

Proletarian

Organ of the International Communist Party

WHAT DISTINGUISHES OUR PARTY: The political continuity which goes from Marx and Engels to Lenin, to the foundation of the Communist International and the Communist Party of Italy; the class struggle of the Communist Left against the degeneration of the International, the struggle against the theory of « socialism in one country » and the Stalinist counter-revolution; the rejection of all popular fronts and national resistance blocs; the struggle against the principles and practice of bourgeois democracy, against interclassism and political and trade-union class collaboration, against any form of opportunism and nationalism; the difficult task of restoring the Marxist doctrine and the revolutionary organ par excellence - the class party - closely linked with the working class, and its daily struggle in opposition to capitalism and bourgeois oppression; the struggle against personal and electoral politics, against any form of indifference, of tailism, of movementism or the adventurist practice of « armed struggle » ; the support of any proletarian struggle which breaks with social peace and rejects the discipline of interclassist collaborationism; the support of all efforts towards proletarian class reorganisation on the basis of economic associationism, with the perspective of a large scale resumption of the class struggle, proletarian internationalism and the revolutionary anticapitalist struggle.

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Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Syria ...

The mass mobilizations can bring down governments, but capitalist domination can only be really threatened by the proletarian class struggle, independent and internationalist

The wave of social upheavals that has swept over the countries of North Africa and the Middle East since last December has shaken the government palaces in Tunis, Cairo and Algiers or Saana; its effects are far from finished in the rest of the vast Arab world while its repercussions are dreaded in the chanceries of the major imperialist countries, in Washington, London, Paris, Rome ...

The economic crisis that hit the major capitalist countries from 2008 and continues to have far-reaching implications there, could not but be felt even more forcefully on the countries of the imperialist periphery: rising unemployment, increasing impoverishment of the petit-bourgeois layers (small farmers, artisans, shopkeepers, etc.). And the immediate periphery of the European imperialist countries is formed by the countries bordering the Mediterranean.

In the preceding decades masses of proletarians driven by poverty, unemployment, and repression, left the southern shore of the Mediterranean; in groups of tens or hundreds of people, this veritable army of migrant proletarians reached the shores of Greece, Spain and Italy, then to gain France, Germany,

Belgium, Great Britain by various improvised means. From the start, the very civilized European countries, whose constitutions promoting “republican” ideals are filled with solemn words about the “rights of man”, the “right to work”, the right to the life and dignity, have treated immigrant workers like animals:

designated as potential criminals, subjected to police harassment, overexploited and underpaid but also essential to economic growth in opulent Europe, provided they remain subjected to the discriminatory rules by which the European bourgeoisies administrate the migratory flux.

Class brothers, proletarians without a country, members of a class which is everywhere exploited by capital, whether they are employed in a more or less temporary way in the “working world” or rejoin the mass of unemployed, thus increasing the pressure on the wages of the employed workers, whether they are native to the region or immigrants, today proletarians in Egypt, in Tunisia, in

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The Global Crisis: **World Capitalism at a turning Point.** **Mutations in the World inter-imperialist Balance of Power.**

In mid-August 2010 When the Japanese authorities issued GDP (Gross Domestic Product) figures for Japan’s second quarter, the whole world could see that they were lower than the Chinese: the Chinese economy, according to this criterion [1], had become the second largest in the world ahead of the Japanese economy, and everything indicates that this result will be confirmed for all of 2010. Some preliminary information from the International Energy Agency indicate that it is also likely to become the biggest consumer of energy in the world [2].

In late 2009, the Beijing government had triumphantly announced that China,

edging out Germany, now ranked as the of world’s largest exporter; ten years ago, it stood at ninth.

Without doubt the effects of the economic crisis in 2008 and 2009 explain these changes in part, China’s exports in 2009 declined for example by less (-16%) than German (-18%), U.S. (-18%) and especially Japanese exports at (-30.8%). However this increase in Chinese exports is a long-term trend, which illustrates the country’s economic growth.

In 1999, the United States was the world’s leading exporter of goods and in 2003 Germany enjoyed first place, while

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Algeria, no longer flee poverty, but filled with anger and determination, make it explode in the streets of the principal cities of their countries. And tomorrow it will in turn hit the streets of the European cities, in a united struggle of the proletarians of all nationalities against the class enemy, the bourgeoisie which dominates on both sides of the Mediterranean.

But the assaults launched by the proletarians and the poor Arab masses against the governmental palaces has implications still more distant, reaching as far as the United States. The most powerful imperialist bourgeoisie in the world has a hand on the reins of power in the largest countries in the region, Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, with which very strong relations of alliance and mutual interest were woven, and any threat to the stability of these countries is a threat to U.S. interests in the region which is of prime importance for them, if only for the oil from the Middle East. This is why the riots in recent months, beyond the immediate objectives that the protesters were given (overthrow of thieving and corrupt governments, end of police regimes, work and bread for all), carry with them the even more serious dangers for the local ruling classes and those of the imperialist countries implicated in the region.

In Tunisia, the anger was such that it drove tens of thousands of protesters to confront the murderers from Ben Ali's police and special services openly and with bare hands. The revolt of the proletarian masses and peasants precipitated into poverty, in its immediate and secular spontaneity, not recuperated by Islam, was of such importance because despite bestial repression, it managed to provoke the flight of the Tunisian "Rai". This result has come at the cost of hundreds of dead and wounded, but the economic and political system which was based on the power of the Ben Ali clan has not disappeared – quite to the contrary. The movement of revolt against a group of leaders who fled with their hands full, demanded *democracy* and *bread!* But to call for democracy in a system that normally uses bourgeois democracy to better regulate its own business and promote its class interests cannot change the fundamental situation of millions of wor-

kers and peasants who are fed-up with their situation. History has also shown that a movement that unites the proletariat and the petit-bourgeoisie of the cities, the peasants, the intellectual strata and the liberal professions, and finds an improvised ally in certain sections of the ruling class, can undoubtedly result in a palace coup, but cannot really revolutionize society, because it does not have the class force.

More **democracy** means new elections, greater freedom of association and political organization, some social reforms finally realized after having long been promised, but nothing more. The economic system does not change and therefore the causes of exploitation of wage labor, the increasing impoverishment, unemployment, and hunger do not disappear; class antagonisms between bourgeoisie and proletariat remain unchanged as remain unchanged the confrontations between bourgeois fractions and states caused by the economic and political competition between the centers of capitalist accumulation which rule over the planet.

The causes that led to the economic crisis of 2008-2010 are still present, although the most devastating effects of this crisis can be amortized in the richest capitalist countries, they will continue to provoke new, even more violent crises until eventually they plunge the world into a third world war. This is not a prophecy based on the suggestions of the moment, but a conclusion of Marxism, the scientific theory of revolutionary communism which has affirmed since the capitalist crisis of 1847 in Britain (and therefore the rest of the world) and 1848 revolutions in Europe:

“For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule [capitalism, Ed]. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put the existence of the entire bourgeois society on its trial, each time more threateningly.(...)”

And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the

conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented” (The Communist Manifesto, 1848; MIA).

Behind the demand for democracy expressed by the demonstrators, there is simultaneously a demonstration that the bourgeois system, if it is democratic in **economic** terms cannot satisfy the social malaise, which at a certain point leads to a revolt; it is the proof that the bourgeois **political** system; in the absence of a proletarian **class** movement standing on its own terrain and under his own direction, leading all the discontented; has succeeded in duping the social protest movement by offering one of the countless versions of democracy which it has produced throughout history. When discontent turns into a social revolt, the bourgeois power habitually responds with police repression, but follows sooner or later with the offer of democratic prospects which were up to that point refused. This is the dirty game that the bourgeoisie repeats whenever the working masses come into rebellion: if the repression is not enough to quell the revolt, then the defenders of “true democracy”, of “freedom”, of “equality”, of the “homeland”, and of the “common interests of the nation” come into contention .

Things would be much different if we were dealing with a movement of the proletarian **class**. The former colonies have become fully capitalist, even if industrial development is still relative, the ruling class is the bourgeoisie, there are no longer the economic and political vestiges of the feudal type which would put a bourgeois-democratic revolution on the agenda. The proletariat has long existed in these countries, alongside the masses of small peasants and the layers of petit-bourgeois shopkeepers and artisans occupying the spaces of production and distribution not covered by industrialization. But this does not mean that there is an independent proletarian movement; the proletarians of these countries participated in the struggles for national independence, but they have not had the possibility of conquering their class independence, as for example the Russian proletariat did in

its struggle against Tsarism, then the capitalist factory owners and the bourgeoisie when it took the place of Tsarism.

The responsibility of the Stalinist counter-revolution; which beheaded the international communist movement and transformed the communist parties into social-imperialist organizations; is overwhelming. Not only was the European proletariat unable to confront capitalism counting on the strong leadership of the International and its national parties, but the young proletariat of the colonial and semi-colonial countries from the beginning has been oriented towards the impasse of “national-communism”. It is impossible for the workers of the former colonial countries to immediately find the path of class struggle and get rid of the trappings of bourgeois democracy also imported with them by post-fascist (ie semi-fascist) democratic imperialist forces, while the European proletarians, infected to the marrow by collaborationist democracy, are not yet able to rediscover the classist methods and means of struggle for immediate defense. The European proletarians have a historical advantage in relation to other proletarians, they were the first to fight alongside of the bourgeoisie, and then almost always in the place of the bourgeoisie, to eliminate feudalism, kings and overthrow the tyrants and the first to pay in blood the price for their illusions in bourgeois democracy in the revolutions of 1848-50 and the first to launch “the assault on heaven” during the Paris Commune before being crushed by the counter-revolution and the first to have established the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Russian revolution, formed themselves into the international communist party called the Communist International (CI), and to have launched an assault on all the bourgeoisies of the world. The experience of this long series of revolutionary class struggles, summarized in the Theses of the first congress of the CI. and the positions of the Communist Left in Italy, is a great proletarian heritage on which on the future renaissance of the international communist movement must be based. The proletarians of the former colonialized countries with a younger capitalism have an advantage over the European and American proletariat: they have a hundred years less democratic intoxication weighing on them than their class brothers in those countries and they have within themselves a class vigor that the others have lost; the cause of which Marx explains briefly but clearly in “*The Class Struggles in France*”:

“Just as the period of crisis began

later on the Continent than in England, so also did prosperity. The process originated in England, which is the demiurge of the bourgeois cosmos. On the Continent the various phases of the cycle repeatedly experienced by bourgeois society assume a secondary and tertiary form. First, the Continent exports to England disproportionately more than to any other country. This export to England, however, depends on the latter's position, especially in regard to the overseas market. England exports disproportionately more to overseas countries than to the whole Continent, so that the quantity of continental exports to those countries is always dependent on England's foreign trade.

Hence when crises on the Continent produce revolutions there first, the bases for them are always laid in England. Violent outbreaks naturally erupt sooner at the extremities of the bourgeois body than in its heart, because in the latter the possibilities of accommodation are greater than in the former” (1).

The most developed capitalist countries have more resources at their disposal, not only because their industries are more technically advanced, but also because they exploit the weaker countries, drawing enormous supplementary profits that allow them to cushion the impact of the crisis on their own proletariat (England was at the time the most developed capitalist country compared to Western Europe – the “Continent”– including France). Marx speaks of revolutions because at this time social movements led to true insurrections where the proletariat struggled in a violent manner to overthrow the existing regimes, but the analysis also applies to the large mass movements and social unrest occurring at this moment on the other side of the Mediterranean: these are the type of violent explosions that he evokes.

* * *

The Tunisian conflagration was first extended to Algeria provoking a wave of riots that first hit the capital, Algiers – including the emblematic Bab el-Oued district, before reaching Egypt, the other “extremity of the bourgeois organism,” and then Libya. With more “expertise” in revolts the Algerian authorities have so far managed to contain the movement without resorting to violence as savage as in Tunisia (all the same, there were 5 deaths in a few days!), with emergency measures to counter the white-hot anger at the soaring prices of food and staples. The fear of the social explosion which they experience can be noted by the massive police presence deployed to

prevent the demonstration of the 12 opposition parties: they are well aware they are sitting on a powder keg. The promises of Bouteflika to remove the state of emergency in force since 1992 should not thus not create any illusions.

But it was in Egypt where the impact of the Tunisian events triggered a gigantic mobilization of the proletarian and petit-bourgeois masses. Egypt is the most populous country in the Middle East (over 80 million inhabitants). Its economy is still largely agricultural, although it must import about half of the wheat needed for domestic consumption, but in recent decades it has experienced some industrialization, especially in the textile industry which employs by some estimates almost half of the workforce. However, the main resources of the country are tourism, income from the Suez Canal and ... external financing. In fact Egypt is the second biggest recipient of U.S. aid after Israel (2 billion per year on average, over a billion in military aid). Egypt is also one of the linchpins of the U.S. imperialist policy in the region. During his thirty years in power Hosni Mubarak has guaranteed a stable alliance with the U.S. and regime change in Cairo under the pressure of the street is something they fear. The Movement of Tahrir Square is candidly democratic, but it is sufficiently determined to cause fears that it will lead to more violent uncontrollable confrontations: opposition parties tolerated by the regime, including the Muslim Brotherhood, appear to have only a marginal influence on the masses in motion.

Order! This is the categorical imperative of any bourgeoisie, in Tunisia as in Egypt, the United States as in Europe and everywhere; the Egyptian army has finally made it clear to Mubarak that he should withdraw so that order is maintained. The Egyptian “beautiful revolution” where the various classes, from proletarians to enlightened bourgeois were fraternally united to expel the tyrant and restore national pride has led to the power of “Supreme Council of the Armed Forces”. “The army and the people are one!” the demonstrators chanted, while opposition politicians, relieved, declared that since the army had taken the reins (2), Egypt would not go over into chaos and the Muslim Brotherhood in a statement hailed the army “which has kept its promises”. The army has assured that it would transmit power to civilians and that it would restore democracy. In reality all this demonstrates once more is what Marxism asserts: the State, the particular organization of

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bourgeois power, rests ultimately on special detachments of armed men, it is the organization of violence to subdue the exploited class.

The post-Mubarak period will undoubtedly involve a facade of democratization and social reform, but it cannot change the conditions of poverty and exploitation of the great Egyptian masses. Bourgeois democracy is never anything other than the veil of the dictatorship of the ruling class; in the poorest capitalist countries such as Egypt, the veil is reduced to almost nothing because capitalism needs an **authoritarian regime** to prevent the explosion of social tensions that it has no ability to “accommodate”.

The only historical perspective that the proletariat and the masses have is that of the **anti-capitalist revolution** to overthrow the political and social domination of the bourgeoisie.

But the proletarian revolution is possible only when the proletariat, organized and led by its **class party** and leading behind it all the oppressed, rises with arms in hand against the apparatus of organized violence of the bourgeois state. It is also the culmination of a process of class struggle that leads to confrontation with the political and military institutions that defend private property and the capitalist mode of production, whatever the form of government: dictatorship, monarchy or republic. The roots and consequences of this confrontation are international, because capitalism is international, because the economic, political, diplomatic and military relations between states are international; even if each bourgeoisie defends its national interests against others; because the proletariat is an international class that has nothing to defend in the nation where it is exploited, suppressed and massacred.

The current social revolts are not the premise of the proletarian revolution, nor even an anticipation of the resumption of class struggle, even if they signal a deep and widespread discontent. In the absence of a class force organized in economic defense associations and into a political party, it is inevitable that they express democratic – that is to say bourgeois – objectives in their behavior and political demands, but it is as inevitable that the interclassist fraternity will give way to the reality of class oppositions: the worker will remain a wage slave, the poor peasant will continue

to be despoiled by the usurer, while remaining committed to his little plot of land, the urban petit-bourgeois will continue to vacillate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and the bourgeoisie will continue to dominate, while holding out the possibility of a peaceful capitalism with a “human face”.

The proletarian revolution may seem like a mirage, as the proletariat is still far from being the protagonist of the social rebellion that has shaken the current Arab regimes, but this revolt despite its confusion demonstrates the acuteness of the contradictions facing capitalism and its increasing difficulties to maintain its order.

From an economic perspective, society is more than ripe to put an end to capitalism, the productive forces regularly come into conflict with the bourgeois forms of production (3), but it still lacks the action of the proletariat. Revolutions do not arrive on command, but it is widespread economic crises which

usually accelerate the maturation of objective factors of the proletarian struggle, allowing the proletariat to return to the path of class struggle and bring to the forefront the need for the formation of the revolutionary party.

With this in mind we welcome the social explosions of the other side of the Mediterranean, not for their claims of democracy, but because the anger and determination they express are the basis for development of future revolutionary class struggle of their young proletariat.

(1) See K. Marx, “*Class Struggles in France*”, Chapter IV (MIA)

(2) Statement of Abdel Sabry, leader of the opposition Wafd Party, 12/2/11.

(3) A revolution is possible only when “the modern productive forces and the bourgeois forms of production come into conflict”, K. Marx, *ibid*.

THE ABSTENTIONISM OF THE COMMUNIST LEFT

INTRODUCTION

In his classic work “*Anti-Duhring*”, Engels explained that “*The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine – the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital*”. Nearly 4 decades later, the Communist International reiterated at its first Congress that the Socialists had thousands of times “*expressed the idea formulated with the greatest scientific precision by Marx and Engels, namely, that the most democratic bourgeois republic is no more than a machine for the suppression of the working class by the bourgeoisie, for the suppression of the working people by a handful of capitalists*”. Referring to the tragic example of the Paris Commune, it added: “*It was Marx who best appraised the historical significance of the Commune. In his analysis, he revealed the exploiting nature of bourgeois democracy and the bourgeois parliamentary system under which the oppressed classes enjoy the right to decide once in several years which representative of the propertied classes shall ‘represent and suppress’ the people in parliament*”(1).

