US election

Trump and Biden: the false choices of capitalist democracy

Capitalism, the system of production which dominates the planet and every country on it, is sinking into an advanced state of decay. A century of decline is reaching its ultimate stages, threatening the survival of humanity with a spiral of insane wars, economic depression, ecological disasters and devastating pandemics.

Every nation state on Earth is committed to maintaining this dying system. Every government, whetherclothed in democratic or totalitarian garb, whether openly pro-capitalist or falsely “socialist”, exists to defend the true goals of capitalism: the expansion of profit at the expense of the only possible future for our species, a worldwide community where production has only one aim - the satisfaction of human need.

Therefore the choice of which party or president takes the reins of government is a false choice that cannot turn capitalist civilisation away from the path towards catastrophe. This applies to the coming US elections as much as to any other electoral circus.

Trump is not the workers’ friend…

It is clear to many that Trump is an avowed defender of everything that is rotten about capitalism: from his denials of the reality of Covid-19 and of climate change, to his apologies for police brutality in the name of law and order, to his dog-whistle appeals to racism and the extreme right, to his disgusting personal treatment of the women who come into his sights. But the fact that he is, in the words of his former legal hit-man Michael Cohen, “a liar, a con-man and a racist…”， doesn’t prevent important factions of the capitalist class from backing him because his policies of overt economic nationalism and deregulation of environmental and health services serve to increase their profits.

At the last election Trump conformed many American workers into believing that “America First” protectionism would save their jobs and revive traditional industries. But even before the Covid crisis the world economy - including China - was already heading for a new recession and the economic consequences of the pandemic are going to be even more brutal. Protectionism is an illusion because no economy can cut itself off from the remorseless laws of the world market.

…but neither are the Democrats

According to Trump, Joe Biden threatens to turn America into a “socialist utopia”, because he’s a mere puppet in the hands of the “radical left” personified by the likes of Bernie Sanders and the “Squad” around Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar and others.

In reality, Biden was chosen as the Democratic candidate because he represents the continuation of the mainstream Democratic polices of Obama and Clinton, which have much in common with those of Trump: the “pivot to the East” to confront Chinese imperialism was begun under Obama, who was also known as the “deporter in chief” because of his ruthless approach to “illegal” immigrants. Of course the Democrats have their differences with Trump: they are more closely linked to the military and security establishment which is deeply suspicious of Trump’s fawning approach to Putin’s Russia, and they are embarrassed by his reckless breaking of international treaties and alliances because it undermines the USA’s diplomatic credibility. But these are differences over the best strategy for American imperialism. Likewise, they object to Trump’s scant respect for the norms of “democracy” because they know how important the democratic illusion is to the preservation of social order. That’s the real reason they – and important representatives of the military – opposed Trump’s threat to use federal troops against protesters in various US cities.

The Democratic Party has never had anything more than the alternative party of US capitalism. It’s true that recently there has been a growth of groupings like the Democratic Socialist Alliance and advocates of the Green New Deal, Black Lives Matter and the various forms of identity politics in or around the official party. But this “radical left” offers only a more left-wing version of state-run capitalism, which all factions of the ruling class – including the right and the fanatics of free enterprise – are obliged to adhere to in a world ravaged by crisis and war. None of the policies of the left question the existence of the nation state, borders or even national borders, by gender, and by “race”, above all in a country like the US with its poisonous legacy of slavery and racism.

But the working class is also the class of association, which is compelled to work collectively, and to defend itself collectively. When it raises its head, it tends to overcome the divisions in its ranks because it has no choice if it is avoid defeat. Racism and nationalism are perhaps the most potent tools for dividing workers, but they can and must be overcome if the class struggle is to move forward. When the Covid-19 pandemic first struck, US workers reacted against being forced to work without protection in car plants, hospitals, supermarkets or warehouses; and every worker, “white” “black”, “Latino” or other stood shoulder to shoulder on the picket lines.

“So we agree - both of them defend the interests of capitalism?”

The working class holds the key to the future

No capitalist politician or party can offer a way out of the crisis of their system. The world’s future lies in the hands of the class which produces everything we need to live, which is exploited by capital in every country, and which everywhere has the same interests: to unite in defence of its working and living conditions, to develop the self-organisation and consciousness needed to confront the capitalist system and put forward its own historic solution: authentic socialism.

