Faced with repression and austerity
The future belongs to the class struggle

The bread and circuses of the Olympics is over. The circus did a great job of – momentarily - creating a sense of euphoria and national unity, of helping us forget the growing signs that the society we live in is irretrievably breaking down. And for that very reason, there’s not much bread. Not just because the Olympics was a big disappointment as far as most local and national businesses were concerned, and will leave in its wake a major addition to UK’s already gigantic debt mountain. But because the economic crisis is continuing remorselessly, and the ruling class has no alternative but to attack our living standards at every level. In short, to make us eat less and work more.

No country on the planet is spared by recession and unemployment. In Europe the rate of unemployment has already gone past 10% and is hitting young people with particular force. In Greece and Spain it’s up to 50% - and at the same time the European bureaucrats and capitalists are calling for them to work harder, proposing a return to the 6 day week for those ‘lazy’ Greeks. Whole families are being thrown out onto the streets, are unable to feed themselves adequately, but that’s not enough: if any of them have a job, they’ve got to sweat even harder to pay off the national debt.

This is why the ruling class is more and more being obliged to talk tough and show its brutal, repressive nature more openly. If workers aren’t going to knuckle down, and even worse, if they begin to band together and resist this austerity drive, they must be shown who’s boss. This was certainly the aim of the savage slaughter of the miners in South Africa in August. In the more established ‘democracies’ like Britain, we have not yet reached the stage where workers’ demonstrations are crushed with live ammunition. But there are plenty of indications that our rulers are again baring their teeth. We’ve had our summer holiday of Jubilee and Olympic celebrations. Now it’s time to get to work. You saw all those thousands who volunteered to make the Olympics a success? Well, now get ready to work longer hours for less – or even nothing.

The make-up of the new cabinet was one sign that the style of government is going to change. Cameron and Co. used to talk green, now they are putting a climate change sceptic in charge of the environment and are going full steam ahead for airport expansion. No more concessions to ‘diversity’ – three women sacked, one of them the only ‘ethnic’ in the cabinet village. The least popular ministers – Osborne, May and Hunt, who all got booted at the Paralympics – are still very much at the core of things. All this is going to cause more problems for the Lib Dems, who seem helpless to block the coalition government’s shift to the right.

But perhaps more significant are the concrete measures of intimidation taken against minorities who are vulnerable to being isolated and blamed for the problems of the national economy. Like the homeless: squatting has been definitively criminalised, despite the huge number of buildings left unused as a result of the recession and of unrestrained property speculation. Foreign students are also being picked on as their visas are revoked: a number of smaller colleges are affected, but London Metropolitan has been selected as a test case for other universities. The logic behind this is less than clear, given the exorbitant fees that are wrung out of these students, but it seems to be part of the state’s general drive to reduce immigration figures.

Another category that was painted in such glowing colours at the Olympics opening ceremony, the healthworkers, are also under the cosh. With new plans threatening to cut wages by up to 15% while increasing the working week and reducing sick pay, 68,000 health workers in the south west of England are being used to test the waters for further pay cuts and increased rates of exploitation across the NHS and the public sector.

The working class has learned to its cost in the past that it cannot escape harm when parts of its body – whether immigrants, the homeless, ethnic minorities, women, gays, or particular trades and sectors – are singled out and attacked. In a situation where we are all facing massive reductions in our living conditions, the sowing of divisions in our ranks can only weaken our ability to resist effectively. If we are going to defend ourselves from capitalist repression and austerity, we are going to have to affirm our solidarity and unity across all divisions.

Last but not least, the Paralympics were used to show the world that the very firm that posed given such a new and improved image by the Paralympics: the disabled. The very firm that was sponsoring the Paralympics, Atos, has been the government’s muscle in its efforts to force thousands of people off disability benefit and get them back to work.

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Inside this issue
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And let’s not forget those who have also been sup- posedly given such a new and improved image by the Paralympics: the disabled. The very firm that was sponsoring the Paralympics, Atos, has been the government’s muscle in its efforts to force thousands of people off disability benefit and get them back to work.

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No Olympic performance from the British economy

As the blaze of patriotism that surround- ed the Olympic Games subsides, the gravity of the crisis comes back into view. And, unlike the sporting heroism of the athletes, the British Government is still on the lookout for something to celebrate in the face of lengthening stagnation.

The Coalition has found three consecutive quarters of contraction, but the tendency to stag- nation is more deeply embedded than this implies; "vacancies in the last 2 years are lower than in the 1990s. 2007 was a low point". UK output is still "3.5% lower than it was when the economy peaked in early 2008". Pressure on George Osborne to 'change course' and increase government spending is mounting from all quarters. Most recently, some among the 20 economists who supported Osborne's deficit-reduc- tion programme in the run-up to the last elec- tion have begun to break ranks. In reality the latest figures show government borrowing up because of the deficit, not down.

