There was a time, not so long ago, when revolutions were greeted with scepticism or mockery when they argued that the capitalism system was heading towards catastrophe. Today, it’s the fiercest partisans of capitalism who are saying the same thing. “Chaos is there, right in front of us” (Jacques Attali, previously a very close associate of President Mitterrand and former director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; now an adviser to President Sarkozy, quoted in the Journal du Dimanche, 27/11/11). “I think that you are not aware that in a couple of days, or a week, our world could disappear…We are very close to a great social revolution!” (Jean-Pierre Mustier, bank director, formerly at the Société Générale. www.challeng.es.fr/finance-et-marches). It’s not with any joy in their hearts that these defenders of capitalism are admitting that their idol is on the way out. They are obviously shattered by this, all the more so because they can see that the solutions being put forward to save the system are unrealistic. As the journalist reporting Jean-Pierre Mustier’s words put it: “as for solutions, the cupboard is bare”. And with good reason!

Whatever their lucidity about what’s in store for capitalism, those who think that no other society is possible are not going to be able to put forward any solutions to the disaster now threatening humanity. Because there are no solutions to the contradictions of capitalism inside this system. The contradictions it is confronting are insurmountable because they are not the result of ‘bad management’ by this or that government or by ‘international finance’ but quite simply of the lack of a work force capable of producing, of the lack of means of production. They are the permanent justification for the attacks on producers and means of production which characterises capitalism, to abolish the commodity relations through which they are exploited, and which are the permanent justification for the attacks on their income since, as all bosses and governments are saying the same thing, ‘you’ve got to be competitive’.

The only solution: free humanity from the yoke of capitalism

Just like the societies which came before it, such as slavery and feudalism, capitalism is not an eternal system. Slavery predominated in ancient society because it corresponded to the level of agricultural techniques which had been achieved. When the latter evolved, demanding far greater attention on the part of the producers, society entered into a deep crisis – the decadence of Rome. It was replaced by feudalism where the serf was attached to his piece of land while working for part of his time on the lord’s land or giving up part of his harvest to the lord. At the end of the Middle Ages this system also became obsolete, again plunging society into a historic crisis. It was then replaced by capitalism which was no longer based on small agricultural production but on commerce, associated labour and large industry, which were themselves made possible by progress in technology (the steam engine for example). Today, as a result of its own laws, capitalism has in turn become obsolete and must give way to a higher system.

But give way to what? Here is the key question being posed by more and more people who are becoming aware that the present system has no future, that it is dragging humanity into an abyss of poverty and barbarism. We are not prophets who claim to describe the future society in all its details, but one thing is clear: in the first place, we have to abolish production for the market and replace it with production whose only aim is the satisfaction of human need. Today, we are confronted by a real absurdity: in all countries, extreme poverty is growing, the majority of the population is forced to go without more and more, not because the system doesn’t produce enough but because it is producing too much. They pay farmers to reduce their production, enterprises are closed down, wage earners are sacked en masse, vast numbers of young people are condemned to unemployment, including those who have spent years studying, while at the same time the exploited are more and more forced to pull in their belts. Masery and poverty are not the result of the lack of a work force capable of producing, or of the lack of means of production. They are the consequences of a mode of production which has become a calamity for humanity. It is only by radically rejecting production for the market that the system that succeeds capitalism can put on its banner “From each according to their means, to each according to their needs”.

The question then posed is this: “how do we get to such a society?? What force in the world is capable of taking in charge such a huge transformation in the life of humanity?” It is clear that such a transformation cannot come from the capitalists themselves or the existing governments who all, whatever their colouring, defend the present system and the privileges it gives them. Only the exploited class under capitalism, the class of wage labourers, the proletariat, can carry out such a total change. This class is not the only one that suffers from poverty, exploitation and oppression. For example, throughout the world there are multitudes of poor peasants who are also exploited and often live in worse conditions than the workers in their countries. But their position in society does not enable them to take charge of constructing a new society, even if they also have a real interest in such a change. More and more ruined by the capitalist system, these small producers aspire to turning back the wheel of history, to go back to the blessed days when they could live from their own labour, when the big agro-industrial companies didn’t take the bread from their mouths. It is different for the wage producers of modern capitalism. What’s at the basis of their exploitation and their poverty is wage labour - the fact that the means of production are in the hands of the capitalist class (whether in the form of private owners or state capital), and the only way they can earn their daily bread and a roof over their heads is to sell their labour power. In other words, the profound aspiration of the class of producers, even if the majority of its members are not yet conscious of this, is to abolish the separation between producers and means of production which characterises capitalism, to abolish the commodity relations through which they are exploited, and which are the permanent justification for the attacks on their income since, as all bosses and governments say: “you’ve got to be competitive”.

Continued on page 4
**Occupancy London, a space for discussion**

I n recent weeks, comrades of the ICC have attended, and on two occasions given, talks at the Occupy site in St Paul’s. As has been the case in the last few years with movements in North Africa, Greece and, most notably, Spain there is a multiplicity of ideas being discussed. The Occupy movement is no different. As we wrote in the last edition of WR, there is a need to wage a struggle within such movements for a workers’ perspective “Occupy London is not only smaller than the movements in Spain and the US it inspired that it, but the voices raised in support of a working class perspective have been relatively weaker, and those defending parliamentary democracy relatively stronger. For instance the efforts to send ‘delegations’ to the electricians’ protests only a short walk away were seen as an entirely individual and decision and initiative of those who participated, whereas in Oakland the Occupy Movement called for a general strike as well as evening meetings so that those who had to work could also participate.”

