The Trump administration had already caused a series of humiliating but lethal flakos for the US bourgeoisie – not least by actively worsening the Covid pandemic 2020 - but there was always hope among the saner factions of the American ruling class that having an incompetent narcissist in supreme power was only a passing nightmare, from which they would soon awake. But the electoral victory of the Democratic Party wasn’t the landslide that was hoped for – either for the new administration of Joe Biden or for the new Congress. Worse still, a televised riot took place in the Capitol, the sacred venue of US democracy, incited by the outgoing head of state who rejected the official, validated, results of the presidential election! A mob attempted to violently prevent the democratic succession, encouraged by the sitting president himself – as in a banana republic as George W Bush recognised. Truly it is a political defining moment in the decomposition of world capitalism. The populist self-harming of the UK through Brexit may look merely absurd to other countries, because Britain is a secondary power, but the threat of instability represented by the insurrection on Capitol Hill of the US has caused shock and fear throughout the international bourgeoisie.

The subsequent attempt to impeach Trump for a second time may well fail again, and in any case it will galvanise the millions of his supporters in the population, including a large part of the Republican party.

The inauguration of the new President on January 20th, usually an occasion for a show of national unity and reconciliation, won’t be: Trump will not attend, contrary to the custom with outgoing presidents, and Washington DC will be under military lockdown to prevent further armed resistance from Trump supporters. The perspective then is not the smooth, long term re-establishment of traditional democratic order and ideology by a Biden administration, but an accentuation - of an increasingly violent nature – of the divisions between classical bourgeois democracy and populism, the latter not disappearing with the end of the Trump regime.

The US – from the world’s biggest superpower to the epicentre of decomposition

Since 1945 US democracy has been the flagship of world capitalism. Having played a decisive role in the Allied victory in World War II, and making a major contribution to reducing Europe and Japan to ruins, it was then able to drag the world out of the rubble and reconstruct it in its own image during the Cold War. In 1989, with the defeat and disintegration of the rival totalitarian Russian bloc, the US seemed to be at the apex of its global dominance and prestige. George Bush Sr announced the coming of a New World Order after the collapse of the Russian bloc in 1989. Washington thought it could maintain its supremacy by preventing any new power emerging as a serious contender for its world leadership. But instead, the assertion of its military superiority has accelerated a world disorder with a series of pyrrhic victories (Kuwait, the Balkans in the 1990s) and expensive foreign policy failures in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria. The US has increasingly undermined the alliances on which its former world leadership rested and this has encouraged other powers to act on their own account.

Moreover US power and wealth has been unable to attenuate the increasing convulsions of the world economy: the spark of the 2008 crisis emanated from Wall Street and engulfed the US and the world in the most serious downturn since the open crisis re-emerged in 1967. The social and political consequences of these US reverses, and the absence of alternatives, is that the divisions and disarray in the bourgeois state, and in the population generally, has been increased, leading to the growing discredit of the established political norms of the US democratic political system.

The previous presidencies of Bush and Obama failed to forge a lasting consensus for the traditional democratic order among the population as a whole. Trump’s ‘solution’ to this problem was not to resolve this difficulty but to accentuate it even more with a racist and incoherent policy of pandemonium that further shattered the political consensus domestically and ripped up military and economic agreements with its former allies on the world stage. All this was done under the banner of ‘America First’ - but in reality it served to increase the USA’s loss of status.

In a word, the ongoing political crisis of US democracy, symbolised by the storming of the Capitol, complements the chaotic and self-destructive consequences of US imperialist policy and makes it clearer that the still-strongest world power is at the centre of, and the major player in, the decomposition of world capitalism at all levels.

China can’t fill the vacuum

China, despite its increasing economic and military power, won’t be able fill the vacuum of world leadership created by the disorientation of the US. Not least because the latter is still capable of and determined to prevent the growth of Chinese influence as a major objective with or without Trump. For example one of the plans of the Biden Administration will be to step up this anti-China policy with the formation of a D10, an alliance of US, India, Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. The role this will play in the worsening of imperialist tensions need hardly be explained.

But these tensions cannot be channelled into the formation of new blocs for obvious reasons. The worsening decomposition of capitalism makes the possibility of a generalised world war increasing increasingly unlikely.

The dangers for the working class

In 1989 we predicted that the new period of the decomposition of capitalism would bring increased difficulties for the proletariat.

The recent events in the US vindicate this prediction. The most important of these in relation to the present US situation is the danger that sections of the working class will be mobilised behind the increasingly violent contests of the opposing factions of the bourgeoisie, ie, not just on the electoral terrain but in the streets. Parts of the working class can be misled into choosing between populism and the defence of democracy, the two false alternatives offered by capitalist exploitation.

Connected to this is the fact that in the present situation other layers of the non-exploiting population are increasingly propelleled into political actions by a whole range of factors: the effects of the economic crisis, the worsening of the ecological catastrophe, the strengthening of state repression and its racist nature, which leads them to act as a conduit for bourgeois campaigns such as the Black Lives Matter movement, or as a medium for inter-classist struggles.