This may seem to be a very distant prospect. In its day to day existence the working class is divided in a thousand different ways: in the competition for jobs, by national borders, by gender, and by “race”, above all in a country like the US with its poisonous legacy of slavery and racism.

continued on page 7

Inside this issue

Links of control by the ruling class - Britain ruled by the waves 2
- Johnson government: a policy of vandalism
Protests in the health sector: putting “national unity” into question 3
- Racism, whether the regime is authoritarian or democratic, it’s same capitalist exploitation!
- Explosion in Beirut: a tragic illustration of capitalist negligence
- The mass strike in Poland 1980: Lessons for the future
- Life of the R.C.
- Population lockdown: the bourgeois state shows its brutality
The irresponsible ‘return to normality’… before a return to semi-lockdown

On a collision course with the European Union

The Johnson government is heading for the semi-lockdown it so longs for. The Withdrawal Agreement has been signed. The government is set to ease lockdown measures, when Boris Johnson, the populist leader, first announced his plan for a gradual ‘return to normal’. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union. The government’s decision has been taken to improve its image in the eyes of the British public, but it has also been taken to improve the government’s image in the eyes of the European Union.
August 8th and subsequent weekends throughout the summer, NHS workers take to the streets of major towns and cities, protesting angrily against low pay, high tuition fees, inadequate safety measures, long and unpredictable shift hours, lack of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) against the spread of Covid-19, systemic under-funding and the increased and open-ended workloads and shift patterns that they experienced. All of this was further emphasized by the evident anger – was further emphasized by the evidence of the work that they had done, and their determination that their ‘heroic sacrifice’ as a deadly burden had been.”

On the second day of the protest,座上, in the view of the authors of the International Review, the Manchester conflict brought the struggle into the open. In the view of hundreds of thousands of workers and the people of the northern industrial towns, the demand to put “national unity” into question was the most momentous of their demands, and the struggle to win this demand will continue.

The struggle had developed very widely in various categories of working class. For all its centuries of experience, Blair’s government is formed by those loyal to the imperialist, economic and financial structures of the other bloc. Today we are witnessing the acceleration of the process of dislocation and collapse, and it was inevitable that the working class would be the first to be attacked.

The government’s inability to provide any control over the economy and the labour market, or to implement any measures to support the working class, is further proof that the United Kingdom, like all other capitalist countries, is technologically and economically unable to deal with the crisis. The government’s inability to provide any control over the economy and the labour market, or to implement any measures to support the working class, is further proof that the United Kingdom, like all other capitalist countries, is technologically and economically unable to deal with the crisis.

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Belarus: whether the regime is authoritarian or democratic, it’s the same capitalist exploitation!

Since the victory of Alexander Lukashenko in the presidential election of August 9 2020, a vicious circle of repression, violence and manipulation has come into being around the national flag, with the regime having been protesting against the regime and demanding “free elections”. Before the election, the main opposition candidate, Svetlana Tikhanouskaya, had already been attracting large crowds to her meetings. Shortly after the election results were announced, the trade unions were linked to the opposition called for a general strike. As with the demonstrations, strikes have spread across the country, even hitting emblematic plants like the Kola Paper Mill or MTZ tractors. The “last dictator in Europe”, in power for a quarter of a century, has been brutally repressing the population.

However, the rise of violence against women

The rise of violence against women and children

For many weeks, or indeed several months, the mass of the population has come out onto the street, following calls from the opposition and various unions, under the pressure of large media coverage, including via the site Médiapart. The government has been trying, as always, to divert the population’s attention away from the issues at stake, by demonising the opposition. The authorities, in their眼里, are using the population as a makeweight for manoeuvres aimed at creating a divide between generations. If, of course, all the opposition leaders are not two-faced and have already given in to the regime, this is a sign that a new dynamic has been unleashed by the popula...
On 4 August 2020, in the port of Beirut, a stockpile of 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate exploded, causing one of the biggest industrial disasters in the history of capitalism.