The movement as a whole is heavily impregnated with reformism – the idea that if one aspect of capitalism were changed this would change the overall functioning of capitalism, and its current dynamic. There is a widespread idea that capitalism can be made a ‘fairer’ more ‘human’ one. This is obviously coming from a freeze in tax credits paid to working families, university tuition fees or reopen closed career services. No, it’s a retro response, we’re going back to the 1980s. If these movements are able to reach out to the young people around the world in the student and Occupy movements, which despite their illusions, usually, be ‘better off’ than your parent’s generation, with a little sacrifice you could own your own home and save for your retirement. With the bourgeois press claims young workers a generation of Neets has risen to a record high of 1.16 million with almost one in five 16 – 24 year olds in Eng England ‘not in education, employment or training’ between July and September this year. “The youth unemployment rate last year was 17.6% [a rise of 13%] on the same period last year. Just over 21% of 18 - 24 year olds are not in education, work or training” (Guardian 25/11/11). Figures, documented by a confusing array of statistics, may have been broken across the board – “official figures published last week show there were 1.02 million unemployed aged 16 - 24 years old in Eng- land ‘not in education, employment or training’ between July and Sep- tember this year, also a record” (ibid) - but the results for young people are the same.

In response the Government has wheezed into action. Even though they “know many young people move between school, college, university and work during the summer, which explains why Neet figures are higher during this quarter” (ibid) they promise not to be complacent. This doesn’t mean that they’ll review scrapping the Education Maintenance Allowance, rethink increasing university tuition fees or reopen closed career services.

This is clearly being put into practice by young people around the world in the student and Occupy movements, which despite their illusions in democracy, are a direct response to all those who want to dismiss and marginalise the young. If these movements are able to reach out to the working class they will be able to begin pose a real alternative to capitalism: communism. If that happens these just could be the best years of your life… .

**The unions are part of the attack on workers’ pensions**

A fter the trade union marches and strikes against the Coalition’s pension cuts the unions went straight back into the serious business of working with government officials in order to implement the latest austerity measures. November 30 was deliberately chosen by the unions for a strike in order to cause the minimum disruption – the airlines for example privately welcomed the date. “Now, after the strike” says Dave Prentis, General Secretary of UNISON, “we want to reach a negotiated settlement.” So individually, behind the scenes, relying on their usual tactics of division and secret talks, the unions are again working with the government against the interests of the working class.

Mark Serwotka’s Public and Commercial Services union (PCS) gives us a good idea of what to expect. Serwotka presents his union as a militant defender of working class interests but the opposite is the truth. In 2006, the PCS “negotiated” with the then Labour Government, the raising of the retirement age of its members from 60 to 65 and greatly reduced payments by agreeing to go from a final salary scheme to a career average. This was in 2007.

Further, the PCS has proposed to increase its own workers’ pension payments by 10% in 3 consecutive yearly leaps of three-and-a-third per cent. The PCS workers belong to a branch of the GMB union and seeing that the proposals have been put to the union’s PCS branch since last July, a stitch up of the workers by both unions is on the cards. More than this, while the PCS has gone out of court (where the union’s lawyers get even richer) to challenge the government’s move to change pension entitlements, the government’s Right to Work Price Index (RPI) to the lower Consumer Price Index (CPI), the union has imposed exactly this change on its members. The GMB has cut the local living wage for public sector workers by 16% (where the union’s lawyers get even richer) to challenge the government’s move to cut the value of their pension payments (employees benefits.co.uk).

This hypocrisy is one more indication of the double language of the unions who not only do not defend our interests but are part of the attack upon them.

**Youth unemployment Best years of your life?**

I t’s not much fan being young at the moment. If you manage to stay in education you end up accruing large debts only to be told standards are slipping and the only reason you’re passed is because the exams are so easy now. On the street you’re either patronised as a ‘chav’ or feared as a ‘hoodie’. Everything from the summer riots to cultural decline is down to you and your self ob-sessed, greedy individualism: you just can’t win.

The cherrys on the top of this rancid cake are the recent announcements on youth ‘employability’ Figures published by the Department for Education (DfE) in November showed that the number of Neets has risen to a record high of 1.16 million with almost one in five 16 – 24 year olds in Eng- land ‘not in education, employment or training’ between July and September this year. “The figure was up 137,000 [a rise of 13%] on the same pe- riod last year. Just over 21% of 18 - 24 year olds are not in education, work or training” (Guardian 25/11/11). Results, documented by a confusing array of statistics, may have been broken across the board – “official figures published last week show there were 1.02 million unemployed aged 16 - 24 years old in Eng- land ‘not in education, employment or training’ between July and Sep- tember this year, also a record” (ibid) - but the results for young people are the same.