To decide periodically which bourgeois politicians will trample the oppressed classes, this is the essence of

bourgeois democracy: this is the crystalline formulation used by revolutionary Marxists to define once and for all the tacky panoply of elections, elected assemblies, of Parliament that the bourgeoisie and their lackeys present as the ultimate achievement of civilization, as the end point of the entire history of mankind which only dreadful reactionaries or fanatical barbarians might even think about disputing. Indeed, the representative institutions and mechanisms of parliamentary democracy are nothing more than cogs in the capitalist state, erected, reinforced, ceaselessly perfected over decades by the bourgeoisie to maintain its class rule and defend the **mode of production** of which it is the agent.

Initially, only the bourgeois had the legal right to participate in political life, only they had the right to vote, only they took part in the activities of Parliament, which decided the way to run the country. It was clear to everyone that these democratic institutions and the State were in the exclusive service of the possessors and for the oppressed it was therefore clear that the only hope lay in its revolutionary overthrow. The ruling class soon became convinced that this situation was too risky. Little by little, and not without misgivings, the bourgeoisie extended political rights in general and voting in particular to broader sections, to the petit-bourgeoisie, which served as a

buffer class, and finally to the “dangerous classes” to the proletarians themselves. It could do that all the more easily, when at the same time the opportunity to participate in the election of the various representative institutions was extended to all citizens, the real power escaped from these institutions and concentrated increasingly into reduced spheres of the state apparatus, linked to networks of the most powerful capitalist interests.

This development has been pushed to its climax. In France, since 1945 women have had the right to vote; since 1980 young people over 18 years (who formerly had the right – Ahem! the obligation – to get shot full of holes defending the homeland and keeping the bourgeois safe, but not of placing a sacred ballot into the parliamentary urn) joined them, maybe tomorrow it will be the turn of foreign workers who are often subject to slave-like conditions, treated as chattel, subject to the most ruthless drudgery and exploitation, but still politically considered as minors. This state of political inferiority which was and still is weighing down on a sector of the laboring population should and must be fought without hesitation by conscious proletarians because if part of the working class is subject to a particular and specific bourgeois oppression, the whole class is weakened: the struggle for equal rights, for equality before bourgeois law, is in this sense an elementary proletarian demand. But could anyone believe that these rights and this bourgeois legality, which are only a codification of capitalist domination, could help to end this domination? Who could seriously believe, especially after the experience of alternating parliamentary majorities and governments of the right and left which have followed basically **the same bourgeois politics**, that Parliament and representative institutions are really the expression of **popular sovereignty**, that the parliamentary and electoral path is actually the path to emancipation?

If it wants to resist exploitation, the proletariat has no other real option than to turn its back on the **democratic** path to rediscover its class weapons, to once again take up the overt anti-capitalist struggle. If it wants to free itself from wage slavery, it must abolish capitalism and overthrow this capitalist state, to destroy all its institutions, even the most democratic and establish its own class power, the **dictatorship of the proletariat** which alone can carry out the weighty task of economic and social transformation. It is this position which distinguishes revolutionaries, communists, from the reformist opponents of the revolution, deceitfully

pretending that capitalism can make amends and transform itself through democratic institutions; it is this position that distinguished the new International constituted in reaction to the shameful betrayal of the Second International, which passed bag and baggage into the camp of the bourgeoisie during the outbreak of World War I, after years of a reformist practice in which **parliamentary cretinism** (already denounced by Marx as a threatening danger) eventually successfully ensnared the labor movement.

If everyone in the newly-born Communist International was in agreement on the condemnation of the reformist, democratic, electoral and parliamentary path, a tactical question remained unresolved: what attitude to adopt in practice in relation to these representative democratic institutions, in relation to the electoral system, given

the persistence of their influence among the masses? This question which does not arise today, unfortunately, in terms of practice – but will do so again in the future – was the subject of an historical debate of which the participants perhaps did not realize the full importance. 90 years later, while fatal democratic illusions continue to flourish, with the stinking corpse of electoralism still on the march, with the precious assistance of so-called revolutionaries, the importance of this debate and of the lessons learned for the activity of the future communist movement cannot be doubted.

(1) See “*Theses on bourgeois democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat*” adopted by the First Congress of the Communist International. (MIA)

The abstentionism of the communist left

When the issue of whether to use parliament to fight against parliamentarism was discussed in 1920 within the Communist International, our current, the Communist Left of Italy, fought for the adoption of the tactic of *abstentionism* in countries with a long democratic tradition, as opposed to the tactics of “revolutionary parliamentarism” advocated by the Bolsheviks.

But the spokesmen of each of the two solutions were united on the terrain of principles, by a solid common platform.

Both excluded, not only the possibility, sustained by the reformists, of the transition to socialism by parliamentary means, but also all the perspectives advanced by an anti-Marxist “far left”: *democratization* of bourgeois institutions as a springboard to the proletarian revolution; intermediate stages between the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat, formation of governments within the framework of the bourgeois state; *mélange* of parliamentary institutions and organs of proletarian power.

Both proclaimed that the **unique and obligatory** means to proletarian emancipation is violent revolution, the destruction of the bourgeois state (and therefore of parliamentarism), the dictatorship of the proletariat led by the revolutionary communist Party, the use of strength against the former ruling class – which signifies the end of all “democracy”.

The discussion between the Bolshe-

viks and our current were not about **points of principle**, which all currents and parties that today claim to be Marxist have disowned. It concerned a question of tactics that was relatively minor in comparison to these principles: in the framework of communist struggle, both anti-democratic and anti-parliamentarist, should we use the “platform» of parliament, “since we do not have the power to destroy it”, to mobilize the masses against the bourgeoisie and its political system?

The Second Congress of the Communist International adopted the “revolutionary parliamentarism” theses presented by the Bolsheviks. Denying the prospect of the conquest of the parliament, these theses argued that the C.P. should participate in it in order to destroy it from within. This directive, which all the far left groups mired in electioneering have now forgotten, were accompanied by a series of draconian conditions:

First, the center of communist activity should absolutely not be electoral and parliamentary activity, having the parliament in the developed capitalist countries definitively transformed itself into an instrument of falsehood and deception of the proletariat. The essentials of communist action must be carried on outside of parliament, in the masses action led by the party with the objective of insurrection and civil war.

Consequently electoral and parlia-

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mentary activity should be rigorously subordinated to the preparation of the revolutionary struggle of which it is only a subsidiary and accessory means. The theses moreover did not make participation in elections and parliament an absolute rule; they argued instead for the need to boycott them in certain clearly defined circumstances of revolutionary radicalization: the Bolsheviks had done this several times beginning in 1905 with the boycott of the first Duma granted by the Tsar, when they left the Kerensky parliament in 1917 and with the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in January 1919, the day of its convocation.

Finally, the Bolsheviks put as a condition to the implementation of “revolutionary parliamentarism” the existence of genuine communist parties, having completely broken with all reformist or *centrist* tendencies (“*revolutionaries in words, reformers in deeds*”) which they saw, not as “tendencies of the labor movement”, but as **agents of the class enemy**.

This was the revolutionary parliamentarism of Lenin: it had nothing in common with the practice of his supposed followers of the far left, who makes electoral participation the axis of their activity and toward which they spend most of their energies and resources; who, far from seizing the opportunity to spread revolutionary principles, instead make every effort to prevent the rupture of the proletariat with reformism; and who even see in the participation in the electoral masquerade, the way to build a proletarian party by the opportunist fusion of heterogeneous currents ...

In presenting their arguments to the Congress of the International, the Bolsheviks were especially concerned with combating the “infantile” positions of the anarcho-syndicalist or ultra-left type that hindered the growth of the young Western communist parties. But despite the full correctness of the principles on which they relied and despite all the conditions for their application, these arguments were very inadequate in the countries with old democratic traditions, where the bourgeoisie had managed to lure the proletariat into the electoral and parliamentary impasse, when **it was precisely a question of leaving it**. The Bolsheviks, who were accustomed to tough illegal activity in the situation of a **double** revolution (that is to say a revolution which was not only anti-capitalist but anti-feudal and therefore a situation where democratic demands still had a revolutionary

content), struggled to understand the extent of the dangers of the democratic opium for the class struggle in the developed capitalist countries and the difficulties which the proletariat had in detoxifying itself.

The Communist Left did not deny that the Bolsheviks’ revolutionary parliamentarism was justified in countries where the bourgeois revolution had not yet occurred (such as in Czarist Russia, in the colonies or in backward countries): in these countries, democracy, signifying the end of the old feudal structures, was a bourgeois revolutionary goal, to be attained through armed struggle, which the proletariat supported. The tactics of revolutionary parliamentarism could have also be useful in the countries of young capitalism, when parliament was still the center of power and, in part, an arena of struggle between classes. Participation in elections and parliament was a means of propaganda and agitation to extract the proletarians from the influence of the left bourgeois parties, in contrast to the anarchist apoliticism, even if there was the danger –denounced by Marx –of falling into “**parliamentary cretinism**”, that is, of giving far too much importance to parliamentary activity.

On the other hand, the new phase opened by the first world war required that all energies of the party and the working class be devoted to the direct preparation of the proletarian revolution; **a much more rigorous tactic** was necessary in all the major capitalist countries, where parliament and democratic institutions were nothing but a counter-revolutionary arm of indirect defense against the proletarian struggle, a powerful brake on the extension of the revolution coming out of Russia.

After decades of electoralism and parliamentary reformism, the rigorous selection of revolutionary minorities was impossible without the sharpest break with the inertia and interclassist compromises of bourgeois democracy, so also with the electoral and parliamentary practice which is the terrain where it operates. If it was necessary to inoculate the fledgling Communist Party against the “infantile disorder” of leftism, it was all the more important to inoculate against, or to get rid of the falsely revolutionary currents which, forced by the radicalization of the working class to make revolutionary-sounding speeches, in fact remained steadfastly committed to social-democratic reformist practice.

However, the tactic of “revolutionary parliamentarism” made it more difficult to break with centrism – that hidden reformism. What’s more, by dedicating a part of the energies of young Communist

Parties to electoral activity, it risked hindering their activity on the extra-parliamentary terrain and their preparation for the tasks of leading revolutionary activity. This risk was especially great in that these C.Ps. could not rely, as did the Bolsheviks, on a tradition of revolutionary struggle and illegal action, but had to break with a leaden reformist tradition inside the parties of the Second International of purely legal and parliamentary activity.

The need to explain clearly and relentlessly to Western proletariat, imprisoned in the paralyzing network of democratic institutions and imbued with pacifist illusions, the practical impossibility of attaining the overthrow of capitalism through electoral, parliamentary and pacifist methods, demanded that the communist parties not make use of these same methods, even occasionally and “tactically”, but concentrate all their efforts of propaganda and agitation on the revolutionary class struggle, calling the workers to turn away from the electoral diversion.

So the abstention of the Communist Left had nothing in common with the metaphysical attitude of the “infantile” currents. For our current, refusal to use parliament was not motivated by moral reasons – refusing to compromise, fear of getting our hands dirty, refusal on principle to use legal means – by political indifference or by the horror of “Chiefs” for whom parliament is the field of action; it was motivated by the **requirements of revolutionary preparation in the context of a precise historical and materialist analysis**.

In 1920 the question could still be discussed; since then, history has demonstrated that the critiques made by the Communist Left were justified. From revolutionary parliamentarism understood as a simple revolutionary tribune, the use of parliament increased imperceptibly to the use of parliament to make the revolution, then its use to defend the bourgeois State against fascism, and finally to the “reevaluation of the role of parliament” in this State!

Of course, the degeneration of the communist movement and the International, was determined by a set of material factors far wider than just the attitude toward the electoral question. If that degeneration became possible, it is in the first place because the process of the formation of the communist parties was done in the worst possible way: not through ruthless selection, but through the admission into these parties of whole wings of the old reformist parties which enfeebled them from the beginning by

preventing the rupture with the social-democratic practices. The fact that abstentionism, the “test” of the break with reformism was not applied, undoubtedly contributed to this weakening.

But somebody may tell us that the situation is different from that of the 20's. Obviously! But **how** is it different?

There is no more revolutionary International. The principles of violent revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat have been discarded and forgotten. The working class is infected to the core with democracy and legalism. Even the daily struggle of defending one's existence against the effects of capitalist exploitation has been repeatedly thwarted by calls for “dialogue” and “class collaboration”.

So if the situation is different, it makes **even more imperative the rupture** with the methods and practices of representative and parliamentary democracy.

The need for this complete break is inseparable from the termination of all social peace, of all collaboration between classes, of all solidarity with the nation. Those who pretend to summon the proletariat to the class struggle and the electoral masquerade, those who speak of revolution and at the same time call on them to vote for a leftist government or against a right-wing government, merely undermine the basis of the proletarian advances they claim to want to promote.

But again our detractors may object, your voice remains unheard.

This is how we respond: this objec-

tion is that of traitors or future traitors. Lenin gained victory in October 1917 because he had dared to declare in April, after four years of bitter struggle against the current in the heart of the imperialist war: “better to be alone like Liebknecht – because it means to be with the revolutionary proletariat”. Whatever the distance – still long without doubt – that separates us from the final outcome, it can be prepared only through waging the struggle against reformist perspectives and practices, without oscillation and against the current, therefore against electoralism.

Whatever the relationship of forces, the dilemma remains: **either electoral preparation, or revolutionary preparation.**

Canadian elections : Down with the electoral circus Long live the struggle of the proletariat

On May 2 the Canadian parliamentary circus will stage its umpteenth performance for the election of a new federal government.

The various parties of the bourgeoisie are falling over each other to participate in this charade once more and to convince workers that in voting for them they will improve their lot!

Meanwhile the living conditions of the proletarian class continue to deteriorate including job cuts, as with the announced closure in 2012 of the Electrolux appliance factory located in the town of L'Assomption, Quebec. The attacks against the social gains won through hard struggles of workers, continue across Canada, as in the last budget of the Quebec finance minister Raymond Bachand. The tuition fees for this province's universities, which are historically the lowest in North America will increase \$ 325 per year from 2012 onwards in order to reach the Canadian average, from \$2,168 (current levels) to \$ 3,793 per annum! Contributions to the Quebec Pension Plan were also increased, thereby increasing the pressure on proletarian incomes, and an increased penalty from 0.5% to 0.6% for those retiring before age 65 was introduced.

In Toronto, the largest Canadian city, the mayor newly elected in 2010, Rob Ford, wants to privatize much of the waste collection, the Toronto Housing Corporation and “anything that is not written in stone”, ie much of the city's public works. The goal is to reduce the working conditions of the proletariat who

work in the public services as much as possible.

The Conservative government's latest budget in March of this year introduced a planned increase in contributions to employment insurance, a cut in taxes for large companies, a freeze in operating expenses of Crown corporations like the CBC and Canada Post to prevent any wage increase for employees, etc...

This is just a foretaste of what awaits the Canadian working class, because of the effects of the capitalist crisis which continues to intensify, requiring the bourgeoisie to increase its exploitation by attacking its conditions of life and work, including slashing gains previously granted to maintain social peace. The proletariat can only answer back with struggle – not through elections.

Contrary to the myth propagated by the ruling class, its media monopoly, bourgeois institutions (schools, churches, etc...) the reformist parties and trade unions, elections do not represent any expression of “popular will”. The orientation of public policy is determined by the interests of large capitalist groups for whom the bourgeois state is a servant.

The elections are used only to mystify the proletariat into believing that the ballot may help to “change things”. They perpetuate the democratic illusions that all “citizens” are equal and that the state is a neutral institution politely obeying little pieces of paper deposited in the ballot box; and therefore that there is no

The Tragedy of the German Proletariat after the First World War

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Proletarian

International Communist Party («programme communiste»)

The Tragedy of the German Proletariat after the First World War



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Canadian elections

(Continuation from page 7)

need of class struggle. These illusions, which are a major obstacle to the resumption of the class struggle, help to maintain the powerful myth that democratic institutions can be used to advance the interests of the proletariat, whereas in reality they are in the exclusive service of the ruling class and are used to suppress the proletarian struggle.

One aspect of these elections (the fourth in seven years!) is the campaign initiated by the reformist left, which calls for no votes for the Conservative Party of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, in power since January 2006, and which would be particularly dangerous and reactionary. Without doubt the party is deeply reactionary and anti-worker, but how is it different from the other bourgeois parties? The Liberal Party of Canada has been the main party of the bourgeoisie since Canadian Confederation in 1867 and has consistently attacked the rights and interests of the proletariat, especially with the War Measures Act in 1970 under the pretext of quelling an apprehended insurrection in Quebec. The Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff, has promised he will continue the imperialist intervention in Afghanistan if re-elected! When it he was in power in the 90s, the Liberal Party brutally cut Unemployment Insurance and diverted funds for this program to offset the federal deficit! The New Democratic Party (still a paper members of the reformist Second International) focuses its rhetoric on support to families and improved health care for seniors. The regionalist bourgeois nationalist Bloc Québécois, speaks only of "Quebec's interests", as if workers and employers in Quebec had similar interests! As for the Green Party of Canada, it simply proposes to humanize the management of the environment within capitalism, when it is precisely capitalism which is responsible for the continuing deterioration of the environment. All this reveals a little more clearly the false alternatives presented to us by the electoral circus and demonstrates the fallacy of the "Anybody But Harper" campaign which fits perfectly in the defense of the capitalist system of exploitation by putting forward a "lesser evil" to the Conservative Party. Like the Conservatives, the promoters of this campaign are class enemies of the proletariat.

All parties represented in the Canadian Parliament voted unanimously in favor of imperialist intervention in Libya on the pretext of "protecting the life of Libyan civilians"! The Green Party is in

favor of a "rapid and sustained diplomatic intervention in Libya to prevent the situation from degenerating into civil war." "We must not lose sight of our priority – to prevent the deaths of countless innocent Libyan civilians," reported Ellen Michelson, the Green spokesperson for Peace and Security. "Diplomatic efforts must counterbalance the military presence to ensure the maximum to avoid loss of life and structural damage." All this verbiage is a thinly disguised support for imperialist war against Libya coated in "humanitarian concerns". The elections divert attention away from the immediate interests of proletarians, but they also divert attention from ongoing imperialist interventions.

