



# world revolution

## EU, Brexit, populism: Against nationalism in all its forms!

*“The communists are further reproached with desiring to abolish countries and nationality. The workers have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got” (Communist Manifesto, 1848)*

Capitalism, the system of exploitation which rules the planet, cannot maintain itself by force and violence alone. It cannot do without the power of ideology – the endless production of ideas which turn reality on its head and persuade the exploited that their best interests lie in lining up behind their own exploiters. Exactly a hundred years ago, hundreds of thousands of workers from Britain, France, Germany and other countries, at the Battle of the Somme, paid the ultimate price for believing the basic lie of the ruling class – that the workers should ‘fight for their country’, which could only mean fighting and dying for the interests of the ruling class. The horrible massacres of World War One proved once and for all that nationalism is the deadliest ideological enemy of the working class.

Today, after decades of attacks on living standards, of the break-up of industries and communities, of financial shocks and austerity packages, and of a whole series of defeated struggles, the working class is being subjected to a new tidal wave of nationalist poison in the form of the populist campaigns of Trump in the USA, Le Pen in France, the Brexiters in Britain and many other central capitalist countries. These campaigns are openly basing themselves on the real disorientation and anger within the working class, on growing frustration about the lack of jobs, housing, healthcare, on widespread feelings of powerlessness in the face of impersonal, global forces. But the very last thing these campaigns want workers to do is to think critically about the real causes of all these misfortunes. On the contrary, the function of populism is to divert any attempt to understand the complex and apparently mysterious social system that governs our lives and to come up with a far simpler solution: look for someone to blame.

Blame the elites, they scream: the greedy bankers, the corrupt politicians, the shadowy bureaucrats who run the EU and tie us all up in red tape and regulations. And all these figures are indeed part of the ruling class and play their part in ramping up exploitation and destroying jobs and futures. But “blaming the elites” is a distortion of class consciousness, not the real thing, and the trick can be exposed by asking the question: who



**British nationalism versus Euro nationalism: false alternative for the working class**

is peddling this new anti-elitism? And you only have to look at Donald Trump or the leaders of the Brexit campaign, or the mass media who support them, to see that this kind of anti-elitism is being sold by another part of the elite. In the 1930s, the Nazis used the same trick, scapegoating a sinister international elite of Jewish financiers for the devastating effects of the world economic crisis, and pulling workers behind a fraction of the ruling class which claimed to defend the true interests of the national economy. The Nazi propaganda minister Goebbels once said that the bigger the lie, the better the chance of its success, and the claim to stand for the little guy against the elite, mouthed by politicians like the billionaire Trump, is a lie worthy of Goebbels himself.

But above all, the target of the new nationalism is not a section of the rich but the most oppressed layers of the working class itself, the most direct victims of capitalism’s economic crisis, its savage imperialist wars, its devastation of the environment – the mass of economic migrants and war refugees driven towards the central capitalist countries in search of a respite from poverty and mass murder. Another “simple” solution offered by the populists: if we could stop them coming in, if we could kick them out, there would obviously be more to go around, a better chance for the “native” workers to find jobs and housing. But this apparent common sense obscures the fact that unemployment and homelessness are products of the workings of the world capitalist system, of “market forces” that cannot be blocked by walls

or border guards, and that the migrants and refugees are being pushed by the same capitalist drive for profit which closes down factories in the old industrial regions and displaces whole sectors of production to the other side of the world where labour is cheaper.

Faced with a system of exploitation that is by nature planetary in its reach, the exploited can only defend themselves by uniting across all national divisions, by forming themselves into an international power against the international power of capital. And in direct opposition to this need is the tactic of divide and rule, which is used by all capitalist parties and factions, but which has been pushed to an extreme by the populists. When one group of workers sees the cause of their problems in other workers, when they see their interests being upheld by parties which call for tough measures against immigration, they give up the possibility of defending themselves, and they weaken the prospect of resistance by the working class as a whole.

### False alternatives to populism

Behind the anti-immigrant rhetoric of the populists lies the very real threat of violence, of the pogrom. In countries like Greece and Hungary, the toxic hatred of ‘foreigners’, the rise of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism have engendered out and out fascist groupings that are willing to terrorise and murder migrants and refugees – the Golden Dawn in Greece, Jobbik in Hungary, and the list could easily be extended. In Britain after

the Brexit victory, there has been a real upsurge in racist attacks, threats and insults against Poles and other EU immigrants as well as against black and Asian people, as the most overtly racist currents in society feel that the time has come to emerge from their sewers.

But the example of Britain also shows that there is a false alternative to populism which ‘remains’ on the side of the capitalist system. The chaotic political situation created by the Brexit vote (which we analyse in another article in this paper), the growing threat to immigrant workers, has led many well-meaning people to vote for the Remain camp, and in the wake of the referendum, to organise large demonstrations in favour of the EU.

Continued on page 2

### Inside this issue

EU, Brexit, populism: growing difficulties for the bourgeoisie and the working class	2
Chilcot: cleaning up the image of the bourgeois state	3
Struggle against new labour laws in France: Repression shows face of democratic state	4
France: union ‘radicalism’ helps impose attacks	5
Philippine election: Duterte, the lure of the strong man and weakness of the working class	6
<i>Life of the ICC</i>	7
Migrants and refugees, victims of capitalist decline, part 3: the cold war	8

# Growing difficulties for the bourgeoisie and for the working class

When 52% of those who voted in the UK Referendum on membership of the European Union chose the Brexit option it was not an isolated incident but another example of the growing international problem of populism. You can see it in the support for Donald Trump in the battle for the US Presidency; in Germany with the appearance of political forces to the right of the Christian Democrats (Pegida and Alternative für Deutschland); in the recent presidential elections in Austria where the Social Democrats and Christian Democrats were eclipsed, and the contest was between the Greens and the populist right; in France there is the continuing rise of the Front National; in Italy there is the Five Star movement; and there's also the governments of Poland and Hungary.

Populism is not another player in the games between the parties of left and right; it exists because of widespread discontent that can find no means of expressing itself. It's entirely on the political terrain of the bourgeoisie, but is based on opposition to elites and 'the Establishment', on antagonism towards immigration, distrust of left-wing promises and right-wing austerity, all expressing a loss of confidence in the institutions of capitalist society but not for a moment recognising the revolutionary alternative of the working class.

In the ICC's "Theses on Decomposition" (<http://en.internationalism.org/node/3253>), published in 1990, we wrote about "the bourgeoisie's growing difficulty in controlling the evolution of the political situation" and "the ruling class' loss of control over its own political strategy". Although the use of democracy has proven a very effective tool and ideology for the capitalist class, something in which their control of the political situation has been sustained, the latent tendency for difficulties to emerge for the ruling class has come more and more to the surface with the growth of populism.

The rise of populism, at a certain level, strengthens democracy with the discontented rallying to the populist parties, with others rallying to any force that will confront populism. However, the UK vote to Leave the EU is a reminder of the difficulties that populism can cause for the bourgeoisie's political control. The ruling class uses democracy to try and give its rule some legitimacy, but populism undermines its attempts at validation. Populism poses dangers for the bourgeoisie because, as it develops, it brings unpredictable upsets in the democratic process

## The British bourgeoisie faced with the problem of populism

We have often had good reason to emphasise that the British ruling class is the most experienced bourgeoisie in the world, able to manoeuvre at the diplomatic, political and electoral level in a manner that is the envy of capitalist states across the globe. The Brexit vote shows the limits of the abilities of the British bourgeoisie.

Although the UK has a long history of capitalism's use of elections, it has had little use for referenda. After the EU referendum of 1975, apart from local referenda in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, there was only the 2011 referendum on a new voting system before this year's vote on Leave/Remain. This has been a wise policy for the bourgeoisie because there is always the danger that a referendum can be used as a focus for protest on any issue, regardless of the actual subject of the vote. In practice David Cameron's calling of a referendum was a massive miscalculation about the growth of populism. Far from being limited to a battle with UKIP and Eurosceptic Tories, there were many from all and no political backgrounds drawn into the fray. This also accounted for the weakness of the Remain campaign. While it presented facts, common sense and rational considerations (from a capitalist point of view), the Leave campaign appealed, with greater success, to irrational emotions.

The Brexiters personalised the argument by focussing on the rich Cameron and Osborne who couldn't understand the concerns of ordinary people; they said that people were fed up with experts and should trust their gut feelings; they portrayed immigration as a problem and one worsened by EU membership; and they promised £350m per

week would be available to spend on the NHS (later saying this was a 'mistake'). Against this the Remain campaign sustained its arguments on the need to continue the benefits of EU membership, displayed the analysis of armies of economists, and quoted the testimonies of businesses that recognised the importance of the EU. When Remain did approach questions like immigration they agreed with the Leavers that it was a problem, but insisted that the EU framework was the best way of further clamping down on the movement of people looking for employment or safety.

