



world revolution

Faced with war and capitalist destruction, only one way out: class struggle!

The last few months have confirmed the brutal acceleration in the decomposition of the capitalist mode of production, with the multiplication of tragedies that have struck the world, particularly as a result of the war in Ukraine. Ongoing destruction, such as that at the Kakhovka dam, and the actions of the Wagner group in Russia, halfway between rebellion and abortive putsch, are fuelling further destabilisation and chaos.

Increased chaos and destruction

Now on the brink of implosion, despite the “return to calm” in Rostov and Moscow following surreal negotiations, Putin’s clique has been severely weakened. In the long term, other warlords are bound to add to the worrying instability of Russia as a nuclear power, sowing chaos beyond the borders of Europe and, at the end of the day, possibly leading to the break-up of the Russian Federation itself. Following on from the collapse of the USSR in 1990, this is a new phase in the process of dragging Russia’s proletariat into deadly confrontations. This latest disastrous episode highlights more clearly the growing dangers posed to the world by the deadly dynamic of decaying capitalism. A destructive dynamic that continues to grow.

The war in Ukraine is fuelling other dramatic events on a global scale:

- This conflict is accelerating the mass impoverishment of the proletariat, including in the richest countries, which are financing the war and the armaments pouring into Ukraine. Access to food, heating and decent housing have become increasingly difficult for a growing proportion of the working class, particularly the most precarious.

- The war is also one of the factors considerably worsening environmental degradation, directly through large-scale destruction (the Kakhovka dam, explosions at arms depots and factories, etc.), and indirectly through the increased reluctance of the governments involved in this war to take the slightest action against climate change, which is jeopardising their haemorrhaging economies, driven by a growing need for armaments.

Large-scale destruction, the loss of human life on the battlefields and the terror of populations



left to fend for themselves, whether in conflict zones or ‘peace zones’, are taking a long-lasting hold. The number of refugees fleeing conflict zones or zones that have simply become unlivable is reaching record figures. People are being transformed into living spectres who languish in inhuman camps, prey to mafia networks and the brutality of governments. Others collide with barbed wire walls or drown by the thousands in waters around the world. With the increasing bunkerisation of “democratic” borders, corpses continue to wash up or disappear into the abyss.

While pandemics continue to threaten, and governments are proving less and less capable of coping with the ever-increasing number of disasters, the unprecedented droughts of spring are now giving way to monstrous fires, as in Canada, where Montreal has become the most polluted city in the world. In other parts of the world, catastrophic floods have recently hit Nepal and Chile. Record

temperatures are already exposing populations to deadly heatstroke (as in Asia and Latin America). With cyclones and storms piling up south of the United States, the summer period augurs even worse.

All these ills are part of a spiral linked to the bankrupt capitalist mode of production, part of a rotten society in which producers are driven into poverty and increasingly exposed to death, prey to worries but also, and above all, to legitimate anger.

The living breath of the class struggle

This anger is all the more profound because the economic crisis, amplified by inflation, is a powerful stimulus for the development of class struggle. As witnessed by the continuing attacks on the working class in all countries, the economic crisis is preparing the ground for new responses

from the proletariat. The development of massive struggles in Great Britain has indeed initiated a phenomenon of “rupture”, a profound change of state of mind and a new surge of combativity within the world working class. This dynamic was confirmed by struggles just about everywhere in the world, and above all by the major demonstrations against pension reform in France. Rediscovering our own class identity in the struggle, getting back in touch with our own fighting methods, is only the first step, fragile though it may be, but it is fundamental for the future.

While strikes are still going on in the United Kingdom, the end of the demonstrations in France in no way signifies despondency or a feeling of defeat. On the contrary, the anger that is still present is fuelling reflection among working-class minorities on how to continue this fight. If we need to draw the first lessons today, it’s that we need to prepare the new struggles to come and face up to all the obstacles and difficulties that stand in the way, in particular the risks of engaging in sterile violence, such as that of confrontation with the forces of law and order, which a section of the precarious youth engaged in during the spectacular riots in France, and which are radically opposed to the proletariat’s methods of struggle. Another danger is the disappearance of the struggle of the working class onto the terrain of the bourgeoisie,

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Why does the ICC talk about a “rupture” in the class struggle?

Last May, the ICC held public meetings in various countries on the theme: “Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Mexico, China... Going beyond 1968!” The aim was to gain a better understanding of the political, global and historical significance of these struggles, the prospects they offer, but also the major weaknesses that the working class will have to overcome if it is to develop the economic and political dimensions of its struggle. The active engagement in the debates that took place is one illustration of the slow maturation of consciousness in depth that is taking place within the global working class, and which is particularly evident in the small minorities coming from a new generation. In this way, they are gradually reconnecting with the experience of the workers’ movement and the Communist Left.

With the confrontation of different positions in these meetings, the desire for clarification was evident. Thus, in the responses to the analysis of the ICC, support, nuances, doubts and questionings, even disagreements, were expressed. The purpose of this article is to give some details of these exchanges in order to promote further debate.

The link with May 68

In the face of the growing chaos of the capitalist mode of production, its dramatic and destructive nature demonstrated by the war in Ukraine and the prospect of the deepening slide into the economic crisis, the interventions generally accepted the fundamental reality that over the last year there has been a widespread development of working class struggles internationally to combat the insufferable attacks on living conditions.

Some participants drew parallels between the current situation and that of May ‘68.¹ In 1968, the return of unemployment (albeit at a much lower level than today) heralded the end of the period known as the “post war boom” with the reappearance of the open crisis, a new period of recession, then recovery followed by deeper recession. Today, the brutal deepening of the economic crisis and the resurgence of inflation are undoubtedly the mainspring of working class mobilisation. Some comrades pointed to the fact that what May 68 and the current period had in common was the eruption of large scale working class mobilisations. A comrade in Britain stated that “the main difference with ‘68 is the current depth of the economic crisis”.

Another comrade reaffirmed that “May 68 had opened a new phase after the counter-revolution”. Indeed, following the failure of the revolutionary wave of the 1920s and the dead weight of Stalinism that followed the defeat of the world proletariat, May ‘68 heralded the re-emergence of the working class internationally. In Paris, a comrade described the subjective conditions of the working class struggle in ‘68 and today as follows:

“The reference to May ‘68 is valid. That event coincided with the arrival of a new generation of the working class who, unlike their parents, had not been subjected to the ideological pressure of the counter-revolution and, in particular, the overbearing influence of Stalinism. Today, it has required a new generation to shake off the ideology of the ‘death of communism’”. Remarkably, those participants in Brazil accepted, almost “as a given”, that the proletariat in the Western Europe countries, those workers at the heart of the capitalist system, were playing a vanguard role in the mobilisation of the struggles internationally. A comrade in Britain commented that “the current struggles are important. They represent the possibility of a real renewal of the class struggle”.

But in this same intervention, and in others elsewhere, particularly in Brazil, the comrade was concerned about “the weakness of the working class” and “the manoeuvres of the bourgeoisie

and its ability to retain control, especially through the unions”.

Misunderstandings of the period following 1989

Indeed, some of the contributions did try to find similarities between May 68 and the current period, while others contrasted the two situations. However, beyond finding analogies and differences between these two historical moments, all of them found difficulty in understanding what is meant by a “rupture” in the context of the class struggle, in both 1968 and today.

In 1968, the recovery of the struggles of the world working class put an end to half a century of counter-revolution, the result of a profound physical and ideological defeat of the proletariat following the crushing of the revolutionary wave of 1917-23. The rupture of 2022, heralded by the mobilisation of the proletariat in the United Kingdom, signalled a revival of a working class struggle which had not suffered a crushing physical defeat comparable to what led to the world counter-revolution but which has, on the other hand, suffered the full force of the bourgeois campaigns on the “death of communism” and on the “disappearance of the working class”, etc. in the wake of the collapse of the imperialist blocs in 1989.

Over the last thirty years, the world working class, disorientated and having lost its class identity, has shown itself incapable of mobilising in response to the attacks imposed on it. It is only after this long period of relentless, widespread and increasingly unbearable attacks that the working class has been able to mobilise itself on a scale not seen for decades (since 1985 for workers in the UK), making a clear rupture with the situation that had prevailed internationally since 1990. Because the working class as a whole had not been defeated during thirty years, a process of reflection was developing within it (the subterranean maturation of consciousness) leading to a growing loss of illusions about the future that capitalism has in store and also to the certainty that the situation can only get worse. In this way the anger has been growing and this was clear in the attitude of the strikers in Britain, who insisted that “enough is enough”.

The dynamics of the last thirty years had not been fully understood and the discussion gave rise to various erroneous interpretations. For example, a comrade in Toulouse spoke of a “continuity” in the struggle over these thirty years, marked by victories and defeats, in particular the mobilisation against the CPE (2006), against the Sarkozy-Fillon pension reform (2010) and also the Indignados movement (2011). But precisely during this period, there was no such continuity (where current struggles echoed past struggles), as the working class was not able to link together in its collective memory these infrequent new experiences.

It’s the same with the notion of a “qualitative leap” used by some comrades, particularly in Brazil, to characterise the eruption of the struggles in Britain and France. Such a conception, which in general tends to reduce consciousness to a simple product or reflection of the immediate struggle itself, plays down all the other dimensions of the process through which consciousness develops. The idea of a “qualitative leap” can only be detrimental by implying that the working class has suddenly overcome many of its weaknesses.

On the other hand, some interventions in Mexico tended to effectively dilute the proletariat’s struggle by diverting it into areas such as environmentalist campaigns or feminism and have been rightly criticised. In fact, the ideology which underpins them, and which itself leads to a loss of class identity, presents a clear threat to the autonomous struggle of the proletariat, which provides the only course possible for solving society’s problems by bringing an end to capitalism’s existence.

The broad scale and the maturation in the current struggles

While those participating in the meetings acknowledged the reality of the scale of the current struggles, it has to be said that, in general, they

were unable to accept their importance as a fundamental element of the qualitative rupture. Millions of workers concentrated in a few countries of Western Europe have mobilised despite the cost to them financially, and they are struggling in solidarity with their comrades to refuse the misery that capitalism wants to inflict on them through exploitation and division; that itself constitutes a considerable victory.

