



world revolution

One nation, two classes



After a summer festooned with Union Jacks for the Queen's Jubilee and the Olympics, Ed Miliband's catchphrase at the Labour Party conference was "One Nation". Faced with the increasingly nasty face of the reigning Tories, Red- White- and- Blue Ed took on the mantle of Disraeli to proclaim that it's the Tories with their vicious austerity policies who are waging class war, and it's Labour who are the true patriots.

Meanwhile the Tories claim that we must accept austerity because "we're all in it together". Sacrifices, in other words, are our patriotic duty.

Both are right, and both are wrong. The Tories are waging class war – the war of the ruling class against the exploited class. The sacrifices they demand are not in the interests of the vast majority of the population, but they are essential for the preservation of the system that exploits us.

But Labour is also waging class war – on behalf of the same system. By preaching patriotism it is saying that workers and capitalists have the same interests. By opposing any effective action by the workers to defend their living standards in the face of the government's austerity policies – Miliband and co. are openly against strikes for example – the Labour Party acts as a phony opposition, an agent of the enemy in the workers' own ranks. And as experience has shown again and again, when they come to power they are no less ruthless at administering the needs of capitalism.

The nation, let us be clear, is no more than the way capitalism divides up the world to engage in competition and the hunt for profit. Every nation belongs not to the majority of the people who live in its territory, but the small minority who control

the state and either own or manage the means for producing wealth. Every nation is therefore a theatre of the class war between the two main classes in this society: capitalists and workers, exploiters and exploited. Nationalism and patriotism are mere ideologies aimed at hiding this fundamental reality from the working class.

By trying to persuade workers that they have the same interests as those who exploit them, nationalism also serves to divide workers country by country – to prevent the workers from seeing that their real allies are not their rulers but the exploited in other countries, all of whom are facing the same attacks on their living standards demanded by capitalism in crisis.

This is why the capitalist class is stirring up nationalism all over the planet. In Spain there have been huge demonstrations for 'an independent Catalonia', where workers and unemployed who last year expressed their 'indignation' against the whole of world capitalism are being marched tamely behind the same politicians and capitalists they were denouncing as thieves a year ago (see the article in this issue). In Britain, the SNP (and leftists, in the name of national self-determination) tries to convince Scottish workers that they would be better off under the rule of Scottish capitalists and politicians. In Greece, the trade unions and the left parties tell workers that their real enemy is 'the Germans' who are forcing them to pull in their belts in return for fresh credit, while in Germany the 'lazy' Greek workers are blamed for the reductions in living standards demanded to pay for these loans. The same story is told about the Spanish and the Portuguese workers.

Meanwhile, there is a sinister renaissance of right wing nationalism across Europe, with increasing attacks on ethnic minorities in Greece, Hungary, France.... It's another ideology of division: we 'native' workers are suffering not because capitalism is dying on its feet but because of these Africans, Muslims, gypsies who come into our country and live off our labour. But persecution of 'foreigners' is not the speciality of the right: gypsies are targeted by Hollande's 'Socialist' government in France just as the Labour-run state threw 'illegal immigrants' into detention centres in the UK.

In its most concentrated form, nationalism is used to march workers off to war and slaughter each other for the greater glory of capitalism and imperialism. In China, squabbles over disputed islands in the East China Sea give the state an excuse to whip up anti-Japanese demonstrations;

Japanese nationalism replies in kind. In the Middle East the capitalist class in Palestine, Israel, Iran calls on the population to prepare for armed struggle and war in the name of anti-Zionism or the defence of the Jewish state.

Nationalism, whether right wing or left wing, whether spouted by the rulers of existing states or the candidate rulers of future states, is pure poison for the working class. Against all this nauseating propaganda, this cynical cultivation of prejudice and ignorance, against divisions that help the rulers conquer, we must affirm the necessity for the international class struggle across nations and borders. Against the class war of the exploiters, dishonestly disguised by the false unity of the nation, we must openly and honestly assert the need for the class war of the exploited against capital and its state. **Amos 3.11.12**

Why is it so difficult to struggle, and how can we overcome these difficulties?

At first sight, everything seems to favour an explosion of working class anger. The crisis is obvious and no one can escape it. Less and people believe that it's coming to an end despite the daily assertions to the contrary. The whole planet seems to be in a desolate state: wars, barbarism, famine, epidemics, the devastating manipulation of nature and our health in the name of profit.

With all this in front of us, it's hard to imagine that any feeling other than indignation and revolt could seize hold of our minds. It's difficult to think that workers can still believe in a future under capitalism. And yet the masses have not fully taken the path of struggle. Are we to conclude that the game is up, that the steamroller of the crisis is just too powerful, that there's no going beyond the demoralisation it has brought with it?

Major difficulties

It can't be denied that the working class today is experiencing major difficulties. There are at least four reasons for this.

The first, and by far the most crucial, is quite simply that the proletariat is not conscious of itself, that it has lost its 'class identity'. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the 1990s saw a huge

propaganda campaign to convince us that we had witnessed the historic failure of communism. The boldest – and most stupid – commentators even announced 'the end of history', and the final triumph of peace and democracy. By amalgamating communism and the rotting carcass of the Stalinist monstrosity, the ruling class sought to discredit in advance any perspective aimed at the overthrow of the capitalist system. Not content with trying

Continued on page 3

Inside this issue

Spain and Catalonia: two countries to enforce the same misery	2
Suffer little children - capitalism is the biggest child abuser	3
Workers' groups: experience of the 1980s	4
ICC online forum	5
Turkey, Syria and war	6
Mali: the music suffocated by capitalist terror	6
<i>Life of the ICC including public meeting in Birmingham and ICC online</i>	7
South African strike wave comes up against ANC and unions	8

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Spain and Catalonia: two countries to enforce the same misery



Nationalism is an ideological poison that the bourgeoisie uses, either to dragoon the working class into its wars, or to divert the struggle of classes onto a corrupt and sterile terrain. The recent nationalist manifestations in Catalonia perfectly illustrate this trap laid by the bourgeoisie for the proletariat. This is why we are publishing a translation of an article by our section in Spain which draws on the essential lessons of these events.

On September 11 last, a million-and-a-half people in Barcelona demonstrated for “their own state inside of Europe”.

This event has been analysed widely in the media: is the independence of Catalonia viable? Why does Catalonia want “a divorce” from Spain? Will Catalans live better after independence? Is it true that Catalonia brings more to Spain than it receives from it? Should a federal state be created?

Another viewpoint is lacking however: that of the proletariat, the social class which through its historic struggle represents the future for humanity. Here is an interpretation of the question from the viewpoint of the struggle between classes, summed up in the phrase: nation or class?

To fight for the nation means fighting for the interests of Capital

On September 11 we saw Felop Puig (Minister of the Interior for the Catalan Generalidad, the man responsible for the violent repression launched against the massive demonstrations of last year and organiser of the twisted police provocations against the demonstrators) amicably walking alongside his victims, young unemployed and precarious workers. We saw nine of the eleven ministers of the regional government, who were in the first line of unleashing ruthless attacks on the health and education sectors, marching side-by-side with their victims: the doctors and nurses who lost 30% of their wages, the patients who must pay a euro each time they make a visit to the doctor or pay for a part of their medication. We saw bosses, police, priests, union leaders, all sharing the street with their victims: unemployed, workers, retired, immigrants... An atmosphere of NATIONAL UNION presided over the event. Capital was taking in its exploited and transforming them into useful idiots for its egoistic goals.

It's highly probable that an important number of demonstrators did not share the goal of independence. Perhaps they were there because they didn't support the attacks, unemployment, the absence of a future; but what is certain is that their unease has been channelled by Capital towards its terrain - towards the defence of the nation. The anger of the workers wasn't being expressed for their own interests, still less for the liberation of humanity, but solely and exclusively for the benefit of Capital!

They are telling us that the struggle for Catalan independence weakens the Spanish state! They are telling us that supporting Catalan independence sharpens the contradictions of Capital between its “Spanish” and “Catalan” fractions.

If the proletariat fights behind flags that are not its own - and the national flag is completely opposed to its interests - then it will STRENGTHEN Capital and all of its fractions. It's possible that it will sharpen contradictions between them, but these are channelled into their crises, their wars, their gangster conflicts and family fights. In other words, they end up being part of the barbaric and destructive machinery of capitalism.

The nation is not the community of all those that live in the same land, but the private property of

all the capitalists, thanks to which it organises the oppression and exploitation of its “beloved citizens”. It wasn't by chance that the slogan of the demonstration was “Catalonia should have its own state”. The nation, this lovely, warm word, is inseparable from that is not so lovely, from the cold and impersonal state with its prisons, law courts, armies, police and bureaucracy.

President of the Catalan Generalidad, Mas, has promised a referendum. Although we don't know what questions will be put we can be sure that he wants the same as his Spanish “colleagues”: that is, to make us choose between three options, each one worse than the other. Do you want the readjustments and cuts made by the Spanish state? Do you want them to be imposed in the framework of the “national construction of Catalonia”? Or else do you want the Spanish state and the Catalan candidate to bring you together? Capital in Spain has at its disposal two countries to impose the same misery, “Spanish” and “Catalan”.

How did we get to this point?

What are the mechanisms that make the workers march alongside their executioners, who, as a Spanish chief of police (a colleague of the above named Puig) made clear, see the workers as the enemy!

