are they critical of? The "1%". Anti-authoritarian ("tackle the guy with the megaphone" etc). Just watch the live stream (<http://www.livestream.com/globalrevolution>) you can see for yourself the things happening.*

*On the 24th I found a facebook page called OccupyNC. At first there were under 40. After meeting the people who started the page (a group of single mothers) they enrolled me as an admin and I decided to intervene, at a personal level. As I'm writing this we're currently at 140 people who are willing to come down and support the occupation physically."*

**en.internationalism.org**

## New strike wave in Egypt

The assemblies in Cairo's Tahrir Square at the beginning of the year, in the period before the departure of President Mubarak, inspired subsequent assemblies and protests in Spain, then Greece, Israel, and most recently, in occupations and assemblies in cities across the US. However, the most important force in the movement in Egypt was the working class, the decisive factor in the removal of Mubarak. Strikes across the country on the 8th, 9th and 10th February showed the strength of the working class.

This was not a revolution, as the army has remained firmly in charge of the country ever since, doing everything that would be expected from a repressive state, including the introduction of a law banning strikes. But the workers were not crushed, as has most recently been shown in a new wave of strikes from the beginning of September.

There have been strikes of tens of thousands of textile workers in a number of locations. There have been strikes by a large proportion of 100,000 doctors. In about half of Egypt's hospitals some 200,000 health technicians have been on strike. Some 4,000 dockworkers struck in a port on the Suez Canal. More than 50% of the country's 1.7 million teachers have been on strike. This, their first national strike since 1951, has also involved a number of occupations of government buildings. In Cairo 45,000 bus drivers, mechanics and ticket collectors have been on strike. Some joined teachers' protests at the cabinet headquarters.

Typically the strikes have been over the concessions that were made in February and March not being subsequently upheld by the bourgeoisie. *Al-Masry Al-Youm* (15/9/11) headlined with "Unfulfilled economic and political demands keep Egypt's labourers furious" and wrote "the recent resurgence of widespread strikes, analysts say, reflect a deep disillusionment with the democratic transition process, with workers feeling more and more that improving their economic and political conditions were but hollow promises from the revolution." Material conditions are at the heart of the moment with incomes falling behind inflation. Food prices, for example, are up 80% since January.

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## Arab/Israeli conflict: the anti-state option

Arab-Jewish unity in the struggle, were positive and concrete examples of this possibility, even if the movement there remained hesitant about dealing directly with the question of the occupation.

It would be naive to expect the recent movements to have sprung to the surface free of nationalist ideas; for the majority of those who took part in them, internationalism means a kind of truce or love-fest between nations, rather than what it really implies: class war across national divisions, the struggle for a world without nation states. And that is not even to mention the terrible spiral of revenge, distrust and hatred that the Arab/Israeli conflict has created and daily reinforces. But at the same time, capitalism is providing ample proof not only of its economic bankruptcy, but also of its inability to reconcile conflicting national interests. Within the cage of the nation state, whether the one-state or the two-state ideal is preferred, there is simply no possibility of delivering millions of Palestinians from the misery of the refugee camps or enabling the mass of Israelis to live without constant fear of war and terrorist attack. The vision of a human community without borders, which is the only answer to capitalism's global crisis, will also appear as the only realistic solution to the Arab/Israeli conflict. And this vision can only be made flesh in the course of massive social movements which evolve towards an authentic revolution of the exploited and the oppressed. All bourgeois states, whether extant or potential, will be the enemy of such a revolution: they are the first wall to be dismantled on the road to freedom. **Amos 26/9/11**

Since Mubarak left there have been at least 130 new unions formed in Egypt. This is not unexpected bearing in mind the role that the official unions played before, as an integral part of the state machine. The new 'independent' unions are already proving themselves worthy successors, suspending strikes prematurely and undermining the developing movement with propaganda for a more democratic capitalism in Egypt.