## The unpredictable consequences of Brexit

After the EU referendum there will be no return to political 'business as usual'. Neither side had a plan for what to do in the event of a Leave victory. Whatever happens those who will suffer most will be those who were suffering already. While Osborne was quick to announce a cut in Corporation Tax to attract business to Britain, it is clear that it will be the working class that will have to make the economic sacrifices, and that workers would bear the brunt of attacks whether Remain or Leave had won.

At the economic level there has been much speculation as to what could happen, how British capitalism can best defend its interests, how the countries of the EU can defend themselves against any collateral damage in the aftermath of the referendum. The implications are international. There will be attempts to limit the impact on the EU. The dangers of a Brexit contagion spreading to other countries are very real. There are forces in many countries that resent the dominance of France and Germany in the EU. A British exit could further deepen these centrifugal forces.

One other prospect opens up with the growth of separatist tendencies. With the Scottish vote in the referendum strongly in favour of remaining in the EU, and with the 2015 General Election leaving only a handful of Scottish MPs not in the Scottish National Party, the possibility of a further loss of control and the undermining of the Union has been the subject of much speculation. It's a different situation in Northern Ireland, but a majority there also wanted to remain, which could also cause further difficulties for the United Kingdom.

On the political level there will be realignments, but there's no guarantee that there'll be a return to the unambiguous certainties of Left/Right politics. Parliament has 40 years of EU legislation to examine in a short period. After its internal battles the Conservative Party is not going to settle down easily. There was a big split in the Tory Cabinet during the campaign, and, after the referendum, the battle between Gove and Johnson showed a further division in the Brexit camp. Of the two women who are candidates for the Conservative leadership, May was for the Remain side but now says that "Brexit means Brexit", while Leadsom, in 2013, said leaving the EU "would be a disaster for our economy", but campaigned to Leave in 2016. The 150,000 members of the Conservative Party who will decide on the next Prime Minister might not be a predictable electorate, any more than the Labour Party was when it voted for Corbyn.

The situation in the Labour Party is a microcosm of the overall political difficulties faced by the bourgeoisie. Labour is not being called on to fulfil any important government function at present, but it does have an important oppositional role and needs to be ready for the future whenever the working class begins to stir. There is a gap between the MPs who don't support Corbyn as leader and the membership who do. The unions are not united, but they too will contribute to the situation, not necessarily to provide stability.

The UK's EU referendum is a disquieting example to the bourgeoisie elsewhere. If the British bourgeoisie, across the spectrum, has difficulties in coping with the growth of populism then the same will apply to every other state. While democracy is one of the main means for containing and diverting the impulses of the working class and other social strata, the force of populism shows that the democratic process has its limita-

tions and doesn't always follow the will of the dominant factions of the bourgeoisie

## The working class in the face of populism

One of the reasons for the growth of populism is the weakness of the working class, at the level of its struggles, its consciousness and its sense of its own identity. If the working class was widely seen to present an alternative to capitalism then it would be an inspirational factor in the perspective of a human community. But this is currently not the case.

Not only that, many workers have fallen in with populism, taken in by the idea of the 'people' against the elites. It is significant that in those ar-

eas of old industrial Britain that have been most run down and neglected there was a greater working class tendency to vote Leave. The Labour Party has taken support in these areas for granted, and although a majority of Labour voters voted to Remain, the minority that didn't was significant. These are the sections of the working class who have suffered most from the 'neo-liberal' policies which have displaced whole industries from the old capitalist heartlands, have turned the housing market into an arena for unrestricted speculation, and which subsequently offered austerity as the medicine needed to avert the disintegration of the international financial system.

Continued on page 3

Continued from page 1

## Against nationalism in all its forms!

We have even seen anarchists, in a panic about the increasingly overt expressions of racism stirred up by the campaign, forgetting their opposition to capitalist elections and voting Remain.

To vote for or demonstrate in favour of the EU is another way of falling into the hands of the ruling class. The EU is not a benevolent institution, but a capitalist alliance which imposes the most ruthless austerity on the working class, as we can see most clearly from what the EU demanded of the Greek workers in return for receiving EU funds for Greece's bankrupt economy. And the EU is certainly not a kindly protector of migrants and refugees. In favour of the 'free movement' of labour power when it suits the profit motive, it is no less capable of building walls and razor wire fences when it sees migrants and refugees as surplus to requirements, and of coming to sordid deals to send refugees whose labour power it can't use back to the camps that they are trying to escape from – as it has done in a recent agreement with Turkey.

## The nationalist Tower of Babel and the fraud of bourgeois democracy

The division between pro- and anti-EU cuts across the traditional left-right divide in bourgeois politics. Both camps have their right and left supporters. The Remain campaign in Britain was led by a faction of the Tory party but was officially supported by the majority of Labour, and by the SNP in Scotland. The left itself was split between Remain and Leave. Corbyn was nominally for Remain but he comes from the Old Labour idea of a "socialist Britain", in other words an island of autarkic state capitalism, and it was obvious that his heart wasn't in the Remain campaign. Corbyn's supporters in the Socialist Workers' Party and similar groups were for Left Exit, an absurd mirror image of the Brexit camp. This Tower of Babel of nationalisms, whether pro- or anti-EU, is itself another factor in the prevailing ideological fog, posing everything in terms of 'in' or 'out', of the interests of Britain, of the existing system.

And all these capitalist groups and parties were further thickening the fog by spreading the fraud of "democracy", the idea that capitalist elections or referendums really can express the "will of the people". A key element of the Leave campaign was the idea of "taking our country back" from the foreign bureaucrats – a country which the vast majority never had in the first place because it is owned and controlled by a small minority, which manipulates the institutions of democracy to ensure that, whoever wins the majority of votes, the working class as a class remains excluded from power. The democratic polling booth – which in some countries is rightly called an "isolator" – is not, as the capitalist left will often argue, a means for the working class to express its class consciousness, at least in a defensive manner. It is a means for atomising the working class, for dividing it up into a mass of powerless citizens. And referendums in particular have been a time honoured means of mobilising the most reactionary forces in society – something that was already apparent under the dictatorial regime of Louis

Bonaparte in 19<sup>th</sup> century France. For all these reasons, despite the political convulsions the Brexit vote has produced, the EU referendum was a "success" for bourgeois democracy, presenting it as the only possible framework for the conduct of political debate.

## The working class alternative

Faced with a world system which seems intent on turning each country into a bunker where only you and yours deserve to survive, some groups have raised the slogan "No Borders". This is a praiseworthy aim, but to get rid of borders you have to get rid of nation states, and to get rid of the state you need to get rid of the social relations of exploitation which it protects. And all that requires a world-wide revolution of the exploited, establishing a new form of political power which dismantles the bourgeois state and begins to replace capitalist production for profit with communist production for universal need.

This goal seems immeasurably distant today, and the advancing decomposition of capitalist society – above all, its tendency to drag the working class into its own material and moral downfall – contains the danger that this perspective will be definitively lost. And yet it remains the only hope for a human future. And it is not a question of passively waiting for it to happen, like the Day of Judgement. The seeds of revolution lie in the revival of the class struggle, in returning to the path of resistance against attacks from right and left, in social movements against austerity, repression, and war; in the fight for solidarity with all the exploited and the excluded, in the defence of 'foreign' workers against gang masters and pogroms. This is the only struggle that can revive the perspective of a world community.

And what about the communists, that minority of the class which is still convinced by the perspective of a world human community? We have to recognise soberly that in the present situation we are swimming against the stream. And like previous revolutionary fractions which withstood the challenge of a tide of reaction or counter-revolution, we need to reject any compromising of principles learned from decades of class experience. We need to insist that there can be no support for any capitalist state or alliance of states, no concessions to nationalist ideology, no illusions that capitalist democracy provides a means of defending ourselves against capitalism. We refuse to participate in capitalist campaigns on one side or the other, precisely because we do aim to participate in the class struggle, and because the class struggle needs to become independent from all the forces of capitalism which seek to divert it or corral it. And faced with the enormous confusion and disarray which is currently reigning in our class, we need to engage in a serious theoretical effort to understand a world that is becoming increasingly complicated and unpredictable. Theoretical work is not an abstention from the class struggle, but helps prepare the time when theory, in Marx's words, becomes a material force by gripping the masses. **Amos 9.7.16**

Continued from page 2

Faced with this onslaught, often presented in the guise of a kind of capitalist ‘internationalism’, it is not surprising that whole sectors of the working class feel a very real anger against the establishment, but this does not in itself lead to the development of class consciousness. The appeal of populist demagogues, with their easy targets to blame, the EU, a metropolitan elite, immigration, foreigners, is quite concrete. Where capitalism is an abstraction, the populists can change their focus from EU regulations to Islamist terrorism to globalisation, even to the parasitic rich, without pausing for breath. Populism represents a considerable danger to the working class, because it does not have to be in any way coherent to be effective. It is a big challenge for revolutionaries to analyse the significance of this whole phenomenon, and we are only just beginning this work.