There are several of them but in our opinion there are three which are most important:

The decomposition of capitalism. During the first decades of the 20th century, capitalism entered into its decadence, but for almost 30 years this has been further aggravated, leading to a situation which we describe as the decomposition of capitalism. On the political level, this worsening decomposition is shown by a growing tendency of the different fractions of the ruling class to be mired down in “every man for himself”. With the exacerbation of the crisis, this leads to a headlong flight towards chaos. When Mas went to Madrid on September 13 to collect the dividends of the demonstration on the 11th, he said that Spain and Catalonia were like two twins who no longer supported each other. He was correct: nations are a “marriage of convenience” between different fractions of the bourgeoisie. Given the crisis and the decomposition of capitalism, it's more and more difficult to forge a minimally of serious project which would bind the different fractions together. This pushes each one to play their own game, even if they know that this game would not give them the least perspective. Many nations are being hit by a whirlwind of centrifugal tendencies: Canada with Quebec not wanting to be part of the Federation, in Britain the push towards independence grows in Scotland, not forgetting Belgium, Italy...

But the drama is that these tendencies are infecting and contaminating the proletariat, surrounded as it is by the petty-bourgeoisie - the soup-stock of social decomposition - and both submit to the pressure exercised by the cynical and corrupt behaviour of the dominant class and the propaganda that it spreads around. The proletariat must fight against the effects of this social decomposition and develop the necessary antibodies: faced with the world of frenetic capitalist competition, it must oppose this with solidarity of struggle; faced with a world breaking apart with ruling parties aspiring to become the petty kings of their fiefdoms, it must oppose this with international unity; faced with a world of exclusion and xenophobia, it must oppose this with a struggle based on inclusion and integration.

The difficulties of the working class. At the moment the proletariat has no confidence in its own strength, the majority of workers not recognising themselves as such. This was the Achilles Heel of the Indignant movements in Spain, the United States and elsewhere, where, despite the positive and purposeful elements, the majority of the participants (precarious workers, unemployed, individual workers...) didn't see themselves as members of their class but as “citizens”. This left them vulnerable to the democratic and nationalist

1. http://fr.internationalism.org/ri430/pourquoi_nous_considerent_ils_comme_leurs_ennemis.html

mystifications of capital². This explains why these young unemployed or precarious workers who, a year ago occupied Catalonia Square in Barcelona from where they launched appeals for international solidarity, renaming this place “Tahrir Square”, are today being mobilised behind the national flag of their exploiters.

Nationalist intoxication. Quite conscious of the weaknesses of the proletariat, today the bourgeoisie is playing the nationalist card. Nationalism is not the exclusive patrimony of the right and the extreme right but a common ground shared by the whole political range from the extreme right to the extreme left and also by what is called the “social organisations” (bosses and unions).

The nationalism of the right, attached to its rancid symbols and a repugnant aggressiveness towards foreigners (xenophobia), is not very convincing for the majority of workers (except its most embittered sectors). The nationalism of the left and the unions is more of a draw because it appears as more “open”, more understanding of the realities of daily life. Thus the nationalist speeches of the left propose to us a “national outcome” from the crisis, and for this to happen it asks for a “fair share” of sacrifices. More than justifying sacrifices with their enticement of “make the rich pay”, this also introduces a national vision, presenting a “national community” made up of workers and bosses, exploiters and exploited all united under the “Spanish Flag”. What's the difference with what was said by Primo de Rivera, leader of the Spanish fascists “workers and bosses, we are in the same boat” (reminiscent of both Cameron's and Miliband's ideas).

Another approach prefers the left and the unions, saying “Rajoy is imposing cuts because he doesn't defend Spain, he is a flunky of Merkel”. The message is clear: the struggle against cuts is a national movement against German oppression and not what it really is - a movement for our human needs against capitalist exploitation. In fact, Rajoy is also an “Espanolista” as was Zapatero, as would be a hypothetical government of Cayo Lara³. They all defend Spain by imposing “blood, sweat and tears” on the workers and the great majority of the population.

The union mobilisations of September 15 were called because “they (the government) want to destroy the country”, which means that we, the workers, must fight not for our own interests, but in order to “save the country”, which puts us on the terrain of Capital, the same ground upon which Rajoy proposes to save Spain with the sacrifices of the workers.

The groups which have kept the name “15-M”⁴ defend the “most radical” of things but are no less nationalist. They say that we must fight in order to defend “food sovereignty”, which means that we must produce “Spanish” and consume “Spanish”. They also talk about making an “audit of the debt” in order to reject the debts on the grounds that they were “illegitimately imposed on Spain”. Once again: a nationalist position pure and simple. The left, the unions and the fraudulent remains of 15-M are doing great work for the “formation of a national spirit”. It's similar to what was known in the days of the dictator Franco as a compulsory school subject: today these are the democratic lessons we are being asked to swallow.

Above all we shouldn't think that all this nationalist poison is only affecting Spain! This is being served up in its local sauce in other countries. In France, Melenchon, leader of a so-called radical Left Front, proclaims that “*the battle against the treaty* (of “stability” being signed by the “soft” left of Hollande) *is a new revolutionary episode*

2. see <http://en.internationalism.org/internationalismusa/201207/5012/statement-social-movements-2011-indignation-hope> and <http://en.internationalism.org/internationalismreview/201111/4593/movement-indignants-spain-greece-and-israel-indignation-preparation>

3. Rajoy is the current head of state (a right winger). Zapatero was the Socialist who preceded him and Cayo Lara is the leader of the Communist Party and the United Left coalition

4. 15-M is the common abbreviation for 15 May 2011, the date of the demo which sparked off the Indignant movement in Spain

for the sovereignty and independence”⁵ Nothing less. It takes you back to the times of Jeanne d'Arc!

The nationalist onslaught has no other outcome than making workers fight amongst themselves. Workers in Germany are told that the causes of their sacrifices are the workers of southern Europe, wasters who have been living beyond their means. The workers in Greece are given to understand that their misery is the product of privileges and the luxury in which the German workers live. In Paris, workers are told that it's better that job cuts are made in Madrid rather than France.

As we see, they bind us up with a Gordian knot of lies that we must break by understanding that the crisis is world-wide, that the cuts are hitting every country. This hammering on about the national problem means that only the 700,000 unemployed of Catalonia are seen or, at its limits, the five million of Spain, and the 200 million unemployed globally are not seen at all. When one only sees the cuts in Catalonia and Spain, one doesn't see the monstrous cuts imposed, for example, on the “privileged” workers of Holland. When one only sees “our own misery” in Catalan or Spanish terms, one doesn't see the misery of the world from a proletarian point of view. When one looks through the national optic, narrow, petty and exclusive, one is ready to think, following the honourable Senor Mas, that “*if Catalonia is paid the ten billion owed to it, the cuts would be unnecessary*”, a regional version of “*if Spain weren't so bound up by Germany, there would be money for health and education*”.

Against the division of the world, a struggle for the human world community

Capitalism has created a world market, it has generalised throughout the planet the reign of commodities and wage labour. But that can only work through the associated labour of the whole of the world's workers. A motor car is not the work of an individual worker, nor of the workers of one factory, not even of the country where it is made. It is the product of the cooperation of many workers of different countries and also of different sectors: not only automobiles, but the metal industry, transport, education, health...

The proletariat has a fundamental strength faced with capitalism: it is an associated producer of the majority of products and services. But it also has the force to give a future to humanity: associated labour which, free of capitalist chains - of the state, of the market and of wages - will allow humanity to live in solidarity and in a real community dedicated to the full satisfaction of its needs and to the progress of the whole of nature.

In order to move in this direction, the proletariat must orientate itself towards the international solidarity of all proletarians. Chained to the nation, the proletariat will always be chained to misery and all sorts of barbarity: chained to the nation, it will always be poisoned by anti-solidarity falsifications, xenophobia, exclusion, patriotism... Chained to the nation, it accepts division and confrontation within its ranks.

No solidarity with our exploiters! Our solidarity must look to the workers of South Africa being crushed by their so-called “black liberators”⁶, our solidarity must look towards the youth and the Palestinian workers who are demonstrating today against their exploiters of the Palestinian “proto-state”. Our solidarity is with the workers of every country.

Unity and solidarity is not with “our citizens”, capitalist Spain or Catalonia, but with the exploited workers of the entire world!

The working class has no country!

Accion Proletaria (ICC, Spain), 16.9.12

5. Melenchon's words translated into English from the Spanish paper *El Pais*, 16/09/2012.

6. <http://en.internationalism.org/worldrevolution/201208/5106/south-africa-massacre-miners-bourgeoisie-uses-its-police-and-union-guard>

Suffer little children... Capitalism is the biggest child abuser

Eleanor Marx said that her father, Karl Marx, often said “*We can forgive Christianity much, since it taught us to love children.*” The decay of capitalism however has brought to light the role of religion, as part of the state apparatus, as one of the prime movers in the organised trafficking and sexual abuse of children. But it is by no means the only part of the state to be involved in this violence against children, as recent and more historical events have shown.

Not just vile Savile

The revelations from the Jimmy Savile affair have also lifted a very big lid on the contempt that the British state has for the care and protection of children - especially working class and vulnerable children. The BBC and the rest of the British state has long vaunted the probity, independence and objectivity of this broadcaster but, as the Iraq War and the miners’ strike showed, the organisation is nothing less than the voice and visage of the British ruling class and a very useful tool in its ideological war against the working class. It’s no wonder that the BBC was much admired by the

Nazi Minister for Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels - his machine could never reach the heights of effective propaganda and lies maintained by the BBC for decades.

