Statement on the social movements in 2011
From indignation to hope

This is an international statement that tries to draw a provisional balance sheet of the social movements of 2011 in order to contribute to a wider debate about their significance.

The two most important events in 2011 were the global crisis of capitalism¹, and the social movements in Tunisia, Egypt, Spain, Greece, Israel, Chile, the USA, Britain...

Indignation has taken on an international dimension

The consequences of the capitalist crisis have been very hard for the immense majority of the world’s population: deteriorating living conditions, long-term unemployment lasting years, precarious work making it impossible to have even a minimum of stability, extreme poverty and hunger...

Millions of people are concerned about the disappearance of the possibility of having a stable and normal life and the lack of a future for their children. This has led to a profound indignation, attempts to break out of passivity by taking to the streets and squares, to discussions about the causes of a crisis which in its present phase has lasted more than 5 years.

This anger has been exacerbated by the arrogance, greed and indifference shown towards the suffering of the majority by the bankers, politicians and other representatives of the capitalist class. The same goes for the incompetence shown by governments faced with such grave problems: their measures have only increased poverty and unemployment without bringing any solution.

This movement of indignation has spread internationally: to Spain, where the then Socialist government imposed one of the first and most draconian austerity plans; to Greece, the symbol of the crisis of sovereign debt; to the United States, the temple of world capitalism; to Egypt and Israel, focus of one of the worst and most entrenched imperialist conflicts, the Middle East.

The awareness that this is an international movement began to develop despite the destructive weight of nationalism, as seen in the presence of national flags in the demonstrations in Greece, Egypt or the USA. In Spain solidarity with the workers of Greece was expressed by slogans such as “Athens resists, Madrid rises up”. The Oakland strikers (USA, November, 2011) said “Solidarity with the occupation movement world wide”. In Egypt it was agreed in the Cairo Declaration to support the movement in the United States. In Israel they shouted “Netanyahu, Mubarak, El Assad are the same” and contacts were made with Palestinian workers.

These movements have passed their high points and although there are new struggles (Spain, Greece, Mexico) many are asking: what did this wave of indignation achieve? Have we gained anything?

The system is obsolete

The system is obsolete

The political and economic system is obsolete. It is not without significance that Time Magazine hailed The Protester as its “Man of the Year”. See http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2101745_2102132_2102373,00.html.

Having said all this, we are only at a fragile beginning. The illusions, confusions, inevitable mood swings of the protesters; the repression handed out by the capitalist state and the dangerous diversions imposed by its forces of containment (the left parties and trade unions) have led to retreats and bitter defeats. It is a question of a long and difficult road, strewn with obstacles and where there is no guarantee of victory: that said the very act of starting to walk this road is the first victory.

The heart of the movement: the assemblies

The masses involved in these movements have not limited themselves to passively shouting their displeasure. They have actively participated in organising assemblies. The mass assemblies have concentrated the slogan of the First International (1864) “The emancipation of the working class is the work of the workers themselves or it is nothing.” This is the continuation of the tradition of the workers’ movement stretching back to the Paris Commune, and to Russia in 1905 and 1917, where it took an ever higher form, continued in Germany 1918, Hungary 1919 and 1956, Poland 1980.

General assemblies and workers’ councils are the genuine form of the struggle of the proletarian struggle and the nucleus of a new form of society.

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2. It is not without significance that Time Magazine hailed The Prophet as its “Man of the Year”. See http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2101745_2102132_2102373,00.html.
The situation with the latter has improved over the last decade.

Within the overall trade in services, financial services are the largest single category, accounting for 17% of all exports and 25% in 2010. The Report on the British Situation produced towards the end of 2010 noted that financial services had grown faster than the rest of the economy and was far more profitable: “From accounting for about 12% of GDP and 17% of exports in 1970 the sector has grown to account for 15%.” The report also showed that the financial sector stands above all others in the gross value it adds to the economy. Examination of financial services for the last two years shows that here too Britain is Europe’s largest market, accounting for 40% of exports and 35% of imports and making up 43% of the total positive balance of trade. However, the data also shows that the US is a significant partner, accounting for 20% of exports and 31% of imports contributing 17.1% of the total positive balance.

London is the leading global centre of financial services, alongside New York. “London is the centre of the UK’s banking industry, which holds the third largest stock of customer deposits of any country in the world.” 17% of all global trading in equities took place in London in 2009, a higher proportion than anywhere except New York. And London’s managed funds, Loncapa, invested in London managed portfolios worth 11% of the total global market - again second only to the US.