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**Communism is not just a ‘nice idea’**

The author of the book produced by the International Communist Current ‘Communism, not just a nice idea but a material necessity’ begins a discussion on what communism is not, what it is, and why it is the only alternative to the crisis of capitalist society.

Tent City University, Occupy St Pauls Thursday 22 December 2011, 6 -7.30 pm.

Nearest Tube: St Pauls

**The unions are part of the attack on workers’ pensions**

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This hypocrisy is one more indication of the double language of the unions who not only do not defend our interests but are part of the attack upon them. Baboon 8/12/11
November 9 and 30 demonstrations
Unions and police are two arms of the same state

Electricians have been protesting against the cuts in trade unionism, and have been fighting for better terms and conditions. They have been joined by other workers who are facing similar treatment.

On November 9, 10,000 students marched in central London, spurring on by the mounting cost of education and a refusal to fight the government's programme of austerity. Recalling last year's student demonstrations, which often posed severe problems for the police, and aware that the students are a somewhat volatile force, who are not really 'disciplined' by legal minded union officials, the state took no chances. The demonstration was therefore treated not as the kettle, but to the 'sock', a kind of mobile kettle, where marchers were herded down a prescribed route with seriously equipped police contingents on either side, blocking the possibility of demonstrators breaking off to right or left, or others joining in the march along the way.

Meanwhile, several hundred electricians had been marching along the route of the students, calling for action against pay cuts at nearby building sites. Although the unions had organised a lobby of parliament, a large group of electricians and supporters took the police by surprise and 'sod that, we want to join the students', and started to move towards the student march. They were very quickly met by a police line, and those who didn't manage to evade it were kettled. Attempts by those who had escaped to get help from the students were blocked as another police line delayed the student march for some time.

In short: a massive police presence, very well organised, overseen by helicopters, and capable of acting swiftly to prevent anyone from stepping out of line.

On November 30, in central London, 50,000 public sector workers marched in protest against attacks on their pensions, part of one of the biggest national strikes for many decades. This time, the police operation was of the softly softly kind, very low key, the signs were of kettles: you could leave the march or join it when and where you wanted. It gathered in good order, marched along in cheerful humour, and dispersed when the rally ended. At that rally the point was over, if not well before.

Why was this? Could it have anything to do with the fact that, unlike the students and the electricians, the public sector strike had been controlled from start to finish by the unions, who are much more effective than a confrontation police force in containing workers with their march stewards, their well-rehearsed rallies and their widely accepted role as the official representatives of the working class?

Not that the police didn't show their other side that day. In Dalston, when a group of young people who had been roaming around showing solidarity with pickets staged a short road block outside the CLR James library, they were immediately set upon by dog-wielding heavyweights and caught up in a kettle, followed by numerous arrests, terrifying a number of small children in the process. At the end of the march, a group of activists who had carried out a banner drop in Piccadilly were given similar treatment.

So let that be a lesson to you: if you start acting unofficially, or if you question the trade unions' History -given right to lead, you will face the full force of the Law. But another way workers and police are two arms of the same state. "Asos 10.12.11"

The struggle so far

The strikes and protests which have gone on since 8 employers announced they wanted to cut their workforce by 35% pay and worse conditions through BESNA have been characterised by:

- repeated wildcat strikes
- a determined search for solidarity within the industry and beyond. There has been a recognition that they need to get the solidarity of other workers in other trades, and that they would not be next if the pay cut is imposed on the electricians. Workers inside and outside the union would need to be involved, although this is seen in terms of getting them to join the union. And there has been a significant effort to seek solidarity of workers in other industries expressed in the strikes and demonstrations on 9th November to coincide with the student protest and the proposal to do the same on 30th alongside the public sector workers. At Farrington on 16th November, as electricians outside were roundly rebuffed - including a group of Polish workers - refused to go in;
- those from Occupy London have been welcomed, and several hundred electricians marched to St Paul's to show solidarity with their protest.

The action on the 9th November showed all these tendencies, starting with a rank and file protest outside the Pinnacle near Liverpool Street after blocking the road it moved off to visit several other construction sites run by BESNA companies and held open mic sessions before joining the main Unite demonstration at the Shard. Several hundred sparks decided not to go to the union lobby of parliament but to join the students. They were immediately kettled and despite their best efforts most were contained and searched - apart from a few who escaped through a coffee shop. The ruling class really do want to keep us apart!

On December 7, as well as calling on sparks to come out at Balfour Beatty at St Cath's Gate, they also called on out NHS Estates workers to explain why they were picketing - and got a sympathetic hearing. A motion to media blackout of all this. Nothing on the pay cut. Nothing on the protests, blockades and occupations. Virtually nothing on the demonstration itself, despite the normally robust lobbying parliament would attract the media. It is typical of the media to keep quiet about a struggle that unites because they think it is a bad thing for other workers. And what the sparks have done so far is certainly an inspiration.

No information passed through union channels either, despite platoonic assurances of support from other unions. I tried asking pickets outside Great Ormond Street Hospital on 30 November and they knew nothing of the attack on the sparks, nothing of their struggle. We shouldn't be surprised.

