

# 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 indifferentism, 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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## Fever on the Stock and Financial Markets: Sign of Relapse of the World Economy

A real tumult has shaken the stock and money markets from the middle of August. Falling stock market indices of 5% or more per session were spoken of as “stock market panic” in the media and forced the political leaders of major European states to interrupt their summer vacations and to multiply their soothing declarations in an attempt to «reassure the markets».

Not a chance! Traders and other speculators thought they were reliving the darkest hours of the tempest that followed the 2008 bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers. Nouriel Roubini, the famous money expert nicknamed “Dr. Doom” a reputation gained by his 2006 forecast of the imminent occurrence of a severe economic crisis in the United States, gloomily declared to reporters of the *Wall Street Journal*, the organ of the financial community: “Marx said it right. At some point capitalism can destroy itself...” (1).

The current imbroglio began as a result of new concerns about the ability of Greece to repay its debts, a default of

the Greek state would have very serious consequences on the banks of this country, on European banks in which they are often subsidiaries and, in turn, on the euro. The ink on the signature of the agreement for yet another “plan of aid to Greece” (in fact: **aid to the banks**) decided at an emergency summit, was barely dry as the tumult broke out again because of concerns about Italy.

Then it was the deterioration of the debt rating of the United States by a rating agency that caused shockwaves worldwide, the largest economy in the world and central motor of world capitalism is also the biggest global borrower and the U.S. public debt (bonds, treas-

ury bills, etc. ....) plays a key role in the equilibrium and flow of global finances.

But if those who hold the debt of the banks, States or individuals (2), are at risk of seeing it devalued, they will logically tend to turn away from U.S. debt to seek safer investments (moreover many financial institutions have a statutory obligation to have in their portfolios only “products” with the maximum score, AAA), making the financing of American debt more difficult and therefore more expensive: to attract buyers, interest rates will have to be raised. But an increase in U.S. interest rates is an impediment to economic growth, already very weak. This shows that the deterioration in the rating of the United States has potentially important consequences for the entire international economy.

The markets had barely digested this

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### Summary

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**The Arab Spring is over.  
The illusions in change have dissolved, and  
the proletariat and the proletarianized masses  
of the Arab countries are confronted with the  
reality of capitalist power – the iron heel of  
the capitalist states and imperialism. The only  
way out is through proletarian class struggle!**

*The sweeping arc of the crisis in the Arab countries has reached Syria, where the massacres are ongoing!*

*The revolt of the masses against the Assad regime, still entrapped in the illusions of a peaceful democracy, continues to run up against the ruthless repression with which the regime, defending its power and its privileges, has also continued to defend the interests of world imperialism.*

This is not the first time a mass revolt has broken out in Syria, the city of Hama is the symbol, together with that of the ferocity of the Assad regime: in 1982, a revolt there was crushed by fierce repression that resulted in tens of thousands of victims; it was during the period of the

Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the Palestinian resistance in Beirut that ended in the defeat and massacre of Palestinians in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila. Today, attacked by the tanks of the Syr-

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# Fever on the Stock and Financial Markets: Sign of Relapse of the World Economy

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sad event, when concerns about France and its banks triggered a new wave of market panic ...

## NEARING A RELAPSE IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

The media and bourgeois economists have exponentially increased their fantastical “explanations” of the stock market and financial crisis: the actions of shadowy speculators, attacks by Anglo Saxon financiers hostile to the euro, spreading of malevolent rumors, use of computer programs to buy and sell stocks, etc. In fact beyond all contingent aspects, it is the slowdown in the global economy for the past several months which is the real cause of the exacerbation of all financial and debt problems that depress the stock markets.

At the time of the economic crisis of 2007-2009, the capitalist governments in all countries had taken recourse in a massive indebtedness: it was a question of saving the banks threatened by bankruptcy, of preserving the banking system essential to the operation of capitalism, and of restarting the economic machine. These measures, more or less important depending on the country, managed to avoid an economic collapse and led to a generally sluggish but undeniable revival in production. This influx of cash, however, had the perverse effect of fueling speculative bubbles, whether in the stock market or in various raw materials; which was the quickest way for banks or large companies, including industrials (3), to rebuild their profits, due to the sluggishness of a market that could not easily absorb additional goods: those that the media criticize as “**speculators**” without naming them, are indeed most often the same very large companies, banks and various financial institutions that are glorified as defenders of the nation!

However, after having made it possible to avoid the economic crisis, at least temporarily, the indebtedness of these States became an increasingly urgent problem to solve, because it imposes an important weight on the budget of the State, more especially as its financing becomes increasingly expensive because of the mistrust of the “markets” (in other words investors: banks, various financial institutions, etc.).

The ratio of debt to GDP, which is

currently published by the media, does not mean much, what matters is the *debt service*, that is what needs to be repaid each year. Taking France for example, government debt in 2010 was equivalent to 82.3% of GDP (against 83% in Germany, 91.6% in the United States, 220% in Japan) (4), but the burden of debt (payment of interest on loans) represented about 11% of the revenue (after Education and ahead of Defence), while total service (interest plus repayment of principal) was approximately 40% of revenue (5): in fact, the government borrows to pay what it owes!

Jacques Attali, formerly advisor to Mitterrand who aspires to be the advisor to Sarkozy, stated sententiously in an interview with *Le Monde*: “*the only thing that could solve the debt problem (...), is war or inflation or growth. The first two solutions are not desirable. What's needed is (...) therefore growth*”(6). The problem is precisely that growth is not on the road ahead and it is rather a **deepening new plunge in the recession** which is taking shape throughout the world.

In the United States, where statisticians have recently concluded that the drop in production at the height of the crisis was far greater than had been believed and therefore the recovery was less vigorous (which led many economists to say that there had been too little stimulus), the GDP figures for the first and second quarters of 2011 already showed a sharp slowdown in economic activity. But other recent indicators of industrial activity seem to suggest a decline even lower than this (7), while the number of job seekers remains high (the official unemployment rate is around 9%, but the actual unemployment rate is more like 16-17%) (8) signaling the stagnation of the economy: in all likelihood the U.S. is about to go into recession if they are not there already.

In France, the INSEE (*Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques*) announced second quarter economic growth was ... 0%, while the numbers for industrial production showed a decline in March, April and especially in June, not offset by increases in May and July: growth forecasts set by the government (more than 2% for 2011) will clearly be impossible to maintain, which reinforces the mistrust of the international financial community concerning the ability of the French State to meet its commitments.

But it was Germany, the champion

of exports, growth and the economic engine of Europe, which caused the most surprise by announcing an increase in its GDP worthy of France (0.1%) and worse still, a decline in its industrial production in June (-0.6%) and a deficit of foreign trade because of declining exports!

The OECD indicators, which are expected to provide a forecast of economic developpement in the coming months, “*continue to signal a slowdown for the month of June 2011 in most OECD countries and major non-member economies*”.

The slowdown is even more pronounced for countries like China, Brazil or India, often presented as the new engines of the global economy, than for the United States or European countries (9): in reality, these “emerging” countries still depend on the markets of the large capitalist countries: USA, Japan, Europe.

## BOURGEOIS SOLUTIONS AND REFORMIST LIES

Confronted with these serious financial and stock market crises, the economic and political leaders in Europe and the world have embarked on austerity plans and measures of fiscal rigour to “balance the accounts”. Greece has served as a testing ground, before the recipe is implemented in Portugal, Ireland and other countries such as Romania. Austerity measures, with intensities lower for now, have been subsequently adopted by Spain, Great Britain, Italy.

However these measures, which mainly affect the proletarians but which also affect the petit-bourgeois, inevitably entrain an economic slowdown or even a brutal decline in the countries that take them (industrial production in Greece has plunged 13% in June compared to the previous year, and GDP could decline by 4.5% this year, according to the government itself); the economic recession reduces tax revenue thus making it difficult to repay debt and to restore account balances, leading to new austerity. It also accentuates the differences in Europe between the economically strongest nations (Germany and its “satellites” such as Austria or the Netherlands) and those weaker (the southern countries), resulting in more and more acute tensions in the euro area.

That's why some unorthodox econ-

omists whose theories are taken up by the petit-bourgeois “left” or “far left” reformist currents, recommend other solutions: not austerity, but a recovery based on major projects through new borrowing, taxes on capital income in order to increase wages which would boost consumption, the fight against speculation and control of banking activities, etc..

For example, consider the proposals in the journal of the NPA (*Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste*) (10), our Trotskyists (or is it post-Trotskyists?) who want to avoid “*the trap*” of “*being limited to general denunciations of capitalism and calling for its overthrow as the only solution, and dissociating itself from and even denouncing contesting ideas that circulate in society as reformist or opportunistic*”, and who recommend “*declaring a moratorium on existing debt*” that should be subject “*to a public audit*” to determine the part that should be repaid and that which should not; to “*reform the statutes of the European Bank to end its independence and allow financing of the deficit*,” to achieve “*broad tax reform*” to tax the highest incomes, of “*financial restraint*”, to “*put all financial institutions under the strict control of society*”, etc..

The reader will find without any doubt that it would be necessary to be quite sectarian to see in these proposals for reform only the most abject **reformism** and **opportunism!**...

In an attempt to justify its lamentable proposals, which it grudgingly acknowledges “do not exhaust all the demands on the agenda” (!), the article concludes by writing that they however “*synthesize what seems the most urgent to deal with a crisis that is not only economic and produces risks of social decomposition conducive to the resurgence of the extreme right in Europe*”. It took only the missing specter of fascism to make this infamous reformist brew pass!

The NPA does not even pretend to stand above all for the interests of workers and to address itself primarily to the working class: it is “**society**” that must control financial institutions. This language isn’t accidental and is used to address the petit-bourgeois, to the small and medium- patronate who have difficulty finding financing from banks or at least to the intellectuals who are their spokesmen and it makes it possible to avoid the slightest criticism of the political institutions of the bourgeois state, implicitly advocating instead the use of these institutions: they are indeed the only ones that theoretically can “control” the banks (by voting for laws or regulations), from this point any revolu-

tionary perspective is discarded.

This is the language of **supporters or lackeys of capitalism** who fear the disintegration of bourgeois society, who, like the very bourgeois Roubini whom we quoted at the beginning, fear only the risk that the crisis poses to capitalism itself!

The workers must understand, and what they will quickly understand if they are in doubt, that what lies ahead are more austerity policies (and still *mezzo voce*, they are announced – both by politicians of the party in power and the Socialist Party which aspires to replace them), new attacks by the capitalists and their state to extract the additional quantities of profit needed by capitalism in this difficult time.

It is futile to lament when faced with these inevitable attacks and to regret the lost heyday of capitalist prosperity: in this mode of production, prosperity naturally generates crisis, it is absurd to give credence to the alternative solutions of the reformists, who not only have always failed but more especially disarmed the proletariat against capitalism: these are just the smoke and mirrors, the **lies** intended to block the path of open confrontation between the classes, including frightening the workers with the threat of the extreme right. There are no reforms imaginable to avoid or soften the capitalist attacks, there is no defending the “**social cohesion**”, another name for class collaboration.

The coming period will inevitably be one of social confrontations, of the open struggle between classes, not only in the poor countries located on the south side of the Mediterranean, but in the ultra-developed capitalist countries from which the bourgeoisie dominates the world.

This is what the proletariat vanguard must prepare themselves and their comrades for, by rediscovering the means and methods of the class struggle, in working to rebuild the appropriate organs for this struggle and especially the party which must lead it to finally triumph.

(from “le prolétaire” Nr. 500; May-September 2011)

(1) see: <http://europe.wsj.com/video/nouriel-roubini-karl-marx-was-right/68EE8F89-EC24-42F8-9B9D-47B510E473B0.Html>

(2) A third of the U.S. “sovereign” debt is in the form of bonds and various obligations, in the hands of foreign creditors. In 2010 China held 21%, Japan 20%,

Britain 11%, Brazil 4%, Russia 3% (Germany had only 1%, Italy 0.5% France, 0.4%, etc.). see: *International Herald Tribune*, 20/7/11 and the blog: *criseusa*.blog.lemonde.fr;

(3) For example, the American *General Electric*, which is the largest private industrial enterprise in the world, takes a third of its profits from its financial activities.

(4) see: [www.aft.gouv.fr/aft\\_fr\\_23/indicateurs\\_economiques\\_20/comparaisons\\_internationales\\_143/dette\\_administrations\\_publiques\\_152/index.html](http://www.aft.gouv.fr/aft_fr_23/indicateurs_economiques_20/comparaisons_internationales_143/dette_administrations_publiques_152/index.html)

(5) see: [http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dette\\_publique\\_de\\_la\\_France](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dette_publique_de_la_France)

(6) see: *Le Monde*, 08.11.11. To “*restore the conditions for growth*”, he proposes ... “*a huge loan*” Debt to solve the debt problem, it took a thinker of the caliber of Attali to dream this up!

(7) see: <http://www.philadelphieafed.org/research-and-data/regional-economy/business-outlook-survey/2011/bos0811.cfm>

(8) Calculated from official figures themselves, see: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/laus.nr0.htm>. Other estimates give a figure even higher, such as the Conservative website: <http://www.shadowstats.com>

(9) see: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/15/44/48494466.pdf>

(10) see: “Tout est à Nous” 8/14/11

## «Programme communiste»

### Theoretical review of the ICP

#### Summary of Nr. 101

(August 2011)

- Les classes dominantes s’alarment aujourd’hui des révoltes dans les pays arabes. Elles trembleront demain devant la révolution communiste pour laquelle les prolétaires auront su reconstituer leur parti de classe.
  - Propriété et capital. Encadrement dans la doctrine marxiste des phénomènes du monde social contemporain (Fin)
  - Histoire de la Gauche communiste. L’«action de mars» en Allemagne et la «théorie de l’offensive»
  - Thèses sur les conditions sous lesquelles il est possible de constituer des Soviets Ouvriers. IIe Congrès de l’Internationale Communiste (août 1920)
  - Notes de lecture:
  - Oliver Le Cour Grandmaison. Coloniser Exterminer. Sur la guerre et l’Etat colonial
  - Robert Camoin. La doctrine économique de Sismondi et le marxisme
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4 € / 8 FS / 3 £ / USA + Cdn US \$ 4 / Latin America US \$ 2

## **Manifestations by the outraged from Spain to Israel from Greece to India, Britain to the United States, Chile, Italy, Portugal, Canada, New Zealand, etc: students and the middle classes take to the streets in launching a cry of revolt the against banks and governments: "They are stealing our future!" But what future?**

**The only future for which it worthwhile to fight is not that of social advancement and reform of the economic and social system that condemns the vast majority of the world's population to increasing poverty, but that of the communist revolution through the struggle of the proletariat, which alone has the strength and the political program needed to destroy capitalism!**

The initial appearance of a veritable movement of *the outraged* was during the May 15 movement in Spain, when students and sections of the petit-bourgeoisie mobilized against unemployment and austerity measures: taking the example of the occupation of Tahir Square in Cairo during the revolts in Arab countries, they occupied the main square of Madrid, the Puerta del Sol; the movement then extended itself to other major Spanish cities. The appellation is now known throughout the world.