That the leering, grotesque image of this serial child abuser, Jimmy Savile, should be the ‘face’ of the BBC over decades, the organisation which created and cosseted him, is entirely appropriate. Although the reporting and enquiries around the Savile affair are now turning into a spectacle, the initial determination of some Newsnight reporters (not Paxman and Mason) has to be saluted - in a similar way that the determination of the Hillsborough families to expose the dark reality at the heart of the state also has to be supported.

It’s clear that the abuse of children by Savile at the BBC wasn’t just tolerated but that it was complicit in it and then tried to cover it up with even more sickeningly fulsome tributes to the ‘national treasure’. But it’s not just the BBC that was involved in his disgusting decades-long abuse but the whole gamut of the British state: the police who ignored the various complaints from all over the country over many, many years; the Catholic



church who made him something of a saint - a role the BBC built on; Broadmoor prison, where a young girl was locked in solitary after complaining against him and then saw a grinning Savile rattling the keys to the cell through the porthole; the media - and here one must give a special mention to *The Sun* and Cameron’s mate’s Rebekah Brooke’s vacuous campaign against paedophiles, while obviously being fully aware of the stories around Savile’s abuse; the charities, the politicians who gave him the access he needed; the gormless Prince Charles (who sent his love to his ‘young ladies’) and the rest of the royal baggage that made him a Knight of the Realm - the whole

rotten lot of them. Lots of people, mainly workers, complained, but in a system based on exploitation, hierarchy, money and the status quo, there was no advantage to capitalism to pursue such complaints. In fact it was in all their interests to hide them and cover them up.

The rotten system

But this example of Savile’s abuse and the complicity of the ruling class institutions in it, is nothing new, nor exceptional, for the British state.

In 2009, Labour Prime Minister Gordon Brown apologised - as if this ‘apology’ meant anything - for the one hundred and fifty thousand 3 to 14 year-old British children who were cut off from their families, sometimes told that their parents were dead, and, between 1920 and 1967 were sent to Australia, Canada, and other Commonwealth countries, where they faced sexual, physical, mental abuse, and were used as cheap or unpaid labour. It wasn’t only the governments of the right

Continued on page 5

Why is it so difficult to struggle, and how can we overcome these difficulties?

Continued from page 1

to wipe out any prospect of revolutionary change, it went on to portray any kind of working class struggle as no more than a ‘cultural memory’, like dinosaur fossils or the cave-paintings of Lascaux.

Above all, the bourgeoisie has insisted over and over again that the working class in its classical form has disappeared from the social and political scene¹. Sociologists, journalists, politicians and tabloid philosophers peddle the idea that social classes have disappeared, lost in the shapeless magma of the ‘middle classes’. The bourgeoisie has always dreamed of a society where the proletarians see themselves as mere ‘citizens’, divided into a whole series of socio-professional categories - white collar, blue collar, employed, casual, unemployed, etc - who are separated by divergent interests and who can only express themselves politically by trooping one by one into the election booths. And it’s true that the barrage about the disappearance of the working class, pumped ceaselessly from books, papers, TV and internet, has served to prevent many workers from seeing themselves as an integral part of the working class, still less as an independent social force.

In the second place, this loss of class identity makes it extremely difficult for the proletariat to affirm its own struggle and its own historical perspective. In a context where the bourgeoisie itself has no perspective on offer except austerity, every man for himself and a scramble to survive, the ruling class takes advantage of the lack of class consciousness by setting the exploited at each others’ throats, by dividing them and blocking any unified response, by pushing them towards despair.

The third factor, a consequence of the first two, is that the brutality of the crisis is tending to paralyse many workers, who fear falling into absolute poverty, fear being unable to feed their families and ending up on the street, isolated and exposed to repression. Even if some of them, with their backs to the wall, have been driven to express their anger openly, like the ‘Indignados’ in Spain, they still don’t tend to see themselves as a class in struggle. Despite the relatively massive character of these movements, this limits their capacity to

1. This is not to say that there have been no important material changes in the shape of the working class in the last few decades, above all through deindustrialisation and the relocation of traditional industries to the ‘peripheries’ of the system, or that these changes have not added to the difficulties of the working class in maintaining its class identity. We will return to this in another article.

resist the mystifications and traps created by the ruling class, to re-appropriate the experiences of history, to step back and draw lessons with the necessary depth.

There is a fourth important reason to explain the current difficulties of the working class to develop its struggle against the system: the whole arsenal of bourgeois control, whether the openly repressive parts, like the police, or more insidious and much more effective ones like the trade unions. On the last point in particular the working class has still not overcome its fears of struggling outside the domination of the unions, even if less and less workers have deep illusions in the capacity of the unions to defend their interests. And this physical containment is reinforced by an ideological containment which has been more or less mastered by the unions, the media, the intellectuals, the left parties, etc.

The key to this ‘mind control’ is without doubt the ideology of democracy. Every significant event is exploited to vaunt its benefits. Democracy is presented as the framework where freedom can flower, all opinions can be expressed, and power is legitimised by the people; where everyone can take initiatives, have access to knowledge and culture. In reality, democracy only offers a national framework for the cultivation of the power of an elite, the power of the bourgeoisie. All the rest is illusion, the illusion that by entering the ballot box you are exercising some kind of power, that the voice of the population can be expressed by voting for its ‘representatives’ in parliament. We should not underestimate the weight of this ideology, just like the shock caused by the collapse of the Stalinist regimes at the end of the 80s, which greatly strengthened the hold of democracy.

We should also add the influence of religion to this ideological arsenal. It’s not new, since it has accompanied humanity from its first attempts to make sense of the world around it, and has long been used to legitimate all kinds of hierarchical power. But what’s different about today is the role it plays in diverting the thought of a part of the working class confronted with the need to understand a capitalist system in a state of bankruptcy, in particular by explaining the ‘decadence’ of the current order by showing how far it has strayed from the values elaborated thousands of years ago by religion, especially the monotheistic religions. The strength of religious ideology is that it does away with the extreme complexity of the situation. It offers simple answers, easy to follow solutions. In its fundamentalist forms, it only convinces a minority of the proletariat, but it general it feeds like a parasite on the reflection going on in the class.

And a huge potential

The picture we have painted might sound a bit desperate: faced with a bourgeoisie which knows how to use its ideological weapons, with a system which threatens most of the population with poverty, when it’s not already deep inside it, is there still room to think positively, to find some hope? Is there really a social force that can undertake a radical transformation of society, no less? We can answer this question without hesitation: yes! A hundred times yes!

It’s not a question of having blind confidence in the working class, a semi-religious faith in the writings of Karl Marx, or of gambling desperately on a revolution. It’s a matter of taking a certain distance, serenely analysing the situation and going beyond the immediate, trying to understand the real meaning of the present struggles of the class and studying in depth the historic role of the proletariat.

In our press we have already argued that since 2003 the working class is in a positive dynamic compared to the retreat it went through after the collapse of the eastern bloc. This analysis has been drawn from a number of more or less significant struggles, but all of them have the characteristic of showing that the working class has been tending to rediscover its historic reflexes, like solidarity, collective discussion, or more simply an enthusiastic response to adversity.

We saw these elements at work in struggles like the one against the ‘reform’ of pensions in France in 2003 and 2010, in the struggle against the CPE, again in France, in 2006, but also in a less extensive way in the Britain (the wildcats at Heathrow, the Lindsey refineries), the USA (New York subway), Spain (steelworkers of Vigo), in Egypt, Dubai, China, etc. The Indignados and Occupy movements in particular reflected something more general and ambitious than the struggles in the enterprises. What did we see in the Indignados movement? Workers from all horizons, unemployed, part-time, full-time, coming together to take part in a collective experience and to get a better understanding of what’s at stake in this period. We saw people regaining their enthusiasm simply from being able to discuss freely with others. We saw people talking about alternative experiences and considering their gains and limits. We saw people refusing to be no more than victims of a crisis which they didn’t bring about and which they refuse to pay for. We saw people coming together in spontaneous assemblies, adopting forms of expression that favour reflection and the confrontation of ideas, and which put limits on those who come to disturb or sabotage debate. Finally and above all, the Indignados movement gave rise

to an internationalist sentiment, an understanding that everywhere in the world we are subjected to the same crisis and that our struggle crosses all frontiers.

Certainly we did not hear many talking explicitly about communism, proletarian revolution, working class and bourgeoisie, civil war, etc. But what these movements did show is above all the exceptional creativity of the working class, its capacity to organise itself, which derive from its inalienable character as an independent social force. The conscious reclaiming of these characteristics is still at the end of a long and tortuous road, but it is undeniably in motion. It will inevitably be accompanied by a process of decantation, reflux, partial discouragement. But it will fuel the thinking of minorities who are placed in the avant-garde of the struggle of the working class on a world scale, and whose development has been visible and quantifiable in the last few years.