Nevertheless the working class internationally in the period of decomposition has not been defeated as in the manner of the 1930s. Its reserves of combative remain intact and the further economic attacks on its living standards that are coming - which will include the bill for the economic damage done by the Covid pandemic - will oblige the proletariat to respond on its class terrain.

The challenge for revolutionary organisations

The revolutionary organisation has a limited but very important role to play in the current situation because, while it has little influence yet, and even for a lengthy period to come, the situation of the working class as a whole is nevertheless bringing...
British capitalism clobbered by Covid and Brexit

World-wide there have more than 100 million cases of Covid-19. In Britain, the official number has been around 370,000, but it is widely believed that the real number is at least 2 million and still rising. This is the impact of the pandemic at the human level, with overwhelmed healthcare systems and millions of people in isolation and greater poverty, the whole uncer- tainty of the situation, even with the arrival of the vaccines, and all the dependency and incompetence of many governments’ policies.

For capitalism the effect of the health crisis is known. The IMF has estimated that the global economy shrank by 4.4% in 2020 and that the decline was the worst since the Great Depression of the 1930s. While this is a blow for capitalism internationally, it has also had a massive effect on the working class. The International Labor Organisation (ILO) has estimated that during the pandemic 200 million workers worldwide have lost as much as £2.7 trillion in earnings. Even though many major countries has been affected, the crisis has not had a uniform impact. The UK, for example, with more than 100,000 deaths, has one of the highest coronavirus death rates in the world and, throughout 2020, the shadow of Brexit hung over the economy, with negotiations con- tinuing for months until the British bourgeoisie fi- nally bought the “shackle” for the EU at the start of 2021. The combination of pandemic and Brexit is hitting a country that already had one of the weak- est recoveries from the 2008 financial crisis.

Recession, deficit and unemployment

The fluctuations of GDP the Brit- ish economy is probably already in a double-dip recession, its first since 1970s. In the second quarter of 2020, British GDP fell 19%, the biggest fall in history. Even after some months of growth it is currently estimated that the economy is at its pre-pandemic level. The IMF estimates a 10% contrac- tion in the UK economy for last year, the largest decline in any developed country. Legal mea- sure, it’s not been since the Great Frost of 1709, when Britain’s GDP dropped by 13% and did not fully recover for 20 years. And that the econo- my has experienced something similar. As for government debt, the figures from the Of- fice for National Statistics (ONS) show that UK government borrowing was the highest ever for December as spending went up in response to the coronavirus and a fall in tax receipts. “Borrowing reached £34bn last month, about £2bn more than the same month a year ago. The increase took the government’s budget deficit – nearly £330bn in the first three months of the financial year, a rise of more than £21bn compared with the same period last year. The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) has also forecast borrowing will hit £394bn by the end of the financial year in March, which would be the highest peacetime deficit in history. Borrowing is already higher than during the worst of the 2008 financial crisis... December’s borrowing pushed the national debt – the total sum of every deficit – to 2.12tm at the end of December, or about 99.4% of gross domes- tic product (GDP), the highest debt ratio since 1993. Citi’s forecast is £42bn (2.18%) in 2021.”

In 2019, the IMF already pointed out that the level of corporate debt in the UK was so high that almost 40% of it would not be able to survive in the event of a downturn. By the end of 2020, it was 37%.

During this Covid-19 crisis hostility has been particularly badly affected and there are warnings that tens of thousands of pubs, restau- rants, bars and hotels could disappear. Apart from furlough the government has adopted various measures to keep businesses afloat, including loans to keep businesses afloat. Like any other state capi- talist measures (generally supported by the left and right), they are done in order to pay for some- one to have to pay, and that means the working class in the first place. If for example, Covid-related restrictions mean that workers who have been forced to do work and have no, or very little, in- come, can be forced to keep working at the lowest wages and conditions.

Labour divisions underline bourgeoisie’s growing loss of control

The British Conservative government’s disas- trously incompetent handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, its incoherent undertaking of the Brexit process, its economic crisis and growing conflicts with the EU, have not been met with an official un- slating by the Labour Party. The British bourgeoi- sie has been losing control of its political apparatus and one of Labour’s historic roles is to pose as an alternative to a government that has pursued unpopular policies and has undermined the effec- tive functioning of British state capitalism. It has largely failed to take up the task.

The Labour Party’s latest leadership election has declared that Labour is a pro-American party, its foreign affairs spokesperson has said that President Biden is an inspiration, and its shadow chancellor has made a major speech in which he contrasted at Labour’s commitment to being a responsible government, with sensible fiscal policies, and the importance of establishing a “resilient” economy, as opposed to the irresponsibility of the Tories. However, the divisions within Labour’s ranks have grown with a wave of expulsions and suspensions as the pro- and anti-Corbyn factions have come into conflict.