Capitalism's latest criminal act
To date, 190 officially dead, dozens missing and missing, was the preliminary version. According to specialists from Sheffield University, this explosion would be the equivalent to a tenth of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. The material damage was enormous: imagine a crater 120m in diameter and 43m deep! Hospitals, like the Saint-Georges Hospital, were badly affected by the shock wave. The immediate consequences of the explosion were dramatic: the port and much of the city collapsed: 43 died. We soon found out that the bourgeoisie in store for society.

On 3 December 1984, in Bhopal in India, at the Union Carbide pesticide plant, owned by a subsidiary of American corporation, there was a highly toxic gas leak: 30,000 dead, between 200,000 and 300,000 sick in a city of 800,000 inhabitants, a case that marked the beginning of organised resistance to the exploitation of the working class. In October 2019 were drastic: you can't withdraw wages from the bank; you can't withdraw currency, there's no access to the most basic medical care. The Lebanese port authorities did not allow the ship to go to sea. In 2014, the nitrate was unloaded and then stored in a warehouse at the port. The owner abandoned the ship (refusing to pay for repairs) and the sailors. Obviously, they were no longer being paid and were prepared to abandon the ship if they did not comply. The story does not end there: subsequently, customs officers warned six times about the danger of this explosive stockpile.

Explosion in Beirut: a tragic illustration of capitalist negligence
In times of crisis capitalism reveals its true face
Economic crises want to present itself as a class at the helm of a society that benefits everyone, a society where everyone has their place and where everyone has their opportunity. But when a health, economic and social crisis of this magnitude strikes, the veil slips and the unblushing monstrous face of the bourgeoisie emerges. A system in which life is a commodity that attracts attention and support only if it is deemed to be profitable, and then on the condition that it does not cost too much. This logic, in which human life is irrelevant, is at the root of the proliferation of catastrophes, especially when all over the world in the context of a catastrophic political and social crisis and today into its phase of decomposition. It is enough, among the immense number of catastrophes, to mention some notable ones to get an idea of the gravity of the situation:

- On 10 July 1976, the factory of a Swiss firm, located in Severo, 20 km from Milan, suffered a fire and an explosion that killed 2,500 people. Thefaux news that the reactors blew a safety valve and caused an explosion of extremely harmful herbicides. Dis- enox was a chemical agent in Agent Orange that was widely used by the US military in villages throughout the country during the war in Vietnam!

- On 26 April 1986, the Chernobyl nuclear power plant 96 km from Kiev in Ukraine (then a “socialist” republic of the USSR) exploded and left the region uninhabitable for a long time. The number of people exposed to radioactive contamination is estimated at several thousand. In April 2020, fires in a forest near the power station increased radioactivity 16 times compared to “normal” but everything was “under control” according to local authorities.

- On 28 August 2001, in the Alpine region of Rouen, a Toulouse-based chemical factory exploded. An explosion of a stock of ammonium nitrate caused the deaths of 21,500 people and 2,000 injuries: the cause of the explosion was, as in Beirut, the storage of this highly toxic product without any protection and very close to a large city.

- On 12 August 2015, in the port of Tianjin in China, 140 km north of Beijing: a sodium cyanide tank exploded and the toxic vapor killed 173 died, according to the figures provided by the Chinese authorities, more than 700 people were injured or injured, thousands were made homeless, in a devastated area with a radius of several kilometers.

- On 12 August 2018, the Gensia Bridge in Italy collapsed due to corrosion. We know that monitoring sensors had not worked for several years… However, two years later, the authors of this article, by chance, visited this area (without the presence of affected families who refused to participate in this despicable ceremony).

- On 26 September 2019, in the river port of Rouen, the American Lurbiloz plant, similar to that at Seveso, caught fire and a subsequent explosion occurred. With the economic crisis, with the sinking of this society into an ever-greater immaturity and chaos, increasingly irresponsible and deadly policies are imposed on life itself. To listen to this class of liars, its media and others who chum out its ideology, the world in the future will no longer be like the one before.