One of the main dangers awaiting the working class in Egypt is that it will embrace the new unions because of a false idea that they are somehow different from the old state-run unions. Also, wider illusions in the merits of a democratic state as a replacement for the current military regime could undermine future struggles. There have recently been widespread demonstrations to "Reclaim the Revolution", Sean Penn notably in attendance in Tahrir Square. These demonstrations, while opposing the current government, focussed on the recent announcements of a timetable for elections. A state decree says that voting will be staggered over a six-week period, with a new parliament assembling on 17 March 2012. Opposition parties, whether liberal or Islamist, complained about many of the details and that they hadn't been consulted. A danger for the working class is that it could be drawn into a conflict between the military and democratic factions of the bourgeoisie. The latest wave of strikes shows a strength that could be further developed; so long as it is not diverted down the democratic dead-end. **Car 1/10/11**

## International Review 146

The mobilisation of the Indignados in Spain and its repercussions across the world  
**A movement that heralds the future**

On the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Paris Commune

Contribution to a history of the workers' movement in Africa (ii)  
**1914-1928: The first real confrontation between the two classes**

19<sup>th</sup> Congress of the ICC  
**Preparing for class confrontations Resolution on the international situation**

The decadence of capitalism (x)  
**For revolutionaries, the Great Depression confirms the obsolescence of capitalism**

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## A report of the demonstrations in Madrid end of July

ing roles, but expressed a variety of objections to its proposals.

By contrast, a minority element did oppose the democratic, citizenship and reformist politics, opposing it with support for class politics and for adopting a revolutionary perspective of the struggle against capitalism, and for the power of the assemblies. This minority generally organised itself inside "collectives" that became widespread and devoted a lot of work to reflecting on things, most notably, to our knowledge, those in Valencia, Alicante and Madrid, even if, for now, these collectives are dispersed and scattered without having succeeded in breaking away from a concern with local actions. **ICC 1/8/11**



# 19th Congress of the ICC: preparing for class confrontations

The ICC held its 19th Congress last May. In general a congress is the most important moment in the life of revolutionary organisations, and since the latter are an integral part of the working class, they have a responsibility to draw out the main lessons of their congresses and make them accessible to a wider audience within the class. This is the aim of the present article. A longer version of this article can be found in *International Review* 146, and online at <http://en.internationalism.org/ir/146/icc-19th-congress-report>.

In line with the statutes of our organisation: *“the Congress is the sovereign organ of the ICC. As such it has the tasks* - of elaborating the general analyses and orientations of the organisation, particularly with regard to the international situation; - of examining and drawing a balance sheet of the activities of the organisation since the preceding congress - of defining the perspectives for future work”.

On the basis of these elements we can draw out the lessons of the 19th Congress.

## The international situation

The first point that needs to be dealt with is our analyses and discussions of the international situation. If an organisation is unable to elaborate a clear understanding of the international situation, it will not be able to intervene appropriately within it.

Today it is of the greatest importance for revolutionaries to develop an accurate analysis of what's at stake in the international situation, above all because in the recent period the stakes have been getting higher than ever.

In *International Review* 146, we published the resolution on the international situation adopted by the Congress and it is therefore not necessary to go over all its points here. We only want to underline the most important aspects.

The first aspect, the most fundamental one, is the decisive step taken by the crisis of capitalism with the sovereign debt crisis of certain European states such as Greece:

*“In fact, the potential bankruptcy of a growing number of states constitutes a new stage in capitalism's plunge into insurmountable crisis. It highlights the limits of the policies through which the bourgeoisie has managed to hold back the evolution of the capitalist crisis for several decades...”* (point 2 of the resolution).

These policies are based on a headlong flight into debt to make up for the lack of solvent markets for the commodities capitalism produces. With the debt crisis now hitting the states themselves, the last ramparts of the bourgeois economy, the system is now being brutally confronted with its fundamental contradictions and its total inability to overcome them.

*“Thus the bankruptcy of the PIIGs is just the tip of the iceberg of the bankruptcy of world economy, which for decades has owed its survival to a desperate headlong flight into debt... By tipping over from the banking sphere to the level of states, the debt crisis marks the entry of the capitalist mode of production into a new phase of its acute crisis which will considerably aggravate the violence and extent of its convulsions. There is no light at the end of the tunnel of capitalism. This system can only lead society into an ever increasing barbarism”.*

The period which followed the Congress has confirmed this analysis: new alarms about Greece's debts and the downgrading of the USA's credit rating in July, stock market crash in August. The drama is non-stop.