Another aspect of Britain’s international position is the service sector’s large surplus. This includes payments to British citizens working abroad, earnings from direct investments overseas and the return of portfolio income from abroad. These figures show that while trade with China has grown over the last decade, as would be expected, and while trade with India over the last few years, ending in a trade deficit which characterised the last years of New Labour. The coalition inherited a serious situation and had to recognise that British imperialism had suffered a significant decline in its power and influence. The result was a further reduction in the power of the major Western powers, the US and Europe, and a further reduction in the power and influence of the major Western powers, the US and Europe.

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This examination of Britain’s international trade shows that its economic interests have their main expression in its world role as a major financial power. This role has a number of consequences: it explains the rapid patching up of relations between Cameron and Sarkozy after the insults and snubs that followed the British veto of the Treaty revision last year.

Turning to the trade in services, the first point to note is that the balance in 2010 in all the main geographical areas shows a surplus. Overall, the surplus came to £58,775m. A decade previously, the balance with Europe was negative. In 2010 the EU 27 accounted for nearly 19% of the positive balance of trade and the rest of Europe just over 16%. However, these positive balances arise from nearly half the value of exports. In contrast, in 2010 trade with the US accounted for over a quarter of the positive balance of trade while the trade with China accounted for under 11% of the value of exports. This suggests that trade with the US is more profitable than trade with Europe, although this advantage may be due to its prices being higher than those of Europe.

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All budgets are for millionaires

IT’S difficult to find anyone with a good word to say about George Osborne’s budget. Ed Miliband claimed it “failed the fairness test” and was a “milliionaire’s Budget whichsqueeze the middle” and was an expression of the “same old Tories”.

The material attack Those defending the Budget point to the in- crease in personal tax allowance to £9,250: i.e. no one will pay tax, except up to this thresh- old. Touted as a measure to help “the poor”, in fact this will affect everyone but only about £14 a month. Taken by itself, one might argue that every little helps – but the reality is that any ben- efit will be swallowed up by record petrol prices, increasing VAT on “hot food” (which will punish workers who have a main meal at work for exam- ple) and the below-inflation rise for the National Minimum Wage (with rates for younger workers frozen entirely). Public sector workers face addi- tional targeted attacks with the proposed introdукtion of local pay rates. And there was £10 billion which Osborne estimated needed to be cut from the benefits bill, without saying exactly when and how it would be done.

The ideological attack Predictably, the left leaning press attacked the role of the state in the period of transition 50p to 45p and the decrease in corporation tax and commenters (even those normally considered friendly to the Conservatives) lined up to con- demn the “Granny Tax” – a reduction of the tax allowance for pensioners. The sound and fury of the media is, of course, designed to steer the debate in particular ways and the outrage over the Granny Tax is a good example. There is no question that the erosion of the al- lowance will cause pain to many pensioners. And, after all, who could be stone-hearted faced with the narrative of ‘hard working’ oldsters, who’ve ‘paid into the system all their lives’ now facing penury in their old age? Against this, another argument is presented: the effects of the crisis have, so far, disproportionately affected young people who suffer from chronic unemployment and low wages, the latter even lower now the age-bands of the minimum wage have been frozen. Shouldn’t older people pay their share?

The masses are thus invited to take sides in a debate about which section of the population should shoulder the burden of the system’s crisis. Class divisions are completely obscured in this debate. No mention is made of wealthy pension- ers or young people from wealthy families. They are conveniently forgotten, allowed to carry on in hidden pockets of privilege that are only mini- mally affected by the various changes, while the rest of society is allowed to fight over the scraps. The fixation on particular items also manages to obscure the actual historical and political elements of the Budget mentioned above.

Of course, the ruling class can’t completely hide the fact we live in a class society. But the rheto- ric about the budget being for millionaires once again hides a deeper reality behind a self-evident truth: all budgets are for millionaires. Contrary to the democratic myth, the state is not the expres- sion of “the people” but the highest synthesis of the ruling class, the capitalist class. It rules in the name of the whole population but actually in the collective interest of the capitalists. The state may sometimes appear to be “in lock” to the “busi- ness community” or at other times to ruthlessly impose its will upon them, but these are only the surface expressions of an underlying constant: de- fending the basic capitalist framework of society.

As long as we allow ourselves to be drawn into arguments about how to manage an economic system in terminal decline, the working class will always lose, no matter what items the Budget con- tains. The working class is forced to defend the realisa- tion of the state in order to destroy both the state itself and the social foundation of exploitation on which the state rests. Only then can society really organise itself for the benefit of all.

Tens of thousands of workers are striking in Lon- don on 28 March against the governments pension ‘reforms’. Why is it only tradesmen who have a reason to protest?

No. It’s the whole public sector. All pensions are under attack, and the latest budget, with its “gran- ny tax”, has made it worse. Last November the civil servants, local government employees and others were out alongside those who work in edu- cation. Why are the unions decided not to bring them out today?

