



world revolution

Rulers can't halt the slide towards the economic abyss

The question of 'the economy' – that is, rising unemployment, debt and inflation, diminishing pensions and wages and so on, ad nauseam – was at the centre of the recent local government election campaigns in Britain, just as it was in the French presidential elections and Greek parliamentary elections. All the parties who take part in these, and all other bourgeois elections, tell us to vote for them because they can deal with the economic crisis, while blaming the other parties for getting us into the crisis in the first place. They are all lying. Whatever policies they follow, this crisis can only get worse.

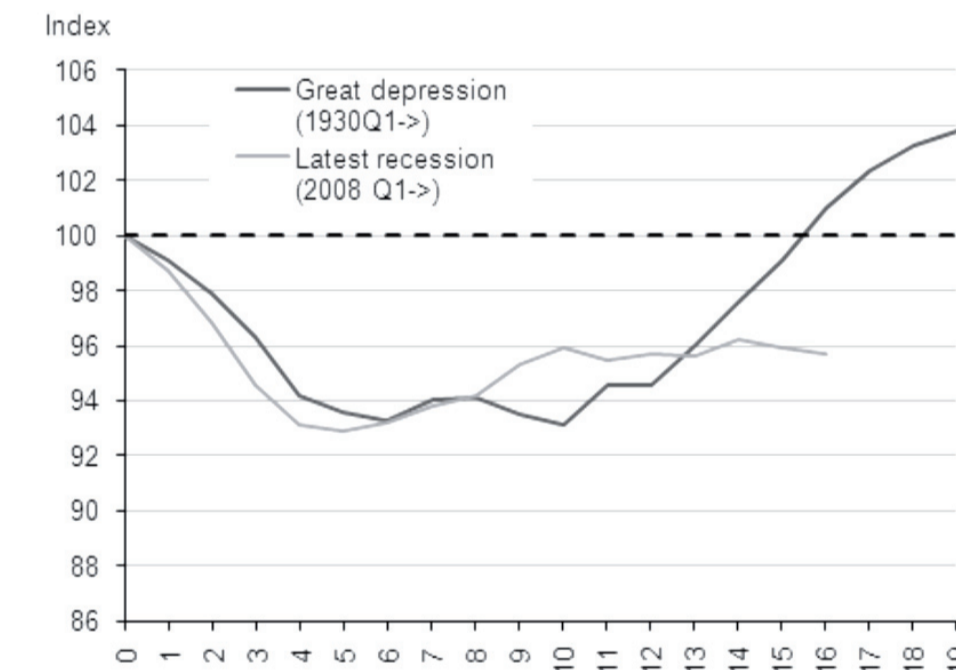
Britain is officially back in recession, although growth has been so sluggish in the last year most people probably won't notice much difference. David Cameron blamed the ongoing Euro-crisis; Ed Miliband blamed David Cameron; Mervyn King wasn't sure if the figures were right but decided to blame over-borrowed consumers for getting us into the mess in the first place. Naturally, no-one blamed capitalism.

Despite the unprecedented austerity programme to bring down government debt, the weak growth may actually see borrowing rise: "Unveiling its new economic outlook, the CBI said net borrowing ... would rise from £126bn to £128.2bn this year; compared with the official forecast of a fall to £120bn. The extra borrowing would more than offset the £18bn of fiscal consolidation planned in 2012." (Daily Telegraph 3/5/12)

Britain is not alone in its economic difficulties: "Traders were rattled when the US Labor Department said fewer jobs have been created than analysts expected and the labour market as a whole had shrunk. The figures combined with alarming economic data showing that the services sector in France, Italy and Spain contracted last month." (Telegraph 4/5/12)

Unemployment across the Eurozone is now 10.9%. In Spain, unemployment has now hit 24.4%, with over half (51.1%) of under 25s out of work.

At the global level, the latest report from the International Labour Organisation, stated that "one in three workers worldwide – or an estimated 1.1 billion people – [are] either unemployed or living



The current recession reached greater depth and is longer lasting than the Great Depression in Britain (source ONS)

in poverty"¹. It estimates that, globally, 50 million jobs are needed just to return the world to pre-2008 levels.

While the ruling class attempts to present the crisis as a local problem, solvable if only we could get the right government in, the widespread nature of these problems shows they are the product of a global system in its deepest ever economic crisis – deeper than the Depression of the 1930s, and even more impervious to any solution, since the economic storms we have been through since 2008 are only the culmination of difficulties which have been mounting up since the end of the 1960s.

In spite of the trillions spent on rescue packages and the vast quantities of money pumped into the economy, the alleged 'recovery' is still standing

1. http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/press-and-media-centre/news/WCMS_171700/lang-en/index.htm / Global Employment Trends 2012, ILO.

on the edge of an abyss. The austerity programmes that were meant to rebalance the economy and pay off the debt are making the debt problem even worse. Yet more spending is unsustainable but the austerity programmes simply phase in the crisis.

In the end, it is the working class that pays the price for the crisis in the form of unemployment, wage cuts, increasing workloads and declining social services. As the economy continues its slow disintegration workers will be faced with a choice: remain passive and make ever more extreme sacrifices to keep a hopeless system going; or begin to defend their collective interests, resist capitalism's demands and open the gates to a real solution to the economic dead-end: the revolutionary transformation of society. **Ishamael 5/5/12**

Downgrading the notion of economic recovery

After months of suspense, the verdict is in: Britain has suffered a double dip recession, after experiencing two consecutive quarters of economic contraction (0.2 per cent down in the first quarter of 2012, following a fall of 0.3 per cent in the last quarter of 2011).

Or, at least, the verdict may be in, depending on who is writing the commentary. The differences of opinion on the interpretation of the figures are considerable. The *Financial Times* (25/4/12) has helpfully put together a compendium of the views being expressed:

"A second consecutive drop in [gross domestic product] in the first quarter leaves the UK meeting the technical definition of recession....But we believe it is fairer to characterise the UK under-delivering on growth, rather than experiencing a double-dip recession." (Allan Monks, an economist at JP Morgan).

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Scandals, local elections

“Disgruntled, disillusioned and disengaged”

“The public seem to be disgruntled, disillusioned and disengaged” with politics concludes a Hansard Society survey (BBC online news, 25 April). Neither the further revelations at the Leveson enquiry, nor a series of scandals that dominated the news for a short while, and least of all the local elections, have stimulated much interest in the sordid politics of our ruling class.

“...the economic crisis, the summer riots and phone hacking did not lead to any greater interest in or knowledge of politics...” Often the ruling class and their media make a great play of condemning and cleaning up some great scandal to make it appear that they are really to be trusted to govern us and root out the self-serving. These campaigns may also reflect a real conflict being played out in the bourgeoisie, as with the attack on News International and phone hacking at the *News of the World*, which very effectively scuppered their bid for BskyB (see <http://en.internationalism.org/wr/347>).

This is not without risk, and in this case the Leveson enquiry is ‘revealing’ disgusting behaviour that the whole media has been engaged in for many years as well as the very close relationship between all the main parties and the Murdoch empire – such as Cameron hiring Coolson, the former editor of the *News of the World*, or Blair jetting off to the other side of the world to meet Murdoch, which was a key part of his effort to get elected. The public can become disgusted with the whole sleazy lot of them. And now Jeremy

Hunt, the culture secretary, is being caught up in this scandal. His error was not so much that he maintained the usual close relationship with News International when he should have kept a quasi-judicial independence, but that he did so when it was no longer in the interests of the British state, which feared the Murdochs were getting too powerful and using that power to promote a pro-US and Eurosceptic line that undermined Britain’s efforts to steer a more independent line between the US and Europe.

Other campaigns and scandals have had an ideological aim in mind without representing a real division in the state. On Abu Qatada and the failure to deport him we see a further effort to whip up fear of foreign Islamic terrorists. The scandal of the disputed 3 hour wait to get through immigration goes in the same direction. ‘Jerry can-gate’ on the other hand was a good way of causing panic buying at petrol stations, and trying to create a link in the public mind between the threat of a tanker drivers’ strike with alarming shortages, thus making any strike action as unpopular as possible. The long running bankers’ bonuses scandal, on the other hand, supported the lie that the crisis was all down to greedy bankers. They are indeed disgustingly greedy, but that is not what caused the crisis.

“Disgruntled, disillusioned and disengaged” is not such a daft response to all this, even if it is not enough. Tedious as it is we also need to understand what the ruling class is up to.

Disillusion with politics

“Worryingly, only a quarter of the population are satisfied with our system of governing, which must raise questions about the long-term capacity of that system to command public support and confidence in the future.” Only 32% voted in the local elections, the lowest for 12 years, and those who did turn out typically voted against the governing parties rather than for any of the local can-

didates. Hence the Labour Party gained many of the councils they lost when in government. The only exception was the ‘Ken and Boris show’ in which two media personalities, Ken Livingstone and Boris Johnson, contested the London mayoral election and the Tory won. But did it really create much interest? Ten cities held referendums for directly elected mayor, with arguments for and against both recognising the general anti-politics mood: for, because the electorate are generally disgusted with local councillors; or against, because we do not need an expensive new layer of self-serving politicians. Only Bristol was in favour with a very low turnout of 24%, 9 against, with Doncaster voting to keep its mayor.

