



world revolution

Confrontations in Catalonia: Democracy and the Nation are the reactionary past, the proletariat is the future



Rival demonstrations on a nationalist basis: Catalonia is or is not Spain



On the first of October the masses who had been led by the Catalan separatists to the farce of the referendum were brutally beaten by the police dispatched by the Spanish government. Both Madrid and the Catalan authorities covered themselves in the mantle of democracy in order to justify both the vote and the repression. The Catalan separatists have presented themselves as the victims of repression in order to advance their call for independence. The Rajoy government has justified its repression in the name of defending the Constitution and the democratic rights of all Spaniards. The “neutrals” (Podemos, the Party of Ada Colau¹, etc.) have declared that democracy is the means for containing Rajoy and “finding a solution” to the Catalan conflict.

We denounce this trap set by the struggles between factions of capital: on the one hand, the deception of the rigged referendum; on the other, the brutal repression of the Spanish government. The working class and the oppressed are the victims of both.

All of them present democracy as the Supreme Good. However, they want us to forget that behind the democratic mask hides the totalitarian state. Like the military regimes and one-party states, the democratic state is also a dictatorship of capital that imposes its own interests and designs in the name of the popular vote, and against the real interests of all the exploited and oppressed.

In the First World War with its 20 million dead, all the contending gangs justified their barbarism in the name of democracy. In the Second World War, whilst the defeated Nazi regime was based on openly reactionary ideologies such as the “su-

premacy of the Aryan race”, the victors - which included not only the democratic powers but also the tyrannical regime in the USSR - dressed themselves in democratic robes in order to justify their participation in the massacre of 60 million human beings, which included the atomic bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

It was in the name of democracy that the Spanish Republic managed to enrol the workers and peasants in the terrible slaughter that was the Civil War of 1936-9; a war between factions of the bourgeoisie - Republicans and Francoists - that cost a million dead.

In the name of democracy, the modernised Francoists and the self-proclaimed democrats, through the regime set up by the 1979 Constitution, have imposed the non-stop degradation of our living and working conditions. This has led to the present situation where permanent work has been replaced by generalised job insecurity. The Catalan separatists and Spanish nationalists have collaborated in this degradation. We cannot forget that it was the government of Artur Mas which in 2011-12 pioneered the cuts in health, education, unemployment payments etc, which have been generalised throughout Spain by the Rajoy government!

The hands of both the Spanish nationalists and Catalan separatists are stained with blood from the repression of workers’ struggles. Democracy began in post-Franco Spain with the death of 5 workers in the 1976 mass strike in Victoria. During the Felipe Gonzalez government, 3 workers were killed in the struggles in Gijón, Bilbao and Reinos. The Catalan separatist government of Artur Más unleashed a brutal repression against the assemblies of the 15 May, leaving 100 injured.

Before, in 1934, the current partners of the ERC² organised a militia – Los Escamots - which specialised in the torture of militant workers.

They all flout their own “democratic” rules which they claim to be their Ideal. We have seen this with the separatists who have organised the parliamentary stupidity of the “Process” towards independence, with its “pregnant” ballot boxes, filled to the brim with Yes votes.

2. Republican Left of Catalonia.

In the name of Democracy a war to the death is being unleashed around that other pillar of capitalist domination: the Nation. The nation is not a “fraternal” amalgamation of all the inhabitants of the same land, but the private estate of all the capitalists of a country, who organise the exploitation and the oppression of the great majority through the state.

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Jeremy Corbyn, a saviour for British capitalism

The Labour Party, that last year was hopelessly divided and looking as if it might split, today presents itself as the new normal, a government in waiting. This is taking place in the context of Brexit on the one hand, and a situation where we see other left wing forces and personalities around the world, whether Sanders in the US Democratic Party, or Podemos in Spain and Melanchon in France, that have grown at the expense of the Socialist Parties. So what is the real state of the party led by Jeremy Corbyn? And who benefits from its actions, the working class or the capitalist state?

Promising to undo the damage done by austerity, to close the gap between rich and poor, to increase tax on the top 1% of earners and, at least until the election, to scrap and repay tuition fees, it has mobilised many young workers to register to vote, and even to join the party. Led by a man who has visited many picket lines and was welcomed as a “socialist” by the Socialist Workers’ Party when elected to the leadership, it sounds – and is – too good to be true. Corbyn’s long record as a ‘radical’, complete with previous MI5 investigation of most of his advisors, underlines and emphasises his credentials, but as Paul Mason shows, recalling his days as a full-on Trotskyist, this is false: “The idea that the left, the miners and various environmental groups wanted to ‘destroy the democratic system’ in the 80s was pure paranoia. ... what we wanted was a left Labour government.... a new kind of radical social democracy stands on

the brink of government. *It wants to save British capitalism from wage stagnation, grotesque inequalities of wealth and the kamikaze mission of a no-deal Brexit. It has boosted democratic engagement, especially among the young, by building the biggest mass political party in Europe*”¹ (Our emphasis).

In other words it wants to save capitalism from those policies likely to create discontent and to provide a harmless channel for the discontent

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/oct/16/stella-rimington-should-stop-fuelling-paranoid-fantasies-about-jeremy-corbyn>

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Australia A\$2.25, Canada C\$1.50, Europe €1.3, India 10 rupees, Japan ¥300 USA 90¢

1. Ada Colau is the left wing mayor of Barcelona and a leading spokesperson of *Barcelona en com*, which was neutral about the referendum.

British government: division and disarray



Expressions of populism have swept a number of countries, been constrained in others, and caused real problems elsewhere. After the September 2017 federal election in Germany, the AfD (Alternative for Germany), only formed in 2013, and based on reclaiming Germany’s sovereignty and national pride, went from 0 to 94 seats and became the third biggest party. In Austria, Sebastian Kurz presented himself as a force for change even though his party had been in office for 30 years. He might need to form a coalition with the neo-Nazi Freedom party. As the *Economist* (19/10/17) put it “*Europe is left wondering whether Austria’s political whizz kid is fending off a populist uprising, or preparing to lead it.*” In Spain, in the conflict between Spanish and Catalan nationalism, the political divisions within the ranks of the bourgeoisie have been worsening with no prospects for a satisfactory settlement for capitalism in Spain

Divisions in the ranks of the capitalist class are natural for a class that competes at every level, from individual enterprises to inter-imperialist war. However, in the face of imperialist threat, economic difficulties or a resurgent class struggle, there is a tendency for the bourgeoisie to come together in the national interest. The decomposition of capitalism has pushed forward the tendency to division within the bourgeoisie, and in particular a tendency towards a loss of political control among the most experienced bourgeoisies.

The 2016 UK Referendum on membership of the EU produced a result against what the central factions of the British bourgeoisie considered as their best interests. The international populist tide was amplified with the election of President Trump. And the specific political difficulties of the British government were exacerbated by the general election of June 2017. Called to increase the Conservative government’s majority and strengthen its position in negotiations over British withdrawal from the EU, the election resulted in a loss of seats and the need to form an alliance with the DUP from Northern Ireland.

Far from improving the position of the British government and assisting in the EU negotiations, the loss of control is being shown in the plotting of various factions, divisions that go beyond those of Leave v Remain and Hard v Soft Brexit, and a general disarray within a ruling class that seems to have no coherent plans and is improvising at every turn. The British bourgeoisie faces real difficulties in the Brexit negotiations, yet appears to be unable to regain political control and at least try to get the best out of a difficult situation. The economic consequences of Brexit will be made worse by this political disarray.

The contrast between the historical strengths of the British bourgeoisie and its current situation is dramatic. The long term experience of the British bourgeoisie has meant that it has been able to unite in times of imperialist war, adapt in the face of economic crises, and adopt an appropriate strategy in the face of workers’ struggles. In 1974, in the middle of an open economic crisis and with a miners’ strike as the latest expression of a wave of workers’ militancy, an election was called which resulted in a Labour government that would be far more effective in dealing with the working class because of the extent of illusions in Labour and the unions. In the 1980s, while the Conservative government presided over attacks on the wages, jobs and conditions of the working class, Labour

in opposition posed as the workers’ friend. Together with the unions, Labour presented alternative capitalist economic strategies and, in various ways, recuperated and/or diverted working class militancy.

In addition to the different ways that the British bourgeoisie have used the Labour Party against the working class, they have also handled well the differences within the ruling class. In 1990, the attitude of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher towards Europe was deemed inappropriate in a period where the blocs dominated by the US and Russia were breaking up. The ‘men in grey suits’ had the previously unassailable Thatcher removed with very little fuss.

Today there are still manoeuvres going on within the British bourgeoisie, and specifically in the Conservative Party, but, far from leading to coherent policies or at least a dominant position by one faction, the strife within the ruling class shows every sign of growing. Britain was one of the countries worst hit by the economic blows of 2008, and the political unravelling within the Tory party is contributing to a further worsening of the situation.