Finally, even if the difficulties facing the working class are enormous, nothing in the situation permits the conclusion that the game is up, that the working class will no longer have the strength to engage in massive and then revolutionary struggles. On the contrary, the living expressions are multiplying, and by studying what they really are, not on the surface where only their fragility is obvious, but in depth, then the potential, the promise for the future that they contain can be grasped. Despite their sporadic, dispersed, minority character, we should not forget that the main qualities of a revolutionary are patience and confidence in the working class². This patience and this confidence are based on an understanding of what the working class is, historically speaking: the first class which is both exploited and revolutionary, and has the mission of liberating the whole of humanity from the yoke of exploitation. This is a materialist, historical, long-term vision. It is this vision which enabled us to write, in 2003 when we were drawing up a balance sheet of our 15th international congress:

“As Marx and Engels said, ‘it’s not a question of considering what this or that proletarian, or even the proletariat as a whole, takes to be true today, but of considering what the proletariat is and what it will be led to do historically, in conformity with its being’. Such an approach shows us that, faced with the blows of the capitalist crisis, which will give rise to more and more ferocious attacks on the working class, the latter will be forced to react and to develop its struggle”. http://en.internationalism.org/wr/264_15cong.htm

GD, 25.10.12

2. Lenin would have added a sense of humour!

Workers' groups: the experience of the 1980s

In the last issue of *World Revolution* we republished one of the ICC's first attempts to draw a balance sheet of our experience with groups of militant workers, responding to the need for independent class struggle, that came out of the struggles of the 1970s¹. In this issue, we look at examples of this phenomenon in the 1980s.

The period 1983-88 saw a wave of international workers' struggles in response to the very severe attacks being mounted on living standards, often under the leadership of right wing teams like the one headed by Thatcher in Britain and Reagan in the US. This was the period of the miners' and printers' strikes in the UK, quite massive strike movements in Belgium and Denmark, and militant struggles in a whole series of other countries: Spain, Holland, Yugoslavia, Brazil, South Africa.... In 1986 and 87 workers in Europe took some important steps towards self-organisation: in France, railway workers launched a very determined strike against the advice of the unions and took charge of the struggle through general assemblies and coordinations. In Italy, education workers and again railway workers formed base committees to keep their strikes and the extension of their movement in their own hands.

Alongside these developments, smaller groups of militant workers again began trying to get together to fight against union sabotage and call for the self-organisation of struggles. *International Review* 50 (third quarter of 1987) published an editorial on the development of workers struggles and devoted a section of the article to the reappearance of struggle committees within these movements:

A particularly significant expression of the maturation going on in the working class is the embryonic appearance of struggle committees, regrouping combative workers around the problems posed by the necessity to struggle and to prepare the struggle, outside of the traditional union structures.

In spring '86 in Belgium, a committee was formed in the Limburg mines and took the initiative of sending delegations to push for extension (to the Ford factory in Ghent, to rallies in Brussels); in Charleroi, some railway workers came together to send delegations to other stations and other sectors in the region, such as urban transport; in Brussels a coordination of teachers (Malibran) was also formed, regrouping unionized and non-unionized teachers with the aim of "fighting divisions in the struggles". These committees, arising out of the spring '86 movement, finally disappeared as the movement retreated, after being gradually being emptied of their class life and taken over by the base unionists.

Such regroupments don't only appear as the fruit of an open struggle. In an open struggle they tend to regroup a larger number of participants, at other moments they regroup smaller minorities of workers. In Italy, for example, in Naples, committees of sanitation and hospital workers have existed for several months. The hospital workers' group, made up of a small minority of workers, meets regularly and has intervened through leaflets and posters and by speaking up at assemblies called by the union, in favour of extension and against the proposals of the unions. It has had an important echo in this sector (the unions no longer call assemblies in the hospital!) and even outside it among railway workers. Committees of this kind have also appeared in France. At the beginning of the year, the unions did all they could to involve the whole working class in the defeat of the railway workers, by organizing a dead-end extension under the auspices of the CGT - which hadn't hesitated to condemn the rail strike when it began. In the face of such sabotage, workers in gas and electricity, then in the post office, set up committees to draw the lessons of the railway workers' struggle, to make contacts between different workplaces, to prepare the next round of struggles.

Even if these experiences of struggle committees are at their beginnings, even if the committees haven't managed to keep going for long and fluctuate a lot in the wake of events, this doesn't mean that they are simply ephemeral phenomena linked to particular situations. On the contrary. They are going to appear more and more because they correspond to a profound need in the working class. In the process towards unification of struggles, it is vital that the most militant workers, those who are convinced of the need for unity in the struggle, should regroup in order:

-- to defend, within the struggle, the necessity for extension and unification;

-- to show the necessity for sovereign general assemblies and for strike committees and coordinations elected and revocable by the assemblies;

-- to push forward, both within and outside moments of open struggle, the process of discussion and reflection, in order to draw the lessons of previous struggles and to prepare the struggles to come;

-- to create a focus for regroupment, open to all workers who want to take part, whatever their sector and whether or not they are unionized.

Such regroupments don't have the task of constituting themselves into political groups, defined by a platform of principles; neither are they unitary organs englobing all the workers (general assemblies of the employed and unemployed, committees elected and revocable by the assemblies). They regroup minorities of workers and are not delegations from unitary organs.

In 1985, with the relative dispersal of struggle, the growing distrust towards the unions led many workers to take a wait-and-see attitude; their disgust with the unions made them retreat into passivity. The acceleration of the class struggle in 1986 has been marked not only by more massive struggles and by a tendency for workers to take charge of their own actions, but also by more numerous attempts by the more combative workers to regroup in order to act upon the situation. The first experiences of struggle committees correspond to this dynamic: a greater determination and self-confidence which is going to develop more and more in the working class and which will lead to the regroupment of workers on the terrain of the struggle, outside the union framework. And this isn't just a possibility, but an imperious necessity if the working class is going to develop the capacity to unite, against the bourgeoisie's manoeuvres aimed at keeping it divided.

This is something the bourgeoisie has already understood. The main danger facing the struggle committees is trade unionism. The trade union representatives and the leftists are now themselves promoting 'struggle committees'. By introducing to them criteria for participation, platforms, even membership cards, they are aiming to recreate a variety of trade unionism. And by maintaining them in a corporatist framework and proclaiming them as 'representatives' of the workers, whereas they are only the emanation of those who participate in them and not of general assemblies of workers, they again drag them back onto the terrain of trade unionism. For example, in Limburg in Belgium the Maoists managed to deform the reality of the miners' struggle committee by proclaiming it as a 'strike committee' and thus turning it into an obstacle to the holding of general assemblies of all workers. In France militants of the CNT (anarchosyndicalist) and elements coming from the PCI (Programme Communiste - which has now disappeared in France) tried to recuperate the committees of postal workers and gas and electricity workers. They proposed a platform of membership "for a renewal of class unionism". Thus introducing in a 'radical' manner the same objectives as any union. And against the principle defended by the ICC of the need to open up to any workers who wanted to participate, an element from the CNT even talked about "the danger of seeing in these committees too many 'uncontrolled' workers"!

Despite the difficulties there are in constituting such workers' groups and keeping them alive, despite the danger of being strangled at birth by base unionism, the struggle committees are an integral part of the constitution of the proletariat into a united, autonomous class, independent from

all the other classes in society. Like calling for the extension and self-organization of struggles, supporting and impulsing such committees is something which revolutionary groups must take up in an active manner. The development of struggle committees is one of the conditions for the unification of workers' struggles².

2. International class struggle: The need to unite the workers' struggles, and the confrontation with rank-and-file unionism <http://en.internationalism.org/node/2998>

Struggle committees Preparing the struggles to come

Despite all the attention, hopes, sympathy and enthusiasm shown by workers towards the railway workers' strike, a certain feeling of anger, bitterness and powerlessness emerged at the end of the strike. Anger and powerlessness when the railway workers went back defeated. Anger and powerlessness about not having come out on strike when it was most needed, at the beginning: "we missed our chance, we should have been out with them, all together".

To a large extent this feeling was the product of the counter-offensive of the bourgeoisie against the struggles which began in January. Once the danger of extension to other sectors had passed, once the railway workers had got bogged down in a sectional dead-end, in 'blocking the trains' and so on, all the bourgeois forces got to work. The objective was to try to turn the failure of the railway workers into a rout for the whole working class. On the one hand, the government hardened its tone against the strikers and against...the CGT³, which had actually been rejected by the strikers; on the other hand, the unions called for a 'tough, unlimited strike' in other sectors when they had been against the rail strike from the start.

This is a real trap for the workers. A false alternative: either follow the CGT and the other unions in isolated strikes with no perspective, into defeat; or else do nothing and take the risk of making it seem that we are accepting the government's austerity policies.

Don't remain passive about union manoeuvres

The two prongs of this trap did not completely ensnare the workers. Yes, the SNCF (national rail) workers were defeated. And with them, the whole working class. However, the near universal refusal, especially in the public sector, to follow the CGT did not allow the union to transform the failure into a rout. Neither the workers in EDF (electricity), RATP (bus and metro), and still less the PTT (post office), to mention only the most militant sectors, have been exhausted, demoralised, or disoriented by a long, tiring, isolated strike which is what the unions were calling for.

So the trap didn't shut completely because the workers didn't follow the unions, but neither did they all do nothing. In the assemblies, where there was a strong participation, in the workshops, the post offices, the EDF agencies, the bus and metro depots etc, there were many discussions: "now, it's too late, we should have done something at the beginning, like the railway workers. Now it's not the moment, especially not with the CGT! We can't let the CGT and the others get away with their usual manoeuvres!"

Group together!