When Labour massively lost the 2019 election it started an inquest into the reasons for the defeat, looking for someone to blame. Its incoherence resonate with anti-Semitism, and its neglect of traditionally Labour-voting areas were all cited. It wasn’t until April that it decided to replace Corbyn by Starmer. One of his earliest at- tempts to stamp his authority on the party came with the sacking of Rebecca Long Bailey for neg- atively appearing to back the anti-Brexit campaign. Far from trying to avoid conflict over the ques- tion of anti-Semitism, Starmer accepted the report of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which investigated anti-Semitism in the party, in its entirety, and made it clear that no criticisms of the EU would lead to the party being suspended from the party for expressing reserva- tions. He has been reinstated to the party, but not by the party faithful. Starmer has made it clear that leadership then banned local parties from passing any motions of solidarity with Corbyn, although this has not stopped the protests about the treat- ment of the ex-leader and those who have been expelled. Corbyn is now going to establish a Proj- ect for Peace and Justice, a faction that will de- fend the policies that Starmer is trying to distance himself from. The divisions within the Labour Party mirror the divisions throughout the Brit- ish bourgeoisie. Similarly, with the unions, some have rallied to Starmer, and some have remained loyal to Corbyn.

Johnson won the 2019 election with his prom- ise to Get Brexit Done. In the year that followed, the negotiations with the EU stumbled on with the prospect of no deal resulting. After many Tory backbenchers were sacked for “sabotaging” the negotiations, who was considered to be an obstacle to an agreement, a deal was finally agreed on Christ- mas Day 2020. For Labour, it appears that Starmer insisted that Labour MPs support the deal, while voicing limited criticisms. 36 Labour MPs abstained and one voted against. Be- cause of the ferocity of the opposition, it was no surprise that, as the first opinion polls of 2021 appeared, that Labour and the Tories were neck and neck, despite a year of government incompe- tence, U-turns and irresponsibility.

At a time when social polarisation is accel- erating and as an expression of the bourgeoisie’s loss of control of its political apparatus, Labour is riven with divisions and is not presenting itself as a coherent opposition, despite Starmer’s attempts to appear as a figure of unity against the chaos of Johnson’s government. As the Labour party purges continue, groups like the Socialist Workers Party are saying that people should leave Labour, while other groups, embedded in the party, continue to fight for its survival in the service of capital.

Because what is presently happening is not just a question of being hit by the pandemic or the accelerating deterioration of living conditions which everywhere are being aggravated. This campaign is trying to mask the insur- mountable contradictions, engendered by capital- ist control of productive forces, in crisis.

Since the Labour Party is not only seeing the chaotic approach of the government but also a social democratic opposition which, because of its divisions, is having the greatest difficulty in fulfilling the role required of it by capital. Cap 28/1/21

Continued from page 3

As apanes for the health crisis; above all it is a question in the context of the whole of 2020 and 2021, which has meant only means of beating the economic crisis and the accelerating deterioration of living conditions which everywhere are being aggravated. This campaign is trying to mask the insur- mountable contradictions, engendered by capital- ist control of productive forces, in crisis.

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As apanes for the health crisis; above all it is a question in the context of the whole of 2020 and 2021, which has meant
Anti-Covid vaccines: Health is just a commodity for capitalism

The article that follows was written before the current row between Britain and the EU over the future production of the AstraZeneca vaccine. The EU, responding to AstraZeneca's delays in supplying the agreed quantity of vaccines, has threatened to respond by restricting supplies of the Pfizer vaccine to the UK, by taking AstraZeneca to court, and by suspending its own national contract with the company. The British minister for vaccines, Nadhim Zahawi, hit back: “Vaccination nationalism is the wrong way to go. No one is safe until we’re all safe”.

Noble sentiments indeed. But as our article’s author, Joseph Kellner, points out, this is precisely the way that nations and companies are going because they cannot escape the laws of profitability and the sharpening tendency of “every man for himself” in international relations. Zawahí’s own government is treeless in its rhetoric about safeguarding “the country” or “the British people” as if there could really be “Covid safety in a single country”. The need to save “the country” is especially pressing for poorer countries in producing and distributing the vaccines among themselves. The pharmaceutical companies are at the top dog on the vaccines market. Israel is hailed as a world leader in the number of citizens vaccinated, but accepts no legal responsibility for the deaths of those who have been vaccinated under its military occupation, while the Palestinian Authority insists on going its own way by ordering its own vaccine (and very poorly tested) Russian vaccines.

No one is safe until we’re all safe. But capitalism, a system which is genetically incapable of going beyond national competition, will never ensure that we can be kept safe from the succession of disasters it is visiting upon humanity.

When the World Health Organisation (WHo) declared in May 2020 that the vaccine against the SARS-CoV-2 virus would be for the “world’s public good”, you could only believe that by clinging to illusions in the capacity of the capitalist world to play a positive role for humanity in the midst of an unprecedented world crisis. Similarly, calls for compulsory licensing only show a naive utopianism.