The UK referendum, both campaign and result, is just one demonstration of a situation that is changing because of the growth of populism. It is a problem that can only get worse until the proletariat begins to appreciate its historic role, understands that it is not just an exploited class but that it has the capacity to overthrow capitalism and establish an international human community. **Car 9/7/16**

## Discussion Day: The working class is a class of migrants

**A day of discussion on the  
migrant/refugee crisis,  
organised by the  
International Communist  
Current**

**16 July 2016, 11am -6pm**

**Morning session:  
Economic migrants and war  
refugees in the history of  
capitalism**

**Afternoon session:  
Populism, national borders:  
the real interests of the  
working class,  
including Brexit referendum**

**Venue:  
MayDay Rooms, 88 Fleet St,  
London EC4Y 1DH. Nearest  
tube: St Pauls**

## Cleaning up the image of the democratic state

Over the last few years in Britain, and especially recently, there’s been a number of ‘independent’ inquiries, parliamentary investigations (often televised live), police, parliamentary and ‘independent’ reports into all sorts of scandals and injustices, some of which go back decades. With several major inquiries in progress or just starting up, those that have been pronounced upon or, like the report on the 2003 Iraq War just out, it appears that the state is ‘cleaning up its act’ and, at last, holding those responsible for unacceptable, immoral or criminal behaviour to account. Senior politicians and top police officers are bought to book and the media, from its right to left wing, as in the Hillsborough case for example, celebrate the ‘justice for victims’. But under capitalism there can be no justice for victims and the primary aim of all these inquiries, reports and investigations is to strengthen the ideology of democracy and its ‘rule of law’ behind which lies the strengthening of the totalitarian state. The bourgeoisie may make scapegoats out of one, two or even more individuals from within its ranks but this itself only serves to reinforce its overall democratic campaign against a presently disorientated and weakened working class. It is only at such times that the ruling class is able to unleash such campaigns because if the working class was struggling in any significant way even the bourgeoisie’s ‘rule of law’ would be lifted and, as with the miners’ strike of 84, the state would be confronting it with all the forces and methods available to it however heinous and brutal.

Let’s look at some examples of the inquiries and investigations going on within this democratic campaign.

**The Chilcot Inquiry** into Britain’s role in the 2003 war in Iraq. After 7 years and ten million quid, the 2.6 million word Chilcot Report has been released. There’s nothing surprising about its conclusions. Tony Blair didn’t lie it says but that’s not even the point; the whole war was based on a mendacity that’s stock-in-trade for the whole ruling class. The intelligence on the threat posed by Saddam was ‘flawed’ apparently but reading it one can see that it clearly warned that the war would increase the jihadist threat and increase regional instability in the Middle East. In this sense the family of one soldier killed in the war was going in the right direction in labelling Blair (and his clique) as “*the world’s worst terrorist*”.

Despite not being accused of lying, Blair does come in for particular criticism in the report, and was the only individual mentioned in the initial oral presentation of it. Everyone denounces Blair but it was the whole of the British bourgeoisie that was overwhelmingly behind supporting the war of the US NeoCons: the cabinet, the civil service, the military, the secret services, politicians of all parties, all faithfully supported by the media as it obediently danced to their lying tunes. The intelligence that was acted upon was what was required and made up by the British ruling class in order to fulfil its imperialist interests covered by its democratic facade. It’s not a question of individuals but of the state apparatus. All the individuals involved in fomenting this war, from the civil service, the military, intelligence, the cabinet office, the media, have all been promoted or are doing very well in high-paid positions – including Tony Blair the “Peace Envoy” to the Middle East!

The lawyers arguing about ‘who lied’ deliberately avoid the point. Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, an admirer of the BBC, hits it on the head: “*The essential English leadership secret does not depend on a particular intelligence.... The English follow the principle that when one lies, it should be a big lie and one should stick to it. They keep up their lies, even at the risk of looking ridiculous*”. “Never again”, “lessons will be learnt” are just continuations of the democratic lie. After around half-a-million Iraqis had been killed, the country fractured and the rise of an ISIS closely linked to the Iraq War and the role of US and British intelligence, British imperialism then unleashed the 2011 Libyan war with similar lies, similar ruthlessness and similar results.

Chilcot can’t teach us anything because the imperialist policies of Blair government are still the

policies of the British state as expressed by the current political set-up. Most recently in the British bombing of Syria, the Cameron government had the full support of a significant number of the Labour Party and the majority of the media in the US-led ‘War on Terror’ (which parts of the Labour Party equated to the ‘war against fascism’). And these fantasy politics of British imperialism continue with forces on the ground in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan in order to defend its own ‘national’ interests, i.e., contribute to the war of each against all in the Middle East

One of the aspects of the inquiry and the general discussion, particularly in relation to the families of British servicemen and women, has been the need to beef up British militarism and its equipment so that its imperialist interests can be better managed. In this sense it’s similar to the ‘Walter Reed scandal’ in the US which exposed the atrocious living and medical conditions of Iraqi war veterans which was then linked to a campaign for a better organised military<sup>b</sup>.

Finally, Jeremy Corbyn has apologised on behalf of the Labour Party, the same Corbyn that saluted the killers of Hamas and Hezbollah from the same ‘Stop the War Coalition’ that supported Islamic fundamentalism against US and British interests.

**The Hillsborough inquiry**, a response to the entirely justified anger and indignation of many to this slaughter (96 crushed to death at a football match in 1989) and its cover-up, has found many elements of the state culpable, including some named individuals. Some of these might, probably will not, go to jail but the state becomes stronger with this result that suggest that ‘victims matter’. Police forces are polished up and the constant refrain of ‘lessons will be learnt’ means absolutely nothing because the police remain a repressive arm of the capitalist state, and the football authorities and the media, who hounded the fans and their families even in death, can now present clean hands.

The result of the Hillsborough inquiry gave rise to demands from the left for an inquiry into South Yorkshire police and its role in the attack on miners at the Orgreave coking plant in 1984. But everyone knows what happened: the police attacked the miners and the BBC and the rest of the media consciously inverted the story to make it look the other way around. There’s already been an inquiry into this and the BBC, in order to maintain any credibility, had to admit what it had done and apologise – presumably ‘learning lessons’. But this hasn’t stopped some, on the left in this case, for calling for more investigations and inquiries, a sort of enquiryitis going around in circles while everything stays the same or rather gets worse.

There have also been various parliamentary select committee inquiries, some televised live, to examine contentious issues and individuals; Philip Green and the now bankrupt BHS, Mike Ashley and Sports Direct (scandal of low wages and aggressive management) for example. These nauseating individuals and their ‘interrogators’ are all part of the game which, like ‘banker-bashing’ is going nowhere while the workers of both companies are either losing their jobs or continue to suffer the same conditions. And the daily grind of exploitation continues to deepen for the working class.

There are inquiries into the role of British intelligence in the killing of civilians during the ‘troubles’ in Ireland, investigations into the role of MI6 in the abuse of young boys at the Kincora home in the North and the role of these agencies in 50 killings related to the British army’s IRA agent ‘Stakeknife’. Another circular waste of time for the victims aimed at not uncovering the past but covering up the present and the future activities of these self-same agencies with the same aim of presenting a ‘clean’ democratic state.

There are various investigations into sexual abuse such as the 2014 Goddard inquiry which will also look at the question of the 150,000 children in Britain that were taken from their families by groups including the Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Church of England, Salvation Army and Barnardo’s and sent abroad from the 1920s to

the 70s, with many suffering sexual and physical abuse. Along with the state, to which they belong, these organisations were running a massive children’s ring of sex slaves and cheap labour. The result of the Jimmy Savile inquiry, where those that supported him have been promoted by the BBC while those that flagged up his ‘institutionalised’ abuse have been forced out, shows how meaningless are words like ‘Sorry’ and ‘lessons will be learnt’ and that will certainly apply in the Goddard attempt at ‘closure’, i.e., the whitewashing of the state. And apart from anything else these inquiries are a goldmine for the lawyers and other parasitic layers. But the real underlying motive is the strengthening of the state by presenting it as ultimately clean, moral and democratic.

While making a show, in one circus after the other, of its ‘clean hands’, the British ruling class continues its war against the working class and the war against its rivals, backing torturers and butchers while manipulating various elements of terrorism to its own ends. When they are not facilitating the expression of terrorism they are using it. In this sense the British bourgeoisie are no different from their counterparts everywhere, who also have their own ‘clean hands’ campaigns.

The bourgeoisie’s ideas about ending corruption and the recent London summit to this effect, involving all sorts of professional gangsters and their cliques, was beyond any parody. And London steeped in money from all sorts of ‘enterprises’, and with its offshore networks, stands as probably the most ‘corrupt’ of all national capitals.