We simply must not fall for the *Socialist Worker* notion that “Big losses for the Tories” in local elections, which is nothing but the norm for a governing party, means that “voters reject austerity”. Voting means engaging with the electoral system, the state, when the whole ruling class is most concerned that we vote at all, rather than who gets in to run local government. The Hansard Society is right to be concerned about the capacity of the system to command public support. They found that the number of people who do not intend to vote at all has risen to 30%. The number voting in general elections has been falling since the 1950s and is significantly lower than in France or Germany, although higher than Switzerland. “Elections where there is a real choice, and the result matters, attract high turnouts” says Andrew Ellis of the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, based in Stockholm (BBC news online 24.4.12). So when is there a ‘real choice’ in elections? We have only to look at the austerity announced in the last months of the last Labour government and that instituted by the coalition government to see that there never was any real choice at the last general election.

Parliament has classically been the best way for the capitalist ruling class to run its state, with elec-

tions allowing its competing interests to jockey for position. This remained true even when universal suffrage was introduced in the late 19th century, since their monopoly of communication and propaganda kept them firmly in control. Then there could be a real choice, albeit a choice of capitalists, some more progressive than others from the standpoint of the working class.

Throughout the 20th century, particularly since the outbreak of the First World War, there has not been such a real choice. During two world wars, the Depression, and the post war boom and since, the state has been required to take measures to direct or intervene in the economy either for the war effort or to defend the economy, and there has been a diminishing margin for manoeuvre for competing capitalist interests to influence policy. And absolutely nothing for the working class to gain from participating in any election, because whoever wins will be equally reactionary.

Disillusion is not enough

Disgust with sordid and often corrupt politics is a natural reaction. But the importance of workers’ disillusion with bourgeois democracy is not so that we can fatalistically put up with whatever the state intends to impose on us – which in the present economic crisis means austerity, cuts in the availability and quality of services, and increased surveillance which will be used to police any response. Disillusion becomes a positive force only when it helps us avoid falling into the trap of relying on democracy in our struggles, for instance the electricians who refused to follow Unite to lobby their MPs and instead tried to join the student demonstration last November; or when it leads to the effort to understand the nature of this society and how to overthrow it. Our ultimate aim is to be rid of capitalism altogether, and with it all professional politicians. **Alex 4/5/12**

May 10

Unions divide public sector workers

The attacks on workers’ pensions - the increase in contributions toward pensions, and the increases in the age for getting pensions - have been met with anger wherever they’ve been proposed or introduced. Unions have been loud in their criticisms of the attacks. In many countries there have been demonstrations and strikes over the issue, for example in Greece where there’s been a 25% cut in basic pension rates.

However, the example of Britain shows that these union-led mobilisations have tended to divide rather than unite different sectors of the working class.

On 28 March for example (see *WR* 343 “Why are we not united?”) teaching unions such as the NUT and UCU retreated from the prospects of a national strike, and the public sector PCS union actually called off a national strike. What was left was a London strike involving just some from the education sector.

For the strike and demonstrations planned for 10 May there has been a similar carve up by the unions. The PCS and UCU are participating (but not the NUT), and Unite is also mobilising health workers in Unite (but not other sectors it represents). There will also be some transport workers and some workers from other parts of the civil service. Already anticipating that this action will not have much impact, activists in unions such as Unison are calling for a really big demonstration in the autumn, along the lines of the demonstrations of 30 June and 30 November last year (which were bigger, but still not very effective...).

Even the limited actions proposed for this month have been condemned by parts of the bourgeoisie. Because some immigration border staff will be taking part, they have been denounced in some

of the press. This is rather ironic because the queues and current disruption at airports such as Heathrow have not been caused by workers’ action but by the government cutting 10% of border staff. Already anticipating the imminent London Olympics, staff who have been made redundant or forced to take early retirement are going to be brought back to try and cope with the arrival of thousands of athletes and officials and hundreds of thousands of tourists. When the state doesn’t feel able to properly fund the security of its frontiers it reveals a lot about the state of the economy.

Tanker drivers and tube workers cut off from public sector workers

Away from the campaign over public sector pensions other UK workers have come up against the manoeuvres of the unions. In the tanker drivers’ dispute shop stewards from the Unite union have recommended that workers reject the ‘final offer’ from fuel distributors. While this raises the possibility of future strike action it is very much framed by the unions as action within one small sector. One of the sticking points for the union is on pensions. At the same time as others are protesting over pensions this is a very clear example of the common interests of workers, and the divisive action of unions.

In April a 72-hour strike by maintenance workers on the London underground also involved the question of pensions. There’s a two-tier system with some workers facing inferior conditions. Again, it’s interesting to note that, during the strike, on the Bakerloo Line, where maintenance workers were actually not on strike, there was still disruption. Rush hour trains were badly disrupted because of a bulging tunnel wall. On the oldest underground system in the world the planned en-

gineering work is inconvenient enough for travellers, but much worse could happen because of the lack of funds made available by the state.

False leftist alternatives

When the PCS leadership called off a 28 March national strike leftists denounced the action. But what they proposed instead was not an effective alternative. *Socialist Worker* (24/3/12) gave the example of the electricians’ strike saying that “The electricians had the confidence to strike independently of their union leaders—and thus force the unions into action.” While the struggle of the electricians took many ‘unofficial’ forms and expressed a great deal of militancy from the workers involved, it was still ultimately in the hands of the shop stewards. When the SWP says of the struggle against the attacks on pensions that “We have to continue that fight in every union” it’s trying to conceal one of the most important acquisitions of the workers’ movement of the last hundred years. It’s not a matter of being independent of union leaders, but fighting independently of the whole union apparatus and ideology. For workers’ struggles to be effective they need to involve the fighting capacity of all workers, holding assemblies to elect and control strike committees and any other delegations. **Car 5/5/12**

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Massacres in Syria, crisis in Iran

The threat of an imperialist disaster

Capitalism is heading straight for the abyss

The Middle East is a powder-keg and there are some who would be willing to put a match to it. The military means are already in position and even the most lucid factions of the ruling class are ready to fight at the moment the benefit outweighs the cost. But in today’s decomposing capitalism the atmosphere is favouring the more openly irrational bourgeois factions. The ‘messianic’ war-mongering of Netanyahu in Israel is perfectly mirrored by Ahmadinejad’s invocation of Imam Madhi, a prophesied redeemer in Islam.

Imperialist war amounts to a real self-destruction of capitalism, but the trajectory of this senile and obsolete system makes such an outcome look more and more likely. Even if the belligerents step back from the brink, this will only be a momentary reprieve. The tensions will remain and heighten and as long as capitalism remains the insane logic of the system will continue its remorseless drive to war. **Tino April 2012** (adapted from an article in *International Review* 149)

Launch of ballistic missile by India

Another act in militarization in Asia

On 19th April 2012, the Indian bourgeoisie launched Agni-V, its version of an inter-continental ballistic missile, and gave another boost to the already raging arms race in Asia. With this test India joined the select club of global imperialist gangsters who possess inter-continental ballistic missiles. Agni-V is supposed to have a range of 5000KM and is supposed to be capable of hitting Shanghai and Beijing.

The launch of Agni-V provoked a drum beat of rejoicing within all sections of the Indian bourgeoisie. For days on end, the entire print and electronic media was full of boastful propaganda about technical and military achievements signified by this launch. There was reckless talk of the new capability to hit all parts of China and other hostile countries. Factions of the Indian bourgeoisie were busy assuring themselves that with the launch of Agni-V they are now better equipped to confront its enemies and to fulfill its global imperialist dreams. The media also tried to use all these drum beats and propaganda to instigate intense patriotic fever.

Intensifying arms race in Asia

The launch of ICBM Agni-V by India is just one expression of the frenzied arms race developing in Asia today. There are numerous players engaged in this game and India is one of the major players in it.

In the middle of March 2012, Indian and world media were full of stories that over the last three years India has been the biggest arms buyer in the world. According to a report in NDTV on 21 March 2012, India has replaced China as the world's largest arms buyer, accounting for 10 per cent of all arms purchases during the past five years. In Feb 2012, India placed an order for 126 Rafale MMRCA (medium multi-role combat aircraft) fighter jets from Dassault of France. To cost 20 billion USD (TOI, 1 Feb 2012), it is considered the largest single order for military equipment in the history of capitalism. This order is in addition to another order for 272 Sukhoi-30MKI fighter planes worth \$12 billion under execution from Russia.

According to the *Statesman* of 17 March 2012, India has increased its defense spending by 17.6 percent to \$47 billion.

But even this frenzied militarisation is not enough for the Indian bourgeoisie. We can see this in another campaign waged in the Indian media in April 2012, just a few days before the launch of Agni-V. In the beginning of April, the head of the Indian Army wrote a long letter to the Prime Minister. This letter told the PM that the Indian army is not equipped for war as it does not have sufficient arms and ammunitions. The letter was leaked to the press and was taken up by the parliament. After discussions with the heads of Army, Air Force and Navy, the parliament has now declared that Indian forces do not have sufficient arms and ammunition to wage a war. Although having an element of faction fights, this campaign primarily served two functions for the bourgeoisie. One is to swamp and hide the fact from its own people that India is already a huge spender on armaments – the biggest buyer in the global arms bazaar. The second is to convince the exploited population that even more needs to be spent on militarisation.