Economy will continue to believe that in the future “there will be better health services”, that “there will be masks and tests”, that “the world will be more unified”, that “we will take care of all the elderly in the care homes”, that “loneliness will be at an end”, that “we will not repeat the same mistakes again”, etc. These hypochromatic tall tales are supported by the media and the managers who monopolise the space, even by the leaders of the state, as if a new wave of demonstrations in June. Nothing changed. The Lebanese state has been mired for decades in a system of corruption in which the banking system (fuelled by foreign funds, including powerful regional sponsors) plagues the entire economy and inexorably sinks the country into decomposition.

The “international community” is an accomplice
As always, the same scenario arises: the international bourgeoisie sympathises, sends some assistance, and promises aid. But capitalist life continues as usual. The race for profit, exacerbating the geopolitical rivalries that fuel growing chaos. Under the guise of solidarity and humanitarian aid, the multinational corporations (MNCs) create new monopolies and open up new regional powers (be it the great powers or the second rank regional powers) pushing to “help” Lebanon in or-
In the countries of Western Europe by making rapid concessions such as wage increases. In mid-July, the workers in Lublin, an important railway junction, went on strike. Lublin was located on the main railway linking Russia with East Germany. In 1980, it was a vital line for conveying Russian troops from East Germany. The demands of the workers were: no repression against the striking workers, withdrawal of the police from the factories, wage increases and free trade union elections. The movement spread, attempts to stop and divide it failed: the mass strike was underway. Within two months, Poland was paralysed. The situation was too explosive for the government to suppress. In addition, the danger was not confined within the Polish borders. In the coal-mining region of Ostrava in Czechoslovakia, and in the Romanian mining region, in Russia, in Togliatti, miners and workers were following the same path. “In the countries of Western Europe, if there were no strikes in solidarity with the struggles of the Polish workers, workers in many countries took up the slogans of their class brothers in Poland.” In Turin, in September 1980, we could hear workers chanting “Gdansk shows the way.”

Faced with this danger of extension, the bourgeoisies of the world worked together to crush the movement. On the one hand, the movement had to be isolated and on the other it had to be misinterpreted. The borders with East Germany, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union were quickly closed. The international bourgeoisies worked hand in hand to shut down and isolate the movement: the Polish government feigned a radical distancing towards the USSR, the Soviet government threatened the workers by moving tanks to the border and Western Europe financed and advised Solidarnosc while international propaganda rallied behind Solidarnosc as a heroic, free and independent trade union.

This alliance of the various Western bourgeoisies with the Polish bourgeoisie proved fatal for the Polish mass movement. And it is for this reason that, contrary to the theory of the weakest link, the future revolution can only start from the central countries: “as long as the important movements of the class only affect countries on the periphery of capitalism (as was the case for Poland) and even if the local bourgeoisie is completely overwhelmed, the Holy Alliance of all the bourgeoisies of the world, led by the most powerful one, will be able to establish a common santisome both economically and politically, ideologically and even militarily around the proletarian sectors concerned. It is only at the moment that the proletarian struggle strikes the economic and political heart of the capitalist system.”

1. “The proletariat of western Europe at the centre of the generalisation of the class struggle”, International Review 31

Ilusions in democracy and trade unions: the weakness of the working class in Poland

The main weapon of the bourgeoisie would be the Solidarnosc trade union itself. Called on to play the role of the “left-wing” of capital, a role it would perform “clandestinely” from 1982 onward, it diverted the struggle onto the nationalist terrain, serving the workers up to defeat and to repression. This trade union came out of the KOR (the Workers’ Defence Committee) that emerged after the repressions of 1976 and was comprised of the intellectuals of the democratic opposition fighting for the legalisation of independent trade unions. It would have 15 of its members incorporated in the MKS (the inter-factory strike committee).

While “there was no trade union influence in the summer of 1980 at the start of the movement, the members of the ‘free trade union’ act to undermine the struggle. While initially negotiations were conducted openly, after a while it was claimed that “experts” were needed to work through the details of negotiations with the government. It became increasingly difficult for the workers to follow the negotiations, let alone participate in them, as the loudspeakers transmitting the negotiations had stopped working due to “technical” problems. The work of sabotage had begun. The political and economic demands (including wage demands) were diverted towards the unions’ interests rather than those of the workers, with the recognition of independent unions to the fore. On August 31, the Gdansk Agreement, embodying the democratic and trade union illusions, signed the death knell of the mass strike. “Because the workers understood that the official trade unions were an integral part of the state, most of them now believed that the newly founded Solidarnosc trade union, with ten million workers, was incorrigible and would defend their interests. They had no familiarity with the experience of the workers in the West who had been confronted for decades with ‘free unions’.”