There were several responses to this situation. One of them, in this atmosphere of mobilisation and discussion, was the regroupment of workers in struggle committees. We saw this among workers in different EDF agencies in the south of Paris, whose leaflet we publish below. Similar groups were set up, or tried to form themselves, in the

3. The main union confederation, controlled by the Communist Party

Members of the ICC were involved with groups of this kind in a number of countries. In a future *WR* we will look at our experience in the UK, but perhaps the most important episodes as far as our own militants were concerned were in France. In *Révolution Internationale* 154, published in March 1987, we published a general article on the struggle committees that had emerged in the wake of the railway workers' strike, and a leaflet produced by one of these committees. We reproduce both of them here.

Paris sorting offices and among the van drivers. These groups, which refused to allow the unions to monopolise things, had the aim:

- of establishing links between different workplaces
- of drawing a balance sheet of the railway workers' strike
- of preparing the struggles to come.

For our part, as revolutionaries, despite the return to work at the SNCF, RATP and PTT, we pushed for the formation of such committees. Our militants working in the post office took part in the formation of the struggle committee which called itself 'Postiers en colere' (Angry postal workers) and in the distribution of its leaflet:

"...we have decided to form a struggle committee. This is not a new trade union but has on the contrary been decided by those at the base. We don't want to leave the monopoly of information to the unions, nor the choice of the moment to call for a struggle. We've had enough of manoeuvres and lies! We need to prepare the struggle:

- by setting up contacts and information between the different offices
- by preparing for the widest possible unity at the base, unionised and non-unionised
- by proposing the most unifying demands for all workers: 700 francs for everyone; against job-cuts and unemployment. Despite what we are told, unemployment is also hitting postal workers, at least indirectly by jobs being suppressed and the freeze on transfers"

The leaflet ends with a call to join the committee, addressed to all those who agree with the lessons of the railway workers strike:

- it's the general assemblies which take the decisions, which nominate their strike committees and revocable delegates;
- it's the general assemblies which formulate the demands and, when necessary, negotiate by coordinating their efforts;
- it's the general assemblies which take charge of extension towards other sectors.

The two committees, the one in the EDF and the one in the post, made contact with each other and held two meetings with the aim of creating an inter-category struggle committee. About 15 workers took part in these meetings. Unfortunately the ability to mobilise for a real activity fell away very quickly. At the second meeting, those present decided to stop the PTT committee for the moment given its lack of echo, to verify the real level of mobilisation among the EDF comrades and to maintain contacts with a view to future struggles. That's where we are today. We encourage readers to let us know about any similar experiences they may know about.

Committees to prepare the struggle

However limited these experiences were, the emergence of struggle committees is likely to take place again in the near future.

This is because they correspond to a necessity that is felt more and more among workers, to regroup and organise themselves with the aim of preparing the struggle and not give a free hand to the unions, to break their monopoly on information. To oppose their efforts to sabotage and iso-

1. <http://en.internationalism.org/worldrevolution/201209/5113/organisation-proletariat-outside-periods-open-struggle-workers-groups-nu>

late the struggle. To defend the need for general assemblies to organise the extension and unification of workers' struggles.

They also correspond to a possibility: the railway workers' strike has awakened the consciousness of many workers. This awakening is bound to be expressed in the preparation and unfolding of the coming struggles.

These committees are not new trade unions, even if they do face this danger. But this means their death. They are not and cannot be embryos of future general assemblies or strike committees which have to be elected by the assemblies. Such strike committees cannot survive outside of an actual strike.

On the other hand, the struggle committees we are talking about here can play a very important role:

- developing contacts and links between different sectors and categories, during and even before the struggle;

- drawing lessons from previous struggles, being a place for discussion;

- being places where workers from different sectors, or the unemployed, can get together

- faced with the unions, being instruments that can propagate the lessons of strikes like that of the railway workers, that can defend the need for every struggle to break out of the prison of isolation and spread;

- to organise themselves to carry out that task, intervening with leaflets, speaking out in strikes and assemblies, not only in their own sector, but in others' as well.

This is the main focus of our intervention in the various committees which appeared during and after the railway workers' strike, and this is how we intend to intervene in the committees which we are sure will re-appear in future struggles – and, we are sure, quite soon. **RL 21.2.87**

Leaflet by a struggle committee To all the electricity and gas workers To all workers and unemployed

We are a group of workers from combined energy agencies in the southern suburb of Paris. We have decided to coordinate and get together in a STRUGGLE COMMITTEE to defend our interests by ourselves.

We applauded the struggle of the railway workers in December 86, and their ability to extend the struggle nationally despite the opposition of the trade unions. At the beginning of this strike, as with the EDF strike in Paris at the end of '86, it was non-unionised workers who were at the origin of the strike.

The way the rail workers controlled their struggle has made it clear that we need

- to function on the basis of general assemblies
- elected and revocable strike committees
- elected delegates to coordinate different depots

BUT THE RAILWAY WORKERS WERE ISOLATED BY SECTIONALISM

Like workers from other sectors, we electricity and gas workers were not able to come out on strike at the same time as the railway workers or establish direct contacts with them. Neither did the rail workers understand the urgent need to right from the beginning send massive delegations to find us.

When the isolation in the SNCF sector was obvious, in January, the trade unions – with the CGT at the forefront – started talking about extension. But this was a dead-end kind of extension. We saw this at Montrouge, Massy, Sceaux, Bourg la Reine, etc. We had every reason to go on strike like the railway workers because we are subjected to the same attacks by the government and we are seeing our spending power diminishing more and more while the burdens of the job get heavier. And what have the unions done about this?

They have kept us cooped up in our agencies. They advised us against contacting our comrades on strike in the RATP or the SNCF or other sectors.

They manoeuvred to stop us looking for solidarity outside or seriously informing the population.

They organised power cuts at any given moment, without consulting us, which had the effect of setting workers in the private sector against us, and to make a laughing stock of the power cuts that were necessary to show that we are on strike (but could be less brutal and not at hours when other workers are going to work)...

Their full timers, as usual, told lies at one agency to the next, making a parody of consultation, and then pushing us to come out on strike at precisely the moment when the railway workers' strike was being defeated.

These specialists in top-down strikes also got us wasting our time guarding the centre at Bagneux

against fictional attacks by extreme right wing shopkeepers, all in order to distract us from any real EXTENSION to other sectors carried out and controlled by ourselves.

When we asked for an account of what they'd been doing at our general assemblies, they arrogantly informed us that they had gained 200 new CGT membership cards. This is not what we went on strike for! It's a mockery, especially when you consider that there has been no small number of membership cards given back or torn up!

WE HAVE TO CIRCULATE INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING:

Just as at the SNCF the unions pushed workers into dead-end days of action, in 86, they tried to lead us into a week of inaction. But in several agencies many of us didn't go along with this or obey our union leaders or seconds in command; others, with tears of rage in their eyes, stopped taking part in this new push-button strike aimed at buffing up the image of the unions.

At Montrouge however, the strike was ended collectively with a will not to allow ourselves to get demoralised, and several of us tore up our union cards or are going to do it.

At Vanves, a majority refused to let themselves be manipulated, not out of passivity but because they don't want to come out on strike in any old way on the orders of people who want to decide things for us: here the CGT violated the decision of the general assembly by quietly calling its members to come out on a two hour strike! This is division in action!

DON'T LET OURSELVES GET PENNED IN LIKE SHEEP!

Many of us have lost several days pay for nothing but a bitter taste of defeat. But despite all the union intrigues, we mustn't get discouraged.

Whether you're in a union or not, we call on you to join us to prepare for the coming struggle. Here is the truth: the government and the unions are each playing their role in attacking us and preventing us from achieving UNITY, which is the only guarantee of our strength.

The more we stay mobilised and grouped together, the more we will hold onto the lessons of the SNCF and the false extension by the unions at the beginning of 87. We have had enough of union manoeuvres. LET'S PREPARE THE STRUGGLE TOGETHER.

For the next struggle, let's establish direct contacts at the EDF and with other sectors:

- CIRCULATE AND CHECK THE INFORMATION ABOUT STRUGGLES IN DIFFERENT AGENCIES, DIFFERENT CENTRES AND IN OTHER SECTORS

- PREPARE THE GREATEST POS-

Discuss with the ICC and others on our online forum

Red Hughes began a discussion on the role of the internet with this post:

I have been thinking quite a bit about the Internet and its strange position in modern capitalist society.

Internet communication is becoming dominant as the medium for communication and distributing ideas. It is still felt to be weird, alienating and unpleasant by most its users.

This is not surprising since the whole of Internet infrastructure has been built haphazardly.

I could compare the entire Internet to a vast city built completely randomly. If capital had the ability to build houses whose materials cost nothing, it would celebrate by firing all the architects and leave each person to build their own huge, horrid contraption.

But even that misses how computer communication is an entire new field of social relations and the economy has thrown us into it as quickly as possible with only the barest after-the-studies of the qualities of the psychology of email and web-forums.

The physical infrastructure of earlier societies was incrementally created following a slow interaction of history and convenience and was naturally an integral part of the "social fabric". Now, capitalist society has the power to upend this fabric and does it in the horrid way you would imagine.

But anyway, that's a stab at an outline of the general situation. We revolutionaries attempting to use the Internet are like everyone else reduced to the status of "users," making haphazard choices concerning haphazardly constructed technologies.