We should be clear on one thing – the Indian bourgeoisie is not the only one engaged in frantic militarisation. All countries in Asia – Japan, South and North Korea, Philippines, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia etc are engaged in the same race. Saudi Arabia and its sister Emirates are spending nearly 100 billion USD on militarisation. China is leading the arms race in Asia today and has doubled its military spending to nearly 150 billion USD this year. Even the global cop, the USA, has accelerated its military spending focused on Asia in general and China in particular.

Why this arms race in Asia?

In the beginning of last century capitalism entered its phase of decadence. What this meant was that existing world markets got divided among the main capitalist powers and these markets were no longer sufficient to absorb the products of all the capitalist nations. To expand or even to exist, each capitalist country was compelled to snatch

necessary markets from its rivals. The only alternative available to every capitalist country was to confront its rivals in massive global military confrontations and to defeat them or to accept defeat and subordination to its enemies. This was the stark alternative that led to gigantic militarisation throughout Europe and America from the beginning of the 20th century. It was the stark alternative which was monstrously played out in World Wars One and Two, each of which led to the slaughter of millions of people and the destruction of whole nations and continents.

Since the end of the second war, this process of military confrontation and preparation for them has gone on unabated among the old imperialist powers till today. In the period of decadence capitalism can survive only by war. As a result all countries are permanently engaged in furious preparations for war.

In the last few decades the economic power of China, India and many other countries in Asia has multiplied. Now capitalism in these countries is faced with same alternative, the same choices as the advanced capitalist countries started facing last century. And these newly 'emerging powers' have been responding to the situation like old imperialist powers, which is to undertake a massive process of militarisation and preparations for war. We can see this underway throughout Asia.

This despite the fact that the working class in these countries, above all in India and China, lives in abject poverty, misery and in a condition of mass unemployment.

As we have seen, the Indian bourgeoisie like its counterparts in other countries is also engaged in an accelerating process of militarisation. The recent launch of the ICBM is situated in this sinister continuity. It is an effort by the Indian bourgeoisie to gain parity in destructive power with its immediate imperialist competitor, the Chinese bourgeoisie.

Bourgeoisie and working class have nothing in common

The arms race is inevitable for a decadent capitalist system. It results from material conditions

of advanced phase of decadent capitalism. Today, capitalism lives and can only live by war. The bourgeoisie cannot get rid of this.

On the other hand the working class is the main victim of all the competition between capitalist nations. Wars and war-mongering tends to destroy its unity and weaken it in front of its class enemy, the bourgeoisie. Preparations for war intensify its exploitation and worsen its living conditions. And the wars by which bourgeoisie of different nations try to settle their scores come as the greatest attack on the working class. It is the working class which pays the price of wars of the bourgeoisie by its lives. Due to its position within capitalism, only the working class can put an end to wars of the bourgeoisie by destroying capitalism.

What should the working class do?

The bourgeoisie is never tired of using every means to deepen the impact of nationalistic fervor in the working class and toiling masses. In past, nationalism has been very effectively used by the bourgeoisie to crush revolutionary upsurges of the working class. It is enemy number one of the world working class. The working class should develop strong indignation against the poison of nationalism and firmly defend the principle of internationalism.

The working class cannot and should not take sides in imperialist war and war preparation. It must condemn all war-mongering. Response of the working class in India to the launch of ICBM by 'its' bourgeoisie cannot be anything but condemnation and denunciation.

The working class has to intensify its class struggle everywhere in the world against intensifying attacks on its living and working conditions. Self-organisation, extension, politicisation, territorial and international unification of these struggles are indispensable for marching forward toward the goal of putting an end to the global capitalist system, the root cause of all social and economic problems, of the arms race, war-mongering and war. This alone can save humanity. There is no other way. **S 25/04/12**

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Downgrading the notion of economic recovery

On the other hand:

“Michael Saunders, an economist at Citigroup, said Britain was experiencing ‘the deepest recession and weakest recovery for 100 years.... It is now four years since real GDP peaked in the first quarter of 2008,’ he said, noting that the level of GDP at the end of the first quarter of 2012 stood 4.3 per cent below its pre-recession peak”.

The second of these interpretations is the more direct and simple interpretation of the figures and, indeed, it is not obvious what the difference is between under-delivering on growth and retardation in the rate of growth, which includes the possibility of negative growth. However, there are plenty of commentators who explicitly repudiate the figures, and refuse to take them as a basis of discussion at all. The most common argument is that GDP figures are susceptible to revision (which may not be complete for several years). Therefore, so the argument goes, worrying about a double dip recession, which may turn out not to have happened, distorts the discussion on where the economy is going. Even the Bank of England shares a degree of doubt about the picture painted by the ONS (Office of National Statistics – the body that produces figures on GDP). Since the MPC (the Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of England) is the body that sets interest rates and determines the level of quantitative easing this is not a minor point.

Like many of the economic commentators, the MPC uses a range of indicators as well as historical information to guide its judgement on these questions; so, if it is not convinced by the ONS figures, then it seems that the British bourgeoisie is simply not sure of the dynamic of its economy at this stage. This, in itself stands in sharp contrast to the way that the economic situation was presented two years ago. It is instructive to compare

the bourgeoisie's discussion then with now.

The bourgeoisie's expectations of recovery change downwards

At the end of 2010 the bourgeoisie was able to present the following figures for the recovery in the G8 countries (on an annualised basis): US: 3.0% growth in GDP; Germany: 4.1%; Russia: 4.5%; Japan: 2.4%; Canada: 3.0%; France: 1.6%; Italy: 1.3%; UK: 1.7%.

In addition China and India had not suffered a recession and had growth rates of 9.6% and 8.8% respectively.

This provided the context for the discussion of the recovery at that time – the word 'Recovery' was then always used with a definite article, to leave no one in doubt about the overall trajectory. Any glitch in the upward curve or any factor that looked unfavourable was treated as a difficulty with the recovery, rather than putting it in question.

And the figures from that period do look quite convincing, taken in themselves. Bourgeois commentators who suggested that there might be a second downturn were regarded as undermining confidence and therefore making a negative outcome a self-fulfilling prophecy (this argument is still deployed, even now).

According to the *Financial Times*, if the official figures from the ONS are accepted, Britain has just joined the list of countries that have experienced a double dip recession which includes Italy, Ireland, Spain and Portugal. The growth figures for France, Italy and Britain in the 'good year' of 2010 were by far the lowest: 1.6%, 1.3% and 1.7% respectively. So, it is not exactly surprising that Britain and Italy have already fallen into recession again (or else into a perspective of very low growth, as some commentators would prefer

to put it). It is perhaps more surprising that France has not joined this company. As for Ireland, it was only a few weeks ago that the *Financial Times* leader referred to Ireland as the 'poster boy' for the policy of austerity, since it seemed to be succeeding in developing its export sector strongly as a basis for its eventual recovery.

But politicians are not interested in analysis or explanations, just someone else to blame. Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls has thrown off accusations that the Labour government might have played a role in the development of the economic crisis, but also accuses Cameron of making a "desperate attempt to blame the Eurozone for pushing Britain back into recession".

While bourgeois politicians are no doubt disposed to blame foreigners for the economic crisis, as a useful get out clause, the reality is that Britain's economic trajectory is interwoven with that of the Eurozone, and that the Eurozone looks more fragile as time passes. For example, the *FT* (24/4/12) reported a key development: "The (Dutch) government's collapse after far-right politician Geert Wilders pulled out of budget talks threatens to move the political battle over austerity from Europe's peripheral south to the heart of the Eurozone."

The figures recently released for the Spanish economy, showing one in five people out of work and one in every two between the age of 18 and 25, were widely acknowledged to be as alarming as anything to come out of Greece.

Meanwhile, "In Ireland, the PMI [purchasing managers index] showed very slow growth, falling to 50.1 from 51.5 in March. In the Netherlands the index fell to 49 from 49.6 the previous month as new order declined. A 'flash' PMI for the Eurozone, released late last week, showed manufacturing activity in the troubled currency union falling

to a 34-month low." (Any number above 50 indicates growth in this context.)

Europe is screwed but aren't the US and China doing OK?

On the other hand: "The US purchasing managers' index recorded a surprise increase from 53.4 in March to 54.8 in April, the strongest since June 2011, assuaging fears of a 'spring slowdown' in the world's largest economy.... Meanwhile, the official Chinese manufacturing PMI rose to its highest in more than a year, from 53.1 in March. It was also China's fifth consecutive month above the 50 level."