Some comrades were critical of what they saw as the ICC’s overestimation of the movement. Thus, for example, such comments were heard in Britain and France:

– “I find the ICC is overestimating the sequence of the struggle. I don’t understand the method of subterranean maturation. There’s an association of ideas here, it’s not massive, we’re just referring to active minorities”.

– “It’s true that at the end of the demonstrations there were discussions, of course, but there were no strikes! Without a strike, the movement has stalled. The problem is that the weapon of the proletariat is the general strike.² In May 68, there was a general strike, but that hasn’t been the case here [...]. I don’t want to tarnish the picture, but amplifying the depth of the movement [as the ICC is doing], I’m not sure is going to help”.

In this case, we seem to have forgotten that when hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of workers in France took to the streets to demonstrate, they were on strike!

In several places (in Nantes in France, in Brazil...) some participants tried to temper the reality of the rupture in the class struggle put forward by the ICC with the fact that the unions had not been called into question. Some participants in Nantes countered this objection with the following analysis: “Admittedly, the unions have not been called into question, there has been no self-organisation, but discontent remains very strong and permanent, even if there is no new spectacular struggle. Because you have to look at where the class is coming from, it’s coming out of a period of thirty years of difficulties. In fact, there has been no political defeat. The class is gathering its forces to go further”. To this we can add that in France (but not only there), the bourgeoisie had anticipated workers’ anger and the unions had done everything possible to avoid being challenged by the workers. Faced with the need and the will of the workers in struggle to unite across categories and corporations, the unions were able to impose their leadership by maintaining, from start to finish, the broadest possible united trade union front, “fiercely opposed” to the pension reform.

What method to understand the rupture?

While some interventions tended to look for “proof” and “facts” to try to convince others or themselves of the reality of the “rupture”, other comrades tried to illustrate the change in the situation through the ability of “experienced unions” (in France, in particular) to “stick with the movement”, with “calls for unity” by using “the trap of the Intersyndicale”. In the same vein, these comrades highlighted the collusion of various factions of the bourgeoisie in isolating certain centres of struggle by means of a carefully measured blackout: “Why does the bourgeoisie black out the strikes happening abroad? The bourgeoisie knows its class enemy very well. This is yet another indication of our maturation. We need to have a global, international vision”. Some comrades quite rightly stressed that we should not focus on any one element in isolation, but that it was preferable to “see a pattern of evidence and to know how to interpret it”, referring in this sense to the

2. Due to lack of time, the question of the difference between “general strike” and “mass strike” could not be addressed. But we underlined our disagreement with equating these two terms. The general strike, if it constitutes an indication of discontent in the class, nevertheless refers to the organisation (and therefore the control) of the struggle by the unions. In this sense, in the hands of the unions, it can also constitute a means of exhausting the struggle. To the general strike, we oppose the mass strike as it manifested itself masterfully in Russia in 1905 by giving itself its own means of centralising the struggle, combining economic and political demands.

approach of Marx, but also that of Lenin, who “had the ability to perceive changes in the political outlook of the proletariat”.

Each time, in an attempt to clarify matters, the ICC tried to go further by defending the valid concept of “subterranean maturation”, of a rupture with the past and not that of a “qualitative leap”. Above all, the ICC has insisted on broadening the scope of the issues and posing them methodically, as illustrated by one of its presentations in Paris: “several presentations highlighted discussions that we hadn’t taken up for years. What do we do with this? How do we analyse it? Are we putting it into a broader, global context? Instead of looking at things through a microscope, we need to step back and look through a telescope; in other words, take a historical and international approach. We are in a period where capitalism is leading humanity to its ruin. The working class has the potential to fight and to engage in the struggle, to be able to make a revolution. Internationally, over the last three decades, we have seen a decline in struggles and a retreat in consciousness. The class has lost consciousness of itself, of its identity. But last summer there was a huge movement in Britain, the likes of which we hadn’t seen for forty years! Was it just in Britain? It showed that something was changing profoundly on a global scale. That’s why we said something was changing. We saw the capacity to fight back confronted with the worsening economic crisis. We saw struggles in many countries. This is the background to the confirmation of the fight against pension reform in France. We’ve seen three months of struggles and a fighting spirit. On the other hand, we’re starting to see slogans, a reflection that we haven’t seen since the 1980s. There’s a general feeling of discontent, an attempt to learn from history. That’s what’s behind the slogan ‘You want 64 (pension reform), we’ll give you 68’ [...]. There’s a tendency to reappropriate the past, as with the reflection on the CPE experience of 2006, despite the fact that little was heard of it immediately afterwards. Why has this resurfaced? There are other questions from a minority like how to make a revolution. Some people are reflecting on ‘what is communism?’. There is a class effort. It’s not just a question of whether pension reform is a pass or fail. We have to learn the lessons. How can we go further? How can we fight back? That’s what’s at stake”.

We must recognise therefore, as a fundamental lesson, the need to take account of the international and historical context in our analyses: an acceleration in the decomposition of capitalist society, its destructive “whirlwind effect”, the seriousness and danger of the present war, and at the same time the brutal acceleration of the economic crisis, with inflation as a powerful spur to the class struggle. We must also recognise that by fighting on its own class terrain, on a massive scale, the proletariat can begin to gain confidence in its own strength, and can acquire a growing consciousness of the need to spread the struggle beyond companies and borders. These struggles today are a first victory for our class. **WH, 26 June 2023**

Articles published in ICC online in July

Shipwreck of migrants in the Mediterranean:
Capitalism kills to defend its borders

On the blog Le Prolétariat universel:
Irresponsible chatter plays into the hands of the bourgeoisie

Critique of a new book: La santé et la révolution: Russie soviétique, 1917 – 1924
(Health and Revolution in Soviet Russia, 1917-24)

The methods of the capitalist state:
Provocation, repression and manipulation are used by the police to sabotage the struggle

1. It should be noted that most of these meetings took place on a symbolic date, the anniversary of the massive demonstrations of 13 May 1968 in France. In this connection, we recommend to our readers our article: “1968 and the revolutionary perspective”, published in two parts in *International Review* no 133: ‘May 68 and the revolutionary perspective, Part 1: The student movement around the world in the 1960s’ and no 134: ‘May 68 and the revolutionary perspective, Part 2: End of the counter-revolution and the historic return of the world proletariat’.

The SWP's 'radical' language - to lead workers' struggles into a dead-end

During the strike wave of the past year the organisations of the extreme left of capital (Trotskyists etc) have been everywhere. They have intervened on the shop floor, at picket lines, in demonstrations, and union meetings in order to raise their slogans, sell their press, and distribute their leaflets. And they always claim to be defending the interests of workers against the government, the bosses, the political establishment and, sometimes, even the union leaders. Should we take them at their word?

To answer this question we will take a look at the practice of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). It is possibly the largest, and certainly the most important leftist organisation in the UK, and has built up decades of experience since it was founded in the Labour Party in 1950 as the Socialist Review Group, before becoming the International Socialists in 1962, and renamed the Socialist Workers Party in 1976. It does not openly refer to itself as Trotskyist anymore, but it is solidly in the Trotskyist tradition.

What you can read about the strikes in Britain in the various publications of the SWP is sometimes quite 'radical' and might well catch off guard people who are interested in discovering something from a working class perspective. At a very early stage in the strike wave it published two articles on the mass strike (the first on 2/7/22, the second on 27/8/22) and "what workers building the fightback today can learn from this". The mass strike in 1905 in Russia showed how "this workers' economic struggle can develop into a political struggle" and how this "is a key component of a modern revolution". In another article, also at an early stage in the strike wave (11/9/22), the SWP underlined that workers' democracy such as "strike committees and self-activity are key", just as happened in 1917 in Russia where "workers began to organise into workers' councils - or soviets. Soviets showed workers' ability to build and carry out revolutions for themselves".

Were these articles really meant to call on the workers to develop a mass strike, to establish real workers' self-organisation and to engage in a political combat against the bourgeois state, as happened in 1905-1917 in Russia? The answer is no, the SWP will never fight for these goals because, as we have said in earlier articles, fundamentally "the SWP is a capitalist organisation"¹ (...) "Its basic loyalty will always be to British capitalism"². The following examples demonstrate this.

Reinforcing the trade unions

A concern the SWP put forward in the course of the strike wave was "Let's recruit, organise and keep new members in militant unions", criticising the unions for mainly providing services to individual members. The SWP's appeal was far from a fundamental criticism of the trade unions as it did not seek to expose their nature as part of the bourgeois state. The SWP criticised the unions for the fact that, if they would not become more militant, they might lose control of the most radical expressions of the movement. Behind the criticisms of the SWP was a call to the unions to radicalise their language and reinforce their impact on the struggles.

The SWP holds the position that the unions are organisations of the working class, which is a deception: although they used to be organisations of the working class over a century ago, they are not any more, as has already been amply demonstrated by revolutionary organisations in the past.

With the onset of the 20th century the conditions for workers' struggle had fundamentally changed, and in the revolution in Russia in 1905 and in 1917 the newly discovered forms of the workers' struggle was no longer the trade union but the mass strike and the workers' councils. The above-mentioned articles of the SWP themselves show that the role of the unions in these revolutions was insignificant. In the German revolution the unions played an openly counter-revolutionary role, something which brought Anton Pannekoek in 1920 to the conclusion that "in the epoch of

imperialism, the trade unions have become enormous confederations which manifest the same developmental tendencies as the bourgeois state in an earlier period"³. And this statement has since been amply confirmed after the Second World War by the positions of the different political organisations of the Communist Left: Gauche Communiste de France, Partito Comunista Internazionalista, the ICC itself.

Unions use pickets to divide workers

A second theme taken up by the SWP has been on the role of the picket lines, showing that they can be "a place where rank and file union members get a chance to organise themselves and plan how to make their strike more effective - and ultimately, wrestle control of their dispute away from the union leaders."