The party of the reformist left and the petit-bourgeois in Quebec, Quebec Solidarity participates fully in the campaign against the Conservatives. It denounces the right wing politics vigorously pursued by this party and its obsession with security, common to all bourgeois governments, and insists that the policy of the Harper government would run "counter to widely held values in the Quebec population: social justice, defense of the French language and culture, equality between women and men, development of a green Quebec, human rights, international solidarity, democracy" (1). This typical **petit-bourgeois nationalist phraseology** makes no mention of the working class and the class struggle and spreads the illusions of a possible "better" world under the yoke of capital!

And as for the Conservatives' obsession with security, it is important to remember the system of security certificates which allows immigrants who are not Canadian citizens to be detained without charge or trial under the pretext of "terrorism." The call not to vote for the Conservative Party is simply support for a fraction of the ruling class, regarded as more "enlightened", against another that is more reactionary. The proletariat has absolutely no interest in marching off to enlist in this campaign to keep the class domination of the bourgeoisie intact.

Some far left militants, like the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party, launched a campaign to boycott the federal elections of 2011 (2). This is a democratic campaign to boycott elections. Its proponents do not appeal to the workers to boycott the elections to make hasten the rupture with democratic illusions and for the return to class struggle, but because these elections are not democratic enough! They say their boycott campaign will serve to expose the "non-democratic" nature of these elections and to call for a struggle for

"popular democracy" and "people's power"; apparently this struggle consists in... beginning "the discussion on how to create true equality and true democracy"! Since they want to reinforce illusions in democracy, it is natural that they do not talk about the division of "people" into opposing classes and they hide the fact that "real equality" can only come after the revolution, the destruction of the bourgeois state and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, a necessary step to dismantle capitalism and move to a communist society without classes.

For these elections, like all others, the only position that corresponds to the interests of the proletariat is **revolutionary abstentionism**, position supported by the Communist Left since the early twenties (3).

The strength of the proletariat, whose exploitation gives life to all of bourgeois society, lies solely in its collective action, organized and conducted on a class basis. The electoral arena, by definition interclassist, where each isolated proletarian will separately file his ballot alongside those of individuals of all other classes, is a phony terrain that serves only the ruling class. On the one hand because the bourgeoisie has established and maintains a huge and multifaceted apparatus (media, political parties, various institutions ...) of anti-proletarian propaganda and forming of "public opinion"; and secondly because the parliament and the whole democratic political system are far removed from the real centers of power in capitalist society: their main function is to deflect the discontent into the maze of harmless alternations between bourgeois politicians from the right and the left.

To defend themselves against exploitation and repression, to fight against bourgeois politics, to express solidarity with the proletariat of other countries, the working class will have to abandon its democratic, legalistic and pacifist illusions, and come in open confrontation with the exploiting class.

The proletarian struggle does not pass through the electoral circus and bourgeois democratic institutions, it fights them! Proletarians have nothing to gain by participating in bourgeois elections where capitalism is always the winner!

The only solution for the proletariat in Canada and around the world is the resumption of the class struggle to defend its exclusive class interests continuing on to the overthrow of the capitalist system under the leadership direction of the political class party.

No to the electoral circus!

Down with capitalism, down with imperialism!

For the return of the class struggle, for the restoration of the international class party, for the international communist revolution!

(1) http://www.quebecsolidaire.net/actualite_nationale_elections_federales_au_quebec_c'est_non_aux_conservateurs

(2) www.boycott2011.ca

(3) http://marxists.org/francais/bordiga/works/1920/06/bordiga_19200627.htm

«The fundamentals of revolutionary marxist communism in the doctrine and in the history of the international proletarian struggle»

(Brochure A5, 56 pages, October 2010, Price: 2 € , 2,5 US\$; 4 FS)

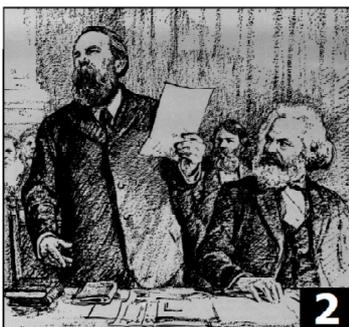
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Proletarian

International Communist Party («programme communiste»)

The Fundamentals of Revolutionary Communism



**Spain:
the movement of the “outraged youth”
Corruption, political bureaucracy,
unemployment,..., are inevitable
under capitalism. It is only possible to put
an end to this system by returning to the
proletarian class struggle, anti-democratic,
anti-legalist and anti-pacifist.**

On May 15, seven days before the municipal and regional elections were scheduled to take place throughout almost all the Spanish State, thousands of youths, unemployed, underemployed and students began to meet in Madrid in the “Puerta del Sol” square with the intention of setting up an encampment in protest against the “two-party system”, behind the slogan “real democracy now!”. After being ousted in the early morning, they returned the following days in increasing numbers.

In the midst of one of the most intense election campaigns in recent years that ended with a resounding victory of the Popular Party, including in the traditional strongholds of the Socialist Party in power, these demonstrations, continuing up until today have launched a series of proclamations focused on broad institutional reforms, in order to allow effective popular participation in the system of government.

Two years of crisis has inflicted a terrible worsening of living conditions on the proletarian class, rising unemployment, rising commodity prices, intensifying work rates, lower wages ... And this offensive of the bourgeoisie against the working class has found in the yellow, collaborationist unions, a guarantee of maintaining social peace, by tying workers to the belief that the only way to improve their situation is to respond to attacks by systematic compromise with the authorities. The collaborationist influence of the so-called workers’ parties and unions has allowed them to keep control of the situation not only in general, by refusing any major national or regional manifestations, but also on the most elementary level, refusing on principle any recourse to strikes, including in isolated factories and enterprises, faced with any boss’s decision to attack the working conditions of the proletarians.

But the effects of the aggravation of the material situation of the proletariat in the world could not be contained everywhere by the levees erected by

political opportunism and trade-union collaborationism to dam up the natural reaction of proletarians.

Since late last year, the disproportionate increase in the cost of living, scarcity of essential commodities, etc., led the proletariat in the countries of North Africa and the Middle East, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, etc., to engage in revolts that led to the downfall of Ben Ali, and Mubarak who ruled with the support of the imperialist countries, wallowing in corruption, theft and violence perpetrated against the poor masses. The suicide of a street vendor in Sidi Bouzid, a small town in Tunisia, has sparked a large scale uprising involving huge masses of proletarians who demanded the improvement of their living conditions. The petit bourgeoisie, social class excluded from power in the bourgeois world, hit by the crisis and outraged by the despotism of the rulers, and pushed into the struggle through panicked fear of proletarianization, joined up with the spontaneous struggles of the proletarian masses, a struggle without clear objectives and inevitably confused because of the absence of an anti-capitalist direction, and this absence is the result of decades of permanent counter-revolution which has witnessed the coalescence of the local bourgeoisies, the imperialisms of the more developed Western countries and various opposition factions, nationalist or religious.

The slogans of “democracy”, “political freedom”, etc., express the aspirations of the petit-bourgeoisie, which placed itself at the head of the struggle and which guides the movement of the proletariat and the

proletarianized masses towards interclassist, nationalist objectives of social cohesion finalized towards the development of the country. The normal proletarian response to a situation of serious crisis, which begins to endanger physical survival, leads for this reason to

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Spain: the movement of the “outraged youth”

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a movement that can accelerate the return to the classist struggle of the proletariat, but cannot do so automatically because it is still contained by the terrible weight of bourgeois influence, within the democratic struggle.

In Spain the consequences of the economic crisis on the proletariat was not as devastating as in the countries of the capitalist periphery, due to the persistence of social buffers conceded by the bourgeoisie during the decades of economic growth to alleviate social tensions. This fact, linked to the action within the proletarian ranks of the agents of the bourgeoisie which are the forces of workers’ opportunism and yellow unionism to guarantee the realization of all anti-working class measures necessary to capitalism (acting as veritable social-firemen and organizing workers passivity at all levels), allows the maintenance of social peace, despite the rapid deterioration of living and working conditions across ever-more numerous sectors of the proletariat.

However, social tensions have inevitably increased in recent years, slowly but inexorably, in spite of all individual or collective outcomes offered by the capitalist system.

The “Movement of May 15” which is responsible for the demonstrations in the Puerta del Sol square, is a reflection of these social tensions. The essentially petit-bourgeois composition of the movement does not prevent it from expressing a general malaise in all sectors of society who are watching their situation deteriorate gradually. In fact, it is the petit-bourgeoisie which is the most impoverished, composed as it is of young graduates without a professional future given the extreme precariousness of employment, the liberal professions, etc., and which, in a situation like the present, may be the first to start moving, because at times it is harder hit than by the blows of the capitalist system than the proletariat (which still receives welfare benefits, subsidies, etc.).

But quite unlike the countries on the southern Mediterranean where the revolt of the proletariat and poor peasants ended up under the direction of a petit-bourgeoisie undoubtedly more affected by the crisis than in Spain, the protest in Madrid (the center of events) was born in the total absence of workers’ struggles, whether generalized or localized.

Manifestations of the “outraged youth” took aim at “autocracy”, the “degeneration of democracy”, etc., in trying to regenerate a system that actually does not ensure the “future” of the intermediate classes, which does not promise well-paid jobs for graduates, in a word which threatens the petit-bourgeoisie with impoverishment and proletarianization.

The general demand that gives the movement its name, “true democracy now!” perfectly sums up these aspirations. Democracy is the system of government used preferentially by the bourgeoisie since its revolutionary period. It is the system that is based, at least in theory, on the equality of citizens to govern public affairs. But the natural conditions of capitalism imply that the society that develops from this base is divided into two opposing classes, the class that owns the means of production, the bourgeois class and the class of “have-nots”, the impoverished who can only live by selling their labor power, the proletarian class. These two classes are always opposed right down to the smallest aspects of everyday life because the social domination of the bourgeoisie depends on the increasing exploitation of the proletariat, from whom is extracted the surplus value that guarantees its survival as a ruling class. For their part, the workers are forced to fight against this growing exploitation and, at certain moments of great social tension, against the domination of the bourgeoisie itself. Democracy appears as the system of government used by the bourgeoisie to obtain the consensus of the proletariat by inculcating them continually with the poison of interclassism, of the supreme national interest in whose name it must accept any concessions.

More democracy, therefore, inevitably means **more capitalism**.

The demand of “real democracy now!” Is the demand of the petit bourgeoisie; who also suffer from the consequences of the despotic government of

the bourgeois class, of the monopolies; to be included in the governing of society, not to be plunged into the ranks of the proletariat by the ravages of competition. Competition is inevitable in the capitalist system that breeds corruption, trafficking and the two party political system, competition is the source of all ills afflicting the petit-bourgeois, but which its class nature prevents it in reality from combatting. Democracy that exists today in the imperialist countries as it exists in the peripheral capitalist countries, is the only one that can exist, the **only real democracy**.

The proletariat can definitely not be indifferent to this type of movement. Firstly because it is itself infected with the democratic virus and sees in these protests reflected its belief in social justice promised by the bourgeoisie. But also because its situation as an exploited class in the absence of a serious and real prospect of the resumption of the anti-capitalist struggle, cannot but find in the struggle for an “authentic” democracy a substitute for its class struggle: this type of movement can be mistaken as a substitute for the immediate struggles of the working class to defend their living and working conditions.

But in reality the demands expressed by this movement are entirely foreign to the requirements that the working class must express as a class antagonistic to the entire capitalist world.

In fact, given the lack of a credible reformist political trade unionism on the terrain of defense – even merely verbal – of workers’ interests, movements like “May 15” may act as a reformist alternative where reformism has lost its traditional influence in the wake of its long history of collaboration with the bourgeoisie.

The proletariat must fight to defend its conditions of resistance faced with attack by the bourgeoisie, with all of its ensemble of prevarications, etc. But it has nothing to expect from the reformist “democratic” struggle, which claims to offer solutions within the framework of



capitalist exploitation and of its political system codified in electioneering, pacifism and legalism.

To carry out its class struggle, the proletariat will inevitably return to the path of direct confrontation with the bourgeoisie and its allies, for the uncompromising defense of its living conditions, work, housing, etc.. This struggle necessarily involves the formation of classist organizations fighting on the immediate terrain regardless of the economic interests of the enterprise, the region or the country. But this struggle itself can only limit or mitigate the consequences of capitalism if it does not raise itself to the level of the political struggle. And in this regard the proletariat needs to find its class party, the revolutionary communist party, internationalist and international, abso-

lutely foreign to any interest that is not the historical interest of the proletariat: the destruction of bourgeois political power, democratic or dictatorial according to the needs of the ruling class, the introduction by violent and illegal means of its class dictatorship, despotism and terrorism against its enemies, a necessary step in moving towards a socialist transformation of society, towards a world without private property, without wage labor ... to the society of the human race.

When the proletarians feel in their flesh the burning need for Communism and they see the possibility of its practical realization, then the hypocritical and religious feeling of indignation harbored today by the petit-bourgeoisie as an expression of its *shopkeeper* mentality will give way to the healthy feeling of mortal hatred against the bourgeoisie

and its lackeys, with the imperious need for violence against its defenders. So resignation will finally disappear and hope in a future without exploitation will be reborn

For the intransigent defense of the conditions of life and struggle of the proletariat!

Against democracy, the system of government of the bourgeoisie which imprisons the proletariat in social peace!

Against any concession to bourgeois ideology!

For the constitution of the World Communist Party!

For the society of the human species, with no class divisions nor exploitation of man by man, for communism!

May 22, 2011

The proletarian May 1 is dead, long live May 1st!

For the class struggle of proletarians of all classes, sectors, genders, ages and nationalities, beyond all divisions and all borders!

The defense of conditions of life and work against the power of the bourgeoisie is the first step towards emancipation from capitalism!

May first was once the workers' international day of struggle, signifying that they are a class with the same interests and the same objectives beyond all borders: **the proletarians have no fatherland, they have a world to win** (*the Communist Manifesto*). In order to oppose the proletarian movement and its growing unification, the bourgeoisie in all countries has used and uses all means from open **violence and repression**, to **democratic and electoral illusions**, while working tirelessly to stoke **division and competition** among the proletarians. If May 1 is no longer the revolutionary show of force which once so deeply troubled the capitalists, if it is no longer the symbol of international labor solidarity, it is because the proletariat has long been **paralyzed by reformism**. It is this paralysis that allows the capitalist class to overcome the economic crisis by making the proletariat pay, it is this same paralysis that gives them ample opportunity for incursions into Afghanistan, Libya, Ivory Coast etc. through wars or for supposedly democratic or humanitarian goals which never manage to dissimulate the real, sordid imperialist goals (to seize or to preserve sources of raw materials, to finance its support for American imperialism).

PROLETARIANS, RESIDENT WORKERS AND IMMIGRANT WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES!

The bourgeoisie of all countries knows that not even the most violent wars can end its class domination because wars are only the expression of the violence that is inseparable from the capitalist mode of production. When, during crises, overproduction paralyzes markets, capitalism must necessarily destroy surplus goods and means of production to restart its economy: war is precisely one means to that end. Furthermore wars are the continuation of bourgeois politics by other means. The widespread competition between corporations, between states that characterizes life under capitalism, leads inevitably at a certain point to military confrontation to defend the interests of the national capitalism. The ruling

class needs to concentrate and strengthen the resources of their country to confront international competition and prepare for wars, but this is only possible through greater exploitation of the proletariat. To prevent the proletarians from reacting to this exploitation, they must therefore always and increasingly support the **collaboration between classes** by spreading nationalism and racism, and by calling for the defense of the national economy as a goal common to the bourgeois and the proletarian.

DOWN WITH CLASS COLLABORATION!

Class collaboration is the catastrophic orientation that social-democratic then Stalinist then post-Stalinism inflicted on the workers and habituated them to only conduct struggles which are within the bounds of social pacifism and the rule of the law, it makes workers believe that their problems can only be solved through concessions to the capitalists, in short, it hides the fundamental antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletarian.

Class collaboration **paralyzes** impulses of working class resistance to capitalism, **sterilizes** the fundamental weapon of the workers which is the strike; **depletes** militancy by orienting towards demonstrations and other impotent Days of Action; **sabotages** the struggle of defence against the capitalists and their State; **marginalizes** the demands and struggles of the most oppressed and most exploited layers such as undocumented workers; **condemns** any violent action against anti-proletarian repression and violence, inflicted daily by the police and all institutions of the bourgeois State, **poisons** the workers with nationalist propaganda, petit-bourgeois prejudices and contempt towards workers of other nationalities or other sectors, towards the unemployed or those without any job security.

We had a sad example in the **pseudo-struggle against the**

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The proletarian May 1 is dead ...

(Continuation from page 11)

attack on pensions last fall in France, where for the whole duration of the movement the reformist union front stubbornly refused to give any other objective than the negotiation of the terms of this attack and other “means of action” like the ritual demonstration/processions meant to move the government, **while abandoning to repression** the youth arrested during the demos. For decades the proletarians could see that the policy of the reformist trade unions and of reformist parties whether in opposition or in the government, is entirely subject to the **imperatives of capitalism**; for decades they have seen their living and working conditions deteriorate inexorably. The economic crisis accelerated this decline: rising unemployment, declining wages, social benefits are reduced leading to even more insecurity, the cost of living increases along with social despotism and the militarization of society. The need for a real struggle, not stifled by class collaboration becomes ever more pressing. The revolts that shook and still shake the Arab countries show that it is possible to fight against even the strongest dictatorships. But as long as the working class fails to organize itself on a class basis and does not have at its head the true revolutionary proletarian party, it will be duped by bourgeois and petit-bourgeois forces want nothing but a simple **reform of capitalist domination**.

The proletariat of the major capitalist metropolises has had a long tradition of revolutionary struggle which culminated in the Paris Commune, the Bolshevik Revolution, the formation of the Comintern, this tradition was broken by the Stalinist-counter-revolution whose anti-proletarian effort was then consolidated with decades of class collaboration and democratic legalist, pacifist poison...