Naturally, there is no shortage of helpful sugges- tions on how growth can be restored. Ministers re- port to Parliament on Wednesday with a review of Sunday trading laws in the hope this will boost consumption. As expected, this provoked a chorus of criticism from various interest groups: union officials talking tough to increase their control over shop workers; Christians worried about further degra- dation of Sunday; MPs demanding an end about both the religious implications and disruption to 'family life', not to mention their irritation at being led to contradict ministers' intentions; small shops (with the sound of their bell-shaped basins) afraid of being destroyed by competition with the big supermarkets; and lastly by Big Retail itself in the form of a formal complaint to the Office of Fair Trading. Could the idea work? One objection is that custo- mers won't have any more money to spend so simply opening longer won't make any differ- ence. This isn't entirely true – longer opening would increase supermarkets outlay on wages, thus putting a limited amount of demand into the economy. But as it would take a while for this to filter through the economy and the impact would be limited, the most immediate result would be a declining profitability for the supermarkets that are already under pressure. Contrary to ruly ide- ology, economic stagnation has no intrinsic con- sumption or production as ends in themselves but only in so far as it generates profit. An increase of consumption that leaves profits stagnant is det- rimental to the system.

This underlying rule of the capitalist economy is vital to remember when assessing the worth of the government's recent cuts on VAT and pensions, a move made in the face of declining VAT revenues (such as demonstrating a plan, called this core mechanic which induces crisis in the system as a whole). None of the above strategies actually attack this root cause of crisis, acting only on the surface level of symptoms – the interest rates of the banking system – receive a promise from the government to pay it back with interest. But the government's capacity to pay back the money it borrows is dependent on future taxes that it can leech from the economy i.e. tomorrow's profits underpinning today's consumption.

The capitalist economy is based on the extrac- tion of profit from the labour force in the form of surplus value i.e. the value produced by the workers that has not been paid. In other words, it is this core mechanic which induces crisis in the system as a whole. None of the above strategies actually attack this root cause of crisis, acting only on the surface level of symptoms – the interest rates of the banking system – receive a promise from the government to pay it back with interest. But the government's capacity to pay back the money it borrows is dependent on future taxes that it can leech from the economy i.e. tomorrow's profits underpinning today's consumption.

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Egypt: after the revolution that wasn’t, workers’ struggles continue

I n a July wave of strikes in Egypt was a clear reminder that the end of Mubarak and the ar-
avival of Mursi, a member of the Muslim Breth-
, had meant no change in the conditions in which Egyptian workers live. With thousands of
24,000 workers in the state-owned Mahalla Misr
Spinning and Weaving Company and the spread of
the strike to seven other factories in Alexandria
and Mahalla, alongside other protests and demonstra-
tions, show that the working class is still capa-
bile of taking militant initiatives. The repression
by the state, in Suez with tear gas fired at workers of
the Cleopatra Ceramics company, in South Sinai,
with live ammunition to disperse protesting health
workers, also demonstrate that the current regime
is an integral part of the state run by the presi-
dent, has meant no change in the conditions in
which Egyptian workers live. It is not the only weapon of Egyptian capi-
talism. Under Mubarak the official unions were
widely recognised as just another arm of the state
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Among the usual variety of views among the left-
ists there are many who describe what has happened in
Egypt since early 2011 as a ‘revolu-
tion’. In this Muslim Brotherhood is portrayed
as an ‘alternative’ and the post-Mubarak state a
step forward. In material from the ‘Revolution-
ary Socialists, Egypt’ that has been published by
Socialist Worker there are many statements cal-
mulated to mystify reality for the working class.
“The Muslim Brotherhood represents the right
wing of the revolution. It is not the counter-revo-
lution... since 1 February 2011 the Brotherhood
gave the police permission to fire guns. But Shafiq
[the military fascist candidate in the presidential
election] is the counter-revolution. That is why we
are mobilising for protests against the military
coup alongside the Brotherhood” (19/6/12). The
leftists take their sides, and, as usual, it is not
with the working class.

Whatever happened to the Arab Spring?

So, in the Middle East, the movements of 2011
have not been repeated on anything like the same
scale in 2012, even though the Egyptian example
shows that the combative power of the working class
is still intact. But, as we said above, social un-
rest can only be understood in an international
context. That means not just the region but the
world. In movements from India to Turkey, in
Greece and in Spain, we have seen the struggles of
the working class in response to capitalism’s austerity
regimes. But we have also seen the ob-
tacles workers face in their struggles. Repres-
nion, nationalism, illiteracy and democracy, and
the sabotage of the unions are found everywhere.
And what is seen in the Middle East more clearly than anywhere in the world is the threat of war. Ulti-
mately the struggles of the working class will not
only be against material deprivations, but against
a system that has the drive to imperialist war at
its heart. Car 7/10/12

South Africa massacre of miners

The bourgeoisie uses its police and union guard dogs against the working class

employment is massive! The country’s wealth is
partly based on the export of mining products like
platinum, chrome, gold and diamonds. But this
sector, which represents nearly 10% of GNP and
15% of the country’s exports, and employs over
800,000 workers, went through a major recession
in 2011. The price of platinum, of which South
Africa possesses 80% of world reserves, has been
falling since the beginning of the year.