None of these expressions of capitalism: corruption, ‘mistakes’, ‘bad policing’, cover-ups, greed, unemployment and fear at work, increased exploitation, sexual slavery and abuse, none of these are exceptions to capitalism which can be overturned or even altered by any number of inquiries. These are integral expressions of the whole system along with the tendency to increased militarism and war. There can be no fair capitalism just as there can be no ‘fair day’s pay’. The essence of this system is profit, exploitation and militarism and no inquiry can even begin to attenuate that. Nor can the bourgeoisie, who are increasingly gripped by the irrationality of their system, do anything but follow its devastating course and try to manage its rhythm. For this they have to continually swamp the working class ideologically with all their various campaigns and ‘investigations’. For its part, and as weak as it is at the moment, the working class is the only force that is capable of posing a new society but for this it has to fight for its own interests and if it begins to do that we won’t be seeing the bourgeoisie setting up inquiries into the excesses of the capitalist state. **Boxer, 7/7/16**

(Endnotes)

a. For a deeper look at this question see: <http://en.internationalism.org/icconline/201601/13764/british-bombs-will-increase-chaos-middle-east>.

b. The US itself is no stranger to ‘scandals’ and ‘inquiries’ and uses them, like Britain, to strengthen the democratic state and settle internal squabbles. ‘Watergate’ was a famous one and the Iraqi Abu Ghraib scandal and others were used to ease the US Neo-Cons out of office.

# Movement against the El Khomri law

## Repression shows the true face of the democratic state!

A scene filmed on 24 March on a mobile phone did the rounds of social media: three police holding a schoolboy on the ground and when the young boy got up a policeman punched him violently in the face. And this is only one example among others. Police repression has in fact been ferocious throughout the movement against the El Khomri law. And with the approval of a government that pretends to be ‘Socialist’ but which has for several months been establishing a climate of extra security. Each demonstration, each blockade of school, university or refinery, was the theatre for brutality by the forces of order. The young generation has above all paid the price for these muscular interventions, beatings and provocations of all kinds. It’s as if it has become necessary to impress the children of workers with the force of bourgeois order from a very young age.

The state has prepared the terrain for repression very well. As we said in our articles on the terrorist attacks in Paris in January and November 2015, the incredible reinforcement of police control and the state of emergency put in place created a situation, on the material as well as ideological levels, in which repression and police provocation can be used more easily, especially in exploiting the phenomenon of ‘casseurs’ (rioters/wreckers) as an important alibi for the police action.

### The repressive nature of the bourgeois state

The state and its repressive forces are the product of irreconcilable class contradictions and are the instrument for the exploitation of the oppressed, exclusively at the service of the bourgeoisie. How is ‘order’ maintained? “... in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in sterile struggle, a power seemingly standing above society became necessary for the purpose of moderating the conflict, of keeping it within the bounds of ‘order’; and this power, arisen out of society, but placing itself above it, and increasingly alienating itself from it, is the state.” But “This public power exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed people but also of material adjuncts, prisons and institutions of coercion of all kinds... A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power.”<sup>1</sup> So, the reality of police violence is neither new, nor an accident of history, nor the product of an imperfect realisation of democracy; it is a clear expression of the profoundly oppressive nature of the state. The ruling class has thus always been extraordinarily brutal faced with any expression that puts its social order in question. The bourgeoisie has attempted to bury each challenge from the proletariat under a deluge of iron and fire. So today the police cosh the working class youth on the same pavements where in 1871 the armies of Versailles drowned the Paris Commune in blood.

From the start of the workers’ movement revolutionary organisations have been confronted not only with state violence but also with the question of the recourse to violence in the ranks of the proletariat. Violent actions in themselves have never been seen as an expression of the political strength of the movement, but have to be seen in a more general context. Even when directed against the forces of order, violent actions can often be no more than individual responses which contain the danger of undermining the unity of the class. This doesn’t mean that the workers’ movement is “pacifist”. It inevitably uses a certain form of violence: the violence of the class struggle against the bourgeois state. But here it is a question of a different, liberating, nature, which is accompanied by a conscious step which has nothing to do with the violence and brutality of ruling classes whose power is maintained by terror and oppression. So, the experience of a proletariat which little by little constituted itself as a distinct organised and conscious class, allowed it to gradually struggle against the immediate temptation of blind violence which was one of the characteristics of the first workers’ riots. For example in the 18<sup>th</sup> century numerous workers, nearly everywhere in Europe,

rose up very violently against the introduction of weaving machines by destroying them. These violent actions, exclusively against the machines, were the product of the lack of experience and organisation in the infancy of the workers’ movement. As Marx emphasised: “It took both time and experience before the workers learnt to distinguish between machinery and its employment by capital, and therefore to transfer their attacks from the material instruments of production to the form of society which utilises those instruments.”<sup>2</sup>

### ‘Rioters/wreckers’, a phenomenon encouraged by decomposition

On the other hand, there were a number of political expressions which emerged during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and which have given in to blind violence in various forms. This was particularly the case after 1968, for example those in Italy inspired by ‘operaist’ ideologies<sup>3</sup>, or in West Germany among the many ‘autonomist’ tendencies. These currents expressed a lack of reflection and orientation about the means needed for a political confrontation with capitalism. In Berlin, for example, since the 1980s, the 1<sup>st</sup> May has become a time of ritual confrontations between police and all sorts of ‘rioters’ who above all seek confrontation with the police, destroying shops and cars, mistakenly identifying this with the idea of ‘making the revolution’.

Today these ‘autonomist’ forces, which are more and more identified with ‘terrorism’ by the state, express the impotence and the political void left at present by the great weakness of a working class which, if it has been able to emerge from decades of traumatic Stalinist counter-revolution, has not yet succeeded in recognising itself as a social class, in affirming its authentic means of struggle, and thus its communist perspective. Disorientated, totally lacking in confidence in its own strength, the proletariat has not succeeded in recognising its own identity and still less its historic power. So it leaves the field free for all the impatience of an exasperated youth, deprived of political experience, and momentarily lacking any perspective for the future.

This largely explains the relative attraction among some of the young for the methods of the ‘autonomists’ and ‘insurrectionists’, or the success of hazy theories like those of the pamphlet *The Coming Insurrection*<sup>4</sup> by a certain ‘Invisible Committee’. In it we can read “The offensive aiming to liberate territory from police occupation is already committed, and can count on inexhaustible reserves of resentment that these forces have united against themselves. The ‘social movements’ themselves are little by little won over by the riot”. This kind of discourse, more or less shared by a good number of autonomists regrouped under various changeable banners (black blocs, defenders of ‘autonomous zones’, some antifascists) has pushed them more and more to the front of the social scene. For some years more and more of the young, suffering the social violence of capitalism, of precarity and unemployment, express their anger and exasperation in revolt, sometimes violently. Fed up, subject to police provocations, they are easily led to confront the forces of order during demonstrations. Some of the young are thus exposed to the influences and actions of ‘casseurs’ or of ‘autonomist’ groups who distinguish themselves through sterile actions such as trashing property, breaking shop windows, etc, which can unfortunately fascinate the desperate.

There is no question of drawing a parallel between the violence of the state, through the good offices of the over-equipped police, and that of some demonstrators armed with a few feeble projectiles, as if the first were the ‘legitimate’ consequence of the second. The bourgeois press do

2. Marx, *Capital vol.1*, chapter 15, part 5, Pelican Marx Library. Our emphasis.

3. Operaism is a ‘workerist’ current which appeared in 1961 around the magazine *Quaderni Rossi*, Mario Tronti and Toni Negri being its principle theoreticians. In 1969 the operaist current divided into two rival organisations: *Potere Operaio* and *Lotta Continua*. After 1972 the operaists have been involved in the autonomous movement extolling riots and violent, so-called ‘exemplary’, actions.

4. This pamphlet has sold more than 40,000 copies in French.



this shamelessly. But the problem of this sterile violence, of these brawls with the police, is that the state can use them totally to its advantage. So, the government has wilfully pushed all these ‘casseurs’ and ‘autonomists’ into a trap seeking to ‘demonstrate the facts’ to proletarians as a whole that violence and revolt inevitably lead to chaos. The damage to the Necker Hospital in Paris is a perfect illustration. On 14 June the police charged with unusual violence a demonstration passing by a children’s hospital. Groups of rioters, probably incited by *agents provocateurs*<sup>5</sup>, ended by breaking some hospital windows, under the impassive gaze of several companies of CRS riot police. That evening, the bourgeois press obviously had a field day, and we were treated to the scandalised declarations of the government which didn’t fail to use the occasion to pit the ‘radicals’ against the sick children. This is how the bourgeoisie polarises attention on the most violent elements on the margins of a whole damaged youth, victims of the bourgeois order, to justify the brutality of police repression. To better present the state and its institutions as the ultimate rampart against those who threaten ‘public order’ and democracy, the media highlight the symbolic destruction carried out by the ‘rioters’. This also has the effect of dividing the demonstrators, of generating distrust within the working class and above all of smothering the least idea of solidarity and of the revolutionary perspective. So, far from shaking the system, these phenomena allow the bourgeoisie to exploit their actions in order to discredit all forms of struggle against the state, but above all to better deform the revolutionary perspective. The manifestations of violence at present are both the reflection of a weakness of the class struggle and the product of social decomposition, of a general atmosphere which gives free rein to behaviour typical of social layers who have no future, who are incapable of opposing the barbarity of capitalism with another perspective, apart from blind and nihilistic rage. Other actions by rebellious minorities (such as the Molotov cocktail attack, on 18 May, against two police officers in their car, on the margins of a rally), which are clearly products of a spirit of revenge, are also exploited to the hilt by the state and its press in order to denounce ‘anti-police hatred’.