Solidarnosc would perfectly assume its role as the fire-fighter of capitalism and extinguish the workers’ combative. “Democratic illusions were the ideal breeding ground for the bourgeoisie and its trade union Solidarnosc to carry out their anti-working class policy and undermine the struggle.” In the autumn of 1980, when the workers went on strike again to protect the Gdansk Agreement, having realised that even with a ‘free’ trade union on their side, their material situation had worsened, Solidarnosc was already beginning to show its true face. Once the mass strike had ended, Walesa, as the leader, travelled all around in an army helicopter to call on the workers to urgently stop their strikes, saying “we don’t need any more strikes because they are pushing our country towards the abyss.” Whensoever possible, he seized the initiative from the workers, preventing them from launching new strikes. “While no workers were beaten or killed in the summer of 1980 because of self-organisation and extension of the struggles, and because there was no union supervision over the workers, in December 1981 more than 200 workers were murdered and tens of thousands were imprisoned or driven into exile.” The living conditions that would follow were worsened by the continual sabotage of Solidarnosc, leaving the Polish working class impoverished and forced into exile to sell its labour power.

The lessons of the summer of 1980

Despite this defeat, the experience of this work of self-organisation and extension of the struggles at point of an international wave of struggles and it provided an illustration of the fact that the class unite and defend their interests against the bourgeoisie to suspend its imperialist rivalities. The military action of the USSR in Afghanistan, which ended in 1979, was bailed by the actions of the undeclared proletariat in the Eastern bloc. This clearly showed the power of the work of self-organisation: “In the summer of 1980, the workers took the initiative in the struggle. Not waiting for instructions from on high, they marched together and held assemblies to decide for themselves the place and time of their struggles. Joint demands were put forward in the mass assemblies. A strike committee was formed. In the beginning, economic demands were to the fore. The workers were determined. They did not want to suffer a repetition of the bloody crushing suffered by the struggle in 1979 and 1976. In the industrial centre of Gdansk-Gdynia-Sopot, an inter-factory strike committee (MKS) was formed, composed of 85 delegates (two delegates per enterprise). In the second half of August, some 800 to 1,000 delegates would meet. Each delegate represented 100 workers at the Lenin Shipyards. Loudspeakers were installed to allow everyone to follow the discussions of the strike committees and the negotiations with government representatives. At that time there were even microphones installed outside the MKS meeting room so that the workers present in the general assemblies could intervene directly in the MKS discussions. In the evenings, the delegates - most of them provided with cassette with recordings of the debates - returned to their workplaces and presented the discussions and the situation in their ‘factory’ general assembly, returning their mandate to it. These were the means by which as many workers as possible could participate in the struggle. Delegates had to return their mandate, which were revocable at any time, and the general assemblies were always sovereign. All these practices were totally opposed to union practices. Meanwhile, while the workers of Gdansk-Gdynia-Sopot united, the movement spread to other cities. To sabotage communications between workers, the government took recourse in the police. Immediately, the workers threatened to extend their movement even further if the government did not come forward to meet them. The general assembly then decided to set up a workers’ militia. It was collectively decided to ban alcohol as consumption was widespread.
The workers understood the need for clear heads in their confrontation with the government. When the government threatened a crackdown in Gdansk, the railway workers in Lublin declared: “If the workers in Gdansk are physically attacked and if even one of them is harmed, we will paralyse the [Strawke] railway until its railway line between Russia and East Germany”. In almost all major cities, the workers were mobilised. More than a million of them understood that they were the only effective force in the country capable of opposing the government and that this strength came from:  

- the rapid expansion of the movement in contrast with what happened in 1970 and 1976 when it was overtaken by violent confrontations;  
- the self-organisation, that is the ability of the workers to take their own initiatives instead of trusting the unions;  
- by general assemblies uniting their forces, controlling the movement and providing the greatest possible mass participation in the negotiations with the government that was visible to all.