The weaknesses of the bourgeoisie are not necessarily opportunities for the working class. The view of many leftists is summarised by the Socialist Workers Party when they say “*The Tories are down but not out - we need to start kicking to bring them down*” (*Socialist Worker* 4/7/17). They see the problems of the Conservative Party and declare that “*We need resistance on a scale that can get rid of Theresa May and the rest of the Tory rabble*”. (4/10/17). This is the prelude to a Labour government, although “*A Corbyn-led government would not make Britain a socialist country. But millions will have cheered by his pledges to tax the rich, renationalise industries and put more money into services.*” (3/10/17). That is to say, many have illusions in Labour, and it’s one of the functions of leftism to reinforce illusions in this cornerstone of British state capitalism. Against this the working class need to understand that it is only through its own self-activity, through a growing consciousness that capitalism has nothing to offer, and an understanding that the working class is not just an exploited class but has the capacity to transform society, that the squabbles of the right and the lies of the left can be left behind. **Car 21/10/17**

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The apocalypse of capital can still be averted

that makes a classic third world war a less likely scenario. This is not a factor that favours the proletariat however, because the threat of world war has been by-passed by a more insidious slide into barbarism in which, as we have argued here, the danger of nuclear warfare has by no means diminished. But the class struggle – and its escalation towards revolution – remains the sole barrier to the deepening of barbarism, the sole hope that humanity will not only avert the apocalypse of capital but realise all its untapped potential. **Amos, 21.10.17**

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Jeremy Corbyn, a saviour for British capitalism



that does arise. This is why the Labour Party has played a key role for capitalism in opposition as well as in government, as we can see from its role over the last century. In fact, it can be more effective in responding to discontent within the working class when in opposition, since it does not have to impose austerity at the same time. In opposition it has tended to elect more left wing leaders, such as Corbyn today, or Michael Foot in the 1980s, as opposed to the likes of Blair or Brown in government, and to display more ‘radical’ policies. Policies such as spending more on health and education, and even the police, paid for either by taxing the rich, or as Dennis Skinner so helpfully explained, “*we’re going to borrow it. ... When the private sector expands where do you think they get their money from? They borrow it.*”² And the renationalisation of railways etc, when the contract comes up for renewal. These policies hark back to the 1945 Atlee government that is so beloved of the left because of it nationalised parts of the economy and set up the National Health Service – actions which can only be called “socialist” by forgetting that they flowed from the needs of capitalist reconstruction after the war, whatever government was elected, and the Conservative government of the 1950s had no thought of reversing them. They were policies of a capitalist state which had just waged a devastating imperialist war. Some Labour leaders in opposition, such as Foot and Corbyn, have a long record of campaigning against nuclear weapons, but this has never been more than window dressing in a party that has consistently supported all the UK’s imperialist wars since 1914, whether in or out of government, and has never put in question its nuclear arsenal when in office.

Greater difficulty in political control

However, Corbyn is leading the Labour Party in a new situation in which there is a much greater tendency to fragmentation internationally, and in which the ruling class is finding it more difficult to control the political situation. The old USSR has broken up, as has Yugoslavia, and more recently we see calls for independence in Scotland and Catalonia. The Trump election and the Brexit referendum result also show the difficulty our ruling class has in getting the electoral results it wants.

In relation to Brexit, it is easy for Labour to point to the “chaos” in the government, to call for a Brexit for jobs, and to promise to unite the Leave and Remain voters, but it remains a difficult and divisive issue for Labour as well, so much so that the party congress vote on the issue was cancelled. It is hardly surprising to find the Labour Party divided on an issue that divides the whole of the UK bourgeoisie. Corbyn, following a tradition of Labour nationalism, was always a reluctant and half-hearted Remainer during the referendum campaign, and he is happy with Brexit to the extent that it gives more leeway for state capitalist policies - not only nationalisation but also favouring British suppliers for nationalised industries which would not be allowed in the EU. The local authority in Preston is “inspiring” in carrying out such policies by encouraging businesses to buy locally and set up co-operatives that “*begin to democratise the economy*”. But unfortunately the real inspiration for Preston is that “*you have to be clever in austerity*” when the annual spending on services has been cut by a third.³ These are abso-

2. http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/dennis-skinner-labour-conference_uk_59c8f70fe4b0cdc773329fc8

3. *The Economist*, 21-27 October.

lutely not policies that help the working class.

We will not speculate about whether there is likely to be a Labour government, or even an election, soon, but remaining vague on such a key policy issue as Brexit is the privilege of opposition.

Another aspect of the greater tendency to fragmentation and loss of control can be seen in the changes taking place in long-established political forces. One example we see of this is the way the left forces are now split in France and Spain between the traditional Socialist Party and Melanchon and Podemos respectively. This tendency underlines the seriousness of the divisions in the Labour Party at the time of the parliamentary party’s vote of no confidence in Corbyn and the subsequent leadership challenge. It is a sign of the strength of the UK bourgeoisie and its two party system in parliament that the Labour Party has held together as a ‘broad church’, in contrast to the marked decline in several Socialist Parties in Europe. Despite the fiasco of the Brexit referendum and all the pressures on the political system, we should not underestimate the ability of the UK bourgeoisie.

The other side of the new political difficulties we can see in many countries is the rise of right wing and populist forces, such as the NF in France, AfD in Germany, and Trump in the USA. Here, the rise of UKIP with its xenophobia and little Englander ideas was one of the factors, alongside a longstanding Euroscepticism particularly in the Tory party, which pushed the government into the referendum and Brexit. We can see the efforts made internationally to deal with this problem in the elections this year, most dramatically with Macron’s new party, République en Marche, in France. Despite the record of Labour governments on immigration policy, the Labour Party is perceived as being a way to fight such xenophobic populism, and this is part of its attraction to many, particularly young urban proletarians.

Another important strength of the Labour Party in dealing with discontent is its close historical link to the trade unions, particularly emphasised by the left of the party and when it is in opposition. Corbyn’s close association with Len McCluskey, leader of the Unite union is a good example. This not only provides a power base for some politicians on the left of the party, but is an important resource for the bourgeoisie. The trade unions continue to be the major arm for monitoring discontent in the working class for the bourgeoisie and to containing it in limited, divided, demonstrations and strikes. Through the Unite union the Labour Party, and the bourgeoisie as a whole, have been made aware of the anger of public sector workers against the long continues 1% pay cap and the fact that continuing it would necessarily lead to disruptions. In addition, mobilisation through the “grass roots” of Momentum has a very important role in supporting Corbyn, and allows the party to respond to the discontent of an important part of the working class, particularly young workers, offering them a false perspective of change through electing a Labour government.

The Labour Party is not and never has been a revolutionary party, and since the First World War it has been an integral part of the capitalist state. It has nothing to offer the working class but the illusions that it can speak on their behalf, when in reality it is one of the strongholds of the ruling class’ political apparatus, with an important role in responding to and dissipating discontent through providing false alternatives. **Alex, 21.10.17**

The apocalypse of capital can still be averted

In a TV broadcast in 1965, the physicist Robert Oppenheimer, one of the leading scientists working on the development of the US atomic bomb during World War Two, recounted his feelings when he witnessed the first atomic bomb test in the deserts of New Mexico in July 1945:

*“We knew the world would not be the same. A few people laughed, a few people cried. Most people were silent. I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture, the **Bhagavad Gita**; Vishnu is trying to persuade the Prince that he should do his duty and, to impress him, takes on his multi-armed form and says, ‘Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.’ I suppose we all thought that, one way or another”¹.*

Prior to capitalism, many societies had developed mythologies of the end of the world. The apocalypse anticipated by Judaism, Christianity and Islam, seen as the final destiny of this world, was understood to be the precursor of a new heaven and a new earth that would last for all eternity; whereas in the Hindu vision, new worlds and even new universes are endlessly born, dissolved and reborn in a vast cosmic cycle.

But if the idea of the apocalypse is not new, what is new in the capitalist mode of production is first, that the world inhabited by humankind for hundreds of thousands of years can be destroyed by the technologies that human beings themselves have created, rather than by supernatural beings or an inexorable fate. And second, that such a destruction would not be the prelude to a new and better world, but destruction pure and simple.

The atomic bomb tested in the desert in July 1945 would, one month later, be tested on tens of thousands of human beings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The world would indeed not be the same. The atomic bomb was the “scientific” proof of something that many had already begun to suspect in the wake of the First World War: in the words of Sigmund Freud in 1929, that “*men have gained control over the forces of nature to such an extent that with their help they would have no difficulty in exterminating one another to the last man. They know this, and hence comes a large part of the current unrest, their unhappiness and their mood of anxiety*”².