Difficulties developing the struggle

Jobs are scarce, living standards are falling as inflation eats away at real wages, and all these attacks are presented as painful but necessary by politicians and media. This is true for the whole working class, but the difficulties faced in construction are much more acute. Thousands of militant workers have been blacklisted, and many of them remain unemployed, and this is a real limitation against the whole workforce. Then there is the difficulty getting regular work, many are forced to subcontract (sabbies) or work through agencies with appalling effects on their pay and conditions, and the potential for divisions among workers along these lines. Hardly surprising that many workers hesitate: "Most of the lads are still not up for the unofficial action, a few boys are going down to London though ... The lads are coming round to the idea of the official strike. They are looking out for their jobs which is understandable" (post on ElectriciansForum.co.uk).

"This situation shows that the electricians’ need to fight far more than the 7 or 8 BESNA firms that want to impose a 35% pay cut next year. The agencies already pay less, as a large number of firms which are not part of the JIB, and those that are still fully willing to get them in: "The JIB/SEC set up is NOT working at all, we will struggle" (on the same post)." uterus – are we really the union?

With the original deadline for workers to sign the new agreement looming and no official strike called sparks are getting extremely frustrated with the union. "I do not want in my opinion cause much harm, these firms will have plenty of notice of whom & how many... IT MAY ALREADY BE TOO LATE: “people are reluctant to join a union that is run by ‘nodders’ that will tell its members down the river for personal gain”, “I do not trust Unite one single bit to negotiate a deal that satisfies us. I have seen too many of their sweetheart deals in various industries. It is imperative that Rank and File members are party to any negotiations that take place”. The union has been described as “contentable” for its inaction and absence from the protests. On the other hand “the union is far from perfect but it is all we have”, there can be no Rank and File without the union and its methods of struggle, including the union.

So why do the unions keep behaving like this? One of Unite’s greatest defenders on the forum tells us “fit the stop the union marching, they will be the ones around the table negotiating the deals... we all play our own part in one way or another but it’s Unite who will do the main stuff” and “Unite are there to make deals with union lads whose companies have a relationship with Unite, they are there for their members. Unite is not there to represent a whole industry or an agency”. This is precisely the problem. Unions are there to negotiate with the bosses – workers have a walk on, in the ballot or on militant demonstration, but the main union business takes place behind their backs. And they are limited to making deals with unionised companies. The unions limit our struggle, divide it by job, by membership of this or that union, by this or that employer. But sparks are facing a 35% cut pay across the whole industry, on workers in or out of a union. And it is only one part of the attacks on the whole working class which needs to unite across all the divisions of trade or profession, of employer, regardless of membership of any particular union or none.

Rank and File Group

The struggle so far has been organised by the Unite Construction Rank And File Group, headed by a committee elected at a meeting in Conway Hall, London, in August and which has held meetings up and down the country. They took the view that “It is now widely accepted that we can’t and won’t wait for the ballot, though we will all be glad when it comes. But until then we must step up the campaign to one of even more unofficial action, walkouts on sites with solidarity action from others”. (site worker.wordpress.com). In September 1500 electricians walked out of Lindsey oil refinery to join a demonstration of electricians. Like the national shop stewards committee the Rank and File Group takes a very militant stance – at times at arm’s length from the union and at times arm in arm. “We are working for the same goals both the Rank & File Committee and the official unions. We are working for the same objective. Don’t allow people to divide us”, said Len McCluskey outside the Shard on November 9, despite the fact that Unite leaders have been conspicuous by their absence from most of the protests, apart from a few token showings, such as at Blackfriars in October.

The efforts of the Unite Construction Rank and File Group show the sparks’ militancy, the determination of a minority to resist this attack. It also shows their attachment to the union and its methods of struggle, including the view that the aim of the struggle is negotiated accommodation between BESNA and Unite, and that convincing workers to struggle means recruiting them into the union. The dynamic of the struggle is seen, goes far beyond trade union methods and even in a completely different direction with the attempts to link up with workers in other trades whether in a union or not and with other struggles, rather than confining the struggle to Unite members and their employers. The sparks’ total rejection of the cut in pay and apprenticeships contracts with Unite’s assurance that they will discuss modernisation.

General assemblies to run the struggle, mass meetings open to all workers regardless of union membership, are the way forward for workers to struggle into their own hands, and to spread it to other workers. Alex 9/12/11

Sparks: don’t let the unions block the struggle

E pluribus unum – the union has been the voice of the Law. Put another way: unions and police are two arms of the same state.
The global economy seems to be on the brink of the most serious economic crisis since 1929, and this time the warning signs are more ominous than ever. Banks, businesses, municipalities, regions and states are facing liquidity problems, and the mantra of governments is “we are not in the same boat.” And one thing the media don’t talk about any more is what they call the “debt crisis.”

When capitalism comes up against the wall of debt, the chart below shows the change in global debt from 1960 to present day. (This refers to total world debt, namely the debts of households, businesses and the States of all countries). This debt is expressed as a percentage of world GDP.

According to this chart, in 1960 the debt was equal to the world GDP of 100%. In 1970 it was 2.5 times greater (250%). In other words, a full repayment of the debts built up today would still not return the world to a pre-1970 situation. Since then, there has been an accumulation of capital in each and every productive process and, together with this, the financialization of the economy, which has been spectacular in recent years. In 2008, world debt was equal to the world GDP (i.e. 100%). In 2008, it was 200% of the world GDP.