It’s the whole private sector, where growing numbers of workers can’t look forward to any kind of pension at all.

Is it just pensions?

No. More and more workers face long term pay freezes, worsening conditions at work – if they have a job at all. Over 20 percent of young people between 16 and 25 are out of work.

Is it just London?

No. These conditions are faced by workers up and down the country.

Is it just Britain?

No. The brutal austerity measures being imposed on the working class and the entire population in Greece, Portugal and Spain, where wages and pensions are already being directly cut and hun- dreds of thousands of jobs wiped out, are what lie in store for the rest of Europe.

The furore over the oil tanker’s dispute shows what workers are up against in today’s cap- italist system. The workers are fed up with the working conditions imposed on them by the oil companies and the contracting agents they use to hire them. They frequently have to work ex- tremely long hours, which is a direct threat to their own safety but the safety of many others given the volatile nature of their cargo. There have always been attempts to cut their costs and improve their profit margins but because of the key role they play in the economy – the 2000 employed tanker drivers sup- ply up to 90% of fuel to UK gas stations – this po- tential conflict has immediately been transformed into a national political scandal by the interven- tion of the government and its vilification by the press, opposition politicians and union officials.

First the government, faced with a possible strike over Easter, made it known that troops would be called in to ensure that oil supplies were not dis-rupted. Then we had Francis Maude’s ‘jury can’ speech which instantly provoked panic buying and stockpiling at the pumps. The government, which knows that this would lead to real fire hazards were al- most immediately vindicated by the horrific 40% of cars without fuel taken by a xeno-trying to exist in Europe.”

The trade unions often tell us that the conflicts they are given to manage are industrial and not political, but the response of the government made nonsense of any such claim. A worried David Cameron declared that tanker drivers, ex-Telegraph correspondent Philip Booth, i.e. “our enemy”, even though this was not true. The层层的blunders, the bourgeois has won an initial victory against the workers on the political level before the workers could even make use of their “economic weapon”. For the oil tanker drivers as for any other sector, there is no substitute for wag- ing the struggle as part of a general movement, the working class against the bourgeois and its state. Amos 31:6/12.

The state in the period of transition from capitalism to communism (i)

Critique of the book: Dynamics, contra- dictions and crises of capitalism Is capitalism a decadent mode of production and why? (iv)

Contribution to a history of the workers’ movement in Africa (iv)

Decadence of capitalism (xii)

40 years of open class conflict show that capitalism’s decline is terminal

Oil tanker drivers’ struggle

Bourgeois campaigns obscure the needs of the struggle

If we rediscover our identity as a class – a class which everywhere, in all countries, has the same interests and the same goal: the replacement of this rotten system with a real human community, the state always lose, no matter what items the Budget con- tains on 28 March against the governments pension ‘reforms’. Why are we not united?

Why then are we being divided, if we face the same attack, and need to fight back together?

There are many reasons. The widespread feeling that there is no alternative, the hope that it will all go away, the lack of confidence about taking things into our own hands.

But this lack of perspective and lack of confi- dence means that those who falsely claim to rep- resent our interests – above all our ‘official’ trade union representatives – can keep us divided into countless little sectors, trades, and categories. We’ll use us on separate days, cancel strikes when the courts give the order, and imprison us in trade union legislation which makes us fight one against the other.

Despite all this, can we unite?

Yes, if we cut across professional and trade union divisions and come together in assemblies open to all workers. If we ignore laws about ballots and use these assem- bles to make actual decisions about how to struggle.

If we ignore trade union laws about ‘secondary picketing’ and use massive delegations to call on other workers to join our struggle.

If we open out to casual workers, students, the unemployed, pensioners.

If we fight the manoeuvres, occupations and street meetings not to listen passively to speeches by the experts but to exchange experiences of struggle and discuss how to go forward.

If we rediscover our identity as a class – a class which everywhere, in all countries, has the same interests and the same goal: the replacement of this rotten system with a real human community.

International Communist Current, 23.3.12

The state in the period of transition from capitalism to communism (i)

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Decadence of capitalism (xii)

40 years of open class conflict show that capitalism’s decline is terminal

ICC leaflet for March 28 day of action

Why are we not united?

Thousands of workers are striking in Lon- don on 28 March against the governments pension ‘reforms’. But is just those workers who have a reason to protest?

No. It’s the whole public sector. All pensions are under attack, and the latest budget, with its “gran- ny tax”, has made it worse. Last November the civil servants, local government employees and others were out alongside those who work in edu- cation. Why are the unions decided not to bring them out today?

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The state as depicted in the book: Regulation and groups...
The wave of austerity measures that govern- ments across Europe have imposed because of recession and the debt mountain that stem from capitalism's economic crisis has been met with a wave of protest up the class struggle. We have seen the rise of the “indignados” in Spain and the angry demonstrations and assemblies in Greece and Portugal. In a country where work- ers’ discontent is more held back by actions of the unions.