Psychoanalysts of the future – if mankind is able to survive capitalism – will perhaps write treatises on the enormous psychological cost of living with the threat not only of individual death, but the death of humanity and perhaps even all life on earth. It’s already possible to discern many of the outward manifestations of this mental burden: the flight into nihilism and the numerous forms of self-destruction, the vain search for hope in returning to old apocalyptic stories, central in particular to Christian and Muslim “fundamentalism”. For Freud’s rival Jung, the wave of UFO sightings in the late 40s was a modern version of old myths: faced with the unbearable reality posed by the nuclear threat, there was a marked tendency to project one’s real fears into “things seen in the skies”, often accompanied by hopes that wiser beings would come and save us from our own follies³. Little wonder that in 1952, during the Korean war, which many feared would explode into World War Three, the comrades of the Gauche Communiste de France were observing that “*mental alienation in all its forms is to our epoch what the great epidemics were to the Middle Ages*”⁴.

The nuclear Sword of Damocles, from 1945 to 2017

The democratic ruling class justified the atrocities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the story that, on balance, it saved lives, above all American lives, because it made it possible to avoid a military invasion of Japan. In reality, the bomb was a

warning directed less against the collapsing Japanese military than against the USSR which had only recently declared war on Japan and was asserting its presence in the Far East. So Hiroshima was more the first act of “World War Three” than the last act of World War Two. This third world war, the global contest between the American and Russian imperialist blocs, remained a “cold” war in the sense that it never took the form of a direct conflict between the two camps. Rather it was waged via a series of proxy wars with local states and “national liberation movements” doing the actual fighting, while the two superpowers supplied arms, intelligence, strategic support and ideological justification. At certain moments, however, these conflicts threatened to escalate into all-out nuclear confrontations, in particular, during the Korean War in the early 50s and over the Cuba crisis in 1962. And all the while the spiralling “arms race” meant that the two blocs were directing vast quantities of labour and research – which in capitalist terms, means vast quantities of money – into perfecting weapons that could obliterate humanity several times over. Politicians tried to reassure the world’s population with the notion of Mutually Assured Destruction or MAD – the idea that world war was unthinkable in the nuclear age because no one could win it. Thus the best guarantee of peace was to maintain and develop this gigantic arsenal of death. Or in other words: a Sword of Damocles hangs over your head? Get used to it, because it’s the only possible way to live.

After the collapse of the Russian bloc at the end of the 80s⁵, the politicians tried a new line: the end of the Cold War would mean a New World Order of peace and prosperity. A little over a quarter of a century later, the words of George Bush Senior, the president who “delivered” the US bloc’s victory in the Cold War, sound extremely hollow. Prosperity remains a chimera for millions, and this in a world system constantly menaced by huge financial storms, like the one in 2008. As for the promise of peace, the breakdown of the discipline of the old blocs has engendered a series of increasingly chaotic military conflicts, above all in the area around the Biblical Armageddon – the Middle East. This region – already the scene of the Arab-Israeli wars, the war in Lebanon, the Iran-Iraq war, and the battle for Afghanistan – has hardly known a day when it was not being torn apart by war, from the first major military adventure launched by the US after the collapse of the eastern bloc – the 1991 Gulf war – to the current military nightmare stalking through Syria and Iraq. This conflict, perhaps more than all the others, reveals the profound irrationality and uncontrolled nature of the wars in this present phase. Unlike the proxy wars between the two blocs which dominated the previous period, we now have a war with so many sides and so many shifting alliances that it is increasingly difficult to count them. To keep himself in power, Syria’s president Bashar Assad lays waste large swathes of his own country, while the opposition to his rule splits into “moderate” and “radical Islamic” factions constantly at each other’s throats. The American-backed coalition against “Islamic State” in Syria and Iraq is rent by rivalries between Shia militias and Kurdish peshmerga, especially following the controversial referendum on Kurdish independence which threatens to disintegrate the fragile Iraqi state; regional powers like Saudi, Qatar, Iran and Turkey play their own game and swap pawns and alliances to suit their immediate interests. Meanwhile the vast majority of the population is either forced to flee towards Turkey, Jordan or Europe while those that remain try to keep sane and survive in ruined cities like Aleppo, Raqqa, Mosul... Furthermore, these conflicts are linked to a wider band of equally intractable wars, from Libya to the Horn of Africa and from Yemen to Afghanistan and Pakistan. And this epidemic of

5. The collapse of the “Soviet Union” was indeed partly the result of the vast burden of arms spending on an economy that was inherently much weaker than that of the US. But for a more comprehensive analysis of the roots of the crisis in the eastern bloc, see “Theses on the economic and political crisis in the eastern countries”, http://en.internationalism.org/ir/60/collapse_eastern_bloc

warfare can no longer be isolated from the centres of western “civilisation”: the blowback of western involvement in these wars is the wave of refugees heading for the “haven” of Western Europe and the efforts of terrorist gangs like IS to take the war to the homelands of the “unbelievers”

These wars already provide us with a terrifying glimpse of what could lie ahead for the whole world if the destructive tendencies within the capitalist system are allowed to reach their full fruition. But there is another aspect to the spreading law of “every man for himself”: the reappearance of the nuclear threat in a new form. Under the reign of the blocs, the two superpowers had a real interest, and capacity, to limit the spread of nuclear weapons to themselves or to regimes that they trusted to obey their commands. The nuclear arming of China in the 1960s was a break in this chain of command because China had by then broken from the Russian bloc; but since the blocs came to an end “nuclear proliferation” has increased at some pace. India and Pakistan, two states which have already gone to war on several occasions and live in a permanent state of tension, now have nuclear weapons pointing at each other. Iran has made considerable steps towards acquiring one and numerous other regimes and even terrorist groups are no doubt quietly working to join the club.

But looming above all this today is the acquisition and piratical testing of nuclear weapons by the Stalinist regime in North Korea, while the world’s leading military power, the USA, is in the hands of an unpredictable narcissist who rode to power on the global populist wave. These two forms of “rogue regime” issue new threats of fire and fury against each other with each week that passes, and it is not possible to say that this is all bluster. There are, within both regimes, factors that constrain them from unleashing a nuclear holocaust. Trump for example does not have an entirely free hand because he is opposed at almost every turn by powerful elements in his own security and military apparatus. But these inner conflicts, like the populist wave itself, point to a loss of political control by the bourgeoisie which favour unpredictable, rash decisions. And more: behind the conflict between the US and North Korea lies a more global rivalry, between China and the USA. Meanwhile Russia remains the second most heavily armed nuclear power in the world, has recovered much of the status it lost with the collapse of the USSR, and is pursuing an ever more aggressive foreign policy, especially in the Ukraine and Syria. The danger of nuclear warfare remains as real as ever, even if the form it takes may have changed since the period 1945-89.

“Ecological Armageddon”

During the Cold War period, a considerable part of which was characterised by the economic growth that followed the Second World War, there was little awareness of what this growth might hold in store for the balance between man and the rest of nature. But the last few decades have shown how limited “mans’ control over the forces of nature” really are under the capitalist drive for profit, where looting, wastefulness and destruction have always dominated what Marx called man’s “metabolic exchange” with nature.

On October 19, *The Guardian* reported that “*The abundance of flying insects has plunged by three-quarters over the past 25 years, according to a new study that has shocked scientists. Insects are an integral part of life on Earth as both pollinators and prey for other wildlife and it was known that some species such as butterflies were declining. But the newly revealed scale of the losses to all insects has prompted warnings that the world is ‘on course for ecological Armageddon’, with profound impacts on human society*”⁶.

We already knew, of course, about the alarming decline of the bees. And this is only one part of a tendency towards the mass extinction of countless living species, brought about by the poisoning of the air and seas by pesticides, industrial and

transport emissions, and the veritable scourge of plastic waste. And this toxic cloud is also killing human beings at an increasing rate. The day after the article about insect decline, *The Guardian* published a new report that estimates that nine million people die every year as a direct result of pollution⁷. Add to this the melting of the ice caps, the unleashing of superstorms, the droughts and wildfires all linked to man-made climate change, and the threatened “ecological Armageddon” more and more closely resembles the traditional stories about the world perishing in flood and fire.

Thus to the menace of destruction through imperialist war, the ecological question adds another and no less terrifying menace, but these two horsemen of the apocalypse will not ride separately. On the contrary: a capitalist world faced with dwindling vital resources, whether we are talking about energy, food or water, is far more likely to deal with the problem through exacerbated national competition, military pillage and robbery – in short, economic and imperialist war – than through the rational, planet-wide cooperation which alone could find a solution to this new challenge to human survival.

The other side of despair

Looked at one-sidedly, this summary of humanity’s situation can only induce despair. But there is another side: if the products of man’s own hands have become capable of “exterminating one another to the last man”, realising the darkest apocalyptic nightmares, so the same powers of production could be used to realise another ancient dream: a world of plenty where there is no need for one sector of society to lord it over another, a world that has gone beyond the divisions that lie at the heart of conflict and war.