Picketing in front of the factory or office where you work is aimed at persuading the workers entering the workplace to join the strike. But in the UK the official picket line is restricted by a whole set of rules that have to be overseen by a union representative. It prevents, even prohibits workers from expressing their solidarity with the struggle of workers in other workplaces. Moreover, it outlaws "flying pickets", delegations of workers moving from one workplace to another in order to persuade the workers at other locations to join the strike. The union picket line has in fact turned from a weapon of the workers to extend the struggle into an instrument of the unions to put up boundaries between striking workers. But for the SWP this is not a problem, for "pickets can also help grow the union."

For revolutionaries the picket lines are nevertheless a chance for workers to come together, but not just "chanting, singing and dancing their way through strike days". The picket line is an opportunity to discuss, certainly when many more than 6 workers are gathered. Being together in front of the workplace, the first task is to question the legal restrictions these picket lines are subjected to. Because they prevent the extension of the struggle

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and the search for solidarity at other workplaces. It is of the utmost importance that workers break out of this union cordon and prepare the organisation of real general assemblies.

The need for real workers' self-organisation

A third preoccupation of the SWP has been the formation of strike committees. It even devoted a whole article specifically to this phenomenon, to which a whole range of properties are attributed, ranging from "spreading the decisions of the union leaders" to going "beyond the existing union structure discussing, running and taking forward a strike". But the SWP drowns the proletarian nature of the strike committee in a multitude of functions, of which some lead directly:

* into the framework of the unions by advocating a criticism of the union bureaucracy: "Debate and raise criticism of the lead from the top"; "to put pressure on the union leaders".

* and others onto the bourgeois terrain of the defence of single issue campaigns: "strike committees can kick off discussion about climate change or anti-racism or trans rights".

A genuine strike committee is not a self-proclaimed group of workers, not the basis for building a rank and file trade union movement, and is not there to spread the decisions of the union leaders. A genuine strike committee is completely independent from the unions. It represents the striking workers between two general assemblies and is only accountable to the workers that elected it. One of the clearest examples of such a strike committee was created in 1980 when "the proletariat in Poland went into action outside and against the unions, creating its own organs of struggle, the MKS -- strike committees based on general assemblies and their elected, revocable delegates"⁴.

By propagating strike committees, even outside the union structure, the SWP are claiming to defend a 'radical' position. When strike committees

4. One Year of Workers' Struggles in Poland, *International Review* no. 27 - 4th Quarter 1981

UK strikes

Union divisions can only weaken our struggle

After more than a year of the biggest wave of strikes in Britain for decades, it's a good moment to reflect about what we have achieved, what we have not achieved, and what obstacles have stood in the way of our struggles.

The main gain of these struggles has been the struggle itself - breaking from years of passivity and retreat, insisting that the working class has not gone away and is ready to resist the mounting attacks on our living standards. The sheer length of the strike wave is proof of the determination of the workers not to make more sacrifices "in the national interest". And the example of workers fighting back in Britain has been an inspiration to workers in other European countries who face similar attacks. In France, for example, demonstrating workers took up the slogan "enough is enough" in their mobilisations against government pension "reforms".

Some workers have won pay awards after months of struggle. But with inflation officially still running at over 7%, the 6.5% to the teachers or the 5% to most NHS workers means that we are still running to catch up.

And what is most striking about these awards is the fact that they have been negotiated sector by sector, even within the same branch of the economy and the same workplace. In the hospitals, for example, ambulance and nurses' unions have accepted the new offer, while radiographers and junior doctors are still holding out, still going on strike. It's the same story in education: the main school teacher's union has accepted the pay deal (although a number of local branches have rejected it), while university teachers are heading

towards new strikes in the autumn. And in transport, the RMT recently suspended strikes on the London underground while maintaining strikes on national rail networks, with ASLEF announcing industrial action "short of a strike".

These divisions are not new. They repeat the pattern of the different strikes over the last year. You belong to a different union, so you come out on strike on a different day from your colleagues. In hospitals, schools, transport depots, instead of meeting together to raise common demands, instead of continuing the fight until all the demands are met, we are limited to voting as individuals in union ballots about whether to come out on strike and whether to accept the pay deal offered to our particular group of workers. The result: a whole series of separate strikes, on different days, with different demands, and almost no common demonstrations, even though all workers are facing the same assault on their living and working conditions. Our picket lines, one of the few places where we can come together and discuss about the progress of the struggle, are reduced to mere symbols, able only to appeal to colleagues in the same union to join them, rather than going out to appeal to workers in the next depot, factory, or hospital to unite in a common struggle.

These divisions are not accidental. They are enforced by the 'official' state, with its laws against deciding on strike action in workers' meetings and against "secondary picketing", but also by the "unofficial" state - the trade unions, who administer the prison of these laws and maintain the fragmentation between different groups of workers according to trade, skill, or job specification.

popped up in union branches at the universities and in the education sector in February of this year, the SWP gave them full attention, presenting them as being "important in allowing ordinary union members to take the initiative". These strike committees were not a threat for the unions, which were able to coop them up in corporatist ideology, namely in the specificities of one's own sector or trade.

But faced with the "unofficial" strike of the North Sea oil and gas workers in September of last year the Offshore Oil and Gas Workers Strike Committee (OOGWSC), which organised this strike, was only mentioned in passing. But this committee was not created in a union branch, and its activities took place independently from the unions. In *International Socialism* 177 (January 2023) the SWP say that the OOGWSC "should not yet be seen as a permanent body of militants with deep roots", but of course that is what the SWP wants: permanent bodies, that function like rank and file unions.

Why did the SWP write articles on the mass strike, workers' councils and the proletarian revolution? The answer is that it aimed to get ahead of a real fermentation in the class, to show that it was prepared to go very far in its support of workers' demands. This was its way to be able to channel the most radical expression of workers' combativity and to keep them within the boundaries of the unions. It's telling that since the publication of these three articles, between July and September 2022, the SWP has not written again with one word on the lessons to be drawn from this historical experience in Russia for the strike wave in the UK. Its daily propaganda was mainly limited to expressing its support for the union policy, "critical" of course. The "radical" language in the first months was only meant to take the wind out of the sails of the most radical expressions in this strike wave and to empty their potential towards a self-activity independent from the unions. **Dennis, 29.6.23**

And so, although this last year has shown that all workers are under attack, and that there is a will to resist among growing layers of our class, we are profoundly weakened by all the divisions imposed on us, blocked in the effort to form ourselves into a massive force that can challenge the exploiting class.

If we are to create this force, we will need to question the whole framework imposed by employers and unions alike. Against their rules about when we can go on strike or take any other actions, we need to gather in general assemblies where we make our own decisions, not as isolated individuals but collectively. Instead of submitting to the laws about secondary pickets, we need to send big delegations to other workplaces to call for a joint struggle, for strikes and demonstrations that bring us all out together.

The dying system which dominates the planet, capitalism, is not going to offer us a better future. It can only demand further sacrifices, further acceptance of misery and destruction. We, the working class, have a different future to offer, and the fight to defend ourselves today lays the ground for a deeper and wider fight to create a new society for the whole of humanity. **Amos 29/7/23**

1. Workers' defensive struggles contain the seeds of revolution, *ICConline* January 2022)

2. Tony Cliff: defender of state capitalism (*World Revolution* no.235, June 2000)

The decomposition of capitalism is accelerating!

While the bourgeoisie and its media never cease to conceal the historic bankruptcy of capitalism, the bourgeoisie, when it brings together the world's major leaders at the World Economic Forum in Davos and talks to itself, cannot avoid a certain lucidity. The conclusions of the general report submitted to the Forum are particularly revealing from this point of view. "The first years of this decade have heralded a particularly disruptive period in human history. The return to a 'new normal' following the COVID-19 pandemic was quickly disrupted by the outbreak of war in Ukraine, ushering in a fresh series of crises in food and energy – triggering problems that decades of progress had sought to solve.

As 2023 begins, the world is facing a set of risks that feel both wholly new and eerily familiar. We have seen a return of 'older' risks – inflation, cost-of-living crises, trade wars, capital outflows from emerging markets, widespread social unrest, geopolitical confrontation and the spectre of nuclear warfare – which few of this generation's business leaders and public policy-makers have experienced. These are being amplified by comparatively new developments in the global risks landscape, including unsustainable levels of debt, a new era of low growth, low global investment and de-globalization, a decline in human development after decades of progress, rapid and unconstrained development of dual-use (civilian and military) technologies, and the growing pressure of climate change impacts and ambitions in an ever-shrinking window for transition to a 1.5°C world. Together, these are converging to shape a unique, uncertain and turbulent decade to come.

The next decade will be characterized by environmental and societal crises, driven by underlying geopolitical and economic trends. 'Cost-of-living crisis' is ranked as the most severe global risk over the next two years, peaking in the short term. 'Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse' is viewed as one of the fastest deteriorating global risks over the next decade, and all six environmental risks feature in the top 10 risks over the next 10 years. Nine risks are featured in the top 10 rankings over both the short and the long term, including 'Geoeconomic confrontation' and 'Erosion of social cohesion and societal polarisation', alongside two new entrants to the top rankings: 'Widespread cybercrime and cyber insecurity' and 'Large-scale involuntary migration'.¹

This long quote is not from an ICC publication. It is the fruit of the work of one of the most highly regarded think tanks among the world's leading political and economic leaders. In fact, these observations are largely in line with the text adopted by the ICC in October 2022 on the acceleration of capitalist decomposition:

"The 20s of the 21st century are shaping up to be one of the most turbulent periods in history, and indescribable disasters and suffering are already mounting up. It began with the Covid-19 pandemic (which is still out there) and a war in the heart of Europe which has lasted for more than nine months and whose outcome no one can foresee. Capitalism has entered into a phase of serious difficulties on all fronts. Behind this accumulation and entanglement of convulsions lies the threat of the destruction of humanity. [...]"

Following the sudden outbreak of the Covid pandemic, we identified four characteristics of the phase of decomposition:

- The increased severity of its effects [...].
- the irruption of the effects of decomposition at the economic level [...].
- The growing interaction of its effects, which aggravates the contradictions of capitalism to a level never reached before [...].
- The growing presence of its effects in the central countries [...].