As often happens during serious economic crises, the petit-bourgeois stratum, facing the threat of ruin and proletarianization, are mobilizing to protest against the government and the "powerful" (banks, large corporations, multinationals, etc.), to demand the maintenance or the restoration of their privileged social position relative to the proletarian masses. Today this malaise is not expressed by parties of parliamentary opposition nor by extra-parliamentary organizations, it is expressed from below, spontaneously, in protests that begin with a few hundred people which can grow into the thousands. In the streets or squares of major cities, protesters consider themselves "free" to participate, outside of party structures which require a formal commitment which is not only ideological but practical. An expression of a sort of liberation of discontent and disapproval by means of smartphones, blogs and social networks in the form of rallies and colorful processions, these movements rely on strength in numbers, on their peaceful nature, on freedom of expression to demand social justice from the authorities, claiming to represent the 99% of the population who are impoverished against the 1% who get rich.

Being much less politicized than the May-June 1968 movements which burbled phrases about "workers' power" and shouting "power to the imagination!", they take democratic rights and freedoms seriously, counting solely on the pressure of their demonstrations to make the authorities bend. At the root of these protests, however, there are common problems such as poor housing, unemployment, not to mention the seem-

ingly endless corruption.

Can movements of these kind trouble governments and the ruling classes? Yes, but only in terms of public order.

Things would be very different if it was the working class which came into action, not only going on strike and mobilizing against the anti-proletarian measures of the bosses and the state, rediscovering the road of the class struggle and organizing itself on this basis by breaking with the democratic illusions that sterilize all social movements.

Under pressure from an economic crisis which after 4 years strikes not only the proletariat, but also large sections of the petit-bourgeoisie, the movements of outrage sprang up in Greece, Spain, Chile, Israel, Italy, Britain, the United States, before touching down in many cities globally on October 15 with demonstrations large and small.

In the United States in recent weeks the *Occupy Wall Street* has movement "dared" set up camp in front of the New York Stock Exchange, erect a small pacifist village, complete with a tent kitchen, children's area, sleeping tents, meeting space, recreation areas, etc.. The police did not intervene until the demonstrators, who had received support from some unions, (such as the United Steel Workers) tried to cross the Brooklyn Bridge on Oct. 11. Indiscriminately pepper-spraying everyone, the police dispersed the demonstration and arrested 700 people, but that did not stop the movement from spreading to many other cities and north to Canada.

Even in Israel, which has yet to suffer the crisis to the same extent as Greece, Spain and the United States, a strong movement of the outraged appeared with its encampments and large peaceful demonstrations, it attacked the "party system", accused of failing to take into account their real interests or of being too sensitive to pressure from ultra-Orthodox groups. The protest was born from the impoverishment of sections of the petit-bourgeoisie and the inequality between those who were able to accumulate wealth during the period of economic growth and those who were left out of the division of "spoils". This movement has

nothing to do with proletarian demands for the defence and improvement of living and working conditions, especially for what concerns the Arab-Israeli and immigrant proletarians, even if it also advances demands of the laborist type such as free education, the construction of popular housing, taxing the rich, etc. And if we move on to more general political questions, such as the issue of the oppression of the Palestinians and the continuation of colonial settlement, then the demand for "social justice" disappears before the notion of "national security": it is not by accident that the movement of the outraged in Israel groups together both partisans of Palestinian self-determination and supporters of the colonial policy pursued by all Israeli governments ....

In Italy the protests of the outraged have taken the classic characteristics of student protests. On October 7, tens of thousands of students demonstrated in 90 Italian cities to protest against austerity measures imposed on the schools and universities, demanding the "right to study", that is, the right to social advancement. But the targets have been extended to the banks and politicians who only care about their own particular interests, manifesting both the despair at the prospect of proletarianization and the illusions of being able to find an improvement of the situation by refusing to pay the public debt, by a generational change politically and by technological innovation.

\* \* \*

Economic crises periodically strike the whole of society and they cause the degradation of living conditions of the vast majority of the population. But if capitalist society appears as split between the rich and the poor, it is actually divided into social classes with conflicting interests: the bourgeoisie which dominates the entire society economically, politically and militarily and the classes subordinate to it: the petit-bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The proletariat, because it is the class whose exploitation gives life to the whole bourgeois eco-

nomic and social system is the only class which has the ability to really fight against this system and to overthrow it. The petit-bourgeoisie, made up of very many stratum (small farmers, artisans, merchants, professionals, various intellectuals, etc.), lives in part from the exploitation of the proletariat and inevitably aspires to join the ranks of the big bourgeoisie; this is why it is unable, as history has shown, to really fight against capitalism, to have a political program and to play an independent political role, despite the fact that it constantly runs up against the competition and pressure of large capitalist enterprises, and is periodically condemned to ruin.

The offspring of commercialism and private property, the petit-bourgeoisie wants to keep the mercantile and capitalist structure of society which alone can give it its privileged position in relation to the proletariat. That's why it defends the basic categories of society and of bourgeois ideology: private property, the family, the State, public institutions and services as well as the prevailing prejudices against foreigners, women, etc. It is always ready to put on the red shirt of reformism when its social conditions are threatened by the crisis or the black shirt of fascism when they are threatened by the proletariat. And is always at the forefront when it comes to putting on the military uniform to "defend the fatherland".

For Marxism the petit-bourgeoisie is a **demi-class**, not because it is located between the fundamental antagonistic classes of society, but because it is inherently unable to express an independent perspective, eternally condemned to oscillate between these two classes. But because of its position of proximity to the upper layers of the working class, it is also a formidable channel for the dissemination within the proletariat of the bourgeois positions of class collaboration, of democratic participation, of reformism, legalism, pacifism, etc. By its intermediation the most harmful bourgeois prejudices and habits continually insinuate themselves amongst the proletarians. It is in this function of preservation and defence of capitalism, of which it pretends to represent the "human face", that the petit-bourgeoisie has found its true "historical" role: its ability to neutralize the workers' movement. It furnishes the ruling class with the, political, intellectual, bureaucratic and religious personnel routinely used to divert the proletariat from the class struggle, by presenting them with the methods and goals that hide the reality of class antagonism, leading workers' struggles into dead ends. Thus it can continue to parasitically receive its share in the exploitation of the proletariat.

This is why the petit-bourgeoisie fears

and struggles against any perspective of autonomous independent struggle of the proletariat.

The illusions of being able to "change the world" without touching the capitalist mode of production, through reforms obtained by mobilizing large masses of peaceful demonstrators can in reality only serve that of social conservation. History has shown that only the overt confrontation between the proletariat mobilized in its class organizations and guided by its party, and the bourgeoisie, its employers' associations and its State, can decide the fate of the world. If the bourgeoisie triumph, no "change" can take place other than the worsening conditions of the proletarian and semi-proletarianized masses, increasing the exploitation of wage labor and of the oppression of the weakest nations and peoples in a continual alternation of periods of peace preparing for wars and wars preparing for peace.

If it is the working class which is triumphant, as occurred temporarily during the Paris Commune of 1871 or for a longer period during the Russian Revolution of October 1917, then it opens up a revolutionary process whose objective is the destruction of capitalist society based on commodity production, the law of value, profit; and its replacement by a rational society, without classes, based on human needs. It is only in this direction that it is possible to end the increasingly acute contradictions of current society which because of insane capitalist growth steals the future not only of younger generations, but of the whole human species.

The future that capitalism reserves for young and old alike is inscribed in its mode of production: increased exploitation, misery, hunger, war in an endless spiral. No doubt a privileged few can improve their living conditions, but it will be at the cost of degradation to those of the broad masses of the laboring population.

The future of humanity is in the hands of the only revolutionary class, the proletariat, the class of those who possess nothing, who have nothing to lose but their chains. The youth, the students who believe that it is possible to change the world "if we want change", but without breaking the chains with which the society of Capital dominates the world, can ultimately only reinforce this dominance by the dissemination of these crippling illusions. If they really want to change the world, they can only do so by embracing the cause of the proletarian revolution, putting their energy and enthusiasm in the service of the working class.

Apart from this perspective, there is nothing other than the shabby and impotent world of "individual conscience" of

"personal freedom", perishable and worthless merchandise in a mode of production that has nothing to offer to mankind: capitalism is the negation of all harmonious relationship between human beings, of any socially useful activity for humanity, of any pleasure in life for the masses!

October, 16th 2011

## «le prolétaire» Summaries

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- Massacre de prolétaires au Kazakhstan

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# Portugal: the proletariat crushed between the capitalist crisis and the complicity of trade union and political opportunism

The capitalist crisis ravaging every country in the world has very grave consequences for the proletarians who witness their conditions of existence deteriorate rapidly as is required by the bourgeoisie and its undertakings that more than ever require the cheapest labor possible, approaching the level of mere survival. Thus not only the wage cuts now rampant in companies of various sectors, but also massive layoffs, cuts in basic social services, the rising price of basic services (water, electricity, etc.), and tax increases everywhere, form a grim tableau. But in places where the living conditions previously were already not very good or really bad compared to neighboring countries, the situation becomes more and more terrible for the workers as time passes and the requirements of the national and international bourgeoisie become increasingly harsh and difficult.

This is the case of Portugal, one of the most vulnerable economies in the euro area which historically has always lagged behind the major imperialist powers in the region and remained relatively marginalized from the process of economic development evident throughout the world, but above all, especially since 1996, in countries where it had been traditionally low. The country was hit hard by the current crisis as evidenced by final macroeconomic indicators. The Portuguese economy will decline 1.3% in 2011 (even though the level of GNP was already very low after two years of crisis) and it is expected that it will officially decline further by 0.6% in 2012 (the fall will undoubtedly be higher). According to forecasts by the Bank of Portugal itself, inflation for this year will be 2.8% against 1.4% last year. The crisis hit a country whose productive structure is marked by a strong predominance of the services sector, concentrated mainly in Lisbon and in Madeira, while the rest of the country saw declining agricultural production and a puny industrial sector.

But above and beyond the macroeconomic indicators with which the bourgeoisie intends to demonstrate the need for severe sacrifices to support the national economy, the statistics also show how the Portuguese proletariat is affected by the crisis: the unemployment rate in 2008, just before the crisis erupted, reached 8% of the workforce (which is around 5.5 million workers) rose sharply to over 13% (not to mention that the rate of active job-seekers fell slightly). As for government measures to revive the economy, that is to say the anti-working class offensive burgeoning there like everywhere else, the most important were probably those affecting the legal duration of the working day which can be increased by half an hour (which adds to the growing number of working days per year), the elimination of bonuses in the civil service, the in-

crease in indirect taxes starting with the VAT (Value Added Tax: tax on goods and services).

Faced with a situation which objectively requires the working class to fight to defend themselves, the main union, the CGTP (General Confederation of Portuguese Workers), called for a general strike for November 25, the second in 15 years (the first having taken place just a few months ago). But in the same way that its trade union confreres in neighboring countries which likewise belong to this deadly family united by the bonds of the betrayal of the working class, the CGTP has demonstrated that under the leadership of opportunistic yellow unionism; strikes are not a means of proletarian struggle, but simply a safety valve to prevent the workers from launching the class struggle. A general strike limited to one day with a warning notice of one month (enough for the bourgeois class to prepare and ensure that this does not interfere with the course of business), and whose sole objective is the negotiation of the austerity measures by the government, cannot in fact have any other real purpose than to diminish proletarian pressure accumulated over a long period of time, so that it does not jeopardize social peace.

It is this pressure which resulted throughout the day in demonstrations of proletarian anger that threatened to disturb the "democratic right to protest" with which the CGTP meant to destroy the proletarian struggle: the pickets of the workers in the garbage collection sector which clashed with police to enforce the strike, night attacks against the headquarters of banks, and above all the clashes with police at the end of the events called by the unions and the "Indignant Movement" (it should be noted that these clashes are particularly significant in a country that is reputed to be among the most peaceful since the "Car-

nation Revolution" of the seventies), all this demonstrates the rise of workers' anger caused by the continued deterioration of conditions life and work: the proletariat is inevitably led to direct confrontation with its enemies, despite the efforts of collaborationist unionism to bar its path of struggle. The CGTP did not hesitate to attack the workers who instinctively tended to move in that direction, as it did by denouncing the workers who had clashed with police on the pretext that it must be peaceful and orderly to negotiate with the bourgeoisie.

On the political terrain the forces of opportunism also played their role. The major "workers'" parties present in parliament are trying to divert the rising social tension towards objectives fully assimilated by the national democratic game.

Thus, the Left Bloc, an assemblage of small groups gathered together for electoral reasons, affirms in the resolution of its national Assembly, following the elections last June 5, that *It's only possible to counter the blackmail on bankruptcy which weighs down on wages and pensions by resolutely engaging in a policy of auditing and renegotiating the debt*, this means that the struggle of the Portuguese proletariat should aim to reach a compromise with the so-called "troika" (the group of experts responsible for managing the intervention in Portugal on behalf of the IMF, the ECB and the EU) to decrease the weight of the public debt (that is to say the national debt); and thanks to a policy of putting pressure on the Socialist Party to counter its coming into line with the Right in office, which means thanks to common parliamentary action with the party which when in government approved European intervention. Parliamentary action is the privileged field of opportunism which seeks to bind the proletariat to the rules of democracy; used by the bourgeoisie pass anti-worker measures to bring the country out of the crisis, not in an authoritarian fashion, but voluntarily, **democratically**.