It is one of contradictions in the evolution of capitalism that precisely at the point that such a world becomes materially possible – we would say round the beginning of the 20th century – this social order plunges mankind into the most barbarous wars in history. From this point on, its very survival becomes increasingly antagonistic to the survival of humanity. This is the most striking proof that capitalism, for all its intact capacities to innovate, to develop, to find remedies for its crises, has become obsolete, a fundamental obstacle to the future advance of our species.

The recognition of this reality is a key factor in the development of a revolutionary consciousness among the exploited masses who are always the first victims of capitalism’s crises and wars. The understanding that capitalism, as a world civilisation, had entered its epoch of decay, was a crucial factor in the monumental events set in motion by the revolution in Russia in 1917 – in the international revolutionary wave which forced the bourgeoisie to call a halt to the slaughter of the First World War and which, for an all-too-brief period, brought the promise of the overthrow of capitalism and the advent of a world communist society.

Today, such revolutionary hopes might appear to belong entirely to the past. But contrary to the ideology and active propaganda of the bourgeoisie, the class struggle has not disappeared from history and indeed, even before it takes on a generalised and conscious revolutionary character, still has an enormous weight in the world situation. During the Cold War, as we have seen, the ruling class tried to convince us that its MAD doctrine was preserving the planet from a third world war. What they would never tell us is that there was a more powerful “deterrent” to world war after capitalism entered its present phase of economic crisis at the end of the 60s. This was a factor that had been missing in the 1930s, when the economic depression did lead rapidly to war: an undefeated working class more prepared to fight for its own interests than to rally to the war plans of the bourgeoisie.

Today, the break-up of the blocs and the accelerating imperialist free-for all is another factor

7. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/oct/19/global-pollution-kills-millions-threatens-survival-human-societies>

October 1917 - a victory for the working masses

We publish here extracts from an article originally published in October 1997, to mark the 80th anniversary of the Russian revolution, the full article can be found here: <http://en.internationalism.org/ir/091/october-1917>. The essential aim of the article is to refute one of the main lies about the October revolution, one which is still propagated by the most eminent bourgeois historians: that, in contrast to the spontaneous mass movement of February 1917, which resulted in the fall of the Tsar and the formation of the Provisional Government, the October insurrection was a putsch organised by the Bolshevik party; that the aim of the February movement was true democracy for Russia, whereas the aim of the October insurrection was a one-party dictatorship. Having shown that the Bolsheviks’ call for insurrection was based first and foremost on an assessment of the possibilities of the world-wide proletarian revolution, the sections of the article we publish here demonstrate that the insurrection, far from being a putsch, was to this day the highest moment in the consciousness and self-organisation of the proletarian class. Also see our Manifesto on the Russian revolution.

The crisis is ripe

.....On October 10 1917, Lenin, the most wanted man in the country, hunted by the police in all parts of Russia, came to a Central Committee meeting of the Bolshevik Party in Petrograd disguised in wig and spectacles, and drafted the following resolution on a page of a child’s notebook:

“The Central Committee recognises that both the international situation of the Russian Revolution (the insurrection in the German fleet is the extreme manifestation of the growth throughout Europe of a world-wide socialist revolution, and also the threat of a peace between the imperialists with the aim of strangling the revolution in Russia) - and the military situation (the indubitable decision of the Russian bourgeoisie and Kerensky and Co. to surrender Petersburg to the Germans) - all this in connection with the peasant insurrection and the swing of popular confidence to our party (the elections in Moscow), and finally the obvious preparation of a second Kornilov attack (the withdrawal of troops from Petersburg, the importation of Cossacks into Petersburg, the surrounding of Minsk with Cossacks, etc.) - all this places armed insurrection on the order of the day. Thus recognising that the armed insurrection is inevitable and fully ripe, the Central Committee recommends to all organisations of the party that they be guided by this, and from this point of view consider and decide all practical questions (the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region, the withdrawal of troops from Petersburg, the coming-out of Moscow and Minsk)”.¹

Exactly four months previously, the Bolshevik Party had deliberately restrained the fighting élan of the workers of Petrograd, who were being lured by the ruling classes into a premature, isolated show-down with the state. Such a situation would certainly have led to the decapitation of the Russian proletariat in the capital and the decimation of its class party². The party, overcoming its own internal hesitations, was firmly committing itself to *“mobilise all forces in order to impress upon the workers and soldiers the unconditional necessity of a desperate, last, resolute struggle to overcome the government of Kerensky”* as Lenin already formulated it in his famous article ‘The Crisis Is Ripe’. Already then (September 29) he declared: *“The crisis is ripe. The honour of the Bolshevik Party is at stake. The whole future of the international workers’ revolution for Socialism is at stake. The crisis is ripe”*.

The explanation for the completely different attitude of the party in October as opposed to July is given in the above resolution with brilliant marxist clarity and audacity. The point of departure, as always for marxism, is the analysis of the international situation and the evaluation of the balance of force between the classes. As opposed to July 1917, the resolution notes that the Russian proletariat is no longer alone; that the world revolution has begun in the central countries of capitalism: *“The maturing of the world revolution cannot be denied. The explosion of anger of the Czech workers was put down with unbelievable brutality, bearing witness that the government is terribly frightened. In Italy too there has been a mass rising in Turin. But most important of all is the rising in the German fleet”*³. It is the responsibility of the

Russian working class not only to seize the opportunity to break out of its international isolation imposed until then by the world war, but above all to fan in its turn the flames of insurrection in Western Europe by beginning the world revolution. Against the minority in his own party who still echoed the Menshevik, counter-revolutionary, pseudo-marxist argumentation that the revolution ought to begin in a more advanced country, Lenin showed that conditions in Germany were in fact much more difficult than in Russia, and that the real historic meaning of the Russian insurrection lay in helping the German Revolution unfold: *“The Germans have, under woefully difficult conditions, with only one Liebknecht (who moreover is in prison), without press organs, without the right of assembly, without soviets, in face of a gigantic enmity of all classes of the population up until the last well-off peasant against the idea of internationalism, in face of the superb organisation of the imperialist big, middle and petty bourgeoisie, the Germans i.e. the German revolutionary internationalists, the workers in sailors’ uniform, have begun a rising in the fleet - with odds of perhaps one to a hundred against them. But we who have dozens of papers, who have freedom of assembly, who have gained the majority within the soviets, we who in comparison to the proletarian internationalists of the whole world have the best conditions, we are going to renounce supporting the German revolutionaries through our insurrection. We are going to argue like Scheidemann and Renaudel: the most sensible thing is to make no insurrection, since when we get gunned down, the world will lose with us such marvellous, sensible, ideal internationalists. Let us adopt a resolution of sympathy for the German insurrectionists, and reject the insurrection in Russia. That will be a genuinely reasonable internationalism”*⁴.

This internationalist standpoint and method, the exact opposite of the bourgeois-nationalist stand of the Stalinism which developed out of the later counter-revolution, was not exclusive to the Bolshevik party at that time, but was the common property of the advanced Russian workers with their marxist political education. Thus, at the beginning of October, the revolutionary sailors of the Baltic Fleet proclaimed through the radio stations of their ships to the four corners of the earth the following appeal: *“In the hour when the waves of the Baltic are stained with the blood of our brothers, we raise our voice: oppressed people of the whole world! Lift the banner of revolt!”*

But the world wide estimation of the balance of class forces by the Bolsheviks did not restrict itself to examining the state of the international proletariat, but expressed a clear vision of the global situation of the class enemy. Always basing themselves on a deeply rooted knowledge of the history of the workers’ movement, the Bolsheviks knew perfectly well from the example of the Paris Commune 1971, that the imperialist bourgeoisie, even in the midst of its world war, would combine its forces against the revolution.

“Does the complete inactivity of the English fleet in general, and of the English submarines during the Occupation of Osel by the Germans not prove, in connection with the intention of the government to move its seat from Petrograd to Moscow, that between Kerensky and the English-French imperialists a conspiracy has been set up, with the goal of surrendering Petrograd to the Germans, and in this way to strangle the Russian Revolution” asks Lenin, and adds: *“The resolution of the soldiers’*

4. Lenin: Letter to Comrades, ibid.

*section of the Petrograd Soviet against the transfer of the government out of Petrograd shows that among the soldiers too the conviction concerning the conspiracy of Kerensky has ripened”*⁵. In August under Kerensky and Kornilov, revolutionary Riga had already been delivered into the clutches of Kaiser Wilhelm II. The first rumours of a possible separate peace between Britain and Germany against the Russian Revolution alarmed Lenin. The goal of the Bolsheviks was not “peace” but revolution, knowing as true marxists that a capitalist ceasefire could only be an interlude between two world wars. It was this communist insight into the inevitable spiral of barbarism that bankrupt, decadent capitalism held in store for humanity, which now prompted Bolshevism into a race against time to end the war with revolutionary, proletarian means.