2022 provided a striking illustration of these four characteristics, with:

- The outbreak of war in Ukraine.
- The appearance of unprecedented waves of refugees.
- The continuation of the pandemic with health systems on the verge of collapse.
- A growing loss of control by the bourgeoisie

1. The Global Risks Report presented at the World Economic Forum in Davos (January 2023).

over its political apparatus; the crisis in the UK was a spectacular manifestation of this.

- An agricultural crisis with a shortage of many food products in a context of widespread overproduction, which is a relatively new phenomenon in more than a century of decadence.

- The terrifying famines that are affecting more and more countries.

The aggregation and interaction of these destructive phenomena produces a 'vortex effect' that concentrates, catalyses and multiplies each of its partial effects, causing even more destructive devastation. [...] This 'vortex effect' expresses a qualitative change, the consequences of which will become increasingly evident in the coming period."²

In reality, it was not just by a few months that the ICC's analysis preceded that of the most informed experts in the dominant class, but by several decades, since the findings set out in this text are simply a striking confirmation of the forecasts we had already put forward at the end of the 1980s, notably in our "Theses on decomposition".

The "vortex" (or whirlwind) effect referred to in our text highlights the fact that all it takes for one of these phenomena to worsen and explode is for other explosions to be triggered, confounding all the effects, so that the partial crises are transformed into a whirlwind of catastrophes.

The *Global Risks Report* says it all when it talks about the dynamic leading to what the bourgeoisie calls a "polycrisis". "Concurrent shocks, deeply interconnected risks and eroding resilience are giving rise to the risk of polycrisis – where disparate crises interact such that the overall impact far exceeds the sum of each part. Eroding geopolitical cooperation will have ripple effects across the global risks landscape over the medium term, including contributing to a potential polycrisis of interrelated environmental, geopolitical and socioeconomic risks relating to the supply of and demand for natural resources. The report describes four potential futures centred around food, water and metals and mineral shortages, all of which could spark a humanitarian as well as an ecological crisis – from water wars and famines to continued overexploitation of ecological resources and a slowdown in climate mitigation and adaptation." The *Global Risks Report's* very precise description of the "interconnectivity of global risks" is basically, without really being aware of it, the process that is leading to total barbarism and the destruction of humanity.

Identifying the causes of the "whirlwind" of crises

Bourgeois experts, on the other hand, abandon this objectivity when they try to explain the origin of these "risks". Although they do not set themselves this objective, we can deduce from the references they present that the roots of the cataclysms lie in inadequate decision-making. The solutions they propose are based on naive optimism, hoping for "significant policy change or investment", a happy collaboration between states and between states and private capital.

Entangled in a bourgeois vision of the historical situation, the *Global Risks Report* fails to understand that the phenomena it manages to describe are the result of the very existence of capitalism, and that war, ecological destruction and economic crisis have no solution in this system. Although from its inception capitalism was a system based on human exploitation, on the depredation and destruction of nature, capitalism was a factor of political and social development at the time of its rise (mainly in the XIXth Century). But like any mode of production, it eventually reached its phase of decadence, a phase in which the development of the productive forces increasingly came into opposition with the relations of production that constrained them. It is no coincidence that the First World War initiated the process of decadence of the system, since militarism and war now define the economic and political life of the bourgeoisie.

Recognising capitalism's decadence, the revolutionaries of the Third International defined it in

2. The acceleration of capitalist decomposition poses the clear possibility of the destruction of humanity, *International Review* 169 (2022)

their programmatic platform as "The epoch of the disintegration of capitalism, of its internal collapse. The epoch of the communist revolution of the proletariat". In this way, decadence represents the material conditions that make social revolution possible.

More than 100 years after this tipping point, the impasse in which capitalism finds itself, and the appalling barbarity and massive destruction it wreaks, are more and more obvious to humanity every day.

Since the implosion of the Soviet bloc in 1989, the internal contradictions that characterised the decadent phase of capitalism have really broken out, highlighting the rotteness of the system. This new period, that of the decomposition of capitalism, is marked by a process of increasing atomisation and dislocation, which has become the determining factor in the evolution of society, bringing together and aggravating destructive phenomena and exposing the danger that capitalism represents for humanity.

Over the last 30 years, these destructive trends have not only become more pronounced, but have also appeared in tandem and, above all, have interacted with each other. Thus, at the beginning of the decomposition phase, the various states could intervene and isolate the effects, so that each catastrophe occurred without being linked to the others.

The pandemic and above all the war in Ukraine marked a qualitative change in decomposition, not only because their effects were global and led to millions dying or being displaced, but also because they had an aggravating impact on conflicts in various fields: they highlighted the bourgeoisie's inability to contain disasters in a coordinated way and its irrationality, they paralysed the economy, accelerated the health crisis, sharpened commercial and imperialist rivalries, etc.

It is precisely this interaction of the contradictions of decadent capitalism, moving forward in a whirlwind, that appears to be the major characteristic of this phase of decomposition. It is in the history of the decadence of the capitalist system that we can situate the foundations of current events and understand why the 20s of the 21st century are shaping up to be "one of the most turbulent periods in history".

The capitalist mode of production is not eternal, any more than the modes of production that preceded it. Like the modes of production of the past, it is destined to be replaced (if it does not destroy humanity before then) by another, superior mode

of production corresponding to the development of the productive forces that it has developed at a given moment in its history. A mode of production that will abolish the commodity relations at the heart of capitalism's historical crisis, where there will no longer be room for a privileged class living off the exploitation of the producers.

The urgent need for a communist alternative to the barbarity of rotting capitalism

While the bourgeoisie, with all its teams of specialists, can describe phenomena, it cannot fundamentally understand them, let alone provide a solution. The only class that can offer an alternative to its barbarism is the proletariat, the exploited class within capitalism, which has no privileges to defend. What's more, the proletariat is also the class that is bearing the full brunt of the attacks on its working and living conditions as a direct result of the pressure of the crisis, accentuated by all the manifestations of decomposition.

Despite all the attacks suffered in recent decades, two conditions enable workers to maintain themselves as a historic force capable of confronting capital: the first is that the proletariat is not defeated and maintains its fighting spirit. The second is precisely the deepening of the economic crisis, which lays bare the root causes of all the barbarity that weighs on society, thus enabling the proletariat to become aware of the need to radically change the system and no longer merely seek illusory improvements in certain aspects of it.

Precisely at the present time, under the impetus of the economic crisis, the proletariat has begun to develop its struggles, as shown by the mobilisations in Europe. Since the summer of 2022, the working class in Great Britain has taken to the streets to defend its living conditions. The same combativeness was then expressed in mobilisations in France, Germany, Spain, Belgium and in the United States. From this point of view, the decade that is beginning also expresses a break with the passivity and disorientation that the proletariat has weighed on it for decades. The combativeness now being expressed in Europe underlines the fact that a process of maturation has begun, moving towards the reconquest of a genuine class identity and self-confidence at an international level. This process is the soil on which the historic struggle of the working class against the barbarity of capitalism in putrefaction can blossom, the basis for the revolutionary perspective. **MA, 15 May 2023**

Continued from page 1

Faced with war and destruction, only one way out: class struggle

that of the "defence of democracy" against "fascism" and "authoritarian excesses" or the obtaining of illusory "rights" for this or that minority.

Faced with the enormous global challenges and the increasingly palpable threat of the destruction of humanity by capitalism, this necessary first step by the working class is not enough. The proletariat will have to develop its consciousness well beyond what it was able to produce during the great strikes of May 68 in France and everywhere else in the world, well beyond the mass strike it was able to engage in Poland in 1980.

The central role of revolutionary organisations

Revolutionary organisations play an essential role in this context. They have the political weapons to make it possible to enrich workers' memory, to defend the revolutionary perspective and an internationalist point of view in workers' struggles in the face of nationalist propaganda and the reactionary policies of the bourgeoisie. On the basis of solid traditions, those of the Communist Left, revolutionary organisations have the responsibility of keeping alive and passing on a method, the method of marxism, to defend the principles of the

proletarian struggle.

In the face of confusion and doubts, in the face of ideological campaigns which hinder the development of consciousness in the working class, this struggle inherited from the traditions of the workers' movement must make it possible to identify concrete perspectives and to defend uncompromisingly the principles and methods of workers' struggles. Starting with proletarian internationalism in the face of the war in Ukraine and all the militarist propaganda.

In the face of insidious ideological campaigns on the theme of the "defence of democracy", in the face of the ideological exploitation of the indignation aroused by the methods of Putin and Prigozhin, in the face of the ideological exploitation of the recent riots and the despicable behaviour of the police, vigilance and the fight for proletarian class consciousness must tread a difficult path. But there is no other way forward. The future struggles of the proletariat must therefore gradually become politicised in order to take on, in a clear, united and conscious way, the goal of the world revolution: a revolution destined to overthrow capitalism and establish a society without class or war. **WH, 8 July**

The Wagner Group rebellion is a new step in instability and chaos



Wagner mercenaries seize control of Rostov-on-Don at the start of their aborted mutiny

On 23 and 24 June last - just as it was facing the counteroffensive by Ukraine - one of the most powerful states and armies on the planet were threatened by the Wagner Group, a private commando army made up of mercenaries linked to Putin's own entourage. A whole military division, headed by Prigozhin, headed towards Moscow without encountering any obstacles. Situations like this, which seem absurd, are being repeated more and more as the putrefaction of capitalism accelerates. It is precisely the war in Ukraine that has become an accelerator of decomposition, spreading instability and chaos throughout the world.

The US, by setting the trap which pushed Russia into war with the overall aim of weakening China, is acting like a sorcerer's apprentice: it initially calculated that it could have some control over the conflict; now it turns out that it is unable to control its longer-term consequences. This compares with the "wars on terror" that justified the invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003). Here again, the United States, in trying to maintain its world leadership, ended up provoking chaos in the Middle East. Although it initially succeeded in bringing the region under its control to a certain extent, and in dragging the reluctant European powers on board, the whole process fostered an even greater and irreversible destabilisation and chaos.¹

Wagner's rebellion, although quickly curtailed, highlighted the fragilities of the Russian state, which threaten to lead to a political fragmentation, affecting not only the Russian bourgeoisie, but also leading the world to levels of great instability. What's more, we are now seeing characters like Prigozhin enter the scene, ready to vie for control of power and, of course, of nuclear weapons.