Throughout the existence of the workers’ movement it has been shown that the construction of a real balance of forces with its class enemy takes a completely different road and uses radically different methods. To take only a few examples: during the summer of 1980 in Poland, faced with the threat of repression, the workers immediately mobilised massively across sectors in the towns of Gdansk, Gdynia and Sopot, making the government pull back. When the state threatened to intervene militarily to suppress them, the workers of Lubin, in solidarity, threatened in their turn to paralyse transport, the railways which connected the Russian barracks in the GDR to the Soviet Union. The Polish state ended by retreating. Faced with the past repression in 1970 and 1976, the workers’ response was not based on revenge, but on

5. For example, this was the case for police unmasked in Spain by demonstrators themselves during the *Indignados* movement in 2011. In France, the infiltration of demonstrations by the police of the BAC (Anti-Criminal Brigades), who have the job of inciting the crowds, is well known.

memory and solidarity.<sup>6</sup> More recently in France, in a different context, at the time of the struggle against the CPE in 2006, the proletarianised youth of the universities took control of their struggles by organising general assemblies open to all to extend their movement. The Villepin government, fearing the extension, had to retreat. In 2011, at the time of the *Indignados* movement in Spain, the people were regrouped in assemblies in the street to discuss, to exchange experience and so to forge a common will to struggle. The Spanish bourgeoisie attempted to break this dynamic by provoking confrontations with the police and by unleashing media campaigns on the ‘rioters’. But the strength and confidence accumulated in the open assemblies allowed the proletariat to respond with massive demonstrations, particularly in Barcelona where thousands of people were able to resist police attacks courageously, several times.

So, it is not violence in itself, the spirit of revenge, isolated and minority action, which creates the power of a movement faced with the capitalist state, but on the contrary a dynamic of conscious action with the perspective of overturning and destroying it.

The strength of our class resides precisely in its capacity to oppose police provocation massively and consciously.

The rotting of capitalism on its feet generates a tendency to the fragmentation of the social tissue and devalues all effort at coherent thought and reflection, pushing towards ‘action for its own sake’ and to simple and immediate solutions,<sup>7</sup> fed by an accumulation of dissatisfaction and resentment, a spirit of revenge, encouraging the upsurge of tiny groups which are the prey of choice for police provocation and manipulation. The most violent elements often come from decomposing petty bourgeois layers or from a declassed intelligentsia in revolt against the barbarity of the capitalist system. Their actions, marked by individualism, blinded by hate and impatience, are the expressions of immediate impulses, often without any real aim. So we find the same nihilist roots which push other young people to set out on jihad.

The bourgeoisie also uses the violence and destruction that accompany many demonstrations to push workers back towards the unions which, despite the distrust towards them, appear as the only force able to ‘organise and lead the struggle’. Such a situation can only further weaken consciousness by rebranding the main saboteurs of the struggle.

### What is a revolutionary perspective?

An authentic working class movement has nothing to do with the false alternative between containment by the official unions and ‘riotous’ actions which can only lead those who truly want to struggle, especially the youth in the demonstrations, towards the political void and repression. By contrast, what characterises a real workers’ struggle is solidarity, the search for unity in struggle, the will to fight against capitalist exploitation as

6. Among the workers’ demands was a monument to commemorate their dead, the victims of the bloody repression of the earlier movements in 1970-71 and in 1976.

7. Like the slogans and chants “we hate the police” or “all coppers are bastards”.

Continued from page 4

massively as possible. The essence of this combat is the unification of struggles, uniting all, unemployed, employed, young, old, retired, etc. And when the working class is able to mobilise on such a scale, it is capable of rallying all the other strata of this society that are victims of the suffering caused by this system. It is this mobilisation in large numbers, really taken control of by the workers themselves, which alone has the capacity to push back the state and the bourgeoisie. This is why the working class does not seek the badge of violence to create a balance of force against the ruling class, but bases itself first of all on its numbers and its unity. The proletarian struggle has nothing to do with the skirmishes filmed by journalists. Far from the instrumentalisation of violence that we see today, the historic and international combat of the working class rests on conscious and massive action. It consists of a vast project whose cultural and moral dimension contains in embryo the emancipation of humanity as a whole. As an exploited class the proletariat has no privileges to defend and only its chains to lose. For this reason the programme of the Spartacist League, written by Rosa Luxemburg, says in point 3 that: *“the proletarian revolution requires no terror for its aims; it hates and despises killing. It does not need these weapons because it does not combat individuals but institutions...”*<sup>8</sup> The workers’ struggle, with its spirit of association and solidarity, anticipates the real human community of the future. Its way of organising is not that of a general staff which directs from the summit to the base but takes the form of a conscious, collective resistance that gives birth to innumerable creative initiatives: *“The mass strike ... flows now like a broad billow over the whole kingdom, and now divides into a gigantic network of narrow streams; now it bubbles forth from under the ground like a fresh spring and now is completely lost under the earth. Political and economic strikes, mass strikes and partial strikes, demonstrative strikes and fighting strikes, in individual towns, peaceful wage struggles and street massacres, barricade fighting – all these run through one another, run side by side, cross one another, flow in and over one another – it is a ceaselessly moving changing sea of phenomena.”*<sup>9</sup> This living, liberating momentum is expressed in the mass strike, then in the formation of the workers’ councils before leading to the insurrection and the world-wide taking of power by the proletariat. For the moment this perspective is not within reach for the proletariat which is much too weak. Although it is not defeated, it does not have sufficient strength to affirm itself, to reconnect with its own experience and history. The revolution is not immediate and inevitable. A long and difficult road, littered with pitfalls, still remains to be travelled. A veritable and profound upheaval of thought has to happen before it is possible to imagine the affirmation of a revolutionary perspective. **EG/WH, 26/6/16**

8. Rosa Luxemburg, *Selected political writings*, Monthly Review Press.

9. Rosa Luxemburg, *The mass strike, the political party and the trade unions*, chapter 4, Merlin Press. Our emphasis.

## Union ‘radicalism’ helps impose attacks

“A trial of strength”! A “War of attrition”! “Rising tensions”!

These are the kind of terms the media has been using in the last few weeks to describe the apparent confrontation between the governments and the unions over the “El Khomri” labour law. The conflict has been presented in a spectacular way by the media. It even reached the point where, for a few hours, the government banned a union demo prior to allowing it after all – something that hasn’t been seen for 50 years.

There has been real discontent against this attack on the working conditions of the entire working class. It has given rise to a relatively significant level of mobilisation and militancy during certain days of action. However, contrary to what the media would have us believe, this militancy has not drawn in the majority of wage earners. Despite the images of blockades, of tyres burning on the roads, the strikes have very often been restricted to a minority and there has been little in the way of a growth of confidence, unity and conscious-



ness in the ranks of the working class. On the contrary: *“these union parades, which consist of people tramping the streets and being bombarded with slogans like ‘The workers are in the street, El Khomri you are screwed’, or ‘Strike, strike, general strike!’ without being able to discuss or build anything together, serve only to demoralise people and spread feelings of powerlessness”*<sup>1</sup>.

Many wage earners, high school and university students, and precarious or unemployed workers have asked questions about this, feeling that the omnipresence of the unions and their sterile days of action are not leading anywhere. But they have not been able to break out of the union manacles or develop an open, collective critique of union methods. And the Nuit Debout movement, which claims to offer a “space” for deeper reflection, *“is leading them into a dead end and strengthening the most conformist outlooks. Worse than that, Nuit Debout is a vehicle for the most nauseating ideas, like the personalisation of the evils of society, blaming them on a few representatives like bankers and oligarchs”*<sup>2</sup>.

Among the youngest participants, there is the illusion that all this is an expression of the class war and that we are heading towards a new May 68, a mobilisation of the proletariat on a scale we haven’t seen for many years. But the government has shown no signs of retreating in the face of pressure from the streets, as it did in 2006 at the time of the fight against the CPE. Even if the Socialist government has not been a picture of unity and coherence, the government and the unions, led by the CGT, have managed to work together to set up this confrontation, with the aim of manipulating the working class and reinforcing its disorientation.

The focus of this strategy has been the growing “radicalisation” of the CGT<sup>3</sup>. Over several months

1. <http://en.internationalism.org/icconline/201605/13953/what-real-nature-nuit-debout-movement>

2. *ibid*

3. The CGT is the union linked to the Stalinist French Communist Party; the CFDT is closer to the Socialist Party while FO has come under a strong Trotskyist influence.

the social movement has not disappeared, and in response the two main actors, government and unions, have fuelled the appearance of a major confrontation. The CGT through the blockading of oil refineries and motorways, through rolling strikes in public transport and the energy sector. The government, especially Manuel Valls, has come out with more and more provocative declarations, culminating in this momentary, but still gobsmacking decision to ban a union demonstration. All this on the basis of the heavy media publicity given to the violence of the rioting “casseurs”. If we were to believe the bourgeoisie and its press, you’d think the country was on a war footing, with everything being dramatised to an almost surreal level, until you stop watching the TV or the computer screen and go and out and look at what’s really been happening.