.....Among the decisive factors that pushed the working class towards insurrection was the fact that the revolution was menaced by further counter-revolutionary attacks, and that the workers, in particular the main soviets, were now firmly behind the Bolsheviks - the direct fruit of the most important mass confrontation between bourgeoisie and proletariat between July and October 1917: the Kornilov putsch in August. The proletariat under Bolshevik leadership stopped Kornilov’s march on the capital, mainly by winning over his troops and sabotaging his transport and logistics system via the railway, postal and other workers. In the course of this action, during which the soviets were revitalised as the revolutionary organisation of the whole class, the workers discovered that the Provisional Government in Petrograd under the leadership of the Socialist Revolutionary Kerensky and the Mensheviks was itself involved in the counter-revolutionary plot. From this moment on, the class conscious workers grasped that these parties had become a true “left wing of capital” and began to flock to the Bolsheviks.....

The revolutionary proletariat on the road to insurrection

.....In February 1917 a so-called “dual power” situation arose. Alongside and opposed to the bourgeois state, the workers’ councils appeared as a potential alternative government of the working class. Since in reality two opposing governments of two enemy classes cannot coexist, since the one must necessarily destroy the other in order to assert itself, such a period of “dual power” is necessarily extremely short and unstable. Such a phase is not characterised by “peaceful coexistence” and mutual toleration. Only in appearance does it represent a social equilibrium. In reality it is a decisive stage in the civil war between labour and capital. The bourgeois falsification of history is obliged to mask the life and death struggle of the classes which took place between February and October 1917 in order to present the October Revolution as a “Bolshevik putsch”. An “unnatural” prolongation of this period of dual power necessarily spells the end of the revolution and its organs. The soviets are *“real only as organs of insurrection, of revolutionary power. Outside of this task, the soviets are just a toy, inevitably leading to the apathy, indifference and disappointment of the masses, who have rightly got fed up of the endless repetition of resolutions and protests”*⁶. Although the proletarian insurrection is no more spontaneous than the counter-revolutionary military coup, in the months before October both classes repeatedly manifested their spontaneous tendency towards the struggle for power. The July Days and the Kornilov Putsch were only the clearest manifestations. The October insurrection itself began in reality, not with a signal from the Bolshevik Party, but with the attempt of the bourgeois government to send the most revolutionary troops, two-thirds of the Petrograd garrison, to the front, and replace them in the capital with battalions more under counter-revolutionary influence. It began, in other words, with yet another attempt, only weeks after Kornilov, to crush the revolution, obliging the proletariat to take insurrectionary measures to save it. *“Indeed the result of the rising of October 25*

5. Lenin: Letter to the Petrograd City Conference, ibid.

6. Lenin: Theses for the October 8th Conference, CW, vol 26.



*was three-quarters decided, if not more, from the moment when we resisted the moving out of the troops, formed the Military Revolutionary Committee (October 16), appointed our Commissars in all troop formations and organisations, and thus completely isolated not only the command of the Petrograd military district, but the government... From the moment that the battalions, under the orders of the Military Revolutionary Committee, refused to leave the city, and did not leave it, we had a victorious insurrection in the capital”*⁷. Moreover, this Military Revolutionary Committee, which was to lead the conclusive military actions of October 25, far from being an organ of the Bolshevik party, was originally proposed by the “left” counter-revolutionary parties as a means of imposing the removal of the revolutionary troops from the capital under the authority of the soviets; but it was immediately transformed by the soviet into an instrument not only to oppose this measure, but to organise the struggle for power. *“No, the government of the soviets was not a chimera, an arbitrary construction, an invention of party theoreticians. It grew up irresistibly from below, from the breakdown of industry, the impotence of the possessors, the needs of the masses. The soviets had in actual fact become a government. For the workers, soldiers and peasants there remained no other road. No time left to argue and speculate about a soviet government: it had to be realised”*⁸. The legend about a Bolshevik putsch is one of the fattest lies in history. In fact the insurrection was announced publicly in advance, to the elected revolutionary delegates. Trotsky’s speech to the Garrison Conference on October 18 illustrates this. *“It is known to the bourgeoisie that the Petrograd Soviet is going to propose to the Congress of Soviets that they seize the power... And foreseeing an inevitable battle, the bourgeois classes are trying to disarm Petrograd... At the first attempt of the counter-revolution to break up the Congress, we will answer with a counter-attack which will be ruthless, and which we will carry through to the end”*. Point 3 of the resolution adopted by the Garrison Conference read: *“The All-Russian Congress of Soviets must take power in its hands and guarantee to the people peace, land and bread”*⁹. To ensure that the whole proletariat supported the struggle for power, the Garrison Conference decided on a peaceful review of forces, held in Petrograd before the Soviet Congress, centred around mass assemblies and debates. *“Tens of thousands brimmed that immense building known as the House of the People... From iron columns and upstairs windows human heads, legs and arms were hanging in garlands and clusters. There was that electric tension in the air which forebodes a coming discharge. Down with Kerensky! Down with the war! Power to the Soviets! None of the Compromisers any longer dared appear before these red hot crowds with arguments or warnings. The*

7. Trotsky: Lessons of October.

8. Trotsky: History of the Russian Revolution, p. 930.

9. Trotsky: History, p. 957.

1. Lenin: Resolution on the Insurrection, Collected Works, vol 26.
2. <http://en.internationalism.org/ir/090/october-1917-80-years-on>
3. Lenin: Letter to the Bolshevik Comrades Participating at the Soviet Congress of the Northern Region, ibid.



Bolsheviks had the floor”¹⁰. Trotsky adds: “The experience of the revolution, the war, the heavy struggle of a whole bitter lifetime, rose from the depths of memory in each of these poverty-driven men and women, expressing itself in simple and imperious thoughts: this way we can go no further, we must break a road into the future”. The party did not invent this “will to power” of the masses. But it inspired it and gave the class confidence in its capacity to rule. As Lenin wrote after the Kornilov Putsch: “Let those of little faith learn from this example. Shame on those who say, ‘We have no machine with which to replace that old one which gravitates inexorably to the defence of the bourgeoisie’. For we have a machine. And that is the soviets. Do not fear the initiative and independence of the masses. Trust the revolutionary organisations of the masses, and you will see in all spheres of the state life that same power, majesty and unconquerable will of the workers and peasants, which they have shown in their solidarity and enthusiasm against Kornilovism”¹¹.

The task of the hour: demolishing the bourgeois state

Insurrection is one of the most crucial, complex and demanding problems which the proletariat must solve if it is to fulfil its historical mission. In the bourgeois revolution, this question is much less decisive, since the bourgeoisie could base its power struggle on its economic and political power already accumulated inside feudal society. During its revolution, the bourgeoisie let the petty bourgeoisie and the young working class do the fighting for it. When the dust of battle settled, it often preferred to place its newly won power in the hands of a now bourgeoisified, domesticated feudal class, since the latter has the authority of tradition on its side. Since the proletariat, on the contrary, has no property and no economic power within capitalist society, it can delegate neither the struggle for power, nor the defence of its class rule once acquired, to any other class or sector of society. It must take power in its own hands, drawing the other strata behind its own leadership, accept the full responsibility, the consequences and risks of its struggle. In the insurrection, the proletariat reveals, and discovers for itself, more clearly than every before, the secret of its own existence as the first and last exploited revolutionary class. No wonder the bourgeoisie is so attached to slandering the memory of October! The primordial task of the proletariat in the revolution, from February on, was to conquer the hearts and the minds of all those sectors who could be won over to its cause, but who might otherwise be used against the revolution: the soldiers, peasants, state functionaries, transport and communications employees, even the indispensable house servants of the bourgeoisie. By the eve of the insurrection, this task had been completed. The task of the insurrection was quite different: that of breaking the resistance of

those state bodies and armed formations which cannot be won over, but whose continuing existence contains the nucleus of the most barbarous counter-revolution. To break this resistance, to demolish the bourgeois state, the proletariat must create an armed force and place it under its own class direction and iron discipline. Although led by the proletariat, the insurrectionary forces of October 25 were mainly composed of soldiers obeying its command. “The October revolution was a struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie for power, but the outcome of the struggle was decided in the last analysis by the muzhik...What here gave the revolution the character of a brief blow with a minimum number of victims, was the combination of a revolutionary conspiracy, a proletarian insurrection, and the struggle of a peasant garrison for self-preservation. The party led the uprising; the armed detachments of workers were the fist of the insurrection; but the heavy-weight peasant garrison decided the outcome of the struggle”¹². In reality, the proletariat could seize power because it was able to mobilise the other non-exploiting strata behind its own class project: the exact opposite of a putsch. “Demonstrations, street fights, barricades - everything comprised in the usual idea of insurrection - were almost entirely absent. The revolution had no need of solving a problem already solved. The seizure of the governmental machine could be carried through according to plan with the help of comparatively small armed detachments guided from a single centre... The tranquillity of the October streets, the absence of crowds and battles, gave the enemy a pretext to talk of the conspiracy of an insignificant minority, of the adventure of a handful of Bolsheviks... But in reality the Bolsheviks could reduce the struggle for power at the last moment to a ‘conspiracy’, not because they were a small minority, but for the opposite reason - because they had behind them in the workers’ districts and the barracks an overwhelming majority, consolidated, organised, disciplined”¹³.