In fact, there is nothing to lead one to think that the anti-Covid 19 vaccine would escape the laws of capitalism and their consequences: competition, markets for resources, espionage, theft of technology, etc., even when it’s a matter of saving millions of human lives. And for good reason, because the health crisis comes at a time when the world is plunged into a profound crisis of production. The pandemic, while being the direct fruit of this process of decomposition, further contributes to its acceleration.

From the beginning of the sickness and the discovery of its infectious agent, a virus unknown up to now, the scientific community knew that only a vaccine could bring it under control. Elements of the pharmaceutical industry were happy to work in their own corners in the race to be the first to deliver the precious vaccine. But beyond the considerable commercial stakes for research laboratories and pharmaceutical groups, there was an evident political bonus for those able to access it.

Human health is a market...

From the moment the panic of the pandemic the war of vaccines began, just as it did in preceding epidemics or pandemics. There are numerous examples but we will cite two of them: “Vaccines for AIDS”.

The battle began in the research for the agent responsible for this unknown illness. The teams of L. Montagnier at the Pasteur institute were followed by those of Robert Gallo of the National Cancer Institute in the United States. The driving force behind these teams was evidently not to rapidly identify the agent in order to begin the fight against it, but to be the first to be able to claim patent rights and to market it at a high rate of profit on future treatments and vaccines.

In January 1983, the French team won a short battle in this war. They had already begun and then took off around the question of their tests, where this time the Americans took their revenge. It was the Abbot Laboratory which positively insisted in 1984 that it had proven the existence of the agent in question. This situation, followed where the greatest contempt for human life was shown; France in particular was out for revenge after its defeat in the war of tests. As soon as the first hopes were raised around the drug Cyclosporine, the Health Minister at the time, Georgina Dufloix, publicly gave it the “French label”, before seeing these hopes finally dashed by the first tests undertaken on the molecule. On the other side of the Atlantic, then re-elected, the American President announced the miracle solution of AZT while test results were still inconclusive.

Those scandals announcements incite the state to react against the two main components of capitalism: competition and profit. A first thought is to give equal doses to all and in this way to assure oneself against a danger to the population. A second thought is a concentration of the vaccine doses to those who demand public authorities regulate the production of the vaccine, to assure a “quality” industry to cooperate for the public good.

Because what is at stake here isn’t the great tragedy of a logic of competition, or altruism? Globalization and Health, Full Text (biomedcentral.com)

In 2019 in Africa, the situation was somewhat similar around the epidemic of the Ebola virus in a climate of accusations about the diversions of public funds towards the Congolese leadership but also against the WHO regarding the choice of one vaccine over another. While the German laboratory, Merck, had proposed an efficient vaccine but in insufficient quantities, the American laboratory, Johnson & Johnson announced another, complementary to it but never tested on humans! The fight was on to introduce this newcomer with lobbing operations and other means of pressure.

The present situation goes along the same lines. The pandemic is giving rise to breathless announcements and conferences around international cooperation about creating a vaccine abound, while “good common sense” among the countries of the world remains out of reach. The international forces of pharmaceutical research would bring about a more rapid and efficient response to the pandemic, including different vaccines and cooperation.

But, underhandedly, each of them has entered into bi-lateral agreements with laborato-

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USA: the struggle of the workers’ movement against slavery and racism (Part 1)

The campaign around “Black Lives Matter” (BLM) has inspired people to look for references in the history of the struggle against the oppression of and violence against black people. Among the most well-known events for many people are the publication of The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, and Martin Luther King. But communists do not base their political orientation on activists fighting for equal rights for black people. The main goal of the struggle lies beyond the limits of the present mode of production. The real abolition of all forms of racial oppression as part of the international work of the socialist movement cannot be separated from the struggle of the international working class for communism. The crucial question is: what does that mean concretely, except for the fact that communists reject the anti-rac- ial politics which are already on the agenda? How should communists answer the questions in the frame- work of bourgeois politics?

In order to be able to respond to this question we have to base ourselves on the theoretical achieve- ments of marxism. Therefore we must examine how the political vanguard of the workers’ movement con- ducted the theoretical-political combat with regard to the “Negro question” in the history of the U.S. Why the U.S.? Because in the U.S. from the first days the workers movement conducted the political-theoretical combat with regard to the unification of its struggle because of the racial ideolo- gy which had systematically presented black people as inferior to white people.

Against this background the workers’ movement in the U.S. throughout its history, has been challenged with the so-called “Negro question”. What does that question, and with taking the necessary steps to integrating black workers into the struggle of the whole work- class. The first step was made in the second half of the 19th century with the formation of “the American Workers League” (AWL), the second step was made after 1901 by the “Socialist Party of America” (SPA), and the third step was made by the Communist organisa- tions after the founding of the Third Inter- national, to begin with the “Communist Party of the U.S.” (CPUSA) in 1897. On the basis of a critical examination of these theo- retical-political positions, acquired in the course of the historical development of the workers movement, this short series intends to make a thorough critique of the possi- bilities of more recent political expressions of the work- ers movement in the present day.