The conflict, we are told, reached a culminating point with the operations aimed at “blockading the economy”, in particular the ports and oil refineries. Blocking the oil refineries, as in 2010 with the

the more “reformist” unions, especially at the level of the small and medium enterprises which are in the majority in France. This is what to a large extent lies behind the radicalism of the CGT: keeping its place at the table of the state, maintaining its position in the apparatus of exploitation.

From the point of view of the interests of the working class, the CGT is anything but radical. While the working class draws its strength from its capacity to unite, to extend its struggles beyond sectional and national frontiers, the CGT demands that everyone must march in their particular work clothes behind “their own” union banner, raising demands specific to each sector. If they do raise the slogan “everyone together”, this is still within the limits of each union boutique. It has nothing to do with the search for the extension of the struggle, with raising proposals that will draw all sectors into a common fight regardless of union membership, as was the case for several weeks during the struggle in 2006.

Similarly, the general assemblies, which should be the lungs of the movement, have been replaced by simulated assemblies which only bring together a minority of wage earners and where the unions decide on practically everything in advance. This has nothing to do with assemblies that are open to all, young and old, without consideration to profession, union or political membership; assemblies which elect and can recall strike committees, and where you can openly discuss the conduct of the struggle, how to spread it and establish a balance of forces in the face of the state. The anti-CPE struggle of 2006, whose lessons the state and its unions want us to forget, was exemplary at this level and resulted in a real loss of credibility by the unions.

This division of labour on the part of the different wings of the state, government and unions, is exploiting to the maximum the current weakness of the working class, with the object of manipulating it, dividing it, demoralising it and pushing through the attacks, all the while giving the impression that only militant unions like the CGT and FO are capable of standing up to an arrogant Socialist government that is even worse than the right.

The working class needs to make the deepest and most lucid analysis possible of the present social movement, in order to identify its enemies and prepare the real struggles of the future. **Stopio, 24.6.16**

## ICC online

**What is the real nature of the Nuit Debout movement?**

**France: Scandal of the abattoirs**

**Iran and Saudi Arabia, twin peaks of capitalism’s decomposition**

**Labour, the left, and the “Jewish problem”**

**Report on the national situation in Germany**

struggle against the pension reforms, is presented as the ultimate weapon against the bourgeoisie, a way of hitting it where it really hurts. But not only was the real level of paralysis on the oil sector even more pathetic than in 2010, it has functioned as a powerful factor of division within the working class.

On the one hand you have some of the most militant workers trapped behind makeshift barricades, cut off from the rest of their class and at the mercy of police repression; on the other hand, you have many workers who are feeling discontented but are waiting to see what will happen, hardly involved in the social movement and sometimes exasperated by the endless transport strikes and the petrol shortages.

The CGT and all the “combative” unions have not suddenly become “revolutionary” any more than they are fighting for the basic interests of the workers. With the decadence of the capitalist system, the trade unions, whose original reason for existence (the reduction of capitalist exploitation) was already quite conservative, have become an essential cog of the state apparatus, with the task of imprisoning the working class in the logic of negotiations, of sabotaging workers’ struggles and smothering the growth of a revolutionary consciousness. Their role is to divide the workers and undermine any mass movement which could lead to questioning the capitalist order. The current radicalism of the unions is aimed at making us forget their direct complicity in the attacks that have been carried out by successive governments, and their involvement in the day-to-day management of exploitation in the factories and offices.

The essential complicity of the unions and the government doesn’t mean that there are no struggles for influence between various cliques. The government’s efforts to restore credibility to the union apparatus have involved downgrading the hegemonic status of the CGT and giving a more central role to more “tolerant” and “cooperative” unions like the CFDT. Article 2 of the new labour law aims to give accords reached at enterprise level priority over those worked out at branch level, which would mean undermining the financial organisational and strength of the CGT in favour of

## Duterte regime

# The lure of the strong man and the weakness of the working class

Last August 2015, in our article 'Boycott the election: the marxist standpoint in the era of decadent capitalism'<sup>1</sup> we wrote:

*"The failure of the Aquino Regime is not just because of BS Aquino and the Liberal Party. Long before the current ruling faction, the capitalist system in the Philippines was already a failure .*

*Together with the rottenness of the present administration, the opposition led by its strongest contender for the Presidency, Vice-President Jojim Binay, stinks with corruption and self-enrichment. Proof that both the administration and opposition are rotten and corrupt.*

*Each of them exposes the scandals of their political rivals. In decadent capitalism there is no need for the radicals and progressives inside parliament to expose the decay of capitalism.*

*One negative effect of decadent capitalism in its decomposing stage is the rise of desperation and hopelessness among the poverty-stricken masses. One indication is the lumpenisation of parts of the toiling masses, increasing number of suicides, rotten culture among the young and gangsterism. All of these are manifestations of the increasing discontentment of the masses in the current system but they don't know what to do and what to replace it with. In other words, increasing discontent but no perspective for the future. That's why the mentality of 'everyone for himself' and 'each against all' strongly influences a significant portion of the working class.*

*But the worst effect of having no perspective due to demoralisation is hoping that one person can save the majority from poverty; hoping for a strongman and a "benevolent" dictator. This is no different from hoping for a all-powerful god to descend to earth to save those who have faith in him and punish those who do not. The class which mainly generates this mentality is the petty-bourgeoisie."*

Generally we were not mistaken of our analysis.

Different bourgeois 'political analysts' admitted that the votes for Rodrigo Duterte are votes against the failures of the BS Aquino administration. What they did not say and don't want to say is that the hatred and discontent of the people is against the whole system of bourgeois democracy that they believed replaced the dictatorship of Marcos Sr. in 1986. For the past 30 years the failures and corruption of the democratic institutions has been exposed, and seen as no different from the Marcos Sr. dictatorship. They feel that the current situation is worse than during the time of the Marcos Sr. dictatorship.

### Duterte regime: a government of the left of capital?

Duterte declared that he is a "socialist" and a "leftist". He boasted that he will be the first leftist Philippine President. Almost all the left factions in the Philippines agree with Duterte and offer their support for his regime. And the front runner in this support is the Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines and its legal organisations.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever the "socialism" of Duterte, it is certainly not scientific socialism or marxism. For sure it is another brand of bourgeois "socialism" to deceive the masses and revive the lies of the bourgeoisie against socialism/communism. The "socialism" of Duterte is state capitalism.<sup>3</sup>

Based on Duterte's statements before and during campaign, it is clear that the essence of his platform of government is for the interests of the capitalist class not of the working masses. In re-

lation to this, he has threatened militant workers not to launch strikes under his term or else he will kill them.

Worse, Duterte uses language (as well as the deeds) of a street gangster and a bully. This is an expression of the fact that he sees the government as a big mafia where he is the 'Godfather'. His vague policy of "federalism", which seems to be based on the boast that the income of the local governments is bigger than that of the national government, is in reality closer to the concept of the autonomy of local mafias in their own territories.

For the communist organisation and revolutionary workers, the Duterte regime is a rabid defender of national capitalism<sup>4</sup> but is still totally dependent on foreign capital.

### Duterte regime: government of and by the capitalist class

The "bold" promise of Duterte to stop corruption, criminality and drugs within the first 3-6 months of his presidency has a very strong appeal to the voters. This has a stronger appeal among the capitalists and the 'middle class' who are the constant targets of crime. Capitalists want a peaceful and smooth-sailing business in order to accumulate more profits. That's why, for the capitalists, workers' strikes are just as much expressions of 'chaos' as the plague of crime.

The new government cannot solve the problems of massive unemployment, low wages and widespread casualisation. In the midst of a worsening crisis of over-production, the main problem for the capitalists is to have a competitive edge against their rivals in a saturated world market. Reducing the cost of labour power through layoffs and precarious contracts is the only way to make their products cheaper than their rivals.<sup>5</sup>

Essentially the solution of the regime is to strengthen state control over the life of society and to oblige the population to strictly follow the laws and policies of the state through propaganda and repression.

Under the new regime factional struggles within the ruling class will intensify as the crisis of the system worsens. On the surface, most of the elected politicians from the other parties, especially from the ruling Liberal Party of Duterte's predecessor, the Aquino regime, are now declaring their allegiance to the new government. But in reality every faction has its own agenda which they want to assert under the new administration. Furthermore, within the Duterte camp there are several factions competing for favour and positions: the pro-Duterte Maoist faction, anti-CPP/NPA faction, warlords from Mindanao/Visayas, warlords from Luzon particularly the group around Cayetano, the Vice-Presidential candidate of Duterte.

### Effects of capitalist decomposition on the consciousness of the Filipino masses

We also wrote in our article 'Boycott the election...'