The article in which this information is encapsulated is titled: 'US and China data eases concerns'. Presumably it will not very effectively ease the concerns of anyone who happens to live in Europe, or indeed anywhere other than the US or China. However, the bourgeoisie do seem now to be contemplating a move towards 'recovery' confined essentially to these two countries, with Europe's fate considered essentially peripheral to the issue:

"The robust numbers from the two world's two largest economies will raise hopes that the global economy can shrug off the effects of a deepening downturn in Europe." (from the same article about 'easing concerns')

If the alleged global trend towards economic 'recovery' has to be accomplished without reference to Europe, then we can see how restricted the bourgeoisie's concept of economic recovery has become in two short years. In reality, their talk of recovery is no more than self-deception. Capitalism is a global system and it cannot 'work' in one or two areas of the globe while other of its vital organs cease to function. **Hardin 3/5/12**

Massacres in Syria, crisis in Iran

The threat of an imperialist disaster

In 1982 the Syrian army bloodily crushed the rebellious population of Hama. The number of victims has never been reliably counted: estimates vary between 10,000 and 40,000¹. At the time nobody talked about intervening to protect the population; nobody demanded the resignation of Hafez el-Assad, the father of today's Syrian president Bashar al-Assad.

Since then the world has changed: the collapse of the old bloc system and the weakening of US 'leadership' have given free rein to the imperialist appetites of regional powers like Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Syria, Israel and the deepening of the crisis is more and more reducing the populations to poverty. The growing exasperation is fuelling revolt against the existing regimes.

For Syria, it began with several months of demonstrations against unemployment and poverty, involving the exploited from all kinds of backgrounds: Druze, Sunni, Christian, Kurds, men, women and children all together in their protests for a better life. But the situation Syria has taken a sinister turn. The working class in this country is very weak and this has allowed the social protests to be recuperated into a struggle for power between factions of the ruling class.

For the government and the pro-Assad armed forces, the stakes are clear. It's a question of staying in power at any price. For the opposition, it's a question of taking power for themselves. But the opposition is a mish-mash of bourgeois cliques, each one rivalling the other, united only by hostility to Assad. The Christians look askance at the Islamists and fear that they will suffer the same fate as the Copts in Egypt; some of the Kurds are trying to negotiate with the regime; and the latter holds onto the support of the Alawite religious minority, to which the presidential clique belongs.

The opposition coalition, the National Council, would have no significant political or military existence were it not supported by outside forces, each with their own imperialist objectives. These include the countries of the Arab League, with Saudi Arabia at the front, and Turkey, but also France, Britain, Israel and the USA.

The struggle between the backers of the various factions is also being waged at the UN. Russia and China have twice vetoed draft resolutions on Syria. The most recent one proposed by the Arab League calls for nothing less than the ousting of Bashar al-Assad. After several days of sordid negotiations, on March 21 the UN Security Council, with the accord of Russia and China, adopted a declaration which aimed to put a stop to the violence through the dispatch of a famous special envoy, Kofi Annan, leading a delegation which, it was clearly understood, had no power to constrain anyone.

But why have none of these foreign imperialist powers involved in this conflict not yet intervened directly as was the case for example in Libya a few months ago? This is mainly because the opposition factions themselves realise that visible reliance on foreign powers would make it impossible for their own regime to have any legitimacy.

But this is no guarantee that the threat of all-out imperialist war, which is knocking at Syria's door, won't break out in the near future. According to Iranian media, Turkey is massing troops and materiel at its Syrian frontier. The Syrian regime, backed by China, Russia and Iran, is preparing its arsenal of Russian-built ballistic missiles in underground bunkers in the region of Kamechi and Deir ez-Zor, near the frontier with Iraq.

We need to ask why this country is attracting such interest from the imperialist powers. The Syrian conflict cannot simply be understood on its own terms but is part of a far wider regional confrontation with Iran.

Iran at the heart of the world imperialist torment

On February 7 last year the *New York Times* declared: "Syria is already the beginning of the war with Iran": a war which has not been unleashed overtly but which lurks in the shadows behind the Syria conflict.

The Assad regime is Tehran's main ally in the region and Syria is an essential strategic zone for Iran. The alliance with this country gives Tehran a

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hama_massacre



direct opening to the strategic space of the Mediterranean and Israel, with military means directly on the borders of the Zionist state. But this potential, hidden war has its roots in the fact that the Middle East is once again a focus for all the imperialist tensions built into capitalism.

This region of the world is a great crossroads between east and west. Europe and Asia meet in Istanbul. Russia and the northern countries look across the Mediterranean to the African continent and the major oceans. And, above all, oil is a vital economic and military weapon. Everyone has an interest in controlling it. Without oil, no factory can run and no plane can take off. This is one of the key reasons why all the imperialisms are involved in this part of the world.

In this struggle for domination, the rise to power of a nuclear Iran, imposing itself across the whole region, is quite unacceptable for its rivals. Iran is completely encircled militarily. The American army is installed on all its frontiers. As for the Persian Gulf, it's so stuffed full of warships that you could cross it without getting your feet wet. The Israeli state doesn't cease proclaiming that it will never allow Iran to possess nuclear weapons and fears it will have the capacity to build one within the next year. Israel's declaration to the world is terrifying because this is a very dangerous situation: Iran is a country of over 70 million people with a 'respectable' army. A direct confrontation between the two would be catastrophic.

Catastrophic consequences

Economic

Iran's political and religious leaders have asserted recently that they would respond with all means at their disposal if their country was attacked. For example, it has threatened to sink its own ships in the Straits of Hormuz, using the wrecks to create navigational hazards that would effectively close the channel. This means a major part of world oil production would not be able to reach its destination. The damage to a capitalist economy, already in an open crisis, would be enormous.

Ecological

The ecological consequences could be irreversible. Military assaults on nuclear reactors have obvious dangers and it would require tactical nuclear weapons to seriously damage certain Iranian installations which are buried under thousands of tons of concrete and rock². Such an assault, nuclear or not, would almost certainly provoke Iranian counter strikes against Israeli reactors. Use of even tactical nuclear weapons (still many times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb) would cross an important Rubicon and give free reign to other nuclear powers to employ theirs.

Humanitarian

Since the outbreak of the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, total chaos rules in these countries. There are daily murderous bombings and shootings. The populations desperately try to survive from day to day. The bourgeois press says it openly: "Afghanistan is suffering from a general lassitude. The fatigue of the Afghans is met with the fatigue of the westerners" (*le Monde*, 21.3.12). But while for the bourgeois press the world is simply tired of the war in Afghanistan, for the population itself it's more a matter of exasperation and despair. If war against Iran took place, involving larger populations and heavier weapons, the human catastrophe would be even more widespread.

2. <http://rt.com/news/american-super-conventional-bomb-951/>

And it's unlikely the conflict would remain contained between the initial belligerents. The wider repercussions (including the potential for a wider war) could threaten the population of the whole region.

Divided national bourgeoisies, imperialist alliances on the verge of a major crisis

Just considering some of the possible consequences of an attack on Iran scares those sectors of the bourgeoisie who are trying to maintain a minimum of lucidity. It's a well known fact that many in the Israeli ruling class do not want this war. Meir Dagan, former head of Mossad, has said that "the perspective of an attack on Iran is the stupidest idea I have ever heard". The former director of Shin Bet agrees and even the current military chief has joined in the chorus of disapproval. But it's also well-known that the clique organised around Netanyahu is determined to forge ahead, sowing the seeds for a deep political crisis in the ruling class.

But the most spectacular split is between the US and Israel. The US administration does not, at the present time, want open war with Iran. Bruised by their experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq, the US ruling class would prefer to rely on increasingly heavy sanctions. Despite enormous US pressure Israel is affirming loud and clear that there is no way it will allow Iran to get nuclear weapons, whatever the opinion of its closest allies. The grip of the American superpower continues to weaken and even Israel is now openly challenging its authority. For certain bourgeois commentators, we could see the first real breaks in the hitherto unquestioned US/Israel alliance.

The other major player in the region on the immediate level is Turkey, which has the most significant armed forces in the Middle East (more than 600,000 in active service). Although in the past Turkey was a reliable ally of the US and one of the few local allies of Israel, the rise of Erdogan has subtly altered relations. The Erdogan regime represents the most 'Islamist' sector of the Turkish bourgeoisie and is trying to play its own card of 'democratic' and 'moderate' Islam. It is trying to profit from the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt and is playing the same game in Syria. There was a time when Erdogan took his holidays with Assad, but once the Syrian leader refused to bow to the demands of Ankara and negotiate with the opposition, the alliance broke down. Turkey's efforts to export its model of 'moderate' Islam are also in direct opposition to the efforts of Saudi Arabia to increase its own influence in the region on the basis of ultra-conservative Wahabism.

The possibility of a war over Syria, and then in Iran, is serious enough to persuade the two biggest allies of these countries, China and Russia, to react with increasing strength. For China, Iran is of considerable importance because it supplies it with 11% of its energy needs³. Since its industrial take-off, China has become a new major player in the region. Last December, it warned of the danger of a global conflict around Syria and Iran. It thus declared through the *Global Times*⁴:

"The West suffers from an economic recession, but its efforts to overthrow non-Western governments due to politics and military interests culminate. China, as well as its mammoth neighbour Russia, should keep on high alert and adopt countermeasures if necessary.

China should not shrink before a possible showdown with the West but seek a solution favouring itself. China will adopt concrete measures to show its determination to take its own path. Such a choice is important for China's interests"⁵.

Even if a direct confrontation between the world's big imperialist powers can't be envisaged in the current global context, such declarations show how serious the situation is.