The marxist position on slavery in the U.S.

In the Communist Manifesto Marx and Engels emphasized that as long as oppression exists any- where in the world, nobody will be free: “Now-a- days, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) cannot attain its emancipation without the complete destruction of the exploiting and ruling class (the bourgeoisie) without, at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating itself.”

While chattel slavery was generalised in the “New World” slavery existed already in the U.S. before the first ship with black slaves arrived in 1619. Under the specific conditions of “the American Workers League” (AWL), founded in 1852. One of its most prominent members was Joseph Weydemeyer. At a meeting of the AWL, on 1 March 1854, his proposed resolution was passed unanimously: “Whereas, this [Nebraska] bill authorizes the further exten- sion of slavery, we have protested, do now protest against and declare it null and void, to protest most emphatically against both white and black slavery” (Karl Ober- mann, Joseph Weydemeyer. Pioneer of American Social Democracy (1827-1899), online: https://www. weymeyer.org/pdf)

In 1863, one year before the founding of the International Workingmen’s Association (IWA), workers in Great Britain expressed their support for the abolition of the slavery, as they rallied in London and Chicago, and the IWA published and other declarations of support for the Union side in the American Civil War. Under the slogan “all for one and one for all!” they demonstrated in their support for the struggle against the any gov- ernment “founded on human slavery”. The meet- ings continued during the Civil War, and when work- ers, passed a resolution declaring that “the cause of labour and liberty is one all over the world.”

Nearly twenty years after the publication of the Communist Manifesto Marx repeated, in different words, the position on the international workers’ movemen- t for all, since one is still oppressed. In his letter to François Lafargue he wrote that with regard to the question “...one must be ready to turn the whole world upside down; one must be ready to树立自己在 the white skin where in the black it is branded”, (12 November 1866) This idea became a key point of the second important stage of the International Workingmen’s Association (IWA) in the expression of its solidarity with the oppressed in the United States. wom, and when the “New World” as long as the labour of the Negroes is so shamefully exploited, that of the whites will never be emancipated either.

In the 20th century a crucial influence of the American Civil War on the develop- ment of the workers’ movement in the U.S. Even though they did not characterize it as a revolutionary war, they believed that it really advanced the cause of the working class, and opened the perspective for a unified struggle of the workers, black and white alike. “In the States themselves, an independent working class movement, linked upon with the larger forces of modern socialist politics, has since that date sprung into existence.”

(“Class Struggle in America Part I”; https://en.internationalism.org/worldrevoluti- on/2013/03/6529/notes-early-class-struggle-america-part-i) Just like the white workers, the first black people to arrive in U.S. were indentured slaves - persons bound in service to an employer for a limited period of time. But in less than one hundred years after the arrival of the first 20 blacks, the British colonial rule inaugurated a barbaric system of chattel slavery. Chattel slaves were not thought of as people, but as objects, as property, like livestock. This sys- tem was much worse than the slave systems that emerged in the previous centuries. The final stage of the establishment of chattel slavery in all the British colonies was concluded in 1750. Since then the development of slavery was called “slavery”.

“...the methods the bourgeoisie used to control its growing black slave army [were] refined into a sys- tem of much greater and more sophisticated bar- barity, specifically designed to ensure the slaves’ psychological decomposition, demeaning, degrading and humiliating them in every way to prevent them from identifying with their own interests against their exploiters.” (Notes on the early class struggle in America - Part 1, https://en.internationalism.org/worldrevoluto- on/2013/03/6529/notes-early-class-struggle-america-part-i)

While chattel slavery was generalised in the U.S. at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating itself, it was noted that the introduction of chattel slavery to the development of the cotton industry on a massive scale. “While the cotton industry introduced child slavery in England, it gave in the United States a stimulus to the transformation of the earlier, more or less barbarous child slavery into a system of commercial exploitation. In fact, the velvety slavery of the waged workers in Europe needs, for its pedestal, slavery for the negroes and the South.” (Karl Marx, Capital Volume I, Chapter XXXI: “Genesis of the Industrial Capitalist”)

Marx and Friedrich Engels introduced the term “chattel slavery” to the development of the cotton industry on a massive scale, and the question of black workers employed in a system of commercial exploitation. In fact, the velvety slavery of the waged workers in Europe needs, for its pedestal, slavery for the negroes and the South.

The term “chattel slavery” was introduced into the common language by the famous “chain gangs” for the development of massive road projects. They were also forced to function as strike-breakers in the Alabama coal miners’ strike of 1894.