Choosing the right moment: cornerstone of the struggle for power

Technically speaking, the Communist insurrection is a simple question of military organisation and strategy. Politically, it is the most demanding task imaginable. Most difficult and demanding of all is the task of choosing the right moment to struggle for power: neither too early nor too late. In July 1917, and even in August at the moment of the Kornilov Putsch, when the Bolsheviks still held the class back from a struggle for power, the main danger remained a premature insurrection. By September Lenin was already incessantly calling for immediate preparation of the armed struggle and declaring: now or never! “A revolutionary situation cannot be preserved at will. If the Bolsheviks had not seized power in October and November, in all probability they would not have seized it at all. Instead of firm leadership the masses would have found among the Bolsheviks that same disparity between word and deed which they were already sick of, and they would have ebbed away in the course of two or three months from this party which had deceived their hopes, just as they had recently ebbed away from the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks”¹⁴. This is why Lenin, in combating the danger of delaying the struggle for power, not only exposed the counter-revolutionary preparations of the world bourgeoisie, but above all warned against the disastrous effects of hesitations on the workers themselves, who “are almost desperate”. The “hungering” people might start “demolishing everything around them” in a “purely anarchist” manner “if the Bolsheviks are not able to lead them into the final battle. One cannot wait any longer without running the risk of favouring the conspiracy of Rodyanko with Wilhelm and experiencing complete decomposition with a mass flight of the soldiers, if they (who already are almost desperate) become completely desperate”¹⁵. Choosing the right moment also requires an exact estimation not only of the balance of class forces between bourgeoisie and proletariat, but also of the dynamic of the intermediary strata. “A revolutionary situation is not long lived. The least stable of the premises of a revolution is the mood of the petty bourgeoisie. At a time of national crisis the petty bourgeoisie follows that class which in-

spires confidence not only in words but deeds. Although capable of impulsive enthusiasm and even of revolutionary fury, the petty bourgeoisie lacks endurance, easily loses heart under reverses, and passes from elated hope to discouragement. And these sharp and swift changes in the mood of the petty bourgeoisie lend their instability to every revolutionary situation. If the proletarian party is not decisive enough to convert the hopes and expectations of the popular masses into revolutionary action in good season, the flood tide is quickly followed by ebb: the intermediate strata turn away their eye from the revolution and seek a saviour in the opposing camp.”¹⁶.

The art of insurrection

In his struggle to persuade the party about the imperious necessity of an immediate insurrection, Lenin returned to the famous elaboration by Marx (in *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*) on the question of the insurrection as a “work of art” which as in the art of war “or other arts is subject to certain rules, the neglect of which lead to the doom of the culprit party”. The most important of these rules, according to Marx, are: never stop half way once the insurrection has begun; always maintain the offensive, since “the defensive is the death of every armed rising”; surprise the enemy and demoralise it through daily successes, “even small ones”, obliging it to retreat; “in short, according to the words of Danton, the greatest master of revolutionary tactics known to date: de l’audace, de l’audace, encore de l’audace”. And, as Lenin noted: “A vast superiority of forces must be concentrated at the decisive point at the decisive moment, since otherwise the enemy, being better trained and organised, will destroy the insurrectionists”. Lenin added: “We will hope that when action is decided, the leaders will follow the great legacy of Danton and Marx. The success both of the Russian and of the world revolution depends on two, three days of fighting”¹⁷. To this end the proletariat had to create the organs of its struggle for power, a military committee and armed detachments. “Just as a blacksmith cannot seize the red hot iron in his naked hand, so the proletariat cannot directly seize the power; it has to have an organisation accommodated to this task. The coordination of the mass insurrection with the conspiracy, the subordination of the conspiracy to the insurrection, the organisation of the insurrection through the conspiracy, constitutes that complex and responsible department of revolutionary politics which Marx and Engels called ‘the art of insurrection’”. (Trotsky: *History* p.1019). It is this centralised, coordinated, premeditated approach which allows the proletariat to smash the last, armed resistance of the ruling class, thus striking a terrible blow which the world bourgeoisie has neither forgiven nor forgotten to this day. “Historians and politicians usually give the name of spontaneous insurrection to a movement of the masses united by a common hostility against the old regime, but not having a clear aim, deliberated methods of struggle, or a leadership consciously showing the way to victory. This spontaneous insurrection is condescendingly recognised by official historians... as a necessary evil the responsibility for which falls upon the old regime. The real reason for their attitude of indulgence is that ‘spontaneous’ insurrection cannot transcend the framework of the bourgeois regime (...) What they do reject - calling it ‘Blanquism’ or still worse, Bolshevism - is the conscious preparation of an overthrow, the plan, the conspiracy”¹⁸. This is what still infuriates the bourgeoisie the most: the audacity with which the working class snatched power out of its hands. The bourgeoisie - everybody - knew an uprising was being prepared. But it did not know when and where the enemy would attack. In striking its decisive blow, the proletariat profited fully from the advantage of surprise, of itself choosing the moment and terrain of battle. The bourgeoisie hoped and believed its enemy would be naive and “democratic” enough to decide the question of insurrection publicly, in the presence of the ruling classes, at the All-Russian Soviet Congress which had been summoned to Petrograd. There it hoped to sabotage and forestall the decision and its execution. But when the Congress delegates arrived in the capital the insurrection was in full swing, the ruling class already reeling. The Petrograd proletariat, via its Military Revolutionary Com-

mittee, handed over power to the Soviet Congress, and the bourgeoisie could do nothing to prevent it. Putsch! Conspiracy! the bourgeoisie cried and still cries. Lenin’s reply: No putsch; conspiracy yes, but a conspiracy subordinated to the will of the masses and the needs of the insurrection. And Trotsky added: “The higher the political level of a revolutionary movement and the more serious it’s leadership, the greater will be the place occupied by conspiracy in a popular insurrection”¹⁹. Bolshevism a form of Blanquism? This accusation is raised again today by the exploiting classes. “The Bolsheviks were compelled more than once, and long before the October revolution, to refute accusations of conspiratism and Blanquism directed against them by their enemies. Moreover, nobody waged a more implacable struggle against the system of pure conspiracy than Lenin. The opportunists of the international social democracy more than once defended the old Social Revolutionary tactic of individual terror directed against the agents of czarism, when this tactic was ruthlessly criticised by the Bolsheviks with their insistence upon mass insurrection as opposed to the individual adventurism of the intelligentsia. But in refuting all varieties of Blanquism and anarchism, Lenin did not for one moment bow down to any ‘sacred’ spontaneity of the masses”. To this Trotsky added: “Conspiracy does not take the place of insurrection. An active minority of the class, no matter how well organised, cannot seize the power regardless of the general conditions of the country. In this point history has condemned Blanquism. But only in this. His affirmative theorem retains all its force. In order to conquer the power, the proletariat needs more than a spontaneous insurrection. It needs a suitable organisation, it needs a plan; it needs a conspiracy. Such is the Leninist view of this question”²⁰.

Party and insurrection

It is a well known fact that Lenin, the first to be completely clear about the necessity of the struggle for power in October, having put forward several different plans for insurrection, one centred on Finland and the Baltic Fleet, another on Moscow, at one moment advocated that the Bolshevik party, not a Soviet organ, should directly organise the insurrection. Events proved that the organisation and leadership of the rising by a Soviet organ such as the Military Revolutionary Committee, where of course the party had the dominant influence, is the best guarantee for the success of the whole uprising, since the whole class, not just the many sympathisers of the party, felt themselves represented by their unitary revolutionary organs. But Lenin’s proposition, according to bourgeois historians, reveals that for him the revolution is not the task of the masses, but the private affair of the party. Why otherwise, they ask, was he so much against waiting for the Soviet Congress to decide the rising? In reality, Lenin’s attitude was in complete accordance with marxism and its historically founded confidence in the proletariat masses. “It would be disastrous, or a purely formalistic approach, to want to wait for the uncertain voting of 25th of October. The people have the right and the duty to decide such questions, not through the ballot but through force; the people have the right and the duty, in critical moments of the revolution, to show its representatives, even its best representatives, the right direction, instead of waiting for them. This has been shown by the history of every revolution, and it would be a boundless crime of revolutionaries to let the moment slip away, although they know that the salvation of the revolution, the peace proposals, the saving of Petrograd, the salvation from hunger, the handing over of the soil to the peasants depend on this. The government is tottering. It has to be given the final push, at any price!”²¹. In reality, all the Bolshevik leaders were agreed that, whoever carried out the rising, the power just conquered would be immediately handed over to the All Russian Soviet Congress. The party knew perfectly that the revolution was not the business either of the party alone, or of the Petrograd workers alone, but of the whole proletariat. But concerning the question of who should carry through the insurrection itself, Lenin was

10. Trotsky: *History*, p. 967.
11. See Lenin: *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?*, and of course his *State and Revolution*.
12. Trotsky: *History*, p. 1136.
13. Trotsky: *History*, p. 1138-39.
14. Trotsky: *History*, p 1005.
15. Lenin: ‘Letter to Comrades’.