On the rack in Portugal

Already the poorest country in Western Europe, Portugal, like Ireland and Greece, has had a bail- out package from the IMF and the EU. Austerity stands the Portuguese economy is predicted to shrink by 3.5% in 2012, with no serious economist expecting the current housing crisis to end in 2013. There will prob- ably be a need for a second bailout before long.

The crisis has led to an array of attacks on basic standards of life. The government has privatized several industries, cut public sector jobs/wages/services, cut welfare benefits, frozen pensions and put up a whole range of taxes. A rise in the mortal- ity rate in February, with a thousand more deaths than usual, is being attributed to the increased costs of heating and health care. General strikes in November 2010 and Novem- ber 2011 were virtually impotent; expressions of anger were very much under the control of the unions. More recently the Portuguese government has in- creased unemployment and labor taxes, squeezed workers, to reduce holidays and cut redundancy money. One of the union federations, the UGT, signed up to these measures in an attempt to placate workers and employers. The Stalinist federation, the CGTP, declared itself against the latest attacks, denouncing them as, among other things, the government’s “The Vealot Plan” and noting that they are in reality the latest expression of the crisis of capitalism, and the actions of the Stalinist ‘opposition’ have held back the response of workers. On 22 March there was a further general strike. The ‘So- cialist’ UGT was not participating, and the lack of coordination between the demonstrations called by the CGTP and others further served to divide the energy of different groups of workers. It was also significant that it was mainly workers from the public sector who were involved. There were clashes with the police, who also began a war against the movement. Any strike that threatens the union straitjacket works back everywhere.

Struggle in Spain

Similar measures in Spain have also led to a gen- eral strike, the first in 18 months. Recent govern- ment measures have made it easier to reduce holidays and cut wages. This is in a country where half of those under 25 are out of work (the highest rate in the EU) and the overall rate is officially 24% (that’s 5 million young people). The union organisers of the 29 March strike claimed that millions were on the street, attempting demonstrations in 110 locations with 80% of the workforce involved. More realistic observers suggested that hundreds of thousands were on the street, which could easily translate into an impressive number on strike. Clashes with the police in a number of places undercut the depth of workers’ anger, and the force that the state has at its disposal.

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From indignation to hope

Assemblies which aim to massivly unite our- selves point the way towards breaking the chains of wage slavery, of atomisation, ‘everyone for themselves’, imprisonment in the ghetto of a sec- tor or a social category.

Assemblies in order to think, to discuss and decide, to act, to mobilise, to take responsibility for what is decided, by participating together both in the making of decisions and their implementation.

Assemblies in order to build mutual confidence, general empathy, solidarity, which are not only in- dispensable at this very moment but which can also serve as the pillars of a future society free of class and exploitation.

There has been an explosion of real solidarity that has nothing to do with the hypocritical and self- serving “solidarity” that the ruling class speaks about. The demonstrations in Madrid called for the freeing of those who have been arrested or have stopped the police detaining immigrants; there have been massive actions against evictions in Spain, Greece and the United States; in Oakland “The strike Assembly has agreed to send pickets or to occupy any company or school that punishes employees or students in any way for taking part in the General Strike of the 2nd November”. Vivid and still periodic moments have happened, when everyone can feel protected and defended by those around them. All of which starkly contrasted with what is “normal” in this society with its associated sense of hopelessness and vulnerability.

The light for the future: the culture of debate

The consciousness needed for millions of work- ers to transform the world is not gained through being handed down by the ruling class or through the clever slogans of enlightened leaders. It is the fruit of an experience of struggle accompanied and guided by debate on a massive scale, by discus- sions which take into account the past but which are always focused on the future, since as a banner said in Spain “There is no future without revolu- tion.”

The culture of debate, that is, open discussion based on mutual respect and active listening, has begun to take root in the assemblies, which belong to everyone. Our experience and intellectual activ- ity has been carried out with very limited means, improvisied in the streets and squares. And, with the same energy, with the same experience of the workers’ movement “The thirst for education, so long held back, was concertized by the revolution into a true delirium. During the first six months, tons of literature, whether on handcrafts or war goods poured forth from the Smolny Institute each day. Russia insatiabley absorbed it, like hot water or absinthe. This was not pulp novels, falsified history, diluted religion or cheap fiction that corrupts, but economic and social theories, a revolutionizing science of Tolstoy.”