After the Civil War black people were subjected to what was known as the Jim Crow laws, a new sys- tem of segregation and discrimination. Under these laws, black people were still treated as second class citizens just as under the regime of “Apartheid” in South Africa. Whites could beat, rob, or even kill black people at will for minor in- fractions, which they actually did on a large scale. Under Jim Crow the reign of terror was fully estab- lished with the widespread evolution of white supremacist militias, such as the KKK. The South became an apartheid-like prison where white supremacy, punishment, and policing forced the black body into a constant state of furtiveness and fa- vorite. “The legal system of segregation protected and encouraged a parallel, supposedly "popular" sys- tem (thanks mainly to the fanaticism of the white petty bourgeoisie) of aggression, collective kill- ings, and systematic lynchings. The petty bour- geoisie, especially in the Southern States, but not only there, unleashed their destructive fury with metronome regularity to terrorise the protagonists of the "new society" and the "redemptory myth" of the marxist-encephalistic exploitation” (https://en.internationalism.org/ worldrevolution/2010/11/2000/jim-crow-2/)

Continued on page 5
The “Swedish Strategy” and the fiction of the Welfare State

The International media always try to depict Sweden as the model of social democracy in its purity, with almost total equality among the citizens. Nothing could be further from the truth. For more than a century, Sweden was one of the most segregated countries in the world, due to a history of racism and institutional discrimination.

The Knights organised tens of thousands of black workers into a single organisation regardless of skill, race, or sex. The first national union federation, the Trades Union Congress, was founded in 1869. Intended to overcome the fragmentation of organizations based upon color.

In 1866 the first national union federation, the “National Labour Union” (NLU), was organised. In 1867, the movement became the Social Democratic Party, which organized the unification of the whole working class in Sweden.

In 1869 the African Americans, who were denied full access to the NLU, came together to form the Colored Labour Union (CLU). The CLU and NLU welcomed all workers no matter what race, gender, or occupation. A new union was born.

The “Swedish strategy” was developed since the AWL of Weyde and others. The working class was divided into separate social classes, in particular the Socialist Party of Sweden which developed from a “secret society” founded in 1869. Intended to overcome the fragmentation of organizations based upon color.

The “Swedish strategy” and the fiction of the Welfare State

The day has passed for the establishment of a single organisation regardless of skill, race, or sex. This is why we are calling for a clear illustration of decomposing capitalist society in general, as well as of the criminal negligence of the state and government in Sweden.

Continued from page 4

Biden presidency: The US and world capitalism on the road to nowhere

A small minority to revolutionary class positions, notably in the US itself.

The successful work of transmission to this ministerial level has been accompanied by an increase in the number of meetings at which the question of the “Swedish strategy” is raised.

The world situation over the past year has been marred by the crisis in the US, the ecologic catastrophe, the plight of refugees, the weakening of the bourgeois class, and high levels of “trust” in authority and government.

Continued from page 1

Report of an ICC contact meeting

humanity depends? It will be necessary in future public meetings to return to the great historical strategies of the workers’ movement such as the Paris Commune in 1871, the 1917 revolution in Russia or, closer to home, the biggest workers’ strike in France in May 1968.

In the immediate situation several speakers asked the question: where is the class struggle? One participant pointed out that, despite the warning of the pandemic, “the working class has not been fooled”. For another participant, “the CGT [a French union confederation] has played its role in diverting the interests of the working class.” Finally, another intervention stressed that “on 18 November there was a strike at the Ministry of National Education. In the hospital sector strikes took place too”. For this contractual crisis, new demands have arisen, but they cannot develop at the moment. On the current dynamics of the class struggle, the concern present in the discussion, this very important aspect could not be sufficiently developed, for lack of time.

We need to return to these issues in subsequent discussions. We call on all those who wish to discuss the question of models of action in the US and in the printed press. It is obvious that we should not underestimate the profound impact of this question on the future historical development of the class. Likewise, it is essential to be able to analyse and understand the general dynamics of the class composition, the political power and the legal instruments available to the bourgeoisie. Here we need all concerns and points of view that we propose to discuss in our next sessions.

The September meeting involved a very rich discussion with a collective dynamic of debate, despite the fact that it took place online. The willingness and ability of the participants to listen and respond to each other with seriousness and responsibility must be undermined. At the end of the meeting, the participants stated that they were very satisfied that they were able to discuss all of them expressed their willingness to continue.

A number of comrades explicitly wished to develop this approach.

- How can we distinguish the period of decadence of capitalism from its ultimate phase which is decomposition?

- Why do nations use state capitalism?

- Can capitalism go beyond the national framework?

- How can we understand the tendency towards steady state totalitarianism and the tendency for the bourgeoisie to lose control?

- How serious is the global economic crisis today and what are its repercussions in the life of the working class?

- To what extent does the brutal acceleration of the decomposition of capitalism affect the working class?

The ICC welcomes the concerns of the participants during the meeting. We have begun to develop the analyses of the ICC on the central issues addressed by the text. However, as requested by the participants, the ICC will ensure that we continue the discussion on these themes during our next sessions.

We also encourage all our readers to send us letters expressing their questions, analyses and queries on all subjects of concern to us. We will publish these letters from readers, together with our response if necessary, so that the debate can continue.