I have worked, off and on, as a computer programmer during this period of the rise of the Internet. One thing that stands out is that I believed that because I understood how to construct programs, I understood the implications of web technology. I think I now understand how many social implications are wrapped up in them. Websites are like houses and cafe, and magazines and other socially shared artefacts. The interaction formats we have now come from the technology and the history of these things (and unpleasant for the ill-thought-out-ness of all this stuff).

Now realizing the weaknesses of all, how can we revolutionaries do Internet relations in a way that is not dysfunctional? (I suppose Libcom is the bad example of website for these discussions).

I could say more (and edit what I've written more) but I just want to throw the door open for this discussion.

To follow the rest of the discussion and join in with it, go to: <http://en.internationalism.org/forum/1056/red-hughs/5224/internet-and-capitalisms-anarchy-production>

en.internationalism.org

SIBLE UNITY BETWEEN UNIONISED AND NON-UNIONISED, without having any illusions in the Intersyndicales⁴

- MAKE SURE WE FUNCTION THROUGH GENERAL ASSEMBLIES, ELECTED STRIKE COMMITTEES, AND ELECTED AND REVOCABLE DELGATES TO THE COORDINATIONS

- TAKE CHARGE OURSELVES OF EXTENSION TO OTHER SECTORS

- GENERAL ASSEMBLIES AND COMMITTEES SHOULD BE OPEN TO ALL OTHER WORKERS AND UNEMPLOYED WHO WANT TO FIGHT WITH US

FOR ONCE, LET'S DO SOMETHING CONCRETE! LET'S GET TOGETHER! LET'S UNITE!

20 January 1987.

Struggle Committee

4 joint union committees

Continued from page 3

Capitalism is the biggest child abuser



and left that organised this massive child trafficking but charities such as Barnado's, the Salvation Army, the Children's Society and, of course, the Catholic Church. In a fine twist, reminiscent of Saddam Hussein charging the families of his murdered victims for the bullets, the state set up a scheme called "Sunny Smiles" where, through charities, working class children lucky enough not to be kidnapped and trafficked on such a scale, were asked to collect monies to help pay for their fares to 'a better place'.

And the Protestant brand of religion isn't backward when getting involved in child abuse. In the 1970s a paedophile ring was operating in and around the Kincora boy's home in Belfast. The Free Presbyterian Church was involved, the protestant DUP, MI5 (who were no doubt recording all the comings and goings and more besides), the Tory government, the Democratic Unionist Party and British royalty (the mentor of gormless Charles, Lord Mountbatten, reportedly visited the place). At the highest levels of the state, children were being used and abused as sexual playthings.

But things have changed you might say. It's a different world now, there's no longer the exploitation of children. Not a bit of it. Like all the major democracies, child labour is rife in Britain. One result of the 2001 census showed that 175,000 children in Britain, some of them as young as eight, were social carers for a parent or parents. The Labour government made this a priority to the point that it did absolutely nothing about it. Trafficked children continue to pour into Britain and despite the 2004 Asylum and Immigration Act there has not been one prosecution against it in the eight years since. On the other hand, despite Coalition heavyweight Nick Clegg saying otherwise recently, young children with their 'suspect' parents are still being locked up in goals in immigration centres.

Another recent shocking example centres around the Rochdale abuse case, which itself is indicative of a much wider phenomenon of the knowing exploitation and abuse of children by the British state. Vulnerable children taken into care in southern England are being shipped hundreds of miles away from family and sent to homes run by private businesses. Thousands are being regularly transported to private-sector homes in the Midlands and the north where these firms buy up cheap housing in insalubrious areas, often with high numbers of sex offenders around, who then charge the state some £250,000 per child per year. Castlereach, which runs 40 homes in Northampton, was charging £378,000 per child per year with only 2% of its homes being rated by Ofsted as 'outstanding'. Rochdale, for example, an area of cheap housing, has 44 'care homes', more than all the London boroughs put together. In 2011, in Greater Manchester, one thousand children were "placed out of borough" - or dumped, as some experts call it. This blatant abusive trafficking has continued for years with the government's dedicated "Children's Minister" saying nothing.

Its treatment of children tells you much about this decomposing system and the rottenness of its elements. Will the government, as with all governments complicit in the abuse of children so far, do anything to remedy the situation? Of course not. Just a couple of months ago David Cameron was attacking what he called the "culture of entitlement". Why, we can ask, should children, particularly vulnerable children whose parents are legally the state, feel entitled to protection from exploitation, trafficking and sexual abuse? The state has been instrumental in facilitating this abuse and will continue to do so even more widely as the cuts rain down on children's services and social payments to families with children. **Baboon 2/11/12**

Turkey, Syria and war

Recently, the Turkish agenda has been shaken by the possibility of war with Syria; a situation which is still, more or less, intact. Following the deaths of five civilians as a result of the shelling of a town called Akçakale, near the city of Urfa, the government rapidly included Syria in the new bill it was preparing, giving it the right to militarily intervene in Iraq. It was altered to give the government the authority to militarily intervene abroad in general. It was also declared that Turkey had started shelling Syria. As the Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan and members of his Justice and Development Party started openly expressing the possibility of the war option, death dealers quickly appeared among the Turkish bourgeois press, going as far as accusing those opposed to war of cowardice.



Despite all this, what actually happened remains uncertain. It turns out that while it didn't claim lives, the Turkish side of the border had been a target for bombs before the Akçakale attack. Moreover, it isn't really certain who launched these bombs or the Akçakale shelling. The Syrian government's reaction was one of denial, declaring they will investigate the situation and expressing how sorry they were at the deaths of the victims and expressing their condolences to the relatives of the deceased, thus denying any responsibility for the shelling. The part of Syria bombed by Turkey, on the other hand, is a zone where the clashes between the Free Syrian Army and the Assad regime are quite intense and which is mostly under Free Syrian Army control. It seems that Turkey, under the guise of retaliation, has been responding in kind to all the previous shellings as well. Soon followed the rumour that the shells have been fired from the area controlled by the Free Syrian Army, that the shell itself was produced by NATO and was not used by the military forces of the Assad regime, and that indeed the Free Syrian Army had fired the shells.

Whatever the truth of this rumour, it is not in the Syrian regime's interests to bomb the Turkish border, an act which would obviously increase Turkey's enmity towards the Assad regime, while fighting a fully-fledged civil war against the Free Syrian Army and suppressing Sunni dissidents in an extremely brutal fashion. Besides, Syria does not have anything to gain from such shellings or from killing a handful of civilians in Akçakale. On the other hand, it is not difficult to see that these shellings did indeed work to the advantage of Erdogan's government and the Free Syrian Army, giving Turkey the legal basis for giving the Free Syrian Army the much needed strategic air support against Assad, as well as enabling Erdogan to pass the war bill in the parliament and strengthen the pro-war nationalists. The strongest possibility is that the Free Syrian Army did this attack in contact with and under the orders of Turkey itself.

Nevertheless, despite the pro-war mood which the government is trying to create, a Turkish invasion of Syria still remains rather unlikely. The first reason for this is that the Turkish state itself is already engaged in war in Turkish Kurdistan, and far from looking like winning it, they seem to be doing rather poorly. At the moment, there are territories within the borders of the Turkish state which are controlled by the Kurdish nationalist PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) which the Turkish army can't enter by land and which are expanding, although slowly. It wouldn't be very reasonable for a state which is fighting such a war within its own borders to attempt to invade another country.

The second and more important reason is that the working class doesn't want to fight, and even has a certain reaction against the idea of war. The war

between the Turkish state and the PKK, which has been going on for over thirty years, has resulted in a growing hostility to war among a significant amount of people living in Western Turkey, and in the recognition of the fact that those who died weren't the children of the rulers but their own children. In this sense, it is possible to say that there isn't a pro-war mood among the Turkish working class in general.

In this situation there have been a number of 'anti-war' demonstrations across Turkey. Although called to oppose the government on a pro-Assad, populist or pacifist basis they have attracted far more people who would not usually attend such demonstrations and may not support the reactionary slogans of the groups who called them. While we cannot be sure what this represents, we can see that the state has responded by brutally repressing them.

There were clashes at the demonstrations in the city of Hatay, where the Syrian refugee camps are located. Called by an ultra-nationalist and Turkish chauvinist structure called the Workers' Party, it was themed "Syria and Turkey are brothers" (by which they mean support for the Assad regime) and held on September 16th, attended by well over ten thousand people. Although the governorship of Hatay officially banned the demonstration, thousands who didn't have a relation to any political organization gathered in the declared demonstration area. These masses argued with the Workers' Party representatives and eventually kicked them away from the demonstration after the supposedly dissident Workers' Party members made a press announcement and told the masses to disperse. The Hatay residents were attacked by the police after the Workers' Party members left and some of them were taken into custody. However the masses fought back against the police who kept attacking them. Clashes lasted till night in neighbourhoods of the city, until the police eventually had to release those who were detained.

Other than that, it's worth mentioning the demonstration in Akçakale itself right after the shelling, where hundreds including the relatives of the deceased participated, shouted anti-government slogans and called for the resignation of the governors of Akçakale and Urfa. The mayor of Akçakale, a member of the ruling Justice and Development Party who was on TV during the demonstration, which clearly showed that something was going on in the area, declared that he didn't understand why this demonstration was taking place; in the meanwhile the police were attacking the demonstrators. This demonstration also led to clashes with the police.

Lastly there were the anti-war demonstrations in numerous cities in Turkey on 4 October when the war bill was passed. All of these demonstrations, the largest of which took place in Istanbul, where according to some accounts up to a hundred thousand gathered, were violently attacked by the police.