Russia, a bomb that threatens to explode

The implosion of the Eastern bloc in the early 1990s confirmed that capitalism was entering its phase of decomposition, characterised by global disorder and a struggle of "each against all". The main cause of this collapse was the pressure of a dual economic and political failure of the Stalinist system in the context of an accelerating and deepening crisis of capitalism worldwide. The collapse of the USSR then led to brutal outbreaks of separatist nationalism throughout its territory.

After the thwarted coup d'état in mid-1991, this process went even further out of control, forcing the Western powers, mainly the USA, to try to contain the avalanche that was coming at them and that threatened to spill over the borders of the former USSR. These powers offered food aid, debt financing facilities, etc. This "aid" was not, of course, done out of altruism but, as always, was based on imperialist calculations aimed at benefiting from the new geopolitical configuration. Today, Russia is once again at the centre of convulsions, but this time in the context of a worsening situation and under much more serious and unpredictable circumstances.

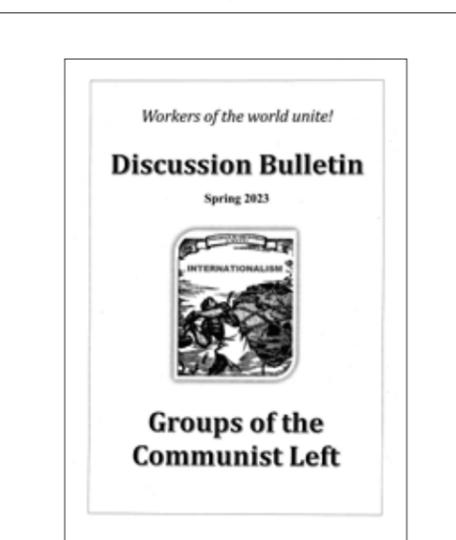
1. "Imperialist interests behind the Afghan 'mission'", *World Revolution* n° 327

The 30 years of deepening decomposition have increased the tendency for US hegemony to decline, which has exacerbated the imperialist ambitions of all the other countries, in particular reviving Russia's ambition to regain an important place in the imperialist constellation.

Now the Ukraine war is accelerating decomposition. The prolongation of the war is weakening Russia's forces and undermining the unity of the bourgeoisie around the state, a process threatening to reach explosive levels. A year before the Wagner mutiny, we warned that the "special operation" on Ukraine risks "constituting a second profound destabilisation after the fragmentation resulting from the implosion of its bloc (1989-1992): on the military level it will probably lose its rank as the number 2 world army; its economy is already weakened and will fall into more and more trouble [... and] internal tensions between factions of the Russian bourgeoisie can only intensify. [...] Some members of the leading faction (cf. Medvedev) are already warning of the consequences: a possible collapse of the Russian Federation and the rise of diverse mini-Russias with unpredictable leaders holding nuclear arms"².

At the beginning of the war, the bourgeoisie seemed unified around Putin as the representative of the state, but as the conflict dragged on, rivalries and disputes between groups began to emerge. In January 2023, certain events were already foreshadowing tensions in the military leadership, as

2. "The significance and impact of the war in Ukraine", *International Review* n° 168



Discussion by groups of the communist left who signed the **Joint statement of groups of the international communist left about the war in Ukraine**, shortly after the start of the war: International Communist Current, Istituto Onorato Damen, Internationalist Voice. Internationalist Communist Perspective (Korea) fully supports the joint statement.

Sergei Surovikin, who commanded the Russian troops in Ukraine, was dismissed.

In the context of decomposition, any pretext can trigger rivalries, which soon became explosive. In this sense, the mutiny led by Prigozhin, although it may have appeared as a small fissure, quickly grew, showing the fragile unity within the power structure and the inability of the state to contain the dynamic towards chaos. Vladimir Gelman, a Russian professor and analyst, following the behaviour of the different sectors during Prigozhin's so-called "March for Justice", notes that while the military caravan did not receive open support from any military or civilian sector, neither did Putin: "nobody came out in support of him. Neither mayors nor regional leaders came out (...) they did not take any political steps...". This waiting to see which way the winds were blowing exposes the vigilance and caution displayed by different bourgeois groups in a context where mistrust and the clash of interests have increased. If people like Lukashenko offered himself as a negotiator with Prigozhin, it was to prevent the war from shifting to Belarus through a possible incursion of the "Kalinoŭski Regiment" formed by opponents of Lukashenko's government who are fighting on the Ukrainian side.

Decomposition is advancing and accelerating all over the world.

The bourgeoisies of the major powers have themselves expressed their fears of a breakdown of the Russian state. During the crisis between the Wagner group and the Russian army, "American officials were paying special attention to Russia's nuclear arsenal, nervous about the instability of a country with the power to annihilate most of the planet..."³ If we look at their statements on the events, there is no doubt that the bourgeoisie as a whole is concerned about the difficulties of the Russian state as expressed by the Prigozhin mutiny. They all agree that there is great division and fragility in the state apparatus. Zelensky, president of Ukraine, was the first to say that Putin is weak and his government is "crumbling". Antoni Blinken, US Secretary of State, while saying, "It's too early to tell how this is going to end", assesses that there are "real fissures" in Putin's government, which distract and divide Russia and make it difficult for it to "pursue aggression against Ukraine". Even Trump, who has presented himself as a "friend" of Russia, claims that "Putin is somewhat weakened" and calls on the US government to take advantage of this to negotiate a ceasefire. China alone avoids expressing a perception of Putin's government's weakness and presents the Wagner mutiny as an "internal affair". The casualness with which it assesses events is more than a diplomatic act and in reality hides concerns about the effect that a weakening of Russia on its borders would have, and even more so if the break-up of the Russian Federation, so far its main ally, were to occur.

For his part, Putin claims that he is maintaining the unity and strength of the Federation, though he is trying to win the loyalty of the various organs of repression by promising more weapons and better salaries. But will this be enough to eliminate the divisions in the military structure and the low morale of the troops?

What is becoming increasingly clear is that as the war in Ukraine drags on, chaos and barbarism will spread and deepen, directly affecting Russia, but since it is "the largest and one of the most heavily armed states in the world [... its destabilisation] would have unforeseeable consequences for the whole world"⁴.

Possible consequences of a prolonged war could be:

- widening of the cracks within the bourgeoisie, leading to the outbreak of a civil war, with the population as a whole and particularly the working class serving as cannon fodder;
- erratic and irresponsible actions on the part of the group in power headed by Putin, who, seeing himself cornered, could make use of the nuclear

3. "Russian mutiny offers clues about Putin's power", <https://www.nytimes.com/>

4. "The acceleration of capitalist decomposition poses the clear possibility of the destruction of humanity", *International Review* n° 169

arsenal... For the time being, he announced the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons on Belarusian territory from 7 or 8 July;

-The emergence of irrational cliques vying for power, which would have a large stock of nuclear weapons at hand, ready to wield them at full blast in order to better position themselves in the new power set-up. The actions of the Wagner group are a clear illustration of this risk. Moreover, there are chilling precedents in this regard, for example, with the threat to bomb the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine, the largest in Europe and one of the 10 largest in the world, menacing humanity with the very real danger of nuclear catastrophe in the middle of Europe. But the war madness is not exclusive to one side of the bourgeoisie: the US has just supplied Ukraine with cluster bombs, which spread by the thousands, killing on the spot and lying dormant for decades.

Whatever initiatives are taken, they will lead to catastrophes for the world. As we stated at the end of 2022, the 20s of the 21st century are turning out to be the most turbulent in history, with an accumulation of disasters and suffering for humanity (pandemics, famines, environmental disasters...), which are out of control and raise the question of its survival as a species. But as it turns out, war, an intentional and planned action by the capitalist state is, without doubt, the main trigger of barbarism and chaos.

In the contest of "each against all", imperialist appetites run amok.

As for the international repercussions, although we cannot hazard a guess as the situation is highly unpredictable, there are already some indications that important countries in Eastern Europe are calculating how they can take advantage of this situation to advance their own imperialist trump cards, as in the case of Poland: the Ukraine war has given Poland a greater strategic importance for the USA, which has allowed it to strengthen its military forces with the provision of armaments by NATO, including advanced technology tanks (in anticipation of the accommodation of the Wagner group in Belarus⁵). This military build-up has gone hand in hand with the revival of Poland's old imperialist dreams of extending its influence in eastern Europe.⁶

Only the working class has a solution to capitalist destruction.

In all these clashes between bourgeois groups, they do not stop spitting their venom against the working class. With their feints, military demonstrations and declarations, all the gangs of the ruling class seek to show their strength to the opponent, but also to sow fear and confusion among the workers. Each faction participating in the war tries to show itself as a victim or defender of freedom, in order to dominate and control the reactions of the exploited and to use them as real cannon fodder on the war fronts, or to subject them to immobility and passivity, accepting the increase of exploitation and the degradation of living conditions in the name of the "fatherland". In particular, taking advantage of the war in Ukraine and specifically the Wagner mutiny, the bourgeoisie is reinforcing its discourse on democracy and the fight against autocracy, trying at all costs to hide the fact that its rotten system, built on exploitation, misery and war, can only offer destruction and chaos. The prolongation of its existence endangers the very life of this planet, and the war in Ukraine, with all its dangerous destructive consequences, shows that this threat is growing.

In the face of capitalist barbarism, the only social force capable of stopping it is the proletariat.