This confirmation of the analyses that came out of the Congress doesn't derive from any particular merit of our organisation. The only 'merit' it can claim is being faithful to the classic analyses of the workers' movement which, since the development of marxist theory, has always argued that the

capitalist mode of production, like the ones that came before it, cannot in the long run overcome its economic contradictions. And it was in this framework of marxist analysis that the discussions at the Congress took place. Different points of view were put forward, notably on the ultimate causes of the contradictions of capitalism (which to a large extent correspond to our debate on the 'Thirty Glorious Years'), or on whether or not the world economy is likely to sink into hyperinflation because of the frenzied resort to printing banknotes, especially in the USA. But there was a real homogeneity in underlining the gravity of the current situation, as expressed in the resolution which was unanimously adopted.

The Congress also looked at the evolution of imperialist conflicts, as can be seen from the resolution. At this level, the two years since our last Congress have not brought any fundamentally new elements, but rather a confirmation of the fact that, despite all its military efforts, the world's leading power has shown itself incapable of re-establishing the 'leadership' it had during the Cold War, and that its involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan have not succeeded in establishing a 'Pax Americana' across the world, on the contrary:

*“The 'New World Order' predicted 20 years ago by George Bush Senior, which he dreamed about being under the guidance of the US, can only more and more present itself as a world chaos, which the convulsions of the capitalist economy can only aggravate more and more”* (point 8 of the resolution).

It was important for the Congress to pay particular attention to the current evolution of the class struggle since, aside from the particular importance this question always has for revolutionaries, the proletariat today is facing unprecedented attacks on its living conditions. These attacks have been especially brutal in the countries under the whip of the European Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as is the case with Greece. But they are raining down in all countries, with the explosion of unemployment and above all the necessity for all governments to reduce their budget deficits, which obviously makes a massive and determined response by the working class more vital than ever. However, the congress noted that

*“This response is still very timid, notably where these austerity plans have taken the most violent forms, in countries like Greece or Spain for example, even though the working class there had recently shown evidence of a rather important level of militancy. In a way it seems that the very brutality of the attacks provoke a feeling of powerlessness in the workers' ranks, all the more because they are being carried out by 'left' governments”.* Since then, the working class in these countries has given proof that it is not just lying down. This is especially the case in Spain where the movements of the 'indignant' has for several months acted a sort of beacon for other countries in Europe and other continents.

This movement began at the very moment the Congress was being held and so it was obviously not possible to discuss it at that point. However, the Congress was led to examine the social movements which had been hitting the Arab countries from the beginning of the year. There was not a total homogeneity in the discussions on this subject, not least because they are something we have not seen before, but the whole Congress did rally to the analysis contained in the resolution:

*“...These movements were not classic workers' struggles... They often took the form of social revolts in which all different sectors of society were involved: workers from public and private sectors, the unemployed, but also small shopkeepers, artisans, the liberal professions, educated young people etc. This is why the proletariat only rarely appeared directly in a distinct way (for example in the strikes in Egypt towards the end of the revolt there); still less did it assume the role of a leading force. However, at the origin of these movements... we find fundamentally the same causes as those at the origin of the workers' struggles in other countries: the considerable aggravation of the crisis, the growing misery it provokes within the entire non-exploiting population. And while the prole-*

1. See *IR*'s 133, 135, 136, 138 and 141

*ariat did not in general appear directly as a class in these movements, its imprint was still there in countries where the working class has a significant weight, especially through the deep solidarity expressed in the revolts, their ability to avoid being drawn into acts of blind and desperate violence despite the terrible repression they had to face. In the end, if the bourgeoisie in Tunisia and Egypt finally resolved, on the good advice of the American bourgeoisie, to get rid of the old dictators, it was to a large extent because of the presence of the working class in these movements”.*