The state reaction manifests itself in the form of brutality against all sorts of anti-war demonstrations, from the tiniest ones to the most massive. This pushes the masses to face and clash with the armed forces of the state more or less instantly and shows the masses that in order to succeed against war, there is a need to struggle – the fact that the demonstrators in Hatay and Akçakale, an overwhelming majority of which were apolitical before the demonstrations, effectively resisted the attacks and spontaneously clashed with the police is a proof of this phenomenon. This being said, especially the organizations of the bourgeois left are creating very large illusions and confusions among the anti-war masses, with pro-Assad, populist or pacifist slogans. In this way they help to prevent the reaction against imperialist war developing on a class basis.

Against all sorts of pro-Assad, populist and pacifist illusions, for the anti-war movement to be successful and the working class to avoid giving the lives and blood of its children for the interests of the imperialist Turkish state, we can only raise the slogan Lenin put forward against World War 1 in 1914:

"Revolutionary class war against the imperialist war!" **Gerdûn October 2012**

Mali: the music suffocated by capitalist terror

War declared on music and dancing, nothing less. "Culture is our petrol... Music is our mineral wealth" says Malian kora player Toumani Diabate in *The Guardian* on October 23. Unfortunately for the region it is also laden with oil and sought-after minerals. Music, which it's internationally renowned for, has coursed through the blood of Malians for ages. Now Sharia demands that it is replaced with Qur'anic verse. Not only is the music dying under this capitalist terror but so are many in the region, some through lynchings, stoning to death, whipping and torture, cutting off limbs.... No wonder "No-one is dancing", and there's worse to come.

Below we have translated an article on Mali from our section in France written in early September. The basic lines of the article and the overall analysis have since been confirmed about this region's descent into barbarity and chaos.

As expected by the piece, the UN Security Council has authorised the formation of an African-led military expedition in order to "recapture the north". The fall-out from the so-called "liberation" of Libya continues to contribute to the downward spiral: the Tuaregs who fled Libya with countless tonnes of weaponry; the jihadist's "international brigade" coming from all over; and there's the new major player in the form of the group Ansar Dine, set up by ex-elements of Gaddafi's "Islamic Legion" composed of "exiles from the Sahel, whom Gaddafi used as cannon-fodder" (*Observer*, 28.10.12). Ansar Dine has recently formed an alliance with Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb in this cesspit of decomposition. The leaders of Ansar Dine, particularly one Ag Ghaly, killer and kidnapper, are, in the opinion of the US Council of Foreign Relations, the people the US should be negotiating with. The most significant development to be added to the article is that, while the running has been made by the US and France in military intervention, German imperialism, through diplomacy at the moment, is now muscling in on the act.

Mali sinks into chaos and barbarity

Since the military coup of March 22 which tore the country to pieces, Mali is now bathing in a bloody chaos. It is prey to a number of imperialist gangs and powers who are fighting over its body. While hundreds of thousands of its inhabitants quit their homes to try to escape the massacres, others are systematically tortured, coldly beaten and even stoned to death. The people of the towns and the country are living in misery and in frightening insecurity as the bloody armed forces are preparing to aggravate and generalise the killings in the name of the "liberation" of the northern region which is in the hands of the Islamist groups.

"One couldn't be clearer about the situation: a coup d'etat in the South, in the North a rebellion which wants to set up a theocratic state from another age, Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its consorts who scoff at the entire world, their bosses, among the most wanted people on the planet, stroll unconcerned around Timbuktu or Gao and whose crimes would surely dispatch them to International Criminal Court along with those those awaiting trial in The Hague.

In Bamako, the acting president, who couldn't be greatly faulted in the crisis that is hitting his country, is lynched in front of passive or even laughing conscripts and by idle youths who have no chance of existing outside of the present chaos, being brainwashed into committing this abominable crime. The "saviour of the nation", Amadou Haya Sango, head of the junta which has seized power from the hands of the president on his departure, saves nothing at all (...) And his troops are using torture, whippings and arbitrary imprisonment against all those who don't support the "cause".

Every day Mali is sinking a little more into chaos and all the ingredients of a real time bomb are coming together. It's a new Somalia in gestation, closer and more worrying. Everyone claims their determination not to let AQIM set themselves up, all claim their indignation faced with such a descent into hell!"

1. *Jeune Afrique* 14.7.2012



Islamicists destroy Sufi tombs

Here's the perfect description of a state of terror and of a population taken hostage by civilian, military and Islamic gangsters. Faithful to their barbarous reputation, the latter have set in motion their machine to mutilate, stone to death, get rid of all those who don't conform to their "Sharia".

Here's a characteristic illustration of the mentality and methods of this "tribe" from another age which rules over Gao: "Gao is not too far. The black flag of the Salfists flutters over the road block. The youth who stops myself and my driver is not much more than 14 years old. He's concerned hearing the music crackling out of the old car radio. 'Who's that?' he yells in Arabic.

- Bob Marley.
- *We are in the land of Islam and you're listening to Bob Marley? We are the jihadists! Get out of your car, we are going to settle this with Sharia.*

Beads in one hand and a Kalachnikov in the other, he reminds me of the boy soldiers in Sierra Leone 20 years earlier... The children are often more ferocious than the adults. We hurry to assure him of our faithfulness to Islam before being authorised to carry on (...) Coming from Algeria and elsewhere, all are found at the commissariat of police, now called the 'Islamic police': Abdou is Ivorian; Amadou, Nigerian; Abdoul, Somalian; El Hadj, Senegalese; Omer from Benin and Aly from Guinea; Babo, Gambian... A jihadist international! Dark glasses on his nose, his face covered by an enormous beard, a Nigerian explains that he's a member of Boko Harum, the group responsible for a number of attacks in the north of his country. He talks of Mali as the "promised land", denounces the west and the 'unbelievers' and swears that he's 'ready to die', if it's the will of God"?

The lives of the populations living under this "government" of diverse Malian cliques who rival each other in barbarity is abominable. But above all the bourgeois world do not care about the suffering of these victims leaving them to rot and cynically waits the monstrous outbursts that are being prepared.

The decomposition of Mali is here for good

After six months of gestures and haggling between the Malian brigands, a heterogeneous coalition of Malian cliques has officially asked for help from the Economic Community of the States of East Africa, "in the framework of recovering the occupied territories of the north and the struggle against terrorism". According to *le Monde* of September 8 2012, Paris, which presides over the Security Council of the UN, quickly announced the organisation of an international conference on the Sahel for September 26 in New York on the margins of the General Assembly of the UN, whose support is necessary for a military intervention in Mali. In fact the countries of the East African Community are only waiting for the green light from the Security Council in order to send some 3300 soldiers to the front. We also know that since the beginning of the occupation of the north by Islamists, the big powers, particularly France and the United States, are pushing for the countries in the zone to get involved militarily in Mali, promising them financial and logistical help. Clearly, after embracing Mali by supporting or directly arming the killer bands, France and the United States, with their rivalry, are ready to launch a new war under the pretext of helping Mali to recover its "territorial integrity" and in the name of the fight against "Islamic terrorism".

Unfortunately, for the working class and the oppressed of this region, all the bourgeois forces

2. Account of a journalist from *Jeune Afrique*, 4.8.2012

Continued on page 7

Continued from page 6

around the UN and the East African Community, who hypocritically claim their “determination” and “indignation” in order to better justify an armed intervention certainly don’t want to launch their forces into action with the aim of sparing the population from this descent into “hell”. Who really thinks that French and American imperialism are sincerely indignant faced with the misery that the proletarian masses of this region have to submit to? Who could think that these gang bosses will fight AQIM and its consorts with the sole aim of establishing “peace” and “the security of peoples” in this zone?

Obviously, the answer is no-one. In truth our great democratic barbarians are ready to put the whole region to the torch simply because their strategic and economic interests are directly threatened by these armed groups, preventing the good functioning of economic traffic. This is what can be understood when the French and American authorities talk about “the war against terrorist groups” and “for the security of the zone’s provision of raw materials”. In the same way, certain elements of the bourgeois press are preparing “public opinion” in the sense of better justifying the coming massacres: “It’s no longer hypothetical, it’s a certainty: the more time goes on, the more the decomposition of this broken state is accentuated and the more the humanitarian, strategic and political nightmare of the Somalisation of Mali haunts East Africa, the Maghreb and soon Europe. Even those who, a couple of months ago, accorded the secession of the north some attenuating circumstances through sympathy with the long-time neglected social-economic claims of the Tuaregs, now fear the brutal grip of the most intransigent Islamist groups on whom rest the populations of Azawad. How can terrorism and all sorts of trafficking finding sanctuary throughout the Sahel under the cover of Sharia and the banners of a twisted Jihadism be accepted?”³.