Let us not forget that, "the first world war was not ended by diplomatic negotiations or by the conquests of this or that imperialism, IT WAS ENDED BY THE INTERNATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY UPRISING OF THE PROLETARIAT"⁷. T / RR, 12-07-2023

5. "Poland raises warnings about the presence of the Wagner Group in Belarus and appeals to the European Union for help" see <https://www.infobae.com/>

6. "Poland wants to annex three regions in western Ukraine when peace is negotiated" [https://okdiario.com.](https://okdiario.com/)

7. Third Manifesto of the ICC, ICConline March 2023

Faced with the barbarity of the bourgeois state, indiscriminate violence is a dead end

The tragic death of young Nahel in the Paris suburb of Nanterre, murdered by a policeman, set off a firestorm. Immediately, riots broke out in towns and cities across France against this despicable injustice.

The terror of the bourgeois state and its police

As can be seen from the video that immediately circulated on social networks, Nahel was shot in cold blood at point-blank range for a simple refusal to obey. This murder follows a long list of people killed and injured by the police, mostly with impunity.

There has been a real proliferation of spot checks, shameless discrimination and the systematic harassment of young people whose skin colour is a little too “dark”. A whole section of the population, often poor and sometimes marginalised, can no longer stand the constant racism to which they are subjected, the arrogant and humiliating behaviour of many cops, or the hate speech they hear morning and night on television and the Internet. The disgusting press release from the Alliance police union declaring itself to be “at war” with “pests” and “savage hordes” illustrates this unbearable reality.

But the vile xenophobic overtones of many cops also allow all the defenders of “democracy” and the “rule of law” to mask the increasingly obvious terror and violence meted out by the entire bourgeois state and its police. Nahel’s murder testifies to the growing power of state violence, a thinly veiled desire to terrorise and repress in the face of the inexorable crisis of capitalism, the inevitable reactions of the working class, and the risks of social explosion (riots, looting, etc.) which will continue to multiply in the future.

While this violence is embodied in an ordinary way by the subjugation of the exploited in their workplaces, by the constant humiliations inflicted on the unemployed and all the victims of capitalism, it is also expressed in the increasingly violent behaviour of a significant part of the police, the justice system and the entire repressive arsenal of the state, whether on a daily basis in the “neighbourhoods” or against social movements.

Since the 2017 law, which eased the conditions under which the police can use firearms, the number of murders has increased fivefold. Since this law was adopted by a left-wing government, that of Hollande, the police have been trigger-happy! At the same time, the repression of social movements has steadily increased in recent years, as evidenced by the yellow vest movement with a multitude of people stabbed, maimed or injured. More recently, the fight against pension reform saw a terrible outburst by the police, symbolised by the numerous attacks by the BRAV-M special police unit. Opponents of the Sainte-Soline megacamps and illegal immigrants expelled from Mayotte have also been subjected to ultra-violent repression. The UN even condemned “the lack of restraint in the use of force”, but also the “criminalising rhetoric” of the French state. And with good reason! France has one of the most extensive and dangerous police arsenals in Europe. The increasing use of rocket-propelled grenades, tear gas and riot guns, and the use of anti-riot tanks, etc., tend to transform social movements into veritable scenes of war, against people whom the authorities no longer hesitate to label shamelessly as “criminals” or “terrorists”.

The recent riots were once again an opportunity for the bourgeoisie to exercise ferocious repression, sending in 45,000 police officers, elite BRI and RAID units, gendarmerie armoured cars, surveillance drones, riot tanks, water cannons, helicopters... In 2005, the riots in the suburbs lasted three weeks because the bourgeoisie tried to calm things down by avoiding another death. Today, the bourgeoisie must immediately impose itself by force and prevent the situation from getting out of hand. Faced with riots that are far more violent and widespread than in 2005, it is striking with tenfold force.

The more the situation deteriorates, the more the state, in France as everywhere else in the world, is forced to react with force. But the use of physical and legal violence¹ paradoxically accentuates

1. After the police crackdown, the thousands of young

the disorder and barbarism that the bourgeoisie is trying to contain. By unleashing its dogs on the most disadvantaged sections of the population, and by multiplying the hateful and racist rhetoric at the highest levels of government and in the media, the bourgeoisie has created the conditions for a huge explosion of anger and blind violence. In the future, it is certain that the brutal repression of the riots that have shaken France in recent days will also lead to more violence and more chaos. Macron’s government has merely put a lid on a fire that will continue to smoulder.

A revolt without perspective

Nahel’s murder was the final straw. A huge wave of anger exploded simultaneously across France and as far afield as Belgium and Switzerland. Violent clashes with the police broke out everywhere, particularly in the major urban centres around Paris, Lyon and Marseille. Everywhere, public buildings, shops, street furniture, buses, trams and many vehicles were destroyed by uncontrollable rioters, some as young as 13 or 14 years old. Fires ravaged shopping centres, town halls and police stations, as well as schools, gymnasia and libraries. Shops and supermarkets were quickly looted, sometimes for clothes, sometimes for food.

The riots were an expression of genuine hatred for the humiliating behaviour of the cops, their constant violence, their sense of impunity. But how can we explain the scale of the violence and the extent of the chaos, when the government initially played up the indignation following Nahel’s murder and promised exemplary penalties?

The tragic death of a teenager was the trigger for these riots, a spark, but it was the deepening crisis of capitalism and all its consequences for the most precarious and rejected populations that were the real cause and fuel for the revolt, the source of a deep malaise that eventually exploded. Contrary to the cheap statements made by Macron and his clique, who blame video games for intoxicating young people, or parents who should give their kids “two slaps in the face”, young people in the suburbs, who are already victims of chronic discrimination, are being hit hard by the crisis, by growing marginalisation, by extreme impoverishment. Falling back on their individual resources they are sometimes led to resort to trafficking of all kinds. This is the result of abandonment and a lack of prospects.

But far from the violence being organised and aware of its aims, the riots have expressed the blind rage of young people without a compass, acting out of desperation and without perspective. The first suburban riots in France took place around the start of the decomposing phase of capitalism: from the 1979 riots in Vaux-en-velin, near Lyon, to the current ones. As we have pointed out in the past, what all riots have in common is that they are an “expression of despair and the no-future it engenders, manifested in their utter absurdity. Such was the case with the riots in the French suburbs in November 2005 [...]. The fact that it was their own families, neighbours or close friends who were the main victims of the depredations reveals the totally blind, desperate and suicidal nature of this type of riot. In fact, it was the cars of workers living in these neighbourhoods that were set on fire, schools or gymnasiums used by their brothers, sisters or neighbours’ children that were destroyed. And it was precisely because of the absurdity of these riots that the bourgeoisie was able to use them and turn them against the working class”.²

Unlike in 2005, when the riots were relatively confined to the suburbs, such as Clichy-sous-bois, the riots of early summer 2023 are now affecting hitherto protected city centres and even small provincial towns that were previously spared, such as Amboise, Pithivier and Bourges, which have been vandalised. The exacerbation of tensions and the deep despair of those involved have only increased and amplified this phenomenon.

people arrested received very heavy sentences in summary trials.

2. “What’s the difference between the hunger riots and the riots in the suburbs?”, *Révolution Internationale* no. 394 (October 2008).



Riots, a danger for the proletariat

Contrary to everything that the parties on the left of capital, led by the Trotskyists of the NPA and the anarchists, may claim, riots are not a favourable terrain for class struggle, nor an expression of it, but quite the contrary, a real danger. The bourgeoisie can all the more easily exploit the image of chaos conveyed by riots because they always make proletarians the collateral victims:

- through the damage and destruction caused, which affects the young people themselves and their neighbours;
- by the stigmatisation of the residents of the “banlieus” as “savages” responsible for all the ills of society;
- by increasing repression, which found a golden opportunity to step up its fight against all social movements, and particularly against workers’ struggles.

The riots are therefore an opportunity for the bourgeoisie to unleash a whole barrage of propaganda to further cut the working class off from the young inhabitants of the banlieus in revolt. As in 2005, “the excessive media coverage allowed the ruling class to push as many working-class people in working-class neighbourhoods as possible to see the young rioters not as victims of capitalism in crisis, but as ‘thugs’. They could only undermine any reaction of solidarity on the part of the working class towards these young people”.³

It’s easy for the bourgeoisie and the media to manipulate events by conflating the riots with the workers’ struggle, the indiscriminate and gratuitous violence and sterile clashes with the cops with the conscious and organised class struggle. By criminalising one, it can unleash ever more violence against the other! It’s no coincidence that, during the movement against pension reform, the images played over and over again on TV channels around the world were scenes of clashes with the police, violence and rubbish bin fires. The aim was to make a link between these two expressions

3. *ibid*

Continued from page 8

Workers in the United States are fighting back

drivers began strike action and demonstrations demanding higher wages and improved working conditions. Several routes throughout San Diego County were affected. And on 2 June, 15,000 workers at 41 hotels in Southern California and in Arizona began a 3-day strike and are threatening more strikes to achieve their demands. There are also 459,000 UPS workers (involved in parcel delivery) who are preparing for a possible strike on 1 August.

It is important to learn lessons from other struggles around the world.

The proletariat must unite and develop its consciousness of the need to overthrow the capitalist system and build a world community without borders or other divisions.

The economic crisis is forcing workers around the world to defend its living and working conditions and to confront the unions. The working class in the US is increasing its consciousness of its exploited conditions, but it needs to unify its struggles and reflect on past experiences and lessons arising from the mobilisations by the proletariat in Europe.

of social struggle, which were radically different in nature, in an attempt to convey the idea that both express a dangerous disorder. The aim was to erase and prevent workers from learning the lessons of their own struggles, and to sabotage the process of reflection on the question of class identity. The riots in France were the perfect opportunity to reinforce this confusion.

The working class has its own methods

of struggle which are radically opposed to riots and simple urban revolts. The class struggle has absolutely nothing to do with indiscriminate destruction and violence, arson, revenge and looting that offer no prospects and no tomorrow. Although they may coordinate via social networks, their rioting is immediate and purely individual, guided by the instinct of mob movements, with no other aim than revenge and destruction. The struggle of the working class is the antithesis of these practices. On the contrary, it is a class whose immediate struggles are part of a tradition, part of a conscious, organised project to overthrow capitalist society on a global scale. In this sense, the working class must take care not to allow itself to be drawn into the rotten terrain of riots, onto the slope of blind and gratuitous violence, and even less into sterile confrontations with the forces of law and order, which only serve to justify repression.