3. <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/iran-and-china>

4. The international current affairs journal belonging to the official *People's Daily* in China

5. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/NEWS/tabid/99/ID/686912/China-not-obliged-to-besiege-Iran.aspx>

Continued on page 2

Spratly conflict

Workers of the Philippines

"Workers of the world, unite!" This is the truth and reality under a capitalist system. We, the workers have no national interest, or nationality to side with and defend as an internationalist class. Wherever and whichever part of the world we may be, we are exploited and oppressed by capital and the local state.

Patriotism and national interest serve only one particular class. History taught us that sovereignty, patriotism, and the state serve only the interest of the bourgeoisie, to control and exploit the working class and the rest of the toiling masses.

The current standoff at the Spratly islands between the Filipino and the Chinese bourgeoisie (both of which are claiming to own the small resource rich islands) cries for "national sovereignty" and "territorial integrity". Calls for "national unity" and "defend national territory" reverberated. The bourgeoisie media is now poisoning the minds of the toiling masses, inculcating them that as one race and nation, capitalists and workers are brothers and allies.

The bourgeoisie has been injecting the workers of both countries "love for the motherland" to divide the workers, fight and kill each other.

Territorial dispute over the Spratly islands: a dispute to gain more profit and an inter-imperialist competition in Asia

The dispute over the Spratly islands is not exclusive between China and the Philippines. Other countries like Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia squabbled with them, and Brunei joined-in claiming for the resource rich island. The basis of each country is their long history of colonial aggression and not their "national sovereignty"¹.

To amass more profit is the foremost reason of each national bourgeoisie disputing over the Spratly Islands. Whoever wins over the current standoff, it will not be the toiling mass of China and the Philippines who will gain from it, but the government, bureaucrats, and the capitalists.

Another main reason is the imperialist interest of contending national bourgeoisies; the Spratly Islands is a thoroughfare which can be strategic for a military base. This is a major reason, why China, Vietnam, Taiwan, and the USA are disputing over the Islands. There have been frictions and armed conflicts for decades now, between China and Vietnam (a USA ally).

Clearly, this friction over the Spratly islands is part of the imperialist rivalry of China and of USA in Asia. There is a need for the ambitious imperialist China to expand its territory because of the global crisis of capitalism. The number one Imperialist power knows this, the USA, and it has given all of its effort to strengthen and guard its borders in Asia².

The national capitals united against the working class

Despite inherent competition of different capitalist factions, national capitals are one in attacking the working class.

As nationalistic/patriotic ideology poisons the workers, diplomatic and economic cooperation amongst the contending countries continue³. As some sections of the population of these contending parties are defending sovereignty⁴, their capitalists and state bureaucrats are feasting and in revelry with their counterparts in the Philippines, China and USA, talking how they could strengthen their economic relations. In other words, they are talking how to intensify their attacks against the proletariat.

1 Other than the International Law, the Philippines stand on their claim to own the Scarborough Shoal since the time of Spanish colonialism while Vietnam since the time of French colonialism. And imperialist China base their stand along the same line.

2 With the balance of power between imperialist China and USA in Asia, North Korea is the only ally of China.

This does not follow that USA is the prime enemy in Asia, and "secondary enemies" or "tactical allies" the other competing rival countries. The primary enemy of the world proletariat is the bourgeoisie of the world.

3 The economic relation between the Philippines and China is continually expanding, the same with China and the USA. In fact, China is USA's biggest creditor.

4 Cyber hackers of both China and the Philippines are destroying websites of their "enemy" country.

nes and China, unite!

National bourgeoisie of disputing countries extremely exploits and oppresses the workers. Hundreds of thousands of workers in China launched wildcat strikes or demonstrations almost every day against their state and capitalists. Strikes are happening in Vietnam because of low-wages and absence of benefits. Filipino workers face and experience the same issues. The hardships of the proletarians facing the “third world” are nothing different from the hardships of their brothers/sisters in the “first world” countries, particularly the USA.

The main and central objective of each national capital is to fan the flame of tension in order to gain the favor of discontented masses against foreign nation “trampling upon our sovereign right.”

Class unity and struggle against the poison of nationalism and patriotism

It is the capitalist class, local or foreign, the true and primary enemy of the working class.

We should not support the calls of our national bourgeoisie for “national sovereignty” and “defend national territory”. The truth behind these calls is, it is the bourgeoisie’s sovereignty to exploit and oppress more the working class; it is the capitalist’s territory to amass more profit from our free labor.

Instead, we should unite Filipino and Chinese workers together with our class brothers/sisters in the world to topple down our “own” national bourgeoisies. We must condemn the continued drum beating of our governments and threats of war; war that will only worsen our conditions and lead us to extreme poverty, death, destruction to property, and division among us.

We know that in the current standoff, none of the contending parties has the capacity or the interest to launch an all-out military confrontation and aggression⁵. However, the propaganda of a possible war may attract and influence sections of people who are relatively backward in their consciousness to support their local national bourgeoisie against a foreign bourgeoisie. The main and central objective of the national bourgeoisie of China and the Philippines is to poison the minds of the toiling masses with nationalist fervor and ideology.

Comrades, Filipino and Chinese workers, let us not be persuaded by these sweet talks and smooth speeches, and by poisonous propaganda of our “own” governments! Let us continue our struggle against all attacks of capital upon our ranks within our countries. Let us continue to expose the oppressive and exploitative nature of the capitalist class, local or foreign. We need to strengthen our unity as a class!

“National sovereignty” and “national unity” are chains that will keep us forever enslaved from this capitalist prison. These are devices divisive for the working class of the world. Movements with nationalist line are movements meant to weaken further the international proletarian movement.

Filipino and Chinese proletariats it is not our interest and we have nothing to gain whoever win and own the Spratly islands. Our interest is to free ourselves from poverty, from being wage slaves. Our interest is to end capitalism and build a society free from oppression and exploitation. Our enemies are the governments of the Philippines, Imperialist China, and all Imperialist countries⁶.

Capitalism is the root-cause of wars in the era of imperialism. The only guarantee for humanity to

⁵ The standoff at Spratly islands had several small military confrontations between Vietnam and China, calibrated and controlled by both countries not to explode into a full-scale war since their only objective is to heighten the nationalist ideology of their countries. Between China and the Philippines, there is a possibility of small military confrontation drum-beaten by the armed forces of the Philippines, USA, and China. Chinese media had lately announced the possibility of small military confrontations between China and the Philippines.

⁶ The Philippine maoist movement helps the Filipino bourgeoisie campaigning for nationalist ideology amongst the ranks of Filipino workers. Maoists firmly held-on to the counter-revolutionary tactic of “chase the lesser evil”, shown clearly through the statements of their legal organizations, about the friction between China and USA. However, it is not only the Maoist movement has this thinking, all the rest of the left organizations are embracing the same bankrupt tactics.

Political divisions in the Chinese ruling class



We recently cast an eye over the development of class struggle in China¹ and here we want to look at some of the problems that will affect the bourgeoisie of the People’s Republic in the run-up to the eighteenth Communist Party Conference in autumn this year when the new leadership will be anointed. But first, a murder mystery – or a suspected murder mystery:

A British national called Neil Heywood, living in China with his Chinese wife died in a hotel room in suspicious circumstances in the middle of last November. Bo Xilai, the party boss of Chongqing and son of a veteran of Mao’s “Long March” and of the Cultural Revolution, has been removed from his post and his wife, Gu Kailai, is in jail charged with murder. More intrigue was involved when Bo’s ex-police chief and previous ally, Wang Lijun, defected to the US through its consulate in Chengdu. Reports ascribed Heywood’s death to a coronary and to excessive alcohol. At any rate, there was no post-mortem and the body was quickly cremated. Heywood was a friend and apparently some sort of financial advisor to the family of Bo before a reported falling out. Heywood, one of several ‘class of 84’ Old-Harrovians resident in and around Beijing, with links to the higher echelons of the Chinese state, also worked for the corporate intelligence unit, Hakluyt, set up by ex-MI6 elements. The British security services have said that he wasn’t working for them, which is exactly what they would say. Despite being pressed by Heywood’s British family and the British embassy being very aware of his death and the strange circumstances around it, the Foreign Office only asked the Chinese authorities to open an enquiry into his death in February/March this year – nearly four months after the event. Whatever the murky goings on here, these events have become part of the manoeuvring that, despite its constant references to “unity”, is going on in this Stalinist state. Party unity, or a facade of unity, is important to present both to the population at large and the outside world; and even if Bo has been set up here, events point to some faction fighting within the regime as Bo was likely to be appointed to the standing committee of the Politburo on the basis of his wider support within the ranks of the bourgeoisie. Another factor it points to is the endemic corruption throughout the regime, and the party has long warned that this corruption is a great threat to its grip on power. In contrast to the old party cadres and factions, the current individuals in the elite have made enormous monetary gains which have been spread about through families and cliques.

1. <http://en.internationalism.org/icconline/201204/4837/china-intensification-workers-struggles>

have lasting peace is the total destruction of capitalism.

**WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!
DOWN WITH THE CAPITALIST CLASS,
LOCAL AND FOREIGN!
OVERTHROW OUR “OWN” NATIONAL
GOVERNMENTS AND NATIONALIST
IDEOLOGY!
DOWN WITH IMPERIALIST CHINA AND
AMERICA!
DOWN WITH THE WORLD
IMPERIALIST SYSTEM!**

Internasionalismo, 28 April 2012

These people generally live above the law and can make a lot of money. They would need advice though on how to get it out of China. This is possibly where the Old-Harrovian connections come in. *China World* (18/4/12), quotes Bloomberg on the leadership’s wealth. The politically well-connected have thrived in China and the country’s leaders, President Jintao and Premier Jiabao, have amassed staggering amounts of wealth: “... the families of the various members of the Politburo have very large assets”. Bloomberg went on to say, in a special report on China: “*The National People’s Congress 70 richest members added more to their wealth last year than the combined net worth of the US Congress, the president and his cabinet and the US Supreme Court judges*”. It estimates their average worth at \$1.28 billion, making Mitt Romney look skint.

Even with a projected lower growth rate of around 7.5%, something other capitals would kill for, the Chinese state is facing growing problems. The era of cheap labour has finished and, along with mounting and poisonous corruption, there has been an enormous growth in social inequality. This latter alone will make the so-called “necessity for reforms” all the more problematic. One of the striking aspects of the tens of thousands of reported “incidents” is how many were undertaken by the peasants and the older generation against arrogant and corrupt land seizures and pollution. The whole “democratic” campaign, mostly engendered outside China, extends beyond Free Trade Unions and towards moves to local democracy. This is partly a response to these extremely militant protests against the Party structures and the official unions. For example, the protests against land seizures took on the proportions of an uprising in Wukan last year; this is far from the Chinese leadership’s preaching about the “harmonious society” and is indicative that growth in China has benefited capital and the elite and not the workers and peasants of this country. Further problems will come as the benefit to capital of the “demographic dividend” ie, the excess of young workers which has fuelled the “economic miracle”, fades as a result of the falling birthrate: “*In 2000, there were six workers for every over-60. By 2030, there will be barely two*” (Tania Branigan, *Guardian*, March 20). People in rural areas rely on their own work and that of their children but the culture of looking after the parents has been smashed by the needs of the capitalist economy. Children may work far from their parents now and many won’t have the time, money or energy to look after them. And the situation with pensions and care for the old is even worse than in the west, with the World Bank stating that China has only enough care home places for 1.6% of its over-60s.

Another endemic problem for China (and the world) is pollution. In early March Vice Minister of the Environment, Wu Xiaoping, admitted that three-quarters of Chinese cities do not meet the wildly lenient standards on air quality. US embassy readings in the capital over one 24-hour period showed air quality micrograms-per-metre readings five-and-a-half times greater than upper US limits, and this is by no means the worst affected city. This pollution has an immediate impact on cardiovascular and respiratory diseases as well as lung cancer over the longer term. The World Health Organisation estimated deaths in China from respiratory diseases alone to be 750,000 a year. Decidedly dangerous, heavy metal pollution has increased, with the Chinese Environment Minister admitting to 30 serious incidents since 2009. Carbon dioxide emissions have more than doubled in the last ten years and Environment Ministry studies suggest that 40% of river water will make you sick. Water shortages are becoming critical with extensive droughts forecast and the great leap forward into hydro power has faltered because of the lack of water, while, according to Yang Fuqiang of the World Resources Institute, coal increased its share of national energy supply to above 72%. And here, the democratic dreamers appeal to investors to move to cleaner energy – as if they are going to listen. According to Yang, if environmental damage was included, China’s

growth rate would be halved.

On the level of imperialism, tensions have increased with India over Tibet (and Nepal) and China has taken political umbrage over India’s position vis-a-vis the Dalai Lama. With the self-immolation of a number of Buddhist monks these last weeks, protests in Tibet against the rigours of Chinese occupation have grown enormously in both size and strength to such an extent that the “People’s Army” have had to withdraw in places or risk a massacre of protesters of Syrian proportions. There have also been demonstrations and protest inside China in Chinqui and Szechuan, home to millions of Tibetans. Unrest is also continuing in the Uighur region. On a wider level, there’s a new generation of Chinese diplomats coming through well versed in the imperatives of China’s national interests world-wide.

A big negative at the moment for China concerns developments in Myanmar (Burma) where Chinese imperialism very much had the upper hand. It began about a year ago when a major hydro-electric dam construction was halted after protests against China’s land purchase and pollution of the environment. There is a battle taking place here for influence, with the USA, as part of the latter’s Asia/Pacific push, coming directly against China’s interests. As the *New York Times*, 8/4/12 put it: “*As Myanmar loosens the grip of decades of military dictatorship and improves links with the United States, China fears a threat to a strategic partnership that offers access to the Indian Ocean and a long-sought short cut for oil deliveries from the Middle East*”. Prime Minister Cameron’s break from his arms sales trip last week to visit Aung San Suu Kyi, the democratic pin-up politician, shows Britain backing the US push as well as defending its own imperialist interests in the region. The British intelligence services have a long standing involvement and interest in her “National League for Democracy” – a likely force in the forthcoming elections. Since he got back to the UK, Cameron has lobbied hard in Europe for the lifting of sanctions against the regime – again showing how sanctions are just another weapon of imperialism. Further assertiveness against China by the US is demonstrated in the plans to base American long-range B52 bombers in northern Australia along with the deployment of 2,500 US marines to be based in Darwin (*Times*, 11.4.12). Both moves show the closer cooperation between the Pentagon and the Australian military which is clearly aimed towards China.

At the end of her recent trip to China Hilary Clinton said relations between the US and China “*will determine the course of history in the 21st century*” (*New York Times* online). The real point of the visit, for the US, was to get China to allow the renminbi to appreciate in value against the dollar, and for diplomacy on various conflicts where the two powers have different interests. So the US wanted to neutralise Chinese opposition to sanctions against Syria and support for North Korea. In the media this has been overshadowed by the affair of the blind dissident, Chen Guangcheng, who escaped house arrest and sought refuge in the US embassy, agreed to leave it and then demanded to leave China. This has allowed the US to exert pressure on the issue of human rights and embarrassed China. It is difficult to believe it was a coincidence.

The new leadership, the next generation of gangsters, will come out of the smoke and mirrors of the autumn Party Congress. There will probably be no surprises and the layer of what they call the “*princelings*” (of which the disgraced Bo was one) are already being prepared or eliminated. There are profound political, economic and social challenges facing the regime, not least a growing property bubble, inflation and bankrupt regions with huge local debts; as well as the deepening crisis of the whole capitalist system and the undefeated and combative working class – a very important battalion of the world proletariat - that we looked at in the first (online) article. **Baboon 4/5/12**

How you can help the ICC

The gravity of the situation facing humanity is increasingly obvious. The world capitalist economy, after four decades of trying to deal with an open economic crisis, is breaking down in front of our eyes. The perspectives posed by the destruction of the environment appear more sombre with each new scientific survey. War, starvation, repression and corruption are the daily lot of millions.

At the same time, the working class and the other oppressed layers of society are beginning to resist capitalism's demands for sacrifice and austerity. Social revolts, occupations, demonstrations and strike movements have broken out in a whole series of countries from North Africa to Europe and North and South America.

The development of all these contradictions and conflicts more than ever confirms the need for the active presence of an organisation of revolutionaries, able to analyse a rapidly evolving situation, to speak clearly with a unified voice across borders and continents, to participate directly in the movements of the exploited and help clarify their methods and aims.

There is no hiding the fact that the forces of the ICC are extremely limited in comparison to the enormous responsibilities we face. We are seeing the worldwide emergence of a new generation looking for revolutionary answers to the crisis of this system. It is essential for those who sympathise with the overall aims of our organisation to connect with the ICC and make their own contribution to its capacity to act and to grow.

We are not only talking about joining our organisation here, although we will come to that. We value any kind of support and assistance that all those who are in general agreement with our politics can offer.

How can you help?

First, by discussing with us. Write to us by letter, email, or take part in our online discussion forum. Come to our public meetings and meetings organised for contacts. Raise questions about our positions, analyses, the way we write, the way our website works, etc etc.

Write for our website and papers, whether reports on meetings you have attended, what's happening in your workplace, sector, or neighbourhood, or more developed articles, theoretical contributions, etc.

Help us translate from/into the many different languages in which we write: the ICC has web pages of varying size in English, French, Spanish, German, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese, Hungarian, Swedish, Finnish, Russian, Turkish, Bengali, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino. There are always too many articles to translate into all the languages, including some of the most basic texts of our organisation. If you are able to translate into these or other languages, let us know.

Participate in our public activities: selling the press on the street, speaking and distributing our press and leaflets at picket lines, demonstrations, occupations. Help us to intervene at political meetings, go along to them yourselves and argue for revolutionary ideas; contribute to the internet discussion forums in which we participate regularly, such as www.libcom.org or www.revleft.com (in particular the left communist forum on the latter) and www.red-marx.com, etc.

If you know others who are also interested in talking about revolutionary politics and the class struggle, set up discussion circles, class struggle forums or similar groupings, which we would be very happy to help you get going and to take part in ourselves.