The living and working conditions of the min-
or workers in South Africa have now got
worse: paid miserable wages, housed in shacks,
only working more than 9 hours a day in stifling,
confined conditions, forced to lying-off by
unemployment. South Africa has recently seen
a large number of strikes. In February, the world’s
biggest platinum mine, owned by Impala Plati-
num, had already been paralysed for six months
by a strike. The Marikana massacre, a trap set by
the unions

It was in this context that on 10 August, 3000
miners from Marikana decided to stop work and
demand decent wages: “We are exploited, nei-
ther the government nor the unions have come
to our assistance... We need work... We will thanks to our work and they pay us practically
nothing. We are not offered a decent life. We
live like animals because of our poverty wages”.
The miners launched a wildcat strike and the
two unions, the National Union of Mine-
workers (NUM) and the Association of Miners and
Construction Union (AMCU) jumped on the
bandwagon, violently clashing to defend their
claim to ‘charge’ the police armed with sticks. What?
ly disappeared - a group of miners had the nerve
to ‘charge’ the police armed with sticks. What?
But there was then an inter-bourgeois war. The
strike, the ANC has signed a deal to return to
its goons against the NUM’s muscle. The result:
10 miners dead and a number of wounded. But
this turf war between the unions led directly to
the strike being violently repressed by the state,
which used this as a way of blocking the dynamic
of this mass workers’ movement.

After several days of clashes, Frans Baleni,
the secretary general of the NUM, called in the army:
“Let us put the armed forces or the
South African armed forces before the situa-
tion gets out of control”[2]...and why not call
for an aerial attack on the mine, Mister Baleni?
But the trap had already been set. The next day,
the government sent in thousands of police
officers, equipped with armoured cars and two be-

And this led to the absolutely disgusting, mon-
strous images which we all now know. But while
the working class can only express its indignation
in the face of such barbarity, it also needs to un-
derstand that the dissemination of those images
also had an aim – that of spreading the mystifi-
cation that the workers in the ‘truly democratic’
countries are lucky to be able to march freely be-
hind their union banners. This was also a warning
to all those who are tempted to rise up against
the misery engendered by this system.

The bourgeoisie tries to distort the
class struggle as a racial struggle.

Immediately after the massacre, voices all around
the world were heard denouncing ‘the demon of
Apartheid’. The bourgeoisie wants to distort the
meaning of this movement by pushing it towards
ethnic and nationalist issues. Julius Malema, who
was expelled from the ANC in April, took himself
off to Marikana to denounce the foreign compa-
nies, demanding the nationalisation of the mines
and the expulsion of the ‘big white landowners’.
But the massacre was resolved with the expulsion of
the ‘big white landowners’. Jacob Zuma declared to the press: ‘We must bring out the truth about what happened here. This is an internal affair and should be treated
as such. There is no need for inquiry to find out the real causes of this incident’. This is the truth: the bourgeoisie is trying to
dupe the working class by disguising the class
struggle as a racial struggle. But the trick is
a bit obvious: wasn’t it a ‘black’ government that
signed the deals with the foreign companies?”
send in the police? Isn’t it a ‘black’ government
which has done all it can to maintain the miners
in the same low-standard living condition? Isn’t it a
‘black’ government which is using a police force
trained in the apartheid era and which has voted in
‘both to kill’ laws? And this ‘black’ government,
 isn’t it the ANC, the party of Mendel
ments, collaborated all over the world as the cham-
pion of democracy and tolerance? 3

The strike spreads

In the night of 19/20 August, trying to take ad-
vantage of the situation, the directors of Lonmin,
the firm which exploits the mine, ordered “3000
employees on illegal strike to return to
work on Monday 20 August, or face possible
redundancy”.

But the anger of the miners was such that they defied this threat: “Are you going
to sack those who are in the hospital and the morgue? In any case, it’s better to get the suck
because we are suffering here. Our lives aren’t
going to change. Lonmin doesn’t care about
our welfare. Up till now they have refused to talk to us. They have sent in the police to kill us.”
Lonmin had to retreat, and meanwhile on 22 August the strike spread, with workers in some
other mines, owned by Royal Bafokeng Platinum and Amplats, coming out for the same demands.
At the time of writing, after four weeks of the
strike, the ANC has signed a deal to return to
work, but the AMCU have said they will confront
anyone reporting for duty. After the massacre 270
miners were killed with ‘public violence’ which was
then changed to murder based on case law from
the apartheid era. Eventually the charges were
dropped, but 150 miners said they had been
beaten while in custody. There have been a
number of demonstrations, and a week’s strike at
KCD East gold mine. Police fired on pickets, wounding four miners, in a wildcat strike at
Middel East gold mine.

Mandela has continued to name for himself,
but his demand for widespread na-
tionalisation is effectively for more control by
the capitalist state dominated by the ANC.

But what the Marikana massacre has
shown most clearly is the violence of the
democratic state. Black or white, all states are ready to carry out massacres against the working class.

El Garcia 28/12/11 (additions 8/12)

1. The official unemployment rate was 35.4% at the end of 2011.
2. Quoted in Le Monde, 16/8/12
3. 3 NUM communiqué, 13.8.12
4. Declaration by the police after the massacre. The police admit that the miners were attacked in a cowardly way by a group using
various weapons, including firearms....The police

officers, to protect their lives and in a situation of
legitimate self-defence, were obliged to respond with force. 5

5. Lonmin declaration 19.8.12

The Muslim Brotherhood has an understanding with the army? Is it true that the police better known as MB
Mursi? Inside Egypt, the degree to which different factions of the bourgeoisie act together or are di-
vided is of interest, but, for workers, what is more important is seeing that their class interests are in
conflict with all factions of the ruling class. In
this vein, the leftism plays a harmful role.
Continued from page 1
The organisation of the proletariat outside periods of open struggle (w)

For the majority of revolutionary groups today, the trade unions are no longer seen as organisations that can defend the most immediate interests of the working class, let alone as bases of class struggle. This is due to a number of reasons. The first is that the most effective form for organising and spreading the struggle today is the genuine assembly of workers, the elected and revocable committees and co-ordinating bodies; the trade unions are now at the point where any form of organisation cannot be maintained on a permanent basis when the struggle dies down, which presents a problem to the trade union leaders who are focused on linking back into their jobs and who want to play an active part in future struggles. This is why there is a tend-ency, even though it’s usually only seen among a small minority, for such workers for workers’ groups to replace the official committees, sometimes explicitly against them. But among revolutionary organisations there are a number of different approaches to such groupings; are they the basis for a revived force of the working class? Could they be a basis for a counter-intern tidal agreements between the communist political organisation and the class as a whole?

The attempts to bridge a gap

But we are not yet in a period of permanent struggle when the revolutionary context which would allow the organisation of the proletariat to organise itself in workers’ coun-cils. The constitution of the proletariat in councils is the result of objective conditions (the depth of the struggle, the historic course of the movement, the matura-
ditions (the maturity of the struggle and the con-sciousness of the class). It is the result of an entire process, a whole maturation, which is as much organisational as it is political. We must be conscious that this maturation, this political ferment, doesn’t unfold in a well-designed straight line. It expresses itself instead as a fiery, impetuous, confused process within a period of the movement. It expresses itself through the active participation of revolutionary minorities.

It is incapable of acting mechanically in accordance with abstract principles, preconceived plans or voluntarist schemes detached from reality, the proletariat must forge its unity and conscious-
ess from the necessity of the struggle and in the course of this period, the ideology of ‘workers’ con-cils’ (cf. their ‘bluff’ about workers’ groups) as much one of regrouping with a well-defined subject-matter (power, struggle) as much as it is an expression of the weakness of their movement.

The French group PIC (Pour Une Intervention Communiste) which had been active at the end of the 1960’s, we witnessed the appearance of the period which, starting with a general de-crease in struggles at the end of the 1960’s, we witnessed the appearance of a whole series of confusions within the work-
ing class. We could measure the extent of these confusions by the extent to which the different elements of the combative class of the council, who tried to remain resolute.

We saw the end of the left workers’ movement, the period of the struggle in a whole series of confusions within the working class. We could measure the extent of these confusions by the extent to which the different elements of the combative class, who tried to remain resolute.

- the illusion in building structures and the distrust of anything political (OHK, AAI, etc.)
- the fear of another ‘invasion’ of the working class by the lumpenproletariat (AAUD: Allgemeine Arbeiter Union Deutschlands, ‘General Workers Union of Germany’). The ‘Unions’ were trade unions, but attempts to create permanent forms of organisation regrouping workers outside and against the unions, in Germany in the years following the creation of the 1919 Berlin insurrection.

The more and more conscious extension and centralisation of struggles, beyond the factories and workshops, led to a response of the artificial, voluntarist action. To be convinced of the correctness of this idea, it’s sufficient to recall the experience of the first wave of strikes. In 1973-74, the social and political ferment, which was a consequence of the historical break, a period of ‘recovery’ by the bourgeoisie to its own profit.

The proletarian organisations of the period of the struggle, the end of the period which characterised by a disproportion between the strength and extension of the strikes and the weakness in the content of the demands made. What especially indicated this disproportion was the absence of any clear, political perspective in the movement. The falling-back of the workers, which happened between 1973 and 1977, was a product of this weakness, which the bourgeoisie utilised to demo-

The reflex of 1973-77

We must be careful not to lock away these organs in a hermetic, rigidly classified drew-

This said, the attempt to bridge a gap stopped in the different moments in the life of these com-
mittes, getting ourselves caught in the false di-
tinction that the trade union leaders, sometimes explicitly against them. But among revolutionary organisations there are a number of different approaches to such groupings; are they the basis for a revived force of the working class? Could they be a basis for a counter-intelligentsia agreements between the communist political organisation and the class as a whole?

These questions have been the subject of debate for some decades and they are still being raised on internet discussion forums, such as this one: http://www.red-max.com/icc-ict-and-the-icmp-1695.html. In a more concrete and practical sense they are being posed in numerous workplaces and localities as a minority of workers, students and the unemployed come together to resist capital’s austerity offensive.

The attempts to bridge a gap

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The organisation of the proletariat outside periods of open struggle (workers' groups, nuclei, circles, committees) to give a more immediate aspect of the struggle and the final reflux in the struggle, we have to insist more on the necessity for a politically independent 'co—ordinamenti', and more specifically in the assembly of Co—ordinamenti in Turin, the debate at which surprise even those elements who were certain of the reflux, and even if the dangers represented by means of a leaflet to denounce the dangers of the proletariat will accord us its political 'confidence' in us. We aren't workerist, nor are we megalomaniacs, our concern to situate the committees, nuclei, circles, etc should be. Even while recognising their limited influence and their weaknesses, we must remain open to them and attentive to their appearance, most important thing for us is that they are open and that they are open to us. But here again, we've no mechanism to drop in place. It's not in an artificial manner that the revolutionary movement wins these elements. Concreteness. The proletariat's general dynamic of the class struggle in the period of capitalist decadence implies that their political reflection is going to happen in an artificial manner. In the long-term, this work cannot be followed except within the organization of the working class as a historic force, and thing we should avoid; another is to avoid flattering them or even unconsciously concentrating our energies on them. We mustn't ignore workers' groups, but equally we mustn't become obsessed about them. We recognise that the struggle matures and class-consciousness develops in a process. Within this process, tendencies exist within the class that attempt to 'hoist' the struggle onto a political terrain. In the course of time, we know that the proletariat will give rise to combative minorities within itself, but they won't necessarily organise themselves into any political organisation. We must be careful not to identify this process of maturation in the class today with what characterised the development of the struggle last century. This understanding is very important because it permits us to appreciate in what way these political 'impurities'. So that's one of the things we should avoid; another is to avoid flattering them or even unconsciously concentrating our energies on them. We mustn't ignore workers' groups, but equally we mustn't become obsessed about them. We recognise that the struggle matures and class-consciousness develops in a process. Within this process, tendencies exist within the class that attempt to 'hoist' the struggle onto a political terrain. In the course of time, we know that the proletariat will give rise to combative minorities within itself, but they won't necessarily organise themselves into any political organisation. We must be careful not to identify this process of maturation in the class today with what characterised the development of the struggle last century. This understanding is very important because it permits us to appreciate in what way these political...
Cosmopolis: a poetical and radical indictment of capitalism

In Syria, the big powers gesticulate, the massacres continue

For more than a year and a half the politicians and media in the west have been dis- playing their deep sympathy for the people of Syria. The Litany is incessant: Bashar al-Assad is guilty of ‘crimes against humanity’. And indeed, the slaughter being carried out by the Syrian regime has mounted up at a terrifying pace, and has even further accelerated this summer, despite all the UN appeals for a cease-fire. The dictator of Damascus continues his project of wiping out the ‘Syrian rebellers’ with considerable determi- nation, declaring recently that “this will take some time still” and that the growing desolation by se- rior regime officials amounts to “a self-cleansing operation by the state first of all, and by the nation in general.” Since 15 March 2011, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, 23,000 have been killed. And how many of the 200,000 injured will not be maimed for life, or will not survive their wounds? Assad certainly leaves little to chance, because he has even been bombing hospitals and sending in his troops to terrorise and murder his enemies. Al-Qaeda, Damascus, Riffa, Aleppo, Dara, Daraya, all these marauding towns are sym- bols of the extreme brutality that has descended on the country.

We should add to this a situation of humanitarian disaster. Food, milk for children, medicines, care for the wounded, water – there is a catastrophic lack of all these things in most towns and regions. Houses have been destroyed en masse and there is a serious shortage of shelter. Electricity cuts often last 4 to 5 days and supplies may only be resumed for an hour or so, as in Aleppo.

Fleeing the fighting and the exactions of Assad’s army, but also from the Free Syrian Army, which is increasingly being accused of certain massa- cres, nearly 300,000 people have gone into exile, whether to the south of Syria, towards Lebanon and Jordan, or north towards Turkey and even to Iraq. Masses of refugees are being kept in mis- erable camps in the hope of one day being able to return home…where everything has been de- stroyed.

In the present period what the UN, we are talking about over two and a half million people, women, children, the aged, in a ‘situation of distress’. Tears of the crocodile

These alarming figures have drawn tears from the leaders of the planet, but they are tears of the crocodile. Fabius, the French foreign minister, said that this was “an intolerable and unaccept- able situation”. And we would applaud these brave words were it not an expression of a legiti- misation of anti-terrorism – for if they weren’t part of a cynical masquerade.

On 7 August Princess Hollandes declared: “if solemnly declare that along with our allies we will remain very vigilant about presenting the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime, which for the international community would be a legitimate cause for direct intervention”. This in- tervention would follow in the footsteps of Barack Obama who not long before said that the use of chemical weapons would mark a “red line” and would be a reason for sending in troops against the Syrian regime. In other words, as long as the killing is done with ‘traditional’ weapons, that’s OK, but watch out for crossing that “red line”.

This war of so-called ‘liberation’ has been threat- ening to intervene for months, but it’s in no posi- tion to do so, and diplomatic initiatives have come and gone, each one more hypocritical than the one before. And even if they did intervene, this would not in all be in order to support the population but rather to take revenge for the torture and mali- ciation of horror whose first victim would again be the Syrian population.

This is a war of so-called ‘liberation’; due struggle for freedom and a war against terrorism that is simple. All the regional and global powers are in- volved in it, with the USA, Russia, China, France and Britain in the front line. The implementation and responsibility of these gangsters is not restricted to their gesticulations in the UN or elsewhere, but on the ground the arms and cash are supplied to both camps.

1. We should note the brave chunk of Russia which has been supplying Assad with combat helicopters and missiles. The same Russia that in a move to facilitate the fulfilment of contracts that were signed and paid for a long time ago (see the contracts) the Russia of the 1940s gave its support for the arms and for means of air defence” (http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jun/13/us-claim-syria-russian-civilians).

This film is more than a superficially radical critique of capitalism, it is a profound, complex and hard to explain: emotion. In the present period what the UN, we are talking about over two and a half million people, women, children, the aged, in a ‘situation of distress’. Tears of the crocodile

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The talk of setting up a buffer zone on Syria’s border with Turkey, to offer shelter to the tens of thousands of refugees in the area, is a vast smoke- screen, because it’s not viable given Assad’s op- position to it. It would more or less require open war with Damascus because it would serve as a launch pad for most of the imperialist sharks, fly- ing the flag of ‘peacekeeping’, with all the attendant risks for the refugees. We should remember how the UN, and France in particular, allowed thousands of civilians to be massacred in Srzhenica by troops under Milosevic.

If the UN did intervene, we would have to recall the solicitude with which the Afghans, and then the Iraqis, have been treated since 2001 in the name of the “war against terror” or “for democ- racy”. Both countries have been shattered by these interventions, leaving the population prey to rival warlords, each one more backward than the one before.

We should also keep in mind the intrigues and the violence which prevailed over the establish- ment of French and British protectorates in this region. The Middle Eastern bourgeoisie has been threat- ening to intervene for months, but it’s in no posi- tion to do so, and diplomatic initiatives have come and gone, each one more hypocritical than the one before. And even if they did intervene, this would not in all be in order to support the population but rather to take revenge for the torture and mali- ciation of horror whose first victim would again be the Syrian population.

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Here are some responses to WR going bi-monthly so that we can better focus on our online intervention:

Fred wrote on 6/9/12: “I would very much adapt our web site, we need at the same time to reduce the effort we put into the paper press... Regarding the monthly press, I think we already read everything in it on-line a number of times. This doesn’t apply to everyone of course. But, although a late-comer to the internet revolution, I’m now that I’d rather read your current articles there than in the old-fashioned paper format. It’s the immediacy. Also, if provoked by an article, a swift response is available at the click. This doesn’t necessarily improve the quality of thought in the response I know; but there’s also something to be said for setting the thoughtful, but fleeting moment before it’s gone. At least I hope so...I very much think you should reinforce and adapt your website, but don’t really know how, or even exactly why! (Not much help.) But I always feel there’s space for a lot more past. ers. If only they could sense the possibility of speaking what they think, and weren’t afraid of saying the wrong thing, of saying something stupid, or of getting bashed by some superior gey of immense revolutionary credentials and an apparently Ein- steinian intellect, who might suddenly jump out of nowhere and have them for supper. On the other hand, if myself wouldn’t want a sudden invasion of vacuous line posters with little or nothing to say. The Red Marx site seems to have attracted quite a few of them, nor would one welcome the type of vicious attack to be found sometimes on lib.com. But that’s enough for now”.

Reply from jk21, same day: “I have mixed feeling about this. On the one hand, it seems like a practical adaptation to a reality we all know to exist. Communication today is almost exclusively carried on through the internet, etc. In this sense, it is only logical for the revolutionary organisation to find ways to adapt and remain relevant in this new environment. That said, on a substantive level, I think it is also true that these new technologies are not ‘content neutral’. They represent more than mere techno-

logical developments. The internet, social media, etc. have dramtically changed the nature of personal relationships, reordered information and knowledge hierarchies, and contributed to a kind of decentering of social life and the production of a new culture of ecticity to go along with it. In some ways this new culture represents a challenge to traditional authorities and the methods through which capitalist society has often been legitimat-ed. But, I don’t think the story is all positive. In some ways these new communication mediations also play into social decomposition and produce a highly individualized–everyone is worthy of having their own blog–culture that can work to undermine the discipline necessary to construct an organization and promote all kinds of stylized, individualist forms of pseudo-rebellion that do not in the end, escape the capitalist horizon.

In this sense, the printed press is kind of a bul-


world against this tendency. By constituting a de-


fined (and limited) space, the printed press forces a kind of analysis that increasingly gets lost in the cacophony of the Internet today. It forces the or-

ganization to focus, to plan, to decide what events are worthy of analysis and reflection in a limited space and to come together on a regular basis to produce a collect product. In this sense, it is good to hear that WR will not abandon the printed press altogether. In the end, we must acknowledge and adapt to the new reality, but let’s not let the site turn into a blog. There are too many of those already”.

Join the discussion! …

Donations

Unlike the bourgeois press, revolutionary publications such as World Revolution have no advertising revenue, no chains of news agents and no millionaire backers. We rely on the sup-

port of our sympathisers, and those who, while they might not agree with all aspects of our politics, see the importance of the intervention of a communist press.

“Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of the workers. This union is helped on by the improved means of communica-
tion that are created by modern industry, and that place the workers of different localities in contact with one another (...). And that union, to attain which the burghers of the Middle Ages, with their miserable highways, required centuries, the mod-
ern proletarians, thanks to railways, achieve in a few years’”

So wrote Marx in 1848, in the Communist Mani-

festo. Capitalism, in the end, has lasted longer than Marx expected – but the class struggle is more now than ever present around the world. Where the workers of 1848 relied on railways, which were certainly not created for their benefit, the workers and revolutionaries of 2012 rely more and more on the Internet to spread their ideas, to discuss, and – we hope – little by little to forge that “ever-


expanding union” of which Marx spoke. The In-

ternet has profoundly modified the way we work, and above all the way we communicate. When the IWC was formed in 1975, the Internet of course did not exist: ideas were spread through the paper press, distributed in the hundreds of small radical bookshops that sprouted up in the aftermath of May ‘68 and similar struggles around the world. Correspondence was carried on through the post, by (often handwritten!) letters. To find revolutionaries in other countries, there was no other solution than to travel physically in the hope that it would be possible to make contact.

Today, everything but the physical contact has moved from paper to electronic media. And where once we sold our paper press in bookshops around the world, today our sales take place above all in demonstrations and at workplaces in struggle. Our press has always relied on sharing articles across national boundaries, and in this way try-

ting to contribute to the development of an inter-


ationalist outlook in the working class. Today, the greater speed of electronic media has made it possible for the IWC’s sections to work together more closely, especially those sections that share a common language, and we want to use this to increase the international unity of our press.

We all have used this to underline the need to produce and to adapt our paper press. This, of course, has been hard going, in particular because the paper press no longer plays exactly the same role as it did in the past: it needs to become more flexible, adaptable to a changing situation.

Given our limited strength, this has led us to the conclusion that if we are to reinforce and adapt our web site, we need at the same time to reduce the effort we put into the paper press: one of the first consequences of this reorientation of our pub-

lications is therefore going to be a reduction in the frequency of our paper publications. Concretely, in the case of our press in Britain, this means that we will be moving to a bi-monthly paper.

We are only at the beginning of our reflections on the subject of the press, and we expect over the year to come to make further modifications, in particular to the way our web site is structured. We would like to involve our readers in this ref-

fort, and will shortly be publishing a survey on the site to invite you to give your own opinion. In the meantime, we would be more than happy for our readers to pass on their suggestions through the forum.

Everywhere we have said above applies, of course, to the situation in those areas where Internet ac-

cess is widespread. There are still regions where the lack or difficulty of Internet access means that a paper press continues to play the same role that it did in the past. This is particularly true of India and Latin America, and we will be working with our sections in India, Mexico, Venezuela, Peru and Ecuador to determine how best to adapt the paper press to conditions in those countries. We are writing separately to all our subscribers about what this means for the duration and future of their subscriptions. Obviously we still strongly encourage our readers to support our work by sub-

scribing to our paper publications, as well as tak-

ing out extra copies to sell.

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Is there a danger of fascism today?

This article is based on the presentation to our political group in London, 24 June, written to introduce and stimulate discussion.

The electoral results achieved by the extreme right have for some time been feeding the fear of fascism after election. And this political fringe really is distinguished by a particularly vicious, xenophobic and racist discourse...

And it is also true that this discourse is reminiscent of another period, i.e. the 1930s. It has twice plunged humanity into a revolutionary wave which put an end to the imperialist war and went beyond the bourgeois order within the proletariat. Its role is neither to 'organise struggle', to reproduce class struggle, nor to imagine revolutionary forms of the proletarian struggle, of its historic and political clarification of the goals and methods of the proletarian struggle.

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 de- cent social system. It has twice plunged humanity into a barbaric cycle of crisis, world war, reconstruction and new crisis. In the 1930s, it entered into the final phase of this historical phase. The bourgeoisie, the imperialists, they have had the final say through the international and imperialist wars, they have pursued their interests through this international capital and by struggling against the bourgeoisie in all countries.

* The national idealism of 'national independence', the right of nations to self-determination, 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.

* Decadent capitalism, parliament and elections are nothing but a masquerade. Any call to participate in the parliamentary machinery 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.

* The struggle of the proletariat is equally reactionary. All the so-called ‘workers’, ‘Socialist’ and ‘Communist’ parties (now ex-Communists), the left and extreme left, the workers and ex-Communists, anarchists constitute the left of the proletariat’s political apparatus. All the tactics of ‘popular fronts’, ‘anti-fascist coalitions’ and ‘united front’, which mix up the interests of the proletariat with those of a faction of the bourgeoisie, serve only to smother and derail the class struggle.

* With the decay 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 struggle.

* In order to advance its combat, the working class has to unify its struggles, taking charge of its extension and organisation through sovereign general assemblies and committees of elected delegates and revitalize 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 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 one case or another a method destined to mystify the working class, whereas democracy to fascism was carried out democratically, with the support of big capital.