Confronted with this society’s culture that is based on the struggle for “models of success” which can only be a fount of millions of failures, the alien- ating and false stereotypes hammered home by the dominant ideology and its media, thousands of us began to look for an authentic popular culture, making it for themselves, trying to ani- mate their own critical and independent criteria. The crisis and its causes, the role of banks etc., have been exhaustively discussed. There has been a discussion of revolution, although with much con- fusion, there has been talk of democracy and dic- tatorship, synthesised in these two complementary slogans “they call it democracy and it is not” and “it is a dictatorship but unseen”.

The proletariat is the key to the future

If all this makes 2011 the year of the beginning of hope, we have viewed these movements with a discerning and critical eye, seeing their limitations and weaknesses which are still immense. If there is a growing number of people in the world who are convinced that capitalism is an obsolete system, that “in order for humanity to survive, capitalism must be killed” there is also a tendency to reduce capitalism to a handful of “bad guys” (unscrupulous financiers, ruthless dictators) when it is really a complex network of organiza- tions that have to be attacked in their totality and not dissipated into a preoccupation with its many superficial expressions (finance, speculation, the cor- ruption of political-economic powers).

While it is more than justified to reject the vio- lence that capitalism has exuded from every pore (repression, terror and terrorism, moral barbarity), this system will however not be abolished by mere passive and citizen pressure. The minority class will not voluntarily deliver the preconditions of its own collapse in its state with democratic legitimacy through elections every 4 or 5 years; through par- ticipation in decisions that must be made without their understanding of what is happening; and through unions that mobilise in order to demobilise and end sign- up to the ruling classes. A whole massive, tenacious, andstubborn struggle will have the exploitive necessity to destroy the state and its means of repression and to make the real oft repeated shout in Spain “All power to the assemblies”.

Although the slogan of “we are the 99% against the 1%” which was so popular in the Occupy movement in the United States, reveals the begin-nings of an understanding of the bloody class divi-sion that affects us, the majority of people have taken these protests saw themselves as “active citizens” who want to be recognized within a society of “free and equal citizens”.

However, society is divided into classes: a capi- talist class that has everything and produces nothing, and an exploited class -the proletariat- that produces everything but has less and less. The driv- ing force of social evolution is not the democratic game of the “decision of a majority of citizens” (this game is nothing more than a masquerade which covers up and legitimises the dictatorship of the ruling class) but the class struggle.

Social movement needs to join up with the struggle of the principle exploited class -the prolet- atariat- who collectively produce the main riches and ensure the functioning of social life: factories, hospitals, schools, universities, offices, ports, con- struction, post offices. In some of the movements in 2011 we began to see its strength, above all in the wave of strikes that exploded in Egypt and which finally forced Mubarak to resign. In Oak- land (California) the “occupiers” called a general strike, going to the port and gaining the active sup- port of the dockers and longshoremen. In London striking electricians and the St Paul’s Occupy carried out common actions. In Spain certain strik- ing sectors have tended to unite with the assem- blies.

There is no opposition between the class struggle of the modern proletariat and the profound needs of the social layers exploited by capitalist oppression. The struggle of the proletariat is not an apo- tistical or specific movement but the basis for the “independent movement of the immense majority to the benefit of the immense majority” (Manifesto).

The present movements would benefit from criti- cisms that have often very rapidly observed the proletarian struggle and attempts at social liberation. The road is long and fraught with enormous attacks of the ruling class so that we must think about what we are going to do in Spain “It is not that we are going slowly, it is that we are going fast”. Start the most widespread and deepest strike always with a great commotion shouting “they do not rep- resent us”.

The growth of the protests is a potential that can be used as pawns in pay negotia- tions between unions and government, but they do not yet represent the problem of the majority. Commentators criticised the proposals for not cut- ting enough. The cuts are supposed to keep costs down, but they are unlikely further contribute to the deepening of recession.

Against the attacks of the bourgeoisie many have been tempted to emigrate. Maybe half a million have left Greece; a majority of Spanish and Por- tuguese youth are reportedly considering emigra- tion. But, apart from such choices always being attempts at individual solutions to widespread problems, this ignores the international reality of the capitalist crisis from which no country is im- mune.

In Germany the lowest unemployment figures in two decades have just been announced. Yet the evidence of a series of strikes in March in the Ger- man public sector shows that, whatever the differ- ences between national economies, workers’ anger is an international phenomenon. It’s true that in the latest strikes in Germany workers have been, to a certain extent, used as pawns in pay negotia- tions between unions and government, but there is clearly real discontent. Ultimately, an interna- tional workers’ struggle is the only response to the attacks of national governments on the international capitalist economic crisis.