FOR THE RETURN TO THE PROLETARIAN STRUGGLE, FOR THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CLASS PARTY!

To defend themselves in the class struggle that continually leads capitalism to attack the proletariat, to respond to the call of the young proletarians in revolt in the Arab countries, to oppose the wars unleashed by imperialism, there is no alternative but to return to the classist means and goals that the workers once followed in the struggle against capitalism. May 1 has become a ritual procession that is used by reformist parties and trade unions to better prepare their pranks: social dialogue, elections, and avoiding proletarian struggle. But May 1 but will be reborn as the day of struggle and **solidarity**

among the proletarians of the entire world when the working class begins to break with the parties and reformist union apparatuses which are the **lackeys of capitalism**, and to commence onto the road of class struggle. The proletarians have potentially an immense strength because it is they who, through their work, make capitalism live and produce all the riches of society, they have the strength not only to finish off some despots, but to overthrow bourgeois States and put an end to capitalism. But the condition for this force to express itself is **the organization of the proletariat as a class, consequently in a party** (*the Communist Manifesto*). This cannot be done automatically or quickly, so powerful are the reformist barriers still maintained by capitalism which paralyze the proletariat. But the internal contradictions of the capitalist mode of production that produce ever more serious crises, press upon and will inevitably press upon the workers to revolt, not only in the poor capitalist countries poor like in the Middle East or Africa, but also tomorrow in the rich capitalist countries which run the world. The proletarian vanguard must understand that today the most important task is to work for the **formation of the class party** without which the proletarian movements as numerous as they may be, with revolts as extensive as they may be, can never lead to the revolutionary struggle, the seizure of power, the dictatorship of the proletariat, paving the way for the communist classless society.

To avoid losing ground in the daily struggle for immediate defence and to then be able to move to offensive in this struggle against capitalism, the proletarians must adopt **these class methods and objectives**:

– **Down with political and trade union collaborationism! Independent organization of workers on a class basis! No to competition between proletarians! For Strikes without warning and without time limits! Struggle for wages, for the reduction of working time, for solidarity with those most oppressed and exploited!**

– **No to expulsions, arrests and deportations of immigrant workers! No to immigration control! Release of jailed protesters and workers! For the right of immigrant workers and all farmworkers to organize!**

– **No to national solidarity in times of peace as in time of war: proletarian defeatism in times of peace, revolutionary defeatism during wartime!**

Down with imperialist wars, long live proletarian internationalism!

For a return to the class struggle, for the reconstitution of the international class party!

April 23, 2011

The revolt of the proletarianized masses spreads to Syria: the system responds with massacres!

President Bashar Al-Assad was severely mistaken if he thought he could stop the protest movements by using the stick and the carrot; neither police repression, nor the announcement of reforms were sufficient to smash the movement.

The accusations that foreign powers incited and directed the movements against the Baathist regime of Assad may well not be unfounded, unlike the Gaddafi propaganda claiming that Al Qaeda is

organizing the revolt in Libya. It's not from today that American imperialism, in conjunction with the aspirations of Israel to dominate the region, tries to find points of support in the Syrian opposition. But it is evident that the current situation in the whole North African and Middle Eastern region is not the result of corrupt American, English, French or Israeli imperialists. It is the economic crisis, precipitating the masses into abject poverty, combined with unbearable police

oppression and dictatorship, which has caused increasing tensions to the point of provoking explosions in the region.

For decades, the authoritarian regimes have maintained the capitalist order and, beyond their opposing alliances, have assured the imperialist control of this troubled area through the brutal repression of any challenge and of any internal struggle.

The bourgeois factions who, in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, took over from the

factions tied to Ben Ali, Mubarak and Gaddafi, inevitably reap the fruits of a rebellion that sparked the broader masses into social and political actions that were completely banned a few months ago.

Inevitably, because the revolt of the proletariat and the proletarianized masses of these countries did not have at its head a revolutionary communist Party, nor even immediate parties and organizations structured on the principles of bourgeois democracy. The revolutionary communist Party does not exist today other than in an embryonic form deprived of any influence (and we are determined to represent this embryo); moreover, without the resumption of the proletarian class struggle, it would be impossible for the Party to lead the social movement and change the relationship of forces between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Two essential elements are necessary for the formation of a **communist** therefore **international class Party: the restoration of Marxist theory**, falsified and destroyed by Stalin and his heirs, which was accomplished by the Communist Left after WWII; and the **resumption of large-scale organized proletarian struggle**, which seems to lag but will inevitably reappear given the attacks inflicted on the proletariat by a global capitalism, itself fallen prey to multiplying difficulties, forcing proletarians to defend themselves including elementary demands relating to their lives and workplaces. It is precisely these attacks that are the basis of the social struggles in the Arab countries and from which no country is immune.

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An old dictum of international diplomacy in the Middle East states that *one does not make war without Egypt and one does not make peace without Syria*. This means that Syria, through its history, its geographic position and its pluralistic multifaith characteristics, plays an important role in the regional equilibrium. Syria doesn't have much oil or gas, very little precious raw materials for the international capitalist economy, but it has a strategic importance: the political and social stability of Syria contributes to the control of social, political and military unrest in the Middle East, whereas its instability increases the risk of instability throughout the region. The United States and other Western imperialist powers, who criticize its ties with Iran, are well aware of its strategic value, the extension of the protest movements issuing from Deraa spreading to larger cities and even Damascus, risking turn into revolt à la libyenne, spreading alarm in the imperialist chancelleries. The warnings repeatedly issued by Obama to Bashar Assad to stop the repression against peaceful demonstrators can hardly be followed by decisions similar to those taken against

Gaddafi. Military intervention in Libya is currently bogged down in a siege situation that does not bode well for the civilians who will continue to fall at the hands of Gaddafi troops or to "friendly fire". This is why Western imperialism would actually not be that unhappy to see the Baathist regime conduct its bloody repression against the masses and the "peace of the graveyards" entrench itself in Syria. In a sense U.S. imperialism which funds the Syrian opposition to the tune of millions of dollars would even do well to allow a regime hated by its people to get its hands covered in blood: "Western democracy" would gain in prestige and legitimacy ...

In any event, there is no doubt that the established order in Syria represented for 45 years by the dictatorial regime of Assad, will be defended with ferocity. If the massacre of civilians has always been a weapon of dictatorial powers, it is also good for imperialism, "friend" or "enemy", that rebellions are contained and that the iron talons of the State maintain domination over the masses.

Today it is not the proletariat which is in the vanguard of social movements in Syria; and it even seems that it remains relatively marginal to the protests whose protagonists are the layers of small and medium bourgeoisie which gathers the support of the peasant masses.

This does not prevent, in addition to the demands for democracy, the struggle against the corruption and privileges of the ruling clan, the suppression of the decades old "State of Emergency", special tribunals and release of prisoners, demands for increases in wages, imposition of a minimum income for the unemployed, lower taxes, freedom of organization and expression, have also emerged: all demands that directly interest the workers.

The violent repression of the demonstrations of 15 March, was followed by the even more violent repression of the demonstrations of April 22: More than 70 dead, hundreds injured and arrested. The great slogan of the protest demonstrations in which Arabs and Kurds, Muslims and Christians all protested together is: democratic change! Like Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and elsewhere, the generous spontaneity of the masses opens the way for the great illusions of bourgeois democracy.

But the democratic change in Egypt and Tunisia has already shown that nothing will really change for the proletarianized masses and when they demand that this change go further than the new leaders want, they face repressive violence. The repression may be a little less fierce, the police may not have quite such a "free-hand", corruption may be a little less obvious, but the workers and poor peasants continue to kill themselves from

overwork when now as always they find themselves threatened by hunger, unemployment and poverty.

The only way out of the clutches of the existing political and economic system is not free elections of the Constituent Assembly, an independent judiciary, nor that of popular nationalism in which class differences would be con-founded in a mélange useful only to the bourgeois ruling class, it begins with the recognition of the irreconcilable antagonism between the working classes and the propertied classes, between proletarians and owners of the means of production, mineral resources, the land and in general the social wealth produced by wage labor.

The only way forward is that of **class struggle against all oppressions**, whether wage-slavery, national, religious, racial, sexual, against all repressions. It includes the **independent organization of the workers' struggle** on the level of immediate defence, for **proletarian class solidarity** through the constitution of the **proletarian party, the revolutionary communist Party**.

All other democratic, popular and religious alternatives, can result in nothing other than the continued domination of the bourgeoisie and capitalism.

April 22, 2011

«Programme communiste»

Theoretical review of the ICP

Summary of Nr. 101

(In preparation - August 2011)

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No to imperialist military intervention in Libya! Long live the international proletarian struggle against capitalism!

Since Saturday, March 19, a US-led military coalition, including, besides English and French Forces, participation by Canadian, Italian, Spanish, and other countries, commenced the bombardment of military installations and concentrations of troops loyal to the Gaddafi government. The stated purpose of this military intervention which has been endorsed by the Security Council of the UN and the Arab League, is to get government forces off the offensive against the rebels, in order to avoid a "massacre of the civilian population".

But when real massacres of civilians occurred at the beginning of the revolt, the authorities of all these countries responded with total silence. When information on the killings began to filter out of Libya, they were content with their hypocritical ritual admonitions, begging the Libyan government to exercise "restraint" and to avoid using "disproportionate" violence. It is Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi who betrayed the origin of this attitude, when he said he had not called Gaddafi asking him to stop the repression "because he did not want to disturb him": the European governments did not wish to "disturb" the Libyan government when it was fighting to restore its order in blood!

With the unceasing onslaught of the revolt despite the repression, to the point of appearing to threaten the regime, the major Western imperialist countries began to put pressure on Gaddafi and his allies with freezes of financial assets, arms embargoes, etc. At the same time, according to reports in some newspapers (1), discreet talks were undertaken, especially by the Americans, with certain fractions of the Libyan power; the aim was not to help the rebels to topple the regime, but to implement a Tunisian or Egyptian solution: the sidelining of Gaddafi to save the regime itself. Indeed, this regime was engaged for several years in **close collaboration** with U.S. imperialism (the fight against Islamism) and European imperialism (the role of border guard and the blockage of African immigrant workers). Also it is a significant supplier of oil, not to mention a lucrative market, thanks to income received from oil, for the capitalist enterprises of many countries.

The evolution of the internal situation, marked by the governmental counter-attack in particular through the

use of Nigerian and Chadian mercenaries and the obstinacy of the Gaddafi clan to yield anything, made this solution impossible. At the instigation of the British and French governments, the United States and other imperialist powers of the Security Council of the UN, this modern den of thieves, and the Arab League (from Egypt to Saudi Arabia and the Emirates), this set of states each more authoritarian and repressive than the other, finally gave the green light to Western military intervention in favor of "democracy". At the same time all these defenders of democracy were busy endorsing the Saudi military intervention to crush the rebellion in Bahrain and the massacre of dozens of protesters by the government of Yemen!

* * *

The rebel movement in Libya, born on the wave of revolts that has shaken neighboring countries since the beginning of this year, undoubtedly mobilized the proletarianized masses of the country against poverty, oppression and repression; but it also, as was inevitable, expressed the aspirations of bourgeois and petit-bourgeois factions, layers or "tribes" marginalized by those close to Gaddafi, to capture a larger slice of the pie and of the power. It is this representatives of bourgeois layers who have installed themselves as leaders of the insurgents and who have been recognized by Sarkozy as "legitimate representatives of the Libyan people". It is no coincidence that the leading representative of the so-called "National Council" of Benghazi is Al Jeleil, Gaddafi's former Minister of Justice who in this capacity is responsible for countless arrests and arbitrary detentions. It is no coincidence either that the insurgent authorities allowed pogroms against African immigrant workers to proceed in Benghazi...

The proletarians have nothing good to expect from the murderer Gaddafi, or the imperialist coalition, but nothing either from the provisional government which was assembled under the colors of the ancient kingdom of Libya. In reality the workers in Libya, both natives and especially immigrants (migrant workers, from Egypt, Tunisia, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian subcontinent, represent **half** of the proletarians of the country by some estimates), have suffered, and will suffer the worst consequences of

repression not only from Gaddafi's militias, but also from clashes between various factions and now the imperialist military intervention.

The war unleashed against Gaddafi, even if it is "limited" for the moment to aerial bombardment is a **war of imperialist plunder**, like its predecessors in Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere. The wave of revolts which shook the regimes which used to be solid allies of the Western imperialists has at the same time sharpened the contradictions and conflicts between the great capitalist powers, at a time when the economic crisis forces each of them to defend its own interests ever more harshly against those of its competitors. The crisis of the Libyan regime has precipitated all the greater and lesser states into pushing their pawns forward, shattering the facade of unity of the "international community". The "Libyan affair" has provided an opportunity for Britain and France to try to dictate the law in the Mediterranean – while entrenching themselves more firmly in a country rich in oil; the United States, while now maintaining a low profile once again demonstrated to their allies that they were still the real masters; tagging behind, Italy, Spain and Canada are present to claim their share of the spoils, while Egypt does not want to be shut out of what's happening to one of its neighbors and the UAE is content to take a back seat in order to have a free hand at home. On the other hand Germany, Russia or China do not look at all favorably upon this Americano-Anglo-Franco action ...

The proletarians have interests diametrically opposed to those factions and bourgeois states that are competing in this bloody fray. They must not support a weaker bourgeois state against the all powerful imperialists, they must not support the bourgeois states experiencing aggression against "aggressor" states: all the bourgeois states, all the bourgeoisies are as one against the proletarians and wage a permanent struggle, sometimes "peaceful", sometimes violent against them. In war as in peace, the workers are exploited, oppressed and suppressed, they experience misery, poverty and death in the workplace. Whatever the government, they can count only on their own forces, on their own struggle, on their own organization to defend themselves. And they must reserve their

solidarity for their class brothers of all countries, and not for the bourgeois. This solidarity, this struggle and this organization can become possible only by breaking all ties with all bourgeois States, organizations and orientations, whether religious or secular, democratic or nationalist.

The class party embodies the struggle of the proletariat of all countries against capitalism and bourgeois power; it is the organ necessary to centralize the proletariat and to lead its struggles to revolutionary victory. This party does not exist today, except in terms of theory and program, as there is no generalized class struggle in all countries.

But the revolts like those that break out today in the Arab countries and

those that will break out tomorrow, demonstrate that the incurable economic and social contradictions of capitalism are at work and they push the workers, including those in the major imperialist countries, to resume the path of real revolutionary struggle against capitalism. Tens of thousands of migrant workers fleeing Libya were greeted fraternally by their Tunisian brothers: this is a small sign of proletarian internationalist solidarity. This is the path which the class struggle will take once again and through which the revolutionary Communist party will be reborn, basing itself on the teachings of Marxism and the lessons of the great struggles and workers' revolutions of the past.

The planes, aircraft carriers, submarines and ships of the western armada mobilized in the seas and skies of Libya will not stop the wave of revolt that is now beginning to spread to Syria and Morocco; it may perhaps mark a pause, but the struggle against all the dams built up by the ruling classes will inevitably be reborn. Until the proletariat, having paid enough of its sweat and blood to fatten the capitalists, launches itself into the only war worth fighting: the **class war** against all the bourgeoisies, starting with that of his own country!

March 20, 2011

(1) See for example the "Wall Street Journal" 09/03/11

The Cannibalism of the Tripoli regime shows the real face of a regime which calls itself socialist, but is supported by the imperialist powers!

After the riots in Tunisia and Egypt, which caused the fall of governments tied to the Ben Ali and Mubarak families it is now the turn of Libya and the system of government centered around the Gaddafi family and the tribes that support it. Compared to other countries, there is a difference: the revolt of the masses has turned into armed revolt in Libya, detachments of the army, air force, and navy refused to bomb the population and it appears that some have passed over to the side of the rebels, Gaddafi and his cronies can only rely on the Tripolitanian military forces and on their African and Balkan mercenaries to quell the uprising.

But none of the governments of these countries would have lasted so long – Ben Ali, more than twenty years, Mubarak over thirty, Gaddafi over forty – without the **assistance**, the **support** and **international recognition** accorded by the major imperialist powers: the United States in the first instance as the leading world power, then Britain, France and Italy, as former colonizers of the region, not to mention the USSR, in competition with Western imperialism, all tried to penetrate the region. Diplomatic clashes which have escalated tensions between states, first in one country then in another, sometimes resulting in military action (as in Egypt in 1956, Libya in the early 80s, not to mention the Gulf wars or Arab-Israeli wars); are the natural consequence of the inevitable rivalry between capitalist powers, and when it reaches its breaking point, economic and trade warfare becomes all-out war.

However the general framework does not change; and for the imperialist countries, to have authoritarian regimes, especially in areas where decolonization could lead to political and social instability, was the "price to be paid" for the proper functioning of the global economy and the production of capitalist profits!

In 2004 the English government was the first Western government to resume formal ties with the Libyan government, previously treated as "terrorist", British Petroleum being the major beneficiary of this rapprochement. The British initiative paved the way for an Americo-Libyan "alliance" within the framework of the fight against "Islamist terrorism". In 2007 Tony Blair signed a military agreement with Gaddafi which included the training of Libyan Special Forces by the British.

Also, if Mubarak was used by Western imperialism to rein in the Palestinian proletariat through his good relations with Israel, Gaddafi has been used to control mass emigration from Africa to Europe. Thus, the recent agreement (2008) between the Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi and the Libyan leader had among its principal terms **control of emigration!**

This is one reason why the Italian government has continued, despite the massacres, to support the retention of power by Gaddafi, perhaps even in a divided Libya, as it has done for years: we remember Berlusconi's cynical words saying he would not intervene with his "friend" Gaddafi so as "not to disturb" him at such a grave moment for his

country. The French Government which has laid down the red carpet to receive the "The Guide of the Libyan Revolution", has remained quite silent these days, and has yet to acknowledge its responsibility in the dispatch by its Chadian protege, Idriss Deby, of hundreds (up to 1000) of soldiers from his Presidential Guard to the rescue of the potentate of Libya during the very first moments of the revolt...