Contribute practical skills and resources: photos, artwork, computer skills...

Help increase our very restricted finances by making regular financial donations, subscribing to our press, taking extra copies to sell to those you know, or to place in local bookshops.

Joining the ICC

We enthusiastically welcome requests by comrades who want to raise their support for the organisation to a higher level by becoming members.

While not every sympathiser will join the organ-

isation, we think that becoming a member means taking part in the history of the proletarian class struggle in the fullest sense. The proletariat is by nature a class whose strength lies in its capacity for collective organisation, and this is above all true for its revolutionary elements, which have always sought to unite in organisations to defend the communist perspective against the huge weight of the dominant ideology. Becoming a member of the ICC enables comrades to participate directly in the reflection and discussions that are constantly underway inside the organisation and to make the most effective contribution to our intervention in the class struggle. To shape the analyses and policies of the organisation, the individual militant's most useful place is inside it, while for the organisation as a whole, the members are an irreplaceable resource which it can count on and through which it can develop its activities on a world wide scale.

Before joining the ICC, it is essential for any comrade to have an in-depth discussion about our fundamental political positions, which are linked by a general marxist coherence and contained in our platform (which can be found online) so that those who become members do so out of genuine conviction and are able to argue for our political positions because they have a real understanding of them. It is equally important to discuss our organisational statutes and agree to the basic principles and rules which guide our functioning: how we collectively organise at the local, national, and international level, the role of congresses and central organs, how we conduct our internal debates, what is expected of members in terms of their participation in the life of the organisation, and so on¹.

In this sense, we are in the tradition of the Bolshevik party, for whom a member was someone who not only agreed with the party's programme but aimed to actively defend it through the activities of the organisation, and was therefore ready to adhere to its method of functioning as embodied in its statutes.

This is not an overnight process and takes time and patience. Unlike the leftist groups, Trotskyist and others, who falsely claim descent from Bolshevism, we do not seek to 'recruit' at any price, and therefore end up with members who are no more than pawns in the games of a bureaucratic leadership. A real communist organisation can only flourish if its members have a profound understanding of its positions and analyses and are able to take part in the collective effort to apply and develop them.

Revolutionary politics is not a hobby: It involves both an intellectual and an emotional commitment to facing the demands of the class struggle. But neither is it a monkish activity, cut off from the lives and concerns of the rest of the working class. We are not a cult, seeking to regulate every aspect of our members' lives, turning them into fanatics incapable of critical thought. Neither do we expect every member to be 'experts' in all aspects of marxist theory, or to enter our ranks with highly developed skills in writing or public speaking. We recognise that individual comrades will have varying capacities in different areas. We work on the communist principle that everyone contributes according to their means – that it is the task of the collective to harness all these individual energies in the most effective way.

The decision to enter a revolutionary organisation is not one to be taken lightly. But joining the ICC means becoming part of a world-wide fraternity struggling for a common goal – the only goal which really offers a future for humanity.

ICC, November 2011

1. The basic approach contained in our statutes can be found in this text: http://en.internationalism.org/specialtexts/IR033_functioning.htm

Welcome to the new ICC sections in Peru and Ecuador

We are very pleased to announce the formation of two new sections of the ICC, in Peru and Ecuador.

The constitution of a new section of our organisation is always a very important event for us. First because it is further evidence of the capacity of the world proletariat, despite its difficulties, to give rise to revolutionary minorities on an international scale; and secondly because it means that our organisation is able to strengthen its global presence.

The formation of two new sections of the ICC is taking place in a situation where the working class has, since 2003, begun to recover from the long period of retreat in its consciousness and its militancy that followed the events of 1989¹. This recovery has been expressed by a whole series of struggles which show a growing awareness of the impasse facing world capitalism and by the emergence, on an international scale, of internationalist minorities looking for contact among themselves, posing many questions, searching for a revolutionary coherence and debating the perspectives for the development of the class struggle. Part of this milieu has turned to the positions of the communist left and some of these elements have joined our organisation. Thus in 2007 an ICC nu-

cleus was created in Brazil². In 2009 we greeted the creation of two new sections of the ICC in the Philippines and Turkey³.

The two new sections are also the product of a sustained effort by our organisation and its militants to take part in political discussion and clarification, to make links wherever there are groups or individuals searching for communist ideas, whether or not they enter our organisation.

Our new sections were, before joining us, groups of this kind, whether they turned straight away towards political clarification around the positions of the ICC, as in Ecuador, or whether they came from different political backgrounds, as in Peru. In both cases, they developed through discussion with other political forces as well as through systematic discussion with the ICC on the basis of its platform. They always had a commitment to taking position on the major events of the international and national situation⁴. Today, they continue to evolve in a milieu which is very rich in contacts.

Based in South America, these two new sections will reinforce the intervention of the ICC in the Spanish language, and its presence in Latin America where the ICC was already present in Venezuela, Mexico and Brazil.

The whole of the ICC send a warm and fraternal greeting to these new sections and the comrades who form them. **ICC, April 2012**

2. Welcome to the ICC nucleus in Brazil (*WR* 306)

3. <http://en.internationalism.org/icconline/2009/philippines-turkey>

4. Some of these statements have been published in *Accion Proletaria*, the ICC's paper in Spain, and on ICC Online in the Spanish language

ICC Public meetings

Day of discussion

23 June in London

*What can we learn from the Occupy movements?
Other discussions on art, religion, etc*

The ICC invites you to a day of discussion in London on 23 June. The main focus of the day will be a discussion about the significance of the social movements of 2011. What can we learn from the revolts that broke out Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, Greece, Spain, the USA, the UK and many other countries? What were their strengths and weaknesses? How do they relate to the more general struggle of the working class against capitalism?

Over the past year we have published a large number of articles and documents about these movements, which can be found on our website at <http://en.internationalism.org>. More recently we have published a general statement about them: <http://en.internationalism.org/icconline/201203/4766/statement-social-movements-2011>. We aim to start the morning's discussion with a presentation of this text, but we hope to have time to discuss other contributions and analyses of how these movements took shape in different cities and countries.

In the afternoon we are planning to organise shorter discussions around more general topics. At the moment we have one planned on marxism and art, and another on the origins of Islam, but we are open to further suggestions, and to offers from all directions to present other topics. So far all three discussions will be presented by sympathisers of the ICC rather than ICC members.

We hope that these discussions will be of interest to comrades in or around revolutionary political organisations, to people who have been actively involved in the social movements, and to anyone asking questions about the nature and future of present-day society – and about the feasibility of getting rid of it.

If you are interested in attending, let us know in advance if you can, especially if you have any accommodation, transport or other problems that might make it difficult for you to come along.

The venue is upstairs at the Lucas Arms, 245a Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8QZ. The first session will go from 11-2 and the afternoon sessions from 3-6. Food can be bought in the pub but we are also planning to go to a nearby restaurant after the meeting.

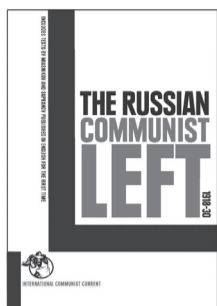
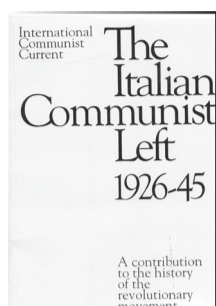
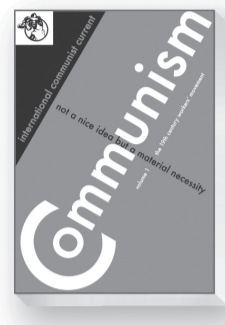
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Discuss with the ICC and others on our online forum

From a thread about the position of art in decaying capitalism

“Why shouldn't art, music and literature, and the artists who produce it, suffer under decadence as does everything else?”

Yes this is one of the crucial political issues in this debate isn't it? Our basic argument is that decadence does not mean the full halting of the productive forces but rather their progressive blocking. As Trotsky says somewhere art is more vulnerable and more sensitive to the effects of decadence than any other area of culture, so we can say without a doubt that art today is blocked, stifled, impotent, but clearly creativity, as a productive force, still attempts to flourish within increasingly impossible restrictions and contradictions. All this helps to confirm our analysis of decadence.

But I think it's really difficult to then make judgments about exactly how things are blocked, and in exactly what way, and point to the evidence for it in individual artists, composers, musical genres etc. Personally I just don't know enough about music theory etc to be able to judge one way or the other. Some of the arguments on this thread (allowing for it to be not all 100% serious) are more questions of individual taste than anything else - the kind of questions that will no doubt still be hotly debated in a future communist society...

But to come back to our understanding of decadence, one of the really interesting things for me is to look at the period around the turn of the 20th century, on the very eve of decadence, which is also an incredibly creative and innovative time in the arts as well as science; Fauvism, Expressionism and Cubism in art, Schoenberg in music, Joyce in literature, not to mention psychoanalysis and relativity theory... This proves the final stage of progressive capitalism was also in many ways its highest stage, in terms of ideas, creativity etc. But it also means that these kinds of artistic de-

velopments often have a very complex, contradictory character, containing both progressive and reactionary elements. I guess as decadence continues you can say that the progressive element tends to diminish, although it doesn't disappear completely...