16. Trotsky: *History*. p. 1125.
17. Lenin: ‘Proposals of an Outsider’, *CW*, vol 26.
18. Trotsky: *History*, p. 1019.

Continued from page 1

Confrontations in Catalonia: Democracy and the Nation are the reactionary past, the proletariat is the future

The Catalan separatists, who are aspiring for a new estate of their own, present themselves as victims of the barbarity of their rivals, claiming that “Madrid robs us”, in order to mobilise their cannon fodder in the name of “true democracy”.

This “true democracy” of the separatists is based on the exclusion of those who do not share their aims. The harassment of those who did not vote; posters and public displays aimed at shaming those who don’t agree; the moral blackmail of those who simply want to maintain a critical attitude. In all areas the “civil” associations have imposed their dictatorship, with the weapons of insults, lies, ostracism, harassment, control, trying to “homogenise” the population around “Catalonia”. This is even more marked with the Catalan separatist groups that use Nazi methods and theorise about the “purity” of the “Catalan race”.

The Spanish nationalist democrats are likewise not holding back. The stirring of hatred against Catalans; the manoeuvres to get large companies to move away from Catalonia; “spontaneous” demonstrations in favor of urging on the repressive forces with the barbaric slogan “give it to them”, recalling the Basque nationalist cry of “ETA kill them”; the call to put Spanish flags in windows: all this reminds us of the way the Franco regime unleashed the nationalist beast in order to impose a reign of terror.

What both sides share is exclusion and xenophobia; they all agree on hatred of immigrants, contempt for Arab, Latin American and Asian workers, under the repugnant slogans of “they take it away from us”, “they steal our jobs”, “they increase waiting times for health care” etc, when it is the crisis of capitalism and the bankruptcy of its states, whether the Spanish or the Catalan Autonomous government, which generates attacks on everyone’s conditions and pushes thousands of young people into a wave of migration that recalls those in the 50s and 60s.

Meanwhile the “neutrals” of Podemos and the followers of Ada Colau try to make us believe that democracy with its “right to decide” will be the balm that allows negotiation and a “civilised solution”. From within this medley of illusions has appeared “Hablemos/Parlem” -Let us Talk-, which wants to put the Spanish and Catalan flags to one side and raise the “white flag” of dialogue and democracy.

The proletariat and with it all the exploited cannot have such illusions. The conflict that has erupted in Catalonia is of the same ilk as the populist conflicts that led to Brexit or the enthroning of an irresponsible neurotic at the head of the world’s main power: Trump. It is the expression of the degeneration and decomposition of the capitalist system which has provoked not only an economic crisis but also a political one in different capitalist states.

Capitalism at the present gives the appearance that “*all is well*”, that “*we are getting out of the crisis*”, that there is “*technological progress*” and dynamism on a world scale. But behind this superficially dazzling facade the violent contradictions of capitalism are growing in strength. Imperialist war, the destruction of the environment, moral barbarity, centrifugal tendencies of each for themselves are feeding the ideology and actions of xenophobia, exclusion, pogromism.

This volcano is also bursting out in the Middle East and with the danger of war between North Korea and the USA; and it is also seen in the Catalan conflict, where the apparently civilised and democratic forms, the use of “negotiations” and “truces”, are progressively disintegrating and run the risk of becoming entrenched and insoluble. If until now there have been no deaths, this is an increasingly dangerous prospect. A climate of social dislocation, violent clashes, intimidation, is taking root throughout society, not only in Catalonia, but in the whole of Spain. Growing numbers of people are finding it hard to bear a situation which is affecting friends, families, children, workmates...

We are getting a glimpse of what Rosa Luxemburg wrote about in such a penetrating and prophetic way in 1915, faced with the horrors of the First World War: “*Violated, dishonored, wading*

in blood, dripping filth – there stands bourgeois society. This is it [in reality]. Not all spic and span and moral, with pretense to culture, philosophy, ethics, order; peace, and the rule of law – but the ravening beast, the witches’ sabbath of anarchy, a plague to culture and humanity. Thus it reveals itself in its true, its naked form.” (The Junius Pamphlet: The Crisis of German Social Democracy).

The danger for the proletariat, and thus for the future of humanity, is that it will be trapped in the suffocating atmosphere that is being spewed forth by the Catalan swamp. The proletariat’s sentiments, aspirations and thinking, are not currently gravitating around what the future holds for humanity, how to respond to job insecurity and miserable wages, how to overcome the general worsening of living conditions. Rather they are polarising around the choice between Spain or Catalonia, the Constitution, the right to decide, the Nation... that is, the very factors that have contributed to the present situation and threaten to take it to the level of paroxysm.

We are conscious of the situation of weakness that threatens the proletariat today. However, this cannot stop us recognising that a solution can emerge only from its autonomous struggle as a class. To contribute to this perspective today means opposing the democratic mobilisation, the choice between Spain and Catalonia, the national terrain. The struggle of the proletariat and the future of humanity can only be determined outside and against the putrid terrain of so-called Democracy and the Nation.

International Communist Current, 9 October 2017.

Leaflet for our organisation’s intervention – help to distribute it!

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October 1917 - a victory for the working masses

perfectly correct to argue that this should be done by the class organs best suited to the job, best able to assume the task of political and military planning, and political leadership of the struggle for power. Events proved that Trotsky was right in arguing that a specific organ of the soviets, specially created for the task, and standing directly under the influence of the party, was best suited. But the debate was not one of principle, but concerned the vital question of political efficiency. The underlying concern of Lenin, that the soviet apparatus as a whole could not be charged with the task, since this would fatally delay the insurrection and lead to divulging plans to the enemy, was completely valid. The painful experience of the whole Russian Revolution was necessary for the later clarification within the Communist Left that although the political leadership by the class party, both of the struggle for power and of the proletarian dictatorship is indispensable, it is not the task of the party itself to take power. On this question neither Lenin nor the other Bolsheviks (nor the Spartacists in Germany etc) were completely clear in 1917, nor could they be. But concerning the “art of insurrection” itself, concerning the revolutionary patience and even caution to avoid premature show-downs, concerning the revolutionary audacity necessary to take power, there is nobody today’s revolutionaries can learn more from than Lenin. In particular on the role of the party in the insurrection. History proved Lenin right: it is the masses who take power, it is the soviet which provides the organisation, but the class party is the most indispensable weapon of the struggle for power. In July 1917 it was the party which steered the class away from a decisive defeat. In October 1917 it was the party which steered the class down the road to power. Without this indispensable leadership, there would have been no seizure of power..... **Kr, October 1997**

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Aung San Suu Kyi: the bourgeoisie’s icon of peace unleashes barbarism

and in defence of the general interest. But for the bourgeoisie, defending the general interest, the national interest, means defending the capitalist state and its violence, whether democratic or not. Aung San Suu Kyi has always been loyal to her cause, the cause of capitalism and her class, the bourgeoisie. At root the stunning communiqué of the EELV is right: Aung San Suu Kyi is indeed in the tradition of all the other apostles of peace: Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mandela, Lech Walesa, Desmond Tutu, Yasser Arafat, Jimmy Carter or Obama. A few examples:

- Mandela was freed after 27 years in prison and came to power to found a “new South Africa”; he was made a Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1993. And despite the fact that the extremely demanding role he was called upon to play demanded a person of a different calibre from Aung San Suu Kyi, “*South Africa remains a ‘third world’ state where certain high-performing sectors, diminishing in number and mainly run by whites, sit over an ocean of poverty, corruption, and violence...the social climate is poisoned by the crying inequalities nourished by the ‘Black Diamonds’, the black nouveaux riches, insatiable and corrupt profiteers who insolently flaunt their luxurious life-style*”¹.

- The ‘historic victory’ of Obama, the ‘first black president of the USA’, gave rise to the same kind of rhetoric: at last a black man in a command of a country ravaged by social inequality and racism. “*Together we will change this country and change the world*”. On 10 December 2009, Barack Obama received the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo. Eight years later, according to the organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD), the USA is one of the countries with the biggest gap between rich and poor. More than 30,000 people are gunned down every year in the USA, very often black people. From the military point of view, Obama continued to defend US imperialist interests in Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq, while involving the country in areas where it had previously been more or less absent: in Libya, in Mali and Nigeria. He set up drone bases in Niger which has frontiers with Nigeria and Mali and is close to Cameroun, while “targeted” air strikes have been carried out in Somalia and Pakistan.