During the "five days of Benghazi" of February 15 to 20, much of the population of eastern Libya rose up against despotism, riding the wave of mass revolts, which after Tunisia and Egypt, have impacted Algeria, Morocco, Yemen, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, and Iran, to varying degrees. From Cyrenaica, the rebellion has spread over 10 days up the coast to the capital Tripoli where Gaddafi and his praetorians are entrenched and from where the head of the "revolution" of 1969 (in reality a *coup d'Etat*) unleashed the war against his own people.

The number of victims continues to rise each day and now the Al Jazeera TV network speaks of thousands dead, a massacre perpetrated by police, soldiers and mercenaries called upon by Gaddafi to crush the rebellion and retake control of the country and its business affairs!

The **cannibalism** of the government of Tripoli shows the true face of Libyan **capitalist** power – because it is **capitalism** that is the basis of the systems of government oppressing the great masses, the workers and immigrant populations in every country; systems of government

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Cannibalism of the Tripoli regime ...

(Continuation from page 15)

where in countries buoyed up by oil and other raw materials, a thin layer of bourgeois seize the enormous wealth produced, while the masses are condemned to misery and starvation, without even being able to demand any rights .

Representatives of major Western democracies that boast of the freedom enjoyed by their populations, have supported and armed the despotic and dictatorial powers with which they have been doing gold-plated business and countenancing the massacres that today follow one after another in the Arab countries, they have one idea in their head: how to save the profits from oil, arms sales or construction of infrastructure to "modernize" the country! The stock markets in New York, London, Berlin, Paris or Milan tumble because of the chaos caused by the riots? It is an "international issue", it is necessary to achieve social pacification as quickly as possible, in order to make finance and the world economy run! The demonstrators are imprisoned, tortured, massacred by the thousands in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya or Algeria? It is the "the problem" of Tunisians, Egyptians, Libyans, Algerians, where internal problems should not interfere! The big light and heavy armaments manufacturers of the developed capitalist countries which have stocked the arsenals of these countries have only one concern: how to continue to do business? It is of no regard to the bourgeois that thousands of unarmed civilians were massacred by soldiers; profits must be saved! And if there is no more Gaddafi, it will be necessary to find another in his place to continue the affairs of business...

* * *

In Rome, Madrid and Athens as in all the major European capitals, there is inquietude about the possible influx of refugees from the other shore of the Mediterranean, and Italian ministers express the open concern of the European leaders: the possibility that 300 000 refugees could come from Libya, the Italian Minister of Defence, saying there would be more than 2.5 million African immigrants in Libya, stirred the prospect of a real "invasion" of desperate masses fleeing poverty, repression and war after the collapse of the Libyan state. And it is for this reason that Italian warships have begun to position themselves along the Libyan coast!

The true face of capitalism is not constituted by the democratic facade of freedom of expression, freedom to de-

monstrate, assemble and organize. Where these freedoms exist it is because they were conquered by long struggles in which the proletariat was in the vanguard, and these freedoms are always more or less flouted and limited, because the bourgeois right that must always prevail, even at the expense of reduction or suspension of other democratic rights is the right to exploit wage labor in the best way possible in order to extract surplus value which, for the capitalists, is transformed into profit. Faced with the worsening of social tensions that pushes the proletariat and the proletarianized masses to attack the pillars of capitalist power and its symbols, the democratic facade shows itself to be a **mystification**.

The revolts, sometimes armed, which are shaking the despotic regimes supported by the imperialist democracies may well be enough to bring down local governments that had ruled by terror and repression; but the aim of "restoring civil peace" and "opening the path to democracy" through another bourgeois government, less compromised than the previous one cannot result in anything other than maintaining the **domination of the capitalists** over the workers, the domination of bourgeois nationalist and imperialist interests over the population and especially over the proletariat; the petit-bourgeois layers, the lawyers, judges and especially the military will gain in terms of social recognition, but the crushing majority of the proletarians and the poor peasants will continue to have to face the problems of daily survival with just as many difficulties, if not more still. It is also for this reason that in recent years millions of people, braving all manner of perils, have emigrated and continue to emigrate across the world.

But what do these masses driven by poverty find when they emigrate to the rich European countries? They find detention centers for undocumented immigrants, they find the best equipped police and military in the world who pursue them, detain and expel them; they find superexploitation and illegal work, and even when they manage to obtain papers, they face racism and petit-bourgeois prejudice. The bourgeois civilization of these countries which teach the whole world lessons on the benefits of democracy, is based on the same economic and social structure as that of less developed countries: capitalist exploitation, economic, social and political domination of the class that possesses all the means of production as well as all the products, and therefore has the right of life and death over the proletarians of the world.

Surprised by the social conflagration which has endured for more than two months in the Maghreb and the Middle

East, foreign ministries of the major capitalist countries of East and West have called on the leaders of these countries to exercise "restraint" in the repression and "to listen" to demands for "freedom" and "reforms". Regimes that for so many years were considered solid, can no longer control their masses, their proletarians. Ben Ali has fallen, Mubarak has fallen, Gaddafi is in freefall, Bouteflika staggers. But what really strikes fear into the imperialist powers, is less what is happening today, than what might happen tomorrow, they fear that the popular revolt will open the way for **revolutionary proletarian movements**, that the proletariat against whom the bourgeoisie in all countries leads a struggle without truce will discover in the current

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- Il Primo Maggio proletario è morto. Viva il Primo Maggio! Per la lotta di classe che unifica i proletari di ogni categoria, settore, età, sesso, nazionalità, contro ogni divisione e confine. La difesa di classe delle condizioni di vita e di lavoro operaie contro lo strapotere della classe borghese è il primo passo per l'emancipazione generale dal capitalismo!
- Rivolte nei paesi arabi e imperialismo
- Elezioni Democrazia in putrefazione
- La rivolta delle masse proletarie e proletarizzate arabe ha raggiunto la Siria, ed è massacro!
- Libia, repressione dei rivoltosi e intervento militare imperialista
- Le classi dominanti tremano davanti alle rivolte proletarie nei paesi arabi, oggi, e domani tremeranno davanti alla rivoluzione proletaria e comunista
- Qualche dato economico sulla Libia
- Egitto: Moubarak è caduto, il regime capitalista e lo stato borghese restano
- No all'intervento militare imperialista in Libia!
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- Alla gogna, non sugli altari il 1861
- Terremoto di Miyagi: è il capitalismo che aggrava gli effetti della catastrofe naturale!
- Terremoto, tsunami, esplosioni nelle centrali nucleari: continua il dramma giapponese
- Abbasso la repubblica borghese, abbasso la sua costituzione
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uprisings the force to engage openly in the **anti-bourgeois class struggle**. The fall of Gaddafi could indeed relaunch the wave of social revolt in the region, thereby encouraging the proletarian masses of Africa and Asia to rise up in their turn against the despotism of capital. It is this fear that motivates the changing attitude of the United States which, when the armed rebellion heralds the end of Gaddafi threatens to **intervene militarily** in Libya.

Unfortunately for the proletarians of the countries in revolt, the proletarian class struggle is not yet on the agenda; democratic illusions, still too powerful, overshadow and consign the real interests of the proletariat class to the backburner. And the proletariat of Europe and America, for decades anesthetized by democratic opium, passively contemplate these revolts instead of finding in them a motive to enter the struggle against their bourgeoisie – the real vampires who have sucked the blood of generations of Arab and Middle Eastern proletarians and peasants: the path to be taken to fight against being accessories to the repression, the wars and the grinding down of the populations of these countries, and which is the only real way to solidarize itself with these proletarians and to join with their class brothers of the whole world is to defend the proletarian interests common to all.

Mubarak, Ben Ali, Gaddafi or others could be replaced tomorrow by a young soldier calling himself a revolutionary, or by a political exile: it will not change much for the proletariat and the masses. The only real change can come about from the resumption of the class struggle, not only in these countries but also in the industrialized capitalist countries that are the heart of the world capitalist Moloch!

Revolutionary communists salute the social revolts in the countries of North Africa and the Middle East not only because they are causing the collapse of these despotic and bloodthirsty regimes, but also because they show the true face of the bourgeois powers in these countries to be the same as the imperialist countries. Knowing that these movements, mobilizing all the classes that make up the people “starved” of democracy cannot as such be transformed into a revolutionary proletarian movement, the revolutionary communists stress the material, not the ideological, causes which started a courageous bare-handed revolt and which pushed a young and combative proletariat to strike and demonstrate. It is impossible to expect that the current social revolts will automatically open up into class struggle tomorrow and it will require the workers to organize and fight independently for the **exclusive defense of their own class interests**, freeing themselves from de-

mocratic illusions and the suffocating embrace of bourgeois and petit-bourgeois strata, and it will be in these struggles where we will see the appearance of vanguard elements needed to form the class party, the **revolutionary communist party**, whose task will be to lead the fight toward the destruction of bourgeois power, the expression of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, whatever its form, and towards the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the extension of the revolutionary internationalist struggle uniting all the proletarians of the world against the bastions of the counter-revolution.

The road to the reprise of the class struggle has never been simple and easy, this is especially true today where the power of the bourgeoisie has been greatly enhanced in terms of social despotism and militarism and where the work of decades-long social-imperialist collaborationism has brought about the acceptance by the proletariat of its own exploitation and support of bourgeois atrocities and wars of plunder. But this is the road it is necessary to take to end the horrible massacres perpetrated by the bourgeoisie over the world to defend their class privileges, their private property and the whole system of capitalist exploitation on which their domination is founded.

February 24, 2011

Benghazi, Derna, Al Baida, Tobruk, Zintan, Tripoli: The riots in Tunisia and Egypt extend to Libya, where Gaddafi is trying to drown them in a bloodbath

Unofficial information sources indicate 200-250 dead and 1000 injured. The protests erupted in the major Libyan cities in the wake of the wave of a revolt that has broken out from the Arab countries of the Maghreb and the Middle East to the Persian Gulf and Iran. Unarmed Protesters confront Libyan security forces; fearing the fraternization of military detachments and the police with the masses who are demonstrating, the authorities in Tripoli have used super-equipped mercenaries from neighboring countries: they have the advantage of having no ties or relationships with tribal peoples, especially with the Tuareg and Berber populations of Cyrenaica, traditionally rebellious.

Here it seems the global economic crisis has had fewer consequences than in Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt. This although unemployment is around 30% in this country of 7 million inhabitants (not counting a million “illegal” immigrants). Social unrest, coupled with

an oppressive climate of authoritarianism and omnipresent political control by a regime which has banned the right to strike, organize and protest, has found an example to follow in the rebellions in neighboring countries. Like a gigantic telluric force emanating from the earth, a material thrust to free itself from brutal oppressive modes shakes the economic and social firmament of whole countries, leading the proletarians, the proletarianized masses, petit-bourgeois, and peasants to a spontaneous and generalized refusal of the established order. The objectives are simple, dramatically limited and vague: to end corruption and the dynastic power of Ben Ali, Mubarak and Gaddafi, to obtain democratic rights, but above all, work and bread. And as in Tunisia and Egypt, the Libyan authorities respond by using the only immediately available means to respond to a peaceful protest and stop challenges to their power: **bloody repression, massacres**, indiscriminate firing upon crowds of

demonstrators.

In Libya, as in other oil producing countries that have a raw material vital to the economies of major industrial countries, the bourgeoisie thinks it has every interest in keeping the profits it derives by any and all means, including imposing social peace by bestial repression: this interest is shared by the imperialist bourgeoisie in Europe and America, even if they are ready in a few days to abandon the authoritarian regimes they have armed and supported for decades or to maneuver behind the scenes to facilitate a “transition” that changes nothing essential and can resume business once the social storm has abated. This explains the awkward silence of the European ruling classes or the timid calls by an Obama to end the violent repression of demonstrations and to give more freedom and democracy. What else could we expect from any of the dominant

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The riots extend to Libya

(Continuation from page 17)

imperialist bourgeoisies, more criminal still than the Arab bourgeoisie? In addition, as long as these social movements do not exceed the limits of bourgeois democracy, of bourgeois rights, as long as they do not attack private property and with it capitalism – and even if they were to take the path of Islamism – they are for the bourgeoisie only a minor evil in comparison to the erupting of the class struggle, the direct struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and its economic system.

In 1969 a military coup led by a young Colonel Gaddafi overthrew King Idris 1st, at the head of a corrupt regime in the pay of Great Britain and especially the United States. The new regime was called the “Great Socialist People’s Arab Republic of Libya”. Needless to say that behind an ideology inspired by Nasser’s pan-Arabism and European social-democracy, there was nothing socialist in a regime that played on anti-American nationalism. The first social measures were the doubling of wages, the establishment of a corporatism involving workers in the management of factories, the introduction of legislation based on the Koran, the prohibition of alcohol, closing down nightlife, etc. Making himself the champion of revenge on the old colonialists, Gaddafi confiscated the properties of the former Italian colony at the same time he nationalized the oil companies to “restore the Libyan people’s wealth usurped by the oppressors,” according to the terms of his “Green Paper” (1976). These reforms and the demagoguery were necessary to win popular support for the new regime. Pompidou’s France, eager to profit from the setbacks of Anglo-Saxon imperialism in an oil-producing country, accorded its support to Gaddafi by selling modern weapons (Mirage, etc.).

Libya has become the biggest supplier of oil to Italy and has forged close links with many companies in the former colonial power (such as Fiat). That is why Berlusconi has just said he did not protest against the repression in that country, because he did not want to “disturb” the Libyan government!

As for the Sarkozy government, which has been courting Gaddafi, and which for many months has multiplied its efforts to increase French sales to Libya (including arms), it kept a deafening silence. Clearly, these reactions mean: repress and massacre, it does not concern us!

But it is very much the concern of the proletarians of France, Italy and of all countries, beginning with the Mediterranean countries!

Everything that happens in the streets

of Tunis, Cairo, Algiers, Benghazi, Manama (Bahrain) Saana (Yemen), etc., concerns the proletarians because when the bourgeois bloodily suppress social movements which demand for bread, work, freedom to organize, they act as a ruling class against the dominated classes and in the first place the proletariat from which they derive most of their profits. When a bourgeoisie crushes its people in cold blood, it not only defends its power, privilege, domination, it also defends the interests of social and political domination of other bourgeoisies, from whom it also seeks assistance. Competition among the bourgeois and their states is the rule under capitalism and this competition often leads to war, but against the proletariat and the proletarianized masses whose movements come up against existing political regimes and could pave the way for the anti-capitalist proletarian struggle, their differences are put aside: the bourgeoisies all **collaborate** to ensure the return to order, one way or another.

Here too, the proletariat must draw lessons from the unfolding events.

The current movements, with all their dead and wounded, imprisoned and tortured express their social discontent in terms of democracy, a change of government, they may be able to topple autocrats and their families, but power remains firmly in hands of the bourgeoisie, it will continue to be a **capitalist** power and will continue to defend the interests of the ruling class, perhaps using methods different **in appearance**, at least initially,

but which will always be **authoritarian** and based on an **ever-increasing** militarism. This is a general tendency, although due to their historical traditions and resources at their disposal, this authoritarianism and militarism which express the **dictatorship of the bourgeoisie**, are hidden in the imperialist countries by a veil – always thinner! – of democratic and parliamentary forms.

In Libya as in Italy, in Tunisia and Algeria as in France, in Egypt as in the United States, in all countries, the proletarians are all **class brothers** since they are all wage-slaves, but also since they are **targets** of a repression which strikes or threatens everywhere, because they are the only class that, by organizing themselves on the terrain of immediate struggles **independently** from bourgeois forces, religious or collaborationist, and on the political level, by organizing themselves in full autonomy as a **class party**, have the opportunity not only to respond blow-for-blow to bourgeois attacks, but to pass over to the conquest of power, to the destruction of the state apparatus and the establishment of their own dictatorship, the prerequisite for the emancipation of humanity from capitalism and all its horrors.

The current movements have opened a new page in the exacerbated social contradictions that characterize capitalism. The proletariat must respond by breaking with class collaboration and by rejecting democratic mystification to embark on the **road of the class struggle!**

February 20, 2011.

Egypt: Mubarak has fallen, the capitalist regime and the bourgeois State remain

Much to the jubilation of the throngs of demonstrators Hosni Mubarak has announced his resignation, handing his powers to the army. The strongman who just a few hours before wanted to be the defender of the constitution and the ultimate bulwark against the “chaos”, has thus ratified a kind of *coup d’Etat* (according to the constitution the president of parliament should take over power).

All the maneuvers and proclamations of the government could not prevent the clashes and massive protests which followed one after the other for 18 days in Egypt. On Friday, February 11 a throng even more massive than at previous demonstrations took to the streets of Cairo and other major cities, despite the declarations of Mubarak saying he was abandoning the real power to his vice-president.

After the first few demonstrations involving some thousands of people, especially petit-bourgeois youth mobilized via the Internet, “specialists from the Arab world” and other “informed commentators” learnedly explained that the Mubarak regime was solid and that a situation such as in Tunisia was impossible in Egypt. The eruption of tens of thousands of demonstrators from the neighborhoods of Cairo during demonstrations on Jan.26 and 28 has completely changed the situation. It was not just in Cairo but in other major Egyptian cities that huge masses poured out screaming their hatred of the power, muscling the police out of the way through sheer numbers.

Nothing could be done: not the cutting of internet and mobile telephone networks, not the censorship of the media, not the ferocity of the repression (more

than 300 dead in early February), nor the half-concessions of Mubarak, could prevent this human tidal wave whose source lies in the increasingly miserable conditions of life of the proletarianized masses. For the ruling circles of the Egyptian bourgeoisie, like those of other Arab countries in the region and U.S. and European imperialism, the question was how to successfully contain the anger expressed in the streets and squares of Egypt, to prevent the **revolt** from becoming **insurrection** or indeed transform itself into **revolution**.