Unlike riots, which strengthen the armed wing of the state, workers’ struggles, when they are united and on the rise, make it possible to roll back repression. In May 1968, for example, in the face of the repression of the students, the massive movements and unity of the workers made it possible to limit and roll back the violence of the cops. In the same way, when Polish workers mobilised throughout the country in 1980 in less than 48 hours, their unity and self-organisation protected them from the extreme brutality of the “socialist” state. It was only when they put their fight back into the hands of the Solidarnosc trade union, when the latter took control of the struggle, so that the workers were divided and deprived of the leadership of the struggle, that the repression struck so savagely.

The working class must remain wary of the danger posed by indiscriminate violence, putting forward its own class violence, the only violence that can lead to a future. **WH, 3 July 2023**

The recent struggles in Britain and France have reminded us that: “We must take the control of our struggles into our own hands”; “We must come together to discuss and draw the lessons of past struggles. The methods of struggle should express the strength of the working class, those which, at certain moments in history, have shaken the bourgeoisie and its system, namely:

- Extending support and solidarity beyond sector, town, region or country;
- Holding the widest possible discussion about the needs of the struggle;
- Taking back control of the struggle through general assemblies away from the control of the unions or other bourgeois organisations, to prepare for the united and autonomous struggles of tomorrow!”⁴.

Faced with capitalist barbarism, the working class must renew its struggles worldwide in defence of its living standards by acquiring the lessons of its past defeats. **Yosjaz 12/07/2023**

4. Against the attacks of the ruling class, we need a massive, united struggle! It’s not enough to come out in large numbers, we have to take control of our struggles!

ACG bans the ICC from its public meetings, CWO betrays solidarity between revolutionary organisations

“The ACG, Angry Workers, Plan C, and Communist Workers Organisation will discuss recent and forthcoming strikes in the UK and elsewhere. Plenty of time for q[uestions] and a[nswers] and discussion.”

This was how the Anarchist Communist Group (ACG) announced its public meeting of 12 May this year. The meeting aimed to “push the idea of grassroots organisations against the machinations of the union bureaucrats, who are hindering and obstructing strike action both here in the UK and abroad”.¹

Who are the organisations cooperating in this meeting?

The ACG split from the Anarchist Federation (AF) five years ago on the question of identity politics, in an attempt to put more emphasis on the authentic working class struggle. It took a basically internationalist stance against the war in Ukraine, although with clear weaknesses.²

The Angry Workers of the World (AWW) is a more “workerist” group which began in West London, very close to the anarchist milieu in its ideas and methods. A year after the start of the Ukraine war, the group had still not formulated a collective position on it. And despite a recent discussion on revolutionary defeatism, it still does not defend an unambiguously internationalist position.³

Plan C is an overtly leftist organisation even without a particular ideology, typifying itself as experimental and non-dogmatic. On June 25, 2022, it held a meeting in “solidarity with the Ukrainian working class” (and not the Russian working class!), with speakers and a film about anarchists in Ukraine helping out neighbours and supporting the fighting soldiers

Finally, the Communist Workers Organisation (CWO) is an organisation of the revolutionary milieu affiliated to the Internationalist Communist Tendency (ICT) and has defended a clear internationalist position against the war.

The ICC banned from London ACG meetings

In October 2022, prior to a meeting of the ACG in London, the ICC received an email from the group which said: “If the ICC is thinking of coming along to tonight’s public meeting, please think again as we have decided that your attendance would be detrimental”. We wrote back, asking the ACG for an explanation. But we received no reply.

As soon as we arrived at the ACG meeting on May 12, we were recognised as the ICC, and were ordered out of the meeting. We protested against this, reminding the ACG that it had been excluded from the Anarchist Bookfair last autumn because it opposes the war in Ukraine. We also rejected the excuse that the ICC “talks too much”, since our practice is to respect rules of the organisation hosting the meeting. Our objections were ignored, and we had no choice but to give out our leaflets and display our press outside.

We don’t know what motivated the ACG to organise public discussions with a leftist group like Plan C, but if it thinks that this will strengthen its capacity to defend proletarian positions, it is mistaken. Many examples from the history of the workers’ movement demonstrate that joint activity between a bourgeois organisation and a proletarian organisation (or in this case, an organisation seeking to orient itself around proletarian positions) is ultimately always to the detriment of the latter.

The clearest example of this was the CNT, which had been a revolutionary organisation of the proletariat and even considered applying for membership of the Comintern. But in the course of the 1920s it started to collaborate ever more with bourgeois political organisations, until it decided in 1936 to participate in the governments of both the Catalan Generalitat and the Madrid Republic. This turn was not an accident, since during WWII the CNT in France, gripped by anti-fascism,

fought in the official armies of the ‘Liberation’ against German occupation. The CNT had definitively turned into a bourgeois organisation⁴.

And today, the ACG is quite happy to hold a meeting together with those who have proved themselves incapable of taking a clear and collectively agreed internationalist stance, like the AWW, and, even more seriously, with a group like Plan C, which has shown itself to be in the camp of the bourgeoisie.

And at the same time the ACG excludes from its meeting an organisation which, just like the ACG itself, defends proletarian internationalism and the perspective of communism. How does the ACG explain this inconsistency?

Another inconsistency of the ACG is the fact that it formulates publicly a standpoint on the class struggle, but does not want to confront it in a public debate with that of the ICC, even though their position on this question is far from antagonistic to that of the ICC, as we see for instance in the following quote from an ACG article: “As more and more workers are forced by necessity to take industrial action, it becomes ever more necessary to create new forms of organisation. These should enable effective and unified struggle, bypassing the union bureaucrats and going beyond the trade unions”.⁵ As everyone reading our press can see, this position is close to that of the ICC, although it is probably defended with different arguments. But a public discussion would show which arguments are the clearest. So, the questions are: why does the ACG avoid a political confrontation with the ICC and why does it think that a debate on the class struggle with the ICC is counterproductive for the development of a proletarian perspective?

4. See: “The CNT’s contribution to the constitution of the Spanish Republic” (1921-31, *International Review* no. 131

5. “Oil rig workers strike”, June 9, 2023.

The betrayal of the proletarian principle of solidarity by the CWO

The CWO is part of the same milieu of the revolutionary organisations of the Communist Left as the ICC. This milieu is founded on certain principles, which all organisations should respect. One of these principles is that an attack on one organisation is an attack on the whole Communist Left. Thus when one group in this milieu is attacked, boycotted or excluded, all organisations are under attack and should react as a unified whole. Because each attack on a revolutionary organisation contains a threat for the historic process of the construction of the party.

So, the ICC gave its full support when the Bordigist International Communist Party came under attack after it had published the booklet *Auschwitz or the Grand Alibi*. In 2015 it published a Statement of solidarity with the ICT when the militants of this organisation were targeted by former members of the ICT’s section in Italy. But what is the response of the CWO in the case of the ICC being banned from the public meeting of the ACG? The ICC had already written to the CWO on 8 November last year asking for its position on this issue, but never received a reply.

When comrades of the CWO came to a public meeting of the ICC following the initial ban by the ACG, we asked them to take position on the incident, but instead of doing so the comrades avoided the question, explaining why they thought the ACG had done this, what ACG members may have said to them about it, as if they were its apologists. But the ACG can speak for itself and the CWO has the duty to take a clear position.

The comrade who represented the CWO at this recent ACG meeting explained on his arrival that he did not know that the ICC had been ordered out of the meeting, nor did he know that the CWO was mentioned in the advertisement for the meeting as

one of the participating groups. Did he realise that he was participating in a debate with an overtly leftist organisation? Ignorance is a bad argument to hide behind, but in the meantime, he had been informed by the ICC about its exclusion from the meeting and yet he took no clear stand.

It is clear, after the CWO has opened the door to parasitic groups and snitches, such as via the Paris No War But The Class War committee⁶, it now opens the door to organisations openly defending bourgeois positions, such as Plan C. But revolutionary organisations cannot engage in a public discussion on the class struggle with organisations that do not defend an internationalist position. Such organisations are essentially hostile to the historic interests of the working class. But the CWO, wanting to have it both ways, does not have the guts to openly come out and say that it is seeking rapprochement with an “undogmatic” leftist group like Plan C, instead of expressing its solidarity or cooperating with the ICC.

In its policy of “openness” the CWO doesn’t want the ICC to be witness to its “romance” with anarchist or leftist groups. Therefore, it is ready to sweep the principle of solidarity within the Communist Left under the carpet and refuses to condemn the banning of the ICC by the ACG.

In the end, the CWO has demonstrated that it is giving up the principle of defending other organisations of the Communist Left against attacks from outside. “But no proletarian organisation can ignore this elementary necessity [of solidarity] without paying a very heavy price”.⁷ **ICC, 14.7.23**

6. “A committee that leads its participants into a dead end”, *World Revolution* no. 395

7. “The International Conferences of the Communist Left (1976-80)”, *International Review* no. 122

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1. “All Out! The Current Strike Wave”, May 12, 2023
 2. See our article on ICCOnline: “Between internationalism and the “defence of the nation””
 3. See our article on ICCOnline: “AWW and Ukraine war: There is no middle ground between internationalism and “national defence””

As in Britain, France and other countries, workers in the United States are fighting back against the attacks of the bourgeoisie

After more than 30 years of retreat, the revival of workers' struggles in Britain has been closely followed by workers in other Western European countries. It indicates a rupture, a change in the dynamics of the class struggle at the international level and a renewal of a class perspective. It shows that the proletariat has not been defeated at the historical level and that it is once again beginning to resist the growing attacks on its living conditions, drawing attention to the inhuman situation endured by all the exploited in the world. The working class in the USA has also suffered from attacks on its living and working conditions, with increased workloads and reduced purchasing power.

Strikes in the USA: a confirmation of the international dimension of the class struggle

Faced with worsening working and living conditions, the proletariat in the United States has also demonstrated that it is not willing to accept further attacks arising from the economic crisis. In 2021 a large number of struggles had already taken place in what was called Striketober (from "strike" and "October"); there were 346 strikes by workers in various sectors, with the workers in the health sector prominent, demanding improved wages and better working conditions. In October, 4.3 million American workers were already mobilised. These struggles continued into 2022 when struggles re-emerged in Europe. 385 strikes were recorded, escalating in October once again, one month before the mid-term elections.