More online - read the article

Spanish indignados’ movement

What remains of 15M?

on our website

en.internationalism.org
General strike in Spain
Radical minorities call for independent workers’ action

A CALL-OUT AND PROPOSAL by the ALI CANTE CRITICAL BLOC AND ASSEMBLY

T he general strike called by trade unions rep- resenting 8 million workers across India took place on 28 Feb 2012. All national unions, belonging to all political parties, in response to the call of the Centre of General Workers’ Unions, went on strike, as did thousands of local and regional unions. Bank employees, postal and state transport workers, workers in the auto, steel, coal, power and sectors of workers participated in the strike. The fact that all unions agreed to call this strike together gives to show the dynamic of workers’ struggles developing.

The unions put forward a mishmash of demands: defend the public sector, control prices, compulsorily acquire land within 45 days, roll back the spread of labour laws, increase minimum wages to Rs. 10,000.00 per month and social security etc. They made no effort to show that the bourgeoisie is mercilessly attacking workers today as its sys- tem is in crisis and sick and rotten. Instead, the unions’ efforts were aimed at building trust in the system – the bourgeoisie can accommodate anything, if it wishes to do so.

The workers went about this whole strike showed their real intent. For one, they did not ask several millions of their members to even formally join the strike. More than one and a half million railway workers, an equal or even bigger number of state power sector workers, many oth- ers who are not even unionized, were not even called upon to join. While proclaiming a ‘general strike’, unions agreed to millions of their members going to work as usual and not disrupting the smooth flow of the main ar- teries of capitalism.

Even in sectors whose unions pledged to join the strike, millions more were at work and doing a real militant job. Most workers who participated did so by staying at home. Unions made no big ef-forts to bring them to the strike. And what made all of them, including BMS and INTUC, join? To do understand this we have to look at what is happening at the economic and social level and within the working class in India.

Why did the unions call the strike?

Despite all the big talk about economic boom by the Indian bourgeoisie, the economic situation has been worsening over the last few years. Only capitalism everywhere, the capitalist economy in India too has been in crisis. According to statistics released by the government this year, unemployment has gone down from nine percent to nearly to six per cent. Many industries have been badly hit by the global recession and especially the IT sector but also all other sectors like textiles, diamond processing, capi- tal goods industries, infrastructure, private power companies which have been faced with fierce attacks on the working class. General inflation has been hovering around ten percent for more than two years. Inflation in food and other items of daily use has been much higher, sometimes going beyond the 50% range. This has made the life of the working class miserable.

Development of class struggle

In the midst of these deteriorating living and working conditions, the working class has also been on the path to class struggle. Since 2005 we have seen a slow acceleration of class struggle all across India. Of course this is not without the participation of a class of workers, the working class. The years 2010 and 2011 have seen numerous strikes in many sectors, includ- ing in auto hubs at Gurgaon and Chennai. Some of these strikes were inspired by strikes of the Honda Motor Cycle workers in 2010 and Maruti Suzuki work- ers in 2011, had shown great militancy and de- termination to confront the security apparatus of the bosses. This has also been the characteristic of strikes in Hyundai Motors in Chennai, where striking workers struck several times against case- alisation and other attacks of the bosses. These strikes showed strong tendencies toward solidarity and common class targets. They also showed the latest tendencies toward self-organisation and setting up general assemblies, as seen in strikes by the Maruti workers who occupied the factory against the advice of ‘their’ union.

In addition to this the struggles taking place in Gurgaon and Chennai, in Britain and the global ‘occupy movements’ have been having an echo in the Indian working class.

Fear of the contagion of class struggle

In the face of this situation the bourgeoisie has been more and more worried about the spread of class struggle. At times the bourgeoisie has been very scared. This fear has been clearly expressed in the face of the recent strikes in Hyundai Motors.

At the time of violent confrontations at Honda Motor Cycles and in the face of repeated strikes the rules of ‘induction’ and ‘deterrence’ got clearer. Each time the media was full of stories that strikes could spread and engulf other auto companies in Gurgaon and analyse the whole area. These sta- tories were not speculation. While the main strikes were in a few factories, other workers went to the gate of the striking companies. There workers’ joint demos, even one strike across the whole industrial city of Gurgaon. The provincial government was itself seriously concerned about the spread of the strike. The Chief Minister and Labour Minister of Haryana, at the prompting of the Prime Minister and Labour Minister, banned the formation of any union and unions bosses together came to demand the strike down.

Like the rest of the bourgeoisie, the union bosses were most concerned about the spread of the strikes over the workers if the militancy increases. Again, this was evident in strikes at Maruti in 2011 where workers took many actions against the directions and the wishes of the union.

This fear has been pushing the unions to appear to be doing something. They have called a number of ritual strikes including a bank workers’ strike in November 2011. The present strike, while without doubt an expression of the rising tide of anger and militancy of the working class, is also the latest effort of the unions to contain and channel it.