*"If Duterte runs for president in 2016 and the ruling class in the Philippines decides that the country needs a dictator like in the era of Marcos to try to save dying capitalism in the Philippines and drown the poverty-stricken mass in fear and submission to the government, surely he will win. Ultimately, the capitalist class (local and foreign) is not concerned with what kind of management of the state the Philippines has. What is more important for them is to accumulate profit."*

There are certainly indications that Duterte is a psychologically disturbed individual who hankers after being a dictator. But whether he rules as a dictator or as a bourgeois liberal depends on the general decision of the ruling class (both local

4. Not essentially different from the programme of the Maoist CPP-NPA.

5. In the 8-point economic agenda of the Duterte regime it is clear that its objective is to strengthen national capitalism through increasing direct foreign investment. And this means more attacks on the living conditions of the toiling masses. Basically its economic programme is neoliberalism. (<http://www.rappler.com/nation/politics/elections/2016/132850-duterte-8-point-economic-agenda>)

and international) and the solid support from the AFP/PNP and even from the Maoist faction that supported him.

For us, what is important is to analyse and understand as communists why significant numbers of the population are ready to accept Duterte as dictator and 'Godfather'. Analysis is crucial because in other countries, especially in Europe and the USA, ultra-rightist personalities who engage in tough-talking and bullying (the likes of Donald Trump) are gaining popularity. Significant numbers among the youth are also attracted to the violence and fanaticism of ISIS.



In analysing the phenomenal popularity of Rodrigo Duterte and Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the son of the late dictator, it is necessary to have a world-wide view

Globally, for more than 30 years capitalist decomposition has been infecting the consciousness of the population. The infection encompasses many areas: economy, politics, and culture/ideology. The popularity of Duterte and Marcos Jr. is an indication of helplessness, hopelessness and a loss of perspective; of a loss of confidence in class unity and the struggles of the toiling masses. Hence, the current seeking for a "saviour" instead of for class identity. The background to this is the unsolvable crisis of capitalism, expressing itself in worsening poverty, growing chaos, spreading wars, devastation of the environment, scandals and corruption in governments.

But a major contributing factor is also the near absence of a strong working class movement for more than 20 years in the Philippines. The militant struggles at the time of the Marcos Sr. dictatorship were diverted and sabotaged by leftism towards guerrillaism and electoralism. Because of the strong influence of nationalism the Philippine workers' movement is isolated from the international struggles of the working class.

### Criminality

For almost 50 years the Filipino toiling masses witnessed the bankruptcy of both the guerrilla war of the Maoists and the promises of reforms from every faction of the ruling class sitting in Malacañang Palace. In addition, the militarisation in the countryside of both the armed rebels and the state resulted in massive dislocation that creates a widening and increasing population of poor and unemployed people living in saturated slum areas in the cities. This situation is exploited by the crime syndicates. Hence, criminality from drugs, robbery and kidnapping and car-napping increases year by year. Gang killings and gang riots, rape and other forms of violence are daily events in the cities. And increasingly, both the perpetrators and the victims are the young, even children.

Since a number of police and military officials are protectors of these syndicates, the state itself has become totally unable to control crimes and violence.

Although the first to be affected by the rise of criminality, particularly robbery and kidnapping, are the rich, the poor people also carry the burden of these crimes since most of the "soldiers" or the cannon-fodder of these syndicates come from the hungry and unemployed population.

### Helplessness

There is a widespread feeling of helplessness among the population. Being atomised and isolated, they're asking who can protect them. Behind this thinking is their expectation that the state must protect them. But the state is abandoning them. Helplessness and atomisation breed a longing for a saviour, a person or group of persons that can save them from their misery, that is stronger than the sum of the atomised population. And this saviour must control the government since only the government can protect them.

This helplessness is a fertile ground for scape-

goating and personalisation. Blaming somebody for their misery: the corrupt government officials and criminals. The loss of perspectives and growing feelings of helplessness catapult the popularity of Duterte and Marcos Jr. The popularity of these figures is an effect of the rotting system, not of the rising political awareness of the masses. This rottenness was also the reason for the popularity of Hitler and Mussolini before World War II.

As this tendency towards scapegoating and personalisation grows, the number of people who support physical elimination, by whatever means, of corrupt officials and criminals is increasing. They clap their hands whenever they hear Duterte declaring "kill them all!"

### Internationalism

It is more difficult for us to combat the effects of a decomposing society in the current political situation. Nevertheless, we are not fighting alone or in isolation. We are part of the international proletarian resistance that exploded since 1968. The international working class, despite its difficulties to find its own class identity and solidarity as an independent class, is still fighting against the attacks of decadent capitalism.

We can only see a bright future by rejecting all forms of nationalism. We cannot see the proletarian class struggle if we just look at the 'national situation'. We should not forget that since 2006 our class brothers in Europe, some parts of the Middle East and USA have been fighting against decomposition through movements of solidarity (anti-CPE movement in France, Indignados in Spain, class struggle in Greece, Occupy movement in the USA). We should also remember that hundreds of thousands of our class brothers in China have launched widespread strikes.

We must persevere with theoretical clarification, organisational strengthening and militant interventions to prepare for the future struggles at the international level. We are not nationalists as the different leftist factions are. We are proletarian internationalists.

Let us be reminded by the last paragraph of the Communist Manifesto: *"The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win."*

**Internasyonalismo (ICC section in the Philippines) June 2016**

1. <http://fil.internationalism.org/internasyonalismo/201509/8638/boykot-eleksyon1-marxistang-paninindigan-sa-panahon-ng-dekadenteng-kap>

2. Despite the initial "protest" of the Maoists under the neo-liberal 8-point Economic Programme of the regime, they're all united in support of the 'butcher' Duterte. Proof of this is they have Maoist representatives inside the Duterte cabinet.

3. Regimes like the ones in China, Vietnam, Cuba, which claim to be "socialist" countries, are also a version of state capitalism. Even the barbaric capitalist regimes of Hitler (Nazism), Saddam Hussein and Assad shamelessly declared that their governments were "socialist". Even now a majority of the population in the Philippines still believe that the "Communist" Party of the Philippines is a communist organisation.

Continued from page 8

## Migrants and refugees: victims of capitalist decline, Part 3: The Cold War

Belgian Congo and the presence of mercenaries led to many victims and many displaced. One could add to these examples, like that of Angola which had been ravaged by war since the first uprisings of its population in Luanda in 1961. After its independence in 1975, many years of wars followed between the forces of the ruling MPLA (Movement of Liberation of Angola, supported by Moscow) and the rebels of UNITA (supported by South Africa and the United States): not less than one million died and 4 million were displaced, including half a million refugees who ended up in camps. The many conflicts on this continent permanently destabilised entire regions such as West Africa or the strategic Great Lakes region. One could equally find examples in Central America, or in Asia, which saw many bloody guerrilla conflicts. The Russian intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 marked an acceleration of this infernal spiral, leading to the exodus of 6 million people, the largest refugee population in the world.

### Nationalism and the mechanics of exclusion

The new states or nations that emerged following large displacements were the direct product of imperialist divisions and poverty. They were the fruit of nationalism, expulsions and exclusion: in short, a pure product of the climate of war and permanent crisis generated by decadent capitalism. The formation of these new states was a dead end that could only fuel destructive tensions. Thus the partition of India in 1947, then the creation of Bangladesh, forced more than 15 million people to be displaced on the Indian subcontinent. The founding of the state of Israel in 1948, a real besieged fortress, was also a significant example. This new state, growing from 750,000 to 1.9 million inhabitants in 1960, was from its birth the focus of an infernal spiral of wars that caused the growth of Palestinian refugee camps everywhere. In 1948, 800,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced and the Gaza strip gradually became a vast open-air camp. Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut, Damascus, Amman, were transformed gradually into suburbs of the capitals.

Similar problems of refugees and migrants were widely created across the planet. In China, millions of people were displaced, themselves victims of the ferocious Japanese oppression during the war. After the victory of the Maoist troops in 1949, some 2.2 million Chinese fled to Taiwan and 1 million to Hong Kong. China then isolated itself in relative autarky to try to make up for its economic backwardness. In the early 1960s, it then undertook a forced industrialisation and launched the policy of the "Great Leap Forward", imprisoning its population in kind of national labour camp, preventing any attempt at migration. This brutal policy of uprooting and repression practiced since the Mao era led to the growth of the concentration camps (laogai). Famine and repression caused not less than 30 million deaths in all. More recently, in the 1990s, the massive urbanisation of this country tore from the land not less than 90 million peasants. Other crises struck Asia, such as the civil war in Pakistan and the flight of Bengalis in 1971. Similarly, the taking of Saigon in 1975 (by a Stalinist-type regime) provoked the exodus of millions of refugees, the "boat people". More than 200,000 of them died.<sup>4</sup> There followed the terrible genocide of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia causing 2 million deaths: refugees were the rare survivors.

Refugees have always been the exchange currency for the worst political blackmail, the justification for military interventions by intervening powers, sometimes for use as "human shields". It is difficult to calculate the number of victims who paid the price for the confrontations of the Cold War and give a precise figure, but "At a World Bank conference in 1991, Robert McNamara, former Secretary of State for Defence under Kennedy and Johnson, gave a table of losses in each theatre of operations whose total exceeds forty million."<sup>5</sup> The new post-war period had there-

fore only opened up a new period of barbarism, increasing further the divisions among populations and the working class and sowing death and desolation. By further militarising borders, states exerted a globally greater and more violent control over the populations bled dry by the Second World War.