Above all, the last few days have seen a new disquieting factor for the capitalists: **the entry of the working class into the struggle**. Calls have begun to circulate for a general strike and the first work stoppages were reported in the days before the departure of Mubarak. By February 10, tens of thousands of workers were on strike; it was the largest strike wave since the strikes in the textile industry in 2007-2008 – which had been severely repressed.

Strikes erupted in different jurisdictions, in the Cairo mass transit system and on the railways. In the Suez Canal Zone 3,000 oil workers went on strike. In the industrial region of Egypt, the delta where most of the Egyptian industry is located, a strike of 4,000 workers at a chemical plant at Al Nasr Helwan was reported, 2,000 workers (in fact mostly women workers) at the textile factory in the same city, 2000 also at the Sigma Pharmaceuticals plant in Quesna; in Al Mahalla, the center of the textile industry, the epicenter of the struggle of 2007-2008, an unlimited general strike was launched on February 10 at the Misr Spinning and Weaving Textile Factory, the biggest factory in Egypt, which employs 24,000 people, etc..

Their demands address low wages, (the minimum wage is only \$ 70 per month), improved working conditions, the permanent hiring of temporary workers, etc..

All these strikes, of which we probably have only a small glimpse, were triggered independently of the official unions whose function is to maintain **social peace** and to **prevent workers' struggles**. Still partial, they are good signs for the future, provided that workers are able to organize on the basis of class, independent not only of the union apparatuses which have sold out to the bosses and the bourgeois state, but by rejecting all the false "brothers" who would use them for their bourgeois goals (such as those who stopped the strike at the Misr Spinning and Weaving Textiles Factory after Mubarak's departure).

* * *

While Saudi Arabia and the Palestinian Authority, mortally afraid of the

mass movement, have all pledged their continued support to Mubarak, the U.S. government has stepped up pressure for a "peaceful political transition", that is to say that he give way, the only way to prevent further clashes with incalculable risks: Mubarak was the fuse which had to be replaced to protect capitalism from a high voltage shock which the outburst of class struggle in the greatest country in the Middle East could not fail to produce, with repercussions throughout the region. Within the regime, Mubarak's closest allies have probably toyed with the idea of an Iranian or Chinese alternative: the crushing of protest, after the inevitable fatigue that has at least temporarily quieted the ardor of the demonstrators. The most influential bourgeois circles, those who are most represented among military leaders, have judged this scenario too risky, just as it was by American imperialism from its perspective.

The Egyptian army was rapidly mobilized to control the crowds, protect buildings, and essential services and goods, while letting the police do the dirty work of repression. Completely absent from the first major events, the Muslim Brotherhood, the only significant opposition force that the government has allowed to develop, has hopped on to the moving train: its role will be irreplaceable tomorrow to maintain bourgeois order. Today, military leaders, after announcing the dissolution of parliament and suspending the constitution, promise a return to civilian rule within six months, by which time they will develop a new constitution.

Whatever form the regime change takes, bourgeois political power remains intact in Egypt; worse, the Army, the mainstay of this power, arises momentarily haloed in the transition. But the Egyptian proletariat will quickly learn if they do not suspect it yet, that it is **against them** that the successors of Mubarak will mobilize, that they will be battered anew by police and military **repression**, and to **defend their interests** they will have to **fight on their own**, without the petit-bourgeois democrats, whether nationalist or religious. In Tunisia after Ben Ali had been removed, a new government, led by the same Prime Minister, was set up so that nothing essential changes: the police brutally evicted protesters who encamped in Tunis and continues to fire on the crowds (2 dead even on February 4), the capitalists continue to operate, while politicians are preparing for a future electoral farce, the hoped-for coronation of the restoration and strengthening of the bourgeois order.

There will inevitably be the same thing in Egypt. Already the Supreme Military Council appears to prohibit any meeting of labor organizations or unions, and in

fact **prohibiting** strikes, and it will call for the resumption of work. The coming period will be one of **workers' struggles** and in addition to their determination, the Egyptian proletariat will need **solidarity** with their class brothers in other countries.

Shaken by an unprecedented economic crisis, the capitalist world order little-by-little begins to reveal fissures everywhere. The future heralds the return of the proletarian struggle, not only in the so-called "periphery" but also in the richest "central" capitalist countries where the consequences of the crisis have so far been largely amortized.

This will not happen in a day and will require the workers of all countries to expend a lot of energy and courage to resist repression just as their Egyptian and Tunisian fellow workers, to foil the false alternatives presented by the lackeys of the capitalist order; it will require much effort to retrace the road of the class struggle and to constitute the indispensable leadership organ of the international revolutionary proletarian struggle, the world communist party, but if these efforts succeed, they will lead to the reappearance of the spectre of communism. It will then be possible to shout out again:

The bourgeois of all countries tremble at the idea of a Communist revolution!

The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

February 13, 2011

« le prolétaire »

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Summary

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- A bas l'intervention impérialiste française en Côte d'Ivoire !
- Le cannibalisme du régime de Tripoli montre le vrai visage d'un régime prétendument socialiste, mais soutenu par les impérialismes européens !
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- Elections canadiennes : à bas le cirque électoral, vive la lutte prolétarienne!

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Egypt in flames

A powerful wave of anger among the poor and unemployed Arab masses shakes the young, voracious and brutal capitalism of the North African and Middle Eastern countries supported by the old and bloody capitalism in Europe and America. Anticipation of a social wave that can only be resolved in favor of the vast majority of the population by the emergence of the proletarian class.

For 5 days the streets of Cairo, Alexandria, Suez and many other Egyptian cities have witnessed a great wave of anger among the masses who can no longer bear to live in unemployment, poverty and hunger: after Tunisia and Algeria now it's Egypt's turn.

The media in the opulent western world, which can now no longer hide the brutal police repression, focus all their information on the "lack of reforms" and the absence of "true democracy"! It was not until the masses, defying the crackdown, unleashed their anger by attacking government buildings, burning what they could, hurling rocks, knocking out tanks, groups fighting in a melee against policemen, defying the curfew and the gunfire of the forces of repression, forcing the media to recognize that these hireling regimes, protected and armed by the Western democracies and principally the United States; have maintained order and social control by a systematic and generalized police violence; that they have arrested, tortured and hounded any opposition underground using any and all means in order to have their hands free and in a few odd years to accumulate enormous riches for their clans – and their foreign godfathers.

The timid requests made by Obama, Merkel, Sarkozy and Co. to the Mubarak regime (and previously with that of Ben Ali) for urgent concessions in order to respond to the most urgent demands of the masses (bread and jobs, essentially) show the extent to which the imperialists were surprised by the wave of riots that spread throughout the countries of the Maghreb and the Middle East.

Have the western democracies suddenly begun to concern themselves about the misery which the proletarians and the agricultural toiling masses of these countries have experienced for years?

Not at all! In countries where capitalism is developing in the only way possible, given the ruthless imperialist competition that imposes an economic social and military oppression on all the world's populations – let's not mince words – the most savage and brutal history has known, in countries where the capitalist mode of production claimed to bring welfare and civilization, there is no other prospect for the masses than exploitation, repression,

poverty and hunger. These regimes like Egypt or Tunisia which have crushed their people down and who now receive in return a very small fraction of the violence inflicted on the masses have throughout this period been strategic outposts of the imperialist "democratic" powers that dominate the world.

Faced with the overwhelming explosion of anger among the disinherited Arab masses Washington, Berlin, Paris, Rome, London and Brussels, address to Cairo as they did yesterday to Tunis and Algiers the counsel that they should permit freedom of expression, carry out reforms, stop the repression.... Empty words that only serve to make people believe that more "democracy", less corruption and less brutality by the authorities, would improve the situation of the masses. Western leaders know from experience that the thousand cards in the deck of "democracy" can be played in different scenarios to divert the struggles of the masses towards objectives that do not challenge capitalism, but limit themselves to changes in government. It is no coincidence that in the demonstrations the various opposition parties put forward the demand, "Ben Ali Must Leave!", "Mubarak Get out!" They just want to take advantage of the riots to replace the Ben Ali and Mubarak clans in the governments of these countries.

What will change fundamentally for the masses? Nothing.

With only a little more freedom of expression and freer elections, it will be the continuation of the brutal exploitation of the proletarianized masses which capitalism inflicts everywhere on the planet, but with the added aggravation of an imperialist oppression, which fills the strong-boxes of the American and European bourgeoisies and allows them to buy the complicity of the reformist organizations controlling their own proletarians!

The riots which today shake the Arab world prefigure tensions and riots in Europe: the Mediterranean, *mare nostrum* of the ancient Romans, could be transformed into a lake of fire setting aflame the Old Continent because the economic crisis which shook the Western economies and of which the **delayed but inexorable** consequences fall upon the countries of the periphery, can be

surmounted by capitalism only by further oppressing the proletarian masses of the world.

By their rioting in recent weeks, the North African, Middle Eastern and Albanian proletarians cry out to the world that capitalism is not able to meet the elementary requirements of the masses and that this intolerable situation **must** change. The proletarians of Europe and America regard these revolts with surprise, anxious but also pleased with revolts which put to flight these bloodthirsty governments. The proletarians of the richest countries on the planet, who are also experiencing a continuous deterioration of their living and working conditions, do not have the power to revolt in the same way. They have been educated in the respect of "democratic legality", they have been poisoned for decades by the myth of a democracy which they see every day is impotent to solve their day to day problems, but from which they are not able to free themselves to give expression to the revolt that any slave inevitably feels.

However, the proletarians of the old capitalist countries have a history of class struggles, revolutionary struggles not only against the old feudal regimes, but also against capitalism. It is this history that they can and must reclaim if they are not to remain forever subjugated to their imperialist bourgeoisie, they must rediscover the lessons of the glorious history of class struggles of the past and the real social revolutions that have made all the imperialist powers tremble in fear!

If the proletarians of the Maghreb and the Middle East which have risen up against their regimes, allow themselves to be channeled onto the path of democracy and into the allegedly not faked elections – which is where the opposition parties are directing them – they will not succeed in finding a perspective for their class, they will not succeed in emancipating themselves from the exploitation and oppression which condemns them to poverty today and tomorrow will transform them into cannon fodder, as has already been the case in the numerous wars that have already drenched the region in blood. The nationalisms which various Arab States have cultivated among the masses to defend the interests of castes and bourgeois factions allied with this or that imperialism, are the other

side of the coin, which accords perfectly, if the need is felt for any supplementary “**social link**”, with religious fundamentalism, as demonstrated by the Ayatollahs in Iran and Zionism in Israel.

The proletarian masses which today express their anger away and apart from any religious instrumentalisation will not long be able to remain in this situation. Even when the bourgeois regimes go through a grave political crisis as is the case in Egypt and Tunisia (and tomorrow perhaps in Morocco, in Jordan, in Libya or elsewhere), in the absence of the class party, armed with the revolutionary communist program and determined to prepare the proletarians for the future anticapitalist revolution, the masses can be “neutralized” thanks to the always effective action of democracy, and – if it is necessary – in recourse to an alternative of the Islamic type...

Actually the proletarians are faced with three possibilities: to fall back into silence as before the revolt, with some freedom of expression and organization permitted by a new legality imposed by new bourgeois fractions with the agreement of imperialism; or to be represented by some forms of Islamist parties, which through their denunciation of corruption and immorality, succeed in capturing the disgust of the masses against the current leadership, or to take the path of class organization for the defense without compromise of their immediate interests with a view to overthrowing bourgeois society plunged into the commodification of all existing social and human relations.

This path of class struggle is undoubtedly the most difficult; and it seems most distant because bourgeois society in the competition of one against another drives each individual to only see themselves, to think only of their personal needs (or those of their family) over those of their neighbors. But the proletariat is a class based on particular productive and social relations: they are the class which the capitalists must exploit to get their profits and it is the material condition of wage-earning **labor power** which makes the proletariat a class in which individuals have the same interests and feel the need to unite to defend them; it is this material pressure, this **movement of defense** that gives birth to solidarity and the consciousness of possessing a force that does not limit itself to outbursts of anger, but can be organized to arrange for a future that is no longer that of eternal exploitation by capitalism!

The European proletarians, for their part, have everything to lose if they just sit and watch passively at what’s happening on the other side of the Mediterranean; the revolt of the proletariat and the poor masses of Africa and the Middle East are of the most acute interest to

them: it is their class brothers who revolt, driven by hunger and poverty, and if repression triumphs some of them will seek opportunities in Europe that offer more in life than where they come from, as has been happening for decades – new proof that the proletarian condition is the same everywhere. Capitalism can only use these new entrants to increase competition among workers, which is why the revolt of the masses is also directly relevant to European proletarians of the Mediterranean. The workers are the only ones who have nothing to fear from these riots, who have nothing to fear if the fire touches the European metropolises. They are the only ones because they are part of the same class of wage laborers, exploited by capitals belonging to networks of interests that bind the bourgeoisies one to the others, and must be fought everywhere.

But to be effective, this struggle must overcome the myths of a “democracy”

and a “legalism” that every bourgeois, every capitalist, under pressure from the street, is ready to demand against the other now-hated and discredited bourgeois, then when calm returns and the dust has settled to trample them underfoot without the least scruple!

The revolts which have succeeded one another in the Arab countries give a lesson for proletarian struggle: the way forward for the workers on both shores of the Mediterranean as in all countries of the world, is the path of class struggle, the struggle in which the proletariat rises not in defense of bourgeois democratic lies, but of their own class interests, which also represent the future of human society because they imply the end of the capitalist mode of production and therefore of all the social, political economic and military oppression characteristic of bourgeois society.

January 30, 2011

Long live the revolt of the proletarian youth!

In Tunisia and Algeria, reduced to poverty and unemployment, proletarian youth revolt.

The police intervene; shooting to kill.

The bourgeoisie responds to the revolt with a massacre!

Tunisia, too, has suffered from the economic crisis of recent years. And it is on the backs of the proletarian masses, as in all countries, developed or not, that the consequences fall. Statistics show that Tunisia is the country with the highest per capita income in Africa, but while they also state that unemployment is officially 14% (for a population of 10 million inhabitants), it is actually closer to 30%, besides vast underemployment, which particularly affects young people. The regime is supported by European imperialism, because with its pervasive repression it offers them a source of labor which is cheap and tightly controlled by police. The recent rise in consumer prices is the background which triggered violent protests from cities in the south which have spread throughout the country and to the capital, Tunis.

On December 17, in the town of Sidi Bouzid, because he did not have a licence, police confiscated the cart of a young 26-year computer science graduate who had not succeeded in finding a position and who was forced to work as a street vendor to survive. Despair at the loss of his only means of living and support to his family, Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire in front of the local government buildings – finally expiring only on Jan 5. Hundreds of outraged people took to the streets and fought the cops with stones and Molotov cocktails. The police responded

by firing live ammunition at the demonstrators!

Three weeks after the protests began there are more than 60 dead, hundreds injured, and over a hundred arrests. The government of President Zine Ben Ali, firmly installed in power with his camarilla for 23 years adds bestial repression to the endemic poverty, unemployment, and hunger. It is only after weeks of repression – not only ignored by Tunisian propaganda organs, but also by the European media – that Ben Ali has sacked the interior minister, released some of the jailed and promised the creation of 300,000 jobs. But this is just a maneuver to calm the growing anger and no one believes these promises, the protests continue, as does the bloody repression and the advancing revolt has spread to Tunis, the capital.

Sidi Bouzid, Kasserine, Thala Regueb, Feriana, Menassa, Ariana, Mezl Bouzayane, etc.: These are not tourist places where European tourists will spend a cheap holiday; they are the cities where the Tunisian police commit multiple murders to defend the rapacious and corrupt power of Ben Ali!

The proletarian protest, a new “revolt of bread”, has not ended and has crossed the border to engulf Tunisia, the richest country in the Maghreb through its oil

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Long live the revolt of the proletarian youth!

(Continuation from page 21)

and gas. As in most cities in Tunisia; Algeria – including Algiers has been the scene of violent protests of young proletarians as a result of sharp increases in the prices of essential commodities, while unemployment is rapidly increasing. Again the youth have rebelled against a society that, despite the huge inflows of money obtained by the export of oil products, gives them no prospects, against a society that does not guarantee even the survival of its wage slaves!

The police firing on the workers – protesting, sometimes violently, against the economic and physical abuse to which they are constantly subjected – is the clearest expression of the **class domination of the bourgeoisie** over the whole society and the proletariat in particular. It also demonstrates that in this bourgeois society where capitalism dictates the conditions of life and death of masses, the only social force that has the power to stand up to this lethal force and finally destroy it, is the proletarian class.

The silence with which the media of the great “advanced” and “democratic” countries of Europe and America have tried to hide the violence and repression which these regimes use to rule their country, is the sign of the fear of **contagion** – even in European countries where proletarian populations of immigrant origin may serve to channel the transmission of revolt. Is it coincidence that Aliot-Marie, French Minister of Interior, has publicly proposed to his counterparts in Algeria and Tunisia that they make use of French “*savoir-faire*” in law enforcement?

The brutality of the repression, the national media censorship and the complicity of the trade union organizations sold-out to bourgeois power show that the authorities’ calls for “dialogue” are a **sinister farce**. Above all, they show that it is only **by force** that one can respond to force, that only by **organizing the might of the proletariat** that we can respond to the organization of bourgeois force.

Today in Tunisia and Algeria the most reactionary currents, like the religious forces have not yet entered into action. But the workers must expect that even the leaders who boast of the defense of “secularism” as in Tunisia, will not hesitate to use religious reaction, if the guns of the police are insufficient to save the bourgeois order, and they will use all the **democratic or nationalist lies** – or even by **recourse to the army** if it looks like Ben Ali will be deposed.

The bourgeoisie always trample underfoot the “democratic rights” enshrined in its constitution, it uses **all and**

every means available – from the most violent to the most insidiously peaceful – to bend the proletariat to the demands of its class domination, political, social and military domination is indispensable for the ever-increasing exploitation of the proletarians.