Taking the struggle into our own hands

Workers need to understand that going on a ritual strike and sitting back at home and take it in anywhere. Nor does it help to gather in a park and listen to speeches of union bosses and party MPs. The bosses are paid to go to the meeting and sit com- passively and isolated from each other does not discourage bourgeois from intensifying their attacks on the working class. Workers need to take initia- tions to come out on the streets, to mobilise them- selves, to come together and discuss with other workers and make plans to take it on the bosses themselves. This will not immediately solve workers’ problems but it will make it possible for us to mount a genuine struggle against the bosses to defend ourselves, to push the bosses back. It will help in our understanding of the real nature of capitalism and work toward its destruction. As those occupying the Athens Law School in Greece have demonstrated, workers can only emerge from selves from present crises of capitalism, “we must destroy the (capitalist) economy.”

Continued from page 8

Catholic or Orthodox. The word ‘ghetto’ originally referred to a small island in Venice where Jews were compelled to live from the early sixteenth century on. This term for a ‘socially isolated, culturally distinct area’ (literally “debacle” or “destruction”) comes from nineteenth century Russia. It was in Europe, in response to the pogroms in the ghettos of the time, that the word “ghetto” was born. The Dreyfus affair in France, and not in North Africa or the Middle East, that we saw the development of Zionism, the national ideology born at the end of the nineteenth century and advocating the return of the Jews to Palestine and the creation of an independent “Jewish” state in a land mainly inhabited by Muslims.

After the First World War a ‘Jewish national homeland’ was created in Palestine under a British mandate that came into force in 1923. During the 1930s many victims of Nazi persecution emigrat- ed to the Mandatory territory, and this (under the auspices of the World Zionist Organisation) to form a state based on Jewish identity in a land mainly inhabited by Muslims. This was the process of ‘Zionism’, the nationalist ideology born at the end of the nineteenth century and advocating the return of the Jews to Palestine and the creation of an independent “Jewish” state in a land mainly inhabited by Muslims.

What is the perspective?

Mohamed Merah is dead, his body riddled with bullets, but the causes behind his tragic itinerary are not about to go away. With the deepening crisis of a capitalist system in its death throes, with the in- eluctable growth of unemployment, of precarious- ness and exclusion, especially among the young, despair and hatred as well as religious fanaticism have a bright future ahead of them, offering the little chiefs of the drugs game or ‘jihad’ plenty of opportunities for recruitment. The only antidote to this slide into barbarism is the massive, conscious development of proletarian struggles, which can offer an alternative to the pallid promises of the religious demagogues; a real community, that of the exploited and not of the ‘believers’; a real solidarity, the solidarity that emerges in the struggle against exploitation, uniting workers and unemployed of all races, national- ities and religious; a real enemy to fight and over- come –not the Jews, but capitalism. At the same time it is the same workers’ struggles which alone will allow the Middle East to come out of its own present crisis, to achieve democracy or be hidden, when Jewish and Muslim proletarians, those on both sides of the ‘Wall of Shame’, under- stand that they can only achieve their goals be in solidarity with each other against exploita- tion. By developing in all countries, the workers’ struggles against the forces of reaction, we can save humanity from barbarism: the over- throw of capitalism and the creation of a commu- nist society.

Fabienne 29/3/12

International class struggle
This is the second in our series by a close sympathiser examining the formation of the British state in the 17th and 18th centuries. The first article in WR 352 showed how English capitalism was able to isolate the rest of the British Isles, and why attempts to form an independent capitaland state in Scotland failed. Here we turn to the case of Ireland, and then draw some conclusions about the strengths and weaknesses of English nationalism and its implications for the struggle today.

The destruction of feudalism in Ireland and the invasion of mainland capital

Feudalism in Ireland was more fully developed and more intact than its English counterpart. The landed nobility, the Catholic gentry, and the peasantry, as well as the Catholic peasantry and the Catholic clergy, were all grouped together in an economic and political relationship. The Catholic nobility, with its rights and privileges, its obligations towards the state, and its dependence on the state, formed a distinct class. The Catholic peasantry, with their rents, their corvée, and their obligations towards the landlord, formed another distinct class. The Catholic clergy, with their position as the agents of the state, formed a third distinct class. These three classes were interdependent, and they all depended on the state for their existence. The Catholic nobility was the ruling class of Ireland, and it was the Catholic peasantry that endured the greatest suffering under the English occupation.

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How to work with the ICC

First by discussing with us. Write to us by letter, email, or take part in our online discussion forum (http://en.internationalism.org/forum/1056) Come to our public meetings and meetings organised for contacts. Raise questions about our positions, analyses, the way we write, the way our websites work, etc etc.

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

Help us translate from/into the many different languages in which we write.