This change is dramatic in the so-called “developed countries” as shown in the following graph which represents the public debt of the United States.

The debt, a product of capitalism’s decline

The reason to see that the world economy was going to hit this wall eventually; it was inevitable. So why have all the governments of the world, whether left or right, been forced to do “austerity” policies, which are economically forced to do so. Capitalism is a competitive system and he must sell his products in order to earn his livelihood. This is the same type of product. As a result, the employer must not only reduce his production costs, that is, he must make his workers viable buyers of his goods. And this is also achieved by reducing the workers’ wages. This paid labor to re-product in the system more efficient machinery to increase productivity. If he does not, he will be forced out of the market, and, according to Marx, “the most powerful agent of capital, no one other than the worker, that the employer does not pay workers the equivalent of what they have actually produced as work, and by forcing employers to give up consuming a large share of the profit thus extorted, the system produces more value than it can deliver. Neither the workers, nor the capitalists and workers combined can therefore absorb all the commodities produced. Therefore capitalism must sell the surplus commodities outside the sphere of its production relations to markets not yet conquered by capitalist relations of production, so-called extra-capitalist markets. If this doesn’t succeed, there is a crisis of overproduction.”

This is a summary in a few lines of some of the conclusions arrived at in the work of Karl Marx in Capital and Rosa Luxemburg in The Accumulation of Capital. To be even more succinct, here is a short summary of the theory of overproduction:

1. Capital exploits its workers (i.e. their wages are less significant than the real value they create through their work).
2. Capital can thus sell its commodities at a profit, at a price which, greater than the value of the commodities. (“labor + value” plus, for example, 100% profit). This will also include the deprecation of means of production. But the question is: to whom?
3. Obviously, the workers buy commodities... and they are also generally not too unhappy about doing so. But they cannot buy all the commodities bearing surplus value. Neither would it make any sense. Capital cannot buy its own commodities for profit from itself; it would be like taking money from its left pocket and putting it in its right pocket. No one is any better off that way, than the poor will testify.

* To accumulate and develop, capital must find buyers other than workers and capitalists. In other words, it is imperative to markets outside its own. It is to sell its surplus commodities on its hands that clog up the capitalist market; this is then the “crisis of overproduction”!

This “internal contradiction” (the natural tendency to overproduce and the necessity to constantly seek out external markets) is one of the roots of the incredible driving force of the system in the early stages of its existence. Since its birth in the 18th century, capitalism had to establish commercial links with all economic spheres that surrounded it: the old ruling classes, the farmers and artisans throughout the world. In the 18th and 19th centuries, this aim took the form of a race to conquer the world. They gradually divided the planet into colonies and created real empires. Occasionally, they found themselves covering the same territory. The less powerful had to retreat and go and find another territory where they could establish a rule over it by using more force than the more powerful. The outmoded empires were gradually transformed and integrated into capitalism. Not only the economic relations between them became more and more integrated, the means of providing markets for commodities from Eu- rope and the United States but they, in turn, generated the need to take in production lines from the more modern countries.

This dynamic of capital in the 18th and 19th centuries, this alternation of crises of overproduction and periods of relative prosperity, and the inexorable progression of capitalism towards its decline, was described masterfully by Marx and Engels in The Communist Manifesto.

“In these crises, there breaks out an epidemic of hoarding. The capitalists, smoke and driver away from their workshops. The result is a graver crisis because the industry is burdened with abnormally, the epidemics of overproduction. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of mo- norality, where the production capacity is much higher than the consumption capacity. The universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and com- munity is overthrown; the globe is deserted, there is too much civilization, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much com- modity.”

At this time, because capitalism was still expanding and could still conquer new territories, each crisis led subsequently to a new period of prosperity and stability. Constantly, the more for the sake of its products the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle every- where, settle everywhere, establishes connections everywhere... The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians’ intensively obstructed foreigner to capitalize. It compels all nations, on pain of ex- te nding the bourgeoisie over the world, capitulations; it compels them to introduce what is called civilisation into their midst, i.e., to become bour- geois societies. In one word, it creates a world after its own image... (ibid)

But already at that time, Marx and Engels saw that the bourgeoisie is now faced with an endless cycle that always gave way to prosperity. They saw the expression of profound contradic- tions that were undermining capitalism. By “the bourgeoisie”, they signified “the whole of the world, the bourgeoisie and the capitalists”. They were: looking for the way to more extensive and more destro- ductive crises, and by diminishing the means by which a crisis can come about. "(ibid) Of course, the capitalists were seeking a market for their products and consequently the need for extended markets, grows, the world market becomes more and more congested, few and fewer markets remain available for exploitation, since every preceding crisis has subjected to world trade a most conquered area which is unexplored or superficially exploited" (Labour Wage and Capital)