The ICC warmly thanks all the participants who animated the November meeting and will tell them the date of the next one. Albin 28/12/2020.
The living conditions of agricultural workers 

Following the obstruction of the agrarian Reform implemented by the military government at the end of the 1960s and the mid-1990s there began a process of transferring the ownership of land into the hands of a number of bourgeois in- dustries that seek to exploit new areas dedicated to the lucrative business of exporting fruit and vegetables to the North American and Euro- pean markets. These companies are located in the north (La Libertad, Lima province, Ancash) and in the south (Ica) of Lima, and these agrarian capitalists currently almost half a million hectares of prime arable areas, and enjoy rich financial incentives and tax breaks granted by successive governments. 

Particularly noteworthy is the poster child and flag-bearer of the Peruvian economy (tradi- tionally monopolised by mining) and it now gen- erates the biggest profits with the help of financial incentives and juicy tax breaks from the state. The workers who work in these factories and on the land, are situations from the war in the villages, and with the boom in the agricultural sector, the demand for labour increased. So many workers were hired that the bourgeoisie talked about Ica being a “model region with full employment”, a kind of economic showcase that the rest of the country had to follow. Thanks to the paganda from the state and the agrobusiness cor- porations could not hide the oppressive conditions of exploitation of the agricultural workers. 

In 2019, the police arrested some 39 (souls) (2 euros) or per day; no CTS support2 or bonuses; there is continued pressure and black- mail to boost productivity and production quotas and long working days that last from 3 am until late at night; they work under a burning sun and this affects their health and their well- being; to suffer, they must be treated badly by those who are at work and they must be worked to the bone while their families are left behind; they are hired for the harvesting and, of course, the social unrest in the region. So many workers were hired that the bourgeoisie talked about Ica being a “model region with full employment”, a kind of economic showcase that the rest of the country had to follow. Thanks to the paganda from the state and the agrobusiness corpor- ations could not hide the oppressive conditions of exploitation of the agricultural workers. 

The agrarian strike in the current Peruvian political situation 

1. The government of General Velasco Alvarado (1968- 
1975) presented itself as a “government of the people” with the support of the Peasant Movement Front. 
2. CTS: Compensación por Tiempo de Servicio (Compensation for Time of Service), provides some financial support for unemployed workers. It is a measly amount. 
3. The Agrarian Promulgation Law is not an agrarian law. Its argument is that not only the agrarian law, but also a great number of social and political values such as the class structure and social relations are still more evident on the political and ideological level. We only need to consider: the incredible and permanent campaign of lies that the forces of repression of the population at large against the protesters. First, they identified the protest as a “reaction of protest or rebellion of the population, the whining of the whole body of journalists, in- dications were that they chose this moment to leave intact the machinery that perpetuates the social outrage culminated on 14 November with the occupation of the Ministry of the Interior demanding that demo- cratic reforms be put into practice. 

Continued on page 7
Covid-19 Pandemic, assault on the Capitol in Washington: two expressions of the intensification of capitalist decomposition

The past year has been marked, once again, by a series of disasters, including a global pandemic that has so far claimed more than 2 million lives and has meant a significant deepening of the economic crisis of capitalism, plunging millions of people into misery and precariousness. The year 2021 has only just begun, but it was immediately marked by a new event of historic significance: the assault on the Capitol by fanatical Trumpist hordes. These two events are not separated from each other. On the contrary, for the ICC, they both reveal an intensification of social decomposition, the ultimate phase of the decadence of capitalism. This public meeting will therefore be an opportunity to put forward this analytical framework, to identify its relevance but also to question it through the prism of the facts and the historical evolution of capitalist society.

In order to prepare this meeting, participants can already refer to the following text:

“Theses on decomposition” (International Review n° 107, 4th semester 2001). Theses on decomposition, International Communist Current (internationalism.org)

This is part of a series of virtual public meetings being held internationally by the ICC. The meeting for English-speaking comrades will be held at two different times:

10am (UK time) on Saturday 13 February, and
6pm (UK time) on Sunday the 14th February.

The Saturday meeting time should be easier for comrades in Asia and Australasia, the Sunday for comrades in Europe and North America.

If you are interested in taking part, please write to us at uk@internationalism.org and we will let you know how to gain access to the meeting. Please indicate which day suits you best.

Continued from page 6

overseeing the classes which can be pressurised and made to intercede and adopt laws granting benefits and wage increases to the workers.

Of course this perspective is one cultivated by all the organisations of the left of the capital, such as the agricultural federations and trade unions and the NGOs such as CONVEAGRO (Conferencia Nacional del Agro Peruano), the CGTP (Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú), left-wing members of the Congress and some leaders of the struggling workers themselves who, like firemen, are negotiating with the employers and the Mainstay of Labour with the concern to not do too much harm to the profits of the agro-industrial bourgeoisie, keeping down the wage increase to 54 soles (17 euro), which then has caused discontented workers to take to the streets in Ica and the northern valleys once more.