For its part, the Portuguese Communist Party in a document dated 20 November 2011, where it cynically claims to commemorate the birth of the Communist International and its own proletarian and revolutionary birth, multiplies the statements of intent which demonstrates once

again that is the perfect ally of the bourgeoisie within the proletarian masses to maintain social order and divert discontent into nationalism and compromise: *There are alternatives. With a patriotic policy (emphasis added by us) which has as its objectives economic development, higher living standards for workers and the people, the defence and promotion of the public interest and citizen rights, the effective support to microenterprises, small and medium enterprises and the defense and affirmation of sovereignty, a just Portugal, sovereign, and with a future (Is a new road to hope possible for Portugal?, intervention of Jeronimo Sousa, General Secretary of the PCP).*

This simply means, according to the PCP, that the Portuguese proletariat has no other choice but to defend the country against foreign intervention in common with the national bourgeoisie, giving up its independent class interests (and of course its classist methods and means of struggle: not once in the text do we find the word strike, pickets, etc.) in the hope that its sacrifice will revive domestic production, allowing itself to be pilloried to satiate Portuguese capital's all-devouring hunger for surplus value.

If it wants to successfully defend its class interests against the nationalism and the politics of class collaboration, the Portuguese proletariat, like its Euro-

pean brothers, beginning with its Spanish neighbors, has no alternative but to effect a rupture with the opportunistic leadership of the yellow unions leading the struggle onto the road of premeditated defeat, and to oppose this with its class weapons, which are the only effective ones: the strike without notice, pickets to stop production, the defense of demonstrations against assaults by the police, etc.

But it must go further, setting up classist organizations, independent of the interests of the national and international bourgeoisie, ensuring the continuity of its resistance struggle in time, and the solidarity of the proletarians of all productive sectors, employed or unemployed, immigrant and resident, men and women, young and old; organizations which in the early 20th century held the pride of the Portuguese proletariat, the most consequential of whom formed the Communist Party of Portugal, section of the Communist International, and its newspaper *Avante!* on whose pages were published the annals of the great class struggle on the Iberian peninsula.

This Communist Party, international and internationalist, will re-emerge as the supreme expression of the coherence of the proletarian class struggle in its program, policy and revolutionary tactics, fighting for the abolition of the world of wage labor and private property, for the

world communist revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist transformation of society.

**For the resumption of the proletarian class struggle in Portugal, Europe and around the world!**

**For the intransigent defense of the interests of the proletariat!**

**For the struggle with class means and methods, independent of the interests of the national economy!**

**For the World Communist Party!**

November 21, 2011

## «Il Comunista»

**Nr. 123-124 - Novembre  
2011 / Febbraio 2012  
Summary**

- La classe dominante borghese di ogni paese impone pesanti sacrifici ai proletari. Ma i proletari hanno una sola risposta da dare: la lotta di classe anticapitalistica!
  - L'Egitto fra repressione militare, reazione islamista e lotte operaie
  - Le navi da crociera, questi mezzi-grattacieli galleggianti, non sfuggono alle tragiche contraddizioni della società capitalistica. La Costa Concordia, naufragata sugli scogli di fronte al porto dell'isola del Giglio, ne è l'ennesima dimostrazione
  - Val di Susa: il movimento NO-TAV. Colpito dal dispotismo politico e sociale col quale il governo borghese targato Monti affronta l'emergenza economica e i movimenti di protesta
  - Portogallo: il proletariato fra la crisi capitalistica e l'opportunismo politico e sindacale
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  - Alcuni cenni sulla Siria
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  - Quando il divieto di usare un pesticida fa bene all'ambiente, fa bene all'uomo, ma non fa bene al profitto capitalistico...
  - Fukushima: macerie radioattive in discarica e negli inceneritori
  - La borghesia capitalistica prima con Berlusconi, ora con Monti, pretende sempre la stessa cosa: crescita economica, salvataggio dei profitti, libertà di fare affari senza restrizioni e manodopera salariata, flessibile e a costo sempre più ridotto!
  - Dizionario. L'accumulazione nella società capitalistica (Lenin)
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## The Revolt in Britain Foretells future Revolts in Europe

*The riots that erupted in the Tottenham district and then spread to all parts of London and to Manchester, Bristol, Liverpool, Birmingham, Glasgow demonstrate anew the great turmoil amongst large sections of the proletariat hit by unemployment, insecurity and marginalization, and prefigure what could happen all over Europe.*

You can read it on the walls of the High Road in Tottenham: *Fuck the police!*.

It all started in Tottenham when Mark Duggan, father of four children, tried to flee a police patrol seeking to arrest him: the police shot and killed him. He was so disfigured by bullets that his mother was unable to recognize him (*Manchester Guardian*, Aug. 7).

It's natural that the police are the target of the anger and violence that engulfed the working-class neighborhoods of London. In recent years nearly a thousand people have been slaughtered by the police and not one police officer has ever been punished. Can anyone be surprised at the reaction of youths with no hope, no future, sys-

tematically humiliated, frustrated by a consumerism reserved for the rich and driven further and further down by each economic crisis?

Violent revolts in Britain have been contemporaneous with periods of economic crisis for thirty years. In 1981, in the midst of full-blown crisis, a veritable wave of riots swept across the country, starting with the so-called "racial unrest" in Brixton, riots then spread to Birmingham, London, Liverpool, Nottingham, Bristol, Bedford, Coventry, Edinburgh, Gloucester, Halifax, Leeds, Leicester, Southampton, and Wolverhampton. In 1985, Brixton exploded again, and in 1990-91 during the epoch

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# The Revolt in Britain Foretells future Revolts in Europe

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of the famous "Poll-Tax Riots", the whole country was shaken by protests and riots, in 2001 it was the turn of Bradford, Oldham in Greater Manchester, Harehills in Leeds, and then Birmingham in 2005. The revolts had generally taken place under conservative governments (Thatcher, John Major), but from the early 2000's they broke out under Labour governments (Tony Blair, Gordon Brown), and now again it's a Conservative government that runs the country: a demonstration that it is not the political coloration of the government that set the rioters in motion, but so-called liberal policy itself which when facing capitalist crises can't think of anything else to do than to increasingly pressurize the great proletarian masses.

Although recent history clearly demonstrates that the deteriorating conditions of the workers and the impoverished is the basis of these explosions, the bourgeois governments react as if they had erupted for the first time; for them it's only a problem of looters and hooligans.

In reality, the systematic violence that bourgeois power exercises daily over the proletarians and particularly over the young proletarians to whom it promises nothing but poverty, despair and death, cannot but lead eventually to these marginalized masses reacting in a violent, disorderly or even gratuitous manner against the police and the symbols of an economic system which crushes them down.

Driven by an uncontrollable rage, the masses of rioters responded with acts of violence and destruction against shops full of goods they cannot buy, against buildings and palaces that are an insult to their miserable life, against the hatred systematically aimed at the proletarians in revolt by the police and bourgeois power which direct them, today as in the previous disturbances.

*You will feel the full force of the law!* Prime Minister Cameron screamed at the rebels while mobilizing 16,000 police officers to halt unrest in London; but bourgeois law is based on the economic and social violence of a mode of production, capitalism, which has no perspective to offer to workers and the masses than those that drive them to revolt: poverty, unemployment, marginalization in an social environment that is deteriorating more and more!

Bourgeois hatred will not disappear

with the end of the recent disturbances, nor did it disappear after the riots of 1981, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2001 and 2005; it will continue, expressing the systematic brutality of a class which appropriates social wealth through the exploitation, the repression and the crushing down of the working classes.

The proletarians have no choice: either they rebel, or they die suffocated in their own sweat and blood.

The recent explosive social situation, just like those that preceded it, was exhausted after a few days, like a volcano after an eruption. But that does not mean that the causes which provoked it have disappeared; they will continue to accumulate in the economic sub-stratum and they will provoke new explosions.

This is why the proletarians must recommence learning the lessons accumulated by the proletarians in the 1920's: to organize their class hatred in forms of resistance to bourgeois pressure and repression, and in defense of their living conditions within the framework of the **class struggle**; a struggle which is not limited to a temporary blaze of violence but which gives itself long range objectives; a struggle which is reinforced by class solidarity and the exclusive defense of immediate proletarian interests; a struggle which does not die out when the physical force of the initial push becomes exhausted, but which persists through the highs and lows of the social confrontations; in short a struggle which represents a future perspective other than that of capitalist society, the society of the exploitation of wage labor, of repression and bourgeois privilege, of economic, social and political violence against the proletarian masses, and completely rejected by the vast majority of the population.

The class struggle is the great objective towards which the workers are summoned by the material conditions themselves, by the explosion of social contradictions destined to become increasingly worse; it is the great objective of the proletariat in all countries because it is only through the class struggle that it is possible to shake at its foundations the bourgeois society which oppresses and suppresses them, and to effectively oppose anti-proletarian measures that bourgeois governments take to deal with capitalist crises; it is the major objective of the proletariat which must be prepared to fight the policy of blood and tears on the eco-

nomic and social terrain, but also the policy of war which will be adopted sooner or later by the bourgeois power, pushed inexorably by inter-imperialist competition which gradually consumes the resources of the welfare state kept in place for decades to exploit the workers with few problems.

The class struggle is the perspective in which the British proletariat, like the proletarians in revolt in the Arab countries in recent months and like the proletarians of the world, can find the necessary international solidarity to confront the bourgeois powers allied with each other in this time of economic crisis that causes difficulties for even the most powerful economies in the world.

This is the perspective always upheld by the proletarian class party, the revolutionary communist party that the proletariat will recognize as its leader in theory and praxis in the measure that

## 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



the class confrontations will produce classist vanguards who will rip the workers away from the deleterious influence of opportunism, of democracy, of petit-bourgeois illusions and will transform the outbreaks of violence into organized class might.

The bourgeois attitude is always the same: repression and assassinations. The proletarian response which today

is characterized by anger, devastation of neighborhoods, the blind explosion of tension accumulated for years, will have to surpass this primitive stage of street violence to be embodied in the organization of the class struggle, coherent and conscious of the irreconcilable antagonism between bourgeois and proletarians.

This is the only positive perspec-

tive for the proletarians, who, after the call to struggle of their class brothers in Greece, are today rebelling against bourgeois austerity in Britain, one of the most powerful capitalist countries the world, in anticipation of what will happen tomorrow in the other European countries.

August, 9th 2011

## Greece at the brink of bankruptcy

# The struggle of the proletariat against an increasingly harsh Greek austerity anticipates the future struggle of the proletarians of the other European countries

The effects of the global capitalist crisis which since 2009, brought the weaker European economies to their knees have pushed Greece towards bankruptcy. The Greek economy, as with that of countries like Ireland, Portugal or Eastern Europe, is subject to a growing tension due to an ever higher debt load and an increasingly greater exploitation of native and immigrant workers: the primary aim was remain in the so-called “virtuous circle” of the Euro zone, which provides access to loans from the European Central Bank. The capitalist economy as a whole is based on debt, that is to say on loans: when the loans cannot be repaid, the economy enters into crisis.

The same as with profits, under capitalism the consequences of the crisis are not distributed equally among the population. Profits are accumulated by the capitalists, who are a small minority of the population, while the majority can expect to receive only crumbs.

The ravages of the crisis, in terms of wages and living and working conditions, are imposed on the majority of the population and especially on the proletariat. Under the rule of capital the proletariat is always hit hard: when the economy is growing (to use a term dear to all bourgeois), the exploitation of labor power does not decrease, but extends and deepens itself, although some concessions are granted, when the economy is in crisis, exploitation obviously does not disappear but becomes even more intense for those who work, whilst unemployment increases and in general so does the impoverishment and insecurity affecting ever wider layers.

The economic crisis demonstrates that the capitalist system is unable to

provide a solution to the problems of the proletariat because for the bourgeoisie there is no other way out of the crisis than by attacking the proletarians: **intensification of exploitation, increased competition between workers, increasing economic and social despotism, repression of all forms of resistance against the widespread degradation of their situation.**

In the spring of last year, workers in Greece came into struggle with strikes and demonstrations against the austerity plan decided on by the Papandreou government in order to obtain from the IMF and the ECB a loan of 110 billion Euros deemed necessary to “save” the Greek economy and the stability of the euro.

A new loan of a hundred billion is being discussed because this plan has proved insufficient for the Greek economy to be able to prevent the bankruptcy of its State in 2012, the big banks, the big corporations, like the other European states, want to avoid a default by the Greek state which would cause an even deeper crisis.

Faced with this prospect, the European leaders and capitalists can conceive of no other alternative than to increase the pressure on the Greek masses, causing an even greater deterioration of their living conditions. Whatever remains of the Socialist government in power, whether it sets up a national unity government or decides on early elections, bourgeois power has no other alternative for the proletariat than **tears and blood** and the **iron claw** against their rebellion!

Can the workers escape the fate which the capitalists have reserved for them?

If they continue to remain prisoners of the illusions in parliamentary de-

mocracy, which offers an eternal debate between the political forces of the left and the right, all interested in “saving” the Greek economy – which means saving the profits of Greek capitalism – and force them to accept the sacrifices, the workers are condemned to be unable to defend themselves.

For their part, the reformist “left” forces, whether trade unions like PAME or political parties like the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), cry against the monopolies and capital, but this is to better bind the workers to **bourgeois** objectives such as the *defense of the country against bankruptcy* and to drown them out in the mass of the *people*! They direct the proletarian anger towards “struggles” and general strikes unable to defend their class interests because those interests are put aside in order to establish a confused, indistinct and helpless “popular” **interclassist** movement.