Potentially the proletarians have the strength to defeat the bourgeoisie, on the condition that they must break with the politics and the inter-class organizations of the unions and parties advocating class collaboration – even if they claim to be “workers” parties – which function for the sole purpose of preventing the proletarian struggle against capitalism. The demonstrations and riots in Tunisia and Algeria are caused by the same causes and encounter the same obstacles. An authentically class organization of proletarian defence, breaking with the imperatives of social preservation and submission to capital, would not only organize the struggle against anti-proletarian measures with class methods – to call for a strike of all categories of workers, formation of strike pickets and of workers committees to lead the struggle, the organization of defense against police repression, it would tie together the struggles of the proletarians of neighboring countries to **unify** the strikes, to reinforce the struggle for the defence of the conditions of life and work of the proletarians, even on the very terrain that the bourgeoisie has chosen: the terrain of open and violent confrontation.

Today it is again the turn of the proletarians of the less developed capitalist

countries to show to the proletarians of the richer and therefore more oppressing countries that the road ahead is not one of peaceful protest, legalist and powerless, but that of revolt against bourgeois injustices and abuses. If the proletarians of the European countries, like Germany, Spain, France or Italy, but also those countries in America which are the main supporters of the Maghreb states, rise up like their class brothers from across the Mediterranean, they will be able to convey their experience from the major political class struggles of the past.

This is the path through which the proletarians will be able to reconquer their class might and to become once again, not a vague threat, but a real danger to the capitalist mode of exploitation that they must destroy forever throughout the whole world!

Long live the revolt of the Tunisian and Algerian proletarian youth!

Against police repression by bourgeois governments, for proletarian defence, independent of all the forces of collaborationism, whether trade union or political!

For the resumption of class struggle and proletarian international solidarity!

Down with the bourgeois fatherland, homeland of judicial murder and of the massacre of the proletariat!

For the emancipation of all proletarians from capitalism! For the communist revolution in all countries!

January 11, 2011

The Global Crisis: **World Capitalism at a turning Point.** **Mutations in the World inter-** **imperialist Balance of Power.**

(Continuation from page 1)

China kept advancing. Specifically, the ten largest exporters in 1999 were as follows, in order: USA, Germany, Japan, France, Britain, Canada, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium and China. In 2009 we had: China, Germany, USA, Japan, France, Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, South Korea (in twelfth place ten years earlier) and Great Britain: the old “despot of the world market” was thus relegated to the tail of these rankings.

During the last decade, Chinese exports rose 20%, those of India (still far distant from the ranks of the export leaders) by 16% and those of South Korea 9.7%, while the U.S. grew by only 4.3% and Japan 3.3% (lower than European countries like the Netherlands: 8%, Germany 7.5%, Italy: 5.7% or

even France: 4.6%) [3].

**CHINA, NEW
“WORKSHOP OF THE WORLD”?**

The media routinely claim that China is the “workshop of the world”, applying to it the appellation that was used for Great Britain in the nineteenth century, and that Marx himself did not hesitate to use. What reality is there really behind this *cliché*?

First let’s cast an eye over the past. Marx wrote in 1858 that Great Britain (which had been the first to experience the Industrial Revolution) enjoyed a “*monopoly situation which makes it the workshop of the world*” [4], with its industry producing goods for the whole world, but he also added that British capitalism was undermining itself in this situation by exporting its capital and it

also provided its future rivals with machinery and equipment with which they developed their own industry. In 1870 Britain still produced 53% of global iron, 50% of its coal and consumed almost 50% of the cotton produced in the world and was estimated to represent nearly 32% of the world's industrial production and it ensured nearly a quarter of global trade. It was then at the height of its economic power. But behind it loomed a vigorous competitor (although still with little presence on the world market), and which was the leading client for British machinery and equipment: the United States with 23% of industrial production in the world. They were followed by Germany (13%), followed by France, trailing at 10%. Russia was 3.7%, Belgium 2.9% Italy 2.4%, other countries follow with negligible amounts.

On the eve of the first world war, if Great Britain still held the largest share of world trade (16%, against 13.8% in Germany, 11.5% U.S., 10% France) it had clearly lost its place as *workshop of the world*, it represented only 13.6% of world industrial production against 32% in the U.S. who took over first place in the last years of the nineteenth century, but it was also passed by Germany which doubled (14.8%), Russia where the anti-Tsarist revolution was fermenting had itself surpassed French imperialism, the "loan shark in the world" with: 8.2% and 6.1% respectively, Italy at 2.5%, with Japan, a newcomer which had demonstrated its military might against Russia, at 2.4% [5].

American power would be greatly amplified by the consequences of the First, then the Second World War which was a gigantic *business*, Yankee imperialism firmly asserted not only its economic and trade dominance, but also, consequently, its political and military hegemony and throughout much of the twentieth century world, to an extent and to a degree unknown to the old British imperialism. In 1945, coming out of the conflict, the United States, to which the war had caused no destruction of its production apparatus, was handling about half of world industrial production.

But even after rebuilding and restarting the economies of the countries ravaged by war, they have long maintained a dominant share of this production, thus in 1953 they still accounted for 44.7% of world industrial production, followed by the Soviet Union (10.7%) and Britain (8.4%). Germany was at 5.9%, France 3.2%, Japan 2.9%, Italy 2.3%, tied with China. But the share of the U.S. in world exports was only 18.8% (while the share of Western Europe was 39.4%) – for them the domestic market was by far the most important.

The ensuing decades saw a slow but inexorable decline of the overwhelming economic superiority of U.S. as its

imperialist competitors, Europe and Japan progressed rapidly.

In 1980 the share of the United States in global industry is almost back down to the 1913 level: 31.5%. the USSR remained the second industrial power at 14.5%; of course it did not achieve socialism nor surpass America economically as Khrushchev promised in the fifties. Indeed, Japan became the second largest economy in terms of GDP and rose to third place in international industrial production at 9.1%, followed by Germany (5.3%), China (5%), Great Britain (4%), France (3.3%), Italy (2.9%). Japan launched out vigorously to conquer the global market and nothing seemed about to stop it with the U.S. and European media increasingly echoing the fears of their industries over the "threat" constituted by the growing flow of Japanese goods. In late 1978 the Chinese government inaugurated its big turn in favor of economic liberalization and a market economy [6].

Ten years later, the Soviet Union struggled, in a deep crisis, while Japan continued its ascent. The world's leading industrial powers in 1990 ranked as follows: U.S. 28%, are closely followed by Japan at 22%. Germany accounts for 12% of world industrial production, followed by Italy (6.6%), Great Britain and France then being almost unchanged (5.7%). Russia at 3.3%, fell behind China (4%) – the fall of the ruble probably accentuating the Russian decline whose main cause was the severe economic crisis that led to the breakup of the USSR. It should be noted that the European countries (one can also note Spain: 3%) did better than just resist the decline that affected Uncle Sam they have managed to increase their share of world industrial production; China still has stagnated, while private companies were increasingly developing there at the expense of large state enterprises.

We come now to the current situation. The services of the UN, which are the main (or rather the only) source for international comparison, no longer provide data on industrial production in the world, but rather on the much more confusing criteria of "value-added in industry" [7]. It is not possible to make accurate comparisons with previous data.

According to this criterion, the United States were still in 2008 (latest figures available) the greatest industrial power (24% of world total), but a powerful newcomer appeared during those 18 years and has grown dramatically: China, which is 18% (having achieved 6% in 1995, 10% in 2000, 13% in 2005, etc.). Japan, which peaked in 1995 at 26%, representing only 14% of the global total. Germany followed: (10%), far ahead of Italy (5%), Britain (4.2%), France (4%), Russia (3.3%), Brazil

(3.1%) and Korea (3%). Regarding "manufacturing" (industry taken alone, excluding mining and energy), the differences are smaller: the U.S. is 18%, China at 15.6% and Japan at 15.4%.

In short, if China today is not at all the "world's workshop" as were in turn Great Britain and the United States, this does not prevent the complaints coming from EU and U.S. capitalists facing this new competitor from being as noisy as those echoed twenty years ago against the Japanese competitor. Once again the American press is concerned about the risk of the U.S. losing their industrial predominance maintained for over a century and, worse, that their entire economy will pass into the secondary ranks in fifteen or twenty years.

STEEL PRODUCTION AND CRISES

Some figures will illustrate the rise of the new Asian giant.

To avoid disproportionately burdening this article, we will consider only the production of steel, but there's a reason. It is indeed a classic index of the development of production and industry of a country and the changing balance of power between the major economic imperialisms. Steel is used variously in food cans, construction or automobiles and for armaments. The party has devoted several works to the study of changes in steel production in different countries and its relationship with the outbreak of major world conflicts [8].

The period known as the Cold War was marked by a race for first place among steel producers between U.S. and USSR, which ended up triumphing in 1974, at the moment when grave economic reverses erupted to put an end to the "thirty glorious years" (in the words of the bourgeois economists) of economic expansion after World War II: with 136 million tonnes against the U.S.'s 132 and 119 in Japan. Other countries that were among the 10 largest steel producers at this time: Germany with 53 million tons, France 27, China 26, Italy 23, Great Britain 22, Poland 13 and the Czechoslovakia 12.7.

5 years later, coming out of the economic crisis, the international economy eventually resumes growth, albeit at a slower pace. In 1979 the top ten world producers are in order: the USSR (149 million tonnes), USA (123), Japan (111), Germany (43), China (37), Italy (26), France (23), Poland (19), Brazil (15), Czechoslovakia (14). The Western capitalist countries and Japan have failed to return to the levels of 1974 (Great Britain finds itself relegated to twelfth in the world after Spain) and the sharp recession in 1980-82 will have significant repercus-

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sions, but the international hierarchy of industrial nations does not go through any major changes. The so-called “socialist camp” seems solid and even well-shielded from the economic crises that seem to strike only the West.

Fast forward ten years to 1990, when the Soviet Union is on the verge of collapse the world plunged into a new international recession, we have the following classification: the USSR maintained its wide lead with 154 million tons of steel produced in the year; this amount is undoubtedly in decline relative to its historic peak of 1988 (163 million tons), but the country is suffocating under the weight of metal overproduction.

Japan is second at 110 million, followed by the United States who have descended to 89 million (a level not much higher than that of ... 1948). China has climbed to fourth with 66 million tonnes, ahead of Germany (38.4), Italy (25), Korea (23), Brazil (20), France (19) and Great Britain (18), which takes advantage of the fall of Poland and Czechoslovakia to return to the top ten, managing to double Spain on the way. Western industrial countries and Japan are still well below 1974 levels, with the exception of Italy and especially Spain, which has resumed steady growth after a short decline in 1975-1976.

Now we come to the verge of the recession of the early twenty-first century, the “New Technology” bubble had not yet burst and the attacks on the World Trade Center have not yet occurred, we are still in the euphoria of the “new economy” which, according to the propagandists of capitalism, had eliminated crises, but the upheavals that took place in our ranking of steel producers reflect the mutations that have occurred in the balance of power between imperialisms, starting with the demise of the USSR.

The world’s largest producer of steel in 2000 is actually China with 127 million tons, followed by Japan at 106 million and the United States at 101 million. Russia is far below (59), Germany (46), Korea (43.7), Ukraine (31), Brazil (27), India (26.9), Italy (26.7). In 1996 China overtook Japan, which had been the world’s largest producer of steel for a few years, its production stagnant for a decade.

Signaling renewed industrial vitality in contrast, the United States have seen their production increase almost 13% during this decade although it remains well below that of 1974; in Europe, German production increased by over 7%, that of Italy 6%, that of France, which with 20 million tons is no longer part of the top

10 global producers, has still increased by 5%, while production in Britain fell by 15%. The largest increase in production in Europe is that of Spain with a 16% increase, allowing it to exceed the British production again (15.8 million against 15.1).

But these changes are small when compared with the increases of new countries: over the same period Brazilian production rose 25%, that of India 79%, that of Korea by 90% and of course China breaks all records with an increase of 92%. Also noteworthy in the same trend is the increase in Turkish production (54% with 14 million tons) and especially of Mexican production: up 80% with 15.6 million tons of steel. Industrialization is now spreading at a rapid pace in countries long relegated to the periphery of the capitalist world.

Let us now turn to the current situation, or rather to that which immediately preceded the current crisis. When we take into account the the 2007 figures, world production of steel has begun to decline, albeit in an uneven and geographically differentiated manner, from May to June 2008 until April 2009: a decline of almost 25% – unprecedented since the last World War – which began in the major capitalist countries, the epicenter of the economic crisis, when it fell to 50%, before spreading over the planet.

During the Great Depression, the decline in world steel production had been uninterrupted for 3 years until 1932 when it was 58% below the record of 1929; at that time only a handful of countries produced steel. This caused numerous economists to say: “The difference with 1929 is that today we have China!”. It is true that in the current crisis the fall in production of the major countries was briefer but more brutal than then, Chinese production fell by only 4% and started to rise again in 2009, while the Western countries and Japan were still in full stagnation.

Returning to 2007, Chinese domination in steel production is overwhelming, with 489 million tonnes, a quantum leap of 380% in 7 years! This amount is comparable to that of total world production in 1967. Japan comes next with 120 million (13% increase) while the United States fell back to 98.5 million (-2.5%). Following we see Russia sharply increased to 72.4 (22%), India booming at 53 (97% increase!), Korea at 51.5 (+18%), Germany 48.6 (+2.3%), Ukraine 42.8 (+38%), Brazil 33.8 (+25%) and Italy at 31.5 (18%). We must also note, in eleventh place, the surging Turkey with 25.8 million tonnes (+84%), Mexico, into the American orbit, saw its growth slow down (+13%).

Regarding other European countries, Spain continues its rise (19 million tonnes, 20% increase), while France is declining

(19.2 million, -4%) as well as Great Britain (14.3 million, -5%).

Producing 35% of the cast steel on the planet (as much in one month as Germany produces in a year) and relegating the other producers to these congruent portions: 9% for Japan, 7% for the United States, 5% for Russia, 4% for India, while China is not the world’s workshop, it has well and truly become the world’s **steelmaker** [9]!

THE DOMINANCE OF FOREIGN CAPITAL

The structure of Chinese exports has changed over the years, as the strength of its industry developed. While not so long ago it was exporting mainly textile products and clothing at low prices, it is now computers or machines that are becoming its flagship products for export. This is a typical feature of capitalism which develops first in so-called “light industry” and the production of consumer goods; and then, as and when it develops the industry and production of capital goods becomes increasingly important.

The textile industry was the largest industry in China when Mao’s armies took over (as it was in England in the first half of the nineteenth century), but in the Maoist period, textile exports from China on the world market suffered drastic reductions as did all other exports.

The economic reforms of the late seventies gave a boost to economic exchanges with the rest of the world from China and its share increased from a mere 1% in 1980 to over 8% in 2008. Exports went from \$14 billion in 1979 to \$1,218 billion in 2007. The textile and clothing industry was the first beneficiary of this shift, in recent years Chinese textile exports were stronger than those of other developing countries, where this industry, leaving the old capitalist countries, was largely concentrated to reach their peak in 1985. The garment industry, which requires added industrial activity continued to grow proportionately and in 1994 China became the world’s largest exporter of clothing. That year the textile, garment, leather and toy sectors etc. represented more than 34% of Chinese exports, while that of electrical and mechanical equipment accounted for less than 13%. Today China is still the world’s largest exporter of textiles and clothing (producing 23% of world textile exports and 33% of garment exports in 2007), but now mechanical and electrical equipment constitute almost 60% its exports.

China is now the largest producer of appliances, electronics, building materials, the second largest producer in chemicals, etc.

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If we consider a product as emblematic of modern capitalism it would be motor vehicles, officially considered a “key area” by the authorities in Beijing [10], we find that in 2007 China was the third largest producer, of all categories combined (ie, commercial vehicles and cars), the United States was the largest producer with 10.8 million vehicles (of which 4 million cars), followed by Japan with 11.6 million (10 million cars), China with 8.9 million (6.3 cars), Germany with 6.2 million (5.7), Korea with 4 million (3.7), France with 3 million (2.5), Brazil with 2.9 million (2.3), Spain with 2.8 (2.2), Canada with 2.6 (1.3), India with 2.2 (1.7). Ten years ago, China was only in tenth place with just 1.6 million vehicles! However, the leading Chinese auto company, FAW, in 2007 was the twentieth largest producer in the world with 600,000 vehicles produced: it is the American company General Motors, which produced and sold the most vehicles in China, foreign manufacturers as a whole hold 70% of the market share...

This example illustrates a typical little known but very important characteristic of the current Chinese economy: **the dominance of foreign capital** over the most dynamic and productive industries. According to an expert from the Chinese government commenting, with satisfaction tinged with bitterness, on the news that China was the world’s largest exporter, “*about 83% of high technology products and 75% of electronics exports were manufactured in foreign-invested enterprises*” [11].

Official Chinese statistics demonstrate that domination [12]; in 1986 companies with foreign capital were responsible for 5.6% of imports and 1.8% of exports and by 2007 the percentages were 57.8 % of imports and 57.1% of exports: **more than half** of China’s foreign trade is actually the product of subsidiaries of foreign firms! But it’s not just trade which we address here and in 1990 foreign-funded enterprises accounted for 2% of the total industrial production in China. In 2007 this production reached 31%. Without doubt this percentage has been decreasing since 2003 when it reached almost 36%, but when we consider also that some of the purely Chinese owned companies are subcontractors of foreign companies, there is no doubt that industrialization and especially the progress of China’s foreign trade depends to a significant amount on international capital. Foreign companies still provide 40% of Chinese GDP [13].

In recent decades, the Chinese authorities have deliberately decided to appeal to foreign investments, first in “special zones” and then throughout the country to accelerate economic growth, because the weakness of indigenous capital left no choice. The

old Maoist slogan “count only on your own forces” is dead and buried: foreign capital has been the driving force of Chinese economic development over the last twenty years...