In fact the expansion of the movement was the best weapon of solidarity: the workers did not just make pronouncements, they took the initiative in the struggles themselves. This dynamic made possible a change in the balance of forces. As long as the workers were struggling in such a massive and united way, the government was unable to carry out any repression. Poland 1980 was one of the great historical experiences of the workers’ movement, an experience that the proletariat might learn from in preparing its future struggles so that it will have confidence in its strength and its ability to organise itself, knowing how to develop solidarity but also being aware of the traps that the bourgeoisie is able to set, especially with the trade unions.

All the quotations come from the article: “Poland (August 1980): 40 years ago, the world proletariat repudiated the experience of the mass strike”. Revue Internationale n°483 (July-August 2020)

The ICC has published numerous articles about the struggles in Poland. The following, from our International Review, are available online in English:

International Review 23  
“The capitalist crisis in the Eastern bloc”  
“Mass strikes in Poland 1980: The proletariat opens a new breach”

International Review 24  
“In the light of the events in Poland, the role of revolutionaries”  
“The international dimension of the workers’ struggles in Poland”

International Review 27  
“Notes on the mass strike”  
“One year of workers’ struggles in Poland”

International Review 28  
“State of war in Poland: the working class against the world bourgeoisie”

International Review 29  
“After the repression in Poland: perspectives for the world class struggle”

Note on the ICC’s intervention towards the mass strikes

During these events, as well as numerous articles in its press, the ICC also distributed three international leaflets, two of them translated into Polish.

The first, dated 6 September 1980, described the massive struggles of the summer, highlighting the power of the movement, its generalisation and self-organisation, denouncing trade unionism and insisting that the workers have no country. It was distributed in about ten countries.

The second leaflet, dated 10 March 1981, was distributed internationally by post in English, Polish and distributed in Poland by a delegation of comrades. It denounced the so-called “socialist” nature of the Eastern bloc countries, putting forward an internationalist standpoint and exposing the activities of the different bourgeoisies and of the trade unions.
Population lockdown: the bourgeois state shows its brutality

Social and collective life increasingly at risk

Contrary to what the bourgeoisie wants us to believe, we are not all equal when facing life’s human, just as we are not all equal when it comes to the consequences of the lock-down. In capitalist society, the proletarians always pay the most heavily and physically for the tragedies generated by this rotting system. Within the exploitive class, the weakest or those who have become “useless” and “unemployed” and the most exploited are the first to suffer the consequences of its inhumanity and barbarism.

The three Internationals (the First, Second and Third) created in 1864-72, the General Council of the First, the International Working Men’s Association (InGWa) in 1864, and the Communist League in 1871 were all organisations of the proletariat. Their aim was to create a communist society, to develop the collective and autonomous struggle of classes and to organize the working class into the class struggle, rather than to defend bourgeois interests.

In order to advance its combat, the working class has to unite its struggles, taking charge of its extension and organization through the offices of the trades, assemblies and committees of delegates elected and revocable at any time by these assemblies.

In the working class, the bourgeoisie are equally re- actionaries. All the so-called ‘workers’, ‘Socialist’ and ‘Communist’ parties (now ex-Communists), the left (inadequate and foolhardy) socialists, and (official and unofficial) constitute the left of capitalism’s political apparatus. All the tects of ‘popular fronts’, ‘anti-fascist fronts’ and ‘united fronts’, which now are the interests of the proletariat with those of a faction of the bourgeoisie, serve only to smother and derail the struggle towards a communist society.

The lack of protection against the virus in care homes in France is shocking and can be compared with the extermination camps and prisons in the Third Reich where millions were subjected to miserable conditions.

Thus, and even with restrictions applied to the rest of the population, it was necessary for the elderly to be confined, isolated and locked in their rooms. All contact with the outside with their families, relatives or still able-bodied friends living outside was forbidden. Just as in orphanages, prisons, refugee camps, migrant detention centres and other juvenile detention centres, retirement homes are for the spread of the virus, especially since these people are often already weak from age or illness.