Each time, these icons thrust forward as symbols of hope have played on the illusions of the exploited and diverted them from the collective, conscious struggle against capitalism and its barbarity.

Buddhism bolsters the capitalist state

We should also look at the religious dimension of the situation in Burma. The most violent rejection of the Muslim Rohingya has been expressed within the majority Buddhist population. Buddhist monks have themselves been stirring up this hatred and calling for pogroms. They haven’t hesitated to engage in physical aggression themselves, led by the ultra-nationalist, anti-Muslim monk Wirathu or the “Venerable W” as he is known. This person was himself imprisoned for several years by the junta for preaching hatred.

There are some who defend Aung San Suu Kyi whatever she does. According to *Alter Info*, September 2017, “*the great lady follows a very pure Buddhist path, and she does her best despite all the insults and lies propagated by the western media...what can she do? Favour a minority which endangers the majority? Let the US destabilise the country through the Rohingya who, for many, are really Bengalis? No, she is doing what she can for the country and the majority of its inhabitants are certainly not responsible for the crimes attributed to them*”.

In reality, the “purity” of Buddhism in Burma is being used in the interest of the capitalist state, a state based on religious identity and on national chauvinism. But here again, we shouldn’t be surprised. Like many of the world religions, Buddhism originated in a revolt of the oppressed against the existing order, in particular the Indian caste system. Hence, like the religion of ancient Israel, early Christianity and Islam, it was characterised by high moral values based on an emerg-

1. UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2013

ing vision of a common humanity. But unable to offer a real solution to the sufferings of mankind, these movements were transformed into state religions which expressed the interests of the ruling class, and even their best ethical insights were turned into justifications for preserving the existing class-divided order. In decadent and decomposing capitalism, however, the religions of the world have increasingly become naked apologists for exclusion, racism and war. Buddhism, still widely reputed to be a religion of tolerance and peace, has not been able to escape this destiny.

The situation in Burma is only a further episode in the bloody agony of the capitalist system. Behind all the indignant noises coming from the bourgeois world, imperialism’s confrontations and alliances continue. Concretely, despite the denunciations, support for the Burmese state and its army will not be dropped by the western states because it can act as a barrier to the advance of Chinese imperialism - its push to gain direct access to the Gulf of Bengal and from there to the open sea, and its new “Silk Road” towards Europe.

Only the proletarian struggle, the development of international class solidarity, can put an end to the scourge of scapegoating and ethnic cleansing. The road ahead is long, very long, but there isn’t another one. **Stopio, 2.10.17**

ICC online

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- Statement on the war tensions around North Korea from International Communist Perspective (South Korea)
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- Philippines’ “Culture of Killings”: expression of decomposing world capitalism
- Polemic with the PCI: Daesh, a decomposed corpse of the struggle for national liberation!

Aung San Suu Kyi: the bourgeoisie’s icon of peace unleashes barbarism

Since the end of August the army of Burma (Myanmar) has been persecuting, torturing, raping and killing thousands of inhabitants of the state of Rakhine (traditionally also called Arakan), people from the Muslim Rohingya minority. This is a particularly impoverished area to the west of Burma, a country where the great majority of the population are Buddhist. Rejected and deprived of civil rights for decades, the Rohinigy have been victims of even more extreme violence since the attack on around 30 police stations by an armed group calling itself the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA). In this conflict the population, as ever, pays the highest price, while imperialist interests serve to aggravate the violence:

- In the name of the “struggle against terrorism”, the central power in Burma has used the opportunity to resume control of a strategic region, rich in minerals, and coveted by a whole number of imperialist vultures: the USA, India, China, Britain...

- The rebels themselves, like the mass of the ethnic group, have always served as pawns, manipulated by this or that power in the region. They were used by British imperialism as a “loyal” force against those calling for independence, from the 19th century until 1948. Today the rebels are widely suspected of being financed by Saudi Arabia; and there seems to be a rallying to the Rohingya cause throughout the Muslim world, from Morocco via Iran to Indonesia.

After months of violence, officially there have been 1000 killed and half a million forced to flee towards neighbouring Bangladesh. These now join the 300,000 Rohingya refugees already living in miserable and unhygienic camps in Bangladesh, having fled Burma after previous waves of persecution, such as the terrible military repression of 2012. This minority now joins the long list of minorities subjected to state violence in the region. Since 1948, for example, the Tibetan-Burmese Karen minority has suffered persecution on a scale where it is not an exaggeration to talk about genocide.

Ethnic cleansing, exclusion: specialities of capitalism

Burma itself is no exception when it comes to persecution and massacre. History is full of the most horrible examples, from the colonisation of Africa and Asia by Britain and other imperialist

powers, passing through the very formation of the USA through the genocide of the native Americans to the methodical extermination of Jews and gypsies during World War Two. Since its origins, the life of capitalism has been marked by the extermination of whole populations. Although the democracies loudly chorus that the Holocaust must never happen again, fill scholarly books that call on us never to forget, make themselves the champions of freedom against the persecutions of Nazi or Stalinist totalitarianism, “ethnic cleansing” has continued and has even multiplied in the last few decades: Chechnya, Darfour, Yugoslavia, Rwanda, the Tamils in Sri Lanka...and these are only the most emblematic examples, the ones that have witnessed the worst atrocities and the most hypocritical reactions from the democratic powers, who in some cases were directly implicated in the massacres (most notably Rwanda, with France backing the Hutu killers and the US the Tutsi rebels who came to form the present government).

The decadent, rotting state of capitalism today can only accelerate and amplify this process of persecution and destruction of peoples and ethnic groups accused of being the source of all that is wrong with society, an obstacle to the development of “civilisation”. They are the easy scapegoats that no state can do without.

Aung San Suu Kyi: an icon of peace in the service of war

For a month or more, the bourgeois press and numerous political, religious and artistic figures have been appealing to the sense of responsibility of Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been in power in April 2016, asking her to put a stop to the massacre. Initially there was total silence from Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1991, and known as an “intransigent” opponent of the Burmese military junta for nearly 15 years. Her imprisonment by the junta gave her a halo and when she was freed, she initiated a “democratic opening” for the country. When in mid-September she finally spoke, it was to deny the reality of the massacres and to denounce the “fake news” being put out by the western press. Presented yesterday as the Asian Nelson Mandela, a white knight for democracy, this is someone who declared that she had been born for no other reason than to “*protect human rights, and I hope that I will always be seen as a champion of the Rights of Man*”; someone who said that “*all the repressive laws must be*



repealed. And laws must be introduced to protect the people’s rights”. Now she has fallen from her pedestal.

Yesterday, the whole humanitarian and diplomatic milieu, from rock stars like Bono to cineastes like Luc Besson and John Boorman, to former world leaders like Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter and Jacques Delors, all of them saluted the determination of this “Mother Courage”. The following declaration is typical: “*it’s not said often enough that the strategy of active non-violence (which is also at the roots of ecology) followed by Aung San Suu Kyi and her partisans is the real success story. Perseverance, patience, the will to understand and to reconcile, the capacity for compromise... but also firmness and inflexibility as regards the objective, all this Aung San Suu Kyi shares with Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mandela, Vaclav Havel...and today the Dalai Lama...In the face of totalitarianism, peace and democracy are possible one day, especially when you know that ‘the most patient wins out in the end’.* And indeed, the evolution of Burma and the freedom of expression and action of the ‘Lady of Rangoon’ are signs of hope for the whole of Asia, for all the non-violent combats on the planet. Signs of hope for freedom, for solidarity, for ecology” (June 2012 communiqué of Europe Écologie-Les Verts (EELV).) Are we dreaming?

Has the brave “Lady of Rangoon” betrayed, given up her principles? Is this someone who has deceived the whole world? Not at all. The reality is more down to earth. Aung San Suu Kyi is merely a representative of the capitalist world, an expression of the bourgeois class, no more, no less. This Nobel Prize winner is indeed the daughter of the general Aung San, protagonist of Burmese independence and Burmese nationalism, which from the start has always excluded the country’s ethnic minorities. Continuity, tradition...in mud and blood! She herself has declared proudly: “*I have always been a political woman. I didn’t go into politics as a defender of Human Rights or as a humanitarian worker, but as the leader of a political party*”. This has the merit of being clear. The icon of peace has simply taken up her role at the head of the Burmese state, cooperating without problem with the very same soldiers who put her in prison, then put her in power, mainly with the aim of giving themselves a more respectable image and currying favour with the US

Certain people, aware of her role as a “politically correct” face of the Burmese state, have waited for at least a few worlds of compassion, an “appeal to reason” faced with the killings. But no: she salutes the army for its struggle against terrorism

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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*.