In the health sector, the scale of mobilisation has reached historic levels.

Some of the most important strikes in 2022 were in the health sector, raising common demands for increased wages, improved benefits and increased staffing levels (a single worker is now being asked to do the work of what was previously done by several workers and overtime has become compulsory). They are also demanding more protection against dangerous conditions for patients and staff, like those caused by the pandemic. As an example, more than 55,000 social service workers in Los Angeles voted to strike on 6 May, and

1. Struggles in the United States, in Iran, in Italy, in Korea... Neither the pandemic nor the economic crisis have broken the combativity of the proletariat!

15,000 nurses in Minnesota and Wisconsin on 12-15 September staged what is believed to be the largest-ever strike of private sector nurses.

Demonstrations and similar demands have continued in this sector, with more than 17,000 nurses involved in January 2023, with 7,000 in Manhattan and the Bronx hospitals in New York going on strike, rejecting the improved offer of the employers who ignored placards declaring: "workers are exhausted and burned out". The fact that the unions prevented nurses in other hospitals from showing their solidarity weakened the 9-12 January strike and finally they were forced to accept the same raise granted to other hospitals and returned to work.

The demand for strike action by US railworkers threatens to disrupt economic activity

The call for strike action on the railways threatened to spread across the country, severely affecting the production and distribution networks and impacting the national economy less than two months before the mid-term elections. More than 115,000 railway workers from various companies were demanding strike action on 16 September 2022.

The working conditions in this sector have worsened as the major rail companies have cut nearly a third of their workforce; 45,000 workers have been made redundant in the last six years. They have also aggressively cut costs, running fewer but longer trains with a reduced workforce and with harsher working conditions with train drivers and conductors working shifts that can last for up to 24 hours and with workers effectively denied time off for medical appointments or to cope with family problems by being penalised financially. The train derailment in Ohio on 3 February, resulting in large quantities of highly toxic and carcinogenic vinyl chloride going up in flames, put thousands of people's lives in danger, including railworkers, and shows the deadly irresponsibility of the railroad companies that increase the length and load of trains for higher profits

The strike threat came after 3 years of conflict during which companies made record profits by imposing harsher working conditions forcing many workers to resign². When the White House

2. Cfr.EE. UU.- La huelga ferroviaria convocada en EEUU preocupa al país ante la falta de acuerdos tangibles para desconvocarla (notimerica.com)

proposed that "the tensions needed resolving without jeopardising the economy or undermining Democrat support among working people", the unions cooperated fully. President Biden had already averted the strike in July by imposing a "cooling-off period", which expired on 9 September with workers still wanting action. Then, in negotiations on 15 September, Biden again intervened by forming a "Presidential Emergency Board" and blackmailed the workers into not taking strike action because of 'the damage it would cause to everyone'. The unions cooperated to prevent strike action by granting time to the US House of Representatives and Senate, Democrats and Republicans alike, to enact a new law within the space of two days, on 30 November, that would prevent strike disruption to the rail network. In other words, it was not only the intervention of Democrat Biden, but above all the union sabotage of the struggle and its control over the workers which ensured that the living and working conditions of railworkers would only worsen

The struggles unite in the face of attacks from bosses, government and the sabotage of the unions

We must draw lessons from current and past struggles and use them in future struggles as discontent continues to grow in different sectors such as education. On 14 November 2022, what has been called "the largest of academic strikes in the United States", involving 48,000 teachers, led to a five weeks stoppage and a demand for higher wages and improved working conditions at the University of California, one of the largest public educational institutions in the United States and home to 280,000 students from all over the world. The strike was called by assistant professors, postdoctoral academics and researchers. Researchers and postdoctoral academics had reached a tentative agreement in early December that improved their contract situation but then both groups agreed to continue the strike until there was a resolution for the assistant professors, the most vulnerable group and the one with the heaviest workloads. This show of solidarity is an important lesson for workers everywhere.

A few months later, 65,000 school employees and state school teachers staged the largest strike in the United States since 2019. Tens of thousands joined the picket lines and held a massive demonstration on 21 March 2023; it was the first of



Teachers in California on strike for better wages and conditions

three days of an extended citywide strike across Los Angeles. Workers serving 420,000 elementary and special education students also struck demanding improved wages and a reduction to workloads. It was the lowest paid workers (canteen and office workers, drivers, janitors and special education assistants) who triggered the strike. They were joined by thousands of teachers, showing their solidarity and unity, an essential factor in the development of the struggles.

In the same dynamic and for the first time in Rutgers University's 257-year history, 9,000 workers serving 67,000 students, went on strike on 10 April. Teachers, researchers, physicians and graduate students at campuses in New Brunswick, Newark and Camden demanded wage increases, equal pay for associate lecturers, as well as demanding an end to semester-only contracts. In an email these workers said: "We are moved & motivated by the huge show of active support from members, students, co-workers and partners in the community. TOGETHER WE ARE STRONG & WE WILL WIN a #FairContractNow! #RUON-STRIKE".

The strikes continue. About 11,500 film and TV scriptwriters at Hollywood studios began their first strike in 16 years on 1 May for wage increases and for a pension plan and health insurance. They were joined by 160,000 actors who called for a strike on 13 June, not having done so since 1980, and they will be joined by screenwriters for the first time in more than 60 years³. Also, in early May, 600 Metropolitan Transit System bus

3. <https://elpais.com/cultura/2023-07-13/hollywood-se-asoma-al-abismo-los-actores-convocan-a-la-huelga-y-paralizan-la-industria-del-entretenimiento-en-ee-uu.html>

Continued on page 6

Political positions of the ICC

World Revolution is the section in Britain of the **International Communist Current** which defends the following political positions:

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

* The Paris Commune of 1871 was the first attempt by the proletariat to carry out this revolution, in a period when the conditions for it were not yet ripe. Once these conditions had been provided by the onset of capitalist decadence, the October revolution of 1917 in Russia was the first step towards an authentic world communist revolution in an international revolutionary wave which put an end to the imperialist war and went on for several years after that. The failure of this revolutionary wave, particularly in Germany in 1919-23, condemned the revolution in Russia to isolation and to a rapid degeneration. Stalinism was not the product of the Russian revolution, but its gravedigger.

* The stratified regimes which arose in the USSR, eastern Europe, China, Cuba etc and were called 'socialist' or 'communist' were just a particularly brutal form of the universal tendency towards state capitalism, itself a major characteristic of the period of decadence.

* Since the beginning of the 20th century, all wars are imperialist wars, part of the deadly struggle between states large and small to conquer or retain a place in

the international arena. These wars bring nothing to humanity but death and destruction on an ever-increasing scale. The working class can only respond to them through its international solidarity and by struggling against the bourgeoisie in all countries.

* All the nationalist ideologies - 'national independence', 'the right of nations to self-determination' etc - whatever their pretext, ethnic, historical or religious, are a real poison for the workers. By calling on them to take the side of one or another faction of the bourgeoisie, they divide workers and lead them to massacre each other in the interests and wars of their exploiters.

* In decadent capitalism, parliament and elections are nothing but a masquerade. Any call to participate in the parliamentary circus can only reinforce the lie that presents these elections as a real choice for the exploited. 'Democracy', a particularly hypocritical form of the domination of the bourgeoisie, does not differ at root from other forms of capitalist dictatorship, such as Stalinism and fascism.

* All factions of the bourgeoisie are equally reactionary. All the so-called 'workers', 'Socialist' and 'Communist' parties (now ex-'Communists'), the leftist organisations (Trotskyists, Maoists and ex-Maoists, official anarchists) constitute the left of capitalism's political apparatus. All the tactics of 'popular fronts', 'anti-fascist fronts' and 'united fronts', which mix up the interests of the proletariat with those of a faction of the bourgeoisie, serve only to smother and derail the struggle of the proletariat.

* With the decadence of capitalism, the unions everywhere have been transformed into organs of capitalist order within the proletariat. The various forms of union

organisation, whether 'official' or 'rank and file', serve only to discipline the working class and sabotage its struggles.

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

* Terrorism is in no way a method of struggle for the working class. The expression of social strata with no historic future and of the decomposition of the petty bourgeoisie, when it's not the direct expression of the permanent war between capitalist states, terrorism has always been a fertile soil for manipulation by the bourgeoisie. Advocating secret action by small minorities, it is in complete opposition to class violence, which derives from conscious and organised mass action by the proletariat.

* The working class is the only class which can carry out the communist revolution. Its revolutionary struggle will inevitably lead the working class towards a confrontation with the capitalist state. In order to destroy capitalism, the working class will have to overthrow all existing states and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale: the international power of the workers' councils, regrouping the entire proletariat.

* The communist transformation of society by the workers' councils does not mean 'self-management' or the nationalisation of the economy. Communism requires the conscious abolition by the working class of capitalist social relations: wage labour, commodity production, national frontiers. It means the creation of a world community in which all activity is oriented towards the full satisfaction of human needs.

* The revolutionary political organisation constitutes the vanguard of the working class and is an active

factor in the generalisation of class consciousness within the proletariat. Its role is neither to 'organise the working class' nor to 'take power' in its name, but to participate actively in the movement towards the unification of struggles, towards workers taking control of them for themselves, and at the same time to draw out the revolutionary political goals of the proletariat's combat.

OUR ACTIVITY

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

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

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

OUR ORIGINS

The positions and activity of revolutionary organisations are the product of the past experiences of the working class and of the lessons that its political organisations have drawn throughout its history. The ICC thus traces its origins to the successive contributions of the *Communist League* of Marx and Engels (1847-52), the three Internationals (the *International Workingmen's Association*, 1864-72, the *Socialist International*, 1884-1914, the *Communist International*, 1919-28), the left fractions which detached themselves from the degenerating Third International in the years 1920-30, in particular the *German, Dutch and Italian Lefts*.