In this regard, another significant feature of foreign trade is to raise the importance of “export processing”, that is the export of goods produced (or assembled) from imported parts or components.

More than half of total exports comprise this category, the percentage amounts to 85% for enterprises with foreign investment, this rate is much higher for exports of electronics and capital goods, than for textiles, steel and chemicals where foreign companies have little representation. Chinese capitalism is thus only partially in control, and not at all in terms of sectors characterized as “high technology” production chains of goods exported by his country. Typically, companies with foreign capital that import components and parts from neighboring Asian countries, to produce low-cost goods – by Chinese workers who are exploited in a bestial fashion – which are then exported to the developed capitalist countries, including those where the capital comes from.

The media noted that the news that the Chinese economy would surpass that of Japan, had not caused a commotion there. It’s not just because the Japanese capitalists are enticed by the China market, but also and perhaps especially because the relocation of part of their production in this country has represented for many a real lifeline of oxygen, and lower production costs, starting with those in the workforce, have enabled them to find a loophole to the decline in their rate of profit: “the opportunity to assemble their products at low prices in China gave new life to many Japanese companies”, wrote a financial daily [14].

Since the early 90’s the flow of direct foreign investment in China, encouraged by government incentives, has experienced very strong growth, so that the country has become the second largest destination for foreign investment in the world after the United States. Nearly 70% of these investments have taken place in industry and just under 25% in real estate (which for some years has been the second engine of China’s economic growth). The most important investors are, according to official statistics, Hong Kong, tax havens, Japan, the United States, Taiwan and South Korea. Hong Kong and the tax havens (Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, etc.) are intermediary relays used by capitalists in other countries, or even by Chinese capitalists.

The growing importance of foreign capital in Chinese industry is probably only temporary; foreign capitalists

regularly complain after investing in China, that in a few years they find themselves faced with Chinese competition for goods that they produce. They are in the situation of British capitalists of the eighteenth century who financed and equipped their competitors, or American capitalists in the post Second World War who have financed the rehabilitation of European and Japanese imperialism.

But in the meantime, the current importance of foreign capital in the economy is bound to have profound consequences, including on the country’s politics.

WHITHERCHINA?

China is presented in the media as the new power objectively destined to wrest global economic dominance from the U.S. Does it have a greater chance of success than previous candidates, Japan and Russia?

Compared to the latter it has the advantage of its huge mass of population, which represents a great reservoir of manpower and potentially a huge market. But despite its impressive economic performance that we have briefly illustrated, it is still far from having overcome a deep economic backwardness. If GDP per capita can be regarded as an index, probably crude but nevertheless significant, of development of a capitalist country then China is around the hundredth globally [15]. The most important part of the workforce is still employed in agriculture (over 40%), and often almost outside of monetary circuits and from the market.

This means that there is still an enormous road for it to travel before it is actually one of the major economies, one of the major **imperialisms**, which dominate the planet. And on this road it will inevitably collide with them; already its insatiable appetite for raw materials and energy are in conflict with the already established imperialisms, from Iran (which is now its number one supplier of petroleum) to Africa and Latin America. To “secure” supply routes and more generally to defend its interests, it undertook an extensive program of modernization of its armaments and its huge but poorly equipped army; Chinese military spending has reached second in the world (but is very far from that of the United States) [16], provoking the alarm of its neighbors, Japan and India.

But long before reaching a military confrontation, clashes of interests between the big and not-so-big powers take the form of economic pressure of all types. In the mid-eighties, to stop Japan’s economic ascendancy, which see-

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med inexorable, the United States imposed an increase in the value of its currency against the dollar on it, that is to say a decline in the competitiveness of its goods (the “Plaza Hotel” accords). Japan, whose territory is dotted with American military bases and whose “security” is provided by the U.S. military – making it politically subservient to the U.S., was forced to obey.

And today, as yesterday, U.S. officials wish to obligate the potential new rival, China, to overvalue its currency. But they do not have the political and military leverage that they used on Japan: China is militarily independent of the United States. Moreover, unlike Japan, we saw that exporting firms are in fact partly subsidiaries or subcontractors of U.S. firms: if the Chinese yuan rises, mobile phones from Apple will become more expensive and will be more difficult to sell. Thus all the American capitalists are not equally partisans of pressuring the Chinese government to allow its currency to appreciate. Finally, the fiscal and economic position of the United States is weaker than it was thirty years ago and so also is their economic leverage: the U.S. needs China to continue to buy their bonds and to finance their deficits. Therefore it will not be so easy for the United States to repeat with China what they accomplished with Japan.

Nevertheless, the contradictions, clashes of interests and crises between the two countries are bound to increase. It is difficult to say more, but what is certain is that the United States, the No. 1 enemy of the world revolution as we have called it in party texts, will never abdicate its place as ruler of the world – in the same way that the American capitalists will never abdicate their position as the ruling class: in both cases, it is only by violence that they will be dethroned ...

ABOVE ALL THE BOURGEOISIE CREATES ITS OWN GRAVEDIGGERS

Foreign capital in China is obviously attracted by the low wages that allow the production of goods that are very competitive in the global market while reaping huge profits. According to Eurostat figures, for the last dozen years, the gross monthly salary of a worker in China was 100 euros (against 1,500 in France). After this summer’s strikes the Chinese government announced it was raising the minimum wage to 117 euros (137 in Shanghai), the management of Honda-China gave a 24% increase in

wages, which would bring them to 237 euros (strikers have returned to work after clashes with the official union). At Foxconn where wages vacillate somewhere around the minimum wage (100 euros per month for 6 days per week), the management had promised in the international press to raise 245 euros, but in reality this increase will be given to workers who have been successful for a period of three months in increasing their productivity sufficiently: no doubt there will not be many... The rise in real wages is much smaller, going only from 100 to 130 euros. But before these increases, the group announced it would move 20% of its employees to Shenzhen, in the north of the country where the minimum wage is 101 euros. These wage increases have led some multinational companies to consider moving to other countries (for example, the U.S. firm Nike has recently demonstrated a tendency to disengage from China to go to Vietnam) or as Foxconn to relocate within the country where wages are much lower than in coastal regions.

But despite these gains, which are moreover only a little above inflation, wages remain very low and they are still appealing to the greed of capitalists seeking to exploit the proletariat. So do not expect them to leave China, on the contrary. They will continue to invest and settle in a country officially “socialist” and led by a party which claims to be “communist” but it is really a paradise of capitalist exploitation.

Let’s examine the case of Foxconn. This Taiwanese corporation is the world’s largest producer of components for electronics, cell phones, etc. It employs 900,000 workers in China, 300 to 400,000 in Shenzhen, a city in southern China. Located not far from Hong Kong, this former small fishing town was chosen for this reason in 1979 to host the first “Special Economic Zone”, where foreign capitalists could invest freely. The success of this area is such that the city proper now has more than one and a half million inhabitants, with the metropolitan area at more than 7 million inhabitants (the largest increase in population throughout China).

Recruited among the young “migrant workers” from the Chinese countryside, concentrated in huge settlements, workers at Foxconn are subject to a bestial exploitation: usually up to 10 hours a day and often much more, six days a week (when there is no mandatory overtime on Sunday) and with a barracks discipline. Most are exhausted in a few months of this regime, and replaced by others. China is indeed an almost inexhaustible reservoir of manpower at low prices coming from the rural areas where hundreds of millions of people still live in subsistence conditions. In a downturn,

migrant workers are dismissed and sent home without further ado: Officially, this was the case for 24 million at the height of the crisis.

The accelerated development of capitalism in recent decades in China has created a large working class, many tens of millions of people. According to official statistics, during the reforms of 1978 there were 53 million people employed in industry while by 2003 (latest official figures), there were 89.5 million. According to an American study [17], this figure rose to 111 million in 2006 (with 325 million employed in agriculture at this time), by comparison, in the same year, the number of people employed in industry in the U.S. States was 14 million. Of course, all persons employed in industry are not workers, there are managers, security guards, etc.. But proletarians comprise the vast majority of employees. On the other hand the working class in the Marxist sense of the term, is not limited to factory workers, even if they have a determinant position and role and there is also the proletariat in the categories listed under “services”, in commerce, transport, etc. but also in the “peasant” category: farm workers. All this leads to the conclusion that the Chinese working class is the largest in the world.

Grouping these proletarians in gigantic industrial concentrations, subjecting them to conditions of bestial exploitation, capitalism also creates the conditions for their struggle of immediate resistance. The strikes this summer reported in the international press (and which may be just the tip of the iceberg) are just one prime example. The accelerated development of productive forces in China in recent decades, including the development of the most important of them: the working class, also leads the development of all types of contradictions, beginning with social contradictions, the ever-increasing gap between proletarians and capitalists. China has had no opportunity, as they had in the “workshops of the world” to anesthetize their proletariat as with the British and American proletariat by granting them higher and better living conditions than those of workers in other countries, since it is furious exploitation that is the basis for its growth.

The resources of the Chinese state are fully utilized to accelerate industrialization and to maintain growth at a high rate, including for social reasons: the Chinese authorities themselves have said that less than 6% growth would threaten social peace. But this rapid growth inevitably leads to overproduction – not overproduction in terms of the needs of the population – which are enormous, but when compared to the market, the gigantic plan to support the economy in

the current crisis only made things worse on this level. A report by the European Chamber of Commerce in China in 2009 gave some figures of this overproduction in some sectors of industry [18]. To take the most glaring example, the steel industry, the report indicated that at the end of 2008 production capacity was 660 million tons for a market of 470 million, and during the year 2009, new mills were starting up corresponding to a future additional production of 58 million tons ... This overproduction, which also seriously affects the real estate industry, cannot be contained forever by state intervention. Although it may be deferred for some time, the inevitable crisis will hit China with a force much greater than in 2008. And as everywhere, it is the workers who will pay the price, with in addition a mass of petit-bourgeois enriched in various speculations (over twenty million people gamble with their savings on the stock market), which will be brutally proletarianized.

Before it manages to become the world's largest economy, China will inevitably become one of the most important and most violent arenas for class struggle in the world. It is no coincidence that China is the country where the death penalty is the most common [19]: the capitalist cannot do without the repression and terror that it causes, even when the proletarian struggle is missing, the more internal tensions are elevated, the stronger the repression. There is no doubt that the Chinese working class will be tomorrow the worthy heir of the proletarian fighters of 1926-27 whom it will be up to them to avenge.

It will be able to provided it manages to find its class weapons, Marxism and the authentic communist program, and it understands the need to form a class party. This will be neither automatic nor rapid: it is indeed a problem that arises not only for the Chinese proletarians but for the proletarians of the world, and which can only be solved internationally.

(To be continued)

[1] If we use the GDP at "Purchasing Power Parity" (PPP: figures adjusted to account for price differences between countries), China overtook Japan in 2001. These figures are estimates and should not be taken literally. Thus in 2007 the World Bank, which gives these figures, has found a "miscalculation" in its estimate of China's GDP at PPP, and has provided a new estimate, lowering estimated GDP by... 40%. This new estimate reflected the desire of the Chinese to benefit from the status of being a developing country.

[2] The Beijing government has refu-

ted this assertion, which puts it in a delicate position in climate negotiations.

[3] see International Herald Tribune, 20-21/02/2010.

[4] cf Marx, "British Trade", New York Daily Tribune, 03/02/1858. Programme Communiste No. 64.

[5] These historical estimates vary according to source, especially in that Russia is sometimes placed after France.

[6] See in this regard the report of a general meeting of the party: "China, the capitalist superpower", *Le Prolétaire* n°295 (september 1979)

[7] This "value added" is equal to the value of goods produced, less the value of "inputs", plus commercial margin. This is then grafted, or not, onto the PPP calculations.

[8] Starting with the article "Sua Maesta l'acciao" in the series "Fil du Temps" in 1950, and the various studies under "cours de l'impérialisme" some of which appear in english.

[9] These are the figures of the World Steel Association, available online at www.worldsteel.org.

[10] From July 2008 the government decided to increase customs duties on imported parts to encourage foreign manufacturers to expand their local production.

[11] According to *People's Daily*, 11/1/2010. see:

[http // french.peopledaily.com.cn/Economie/6864541.html](http://french.peopledaily.com.cn/Economie/6864541.html)

[12] Official statistics on the subject are available online: www.fdi.gov.cn

[13] The latter figure is advanced by the North Carolina Department of Commerce, International Trade Division (2009).

[14] see *Financial Times*, 23/08/2010;

[15] According to IMF estimates, it was somewhere between that of Cape Verde and Congo. See *Financial Times*, 26-27/09/2009

[16] SIPRI gave a 2007 figure of China's military spending of \$100 billion, against \$661 billion for the United States. see *Financial Times*, 11/06/2010.

[17] see "Manufacturing in China", *Monthly Labor Review*, April 2009. Official Chinese statistics add up urban industrial employment, employment in the "rural industrial enterprises" and industrial employment in informal enterprises.

[18] see *Financial Times*, 30/11/2009.

[19] *Amnesty International* estimates the number of people executed in China at "several thousand", which is more than all the other countries in the world combined! The Chinese authorities did not give figures. www.amnesty.org/fr/death-penalty/death-sentences-and-executions-in-2009 cf. On the other hand we find the United States who have, by far, the record number of people imprisoned.

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PROGRAM OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTY

The International Communist Party is constituted on the basis of the following principles established at Leghorn in 1921 on the foundation of the Communist Party of Italy (Section of the Communist International):

1. In the present capitalist social regime there develops an increasing contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, giving rise to the antithesis of interests and to the class struggle between the proletariat and the ruling bourgeoisie.

2. The present day production relations are protected by the power of the bourgeois State, that, whatever the form of representative system and the use of elective democracy, constitutes the organ for the defense of the interests of the capitalist class.

3. The proletariat can neither crush or modify the mechanism of capitalist production relations from which its exploitation derives, without the violent destruction of the bourgeois power.

4. The indispensable organ of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat is the class party. The Communist Party consists of the most advanced and resolute part of the proletariat; it unites the efforts of the working masses transforming their struggles for group interests and contingent issues into the general struggle for the revolutionary emancipation of the proletariat. It is up to the Party to propagate revolutionary theory among the masses, to organize the material means of action, to lead the working class during its struggle, securing the historical continuity and the international unity of the movement.

5. After it has smashed the power of the capitalist State, the proletariat must completely destroy the old State apparatus in order to organize itself as the ruling class and set up its own dictatorship; meanwhile depriving the bourgeoisie and members of the bourgeois class of all political rights and functions as long as they survive socially, founding the organs of the new regime exclusively on the productive class. Such is the program that the Communist Party sets itself and which characterizes it. It is this party therefore which exclusively represents, organizes and directs the proletarian dictatorship. The requisite defence of the proletarian state against all counter-revolutionary initiatives can only be assured by depriving the bourgeoisie and parties which are enemies of the proletarian dictatorship of all means of agitation and political propaganda and by equipping the proletariat with an armed organization in order to repel all interior and exterior attacks.

6. Only the force of the proletarian State will be able to systematically put into effect the necessary measures for intervening in the relations of the social economy, by means of which the collective administration of production and distribution will take the place of the capitalist system.

7. This transformation of the economy and consequently of the whole social life will lead to the gradual elimination of the necessity for the political State, which will progressively give way to the rational administration of human activities.

* * *

Faced with the situation in the capitalist world and the workers' movement following the Second World War the position of the Party is the following :

8. In the course of the first half of the twentieth century the capitalist social system has been developing, in the economic field, creating monopolistic trusts among the employers, and trying to control and manage production and exchange according to central plans with State management of whole sectors of production. In the political field, there has been an increase of the police and military potential of the

State, with governments adopting a more totalitarian form. All these are neither new sorts of social organizations in transition from capitalism to socialism, nor revivals of pre-bourgeois political regimes. On the contrary, they are definite forms of a more and more direct and exclusive management of power and the State by the most developed forces of capital.

This course excludes the progressive, pacifist interpretations of the evolution of the bourgeois regime, and confirms the Marxist prevision of the concentration and the antagonistic array of class forces. So that the proletariat may confront its enemies' growing potential with strengthened revolutionary energy, it must reject the illusory revival of democratic liberalism and constitutional guarantees. The Party must not even accept this as a means of agitation ; it must finish historically once and for all with the practice of alliances, even for transitory issues, with the bourgeois or petit-bourgeois parties, or with pseudo-workers' parties with a reformist program.

9. The global imperialist wars show that the crisis of disintegration of capitalism is inevitable because it has entered the phase when its expansion, instead of signifying a continual increment of the productive forces, is conditioned by repeated and ever-growing destruction. These wars have caused repeated deep crises in the global workers' organizations because the dominant classes could impose on them military and national solidarity with one or the other of the belligerents. The opposing historical solution for which we fight, is the awakening of the class struggle, leading to civil war, the destruction of all international coalitions by the reconstitution of the International Communist Party as an autonomous force independent of any existing political or military power.

10. The proletarian State, to the extent that its apparatus is an instrument and a weapon of struggle in a historical epoch of transition does not derive its organizational strength from constitutional rules nor from representative schemas whatsoever. The most complete historical example of such a State up to the present is that of the Soviets (workers' councils) which were created during the October 1917 revolution, when the working class armed itself under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party. The Constituent Assembly having been dissolved, they became the exclusive organs of power repelling the attacks by foreign bourgeois governments and, inside the country, stamping out the rebellion of the vanquished classes and of the middle and petit-bourgeois layers and of the opportunist parties which, in the decisive phases, are inevitably allied with the counter-revolution

11. The defense of the proletarian regime against the dangers of degeneration inherent in the failures and possible retreats in the work of economic and social transformation – whose integral realization is inconceivable within the limits of only one country – can only be assured by the constant coordination between the policy the workers' State and the united international struggle, incessant in times of peace as in times of war, of the proletariat of each country against its bourgeoisie and its State and military apparatus. This co-ordination can only be secured by means of the political and programmatic control of the world communist party over the State apparatus where the working class has seized power.