The workers experience in the flesh, day after day, not only the disastrous consequences of capitalist exploitation strengthened by the crisis, but also the crippling consequences of these supposedly democratic, progressive or socialist policies which tag on their most fundamental demands behind the “national interest” – which is nothing but the **interest of the national capitalism** – and who drown them in popular assemblies, while the simple perspective of open class confrontation is incomparably more effective than the most massive peaceful demonstrations in front of Parliament.

Those who speak only of the *people*, of the *people power*, of the *popular alliance* of *popular government*, actually want to stay within the frame-

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## Greece at the brink of bankruptcy

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work of bourgeois political institutions and the capitalist mode of production when they denounce only the **private monopolies**, as if the state monopoly was not the highest form of concentration of capital and reinforcement of its domination over society!

The proletarians, in Greece as elsewhere, must rediscover the path of **open class struggle** against the bourgeoisie, its State and the layers defending its dominance (such as the petty and middle bourgeoisie, the Church, the layers of the ‘labor aristocracy’...), the path of real struggle for the emancipation from wage labor, therefore from capitalism: as long as wage labor exists, capitalism exists and bourgeois political and economic power.

**To fight against capitalism, the proletariat must first be organized into a distinct class, therefore outside of any class collaboration on behalf of the unity of the “people” and must establish class organizations for the struggle for immediate defense, independent not only of the bourgeoisie and its state, but also from reformist collaborationist forces. In this field of struggle, the proletarians can recognize themselves as class brothers, overcoming competition between them, and build a strong and durable international class solidarity** (and not a so-called national and popular solidarity).

Coming after decades of collaboration between classes, the capitalist crisis has weakened the proletariat in all countries. But it can rebuild its class strength if it revives the tradition of class struggle it once waged, not just making a simple government tremble and shake, but bourgeois society and the bourgeois classes around the world.

To resume the path of class struggle, is to reconstitute the only social force capable of ending the society of Capital, with its poverty, its unemployment, its war, a perspective in which the proletariat in struggle will organize itself around its political organ, the communist and international class party, to be finally victorious.

June 18th, 2011

Our Internet Site:  
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**The «Arab Spring» is over. The illusions in change have dissolved, and the proletariat and the proletarianized masses of the Arab countries are confronted with the reality of capitalist power – the iron heel of the capitalist states and imperialism. The only way out is through proletarian class struggle!**

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ian army, Hama again is suffering harsh repression.

And as before it is not a question of religious revolts, but of revolts caused by a profound social crisis, that rocks the social peace maintained by a regime which since 1963 has militarized the whole country and which the Assad family has ruled in a hereditary manner since 1970. Martial law, in force for 43 years, has been justified by the conflict with Israel (which annexed the Syrian Golan Heights after the Six Days war in 1967) and the risk of “Islamic terrorism”. But the power of the local bourgeoisies in the Middle East cannot do without either the support of imperialist powers, or the support of existing religious authorities. Under Assad, power is held by the bourgeois from the minority Alawite Shia, while the majority of the population is Sunni. Religious differences, as always, are used for social control in regimes like Syria (as they were in the Iraq of Saddam Hussein) who, despite having written on their banner: “God protect you, O Syria,” call themselves “secular”. This “secularism” did not impede the Assad regime from having the support of the ayatollahs of the Islamic Republic of Iran and in its turn from supporting the politico-religious movement Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Since the Baath Party came to power in the mid-sixties, Syria has become the channel of Soviet influence in opposition to Western influence, which was based on Israel and Iran’s Shah Reza Pahlavi. For forty years the Syrian bourgeoisie has used the iron heel of the Assad regime to maintain an inner solidarity to confront Israel and to support its own expansionist aims in Lebanon, but also to enable the country’s economic development through the exploitation of the peasants and workers while largely avoiding social conflict.

But repression cannot forever prevent the outbreak of these conflicts, as was the case during the 1982 revolts that spread throughout the country to culminate in the tragedy of Hama, and as is the case today after the real social earthquake that shook all the Arab countries

of North Africa and the Middle East with the wrath of huge masses in rebellion against intolerable living conditions.

According to what is reported (and to what goes unreported...) in the newspaper columns, there is no doubt that the deteriorating situation of the masses, hit by an unbearable increase in prices of basic commodities, is the root cause of their mobilization and of their tentative aspirations at a regime change. The crackdown has already claimed more than fifteen hundred dead, not counting the wounded and arrested, causing the flight of thousands of refugees into Turkey and Lebanon.

In recent days the French ambassador Chevallier and the new U.S. Ambassador Ford have gone separately to “honor” the demonstrators to the martyred city of Hama, where they denounced the brutality of the repression of the Bashir al-Assad government. The government responded by unleashing demonstrations against the French and U.S. embassies and accusing these countries of fomenting the revolt.

In fact, even if Washington and Paris, as well as Rome, London or Berlin, criticized the bloody suppression of protests, they still resumed their relations and their business with the Syrian regime, albeit with ups and downs. In any event, what the imperialist powers want to avoid is the social wave that swept over Tunisia and Egypt from spreading throughout the Middle East. They care little of the dead who have fallen in the repression of an Assad in Syria, a Saleh in Yemen, one Mubarak in Egypt, Ben Ali of Tunisia, a Bouteflika in Algeria or a Gaddafi in Libya; if they multiply the declarations about “human rights” and “democratic rights” it is only for propaganda reasons, to make us forget that they have supported the regimes of these assassins to the bitter end! As experts in repression in their own countries and in their former colonies, they know perfectly well that to “maintain order” – their bourgeois order – there are times when one must be ruthless against those who revolt, especially if they revolt en masse.

The key for the imperialist powers, is that “social peace” is achieved in each

country by its leaders, by brute force if necessary, so that economic relations and business can develop, and if the local leaders fail to control the situation satisfactorily, the armed forces of the “international community”, that is, the imperialist countries that dominate the world, may be involved, which happened in Somalia and Iraq and in the Balkans and Lebanon, as it is occurring now in Afghanistan and Libya and which has just occurred in Ivory Coast.

Has military intervention of the imperialist countries ever “solved” crises and brought peace and tranquillity to the inhabitants?

Claiming to want to “pacify” these countries, instead they have always exacerbated tensions and clashes between bourgeois factions vying with each other like jackals to obtain or preserve local power.

Whatever information is received not only about Syria, but also about other Arab countries affected by the revolts is becoming increasingly partial and hard to find. And for good reason!

The imperialist powers of Europe and America want us to believe that their democracy is a universal value to which everyone should adhere: kings and subjects, capitalists and workers, peasants and students, intellectuals and peasants, refugees from war and the impoverished on the peripheries of the metropoles, and that the “right to life and death” with which they are in fact endowed – by means of ever more sophisticated and destructive weapons – is justified by the universal value that capitalist progress has given them so that they can spread it, like a divine breath, over the entire world.

The reality is completely different, as shown by the revolts in Arab countries.

In Tunisia, where the revolt began, in Syria in recent weeks which is now the focus of clashes, the socio-economic conditions of the masses continue to push them into an incessant seething discontent against the new as well as the old regimes. Without doubt the social movements of these countries are not all the same. In Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, etc..., the proletarians and the proletarianized masses played the decisive role in a revolt that served as a veritable detonator for the whole Arab world; in Libya, the Gulf countries and Syria, also pushed to rebellion by the material conditions the masses were mobilized according to orientations to some extent predetermined by the opposition forces, becoming even unconsciously controlled by particular bourgeois interests allied to this or that regional or global imperialist pole.

This explains why the “protection of civilian populations” is used as a pretext

to justify the current military intervention of NATO in Libya, whereas the Israeli embargo against Gaza which starves its million and-a-half inhabitants does not stir the emotions of any of the so-called democratic countries, any more than the massacres in Yemen or the repression against Shiites in Bahrain.

There is actually a complex network of capitalist interests and caste privileges deeply rooted for decades for which the only thing that matters is the defense of *business* and strategic positions against the consequences of social upheavals in the region, and which drives the most aggressive imperialist to brandish their claws and make the masses pay the price for daring to rebel against the “established order”.

In Tunisia, where the much-hoped-for “change” seemed to finally bring new opportunities for work and social life, the media are already talking of “counter-revolution”. In Egypt, the army has always had power firmly in hand, and has pushed back elections to the end of the year; it intervenes to repress demonstrations and has forbidden strikes; to maintain a semblance of popularity, it finally had to organize the trial of Mubarak, and arrest more than 700 police officers too “compromised with the old regime” ... as if the main pillar of this regime was not precisely the army itself!

Rebellion smolders in Algeria, but hasn't yet exploded, as is shown by recent strikes like that at Air Algeria for a salary increase of over 100%, which was broken after 4 days with dozens of layoffs.

In Morocco, the king has up until now managed to calm the protests with promises of constitutional reform, which however, leave intact the autocratic features of the regime.

In Libya the imperialists who expected a rapid collapse of the regime, can no longer hide the impasse of their military intervention. Despite the continual bombardments (with their share of civilian deaths, carefully ignored by Western media), the tenacious resistance of Gaddafi and the tribes which support him, force them to reconsider the objectives of an operation which, despite all the propaganda about the protection of civilians and the UN mandate, has never been anything other than imperialist military intervention; to try to find a “way out”, Paris and Washington have activated more or less secret relations with emissaries of Tripoli.

In the Persian Gulf, the violent repression of demonstrations in Kuwait and Bahrain has put an end at least temporarily to the revolts that shook the regimes aligned with Saudi Arabia. Same thing

with the Sultanate of Oman after the revolts and in the United Arab Emirates which acceded to the Saudi requests to suspend their economic relations with Iran.

In Yemen, where President Saleh is still being treated in Saudi Arabia after his injuries in the attack on the presidential residence, clashes between government and oppositional forces have resumed in the capital. You can count on the “freest” and the most deceitful television network in the Arab world, Al Jazeera, which has managed to multiply its audience and profits during the Arab revolt by multiplying the actual and invented facts, to transform future bloodshed into future global scoops...

The revolts in Arab countries and their consequences have relegated to the background what was happening on the Palestinian front: Fatah and Hamas, united in fear of possible movements inspired by unrest in the Arab world, undertook an agreement to form a “united government” in the prospect of UN recognition of a Palestinian state within 1967 borders and with Jerusalem as its capital. Israel has always opposed such a Palestinian state as it has an agreement between Hamas and Fatah, despite the constant so-called “peace negotiations”, it continued its policy of annexation of Palestinian territories, of repression and apartheid, without hesitating to sometimes get in the face of its American sponsors who increasingly are looking for a peace between Israelis and Palestinians (naturally at the expense of the latter, ground down for decades).

If the situation in Palestine has not at all improved for the masses, in neighboring Jordan, King Abdullah appears to have managed to calm the discontent manifested every Friday after prayers since the beginning of the year by promising electoral reform, measures against corruption and a general amnesty for political prisoners. That did not stop the multitudes from attacking a school that the king was visiting last June in the town of Tafileh. Tafileh is a city in northern Jordan, near the border with Syria and to the city of Deraa which is one focus of the revolt in Syria.

Media attention is focused on Syria and Libya because they are the two countries of most concern to the imperialists today, but in reality the whole Arab world is experiencing a series of diplomatic, economic, political and military interventions striving for a “normalization” of the situation, but this will not be easy to achieve, not only because of conflicts between the bourgeoisies of the various

## The Arab Spring is over.

(Continuation from page 11)

countries implicated and between internal bourgeois factions which have inevitably increased, but also especially because the movement of the proletariat and the proletarianized masses, shows no signs – after seven months – of disappearing.

The material conditions which have provoked the revolts of the masses in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and elsewhere, have not only not improved but have rather deteriorated despite the fall of tyrants and promises of reform, political freedom and democracy.

A huge obstacle to the movement of the proletariat and the masses is created by petit-bourgeois illusions in regard to electoral solutions and cosmetic changes in parliamentary and reformist terms spread in profusion by governments, opposition parties and the imperialist powers, but the revolts are demonstrating that the governments of past and present are willing to “*change everything so that nothing changes*”, that is to say that capitalist power and bourgeois privileges remain intact!

The repression is accompanied by promises of reform, the removal of leaders is accompanied by the maintenance of governments just as corrupt and oppressive as the preceding ones, concessions on freedoms of the press and assembly are coupled with the repression of strikes and demonstrations. For local as well as foreign capitalists, it is necessary to calm the revolts as fast as possible in order to best continue the exploitation and the accumulation of the profits, and too bad if in order to do so, it is necessary to sacrifice Ben Ali, Mubarak, Saleh and tomorrow Bashir El-Assad...

If the proletariat, in Syria and Tunisia, Egypt and everywhere, do not want to continue to be dominated and exploited by capitalism and by the bourgeois authorities who defend it, they must, after having separated their aspirations and their objectives from those of the reformers and democrats, direct their anger and revolt to the struggle for their own real class interests!

These interests will never be protected by other social classes and even less by the bourgeois, who on the contrary, repress and massacre the workers to “convince” them to sacrifice their interests in the name of support for the nation or for democracy.

To have taken the route of street demonstrations and of revolt is an indispensable reaction to decades of misery, of repression and increasingly bestial exploitation, but it is not enough. The

proletariat has in its hands a great power that can become omnipotent on condition that it be organized on the basis of class, guided and directed towards class objectives using the methods and means of the class struggle, which are none other than those that are used solely to defend the immediate and future interests of the class.

The world's media have defined the revolts in the Arab countries as “revolutions”.

But history teaches that revolution is something very different. Revolution is the opposite of democracy, of peaceful protests, of simple changes in government; it is the process by which a class organized around a program that expresses its interests and general goals, engages in armed confrontation with the existing state to win political power and build a new state apparatus capable of achieving the revolutionary objectives.

In bourgeois society, the only revolutionary class is the proletariat, the class of wage laborers, because it is the only class that has nothing to defend in this society where it is exploited to produce the profits necessary to the functioning of capitalism. To ensure that production, the minority which constitutes the bourgeoisie oppresses the majority of the population: the proletariat, poor peasants, etc.; in addition to the exploitation of labor power, the capitalist system produces poverty, unemployment, hunger, social degeneration, devastation of the environment, war!

This is not a just characteristic of poor countries, but the constant feature of capitalism in all countries. And that is why the workers in Tunisia are not only the class brothers of proletarians of the Arab States, Egypt or Syria, but the class brothers of proletarians around the world.

The emancipation of the proletariat from capitalist exploitation, wage slavery, will be neither easy nor the automatic result of the revolt of the masses against the atrocities of bourgeois power. History teaches that this is a war, a class war that must be carefully prepared because the bourgeoisie uses all means to defend its dominance: military force, political force, religious force, the power of propaganda, i.e. – lies, deception, blackmail. The economic dictatorship of Capital needs a correspondence on the political level and this is why in all the countries the bourgeoisie tends to militarize society, to continuously intensify social authoritarianism and the existing “despotism of the factory”.

The proletariat will be only able to be defend itself against this formidable pressure by having already organized itself to defend itself against the attacks by the

dominant class, before then being able to pass to the attack against bourgeois political power in order to revolutionize society from top to bottom. It will have and be able to count on three basic elements: its class organizations for immediate defense, its internationalism and its political party which incarnates the historical consciousness of its general goals and which assumes the task of leading its revolutionary struggle.

The proletarians of Arab countries who have for months experienced a situation of great social unrest, have yet to reach a classist political maturity sufficient to indicate to the proletariat of capitalist countries the way forward to find the terrain of revolutionary class struggle. But the shocks that have rocked the Arab countries have also caused an increase in emigration, particularly to Europe, proletarians fleeing misery, repression, hunger and war, and they bring with them a load of social anger accumulated in their countries of origin which will eventually contaminate the slumbering European proletariat. These proletarians have a rich experience of revolutionary and class struggle, but decades of reformism and class collaboration have made them forget.

We do not know if a period of very serious economic and social crisis will break out soon in the big capitalist countries, pushing the workers on the path of rebellion, as was the case in the Arab countries in recent months; we do not know if the Welfare State, which is the material basis of political and trade union collaborationism, will need to be completely destroyed for the workers of the big capitalist countries to remember their old class traditions and their old class combat..

But what is certain, is that in the economic sub-stratum, including in the most powerful capitalist countries, there is an accumulation of contradictions and tensions which will inevitably explode the various mechanisms put in place by bourgeois democracy to control and contain outbreaks of struggle, in this or that factory, this or that industry, or this or that country.

Then the alternative will be: to die for the capitalists, of hunger, misery or in imperialist war, or to engage in the fight to the death against the established order, the real enemy of the proletarians of all countries, the bourgeois class and its State.

Only the class struggle of the proletariat can open a perspective that the bourgeoisie can never possibly offer, that of their emancipation!

# Egypt amidst bloody military repression, islamist reaction and workers' struggles

After the February 1 killings at the soccermatch in Port Said (74 deaths, mainly among supporters of the Al-Ahly club of Cairo), the ultras, – supporters of the teams from the capital – who, throughout the events of last year had many times fought the forces of repression, have accused the SCAF of premeditated murder.

Therefore, with the support of various leftist parties and youth movements, they organized protests demanding the departure of SCAF, towards the parliament, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Defense.

The Muslim Brotherhood – the main political party in parliament – reacted by calling on the SCAF to protect the parliament, accusing the protesters of being financed by foreign countries to spread disorder and vandalism and to destroy state institutions; they said that the “*immediate departure of the SCAF (...) would lead to chaos in the country*”. Police responded eagerly to this call by firing on the protesters, causing more than 12 deaths with hundreds wounded in Cairo and Suez...

## THE BITTER VICTORY OF DEMOCRACY

At the end of last year, ten months after the popular jubilation accompanying the fall of Mubarak, the media around the world announced in bold headlines the “victory of democracy” in Egypt, with the first free elections which saw the triumph of the reactionary Islamist parties, and the bloody military repression of the occupation and demonstrations in Tahrir Square, which resulted in dozens of deaths.

If the enlightened bourgeois might experience some discomfort when countenancing these events, they can rest assured no doubt realizing that they are two interrelated, complementary aspects of the same phenomenon, that of the **reinforcement of the bourgeois order** which had been shaken by the events and struggles from the beginning of the year. This explains the moderation of the reactions to the bloody repression from Western governments that usually do not lose an opportunity to give sententious and hypocritical lessons in democracy to the governments of the so-called “periphery”: the restoration of political and social stability in a country of over 85 million people located in the heart of a strategic zone for world imperialism,

has need of the combined action of democratic and religious opium, and fusillades by soldiers and paramilitary groups. Especially under the looming threat of labor unrest ...

## UNITED AGAINST WORKERS' STRUGGLES

Almost immediately after the fall of Mubarak, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) who took the reins of power, issued a statement condemning industrial actions as endangering national security, on March 23 the new government appointed by the military banned meetings, demonstrations and strikes affecting the smooth running of public or private companies, the perpetrators face up to one year in prison and huge fines.

The spokesman of the Muslim Brotherhood (traditional Islamic current which constituted the only real opposition force that was tolerated under Mubarak) in mid-February expressed its “*understanding*” vis-à-vis the position of the military leaders, accusing industrial actions of sapping the national consensus, while a prominent Salafi (far right Islamist current) functionary called for an end to strikes and sit-ins of workers. In April the Grand Mufti, the highest religious authority in Egypt, said that the instigators of industrial actions “*violate the teachings of God*” (1).

The campaign against strikes and workers' struggles was relayed throughout the ensuing months by newspapers and television channels. When they were not reported as being manipulated by “*counter-revolutionary elements*”, the proletarians in struggle were accused of selfishly defending their own interests instead of thinking of the general interest of the nation. The media sought to shame them claiming that those demonstrators in Tahrir Square, had fought for their country: “*All the slogans revolved around the meaning of freedom, as demonstrators set aside their demands and summoned forth the spring of liberty. They did not ask for a raise or a bonus. They looked at the wider context and at the nation as a whole. The contagion of narrow viewpoints did not spread among them, as it did among those who engaged in continuous, hysterical and vengeful corporatist demonstrations*” (2). How the bourgeois adorn the proletarians with laurels when they set aside their class interests and do not “shabbi-

ly” seek to improve their lives at the risk of jeopardizing sacrosanct capitalist profits!

The fact is that the fall of Mubarak, which was preceded and to some extent prepared by the strikes of 2008, was followed by a new and powerful surge in proletarian struggles, despite all the anti-worker measures and campaigns. During the unprecedented wave of workers' struggles in 2008, the number of strikers is estimated to have reached 240,000 (3). In February 2011, when the movement against the regime had reached the highest point, there were 489 “collective actions” of workers (the number of participants is not known) against only 42 in January. The number of strikers from March to August was about 400,000, a figure already very important for a country like Egypt, with little industry and where strikes are rare. But in September they are estimated to have increased to a figure between 500 and 750,000, more than all of 2008! In that month there were several large strikes sometimes involving the whole country as with the teachers' strike (250 to 500,000 strikers) and six other major strikes involving about 160,000 workers, including the postal workers, the Transport Workers of Cairo, the workers in sugar refineries, etc., and strikes limited to a single plant or jurisdiction in which a total of tens of thousands of workers participated. Even if we do not have more recent figures, the movement has maintained strength and even amplified in October, despite the electoral campaign for the November elections: Egyptian workers have not been hit by the fatal habit of electoral truce!

These movements of struggle were directed or organized by new unions coming into existence outside or against the former official union, or even by true strike committees, sometimes coordinated at the regional level as in the case of teachers in North Sinai .

The most frequent demands are for wage increases (and the creation of a minimum wage), the permanent hiring of temporary workers, dismissal of particularly hated bosses, improved working conditions, ahead of demands of a more reformist nature such as increased state investment in a given sector, the re-nationalization of enterprises privatized in recent years or improvement of the Public Education service; these undoubtedly reflecting the still very real influ-

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# Egypt

(Continuation from page 13)

ence of bourgeois forces among the workers (especially in certain sectors such as teachers where the Muslim Brotherhood is very active and leads the union). What have really set the proletarians in motion, are the basic demands for their immediate needs for survival, after years in which wages have remained low as the cost of living was increasing.

## REPRESSION AND ELECTIONS

The military authorities of the SCAF have worked since February to end the unrest by gradually returning to the good old repressive methods, after the “disappearance” of the police in the period which followed the fall of Mubarak.

Even before the latest events, more than 12,000 people had already been convicted by military courts under the Emergency Law that, until now, has been in effect since 1967 (4); the practice of torture continues in Egyptian prisons, and again in recent weeks there was the use of paramilitary thugs against workers and kidnappings of known activists. Furthermore the SCAF has not hesitated to unleash sectarian hatred. While the bestial repression of a demonstration of Copts (5) in Cairo on October 9 left 27 dead, the official media accused the Copts of attacking soldiers and they called on the people to defend the army against the Christians!

But a callous machination by the SCAF on the eve of the elections jeopardized the process. Little versed in the subtle art of the use of democratic opium, the military decreed “supra-constitutional principles” in mid-November to give the Army a special status above civilian institutions (the parliament and the government would have no control over the military budget, the Army reserved the right to change the future constitution, to dissolve parliament, etc.).

To oppose this decree, a day of demonstrations was organized for November 18, and was supported by the Islamist parties who were concerned about being robbed of their announced electoral victory and the regroupments issuing from the “revolution” in February; while the traditional left-wing parties like the Egyptian Communist Party, the Social Democrats, the Tagammu (which included the ECP, illegal at the time of Mubarak and the leaders of the official union), eternal flunkies of the regime, or the Wafd (pseudo-opposition party under the old regime), were refusing to

support the call.

After tens of thousands of people began demonstrating peacefully in Cairo, the unleashing of a bloody crackdown leaving dozens of casualties among the demonstrators who wanted to reoccupy Tahrir Square, set this tinderbox afire. The next day, hundreds of thousands of people came out on the streets of Cairo, Alexandria and other cities to show their anger and shout their opposition to the government. But after negotiations with the military and the resignation of the Prime Minister, the Muslim Brotherhood, reassured that the elections would not be deferred, and that the SCAF promised to give power to civilians in the coming months, on Nov. 20 called on their supporters not to demonstrate.

The protests continued on the following days with slogans calling for the resignation of Tantawi (the head of the SCAF who is considering running for president), a civil government, etc.; neither the elections of 11/28 nor the continued repression (another 17 deaths in the last weeks of December) could extinguish the protest movement, proof that it expresses the depth of discontent in the country. But despite its numerical strength, the movement was doomed to impotence by the nullity of its petit-bourgeois democratic political demands: democracy, civil government of national unity and so on...

A bitter balance sheet: dozens dead, thousands of arrests so that “democracy” might triumph in the form of an alliance, at least temporarily, between the military and the Muslim Brotherhood, giving the victory in the elections to the religious parties on the right and far right (6) ...

But this victory does not mean the end or the mitigation of the class struggle in Egypt, nor the stabilization of the political situation which would be its consequence. Feeble Egyptian capitalism can not afford to give satisfaction, if only in a temporary and limited way, to the workers, it can not ensure employment for the enormous mass of unemployed, permanently supplied by the rural exodus. It can only survive in international competition by oppressing its proletariat to the maximum, imposing low wages and poor living and working conditions. Its economic and social difficulties, compounded by the workers’ struggles and the return of tens of thousands of workers who had left to find work in Libya and elsewhere, the collapse of tourism, not to mention other casualties of the international capitalist crisis (decreased opportunities in the textile industry, decline in traffic of the Suez Ca-

nal, reduced foreign investment, etc.), leave it no choice. It can not afford, as in the richest capitalist countries, to maintain a range of social shock absorbers to quell social tensions (and indeed these countries themselves now have fewer means!); the subsidy in the price of staple foods, which is a fundamental element in avoiding a social explosion is already a burden which it aspires to get rid of as soon as possible ...

In service to the national capitalism, Egyptian democracy, born under the most reactionary auspices, can only continue the repressive and anti-worker tradition of the previous regime.

Tough battles thus await the proletarians of Egypt; to carry them out under the best conditions, it will be necessary for them to separate themselves from the interclassist national-religious sludge and to organize themselves on independent class bases. The first elementary but gigantic step was taken spontaneously: serving as an example to the proletarians of the whole world, the Egyptian proletariat came bravely into struggle, undermining a seemingly all-powerful regime; however it still has many difficulties to overcome, many experiences to accumulate, to thwart the efforts of those who want to drag it back to its previous forced docility.

As for the following step, the organization of a class party to go beyond the horizon of the immediate struggle and engage in combat against capitalism, it will have to do be done in close liaison with the proletarian vanguard of other countries, especially those of the dominant capitalist countries, when they are able to break their own fetters which have paralyzed them for decades.

As difficult as this path may seem, as distant as that goal seems, this perspective is objectively opened by the global capitalist crisis, which inevitably undermines all the equilibriums from the previous period. The future belongs to the proletarian struggle, in Egypt as elsewhere!

(1) “*Striking back at Egyptian workers*”, MERIP Reports No. 259 (Summer 2011).

(2) Ibid.

(3) These are the figures given by Anne Alexander, *Al Ahram* (English edition), 12/16/2011; these are the figures of the Egyptian NGO *Awlad al-Ard* which regularly publishes statistics on strikes (we do not know on what basis they are established).

(4) A partial lifting of the law was officially announced by the SCAF on 01/

24/12, on the first anniversary of the revolt Against Mubarak. But repression and killings of demonstrators are still going on.

(5) The Copts are a Christian minority, representing about 10% of the population, which counts among its members an influential fraction of the bourgeoisie; as such, they serve as a convenient scapegoat.

(6) The second round of elections took place in mid-December in the rural provinces of the south with a much higher participation, it confirmed the results of the first round where the Muslim Broth-

erhood had received at least a third of the votes, Salafi's Nour party more than a quarter, followed much further behind, by two bourgeois parties; the "Free Egyptians" who with the support of big capitalists, could afford a flashy campaign that allowed them garner nearly 15% of the votes, and the Wafd, the old traditional party of the democratic bourgeoisie, based on what is left of patronage networks: 7%.

A third and final round was held in January, then it will be elections to the senate, and finally, according to the promise of the Muslim Brotherhood's Tanta-

wi, presidential elections should be held in June, denoting the formal transfer of political power from military to civilian.

But even if that promise is fulfilled, the political weight of the army which is a first-rate economic power in Egypt, will remain prominent.

The abstention rate was, it seems, about 40% of registered voters; despite all the incentives to vote, in some cities a boycott order was particularly closely followed: this means that the majority of citizens then shunned "*the first free elections*" ...

February 6th 2012

## DICTIONSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT AND CLASS PARTY

While the slogans of real democracy flourish in demonstrations around the world, calling for an informal and apolitical union of 99% of the population, with all classes intermingled, Marxists defend more than ever the need for the exploited class to organize independently from all the others for the exclusive defense of its class interests; independent organization whose outcome is the class party, indispensable organ for the proletariat to lead the class struggle to the revolutionary victory materialized in the establishment of its dictatorship on the ruins of the bourgeois state.

### THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

The Marxist position in the question of the state is condensed in these few programmatic lines

*"Between capitalist and communist society there lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat"* (1).

If it need be said, this classic formula shows that revolutionary communism does not call for dictatorship by "political ideal", by an appetite for force or by a thirst for violence, as democrats, the traditional spokesmen of the conservative middle classes, would have us believe (in fact they are more attached to the social order in force than to political democracy since, in the event of a brutal crisis, they do not hesitate to turn to Fascism).

Marxism sustains and demands the

dictatorship because it foresees and struggles for **the revolutionary transformation of capitalist society into socialist society**.

Capitalism is not eternal, contrary to what the bourgeois revolutionaries of the eighteenth century thought and contrary to what the miserable social democrats of today would have us believe, since all their demands are based on maintaining the exploitation of wage labor and on all the relations of exchange specific to the capitalist economy, any more than the previous modes of production and the societies which corresponded to them, neither capitalism nor a society divided into bourgeois and proletarians can gradually and peacefully disappear: that disappearance can only be the result of the deepening, generalization and unification, not only national but international, of the spontaneous, scattered, limited struggle of proletarian groups, on a revolutionary anti-capitalist program.

These theorems of Marxism follow from the historical materialist analysis signifying that the explosion of a social revolution is inevitable, and that if it is victorious, it will put an end to the capitalist mode of production and the division of society into classes.

Marxism is not an abstruse doctrine reserved for the convoluted speculations of intellectuals and academic experts, essentially it affirms three basic positions which are so many calls for revolutionary struggle:

1. Capitalism, that is to say the exploitation of wage labor, is not eternal but historically transient, as were slavery and feudalism, that is to say, servile labor.

2. Capitalism cannot disappear peace-

fully because the capitalist class and the middle classes that support it will never give up their privileges.

3. Even during reactionary periods, that is the periods when the proletariat renounces the revolutionary struggle, accepts the regime that oppresses it economically, politically and morally, or in any case is at least resigned to it, class antagonisms do not disappear, they burst out in broad daylight at the first grave economic or political crisis that the very growth of capitalism inevitably causes.

These are the irrefutable positions upon which the maximal political demands of authentic communism repose, the **dictatorship of the proletariat**, even though it now seems distant, the socialist revolution is bound to burst out at some point in history. It is precisely this moment which the Communists are awaiting and preparing for, because only this revolution can spell the end of the capitalists' barbarism and misery.

But as Engels said to the anti-authoritarian anarchists, "*A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is the act whereby one part of the population [the revolutionary class] imposes its will upon the other part [the whole social aggregate which lives on exploitation of the proletariat] by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon – authoritarian means, if such there be at all*" (2).

To recoil from this perspective in horror, is not just to recoil from socialism, it is to pass over in cowardly silence everything of importance that has happened in human history, all serious steps forward achieved by humanity since it

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## DICTIONSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT AND CLASS PARTY

(Continuation from page 15)

was organized in society, because what revolution which is to any degree profound has ever been peaceful, starting with the bourgeois democratic revolution of 1789?

This being said, it is easy to understand the meaning of the great formula “dictatorship of the proletariat” that not only bourgeois propaganda, but also generations of petit-bourgeois reformers and so-called revolutionaries have managed to discredit even among the proletariat.

It expresses an obvious necessity: the proletariat can not and should not eternally fight in a dispersed manner, nor above all more or less always on the defensive. At a given moment in its struggle it must take the initiative, all the initiative into its hands, to carry the whole fight to the opponent and go on the general offensive.

And just as this general offensive cannot be crowned with success as long as the class enemy has State power, the objective of seizing power, the political overthrow of the bourgeoisie, is the logical conclusion; any radical social struggle is also a political struggle, as Marx affirmed against Proudhon. The purpose of the conquest of power is not only to tear away the supreme weapon of the state from the capitalist class, but more especially to destroy capitalism so that a new society can emerge from the ruins of the exploiting society.

Such a power can only be **revolutionary** because, to maintain itself and prevent counter-revolution, it recognizes no value in the juridical, political and constitutional practices and norms of the old bourgeois regime. It can only be **diktatorial** (as is all bourgeois power, which, behind even the most democratic of facades, capitalist interests dominate, unchallenged) as it is guided only by the interests of the exploited, it must intervene in a **despotic manner** in the relations of production, without being restrained by the interests of the propertied classes, and that it must suppress their inevitable attempts to overthrow it.

The demand for the dictatorship of the proletariat is the central position of genuine Marxism, one that distinguishes it from all the false versions of all the false revolutionaries. Marx explained this to a correspondent:

*“And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the strug-*

*gle between them.*

*Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists, the economic economy of the classes. What I did that was new was to prove: 1. that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production (historische Entwicklungsphasen der Produktion), 2. that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, 3. that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society.”* (3)

In their epoch, Lenin and the Bolsheviks had to wage battle against the reformist socialists who, while claiming to champion the cause of the exploited, condemned the Russian revolution in the name of democracy. Thus Karl Kautsky, the great international theoretician of the Social-Democrat International, was willing to admit that the Soviets would play “*a decisive role in great decisive battles between capital and labor*” but he then immediately adds that the fault of the Bolsheviks was to have “*destroyed the democracy that the Russian people had won*” by making these “*organizations of a single class*” a State organization. Lenin, after quoting this passage, replied sarcastically:

*“But won’t the ‘decisive battles between capital and labor’ decide which of the two classes will assume state power?”*

*‘Nothing of the kind! Heaven forbid! [replies Kautsky] The Soviets, which embrace all the wage-workers, must not become state organisations in the decisive battles!’*

*But what is the state? The state is nothing but a machine for the suppression of one class by another.*

*Thus, the oppressed class, the vanguard of all the working and exploited people in modern society [according to Kautsky] must strive towards the ‘decisive battles between capital and labor,’ but must not touch the machine by means of which capital suppresses labor!—It must not break up that machine! It must not make use of its all-embracing organization for suppressing the exploiters!”* (4).

### UNIQUE CLASS PARTY AND CLASS DICTATORSHIP

The concepts of class party and

class dictatorship are thus central to the Marxist doctrine, as the Communist Manifesto enunciated in 1848, defining the two moments of the revolutionary process that must lead to the demise of capitalism: **constitution of the proletariat into a class, therefore into a party**, and its **constitution as the ruling class**. The proletarian class is not simply a sociological category alongside others that make up bourgeois society, a particular fraction of the 99% with incomes more or less stagnant in relation to the 1% of the super-rich whose wealth increases without cessation; and it is the **class** whose exploitation nourishes, to varying degrees, all the others – and not just a handful of billionaires; and for this reason it is the **only revolutionary** class, the only class whose interests are historical and general – the destruction of capitalism and the establishment of a society without exploitation, and not some **reform** aiming towards a better distribution among the various bourgeois layers profiting from the exploitation of the proletariat.

But the proletariat only becomes a class in the full Marxist sense (a class *for itself and not for Capital*, as written in the *Manifesto*) only when in its struggle for its general historical interests, it succeeds in transcending the limits of category, corporation, factory, region, nation, sex, race, age, etc., in which it is imprisoned by the organization of capitalist society. As the social and political movement objectively tending at the overthrow of capitalism and replacing it with a new society does not exist, or it does not have enough power, the masses of the exploited are only a class in the bourgeois sociological sense of the term: the individuals who compose it live for themselves, but fail, except on rare occasions, to overcome “the struggle of all against all” that characterizes capitalism according to Marx.

The spontaneous movement engendered by the acute worsening of capitalist contradictions is indeed not enough; to become an independent force aware of its general historical interests and fighting for them – a class in the Marxist sense of the term – the proletariat needs “*an organization that inspires it, concretizes it, precedes it, in a word frames it*”: this vital organization is the party. *“The class presupposes the party, because to exist and to act in history it must possess a critical doctrine of history and an aim to attain in it”* (5).

If the proletariat constitutes itself as a class only when it constitutes itself into a party, it can only constitute itself as the ruling class by establishing its

dicatorship, its state – any State being the dictatorship of one class over the others – if its party **directs** this dictatorship, this State.

In the course of this relentless struggle which leads to insurrection, the destruction of the bourgeois and the establishment of proletarian power, the class party plays a decisive role, as the general staff of the revolution. But the seizure of power is itself only the prelude to a social revolution of unprecedented magnitude; the struggle does not stop, it continues with the weapons of power. To overcome the resistance of all kinds from the old world which will not cease to oppose it, since the power of the bourgeoisie can't be simultaneously defeated around the globe, the working class will always need its internationalist and international organ of unification, conscience and direction which is the class party.

History has shown conclusively that in the revolutionary period and after the seizure of power, all other parties, including those which call themselves revolutionary and workers' but which are in reality representatives of classes or sectors perhaps oppressed, but not proletarian, infallibly range themselves on the side of the counter-revolution. Lenin replied in 1919 to those who advocated a government of all "socialist" parties: "When we are reproached with having established a dictatorship of one party and, as you have heard, a united socialist front is proposed, we say, 'Yes, it is a dictatorship of one party! This is what we stand for and we shall not shift from that position because it is the party that has won, in the course of decades, the position of vanguard of the entire factory and industrial proletariat.' (...) When a united socialist front is proposed to us we say that it is the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties that propose it, and that they have wavered in favour of the bourgeoisie throughout the revolution." (6)

Almost a century has passed since and nothing has invalidated this historical lesson.

If in Russia the counter-revolution did not overthrow the Communist Party formally, it is because it had managed to **denature** it completely to the point of transforming it into an agent of emerging state capitalism the growth of which it had attempted to control (because of the material impossibility of going beyond capitalism in the absence of revolution in the West). Stalinism was able to make it appear that the construction of capitalism was a "construction of socialism", and that his ferocious dicta-

torship was a continuation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, even though the Communists, and the proletarians in general, were its first victims!

Subsequently the Stalinists and their descendants completely took on the democratic ideology and principles, although they were and have always been denounced and opposed by Marxism. In his *"Theses on bourgeois democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat,"* Lenin reminds us:

*"History teaches us that no oppressed class ever did, or could, achieve power without going through a period of dictatorship, i.e., the conquest of political power and forceable suppression of the resistance always offered by the exploiters—the resistance that is most desperate, most furious, and that stops at nothing."*

*(...) In explaining the class nature of bourgeois civilization, bourgeois democracy and the bourgeois parliamentary system, all Socialists have expressed the idea formulated with the greatest scientific precision by Marx and Engels [Engels: *Introduction to the The Civil War in France*], 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.*

*(...) in capitalist society, whenever there is any serious aggravation of the class struggle intrinsic to that society, there can be no alternative but the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or the dictatorship of the proletariat. Dreams of some third way are reactionary, petty-bourgeois limitations." (7)*

Today very few people dare to criticize the democratic lie and to defend Marxist positions. But it is the increasingly violent contradictions of capitalism, its increasingly profound crises which inevitably will dissipate the illusions in democracy and in the union of 99% of the population, in thrusting the proletariat into struggle.

Then the **specter of communism** will recommence haunting the world, and then the need for the **unique party of social revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat will reappear with imperious force!**

(4) Lenin, *"The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky".*

(5) Bordiga, *"Party and Class."*

(6) Lenin, *"Speech at the First Congress of Education Workers"*, 07/31/1919.

(7) Lenin, *"Theses on bourgeois democracy and proletarian dictatorship"*, 1919, written for the first congress of the Communist International.

(all quotations in English are taken from the Marxist Internet Archives [MIA])

## 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)

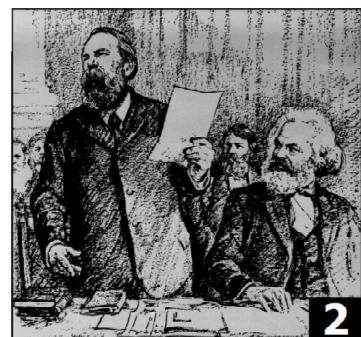
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## Proletarian

International Communist Party («programme communiste»)

### The Fundamentals of Revolutionary Communism



(1) K. Marx, *"Critique of the Gotha Program"*.

(2) F. Engels, *"On authority"*, 1872

(3) K. Marx, *Letter to Weydemeyer*, 03/05/1852.

# ELEMENTS OF MARXIST ORIENTATION

The “*Elements of Marxist Orientation*” from which we publish this extract, first appeared in 1946 as ***Tracciato d'impostazione*** in the first issue of *Prometeo*, the Italian theoretical journal of the Partito Comunista Internazionalista. This text is part of the body of work of Amadeo Bordiga and his comrades to restore the fundamental Marxist positions forgotten or distorted by the victory of the counter-revolution in Russia and throughout the world. Such a work had nothing scholastic or academic about it, its task was to fix the cardinal points in a period where the historical compass no longer pointed north, in the utter confusion which existed in the overwhelming welter of anti-stalinist currents, including even those who claimed to represent the tradition of the Communist Left of Italy: a little later this will result in the scission of the organization and constitution of the party which we claim and sustain on a clear basis .

## MARXISM IS NOT A CHOICE BETWEEN DIFFERENT OPINIONS

*For obvious reasons, this text does not demonstrate what it affirms. It only aims to establish as clearly as possible the orientation of this publication. It simply states and sets down fundamental points to avoid ambiguity or confusion whether inadvertent or otherwise.*

Before convincing our interlocutor, it is necessary for him to understand the position to which he is exposed. Persuasion, propaganda proselytism come only after.

In our conception, opinions are not the product of the work of prophets, apostles or thinkers whose brains create new truths capable of garnering numerous adherents

The reality is quite different. It is the impersonal work of a social vanguard which concentrates and makes obvious theoretical positions which their common conditions of life leads individuals to, well before they are conscious.

Our method is anti-Scholastic anti-cultural, anti-illuministic. In the present theoretical vacuum, reflecting the disorganization of practice, do not be surprised or complain if the clarification of positions leads at first to isolation and not to the rapprochement of adherents.

## THE SENSE IN WHICH MARXISTS ARE JOINED TO A HISTORICAL TRADITION

*Any political movement that puts forward its thesis claims historical precedents and traditions near or far, national or international. The movement of which this review is the theoretical organ also asserts a well-defined origin . But, unlike other movements, it does not start with a revealed “Word” of superhuman origin, or recognize the authority of immutable texts nor a *a fortiori* admits by claiming as points of*

*reference for the study of each issue legal rules in any manner whatsoever, whether innate or immanent in the thoughts or sensibilities of all men.*

We can describe this orientation by the terms Marxism, socialism, communism, political movement of the working class. Unfortunately there has been an abuse of these terms. In 1917 Lenin found that changing the name of the party and returning to the term “Communist” of the Manifesto of 1848 was a fundamental issue. Today, the overwhelming abuse of the word “communist” by parties that are outside of any revolutionary class line creates even greater confusion; movements which are overt defenders of bourgeois institutions still dare to call themselves parties of the proletariat, the term Marxist is used to designate the most absurd conglomeration of parties, including those of anti-Franco Spain.

The historical line that we claim is: the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 (precisely entitled the: *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, without reference to nationality); the basic texts of Marx and Engels; the classic restoration of revolutionary Marxism against all the opportunist revisionists who accompanied the revolutionary victory in Russia and the fundamental Leninist texts; the constitutive declarations pertaining to the first and second congresses of the Moscow International; positions supported by the Left in the Congresses following 1922.

Limiting ourselves to Italy, the historical line is connected to the left current of the Socialist Party during the 1914-1918 war, the establishment of the Communist Party of Italy in Livorno in January 1921, to its Congress in Rome in 1922 , all manifestations of this current which prevailed until the Congress of Lyon in 1926 and remain alive outside the party and the Comintern, abroad.

This line does not coincide with the

movement of the Trotskyist Fourth International. Trotsky responded later, and Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin and other Russian groups of the Bolshevik tradition later still, against the wrong tactic sustained until 1924, eventually recognizing that the deviation worsened to overturn the fundamental political principles of the movement. The Trotskyists today are demanding the restoration of those principles, but they have not clearly rejected the liquidational elements of tactical maneuvering, falsely described as Bolshevik and Leninist.

## ORIENTATION OF THE MARXIST DIALECTICAL METHOD

*As a basis for any research, we must consider the whole historical process that has developed so far and objectively examine current social phenomena.*

*This method has often been claimed, but has also often been misapplied. The research is based on the examination of the material means by which human groups meet their needs, that is, productive technique and, in conjunction with its development, of economic relations. In different epochs these factors determine the superstructure constituted by the legal, political or military institutions and the dominant ideologies.*

This method is defined by the expressions historical materialism, dialectical materialism, economic determinism, scientific socialism, critical communism.

The important thing is to always use positive results supported by facts and not to postulate the intervention of myths or divinities, or principles of “right” or natural “ethics”, such as justice, equality, fraternity and other meaningless abstractions, in seeking to expose and explain human phenomena. For stronger reasons still, it is important not to succumb to pressure from the dominant ideology in using these illusory assumptions or others similar unconsciously or without acknowledgement, or involving them again just at the most fiery and instantly decisive conclusions.

The dialectical method is the only one that overcomes the current contradiction between rigorous continuity and theoretical consistency and the ability to deal critically with old conclusions drawn in terms of formal rules.

Its acceptance does not have the character of a faith nor of an impassioned position of a school or party.

## THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE PRODUCTIVE FORCES AND SOCIAL FORMS

*The productive forces, are those consisting mainly of men suitable for production, their groupings and the tools and mechanical means that they use operating within the framework of the forms of production.*

*We understand by forms the organization and the relations of dependence in which the productive and social activity develops. Included in these forms are all the constituted hierarchies (family, military, theocratic, political), the State and all its agencies, laws and courts that apply the rules and provisions of an economic and legal nature, resistant to any transgression.*

*Society assumes a given type as long as the productive forces are maintained within the framework of its forms of production. At a given point in history, this equilibrium tends to break. There are various causes, including advances in technology, population growth, expansion of communication, increase in productive forces. They come into conflict with traditional forms and tend to break through and when they succeed, we are dealing with a revolution: the community organizes itself according to the new economic, social and legal relations, the new forms take the place of the old.*

The Marxist dialectical method finds, applies and validates its solutions to large-scale collective phenomena using scientific and experimental methods (the same method that thinkers of the bourgeois epoch applied to the natural world in a struggle that was the reflection of the revolutionary social struggle against the absolutist and theocratic regimes, but were not able to press into social applications). It deduced from the results achieved on this terrain solutions to the problem of the behaviour of the single individual, whereas all the opposing religious, legal, philosophical, and economic schools, proceed in the reverse order. That is, they constructed the rules of collective behaviour on the basis of this inconsistent myth of the Individual, presented as an immortal personal soul, or asserted as the subject of law and citizenship, studied as an immutable monad of economic practice, and so on. But today science has continued beyond its fecund hypotheses about individual material indivisible atoms; now they are described as rich and complex, far from being reduced to incorruptible monads, they are considered as points of intersection of lines of force radiating

from exterior energetic fields, so we could say that the cosmos is not a function of units, but any units are a function of the entire cosmos.

Whoever believes in the individual and speaks about personality, dignity, freedom, responsibility of man or citizen has nothing to do with Marxist thought. Men are not put into motion by opinions, beliefs or any phenomenon of so-called thought from which their will and action is inspired. They are driven to act out of their needs which take the character of interests when the same material needs motivate entire groups at the same time. They are faced with the limitations which the social structure and ambiance place between them and the satisfaction of these exigencies. And they respond individually and collectively in a way that, for the proponent median, is necessarily determined before the interplay of stimuli and reactions has created in their minds these reflections which are called feelings, thoughts, judgements.

This is naturally of very great complexity and some cases go against the grain of the general law, which is nevertheless justified.

At any rate, whomever involves the individual conscience, moral principles, opinions and decisions of the individual or the citizen as active causes in the interplay of social and historical facts does not have the right to call himself a Marxist.

## CLASS, CLASSSTRUGGLE, PARTY

*The conflict between productive forces and social forms is manifested as a struggle between classes that have competing economic interests, in its culminating phase, this fight becomes armed struggle for the conquest of political power.*

From a Marxist perspective, class is not a fixed statistic but an organic active force and is manifested when the simple correlation of economic conditions and interests expand themselves into action and in a common struggle.

In these situations, the movement is guided by avant-garde groupings and organisms, whose form is the modern and evolved political class party. The collectivity, whose actions culminate in the action of a party, acts in history with an efficiency and a real dynamic that cannot be achieved at the small scale of individual action.

It is the party that succeeds in having a theoretical awareness of the development of events and thus an influence on their outcome in the sense determined by the productive forces and relations.

## CONFORMISM, REFORMISM, ANTIFORMISM

Despite the difficulty and complexity of issues, we cannot explain the principles and directives without recourse to schemas for simplification. To this end, we distinguish three types of political movements that will characterize them all.

**Conformist** movements fight to keep existing forms and institutions intact by banning any transformation, and claim to refer to immutable principles, whether presented as religious, philosophical or legal.

**Reformist** movements, while not wishing the sudden and violent disruption of traditional institutions, are aware of the excessive pressure that the productive forces have on them and call for gradual and partial changes to the existing order.

**Revolutionary** movements (here we adopt the provisional term: **Antiformist**) proclaim and implement the assault on the old forms, and even before knowing how to theorize the characteristics of the new order, tend to attack the old forms, causing the irresistible rise of new forms.

All schematization presents the danger of errors. It can be questioned if the Marxist dialectic could not also lead to the construction of a general and artificial model of historical events, while reducing their whole development into a succession of dominant classes which are born revolutionary, grow to become reformist and eventually end up conservative. The advent of the classless society by the revolutionary victory of the proletarian class poses a term suggestive of this development (what Marx called "the end of human prehistory").

But this term could also seem to be only a metaphysical construction, like those of the fallacious ideologies of the past. Hegel (as Marx had demonstrated in his time) reduced his dialectical system to an absolute construction, thus falling, in an unconscious way, into this metaphysics which he had transcended in the destructive part of its criticism (philosophical reflection of the bourgeois revolutionary struggle).

This is why Hegel, crowning the classical philosophy of German idealism and bourgeois thought, affirmed the absurd thesis that the history of action and thought was finally crystallized in a perfect system, in the conquest of the Absolute. The Marxist dialectic eliminates such a static conclusion.

However Engels in his classic expo-

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## ELEMENTS OF MARXIST ORIENTATION

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sition of scientific socialism (as opposed to Utopian theory, which entrusted the social renewal to propagands for the adoption of a plan for a better society proposed by an author or a sect) may seem to admit a rule or general law of historical movement when he uses phrases such as: moving forward, the world progresses.

Such vigorous propagandistic for-

mulas do not have to make believe they have discovered a recipe in which you can enclose the infinite universe of possible developments of human society, a recipe that takes the place of the usual bourgeois abstractions of the evolution of civilization, progress, etc.. The wonderful advantage of the weapon of dialectical research is that it is essentially revolutionary: it manifests itself in the relentless destruction of countless theoretical systems which, in turn, cloak the dominance of the privileged classes.

At the cemetery of broken idols, we must not substitute a new myth, a new

word, a new credo, but the realistic expression of factual circumstances and the optimum developments that bring them about. For example, the correct Marxist formulation is not "*one day the proletariat will take political power, will destroy the capitalist social system and build the communist economy,*" but, conversely, "*it is only by its organization as a class and thus in a political party, and the armed establishment of its dictatorship, that the proletariat will destroy the capitalist power and economy and make possible a non-capitalist and non-mercantile economy*".

## WOMEN AND CLASS STRUGGLE

*“...The first condition for the liberation of women is to bring the whole female sex back into public industry, and that this in turn demands the abolition of the monogamous family as the economic unit of society”.* (Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*)

The bourgeoisie boasts of having liberated women by opening the doors to the world. Is it necessary, as reformism claims, to be content with extending the work of the bourgeoisie? Should we, contrary to Marxist analysis, look for “specific” causes of the oppression of women? These are the questions that are generally bandied about among the “Left” on the subject of the oppression of women.

For the first time since primitive communism, capitalism has actually reintegrated women into social production. In spite of the brutality with which this was done communists have always stressed its revolutionary nature. But they have shown that all the female workers gained was exploitation, constant insecurity and the unemployment that goes hand in hand with wage labor without being relieved of the millenial yoke of petty housework. Whereas, among women in the exploited class who live off their salary, capital destroyed the two foundations of a monogamous family (1) i.e., inheritance and the economic supremacy of the husband, it still has not abolished the family, for the same reason, – as Trotsky explained in *The Revolution Betrayed*, that the family cannot be destroyed, much less abolished, by decree; it must be replaced. Its disappearance presupposes that society assume the domestic responsibilities necessary for the survival of the species. Capitalism cannot do this.

The double slavery of women work-

ers is thus rooted in the deepest contradictions of capital. Socialization of production has brought women back into public industry, but only by subjecting them to wage slavery. The foundations upon which the family once rested have been destroyed. The domestic economy has been absorbed into capitalist industry (how many families still bake their own bread, can their own preserves, make their own linen etc.) so much so that, to compensate for the imbalance of its own system bourgeois society has had to institute a whole network of cooperative organizations which are nothing other than what Lenin called, “*germs of socialism*” even though they reflect all the defects of the market economy that surrounds them. But the family outlives its necessity, bringing its full weight to bear on the working woman, since the condition for its disappearance is the socialization of exchange and distribution, i.e., communism.

This is the ultimate reason for the oppression of working women in bourgeois society. Their situation as women **conditions** their super-exploitation in the factory, where child-bearing and servitude depreciate their labor power and place them at a disadvantage in the incessant competition capital creates and maintains among those it exploits. Chronic unemployment, which is the fate of the proletariat, is further aggravated among women both by competition and by all the other factors that combine to drive women back into the home. Capital not only stands in the way of the emancipation of women, but also obstructs the realization of the social tendency it has itself engendered, i.e., the return of women to public industry.

Bourgeois society has inherited the monogamous family form from previous societies. In Engels’ words, it “*comes on the scene as the subjugation of the one*

*sex by the other; it announces a struggle between the sexes unknown throughout the whole previous prehistoric period*” (*The Origin of the Family*). It is a form of family based on private property, the dominance of the father, and inheritance of wealth by the children, which restricts women to domestic duties and prohibits them from public activity. This family conformed so well, at least during its early period of expansion, to the capitalist mode of production that the bourgeoisie, as soon as it had become the ruling class, strove to reinforce it by increasing the authority of the father over his family (the Napoleonic code took away freedoms that women were accorded by habits and customs in effect during the Middle Ages).

But capital could not develop without destroying the foundations of the family (while remaining just as indissolubly linked to it as it was to private property) by drawing women out of their age-old seclusion. Among the proletariat, women’s work is the direct consequence of the needs of capitalist exploitation and its constant quest for labor, and it is this work that breaks up the family. Among the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie, however, it appears as a secondary and later consequence of the destruction or disintegration of the family.

The destruction of the peasant and artisan’s family followed the destruction of small production. With it disappeared the pre-capitalist form of servitude that condemned women to a limited, mind-dulling role in the family industry (2) as well as the safety and security she received in return. The bourgeoisie boasts of having liberated women, which it has done but **for** capital and within its own limits. Even the bourgeois family, guardian of property and accumulator of capital, loses its rationale when capital becomes so concentrated that its reproduc-

tion is carried out by banks and corporations. The liberalization of laws concerning women that we have seen in the past years is the result of this dissolution.

While women workers are not the only ones crushed in the contradictions of capital it would be false to conclude, as many groups do, that women as a whole, and in particular those members of the petit-bourgeoisie who share a similar lot, are in the same situation as women workers, or that there is a general oppression of all women which may or may not be supplemented by wage slavery.

It is true that the generalization of capitalism turns everything into commodities and gives all work, even capitalist work, the characteristics of wage labor. It thus results in a (relative) uniformity of lifestyles such that modern feminists can present "women's problems" as representative of all women. In reality if bourgeois society extends the contradiction between social labor and persistence of the family to all women, this contradiction nonetheless assumes different features for each class. The bourgeois woman does not experience the exploitation of wage-slavery, which is based on the production of surplus-value. More often than not her employment consists in helping to extort surplus value from the proletariat. She relieves herself of domestic duties in part or altogether by engaging a maid, i.e., a proletarian. "*So long as society is incapable of taking upon itself the material concern for the family the mother can successfully fulfill a social function only on condition that she has in her service a white slave: nurse, servant, cook etc. Thus the proletarian woman is not only enslaved to her own family but to that of the bourgeoisie and to a large extent the petit-bourgeoisie*" (*The Revolution Betrayed*).

The oppression experienced by bourgeois women is essentially legal in nature (ownership of property and free disposal of possessions) or related to professional promotion, when she encounters resistance from men hostile toward their new competition. Democratic reforms offer a partial solution, since child-bearing and the family remain an unavoidable handicap, linked to the very nature of this society, in competition with men for "careers". It is true that capital also creates competition between male and female members of the proletariat, since the employment of female workers at a lower price serves to increase the general level of exploitation. But at the same time it compels them to unite against it. Male workers cannot adequately defend themselves against exploitation without fighting against the exploitation of women workers and women workers cannot im-

prove their situation without fighting alongside their class brothers against capital. The two have the same historical goal: to overthrow bourgeois society and institute a class dictatorship. But among the bourgeoisie competition between men and women is irreversible, which is why oppression of bourgeois women is expressed in feminist movements which are aimed essentially against men.

A typical form of this struggle was the demand of the old feminist movement for the right to vote. Today, now that legal equality is close to realization, there are a few feminist voices that sometimes speak of the destruction of capitalism – as it has become more and more clear that women's liberation will be impossible without it; but since they do not wish to countenance that the class struggle is the only way to accomplish this destruction, they inevitably fall into sterile speculations about the revolution of consciousness.

This new feminism flourishes in the middle class. Admittedly a near-infinity of categories exists between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat: the petit-bourgeois strata which, by definition, live in "intermediate conditions" – the strata which lacking their own ideology, constantly vacillate between proletariat and bourgeoisie. But recognizing that these strata – some of which are very close to the proletariat – exist, and taking them into account is one thing; but to try to build social theories on the basis of their necessarily hybrid conditions is something altogether different.

Therefore, communists reject the thesis that women of all social classes, on the basis of a "specific oppression", can act against capitalism as a whole and pursue their struggle until the end of their oppression. This can only be done by those who have nothing to lose in this society: the powerful and growing army of the proletarians of both sexes.

Historically all battles fought by women as such, in the name of their liberation have always remained on the terrain of bourgeois democracy; it could not be otherwise. Movements that aim for the unity of women above classes always fall into the hands of their bourgeois component. They only succeed in guaranteeing their own submission to the bourgeoisie. Interclassism is the substance of feminism: "*They would have to reconcile classes*", wrote radical feminist writer K. Millet (*Sexual Politics*, p. 89), "*unite the lady and the worker, the prostitute and the dignified mother in a common cause. This is the way to insure the success of the revolution*".

It would be wrong to think that feminist groups have a monopoly on inter-

classism. All the reformist parties adopt the same positions and want to unite women of different social strata.

Marxism has shown that, on the contrary, women's liberation will be the task of the communist revolution and the deepening of class struggles.

But this does not mean that fighting the oppression of women is useless before the final revolution! On the contrary, fighting to relieve working women of petty housework that crushes them and fighting salary and job discrimination is not only part of an elementary defense of the proletariat, but also is a **condition of** their unification.

Without it there would be no question of effective resistance against capitalist exploitation since it uses the divisions it creates between levels of workers to its own advantage. Without it there would be no question of women joining the revolutionary political struggle.

Moreover, communists point out the abyss between real equality and formal equality between the sexes, and they have always included "democratic" reforms in their programs such as the right to divorce or to abortion, reforms that are compatible with bourgeois society but that it has never entirely achieved. They combat laws like those that restrict abortion because they are an additional burden to women – and particularly the proletariat – who lack the means to procure abortions and also because the elimination of legal discrimination, though it would not end the oppression of women, reveals the real economic nature of this oppression, and clarifies the objectives of the struggle: "*The peculiar character of the supremacy of the husband over the*

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## «el programa comunista»

Nº 49, Septiembre de 2011

### EN ESTE NÚMERO

- • • Presentación • • • Las revueltas en países árabes y el imperialismo • • • Crisis capitalista, luchas obreras y partido de clase • • • La «cuestión china»
- • • Hace cuarenta años moría Amadeo Bordiga • • • El partido comunista de Italia frente a la ofensiva fascista (1921-1924). (Informe a la Reunión General del Partido, en Florencia, del 30 de abril al 1º de mayo de 1967) - Primera parte • • • León Trotsky: Informe sobre la crisis económica mundial y las tareas de la Internacional Comunista

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## WOMEN AND CLASS STRUGGLE

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*wife in the modern family, the necessity of creating real social equality between them and the way to do it, will only be seen in the clear light of day when both possess legally complete equality of rights". (Engels, *The Origin of the Family*).*

The Russian revolution realized these rights more radically than any bourgeois democracy. Only when it was crushed by the combined weight of isolation and the forces engendered by domestic small production did the Stalinist **counter-revolution** rediscover the "sacred character" of the family as one of the conditions of the capitalist development of Russia.

Finally, it would be false to conclude from the necessary class intransigence that communists do not try to rally non-

proletarians, and especially elements from the intermediate strata to the side of the revolution. On the contrary they exploit all the contradictions of capitalism to achieve this. But they do so not on the basis of a reformist and interclassist feminism, but on the basis of agitation and propaganda for **communism**.

nogamy in its etymological meaning, a couple consisting of one man and one woman (a definition by which our society could hardly be called monogamous) but in its historical sense: the family that, following after the different forms of family of primitive communism, for the first time consecrates the insolubility of the marital tie and whose structure has remained basically the same throughout ancient, feudal and bourgeois society.

(2). Just as small-scale production is the carrier of the most reactionary social oppression of women, the emancipation of the petit-bourgeois woman from her domestic slavery is inseparable from the transcending of small scale production. The emancipation of working women can only come about through the struggle against capital.

If, however, a woman of petit-bourgeois status were to defend her social class, she would also be defending her enslavement as a woman.

(1). Engels calls a monogamous family the form of family that appeared with class society: "*It was the first form of the family to be based not on natural but on economic conditions – on the victory of private property over natural, communal property*". (Engels, *The Origin of the Family*). Its aims were to "*make the man supreme in the family and to propagate, as the future heirs be his wealth, children indisputably his own*".

Thus Engels does not consider mo-

## MARCH 8TH, A PROLETARIAN AND COMMUNIST DAY

At the International Socialist congress held in Copenhagen during August and September 1910 Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin proposed that March 8th be proclaimed an international day for proletarian women. It was to be a "celebration" similar to the first of May and like the first of May, it originated in a bloody episode from the class war.

In 1908, two years previously, the women working at a textile factory in New York went on strike. The management responded by locking them inside the factory. On March 8th a fire of indeterminate cause swept through the factory in which the workers were trapped incinerating 129 of them.

Ever since, March 8th has been an important day in the class struggle.

March 8th 1917 (February 23rd on the old Russian calendar) saw workers and proletarian women participate in the February revolution that drove out Czarism. Trotsky says, in his History of the Russian Revolution:

*"Thus the fact is that the February revolution was begun from below, overcoming the resistance of its own revolutionary organizations, the initiative being taken of their own accord by the most oppressed and downtrodden part of the proletariat – women textile workers, among them no doubt many soldiers' wives. The overgrown bread-lines had provided the last stimulus. About 90,000 workers, men and women,*

*were on strike that day.... A mass of women, not all of them workers, flocked to the municipal Duma demanding bread.... Women's Day passed successfully, with enthusiasm and without victims.*

*The importance of the contribution made by women to the revolution is confirmed by this report in Pravda on March 18: "The women were ready to fight as they had never been before. Not only the working women but all women; those who line up for bread and kerosene. They organised meetings, met in the streets and strode to the municipal Duma to demand bread. They stopped trams shouting, 'into the streets, comrades!' They also stopped work at factories and offices. All in all it was a glorious day of mounting revolutionary spirit." On March 19th Pravda continued: "The women were the first to hit the streets of St Petersburg. In addition in Moscow it was they who decided the fate of the troops. They went down into the barracks to convince the soldiers to turn to the side of the revolution. In the misery of war women suffered tremendously. Although their loved ones were at the front and they were pre-occupied with their children's hunger at home they never lost hope. They brandished the flag of the revolution".*

March 8th is an important day in the struggle of the proletariat and it is indivisibly linked with the class struggle itself.

Today, after the counter-revolutionary storm that destroyed the international revolutionary party of the proletariat as well as proletarian traditions, the proletarian and communist nature of March 8th is obscured and corrupted.

Women's organizations linked to reformist parties used to celebrate March 8th in the name of social progress, "concrete gains" and parliamentary laws. It is no longer a day of struggle but a diversion with dancing, children's parties, films and reformist propaganda sessions. With revolting demagogic, the international bourgeoisie and the Feminists celebrate March 8th not as a day for proletarian women but for women in general and even for the woman as housewife. To make this day theirs its whole meaning had to be changed; according to them the women of the Russian revolution fought for civil marriage, laws for equality of rights for illegitimate and legitimate children, divorce laws, maternity leave and freedom of contraception and abortion.

This is not true! To say that the Russian women fought **only** for these things brings their struggle down to the level of bourgeois reformist demands. The Russian proletariat fought not only against religious marriage and juridical inferiority but against the whole social order that engendered these contradictions. They fought not only for equality before the law and a series of rights, or worse – for an illusory social well-being, but moreover were contributing to the overthrow of international capital with the aim of a different social order. The most advanced women of the proletariat were perfectly aware of this. It was because of this that

they were able to endure the hardships that followed, the understanding being that the legal gains made would not be the final resolution to their problems since these were still based on capitalism (when it even rose to that level) in Russia, but would only expose the roots of their troubles.

In memory of the factory workers of New York, Leningrad and the whole world we celebrate March 8th as **International Proletarian Women's Day, a proletarian and communist day!**

(“le prolétaire”, Nr. 192, March 8<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> 1975)

## Lenin International Working Women's Day

The gist of Bolshevism and the Russian October Revolution is getting into politics the very people who were most oppressed under capitalism. They were downtrodden, cheated and robbed by the capitalists, both under the monarchy and in the bourgeois-democratic republics. So long as the land and the factories were privately owned this oppression and deceit and plunder of the people's labour by capitalists were inevitable.

The essence of Bolshevism and the Soviet power is to expose the falsehood and mummery of bourgeois democracy, to abolish the private ownership of land and the factories and concentrate all state power in the hands of the working and exploited masses. They, these masses, get hold of politics, that, is, of the business of building the new society. This is no easy task: the masses are downtrodden and oppressed by capitalism, but there is no other way – and there can be no other way – out of the wage-slavery and bondage of capitalism. But you cannot draw the masses into politics without drawing in the women as well. For under capitalism the female half of the human race is doubly oppressed. The working woman and the peasant woman are oppressed by capital, but over and above that, even in the most democratic of the bourgeois republics, they remain, firstly, deprived of some rights because the law does not give them equality with men; and secondly – and this is the main thing – they remain in “household bondage”, they continue to be “household slaves”, for they are overburdened with the drudgery of the most squalid, backbreaking and stultifying toil in the kitchen and the family household.

No party or revolution in the world has ever dreamed of striking so deep at the roots of the oppression and inequality of women as the Soviet, Bolshevik revolution is doing. Over here, in Soviet Russia, no trace is left of any inequality between men and women under the law. The Soviet power has eliminated all there was of the especially disgusting, base and hypocritical inequality in the laws on marriage and the family and inequality in respect of children. This is only the

first step in the liberation of woman. But none of the bourgeois republics, including the most democratic, has dared to take even this first step. The reason is awe of “sacrosanct private property”.

The second and most important step is the abolition of the private ownership of land and the factories. This and this alone opens up the way towards a complete and actual emancipation of woman, her liberation from “household bondage” through transition from petty individual housekeeping to large-scale socialised domestic services. The transition is a difficult one, because it involves the remoulding of the most deep-rooted, inveterate, hidebound and rigid “order” (indecency and barbarity would be nearer the truth). But the transition has been started, the thing has been set in motion, we have taken the new path.

And so on this international working women's day countless meetings of working women in all countries of the world will send greeting to Soviet Russia, which has been the first to tackle this unparalleled and incredibly hard but great task, a task that is universally great and truly liberatory. There will be bracing calls not to lose heart in face of the fierce and frequently savage bourgeois reaction. The “freer” or “more democratic” a bourgeois country is, the wilder the rampage of its gang of capitalists against the workers' revolution, an example of this being the democratic republic of the United States of North America. But the mass of workers have already awakened. The dormant, somnolent and inert masses in America, Europe and even in backward Asia were finally roused by the imperialist war.

The ice has been broken in every corner of the world.

Nothing can stop the tide of the peoples' liberation from the imperialist yoke and the liberation of working men and women from the yoke of capital. This cause is being carried forward by tens and hundreds of millions of working men and women in town and countryside. That is why this cause of labour's freedom from the yoke of capital will triumph all over the world.

March 4th, 1921

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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.