But our planet is a small round ball. By the early 20th century, all lands were conquered and the great historic nations of capitalism had divided up the globe. From now on, there is no question of making new discoveries but only seizing the areas dominated by competing nations by armed force. There is no longer a race in Africa, Asia or America, but only a ruthless war to defend their areas of influence and capturing, by military force, those of their imperialist rivals. It is a genuine is- sue of survival for capitalist nations. So it’s not by having a larger part of its markets, having additional markets and being dependent on the goodwill of the British Empire to trade in its lands (a dependency was the inevitable result of the international political economic aspirations), started the First World War in 1914. Germany appeared to be the most aggressive be- cause of the necessity, made explicit later on by Hitler in the march towards World War II, to “Ex- port or die”. From this point, capitalism, after four centuries of expansion, became a decadent sys- tem. The horror of two world wars and the Great Depression of the 1930s would be dramatic and irrefutable proof of this. Yet even after exhaust- ing the extra-capital markets that still existed in the 1950s, capitalism had still not fallen into a mortal crisis of overproduction. After more than one hundred years of a slow death, this system is still standing: staggering, ailing, but still standing. How does it survive? Why is this organism not yet but now the debts are all over the body, they saturate the least organ, the least cell of the sys- tem. More and more banks, businesses, municipi- alities and being dependent on the goodwill of the market. For, as we have just tried to show, the problem is capitalism, the capitalist system as a whole. And today this system is bankrupt.

Continued from page 1

Pawel (November 26)

For, as we have just tried to show, capitalism is bankrupt. We need to overthrow it

Therefore the proletariat has to expropriate the capitalist system and establish a world economy in order to make it a means of truly satisfying the needs of the human species. This is what we are talk- ing about, will inevitably come up against all the organs capitalism uses to preserve its rule over society, in the first place its states, its forces of re- pression, but also the whole ideological apparatus which serves to convince the exploited, day after day, that capitalism is the only possible system. The ruling class will be determined to stop by all possible means the ‘great social revolution’ which haunts the banker mentioned above and many of his class companions are and will become insol- vent, unable to make repayments on their loans. Summer of 2007 opened a new chapter in the history of the capitalist decadence that began in 1914 with the First World War. The ability of the bourgeoisie to slow the development of the crisis and, as a result, the crisis of capitalism, is what they call the “debt crisis”. By analogy, debt is to capitalism what morphine is to a fatal illness. By resorting to it, the crisis is temporarily overcome, the sufferer is calmed and soothed. But hit by hit, dependency on daily doses increases. The product, initially a savour, starts to becomes harmful... until the overdose! World debt is a symptom of the historical dol- cline of capitalism. The world economy has sur- vived on life supporting credit since the 1960s, but now the debts are all over the body, they saturate the least organ, the least cell of the sys- tem. More and more banks, businesses, municipi- alities and being dependent on the goodwill of...


**The bourgeoisie is divided by the crisis but united against the working class**

In the last few months, the world economy has been going through a difficult period and the ruling class has found it harder and harder to conceal crises. The various international summits aimed at ‘saving the world’, from the one in Europe to the one in Davos, have been unable to resolve the crisis. The only solution or prospects is beginning to stir up tensions between nations, as we can see in the current threats to the Eurozone created even to the European Union itself, and within each country, between the various bourgeois cliques who make up the national political panel. Serious political crises have already broken out:

- in Portugal: on 23 March, the Portuguese prime minister, José Sócrates, resigned following the refusal of the opposition to vote for a fourth austerity plan aimed at avoiding a new plan for financial aid from the EU and the IMF.
- in Spain: in April, prime minister José Luis Zapatero had to announce in advance that he would not be standing in 2012, in order to get his austerity plan adopted, but his plan with its very sharp attacks on pensions was paid for by a heavy defeat for his party, the PSOE, at the legislative elections of 20 November, resulting in a new right-wing government led by Mariano Rajoy;
- in Slovakia, the prime minister Iveta Radicová was replaced at the beginning of October by the FVPDG during the First World War. The movement is complex, chaotic and infested with the obscurantist Tea Party... show to what extent the last minute. And the same question is threat to the unity of the Eurozone and even to the European Union itself, and within each country, between the various bourgeois cliques who make up the national political panel. Serious political crises have already broken out:

What are the causes of these crises?

These difficulties have three interlinked roots:

1. The economic crisis is sharpening the confrontation between the national bourgeoisies and the working class. To use an image, the cake to be shared is getting smaller and smaller and the battle to grab a greater share is becoming more and more savage. For example, in France, the setting of scores between different parties and sometimes within the same party, through moral and financial scandals, reveals the temptation to adopt and sensational trials, are clear expressions of this ruthless competition for power and the advantages that go with it. In Italy, for example, the old trick of ‘opinion’ (in other words, once the dialectic language is decoded, ‘full-on clashes between irreconcilable positions’) which came out at the big summits of the deadly struggle over a world market in crisis.

2. The bourgeoisie has no real solution to the economic catastrophe facing the world economy. Each faction, whether of the right or the left, can only put forward vain and unrealistic proposals. Each faction clearly sees the uselessness of what their rivals are proposing, but can’t see the inefficaciousness of their own. Each faction knows that the policy of the other leads to a dead-end. This is why the blockage over the decision to raise the debt ceiling in the USA: the Democrats know that the policy of the ruling party will lead the country to ruin... and vice versa.