The workers sensed that a fresh swindle was in the pipeline, cooked up at these high levels of the negotiations and that they were being “deceived,” without clearly understanding that these “leaders” that claim to negotiate in their name are also part of the exploiting class.

Although the workers cannot give up their struggle for demands, this is a moment for them to discuss and draw some lessons. They have to understand that they cannot win if they are not able to go beyond this level when the struggle will only be trapped in the dead end of legal chicanery and respect for the Constitution. The real liberation of the workers will arise when they are able to bring down the bourgeois order, with its laws, its constitutions and its unions, thus heralding a real transformation that will also free humanity from the chains of this dehumanising social system.

Dirk, December 2020

International Review

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New International Bookshop Trades Hall Building, cnr. Lygon & Victoria Sts., Carlton, Melbourne
As 2020 drew to a close, the health crisis continued to deepen. Confronted with this crisis, our organisation continues its intervention towards the proletariat and its most politicised minorities. Imperialism has been strengthened and at-
omination imposed on us by the bourgeoisie with lockdown measures and curfews. We therefore held an online meeting on 21 November 2020, fol-
lowing on from an earlier one that took place on 17 October. There were fourteen people present at the earlier meeting, who were very keen for the discussion to continue. And at this meeting there were 22 people present and participating in the discussion. The willingness to discuss with the ICC was so apparent that the global and historical situation was thus confirmed by the growing number of participants. The dy-
namic of the discussion also strongly confirmed this willingness to discuss. The participants’ questions, queries, analyses, and arguments were very rapid and were our guides for the session and the meeting was longer than during the previous meeting.

A very dynamic start to the discussion

The discussion began with two interventions on strategies to deal with the effects of the lockdown, with a comrade putting forward the idea that only one third of the French support it. The same com-
rade also put forward the idea that it might not be possible to popularise this line of support for the lockdown because it does not reduce poverty: “The lockdown makes us poorer. It strengthens the proletariat, their awareness of the need for no possibility of seeing the correlation between the number of deaths and the lockdown”. Some participants re-
defended this position: “Statified regimes which were forced to resort to the lockdown, which corresponds to measures against the epidemic worthy of the Mid-
dle Ages. Negligence, growing irresponsibility, an inability to manage the situation on the imme-
diate scale”.

The ICC intervened to state that the global situa-
tion was going through an acceleration of social decomposition and that a constitutional crisis of a very serious and historically far-reaching nature. We re-
iterated that the pandemic and the lockdown are consequences of the decomposition that has deep-
ened brutally and violently. The whole of society is a mass of people put under pressure, the state of the bourgeoisie, and the dynamics of the class struggle.

* The positions and activity of revolutionary or-

The first part of the discussion focused on what phase of decomposition of capital-
ism is. Many speakers supported this fundamental analysis of the ICC to characterise the histori-

cal period that has been underway for more than thirty years. Some comrades wanted to know why class societies in history had also experienced periods of decomposition of the com-
dition of capitalism as in capitalism. These fundamental questions about the decadence and decomposition of capitalism are extremely important for the fu-
ture of humanity and the historical struggle of the proletariat.

One underlying why this phase of decomposi-
tion is at the heart of the key capital characterised as perhaps the most important social question and therefore central to the activities of the ICC. The entry of capitalism into its period of deca-
dence becomes an obstacle to the possible, nec-
cessary and harmonious development of human civilisation. The state must then inevitably take over the entire life of society in an increasingly to-
talitarian manner, with the survival of the state itself at stake. For example, as the crises of capitalism in the twentieth century have shown, it is the state that has provided the means to ensure that capi-
talism does not become paralleled. Likewise, the capitalist state is the permanent but also ultimate bulwark against any attempt at a revolutionary challenge to capitalist state. This is seen in the current historical situation with the reinforcement of the means of coercion and repression by the capitalist state. The ICC intervened to show, above all, that in the face of the epidemic and the economic crisis, “we leave the power to the state over our lives... we must try to wake people up... the danger of the virus is very low... something is being hid-

The central questions posed during this inter-
vention are:

- The decadence of the phase of decomposition.
- What is the phase of decomposition of capitalism?
- What level of economic crisis will we experi-
ence? How will it affect the life and struggle of the proletariat?
- What does the increased repression by capitalist states mean?
- What level of economic crisis will we experi-
ence? How will it affect the life and struggle of the proletariat?
- What role does popular political activity play in the current historical situation?
- How does the working class defend itself as an exploiting class?
- How does the working class defend itself as an exploiting class?

A brief account of the spectacular rise of “each against all” led to serious questions and interven-
tions focused on the following themes:

* 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 dec-

independence: the right of nations to self-determination; and freedom from war and the threat of war; the unification of the proletariat through its international solidarity and by struggling against the bourgeoisie in all countries.

The positions and activity of revolutionary or-

The central questions posed during this inter-
vention are:

* All the national ideologies – national inde-

independence: the right of nations to self-determination; and freedom from war and the threat of war; the unification of the proletariat through its international solidarity and by struggling against the bourgeoisie in all countries.

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