## The intervention of the ICC in the development of the class struggle

The 19th Congress of the ICC, on the basis of an examination of the economic crisis, of the terrible attacks which have been imposed on the working class, and of the first responses of the class to these attacks, concluded that we are entering into a period of class conflicts much more intense and massive than in the period between 2003 and now. At this level, even more than with the evolution of the crisis which will play a big part in determining these movements, it is difficult to make any short term predictions. It would be illusory to try and fix where and when the next major class combats will break out. What is important to do, however, is to draw out the general tendency and to be extremely vigilant towards the evolution of the situation in order to be able to react rapidly and appropriately when this is required, both in taking up positions and intervening directly in the struggles.

The 19th Congress felt that the balance sheet of the ICC's intervention since the previous congress was definitely a positive one. Whenever it was necessary, and sometimes very rapidly, statements of position were published in numerous languages on our website and in our territorial paper press. Within the limits of our very weak forces, the press was widely distributed in the demonstrations which accompanied the social movements of the recent period, in particular during the movement against the reform of pensions in France in autumn 2010 or the mobilisations of educated youth against attacks that were aimed especially at students coming from the working class (such as the major increase in tuition fees in the UK at the end of 2010). Parallel to this, the ICC held public meetings in a lot of countries and on several continents, dealing with the emerging social movements. At the same time, whenever possible, militants of the ICC spoke up in assemblies, struggle committees, discussion circles and internet forums to support the positions and analyses of the organisation and participate in the international debate generated by these movements.

Similarly, the Congress drew a positive balance sheet of our work towards individuals and groups who defend communist positions or who are heading in that direction.

The report on contacts adopted by the Congress *“stresses the novelty of the situation regarding contacts, in particular our collaboration with anarchists. On certain occasions we succeeded in making common cause in the struggle with elements and groups who are in the same camp as us, the camp of internationalism”* (presentation of the contacts report). This cooperation with individuals and groups who identify with anarchism has stimulated a number of rich discussions within our organisation, enabling us to get a better grasp of the various facets of this current and in particular to get a clearer understanding of its heterogeneous nature.

## Organisational questions

Any discussion on the activities of a revolutionary organisation has to consider the assessment of its functioning. And in this area the Congress, on the basis of different reports, noted the biggest weaknesses of the organisation. The Congress examined these difficulties at some length, in particular the often degraded state of the organisational tissue and of collective work, which can weigh heavily on some sections. All the militants of the sections where these problems have arisen are fully convinced of the validity of the ICC's fight, and continue to show their loyalty and dedication towards the organisation. When the ICC

had to face up to the most sombre period suffered by the working class since the end of the counter-revolution whose end was marked by the movement of May 1968 – a period of general retreat in militancy and consciousness which began at the start of the 1990s – these militants 'stayed at their post'. Very often, these are comrades who have known each other and militated together for more than 30 years. There are thus many solid links of friendship and confidence between them. But the minor faults, the small weaknesses, the character differences which everyone has to accept in others have often led to the development of tensions or a growing difficulty to work together over a period of many years in small sections which have not been refreshed by the 'new blood' of new militants, precisely because of the retreat experienced by the working class. Today this 'new blood' is beginning to arrive in certain sections of the ICC, but it is clear that the new members can only be properly integrated if the organisational tissue of the ICC improves. The Congress discussed these issues with a lot of frankness, and this led some of the invited groups to speak up about their own organisational difficulties. However, there could be no miracle solution to the problems, which had already been noted at the previous congress. The activities resolution which it adopted reminds us of the approach already adopted by the organisation and calls on all the militants and sections to take this up in a more systematic way: *“This means the growth of mutual respect and support, cooperative reflexes, a warm spirit of understanding and sympathy for others, sociability, and generosity”* (point 15).

## The discussion on 'marxism and science'

One of the points stressed in the discussions and in the resolution adopted by the Congress is the need to go deeper into the theoretical aspects of the questions we face. This is why, as for the preceding congress, this one devoted an item on its agenda to a theoretical question, 'marxism and science'. For lack of space, we are not going to report here the elements raised in the discussion. What we want to say here is that the delegations to the Congress were very pleased with this debate, and that this owed a great deal to the contributions of a scientist, Chris Knight<sup>2</sup>, who we had invited to take part in our Congress. We want to thank Chris Knight for accepting our invitation and we salute the quality of his interventions, which were both very lively and accessible for non-specialists, which includes the majority of ICC militants.

At the end of the Congress, the delegations felt that the discussion on marxism and science, and the participation of Chris Knight within it, had been one of the most interesting and satisfactory parts of the Congress, a moment which will encourage all the sections to pursue and develop an interest in theoretical questions.

We are not drawing a triumphalist balance sheet of the 19th Congress of the ICC, not least because it had to recognise the organisational difficulties we are facing, difficulties the ICC will have to overcome if it is to continue being present at the rendezvous which history is giving to revolutionary organisations. A long and difficult struggle awaits our organisation. But this perspective should not discourage us. After all, the struggle of the working class as a whole is also long and difficult, full of pitfalls and defeats. This is a perspective which should inspire militants to carry on the struggle; a fundamental characteristic of every communist militant is to be a fighter. **ICC 31/7/11**

2. Chris Knight is a British university teacher who up until 2009 taught anthropology at the University of East London. He is the author of the book *Blood Relations: Menstruation and the Origins of Culture*, which we have reviewed on our website in English (<http://en.internationalism.org/2008/10/Chris-Knight>), and which is based in a very faithful manner on Darwin's theory of evolution and the works of Marx and above all Engels (especially in *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*). You can listen to our interview with Chris Knight at the time of the Congress: <http://en.internationalism.org/podcast/20110925/chris-knight-origins-of-humanity>

## Contact the ICC

Debate is vital to the revolutionary movement. One of the most important elements of our activity, defined in our Basic Positions, is the "Political and theoretical clarification of the goals and methods of the proletarian struggle, of its historic and its immediate conditions". This, we are convinced, is only possible through the confrontation and discussion of differing views and positions within the revolutionary camp.

For this reason, we urge our readers to write to us with their comments, opinions and disagreements on the positions and analyses that we defend in our written press, including our web site.

We will do our best to reply to all serious correspondence as quickly as possible, although given our limited resources we may not always be able to do so immediately. Should the subject matter be of general interest, then we may publish both correspondence and our reply in our press.

While debate amongst revolutionaries is vital, it is equally necessary not to fall into the trap of thinking that our activity is something anodyne and acceptable to the bourgeois dictatorship disguised under the trappings of the democratic state. We will not under any circumstances publish our correspondents' real names, nor their home or e-mail addresses.

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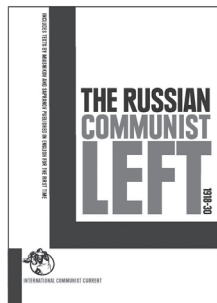
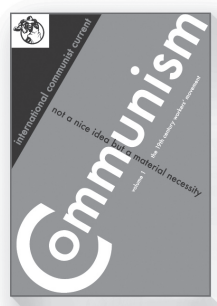
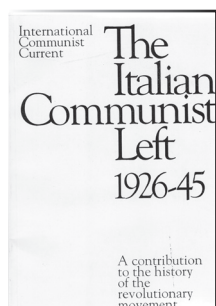
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# Arab/Israeli conflict: the anti-state option

The massive street protests in Israel seem, for the moment at any rate, to have gone into retreat; the social question, which they raised so noisily around issues of housing, inflation, and unemployment, is once again being sidelined by the national question.

On the occupied West Bank, there have been clashes between Israeli soldiers and Palestinians demonstrating in support of the Palestine Liberation Authority's bid to be accepted as a member state at the UN.

At Qalandiya, a major Israeli checkpoint between the West Bank and Jerusalem, Israeli troops fired tear gas to disperse Palestinian stone-throwers. The confrontations lasted several hours and around 70 Palestinians were injured by rubber-coated steel pellets or suffered tear gas inhalation. This scenario was played out in several places, sometimes linked to sharpening tensions between Palestinian villagers and Jewish settlers. Near the West Bank village of Qusra, Israeli soldiers shot dead a Palestinian man during an incident between the villagers and Israeli settlers, according to witnesses and military accounts.

Earlier on in September, in Egypt, a violent assault on the Israeli embassy followed Israeli air raids on Gaza which had left a number of Egyptian border guards dead.

At the height of the Tahrir Square demonstrations, government attempts to divert attention away from the economic and political demands of the protesters by brandishing the 'Palestinian question' and anti-Israel feeling had met with little success. According to an article by Nadim Shehadi in *The New York Times* (25/9/11), "even the recent attack on the Israeli embassy in Cairo was seen by many as a diversion from the continuing protests in Tahrir Square". There were hints of government and police collusion in the attack, which also coincided with a visit to Cairo from the Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan who is keen to promote a new anti-Israel Middle East power axis between Turkey and Egypt. In any case, the sacking of the embassy certainly helped to draw attention away from a new wave of popular discontent with the regime, which has again involved a rash of workers' strikes.

## One state or two?

Among those who claim to be opposed to the present capitalist system, many argue that until the

national question is sorted out in Israel/ Palestine, there can never be a 'normal' class struggle in the region, with workers and the oppressed fighting alongside each other, regardless of nationality and religion, against the capitalists of all countries.

There are different approaches to how the Israel/Palestine issue might be resolved: parts of the left have shown themselves to be more than willing to support military action against Israel (by Palestinian nationalist groups, secular and Islamic, and, logically, by the states which have provided them with weapons and resources, such as Iran, Syria, Gaddafi's Libya or Saddam's Iraq). The fact that such policies are combined with rhetoric about the 'Arab revolution' and a future 'Socialist Federation in the Middle East' does not alter their fundamentally militarist character. Views of this kind have been put forward by the SWP, George Galoway, and others. Such approaches have often been linked to the idea of a 'one-state solution' - a democratic secular Palestine with rights for all. How such an idyllic regime could emerge out of a wholesale imperialist massacre is a question that could only be answered by those trained in Trotskyist sophistry.

Others on the left, and a whole host of liberals, favour the 'two-state solution', with the Israeli and Palestinian nations both 'determining' themselves and mutually respecting their respective national rights. Within this view there are many different nuances: officially the USA is in favour of a two-state solution, based on the negotiations it oversees as part of the Middle East Quartet along with the UN, the EU, and Russia. But Washington is currently vetoing the PLA's bid at the UN because it says it is not based on mutually agreed terms. The fact that it is increasingly unable to bend Israel's intransigent right-wing government to its proposals, particularly in its call for a freeze on settlements in the occupied territories, also plays a major role in America's current stance.

Meanwhile PLA president Mohamed Abbas, pointing out that negotiations just aren't happening, is going ahead with the proposal that the PLA becomes a state because this will provide it with a number of tactical advantages, such as being able to take Israel to the International Criminal Court. But opposition to this ploy comes from a number of supporters of Palestinian nationalism, both secular and Islamic, who point out, quite correctly, that a state based on a few scraps of land divided and dominated by the Israeli military and the 'anti-terrorist' Wall is no more than a token state.

## Political positions of the ICC

**World Revolution** is the section in Britain of the **International Communist Current** which defends the following political positions:

\* Since the first world war, capitalism has been a decadent social system. It has twice plunged humanity into a barbaric cycle of crisis, world war, reconstruction and new crisis. In the 1980s, it entered into the final phase of this decadence, the phase of decomposition. There is only one alternative offered by this irreversible historical decline: socialism or barbarism, world communist revolution or the destruction of humanity.

\* The Paris Commune of 1871 was the first attempt by the proletariat to carry out this revolution, in a period when the conditions for it were not yet ripe. Once these conditions had been provided by the onset of capitalist decadence, the October revolution of 1917 in Russia was the first step towards an authentic world communist revolution in an international revolutionary wave which put an end to the imperialist war and went on for several years after that. The failure of this revolutionary wave, particularly in Germany in 1919-23, condemned the revolution in Russia to isolation and to a rapid degeneration. Stalinism was not the product of the Russian revolution, but its gravedigger.

\* The stratified regimes which arose in the USSR, eastern Europe, China, Cuba etc and were called 'socialist' or 'communist' were just a particularly brutal form of the universal tendency towards state capitalism, itself a major characteristic of the period of decadence.

\* Since the beginning of the 20th century, all wars are imperialist wars, part of the deadly struggle between states large and small to conquer or retain a place in

the international arena. These wars bring nothing to humanity but death and destruction on an ever-increasing scale. The working class can only respond to them through its international solidarity and by struggling against the bourgeoisie in all countries.

\* All the nationalist ideologies - 'national independence', 'the right of nations to self-determination' etc - whatever their pretext, ethnic, historical or religious, are a real poison for the workers. By calling on them to take the side of one or another faction of the bourgeoisie, they divide workers and lead them to massacre each other in the interests and wars of their exploiters.

\* In decadent capitalism, parliament and elections are nothing but a masquerade. Any call to participate in the parliamentary circus can only reinforce the lie that presents these elections as a real choice for the exploited. 'Democracy', a particularly hypocritical form of the domination of the bourgeoisie, does not differ at root from other forms of capitalist dictatorship, such as Stalinism and fascism.

\* All factions of the bourgeoisie are equally reactionary. All the so-called 'workers', 'Socialist' and 'Communist' parties (now ex-'Communists'), the leftist organisations (Trotskyists, Maoists and ex-Maoists, official anarchists) constitute the left of capitalism's political apparatus. All the tactics of 'popular fronts', 'anti-fascist fronts' and 'united fronts', which mix up the interests of the proletariat with those of a faction of the bourgeoisie, serve only to smother and derail the struggle of the proletariat.

\* With the decadence of capitalism, the unions everywhere have been transformed into organs of capitalist order within the proletariat. The various forms of union

The Islamists, most of whom don't even recognise the existence of Israel, want to continue with armed struggle for an Islamic state in the whole of historic Palestine (although in practise they are prepared to look at various interim stages). On this level, militarist Islam and militarist Trotskyism advocate the same methods for achieving their different one-state schemes<sup>1</sup>.

## Communists are against the nation state

In our view, these are all false solutions. The Israel/Palestine conflict, which has dragged on for all of 80 years, is a concrete example of why capitalism cannot solve the various 'national questions' which it partly inherited from previous social systems, but largely created itself.

Opposing the slogan of 'the right of all peoples to national self-determination' during the First World War, Rosa Luxemburg argued that in a world now carved up by imperialist powers, no nation could advance its interests without aligning itself with larger imperialist states, while at the same time seeking to satisfy its own imperialist appetites. Nationalism was not, as Lenin and others argued, potentially a force that could weaken imperialism, but was an integral part of it. This analysis has certainly been confirmed by the history of the Middle East conflict. It is well known that from its inception Zionism could not make any gains without the backing of British imperialism, and later only turned against Britain to put itself at the service of the more powerful USA. But the Palestinian national movement has been no less compelled to seek the backing of imperialist powers: fascist Germany and Italy before and during the Second World War, Stalinist Russia and its Arab subalterns during the cold war, Syria, Iraq, Iran and others since the collapse of the old bloc system. Alliances have shifted over the years, but the constant has been that both Jewish and Arab nationalism have acted as local agents of wider regional and global imperialist rivalries. Those who advocate the military defeat of Israel or more peaceful solutions presided over by the UN are still locked in this logic.

At the same time, support for national solutions, in a period of history where the working class and

1. It's worth pointing out that some right wing Zionists have also concluded that one state would be best, but this would of course be a Jewish state in which the Arab minority would either be expelled or remain forever as second class citizens

organisation, whether 'official' or 'rank and file', serve only to discipline the working class and sabotage its struggles.

\* In order to advance its combat, the working class has to unify its struggles, taking charge of their extension and organisation through sovereign general assemblies and committees of delegates elected and revocable at any time by these assemblies.

\* Terrorism is in no way a method of struggle for the working class. The expression of social strata with no historic future and of the decomposition of the petty bourgeoisie, when it's not the direct expression of the permanent war between capitalist states, terrorism has always been a fertile soil for manipulation by the bourgeoisie. Advocating secret action by small minorities, it is in complete opposition to class violence, which derives from conscious and organised mass action by the proletariat.

\* The working class is the only class which can carry out the communist revolution. Its revolutionary struggle will inevitably lead the working class towards a confrontation with the capitalist state. In order to destroy capitalism, the working class will have to overthrow all existing states and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale: the international power of the workers' councils, regrouping the entire proletariat.

\* The communist transformation of society by the workers' councils does not mean 'self-management' or the nationalisation of the economy. Communism requires the conscious abolition by the working class of capitalist social relations: wage labour, commodity production, national frontiers. It means the creation of a world community in which all activity is oriented towards the full satisfaction of human needs.

\* The revolutionary political organisation constitutes the vanguard of the working class and is an active

its exploiters have no common interests, not even the need to oppose previous reactionary ruling classes, runs directly counter to the struggle of the exploited class. In Israel, the workers' struggle to defend living standards is constantly greeted with the argument that the country is at war, we must accept sacrifices, and that strikes can only undermine the needs of national defence. In Egypt and other Arab countries, workers resisting their exploitation have been told time and time again that their real enemy is Zionism and US imperialism. A very clear example of this was provided during the massive workers' struggles of 1972: following the repression of strikes in Helwan by the Sadat government, "the leftists (Maoists, Palestinian activists, etc) succeeded in diverting the whole issue into nationalist ends. Thus demands to release imprisoned workers were combined with declarations of support for the Palestinian guerrilla movement, with demands for the setting up of a war economy (including a wage freeze) and for the formation of a 'popular militia' to defend the 'homeland' against Zionist aggression. Thus the main complaint was that the government was not being decisive enough in its war preparations; as for the workers, they were exhorted not to carry on the struggle against their exploiters but to form the rank and file of a 'popular' Egyptian imperialism against its Israeli rival" ('Class struggle in the Middle East', *World Revolution* no. 3, April 1975).

On the other hand, the recent protest movements show that when the social question is raised in open struggle, the arguments of the nationalists can be put into question. The refusal of Tahrir Square demonstrators to subordinate the fight against the Mubarak regime to the struggle against Zionism; the prescient warnings by Israeli demonstrators that the Netanyahu government would use military conflict to derail their movement; and above all their determination to continue protesting even when military clashes were taking place on the borders, show that the class struggle is not something that can be postponed until after some ideal solution to the national problem has been implemented. On the contrary, it is in the course of the class struggle itself that national divisions can be confronted and exposed. In Israel, the inspiration drawn from the movements in the Arab world, loudly recognised in slogans like "Mubarak, Assad, Netanyahu", the calls for

## Continued on page 5

factor in the generalisation of class consciousness within the proletariat. Its role is neither to 'organise the working class' nor to 'take power' in its name, but to participate actively in the movement towards the unification of struggles, towards workers taking control of them for themselves, and at the same time to draw out the revolutionary political goals of the proletariat's combat.

## OUR ACTIVITY

Political and theoretical clarification of the goals and methods of the proletarian struggle, of its historic and its immediate conditions.

Organised intervention, united and centralised on an international scale, in order to contribute to the process which leads to the revolutionary action of the proletariat.

The regroupment of revolutionaries with the aim of constituting a real world communist party, which is indispensable to the working class for the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a communist society.

## OUR ORIGINS

The positions and activity of revolutionary organisations are the product of the past experiences of the working class and of the lessons that its political organisations have drawn throughout its history. The ICC thus traces its origins to the successive contributions of the *Communist League* of Marx and Engels (1847-52), the three Internationals (the *International Workingmen's Association*, 1864-72, the *Socialist International*, 1884-1914, the *Communist International*, 1919-28), the left fractions which detached themselves from the degenerating Third International in the years 1920-30, in particular the *German, Dutch and Italian Lefts*.