3. This is why the appeals launched all over the world, from Greece to Italy, from Hungary to the USA, for ‘national unity’ and a sense of responsibility from all parties are all desperate and delusional. In reality, in a ship that’s threatening to go under, ‘save what you can’ predominates in the ruling class. Each one is trying to save his own skin at the expense of the rest. And in these political crises, where all the alliances are exploited with all these austerity plans are growing all the time and the parties in power are more and more discriminated. The only thing that is self-evident is that the policy of putting to put forward and often alternate with each other after each election. And when the scheduled elections are too far away, they are being artificially precipitated by the resignation of presidents or prime ministers. This is exactly what happened in Greece recently. In Greece, where a referendum was proposed, it was because Papandreou and his acolytes were ejected from the national parliament of 28 October by an angry crowd!

In Greece, where a referendum was proposed, it was because Papandreou and his acolytes were ejected from the national parliament of 28 October by an angry crowd!

4. Support for the new government had to manoeuvre to ensure it didn’t lose its leadership position which could make it lose its leadership position. To use an image, the cake to be shared is getting smaller and smaller and the battle to grab a greater share is becoming more and more savage. For example, in France, the setting of scores between different parties and sometimes within the same party, through moral and financial scandals, reveals the temptation to adopt and sensational trials, are clear expressions of this ruthless competition for power and the advantages that go with it. In Italy, for example, the old trick of ‘opinion’ (in other words, once the dialectic language is decoded, ‘full-on clashes between irreconcilable positions’) which came out at the big summits of the deadly struggle over a world market in crisis.

Against right and left – the class struggle!

It is flagrantly clear that changing governments doesn’t change anything about the attacks on our living conditions, that all the divisions within the camp of the bourgeoisie don’t alter its strategy when it comes to pushing through drastic austerity plans against the exploited. The proof if this that, not long ago, the period before, during and after elections used to be marked by a relative socio-economic calm. Today, there is no such truth. In Greece, there was already a new general strike and another round of demonstrsions on 1st December. In Portugal on 24 November we saw the biggest country-wide mobilisation since 1975, with numerous sectors of society (students, post offices, banks and hospital services) closed, while in Lisbon the metro was paralysed and the main airports widely disrupted, as was the highways department. In Britain on 30 November there was the most widely followed strike in the public sector since January 1979 (around two million people) in Belgium, on 12 December, the unions called a 24 hour strike, which was again broadly followed, against the austerity measures employers were under pressure to implement, but with great difficulty after 540 days in which the country was officially ‘without a government’. And the political crisis is not about to end because none of the sources of tension between the various bourgeois parties have gone away. In Italy, on 12 December, as soon as the dracoonist auster... a new government was announced, the moderate UIL and Cgil unions were obliged to call a symbolic two-hour strike on 12 December:

- the path of struggle in the street, of class against class – can lead to an ef...
What is the future for the struggles in Egypt?

Growing poverty, the brutal blows of the economic crisis, the yearning for freedom from a regime of terror, indignation about corruption, are continuing to fuel revolt among the populations of the Middle East, especially in Egypt.

The bourgeoisie uses lies and repression against the demonstrations

All the main Egyptian cities have already seen this general discontent with living conditions and with the regime in power. And at the beginning of 2011, they were again seen the occupation of Tahrir Square and big new demonstrations. This time, the target of the anger was, mainly been the army and its leaders. These events prove, contrary to what we are told by the bourgeoisie and its media, that there was no “revolution” at the beginning of 2011 but a massive movement of protest. In the face of this movement, the bourgeoisie was able to change the complexion of the army by acting exactly like Mubarak and nothing has changed in the conditions of exploitation and repression for the vast majority of the population.

They are obliged to organise and they have shown they have the necessary force. The bourgeoisie was gripping the “transition to democracy”. This from the same media which, having supported Mubarak and the “transition”, are now used to talk about “transiti- erating” military regime, taking full advantage of the population’s illusions in the army.