Participate in our public activities: selling the press on the street, speaking and distributing our press at leaflet picket lines, demonstrations, occupations. Help us to intervene at political meetings, go along to them yourselves and argue for revolutionary ideas; contribute to the internet discussion forums in which we participate, such as www.marx.com, or www.revleft.com (in particular the left communist forum on the latter: http://www.revleft.com/vb/group.php?groupid=9), www.marxists.org, on which

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

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

Discuss with the ICC on our online forum

Recent threads include:

Statement on the social movements of 2011

“The bourgeoisie fears the contagion of revolt, but they must also fear the culture of debate which is its precursor. The protest movements of 2011 have initiated this process and shattered the bourgeoisie’s preferred conception of the exploited as “failures, idlers, incapable of taking the initiative...”.”

Speed of neutrinos: is scientific progress faster than its shadow?

“the greatest scientific advance has been in scientific socialism, dialectical materialism, marxism - whatever you want to call it. And that advance has been the exposition of contradictions of capitalism and the negation of that, ie, the class struggle. But I agree more with K that that doesn’t preclude taking in particular scientific advances. Maxime says the same in the original piece: science is tainted by capitalism but communists have a more materialist and historical approach to “scientific” questions.”

Questions on activity and intervention

“In the other parties who call themselves socialist/communist, one could only argue that a MAJORITY of the people involved in these groups have genuine intent in building communism. Sure, you could say their positions might negate this genuine intent. But nevertheless, I see people involved in the “workers parties” and think of them in a positive light, I get the sense the ICC does not. I feel they can be won to their positions might negate this genuine intent. But nevertheless, I see people involved in the “workers parties” and think of them in a positive light, I get the sense the ICC does not. I feel they can be won to.

We need communism - not the state capitalist nightmare of Stalinism but a global human community without states, markets or money – because:
- capitalism, as a world-wide system of production, can offer us no future except crisis, war and ecological catastrophe
- this system cannot be reformed or made more ‘democratic’

the same time, the possibility of producing for our real needs already exists

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Write by e-mail to the following addresses:

From Great Britain use uk@internationalism.org
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Wednesday 11 April, 2012, 1pm - 3pm

Day of discussion

23 June in London - watch this space

What can we learn from the occupy movements?

Discussive life of the ICC
Political positions of the ICC

* Since the first world war, capitalism has been a deca
dent social system. It has twice plunged humanity into a
demonic cycle of crisis, world war, reconstruction and
crisis. In 1919, it entered into the final phase of this
decadence, the phase of decadence. There is only one
effective solution: 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 this revolution, in a
period when the conditions for it were not yet ripe.
Once these conditions had been met, 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
for several years after that. The failure of this revolu-
tionary 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 proponent.

* The stategenerated regimes which arose in the
USSSR, eastern Europe, China, Cuba etc and were"socialist in
comparison" were just a particularly brut
tal 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-increas-
ing scale. Any working class can only pass through its
international solidarity and by struggling
against the bourgeoisie in all countries.

* All the nationalist ideologies -- national inde-
dependence, the "right of nations to self-determination" etc
whatever their pretext, ethnic, religious or historical,
are a real poison for the workers. By calling
them to the side of one or another faction of the
bourgeoisie, they divide workers and lead them to
march to their下一个 interests and wastes of their
revolutionary struggle.

* In decadent capitalism, parliament and elections
are nothing but a masquerade. Any call to participate
in those elections is a call to betray the
proletariat and to eat them up for one's
interests and expresses of their
own revolution.

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are nothing but a masquerade. Any call to participate
in those elections is a call to betray the
proletariat and to eat them up for one's
interests and expresses of their
own revolution.

* The working class is the only class which can
have the last word. It is in the working class
and the ultimate weapon of the proletariat
that lies the solution to the economic and
social problems of the working class.

* In order to advance its combat, the working class
has to unify its struggles, changing of their ex-
tenment and organisation through the
mass 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 straws with
no historic future and 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 fanaticism, for the outright rejection of
reason. When they contain the ingredient of "holy war" against the "infidels" as a way of entering
paradise (as is the case with Islam, but also with
Christianity), added to poverty, despair and daily
humiliation, they can easily be converted into a
cetheral justification for violent acts.

* 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 "play" role, but to participate actively in
the movement towards the unification of struggles, towards workers taking control of
their social existence, 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, unified 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

OUR ORIGINS

The positions and activity of revolutionary or-
organisations are the product of the past experiences of
the working class and the organisational efforts of
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),
the three Internationals (the International Work-
men's Association, 1868-72, the International Socialist,
1889-1914) and the "Third International" (1917-1943)
that gave rise to the pre-1945 organisations
which detach themselves from the
regrouping of left fractions which swept through the
French left in the wake of the war's end.

The ICC is an international"leftist", the first step
in the construction of a world communist party.

The ICC is the section in Britain of the
International Communist Current which defends the
following political positions: