Attacks on benefits are attacks on the whole working class

When the state cuts benefits, when politicians or the media make a big scandal about how much those not in work are getting, it is always in the name of fairness. For Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne, the long term unemployed will have to accept work placements, training, or just turn up and hang around in an office all day if there is no work or training for them, in order to be “fair for those who need it and fair for those who pay”. That’s when they not claiming that toughness and a punitive approach is the kindest thing for those who are sick, disabled, or unemployed. But is it true?

Trying to make us forget there is a working class

The attacks on benefits have accelerated since the recession of 2008, so that we have seen the cap on benefits, the bedroom tax, and the vilification of claimants. The economy has not yet recovered from that recession, with GDP still more than 3% below the level of the first quarter of 2008. And it certainly isn’t only the unemployed who face attacks. The whole working class is facing a rise in the state pension age, with teachers and firefighters the latest to face a rise in the occupational pension age as well as greater costs and reduced pension benefits. Young adults will no longer get housing benefit at all – adding to the number forced to continue living with their parents. The whole public sector is facing a 1% pay cap, with NHS staff facing a pay freeze. Many workers face the threat of their firm being shut down if they don’t accept worse pay and conditions and a number of redundancies, most recently those at Grangemouth (see page 2). And we all face a rise of approximately 19% in energy prices from all the main suppliers – so much for competition and shopping around.

This is the ruling class’ idea of fairness – every part of the working class is affected by crisis, it’s tough, but it’s tough for everyone. In order for this argument to work we have to forget that we are part of the working class and accept the divisions and competition imposed on us: ‘strivers’ (those fortunate enough to have a job) against ‘shirkers’ (the unemployed); public sector against private sector; teachers against NHS workers in the struggle for scarce budgetary resources.

The reality is that we do have a common interest as workers. Let us take the example of making the unemployed work for their benefits and its so-called fairness to those who ‘pay’ because they are in work. If my job can be done by one of the unemployed on work placement, how soon do I either have to do the work for less or even lose my job? In capitalism there is always a larger or smaller number of unemployed, and every ‘striver’ with a job is also at risk of being forced into becoming an unemployed ‘shirker’.

It’s the same with every attack. If 18-25 year olds cannot get housing benefit that means very often they cannot get independent housing whether or not they have a job, especially in high cost areas such as London. This affects the whole family with the parents putting up their adult children. Attacks on those in work are no exception. If the state caps pay rises at 1% in the public sector, significantly below the official inflation rate of 2.7%, then through competition this has a downward effect on wages and salaries in general. Of course, when it comes to the pay freeze in the NHS this has a much wider effect. Just like the attacks on the unemployed, it comes with a pretence of fairness and a vilification of the victims. The excuse is that those working in the NHS already get an annual increase due to seniority, which is doubly dishonest – firstly because Agenda for Change is being imposed to introduce performance related pay, and secondly because the annual increase only applies to some of the stuff for part of the time; and overall as older staff retire they are replaced by younger on the lower pay scales. The vilification comes in the form of blaming those who work in the NHS for the deterioration that comes from poor staffing levels, poor training and perverse incentives imposed by the latest targets.

With the whole working class under attack, we cannot fight back piecemeal

The attacks affect us all, so how can we all fight back against them? Recent strikes by school teachers, firefighters, and university lecturers and support staff show that there is a great deal of discontent. The issues are very similar when not exactly the same: an increase in pension age for both firefighters and teachers; the question of pay in schools, where performance related pay is being brought in, and universities, where a 1% offer goes nowhere near overcoming the 13% deterioration in real pay; as well as the issue of increased workload for teachers. Meanwhile the CWU has called off strike action in the Post Offices and Royal Mail in a joint statement with management about future negotiation over the threat to jobs (about 1,500 under threat with the proposal to shut 75 offices) and to pay and terms during the Royal Mail privatisation.

But the actual strikes have seen the workers kept completely separate from each other. The NUT and NASUWT teaching unions called a series of regionally divided, one day strikes in October, calling off further action for negotiation. The university unions and Fire Brigades Union called one day and 4 hour demonstration strikes respectively in the same week but on different days. As usual with union strike action workers have been kept separate even when fighting on the same issues at the same time. The strike has been taken out of the hands of workers and made into an adjunct to union negotiation. The chance for workers to meet and discuss with others facing similar attacks in different industries has been avoided – because what is a necessity for the workers in taking their struggle forward is a danger for the forces of the ruling class ranged against them, the bosses, the state and the unions. Also 21.11.13

Inside this issue

Grangemouth: Bosses attack and Unite ties workers’ hands 2
Universities strike – workplace intervention 3
Milliband and Milly: Marxists are not patriots 7
Lampedusa tragedy: Capital and its politicians are responsible 4
From junk food to famine part 1 5
A system that poisons and starves 5
UC online discussion forum 4
60 years after the death of Stalin – Stalinism still emits the stench of counter-revolution 6
Tribute to our comrade Jean-Pierre 7
Life of the ICC 7

Greece: Democracy & fascism need each other 1

UK: en.internationalism.org

Workers of the world, unite!
Grangemouth

Bosses attack and Unite ties workers’ hands

The price for keeping the Grangemouth petrochemical workers from going on strike was whole- sale retrenchment, from shutting down: a no-strike agreement, a 3-year pay freeze, cuts in shift-pay and pension rights. For new workers, “limited redundancies” and an end to the Final Salary pension scheme (more contribu- tions and no indexation). A year before the strike it had been “embraced... and all” by Len McCluskey and his Unite trade union. When asked on the BBC’s Breakfast show last Sunday, he said no, “we sort out problems like this all the time.” And indeed the actions of the trade union Unite go hand in hand with the bosses’ attack. The workers at Grangemouth, like the employers around the world, the Unite union brought in a two-tier wage system, divided workers at Garwick from Heathrow and cut wages and conditions to the extent that some workers and stewards tore up their union cards in angry meetings with the union representatives. Like BA, the events around Grangemouth demonstrat- e the breath the attacks raining down on the working class and, at the very least, the uselessness of the unions in representing the interests of the working class.

Much is made by papers like the Trotskyist Socialist Worker and the Socialist Morning Star about the billionaire boss of Grangemouth “black- mailing” the workers and the about the “greed” of the “oil industry”. That makes it appear a matter of fact and is increasingly forced to do as the crisis deepens and its profits are threatened. For those on the Left the answer is one of the nation- alisation of the oil industry, which is an attempt to alleviate the exploitation of the workers. One of the first coordinated actions of the actions of the nation- alisation of the oil industry, which is an attempt to alleviate the exploitation of the workers.

Nonetheless, it was only a week before the strike that a deal was stitched up by them and the bosses, not against the attacks of the company, but against the actions of Unions in enquiring into the time the union convened was spending on Labour Party politics in Scotland. The attack on the work- ers was entirely secondary to the union which was facing the crisis deepens and its profits are threatened. It’s often said that the union leadership is “out of touch,” “bureaucratic” and the “rank-and-file;” in the real world. There’s nothing more insidious and it’s bad to be “exiled” - that the structure in which their struc- tures and frame-works give rise to cliques and ca- bals of small minorities even with the best will in the world. The workers have the fight is about mass atten- uation of the mass, open meetings of workers that can point the way forward.

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I work in Higher Education in a low-grade ad- ministrative function. My work is “repre- sented” by three unions: Unite, Union and UCU. On the 31st October, and for the first time ever, all three unions called a sector-wide strike over the issue of pay.

A number of workers in my office are not in any of the unions. One colleague, a member of the UCU, did support the ballot and voted to go on strike. This colleague had told the union that there was no effort whatsoever on behalf of the unions to publicise it to non-members. A Unison member to distribute it around the offices. This is what was going on was my UCU colleague who forwards me anything she receives.

The response of the University was interesting, however. A couple of weeks before the strike date, they announced they were introducing the “Liv- ing Wage” for lower paid staff and that the senior management team were generously rescinding their “contractually and legally agreed” bases so the Christmas bonus for staff could be re- introduced this year.

Nonetheless, it was only a week before the strike when the union met that started to circulate in my office and that was mainly because I talked about it. The general response was negative. Most colleagues couldn’t see the point of action. Even the colleagues who had voted for the action was beginning to have doubts. She still agreed with the principle, but the issue was the union that had to deal with.

It’s difficult to convey the pressure our office was under. The UCU colleague who was starting at 8 in the morning and leaving gone 6 at night, every day for months, then doing work which would not be touched on the roll because of the nature of our functions, if we don’t want the work that’s assigned to us, it just doesn’t get done. And it doesn’t stop coming in if we’re not there. Going on leave is now a nightmare because you come back to the two weeks of work which isn’t even touched in your absence. She simply felt terrified at the thought of having to work another weekend to catch up if she missed a day in the office.

Two days before the strike, the unions issued a joint statement to all workers, relying on their members to distribute it around the offices. This is despite the fact that they are fully aware that many workers would not even see the leaflet.

The letter set out the reasons for the action but contained a shocking (if you don’t understand the true nature of the unions, that is) claim that non- members couldn’t participate. It is, of course, something of a joke among left-communists that it is actually the unions that enforce all the anti- strike legislation.

In a previous UCU strike over pensions, I went to a mass UCU meeting to show solidarity and I would not cross the picket line. The re- sponse of the preceding official was to tell every- one that people not involved in strike must go into work. I ignored the advice and joined the picked, the where I was welcomed - even the branch secretary was impressed enough and whenever I saw him and spoke to make sure I was looking at what they were doing. The regional official actually refused to speak to me on the picket!

In any case, while it is customary for the unions to enforce anti-strike legislation they are also in the business of enforcing anti-strike legislation (the original offer to the Shell drivers. The real victory was, naturally, teased a fair bit! My favourite was, somewhat nervously for my colleagues to come in.

Continued on page 3

Universities strike

Workplace intervention

The revolutionary potential of the rank and file strikes at Grangemouth in Scotland demonstrated that it is possible to fight back against attacks on jobs and pensions. The Grangemouth workers had the whole gamut of the state ranged against them: the “evil” boss, Alex Salmond and his brand of Scot- tish nationalism, Westminster politics and Falkirk Labour Party plotting and scheming, the Trotsky-ists and Stalinists denouncing “fat cats” calling for nationalisation and ideas of “workers’ control” - and the Unite trade union also singing the left’s praises and the workers - and that we didn’t admire the future of Scotland to be put in peril”. And so he puts himself and his union, and his compromised clique of stewards, at the service of the com- pany and the “rank-and-file” is the real union. There’s another machinations around the corrupt politics of the union leaders, not against the attacks of the company, but against the actions of Unions in enquiring into the time the union convened was spending on Labour Party politics in Scotland. The attack on the work- ers was entirely secondary to the union which was facing the crisis deepens and its profits are threatened. It’s often said that the union leadership is “out of touch,” “bureaucratic” and the “rank-and-file;” in the real world. There’s nothing more insidious and it’s bad to be “exiled” - that the structure in which their struc-

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2 Britain

1. see http://internationalism.org/ baboon/2535/oil-tanker-drivers-strike-solidarity-fails-strike
I don’t require any of a rather startling point to express the concern felt by all workers. These are the trends through the medium of a thoroughly nasty and very poorly argued back-jib on Ed’s father Ralph. The Daily Mail’s reprinted a letter that Tony Blair rushed to condemn it, and it emerged rapidly that the Mail had ‘shot itself in the foot’ with a story well-timed to whip up a new panic about ‘Red Ed’. Following Milliband Junior’s announcement, at the Labour conference, of his new party, the Daily Mail succeeded in directing the fire on itself while simultaneously embarrassing the Conservative Party.

The headline of the Mail article was ‘The man who told Britain’ and the question of patriotism, ‘love for one’s country’, was the central issue being debated by left and right. In an intelligent article published in The Guardian at the height of the furore, Priyamvada Gopal dully notes the squalid nature of the Mail article, with its baseless allegations, and she also asks some questions about the standard line of defence against the Mail’s attack.

Continued from page 2

sayed this way I wasn’t a member of the union, but that we still had to take a stand and this was an opportunity to do so.

The day of strike came and I went to one of the pickets, getting there early. While others picketed in shifts, I was there for the full duration. Contrary to the union statement, I was not turned away. One member remembered me from the previous strike and welcomed me.

I was an initial tendency for people to picket in their own unions. I joined a UCU one and suggested moving to join a United picket farther afield. When I questioned the possibility of picketing in solidarity with antiunionism, it was, at best, equivocal. More precisely, it accepted the distorted terms set by the right wing of the union movement

Embarrassed silence and ironic smiles from the Daily Mail over what we read in their front page a long awkward moment and after bagoning on for over half-an-hour about how the unions were standing together, the UCU national official finallly said he had no information about that at the moment but the line at present is to stand together.

The meeting was then wound up.

Back at work the next day, I learned that I had been the only one to join the strike. I wasn’t at all surprised, of course. My friend told me she had sat in her car overcome with guilt for 45 minutes before finally going in. Although everyone came in, the atmosphere was subdued. I told her I understand, but I don’t believe anyone will be in a hurry over what was done but to understand what’s being done to us.

Could it be an act of achievement? On the face of it, very little. None of my colleagues were per- suaded to join the strike. But I was able to prevent them from sleepwalking into their decision - they were forced to make a conscious choice about their decision. A tiny seed of consciousness may, one day, flower into something more signific- ant.

I also showed that being a marxist is more than “reading cheap books at lunchtime” which is how often people see me. It means standing up for something, even if only in a very small way. I also showed that it’s possible to do so without breaking the law. If the law is not, my colleagues were frightened and I understood be- cause I was frightened too. I cannot judge others for crossing picket lines when I cannot honestly say I will always have the courage not to.

Would my action have been any more effective had I been in the union? I can’t see how. I would still have spoken against them both in my leaft and at the meeting. And, more importantly, while the pickets are on the march together, may not tell workers to cross picket lines? Demogorgon 21/10/2013

The leaflet

Ofﬁcial Strike Action 31/10/2013

Experiencing Growth Without Gain, The Resolution means loving the Queen, the church, the armed forces and the monarchy. But the left version of this patriotism is no less faithful to key institutions of the capitalist state: the military, the employers, and the rest of the so-called labour movement, which have long been integrated into the present capitalist order.

Ralph Miliband was by all accounts a very good university teacher and he certainly had a thoro- ghtly embarrassing the Conservative Party. Thus, he might have answered those who have come to say ‘supple’ marxism never challenged the notion that the working class had something to defend in the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup- porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup- porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup- porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup- porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup- porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical sup-porter of the existing state. Politically he acted as a critical su-
Lampedusa tragedy
Capital and its politicians are responsible

At the beginning of October, an overloaded ship went down near Lampedusa in Italy. More than 350 immigrants died. A few days after- wards, expressions of ‘humanitarianism’ from the political leaders and immigrants sank, and another ten people drowned. Every year in the Mediterranean 20,000 people lose their lives on the verge of reaching the southern shores of Fortress Europe. Since the 1990s, the corpses of human beings fleeing from poverty and war have been piling up at the frontiers, along the coasts, in the deserts of the Sahara – like the 92 women and children from Niger abandoned by people smugglers to die of thirst and exhaustion in the Sahara at the end of the same month.

The hypocrisy of the ruling class
The ruling class has shed copious crocodile tears about the Lampedusa tragedy because its scale, and the death of ‘hundreds’, is impossible to ignore. To have done so might have stirred up too much anger, too much thinking.

That the catastrophic failure of Italian fishermen to help the victims has also served to divert people’s attention towards the hunt for scapegoats – even though the current laws actually make it harder and harder for immigrants and in previous cases captains of fishing vessels have already been prosecuted for trying to “give assistance”, to the point of being sentenced to death. The grand media coverage of the Lampedusa tragedy is aimed at creating a mental fog and ob- sclusion of the real situation, but also in a coordinated manner by the states. The ideological trap is made up on the one hand, of overt- ly ‘humanitarian’ speeches. The other, by ‘humanitarian’ speech which, by emphasising the ‘rights’ of the victims, serve to separate im- migrants from other proletarians.

One thing should be clear: capitalism is in crisis and its politicians are indeed responsible for this new tragedy. It’s they who compel thousands of hungry people to embark on ever-more suicidal adventures to get round the obstacles placed in their path. It’s therefore not surprising if these same politicians are jeered at the border by a shocked and disgusted local population.

The proletariat is a class of immigrants
Like these immigrants, all proletarians are really the same. While the public begins to see the begin- ning of capitalism, they have been torn away from the land and from artisan labour. In the Middle Ages the majority of the exploited remained tied to the land; the rising power of capitalism subject- ed to a violent exodus from the countryside.

‘The proletariat created by the breaking up of the bands of feudal retainers and by the forcible expropriation of the people from the soil, this “free” proletariat could not possibly be absorbed by the nascent manufactures as fast as it was thrown upon the world. On the other hand, these men, suddenly dragged from their wonted mode of life, could not as citizens of the state, be received into the social strata’.

Historically capitalism developed on the basis of forced access to labour power. To extract surplus val- ue it generated enormous population shifts. It was the unity of the new conditions of the exploited and the monopolistic capitalist profit motive which shaped “the workers have no country!”

In addition, without the slave trade from Africa in the 18th century, the development of capitalism would not have been able to develop so quickly in its initial phase and through subsequent waves. Liverpool, London, Bristol, Zeeland, Nantes and Bordeaux. In the 19th century, with the black la- bour trade, ‘it took “wage” labour, economic growth fuelled even more massive displacements of populations, especially towards the American continent. Indeed, the first 20 years of the 19th century, 50 to 60 million Europeans headed towards the USA in search of work. At the beginning of the 20th century, 50 to 60 million people entered the USA every year. For Italy alone, between 1901 and 1913, nearly 8 million people became immi- grants. During the ascendant phase of capitalism workers were able to absorb this mass of workers whose labour power was needed by an expanding economy.

In decadent capitalism, the state becomes a bunker
With the historic decline of the system, migra- tion and the displacement of populations have not stopped. On the contrary! Imperialist conflicts, es- pecially those in the Near and Far East, wars, economic disasters linked to climate change have fed ever- growing migrations. In 2010, it was estimated that there were 214 million migrants in the world. In the 3% of the world’s population). On the basis of change even, certain projections estimate that there will be over 25 million and one bil- lon extra migrants by 2050.

Because of the permanent crisis of capital and the overproduction of commodities, migrants have always been an important reserve of labour and the increasingly brutal rules imposed by the state. Capital can no longer integrate labour power on the same scale as before. Thus, in contrast to the period prior to the First World War when it opened its doors to the ‘huddled masses’, the USA has set up a whole network of quotas to drastically restrict entry, and is now building walls to halt the flow of migrants from Latin America. The economic crisis which opened up at the end of the 1960s has led all governments, especially in Europe, to set up heavy-handed patrols around the southern Mediterranean, employing an army of boats to control the flow of migrants. The undeclared aim of the ruling class is clear: migrants should stay at home and rot. To ensure this, the good democrats and of course, the opposition, are trying to outdo each other to ‘legitimise’ the exclusion of the ‘illegal’.

Today, with the development of military ten- sions, we see the repeated use of the cycles of people escaping war zones, especially from the Middle East and Africa.

The proletarian combat
In the face of growing barbarism, of brutal police measures against immigrants and the xenophobic campaigns disseminated by the ruling class, the proletariat can only respond with indignation and with international class solidarity. This means re- jecting any idea that immigrants and ‘foreigners’ are the cause of crisis and unemployment.

The media, especially those aligned to the Right, are constantly bombarding us with the image of migrants who foment crime and disorder and live as parasites from the ‘generous’ benefits handed out by western countries. In reality, it’s the im- migrants who are the first victims of the system. This nauseating right wing propaganda has always been used to divide workers. But the more insidi- ous traps are the ones laid by the ‘humanitarian’ Left, with its false generosity and good old com- mon sense, which also divides the working class by treating immigrants as a special case. Today, when factories are closing one after the other, and even when the books are getting thinner despite all the talk of ‘recovery’, it is becoming increasingly clear that all proletarians are being hit by the same crisis and are the same victims: migrants or not. What meaning can there be in the idea of competition for jobs from illegal workers when jobs for everyone are disappearing? Against this ideological offensive, against the policy of repression, the working class has to re- afirm its historical perspective. This begins with basic solidarity and advances towards recognis- ing its own revolutionary strength in society.

Syria: behind the diplomatic game, the impasse of a murderous system

Today, along with the development of military ten- sions, we see the repeated use of the cycles of people escaping war zones, especially from the Middle East and Africa.

1. Alongside the Italian Prime Minister A. Altano, ‘the workers have no country!’
2. Marx, Capital, Vol 1 chapter XXVII
3. Source: INED
4. 133 nuclear catastrophes were recorded in 1980. The USA alone has more than 100 reactors. See ‘The Nuclear Century’, IPPNW 40 years. See www. unchrc.org
5. Source: INED
6. E. Hagen, La république sanspoule, JLC 2001
7. For example, at Sangatte in Northern Europe, in 2000 a unit of police, 600 troops and 300 Malian police, in the name of humanitarianism, they supported a hardening of the borders on the coastline of the European continent, the first wave of refugees out of the 20th century.
8. Between 1944 and 1951, nearly 20 million people were displaced or evacuated from Europe. Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, refugee camps have sprung up like mushrooms, especially in Africa and the Middle East, where entire populations live in the face of survival, prey to famine, illness, and epidemics of all stripes.
9. The explosion of ‘illegal’ work
Since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the eastern bloc, two major events have inter- vened, on top of the growth of migration, to weigh on the labour market and increase the flow of migration:

- the emergence of the economic crisis, especially in the central countries; - the emergence of China.

For an initial period, workers from the eastern countries went west; this coincided with the first relocations of industry and it helped to exert a downward pressure on wages. In the last two decades, which had previously been on the margins of the world market, such as India and China, opened up the possibility of upcoming millions of workers who had come from the countryside, swelling the ranks of a reserve army made up of unemployed proletarians who could be drained for work when needed.

The very low level of wages paid to these work- ers in the context of a saturated world market makes it possible to put further pressure on wages and results in even more relocations. This explains the fact that in the central countries since the 1990s the western states of illegal and clandestine workers has exploded in certain sectors, despite the strengthen- ing of controls. In 2000 there were about 5 million illegal workers in Europe. In 2004, the USA and 20 million in India. The central states make ample use of this workforce, generally poorly qualified and without official papers, and whose extremely precarious position makes them ready to do pretty much anything for very low wages.

Under the watchful eye of the state a whole paral- lel market has been created, sustained by workers who are subject to all kinds of blackmail and live in atrocious conditions. The majority of agricultural workers are now being taken in by foreign workers, many of them illegal. In Italy, 65% of the agricultural labour force is illegal. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, 2 million Romanians migrated to the southern Europe for agricultural work. In Spain, the housing ‘boom’ which came before the crash was to a large extent based on the sweet of under- paid clandestine workers, often from Latin Ameri- can countries like Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, etc. To round this we must add the grey areas of the economy:

- the slaves who are exploited in factories; - the hundreds of thousands of workers who were forcibly integrated through the border; - the construction workers and the ‘low-skilled workers’ who are integrated through the border.

10. ICC Online: recent additions

The social movement in Brail, June 2013

“... But whatever the outcome of this latest crisis and the decisions taken in government ministries, and whether or not there is a direct military in- tervention in Syria, we are seeing a spectacular rise in warlike tensions against a background of mounting chaos, of an increasingly uncontrollable situation which has made the clash of arms more and more widespread.”

The attack on the Westgate shopping centre in Nairobi

“Today, along with the permanent and deplorable legacy of colonialism, there is a(Locale) to go” where child soldiers, mass rape, warlordism, religious irrationalism and disintegration are overlaid and managed by the major powers, the whole region is increasingly an imperialist free-for-all where any atrocity goes, a true cru- cible of capitalism barbarism.”

en国际化主义
From junk food to famine part 1
A system that poisons and starves

The media are full of unbearable images of children and whole families dying of starvation in a world where vast amounts of food are being thrown away. The violence of this absurd poverty seems to have no limits. 10,000 people die of hunger every day. A child under 10 dies of starvation every 5 seconds. 842 million people are suffering from severe undernourishment. And this misery is spreading throughout the world, reaching part of the population of the ‘rich’ world, where food banks are a normal occurrence. And if we are not immediately faced with hunger, we are being made to feel culpable for the horrors stalking the ‘third world’.

The false explanations of the bourgeoisie

The ‘experts’ give us the most unbelievable explanations for all this. There are too many people. Our food regime is not adapted to the resources of the planet. We don’t have enough respect for these resources. In short, everything is geared to making us feel as guilty as possible, while those who benefit from this are never denounced. Is it that their fault that modest families in the ‘Northern’ countries have to buy at the lowest prices at the supermarkets? Shouldn’t we blame the ‘consumers’ for buying products made in the most dubious conditions? There are those who repeat this endlessly, and many of them tell us if we ‘consume in a different way’, everyone will be better off, including those in the poor countries. Our problem is that we are not being responsible. We eat too much and we eat badly, so it’s all our fault if others are going hungry.

There’s not much doubt that we eat badly, given all the colourings, sugars, and pesticides in our food. We will come back to that later on. But for now the question is: how can we really understand this situation? Our planet is a fertile place, blessed with an extremely rich and diverse ecosystem which contains vast potential. With more than 10Gha (10,000,000,000 hectares) of potentially cultivable land, it seems inconceivable that with the current technology so many people are dying of hunger. And yet, when we compare the resources available on the planet with the actual use being made of them today, we can see enormous contradictions, contradictions which are threatening the very survival of our species.

Let’s look a bit more closely at these contradictions. As we said, the planet does dispose of more than 10Gha (10,000,000,000 hectares) of potentially cultivable land. According to a report published by the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in 1999, the total amount of land actually being cultivated today represents 4.9Gha, i.e. around half of what is available for the production of food. This same report indicates that the average amount of land on which a one hectare area of grains like wheat or maize would make it possible, given current conditions, to feed between 19 and 22 people for a year, whereas the exploitation of a hectare destined for producing beef or lamb for human consumption makes it possible to feed around 1.5 people a year.

The existing productivity in the agro-food sector thus makes it possible to feed the whole world population. If millions of human beings are dying of hunger every day, the cause is this ignoble system which does not produce to satisfy the needs of humanity, but to sell and make a profit. Here’s the big difference with the famines of the Middle Ages: these were a result of the limited development of agriculture, of the organisation of land and labour. Human beings continued to exploit every inch of land in order to make up for this lack of productivity. Today, under capitalism, humanity possesses extraordinary capacities which it is not using. Worse than that: the race for profit leads to immense waste:

In South-East Asian countries for example, losses of rice can range from 37% to 80% of total production depending on development stage, which amounts to total wastage in the region of about 180 million tonnes annually. The potential to provide 60–100% more food by simply eliminating losses is immense. While simultaneously feeding up land, energy and water resources for other uses, is an opportunity that should not be ignored.

In Europe, 50% of food products end up in the trash: 240,000 tons every day. In response to famines, setting a stop to such waste, to the destruction of unused food, would appear to be the immediate measures that need to be taken, even if they are largely insufficient. But even these basic measures can’t be taken by capitalism because in this society human welfare and the satisfaction of needs, even the most basic ones, is not the goal of production. Factories, machinery, capital only exist to make a profit and the workers are only fed so that they can produce according to the profit source of the capital. This might seem simple and obvious can only be adopted by the proletariat in a revolutionary situation.

This said, in the long term, a society free from social classes and capital will have to take much more radical measures than this. The capitalist mode of production ravages nature, exhausts the soil, poisons the air. The majority of animal species are threatened with extinction if the destructive madness of this system isn’t halted.

Those who are conscious of this situation can only react with indignation. But many claim that the way forward is to reduce consumption, and to practice negative growth. But the solution is neither ‘productivist’ (producing more and more) nor ‘consumptionist’ (satisfying the negative growth (producing less so that each human being lives just above the poverty line, which is impossible under capitalism with its inevitable class inequalities). It has to be much more radical and profound than that. If production is no longer spurred on by the hunt for profit but by the satisfaction of human need, then the conditions of production will have to change completely. In the realm of food production, all research, the whole organisation of labour and the soil, the process of distribution...will be guided by the respect for humanity and nature. But this implies the overthrow of capitalism.

From scarcity to overproduction

From what we know today, agriculture first made its appearance around 10,000 years ago, somewhere around the south east of what is today Turkey. Since then, techniques have continued to develop, sometimes resulting in major leaps in output. The use of animals to pull the swing plough became general in antiquity, while the development of the wheeled plough and of three crop rotation around the 10th century AD led to definite improvements in production. However, it is important to remember that despite the advances that marked this long period, the technical knowledge of the time did not make it possible to generate stable harvests from one year to the next. There were many examples of great famines that decimated the population:

l. ‘Global food, waste not, want not’
2. ‘Global Food’

We can also refer to the work of Olivee Serres (1539-1619) on the structure of agricultural practice

If we take up what Lenin says in opposition to the Economists this difficult situation takes on a more dynamic nature. Lenin’s makes the Economists this difficult situation takes on a more dynamic nature. Lenin’s makes the Economists this difficult situation takes on a more dynamic nature. Lenin’s makes the Economists this difficult situation takes on a more dynamic nature. Lenin’s makes the Economists this difficult situation takes on a more dynamic nature. Lenin’s makes the

In this context the recent upsurge of social movements takes on great importance. We have always said that what is most important about the Movements is the fact that they tried to not only organise demonstrations but also discussions, activity, that at the core of these movements has been an elemental indignation about increasingly brutal crushing of the hopes that capitalism used to be able to hold out, no matter how illusory that was.

The core of these mobilizations, as comrades have pointed out, has been the unemployed, under-

The low level of strikes in the UK and elsewhere is due to a lack of understanding of the struggle for the transition of village communities from feudalism to capitalism. This struggle is marked by the central point that the bourgeoisie want to keep the proletariat’s vision of its self-imposed in the immediate, in the factory and industry, in their conditions and those of their children. Lenin’s determined and intransigent struggle against the factory laws was precisely because with their talk of the daily struggle being the most important aspect to the class struggle, their insistence that rev-}

In the advanced industrial countries, we have

To simplify, during the 14th and 15th centuries, a huge debacle in the growth of the economy of Western Europe took place. By the end of the 15th century, harvests in France were 50% below that of previous years, result-

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These movements have posed the very thing that was so evident by its almost total absence during the 70s and 80s during the massive mobilizations of the class in strike movements: politicization.

Discuss with the ICC and others through our online discussion forum

Extract from a longer post by Ernie on the recent social movements in Turkey and Brazil. The discussion can be found at

Below is the translation of an article written by our comrades in Mexico and published in the number two of the Revolución Mundial (March-April 2013).

The terror and the degeneration of the Russian Revolution are explained solely through the personality of Stalin, an uncorrected and one-sided formula. It is certain that his character was an important factor in the historical role played by Stalin, but not the only one.

60 years ago, on 6 March 1953, the world press announced the death of Stalin. “The mad dog is dead; the madness is over”, was the popular adage expressed by the Western press. But in the case of Stalin, such a statement was unjustified. If Stalin was at the helm of the physical and mental destruction of a whole generation of revolutionaries, if he openly contradicted all the internationalist principles of Marxism and if he has been declared the author of one of the major crimes and powers that presided over the division of world, his death in no way eliminated or halted the counterrevolution.

In his lifetime, Stalin thus stifled and the triumphant Russian revolution became isolated. The bourgeoisie of the whole world, including the French government, in total complicity with the Comintern, is indicative of the attitude of the bourgeoisie, saying “he will be one of the great men in Russian history”.

Stalinism, the incarnation of the bourgeois counter-revolution

One of these crisisary waves of bureaucracy occurred during and after the First World War, it was the Russian proletariat at the head of the revolution of 1917 that produced the conditions for the overturning of the international wave. The process continued in 1918 when the battles of the German working class rose up, sections of the proletariat but they were ruthlessly crushed by the German bourgeoisie state led by Social Democracy with the broad collaboration of the democratic states. Attempts to spread the proletarian revolution were thus stifled and the triumphant Russian revolution became isolated. The bourgeoisie of the whole world, including the French government, in total complicity with the Comintern, is indicative of the attitude of the bourgeoisie, saying “he will be one of the great men in Russian history”.

Therefore, Stalinism is not the product of the communist revolution but rather the product of its defeat. Following to the letter the advice provided by Machiavelli, Stalin had no hesitation in resorting to intrigue, lies, manipulation and terror to install himself at the head of the state and to consolidate his power, strengthening the work of the counter-revolution by resorting to acts as ruthless as rewriting history, doctoring photos by eliminating from them certain personalities he regarded as ‘heretics’ because of their oppositional stand. At the same time he promoted the cult of his personality and distorted the truth about the scale of repression and making this the core of his policy. This is why Stalinism is in no way a proletarian current; it is quite obvious that the means used and objectives pursued by Stalin and the Russian proletariat that surrounded him with were overtly bourgeois.

With the ebbing of the revolutionary wave of 1917, the process of bureaucratization opened the door to the actions of Stalin. Thus, persecution, harassment and the physical elimination of combative proletarian vanguard are referred to the ruling class. The world bourgeoisie applauded his methods, not only because an important generation of revolutionaries was wiped out but also because it was done in the name of communism, not to mention the whole working class into total confusion.

The charges trumped up by the political police, the threats of consolidation camps and other atrocities, were supported by all the democratic states. For example, even before the trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev (in 1936) in which threats against their families and physical torture were used, the democratic states applauded the services that Stalin rendered to their system: through the medium of their “worthy” representatives assembled at the League of Human Rights (headquarters in France), the bourgeoisie approved the perfect ‘legality’ of the purges and the trials. The declaration of the novelists Romain Rolland, Nobel Prize for Literature winner in 1915 and distinguished member of this organisation, is indicative of the attitude of the ruling class: “There is no reason to doubt the accusations against Zinoviev and Kamenev: individuals discredited for quite some time, who have twice been turned coats and gone back on their word. I do not know how I could dismiss as inventions or explain away the public statements of these defendants themselves.”

Similarly, before the forced exile of Trotsky and his subsequent hounding across the world, the Social Democratic government of Norway and the French government, in total complicity with Stalinism, did not hesitate to harass and ultimately expel the old Bolshevik.

Churchill and Stalin

The shipment of arms to countries like Angola was a demonstration of proletarian internationalism. This is not at all a confusion but is a deliberate policy aimed at demolishing this central pillar of Marxism.

In the Principles of Communism (1847), Engels clearly defined the internationalist argument attacked by Stalin: “Will it be possible for this revolution to take place in one country alone? No.

By creating the world market, big industry has already brought all the peoples of the Earth, and especially the civilized peoples, into such close relation with one another that none is independent of what happens to the others.

There has co-ordinated the social development of the civilised countries to such an extent that, in all of them, bourgeoisie and proletariat have become the decisive classes, and the struggle between them the great struggle of the day.

It follows that the communist revolution will not merely be a national phenomenon but must take place simultaneously in all civilised countries (...)

It is a universal revolution and will, accordingly, have a universal range”.

The Bolsheviks, with Lenin at the helm, conceived the revolution in Russia as a first battle in the world revolution. That is why Stalin was lying when he validated his thesis, he said it was a continuation of the teachings of Lenin. The bourgeoisie nature of this “theory” dug the grave of the Bolsheviks, it was one of the main pillars of the Communist Internationale by subjecting these bodies to the defense of the interests of the Russian state.

Stalinism, an important pillar in the reconstruction of the bourgeoisie in the USSR

The growth of terror through the concentration camps and the surveillance, control and repression organised through the NKVD (the secret police),... symbolise the counter-revolutionary juggernaut that was built by Stalin...

So, is it possible to change it. It needs to reclaim its own history and correct the trajectory and to be able to really understand the anti-proletarian profile of Stalin and Stalinism; it has, above all, to discover the internationalist principles of Marxism that the bourgeoisie has persistently distorted and attacked, because they are the key to real class action.

Tatlin, February 2013

International Review 152

Social movements in Turkey and Brazil: Indignation at the heart of the proletarian dynamic

20th congress of the ICC

- Balance sheet of the congress
- Report on imperialist tensions
- Resolution on the international situation

Bilan, the Dutch left, and the transition to communism (II)
Tribute to our comrade Jean-Pierre

With the death of Jean-Pierre, the ICC has lost a rounded comrade, a great fighter, and a remarkable character. Jean-Pierre left us during the night of 13 September, following a long and incurable illness whose fatal outcome was recognised by everyone, including himself. For more than two years our comrade, who had grown to love playing sport, little by little lost the use of his limbs, his breathing and finally his speech. During this period, his heart was always perfectly conscious of every moment in the evaluation of his illness and its consequences. This lucidity obviously affected him profoundly because he knew he would have to give up so much of what he loved: physical activity, a direct contact with nature, in particular the mountains where he used to go on long rambles (he lived in the Alps), cooking... But he didn’t accept this fatalistically. He wanted to stay at home for as long as possible and no one could make him change his mind about this. He firmly insisted on staying in this familiar, human space to maintain the closest possible links with his family, friends and comrades. This space was his access to the world, the place where he had his books, the place where he could talk about politics and current events until the last moment, the place where he could watch a film and talk about it, the place where he could read the poetry he liked. His strongest wish was to put limits on the medical procedures aimed at keeping him alive. He strug

A remarkable and engaging personality

Jean-Pierre’s personality was so engaging that his memory remains alive in all his comrades. He was an example of a fighter devoted to the organisation as much as his means allowed. At the end, from his bed, he maintained the closest possible links with his family, friends and comrades, and had strong ties of personal friendship with those who have had the good fortune to know him but for others he met on the way. His comrade, his curiosity, his mind was always developing and he was always curious, his mind was always developing and he had a lot of empathy not only for those closest to him but for others he met on the way. His compa-