The key role of the army for the Egyptian bourgeoisie

Even if the army is being strongly discontented today, the target of popular anger is the Su- preme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) and its leader Hussein Tantawi. The latter, minister of defense for ten years under Mubarak, as a clone of the dictator, has been told huge crowds “leave”. But the army, Mubarak’s historic base, is a solid bulwark and continues to hold onto the reins of the state. It never stops maneuvering to ensure its position with the backing of all the big powers, especially the USA, since Egypt is a vital piece in the latter’s strategy for controlling the Middle East, a factor of essential stability in imperialist policies in the region, above all with regard to the Israel-Palestine conflict. By claiming that “the army has gone back to the barracks”, the bourgeoisie has for the moment managed to hide the most important thing. Not without reason, the daily Al-Akhbar warned that “the most dan- gerous mission that the army could undertake is the re- location of the relationship between the army and the people”. In fact, the army has not had a major political role since the arrival in power of “transitional elections” the first step toward a “stable” regime; it also has a key economic role, direct- ly running a number of big enterprises. Since the crisis of 2008, the oil price has doubled and above all since the Camp David Accords in 1979, when tens of thousands of soldiers were deployed to protect the oil interests, the bourgeoisie is exp- loring large parts of the army to turn themselves into entrepreneurs, out of fear that the demobilisation of these thousands of officers and soldiers could be the work of a large national market, which already suffered from massive endemic unemployment: “It began with the pro- duction of material for its own needs: accessories and clothing, then, in time, it launched itself into different civil industries and invested in oil and gas industrial group, which were exempt from taxes” (Libération, 28.11.2011), investing 30% of production and oiling all the wheels of Egyptian capital. Thus, “the SCAF can be seen as the administrative council of an industrial group composed of firms held by the (military) institu- tion and managed by retired generals. The latter, according to the administrative council of an industrial group, has been replaced by the administrative council of an industrial group, which we have to be brutal about its ideological role, that is to say, the political role of this movement: the democratic, nationalist and re- publican movement and have refrained from calling for pro- test. Their courage and determination, the now famous slogan “we are not afraid”, the will to gather en masse in the squares to live and struggle together... all this really is an invaluable source of inspiration and hope. But also, and per- haps above all, the Phoenix” (Al-Akhbar, 27.11.2011) of this movement: the democratic, nationalist and religious illusions, the relative weakness of the workers... These obstacles are linked to the fals- ified historical and revolutionary experience of the working class in this region of the world. The so- cial movements in Egypt and Tunisia have given to the international struggle of the exploited the maximum of what they are capable of achieving for now. They are reaching their objective limiting.

Courage and determination, but the limits cannot be breached in Egypt

The continuation of the repression and the pro- tests of the “committees of families of the wound- ed” were the focus of the anger against the army, but the motivation was not simply to call for the military to give up power, for more democracy and elections. The worsening economic situation and the black hole of poverty are also pushing the demonstrators onto the streets. In conditions of economic crisis, prices for basic necessities are rising, making life difficult for poor people just to feed their families. And it is precisely this social dimension which militates against the army: the possibility for the army to become an integral part of the system” (LeMonde.fr).

We are being led insidiously to think that the
courts of Cairo are hooligans because they “disrupt the democratic elections”, of the army is for “erating the “transition to democracy”. This from the same media which, having supported Mubarak and the “transition”, are now used to talk about “transiti- erating” military regime, taking full advantage of the population’s illusions in the army.

Alicante: Open Assembly of So- cial care workers

“Instead of being locked up in their sector as usually happens with struggles dominated by the unions, these workers can open up to all workers without distinction of sector or situation: in short, a united struggle.

And, in the second place, instead of the struggle being led by a minority of organising and negotiating the working class, it has become possible in the union way of thinking: they have made the centre of decision-making an Open Assembly held in a square”.

Reflections on the riots of August 2011

Part 1 – marxism and the ques- tion of riots

“In the immediate aftermath of the riots a discussion developed within the revolutionary movement about the class nature and dynamics of the riots. Left communist organisations and anarchist groups, such as Sofield, saw the riots as arising out of the combined efforts of capitalist state but criticised the attacks on other workers, whether directly or as a result of the setting fire to slum areas which are living. Others saw the riots as an attack on the commodification on capitalist relations of production...”

The beginning of struggle or just another token gesture?

“... the working class can use its struggles to form itself into a real social power, to develop its political understanding of the present system, and create a different future: a global community where all production is organised for human need and not the inhuman laws of the market.”

Leaflet given out by the ICC on 30 November.

Israel-Turkey relations, or the race to be a regional power

“... aside from this race to become the regional power the war which began with the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. In these projects, Turkey is a strategic partner for the United States. For the Americans, Turkey is the ideal intermediate between Europe and the Middle East, which has two strategic partners in the region, Turkey is a better choice then Israel for the Americans, especially since it is a country friendly to the US. Some observers...”

Palestinian question and the occupation of Gaza makes Israel undesirable.

en.internationalism.org

Continued from page 6

Syria/Iran

be on course, on the back of its satellite launch rocket programme, for future development of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). Brit- ain, which was instrumental in providing Israel with nuclear weaponry, is not mentioned in this British-commissioned report.

Everyone knows that an attack on Iran would be crazy: even Moscow and Shin Bet, Israel’s external security and intelligence service, know their usual channel of leaking against their politicians, the Kuwaiti newspaper al-Jarida, the two agencies have expressed their serious doubts and the re- cently retired boss of Moscow, Meir Dagan, called the prospect of an attack on Iran “the stupidest idea” he had ever heard. But stupid or irrational it doesn’t make it unlikely – look at the wars in Iraq and the Afghan/Pakistan long-running monumen- tal war, and the current situation in Syria. Syria is be- coming another step in transforming the covert war against Iran into its overt expression. It has nothing to do with “protecting civilians” but every- thing to do with advancing the increasingly irrational aims imposed by imperialism on a de- cayed economic system.

Baboon 21/11/11
Contact the ICC

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

For this reason, we urge our readers to write to us with their comments, opinions and disagreements on the positions and analyses that we defend in our written press, including our web site. We will do our best to reply to all serious correspondence as quickly as possible, although given our limited resources we may not always be able to do so immediately. Should the subject matter be of general interest, then we may publish both correspondence and our reply in our press.

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

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