In effect, from Algeria to Nigeria, from Libya to Niger, from Sudan to Mali, from Chad to Gabon, passing through the Ivory Coast, all this part of Africa is full of the most wanted raw materials the control of which constitutes an extremely high strategic stake. Thus even if they know that they are not going to come out unscathed the various vultures cynically keep the chaos going. We know that France has never stopped its military intervention in this zone, notably Mauritania and Ni-

ger in company with the troops of these countries in order to protect its businesses such as AREVA which exploits Nigerian uranium. The United States are also not far behind as the publication *Jeune Afrique* notes: “Their role (the USA) has become still more vital since the north has fallen into the hands of the Islamists and the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (...) The tension which reigns in the Malian north is also provoking the Pentagon to strengthen its presence in Mauritania (...) The Washington Post has just affirmed that more than 8 million dollars has been released in order to renew a base close to the Malian frontier and undertake surveillance operations together with Mauritanian forces. The two other hot spots prompting the USA to act are Nigeria, with the growing presence of Boko Haram, and Somalia (...) General Carter Ham (who leads the Africom forces) stressed to Congress last March: ‘If we don’t have bases on the continent, our means of ISR (information, surveillance and reconnaissance) will be limited and that will contribute to weakening the security of the USA’ (...) Also in front of the Congress Carter Ham declared that he wanted to be able to establish a new base for surveillance at Nzara, in south Sudan. Here again this project is explained by local circumstances. Tensions between Sudan and its southern neighbour rich in hydrocarbons doesn’t leave Washington, which must assure the security of the petrol companies in the region, indifferent.”

It couldn’t be clearer: the US gang boss and its competitors are going to pulverise the whole region of the Sahel, beginning with Mali, with the aim of securing (amongst other things) the zones that are “rich in hydrocarbons”.

Mali isn’t just an “African Afghanistan” but the face of a moribund capitalism

Here’s a country in total decomposition which can offer no viable perspective to its population and to its children, many of whom, in order to survive, are manipulated or recruited by various mafias and traffickers who transforms them into soldiers and mercenaries. This is how these simple young victims of capitalist misery can become, from one day to the next, killers and cruel “apprentice hangmen”. All these youths, unemployed and those that have not worked, all those who have nothing find themselves at the mercy of all the criminal brigands thirsty for profits and blood: civilian or military “democrats”, putchists, independentists and nationalists, “jihadists” and other “people of God”. **Amina, 9.9.12**

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South African strike wave comes up against ANC and unions

In the last three months in South Africa 80,000 miners have been involved in a wave of wildcat strikes in gold, platinum and coal mines. In WR 356 (“South Africa massacre of miners: The bourgeoisie uses its police and union guard dogs against the working class”) we looked at the massacre of 34 miners in Marikana. We showed how unions and government acted together against the working class. At the time it was not clear what direction events would go. Since then we have witnessed the largest strike wave since the ANC came to power in 1994

South Africa is portrayed as the ‘economic powerhouse’ of Africa, leading the continent in industrial output and mineral production. And yet, if you look at the conditions in which the majority of people live, with, officially, 25% unemployment, and more than 50% of children living below the official poverty line, in a society commonly described as the one of the most unequal in the world, the fact that workers have been struggling is no mystery. Behind every ‘economic miracle’ there is growing poverty and there are conflicting class interests. The struggles in South Africa show that country is no exception.

The continuation of the struggle

The Marikana miners continued their strike for six weeks before a deal was signed. A light shone on the condition of all workers in South Africa, the poverty and deprivation of the townships, the misery of the mining camps, and, above all, on the lie that the ANC government represented something other than a capitalist government prepared to shoot down striking miners just like the previous apartheid regime.

The Marikana miners pay deal was for increases between 11% and 22% along with a one off bonus of 2,000 Rand (\$240). Rock-drillers (the most dangerous operators in the mine) received the biggest pay rise.

In other workers’ actions, at Anglo American Platinum (Amplats), the world’s largest producer of platinum, a strike that has so far lasted for seven weeks shut five mines in the Rustenberg area. At one point the firm sacked 12,500 workers – 40% of its work force. In unrest at Amplats nine people have been killed. There have been a number of clashes between workers and the police – on at least one occasion with the police using teargas, stun grenades, rubber bullets and live ammunition. As South Africa’s *Mail and Guardian*

(2/11/12) put it: “*The strike has so far yielded about three dozen arrests and nothing more than a one-off offer of R2000 as well as a R2500 loan, which was to be paid back in January.*”

Alongside the activities of different unions there have been strike committees and shaft committees formed. When the latter meet it’s “*to discuss a way of giving impetus to the strike*”. There has been a great deal of anger directed at the unions, in particular when a secret deal was struck with the company. The main strike committee rejected the deal. Anger at the unions can be seen in the report that “*a NUM office was set alight at the Khuseleka shaft, possibly as a show of anger at management’s response and the NUM’s insistence that it had secured the reinstatement of the Amplats strikers*” (op cit).

When the South African Communist Party leader, along with leaders of the Mineworkers’ Union (NUM) and the COSATU union federation attempted to hold a rally in the Rustenberg Olympia Stadium they found that “*over 1,000 striking Amplats miners arrived early and took over the venue*” (*Daily Maverick* 27/10/12). “*They marched into the stadium ... After desecrating ANC and Cosatu hats, scarves and other paraphernalia, they moved back out.*” The protesting strikers wore T shirts saying “Remember the Slain of Marikana” and “Forward to a Living Wage R12,500” and carried placards saying, “We are here to bury NUM,” and “Rest in Peace NUM.” The police who proceeded to attack the strikers and protected union figures clearly demonstrated that workers and unions are on different sides.

Meanwhile, Amplats is currently struggling to get 30,000 workers back to work after intimidation and various settlements have ended other strikes. They have offered “hardship allowances” to those who have been on strike, and “loyalty allowances” to those who did not strike.

At AngloGold Ashanti (the world’s third largest bullion producer) 35,000 workers downed tools in an illegal strike that started in late September and continued for almost a month. And after the settlement there were further sit-in protests over early payments of a bonus that involved hundreds of workers.

At the Gold One’s Aurora goldmine at Modder East near Johannesburg security guards shot four picketing miners when they fired on 200 workers. This mine is said to be owned by the nephew of Jacob Zuma and the grandson of Nelson Man-

del.

One Gold Fields’ mine remained shut after a strike as the company processed the appeals of 8,500 workers sacked for an unlawful strike. These were from twelve thousand miners at Gold Fields’ KDC East goldmine who were dismissed for refusing to return to work.

Among the more than fifty people killed were two who died after they were shot by security guards employed by Forbes Coal. Striking miners had been chased into a township in KwaZulu-Natal where the guards fired on the workers. This showed the familiar repressive side of the bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, following the higher increases agreed at Marikana, Coal of Africa agreed to a 26% wage rise (including allowances) for workers at its Mooiplaats colliery. The warnings that higher wage rises could further increase unemployment are made at every opportunity.

False friends – in the unions and beyond

The South African ruling class is not bluffing. There has been genuine concern over the impact of the strike wave. The mining industry was already seeing share prices plummet due to the world recession, and then dive even lower. The South African economy is not immune to the current recession. The worldwide recession has seen the production of platinum and palladium, precious metals essential in car manufacture, cut back drastically. Even during the recent mineral boom, production of these metals has diminished by 1% a year. Output has now dropped to its lowest level for 50 years.

In the face of the crisis the ANC and the NUM have entered into a tripartite alliance with the mine owners. It’s not just that ANC and NUM leaders have considerable investments in the mining companies and want to protect that investment. It’s an integral part of their social role to do everything in their power to protect the interests of their fellow bourgeois, to oppose the spread of strikers’ actions, and try and prevent it becoming contagious.

Right from the start of the strike wave the unions involved have sought to divide workers attempting to struggle for a living wage. After the Marikana massacre a meeting was set up. As SABC news (28/8/12) reported “*One of five delegates chosen by Lonmin mineworkers, Zolisa*

Bodlani says workers are skeptical about tomorrow’s meeting between Labour Minister Mildred Oliphant, unions, management and worker representatives. The workers believe unions have failed them and have misrepresented their interests, as well as management which Bodlani has accused of not wanting to meet workers before the fatal tragedy last week that led to the deaths of 44 people. Bodlani was speaking in an interview on SAfm’s AM Live this morning.

‘We are not sure that we are going to attend tomorrow’s meetings. They promised us today that we will meet the labour minister - we have questions to ask her – we want to know why they decided to call us together with the unions. We are not willing to work with the unions. We have reasons why but we don’t want to disclose that now. We also believe our unions failed us big time. We are not going to use any one of them. We don’t want to be affiliated to any of the unions,’ says Bodlani.”

As well as the unions, other false friends that workers need to beware of include ex-ANCers like Julius Malema who claim to be putting forward an alternative. He has used the miners’ strike for his own ends. On one hand saying that there should be a national miners’ strike, and that a ‘fight to the death’ was needed, while also pushing nationalisation. He declared “*They have been stealing this gold from you. Now it’s your turn.*” But nationalisation does not mean an improvement in the wages and conditions of miners. It just means state control – control by the capitalist state.

With Malema, it’s not that he turns up to address miners in his Mercedes Benz SUV that makes him a spokesman for the bourgeoisie; it’s the ideology he puts forward. You can see how he has “*portrayed Lonmin director and ANC heavyweight Cyril Ramaphosa - who was a leading trade unionist during white minority rule - as a puppet of whites and foreigners*” (BBC News 12/9/12). In this view ‘whites and foreigners’ are the enemy. In reality, in the case of Ramaphosa, his call for action against Lonmin workers was in continuity with his activity in the ANC and trade unionism – in defence of the national interest against the interests of the working class.

The current wave of strikes in South Africa appears to be coming to an end. For future strikes a consciousness of the need for workers to rely on their own efforts will be essential. **M/C/EIG 3/11/12**

Political positions of the ICC

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

OUR ACTIVITY

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

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

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

OUR ORIGINS

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