MH

<http://en.internationalism.org/forum/1056/lonelondoner/4827/stonehenge-bouncy-castle-icant-resist-it>

From a thread about the fundamental economic contradictions of capitalism

First I need to make an apology to comrades, the following post is rather long but I have not been able to participate until now. I have tried to limit the post but brevity is not one of my strong points.

This is a very positive discussion on the question of the causes of the crisis, which has drawn out several important questions: is the fall in rate of profit the causes of overproduction or is it the limit of the market? What is meant by the extension of the market? How does the extension of the market impact on the rate of profit? How do we understand Marx's concept of the mass of profit and its importance in relation to the crisis of overproduction? The question of the inter-relationship between the constant process of the development of the means of production under the pressure of competition, the fall in prices and the rate of profit. The way that the contradictions of capitalism flow and move through the relations of production, and what is the relationship of this dynamic to the cause and development of the crisis?

Ernie

<http://en.internationalism.org/forum/1056/lazarus/4824/icc-internal-debate-causes-post-war-economic-boom>

ICC Online

Recent additions

China: the intensification of workers' struggles

Throughout the last decade the working class in China has been involved in a wave of strikes and protests, counting thousands of workers, as anger and combativity mounts under the weight of capitalist exploitation. The spontaneous strikes, born from the workers themselves, have been over issues across the board: overtime pay, relocation compensation, corruption of officials, wage rises, wage and pension cuts, improved working conditions and reductions in hours, education and health benefits. In sum, the whole gamut of conditions expressed in the intensity of the exploitation of the Chinese state. While largely separate from each other these strikes have shown a definite dynamic and a growing strength to the extent that the **China Briefing** of 29.11.11 warns investors to get used to labour unrest

Solidarity with the oil workers of Kazakhstan in the face of state repression

Mali: a coup that will worsen chaos

Out soon

International Review 149

Massacres in Syria, Iran crisis...

The threat of an imperialist cataclysm in the Middle East

Massive mobilisations in Spain, Mexico, Italy, India....

The union barrier against the self-organisation and unification of the struggles

Contribution to a history of the workers' movement in Africa (V):

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Critique of the book *Dynamics, contradictions and crises of capitalism*
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Contact the ICC

Write to the following addresses without mentioning the name:
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From India use India@internationalism.org

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<http://www.internationalism.org>

Islamophobia, Jihadism, capitalism: same enemy!

Anders Breivik's minute by minute account of how he slaughtered dozens of teenagers at last year's Norwegian Labour Party summer camp makes sickening reading. Breivik's trial has given rise to much debate about whether he is sane or not, whether he acted alone or is part of an organised fascist network, or whether he should be allowed to use the Oslo court as a platform for his political philosophy¹.

The murders committed by Mohamed Merah in Toulouse were on a smaller scale but they were no less chilling: in the playground of a Jewish school a heavily armed man picks out a teacher and three small children and guns them down at point blank range. Merah, of course, was not given a platform to expound his philosophy: he was killed by police marksmen after a short siege. There has been considerable speculation about this also, with some arguing forcefully that he was a double agent working for French security (<http://www.ilfoglio.it/soloqui/12779>).

There are obvious differences in the way the two cases have been handled. In *The Guardian* of 21 April, Jonathan Freedland² points out that as a general rule Islamic terrorists, even when they are kept alive, are not usually given the chance to explain their motives as Breivik has been. And on the face of it, ideologically, far rightists like Breivik and jihadis like Merah are polar opposites; Breivik's obsession is with the threatened 'Islamification' of Europe, while the jihadis claim not only to be acting in revenge for attacks on Muslims in Iraq, Palestine or Afghanistan, but for the creation of a global Caliphate ruled by Sharia law.

But what is most striking about the Islamophobics and the jihadis is the similarity of their ideology and their practices.

For a start, in court Breivik expressed his admiration for al-Qaida's method of organisation through small decentralised cells. It has been suggested that this is a model which groups of the far right are increasingly turning to. Breivik also praised al-Qaida's ruthlessness and spirit of self-sacrifice in the service of a higher ideal.

And when you look at their respective ideologies, they also have a great deal in common.

1. See the article we wrote at the time of the killings: <http://en.internationalism.org/icconline/2011/august/norway>

2. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/apr/20/breivik-terrorist-like-al-qaeda>



A shared racism

Both are deeply racist: the rightist hysteria about the Islamification of Europe is just the latest version of the ideology of White Christian Civilisation threatened by hordes of dark-skinned foreign invaders. At the turn of the 20th century the main threat was presented as the Jews fleeing the pogroms of Russia; a few decades ago it was the black and Asian immigrants brought in to do jobs at lower rates than 'native' workers; today, racism has had to cloak itself in the colours of anti-Islam because overt anti-semitism and anti-black racism are far harder to sell to a population already accustomed to a much more diverse social environment. The English Defence League even has Jewish and Sikh members, united (for now) with white stormtroopers by their hatred of the 'evil religion' of Islam. But behind all this is same morbid 'Aryan' world-view born as a justification for the imperialist expansion of European and American capitalism from the late 19th century onwards.

But the jihadis are no less racist. When it first emerged, Islam, like other monotheistic religions, expressed, in ideological terms, a real tendency towards the unification of humanity beyond tribalism. It was thus open to all ethnic groups and maintained a respectful attitude to the Jewish and Christian religions which it saw as bearers of a previous revelation. But today's jihadism expresses another historic reality: religion, in all its forms, has become a force for division and the maintenance of a decaying social system. In the mind of the jihadis or Taliban-type groups, the 'kaffir' (unbelievers) are indistinguishable from 'foreigners', while the Jews are no longer the People of the Book but the evil conspirators of Nazi paranoia,

and Christian churches are legitimate targets for bombs and massacres. This doctrine of division is even extended to the followers of Islam – al Qaida in Iraq and Pakistan has probably killed more Shia Muslims than members of any other group.

Their hatreds may be directed at different groups, but both the extreme right and the jihadis are implacably opposed to any real movement for the unification of mankind.

A shared morality

Breivik and al-Qaida also share the same conception of morality: the end justifies the means. For Breivik, the teenagers he murdered were not innocent because they support a party that imposes the evil of 'multiculturalism'. But above all they were killed with the intention of sparking off a race war that would lead to the ethnic cleansing of Europe and a new Christian-Aryan millennium. For Merah, small Jewish children can be shot in the head because Israeli jets have killed many more Palestinian children. For Bin Laden and his ilk, killing thousands of civilians in the Twin Towers is a justified response to what the US has done in Afghanistan or Iraq, and will serve the end of rallying the world's Muslims to the banner of Holy War and the new Caliphate.

Of course many liberals will make similar points to ours – it's part of their argument that 'all extremes meet at the same point'. But the most visible extremists are the tip of a much bigger iceberg. Underneath Breivik are all the EDL-types and 'populist' politicians like Le Pen in France and Wilders in Holland who take the line "I don't agree with his methods, but he definitely has a point about the threat of Islamification.....". And underneath them are the mainstream tabloids whose headlines ceaselessly scream about the Muslim terrorists in our midst, the mounting flood of asylum seekers, while the 'respectable' politicians compete with each other to show how tough they are on immigration and are, after all, in charge of the state that deports asylum seekers fleeing the worst miseries of the present system, or bangs them up in detention camps.

Likewise jihadi ideology is only the child of the official ideology of the Arab states who have long used anti-Zionism and a perpetual state of war with Israel as a way of diverting the anger of the masses from their own corrupt and dictatorial practices. And 'radical Islam' also has its 'revolutionary' apologists – Galloway, the SWP and the

official left, whose response to the latest jihadi atrocity is also "I don't agree with their methods but..." because they share the same notion that the USA and Zionism are Imperialist Enemy Number One and see Hezbollah, Hamas, and Iraqi or Afghan jihadis as expressions of 'anti-imperialism'.

All this is the ideological excretion of the real processes at work in contemporary capitalist society: the never-ending drive towards imperialist war, which has become increasingly chaotic and irrational as the system decomposes. The war of each against all, of race against race, of religion against religion, of state against state, is a process which is the most real and devastating threat facing humanity today – the threat of a slide into barbarism and self-destruction. And the liberals who decry extremism and bleat about their humanitarian values don't represent an alternative. They justify the terror bombing of Japanese and German cities at the end of the Second World War, and indeed the whole nightmarish catastrophe of that war, because it was a means to establishing democratic post-war capitalism.

The only worldview that stands in opposition to these ideological divisions is working class internationalism: the simple idea that the exploited of all nations and religions have the same interests in combating their exploitation and their exploiters. This is a combat whose end is the real unification of humanity in a stateless, global community. And it is a combat whose means can only be consistent with its ends. It seeks to win over those caught up in the ideology of the exploiters by demonstrating the need for solidarity, not massacre them as unbelievers. It rejects the practice of indiscriminate revenge and mass murder because it knows that these methods can never result in a establishment of a human society. Yes, the class struggle is a form of war. But the class struggle is truly the war to end war because its aims and its methods are radically opposed to the aims and methods of capitalism and class society. **Amos 3/5/12**

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 statified 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

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

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*.