An exemplary fighter

Jean-Pierre joined the ICC relatively late in his life. After being mobilised for the war in Algeria, which he experienced as a moment of unacceptable and unappeasable barbarity, he never stopped working for the perspective of constructing another society where these kinds of horrors would be banished forever. Holding on to this notion, he went through May 68 with all his hopes and all his confusions, in particular his communistian ideas. He didn’t discover the ICC until the 1990s. There he found the theoretical and practical coherence of Marxism, which enabled him to make a real political break with the confused ideologies he had maintained up until then. This encounter rooted him firmly in the “passion for communism” (ac-

Established in 1982

The militants of the ICC share deeply the pain of his children, of his family, of his friends. We have lost our comrade Jean-Pierre, but his memory is always open to those who have had the good fortune to know him and work by his side. The ICC salutes you, comrade, as an exemplary militant for the cause of communism, to which you gave the best of yourself. ICC 15.10.2013

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

Donations are always welcome.

Contact the ICC

Write to the following addresses without mentioning the name:

COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL
P.O.B 25, NIT, Faridabad, 121001 Haryana, INDIA.

WORLD REVOLUTION BM Box 869, London WC IN 3XX, GREAT BRITAIN

Write by e-mail to the following addresses:

From Great Britain use akicommunistinternational.org

From India use india@internationalism.org

From the rest of the world use international@internationalism.org

Visit the ICC Website:

http://www.internationalism.org
Golden Dawn
Democracy and fascism need each other

The staking of Greek rapper Pavlos Fyssas in September by a self-confessed member of Golden Dawn has led to a wave of official actions against the neo-Nazi party. Mem- bers of the government are reported on charges of belonging to a criminal organisation, following the lifting of its parliamentary immu- nity. Individuals have been charged with murder, attempted murder, sex trafficking, money laun- dering, benefice and tax fraud. Its state funding has been suspended, following the police evidence of the involvement of the party in attacks on im- migrants, extortion and arms smuggling.

Political parties have shown themselves united in their condemnation of the party, all agree- ing that Golden Dawn (GD) is a serious threat to democracy. Alexis Tsipras, the leader of left wing opposition party Syriza supported the repressive measures: “The intervention shows that our de- mocracy is standing firm and is healthy” while suggesting that the “intervention has not gone far enough as Syriza called for all GD members to be arrested. The Greek Socialist Workers’ Party said: “At last a political ‘victory’” following Operation Xenios Zeus, which ‘cleared’ from the Greek ‘Guantanamo’. Here, officially, 1600 people face ‘tough conditions’ by being kept under the control of police, the Greek state has been accused of using the torture and violence to pressure the people as a way to put to an end to the communist revolution. It has twice plunged humanity into a new crisis. In the 1980s, it entered into the final phase of capitalist decadence, the October revolution of 1917 and Hungary and China, and it has given rise to the most serious causes for concern. Greece is seen as “overwhelmed by extremely high unemployment, deepening economic crisis and a new disillu- sionment with the political establishment”. On every count the report sees Greece coming out badly. It’s the most corrupt country in the EU, “... in countries like Greece and Italy corrup- tion is rife in slush cash for economic reform. The economic crisis has linked to widespread discontent — and recent report found Greeks now the most unhappy people in Europe. In the face of discontent “Some have even gone underground, with the collective voice of hundreds of thousands, have put in danger the democratic state has a far wider weaponry, both political and ideological, and it is sophisticated enough to subvert the whole of fascism to bolster its own power.”

In August 2012 the Greek coalition government announced the following: “In order to advance its combat, the working class has to unify its struggles, taking charge of their ex- tension and organisation through sovereign general strikes, extending its international solidarity and by struggling against the bourgeoisie in all countries.”

* The nationwide general strikes have been co-ordinated by the Communist-affiliated trade union, PAME.
* The styled regimes which arose in the USSR, eastern Europe, China, Cuba etc and were called ‘socialist’ and ‘communist’ in name only (capitalist representatives of the old feudal system were back in power) have been their own god- dman. It was the end of the ‘class struggle’ as a meaningful concept. All factions of the bourgeoisie are equally re- sponsible for the ‘triumph’ of neo-capitalism.
* The handled parties of the Greek bourgeoisie until the new-fund unity of the bourgeoisie against Golden Dawn has given an impetus to Greek democracy. However, this is not going to last forever. The early November killing of two members of Golden Dawn provoked much specualation on what would happen next. One approach is that it is retaliation for the death of Fyssas and anticipated an escalation of tit-for-tat violence. This would not necessarily lead to greater instability as the Greek state would be in a position to say that further repression was required against other extremists, not just neo-fascists. Marched on, the regime would use its repressive and ideological, and it is sophisticated enough to subvert the whole of fascism to bolster its own power.”

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 deca- dent social system. It has twice plunged humanity into a new crisis. In the 1980s, it entered into the final phase of capitalist decadence, the October revolution of 1917 and Hungary and China, and it has given rise to the most serious causes for concern. Greece is seen as “overwhelmed by extremely high unemployment, deepening economic crisis and a new disillu- sionment with the political establishment”. On every count the report sees Greece coming out badly. It’s the most corrupt country in the EU, “... in countries like Greece and Italy corrup- tion has been rife in slush cash for economic reform. The economic crisis has linked to widespread discontent — and recent report found Greeks now the most unhappy people in Europe. In the face of discontent “Some have even gone underground, with the collective voice of hundreds of thousands, have put in danger the democratic state has a far wider weaponry, both political and ideological, and it is sophisticated enough to subvert the whole of fascism to bolster its own power.”

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