But the unfolding human drama does not stop there. The consequences of the pandemics, in itself, these human beings who it is claimed are isolated ‘for their own good’ are thus condemned to a bleak despair, cut off from all connection with their loved ones, and diagnosed as victims of ‘old age depression’. What capitalist social inflicts on them can only make them feel in a deep sense of abandonment and loneliness, totally losing interest in life and even in identity. It is a hell that the bourgeoisie has created, and the bourgeoisie itself is responsible for this, the social, mental and health distress caused by the pandemic.

Older people discarded from society

In care homes across the world, the human drama is unfolding. At first it was silenced in order to protect the bourgeois state, but it became news when the sad unfolding reality could no longer be hidden. Already more than 10,000 deaths have been recorded officially in the French homes. In Spain, where as many as 16,000 deaths were recorded last year, the number of deaths in old people’s establishments, lying on their beds and abandoned for days. Similar dramas took place in many other countries. The bourgeoisie, the ‘old’ are little more than superfluous mouths to feed, best removed from society as death awaits them.

This is not to ignore all those others who died alone in their own homes, abandoned to their plight and without protection from the social security services and the medical profession.

Based on the report of the ‘Les Invalides’ committee in 2012, the response of the Icc was that the population could emerge with limited fatalities. But there was a great risk that the spread of the virus could get out of control and the entire economy would be plunged into a downturn. The large majority of countries throughout the world have already been affected and some of them, in particular the most vulnerable, when, in fact, the state itself takes care of them.

Population lockdown: the bourgeois state shows its brutality

Political positions of the ICC

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

* The Paris Commune of 1871 was the first attempt by the proletariat to carry out this revolution, in a period when the conditions for it were not yet ripe. Once the bourgeoisie had been provided with support through a sect of capitalist decadence, the October revolution of 1917 in Russia was the first step towards an authentic world communist revolution – the International Working Men’s Association and the Communist League. But at that time, the bourgeoisie had not yet thrown off the political weight of the ‘victorious’ bourgeoisie and the apathy of the working class, and the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie were still functionaries of the state.

* The Stalinist regimes which arose in the USSR, eastern Europe, China, Cuba etc. were called ‘socialist’ or ‘communist’ and were despotic. The bourgeoisie had been transformed into an autonomous political class, the bureaucracies, which were at the service of the interests of the proletariat of the bourgeoisie, served only to smother and derail the struggle towards a communist society.

* With the decay of capitalism, the unions everywhere have been transformed into organs of capitalism order within the proletariat. The various forms of union organisation, whether official or ‘in modelling’, serve only to discipline the working class and sabotage its struggle for the socialism of the workers.

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

* The extension of the working class into the collective is essential for the people’s councils, regrouping the entire proletariat.

* The working class is the only class which can carry out the communist revolution. Its revolutionary struggle will inevitably lead the working class towards the dictatorship of the proletariat, which will completely destroy the capitalist state, the working class will have to overthrow all existing states and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale, outside of the industrial centers, and regroup the entire proletariat.

* The transformation of society by the workers’ councils does not mean ‘self-management’ or the nationalisation of the economy. Communist revolution is the abolition of the capitalist state and of all forms of capitalist social relations: wage labour, commodity production, national frontiers. It means the creation of a new society in which the working class will orient towards the full satisfaction of human needs.

The real revolutionary political organisation constitutes the vanguard of the working class and is an active factor in the generalisation of class consciousness within the proletariat. Its role is neither to ‘organise the working class’ nor ‘represent the working class’, but to participate actively in the movement towards the unification of struggles, towards working people taking control of their own lives, and at the same time to draw out the revolutionary political goals of the proletariat’s combat.

OUR ACTIVITY

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

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

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

OUR ORIGINS

The positions and activity of revolutionary or- ganisations are the product of the past experiences of the working class and the world communist movement. The ICC and its affiliated organisations have drawn throughout its history. The ICC thus traces its origins to the successive contributions of the First International (1864-1872), the Second International (1884-1914), the Communist International (1893-1919) and the three Internationals (the International Working- men’s Association, 1868-72, the Socialist International, 1893-1914, the Communist International, 1919-23) and the left factions which detached themselves from the degenerating Third International in the years 1920-30, in particular the German, Dutch and Italian Lefts.

Continued on page 4