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What caused the fall of the working class in the 1930s?

We have already mentioned the crisis. However, to understand the eruption of this particular form of the domination of capitalism in society in a given period, we must take into account of another factor which we consider essential.

This factor is the heaviest defeat the working class has ever suffered. That defeat is the main reason for the revolutionary wave of 1917-23. Remember that it took the form of the degeneration of the Russian revolution and the decomposition of its ideology of the international proletariat by the bourgeoisie. And that was particularly true in the countries where its revolutionary struggle had gone furthest in putting capitalist order in order. In all the countries, the working class was transformed into organs for the defence of capitalism in the particular form of state capitalism existing in the USSR.

Such a defeat gave rise to the longest and most profound period of world-wide counter-revolution that the proletariat has ever known. The main distinction of this counter-revolution was that it rendered the proletariat of the whole world incapable of subjecting the bourgeoisie’s imperia- lised subordination to the law or force as cannon fodder in the second imperialist World War.

During the Second World War the hitherto independent countries showed three different models of the organ- isation of society; all three were capitalist and all three, in the final analysis, around the world, were fascist state capitalism, a general tendency affecting all countries in the world:

- Stalinist state capitalism,
- National Fascist state capitalism,
- Fascist state capitalism.

The differences between the democratic capitalist states of the 1930s, the Stalinist bloc and the fascist state are obvious and evident. It is also true that today it is also obvious that it is more efficient that the two other forms, as much for the management of production as for the control of the working class.

Why were some capitalist states fascist at that time?

The fact that the fascist state capitalist state (just like the Stalinist) was stripped of all democratic mechanisms is no more than a small detail. The true fundamental point was that fascism served to maintain that defeat through the violence of a ferocious open dictatorship.

In Germany and Italy fascist parties took part in the elections as a bloc, in France the communists in the interests of national capital, in the context of an economy disorganised by the war and driven to the brink of bankruptcy, the bourgeoisie in these countries needed to prepare a new war. This was done under the banner of revenge for defeat and the humiliation suffered at the time of the First World War. From the beginning of the 1920s the fascists were the champions of such an option. In these two countries the transition from democracy to fascism was carried out democratically, with the support of big capital.

We have said that the profound defeat of the working class was an essential condition for the establishment of fascism in the countries where it achieved power. According to a belief widely spread by the bourgeoisie, it was fascism that de- tected the working class in the 1920s and 1930s. That is completely false. Fascism did nothing but complete a defeat mainly carried out by the left of the working class in the imperialist war. At the time of the revolutionary wave the bourgeoisie was represented by the social democratic parties which had complete control over the working class and pro- letarian internationalism. During the First World War they called on the working class to support the capitalists’ war effort in different countries, against the very principles of proletarian internationalism.

Why did the social democratic parties play this role? Why was it necessary for them to do so? Faced with a working class which is not only unde- feated, but is also developing its revolutionary struggle, rendering certain repressive forces impotently, it would be suicidal for the bour- geoisie to deploy its brute force first of all. Brute force is only effective when it is used as part of a strategy capable of mystifying the proletariat, to use any weakness, to turn it towards impasses, to turn it towards impasses, to turn it towards impasses, to turn it towards impasses, to turn it towards impasses, to turn it towards impasses, to turn it towards impasses, to turn it towards impasses, to turn it towards impasses, to turn it towards impasses, to turn it towards impasses, to turn it towards impasses.

So, in 1919, the very democratic German SPD, last political pillar of capitalist domination at the time of the revolution, had the task of being the executor of the revolutionary working class.

To this end it was supported by the re- mains of the army still faithful to the state and set in motion the repressive Freikorps, the ancestors of the Nazi shock troops.

For this reason, of all the enemies of the working class, right wing democrats, left wing democrats, extreme left whether democratic or not, populists whether fascist or not, the most dangerous are those who can mystify the proletariat in order to prevent it advancing towards its revolutionary project. This is primarily the job of the left and extreme left of capitalism, and this is why it is so important to unmask them.

What is the situation in the present period?

The great difference with the 1930s is that in 1968 the working class in France and internation- ally opened a new course of class struggle, a new front in the war of the working class against the bourgeoisie. But to participate actively in the movement towards the unification of struggles, towards workers taking control of their movements, and at the same time towards the unification of 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 immediate conditions. Organised intervention, united and centred on an international programme, is the best way to contribute to the process which leads to the revolutionary action of the proletariat.

The regroupement of revolutions with the aim of constituting a real world-wide communist party, which is indispensable to the working class for the overthrow of capitalist states.

OUR ORIGINS

The positions and activity of revolutionary organ- isations are the product of the past experiences of the working class and its political vanguard. But these organisations have drawn throughout its history. The ICC thus traces its origins to the successive contributions of the Communist League of Marx and Engels, the three Internationals (the International Working- men’s Association, 1868-74, the Socialist International, 1884-1905) and the Trotskyist groups destined to the left factions which detached themselves from the degenerating Third International in the years 1920-30, in particular the German, Dutch and Italian Lefts.