### Migrants: a boon for exploiting labour power

In the early days of the Cold War, not all migrations were caused by military conflicts or political factors. The countries of Europe that had been largely devastated by the war needed to be rapidly reconstructed. But this reconstruction had to overcome a decline in population growth (10 to 30% of men had been killed or wounded during the war). Economic and demographic factors therefore played an important role in the phenomenon of migration. Everywhere, there was an available workforce, at low cost.

This is why East Germany was forced to build a wall to stop the leakage of its population (3.8 million had already crossed the border to the West). The former colonial powers favoured immigration, primarily from the countries of southern Europe (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece ...). Initially, many of these migrants arrived legally, but also illegally with the help of organised smugglers. The need for labour meant the authorities at the time closed their eyes to these irregular migrations. In this way, between 1945 and 1974, many Portuguese and Spanish workers fled the regimes of Franco and Salazar. Until the early 1960s, Italians were recruited in France, first from northern Italy and then the south as far as Sicily. Then a little later it was the turn of the former colonies in Asia and Africa to provide their quotas for a docile and cheap workforce. In France, for example, between 1950 and 1960, the number of North African migrants rose from 50,000 to 500,000. The state then built hostels for migrant workers to keep them away from the population; this foreign labour was in effect deemed a "risk", justifying its marginalisation. But this did not stop it from hiring cheap labour for the heaviest work, knowing that it could get rid of them overnight. The high turnover of these newly arrived workers allowed a frenzied and unscrupulous exploitation, particularly in the chemical and metallurgical industries. Between 1950 and 1973, nearly 10 million people migrated to Western Europe to meet its industrial needs.<sup>6</sup>

This situation was inevitably exploited by the bourgeoisie to divide the workers and turn them against each other, to generate competition and distrust on both sides. With the recovery of workers' struggles in 1968 and the waves of struggles that followed, these factors would feed the many divisive manoeuvres by the unions and the ideological campaigns of the bourgeoisie. On the one side, racial and xenophobic prejudices were encouraged; on the other, the class struggle was diverted by anti-racism, often used as a distraction to workers' demands. In this way, poison was spread and foreigners became "undesirable", or were portrayed as profiteers" or "privileged". All this would favor the growth of populist ideologies, facilitating the expulsions which have increased wholesale since the 1980s. **WH (April 2016)**

In the next and final article in this series we will cover the issue of migrants from the 1980s to the current period which is marked by the final stage of decomposition of the capitalist system.

2004.

6. Source: [www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/historyteaching/Source/Projects/DocumentsTwentyCentury/Population\\_fr.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/historyteaching/Source/Projects/DocumentsTwentyCentury/Population_fr.pdf)

4. Source: UNHCR (High Commissioner for Refugees).

5. According to André Fontaine, *The Red Spot. The Romance of the Cold War*, Editions La Martinière,

## Out soon International Review 157

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# Migrants and refugees: victims of capitalist decline, Part 3: The Cold War

In the first article in this series<sup>1</sup>, we gave a brief overview of the origins and function of migration in the capitalist system and how this has changed as that same system began its remorseless historical decline in the early 20th century. In part two<sup>2</sup>, we examined the culmination of those trends in the horror of the Holocaust. But the defeat of the Nazi terror did not mean an end to the suffering and trauma of displaced people around the globe. As Nazi terror was replaced by the terror unleashed by the Stalinist and democratic powers, millions of displaced Jews, fresh from the horror of the concentration camps, became pawns in the imperialist struggle in the Middle East around the formation of the Israeli state. As the Cold War confrontation widened, millions more around the globe fled wars and massacres, victims of murderous rivalry between the global super-powers and their equally murderous local client states.

At the end of the Second World War, the disastrous destruction caused by imperialist confrontations created a world of ruin and desolation. In May 1945, 40 million people were displaced or refugees in Europe. To this must be added the 11.3 million workers who had been conscripted by Germany during the war. In other major regions of the world, the weakening of colonial powers caused instability and conflicts, particularly in Asia and Africa, leading over time to millions of migrants. All these population movements provoked terrible suffering and many deaths.

## The "Iron Curtain": terror and the militarisation of borders

On the still smoking ruins of the world conflict following the conferences at Yalta (February 1945) and Potsdam (July 1945), the "Iron Curtain" that fell between the former allies (the Western powers behind the United States on one side and the USSR on the other) drove millions of people to flee from hatred and vengeance. With the division of the world into spheres of influence dominated by the victors and their allies, the new

1. <http://en.internationalism.org/iconline/201510/13477/migrants-and-refugees-victims-capitalist-decline>  
2. <http://en.internationalism.org/iconline/201601/13766/migrants-and-refugees-victims-capitalist-decline-part-2-depth-counter-revolut>

line of inter-imperialist confrontations was drawn. Hardly had the war ended than the confrontation between the Western and Eastern blocs began. The months that followed the end of the war were marked by the expulsion of 13 million Germans from the Eastern countries and the exile of more than a million Russians, Ukrainians, Belarussians, Poles and Balts, all fleeing the Stalinist regimes. Ultimately, "Between 9 and 13 million people perished as a result of the policy of Allied imperialism between 1945-50. There were three main foci of this monstrous genocide:

- Firstly amongst a total of 13.3 million ethnic Germans expelled from Eastern parts of Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary etc., as allowed by the Potsdam agreement. This ethnic cleansing was so inhumane that only 7.3 million arrived at their destination within the post-war borders of Germany; the rest 'disappeared' in the most gruesome circumstances.

- Secondly amongst the German prisoners of war who died as a result of the starvation and diseased conditions of the allied camps - between 1.5 and 2 million.

- Finally amongst the population in general who were put on rations of around 1000 calories per day, guaranteeing slow starvation and sickness - 5.7 million died as a result."<sup>3</sup>

A great number of Jewish survivors did not know where to go because of the resurgence of anti-Semitism, particularly in Poland (where new pogroms broke out such as at Kielce in 1946) and Central Europe. The frontiers of the Western democratic countries had been closed. Jews were often housed in camps. In 1947 some sought to reach Palestine to escape hostility in the East and rejection in the West. They did so illegally at the time and were stopped by the British to be immediately interned in Cyprus. The aim was to deter and control all these populations to maintain capitalist order. In the same period the number of prisoners in the camps of the Gulag in the USSR exploded. Between 1946 and 1950, the population doubled to more than two million prisoners. A large number of refugees and migrants, or "displaced" persons, ended up in the camps to die. This new world of the Cold War shaped by the "victors of freedom" had created new fractures, brutal divisions tragically cutting populations off

3. See 'Berlin 1948: The Berlin Airlift hides the crimes of allied imperialism', <http://en.internationalism.org/node/3865>



from each other, causing their forced exile.

Germany was divided up by the imperialist victors. And to prevent migration and the flow of its population to the West, in 1961 the GDR had to build the "wall of shame". Other states such as Korea and Vietnam were also cut in two by the "Iron Curtain". The Korean War, between 1950 and 1953, divided a population imprisoned by the two new enemy camps. This war led to the disappearance of nearly 2 million civilians and caused a migration of 5 million refugees. Throughout this period until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, many populations were forced to flee from the incessant local conflicts of the Cold War. Within each bloc, numerous displacements often directly resulted from the political games played by the American and Russian great powers. Thus, propaganda concerning the 200,000 refugees who fled to Austria and Germany after the suppression of the uprisings in East Berlin in 1953 and Budapest in 1956 by the Red Army fed the ideological discourse of the two rival camps. All the wars fuelled by these two great East-West military blocs continued to create large numbers of victims who were the systematically exploited by the propaganda of each opposing camp.

## Tensions, "national liberation struggles" and migration

The brutal divisions of the Cold War continued in the 1950s with decolonisation movements that fuelled migration and further divided the proletar-

iat. Since the beginning of the period of decolonisation, and especially in the 1980s when Cold War conflicts intensified and worsened, so-called "national liberation struggles" (in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East) were particularly murderous. Pushed to the geographical periphery of the major capitalist powers, these conflicts gave the illusion of an "era of peace" in Europe while the lasting wounds and forced displacement of large numbers of migrants appeared as so many "distant" tragedies (except of course for the old settlers coming from these regions and the nations directly affected). In Africa, since the end of the colonial era, there were many wars, some of them among the most murderous in the world. Throughout these conflicts, major powers like Great Britain or France (then acting as the Western bloc's "gendarme of Africa" against the USSR) were widely involved militarily on the ground where the logic of the East/West blocs prevailed. For example, hardly had the Sudan gained its independence in 1956 than a terrible civil war would involve the colonial powers and thus be exploited by the blocs, leaving at least 2 million dead and more than 500,000 refugees, forced to seek asylum in neighbouring countries. Instability and war became a permanent feature. The terrible war in Biafra caused famines and epidemics, leaving at least 2 million dead and as many refugees. Between 1960 and 1965, the civil war in the former

Continued on page 7

## Political positions of the ICC

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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*.