

Proletarian

Organ of the International Communist Party

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

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Wave of Strikes in Education in the United States Workers Must Fight on Class Terrain to win their Struggle!

Since the beginning of 2018, the United States has been affected by massive strikes by education workers. The trigger was the struggle in West Virginia.

From late February to mid-March, 20,000 teachers and more than 10,000 school bus drivers, cafeteria workers and other support staff went on massive strikes for higher salaries and better coverage for medical expenses. This strike was partly successful: workers gained 5% more for themselves but also for all public sector workers. This victory is partial because nothing has been achieved for health care; however, increases in medical care costs, only temporarily «frozen» for 17 months, risk effectively cancelling the salary increase.

**DESPITE THIS, THIS STRIKE IS
EXEMPLARY BECAUSE IT WAS
CONDUCTED, IN PART,
ON CLASS TERRAIN**

The workers fought over their own demands – wage increases and cheaper access to health care – and not over the prospect of reforming the education system to make it more «democratic» or «emancipatory». The salary issue is essential: many earn a real salary of less than \$15 an hour, the families of some teachers must access the government's food stamp program, and many teachers are forced to hold two jobs... The plight of non-

teaching staff is just as dramatic.

They fought with a class weapon: the strike without prior limitation of duration. The workers have stopped work for nine days without exhausting themselves in the strategy of flurries of pre-announced or one-day rotating disengagements which – by their punctual nature – do not attack the employer but only beg to be «listened to». The strategy of «days of action» or one-day preannounced work stoppages favored by collaborationist forces, serves only to weaken the struggle and exhaust the strikers.

In contrast, in Virginia, for nine days, all public schools (757 in total) in the

state's 55 counties were closed. This total strike period was conducted when all the union apparatus' wanted was to call for a rotating strike and then a two-day limited strike.

The struggle was conducted in unity. The fight brought together workers affiliated with unions representing different categories of employees: the West Virginia Education Association (WVEA), the West Virginia Teachers' Federation (AFT-WV) and the West Virginia School Service Employees Association (WVSSPA) and included non-union members. In addition, the strikers fought for wage increases for all public sector workers, 200,000 people (more than 10 percent of West Virginia's population).

This strike was conducted despite and against bourgeois legality. The right to strike is limited in West Virginia and, in 2016, a law known as the «right to work» came into force in order to paralyze trade union activity as much as

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Considerations on the Party's Organic Activity When the General Situation is Historically Unfavourable

- Introduction -

The «Considerations» were drafted at the beginning of 1965, in lapidary form, with the precise intention of clarifying and reaffirming the tasks of the party in a phase, not of great class confrontations, but of a deep stagnation of the real movement of the proletariat, and an obscuring of its political consciousness (the party). They represent what we can rightly call our «What is to be done?» (Lenin); we don't state this rhetorically, or on account of superficial analogies, but in a much more profound and dialectical sense because they stand on exactly the same line and correspond with different words, to the same objective inscribed in the general vision of Marxism.

As with «What is to be done?», they aim at giving a correct orientation to the party organ, which «in a historically unfavorable general situation» can only be that of «marching in a compact group along a precipitous and difficult path, firmly holding each other by the hand» as

Lenin said (1). In such a situation, it is not,

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Wave of Strikes in Education in the United States

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possible. Shortly before the strike began, the State Attorney General declared the strike illegal and threatened workers with «action» (i.e. repression) because «the imminent cessation of work is illegal». In West Virginia, teachers' and other public employees' unions have never had legal recognition, they are considered «voluntary associations».

Workers have organized themselves. The strike was triggered by discussions in schools, as well as on social media, by teachers in the southern coal-mining counties. The very bourgeois New York Times noted that teachers in West Virginia had «*found ways to organize and act outside of traditional unionism. Teachers and public service workers across the state expressed their frustrations in a huge Facebook group, and their walkout eventually included members from three different unions and many non-union members*» (1). Unions were forced to work together but also with non-union members at county level (2).

This is how the strikers succeeded in countering the maneuvers of the collaborationist trade-union bosses. Not only did the strikers refuse to allow themselves to be locked into a time-limited strike, but they did not agree to return to work after the initial announcement of an agreement between the governor and the unions. The strikers, rightly considering the guarantees insufficient (this agreement also provided that the increase in wages would be paid by a reduction in social spending), voted county by county. At the end of the vote, the decision was clear: continue the strike, keep the schools closed.

The education employees sought class solidarity. They didn't launch interclassist calls upon the «users» or for the defense of a supposed «general interest». They turned to the many-faceted working classes of this mining state. They showed a real classist solidarity towards the proletarian families. In a state where poverty is rampant, where two-thirds of the students depend on free breakfast and lunch, strikers and their supporters collected and distributed food for the pupils throughout the strike.

They commemorated the miners' struggles in the 1970s when picket lines completely shut down production. They proudly wore red scarves, recalling the great miners' strike of the 1920s: the Coal Wars. During these conflicts, thousands of miners armed themselves to face troops, cops and scabs. It was one of the greatest proletarian uprisings in

U.S. history; many miners were murdered and thousand were tried on charges of murder, conspiracy, and treason.

EVEN IF THE STRIKERS' VICTORY IS PARTIAL, THEIR STRUGGLE IS EXEMPLARY FOR MANY REASONS

The West Virginia teachers' strike has been widely commented on by groups that claim to be revolutionary. While some wanted to see in it more than it really *meant* – a promising first step – others denigrated it because of its limitations. This is particularly the case of the Trotskyists of the International Committee of the Fourth International (their national sections are called the Socialist Equality Party and they operate the wsws.org website) who present its outcome as a defeat and a betrayal: «*Contrary to the proclamations of the unions, however, the deal reached to end the strike is not a victory for teachers. It does nothing to address teachers' central demand—an end to escalating health care costs through the Public Employee Insurance Agency (PEIA) that effectively wipe out any pay raises. Moreover, the one-time five percent raise for public workers will be funded by deep cuts to social programs (...). Instead of taxing the wealthy and the energy corporations that dominate the state and control both the Democrats and Republicans, any additional funding for meager pay increases will come from the cancelation of a free community college tuition program, a \$10 million reduction in the Medicaid health care program for low-income residents, the elimination of new funding for free health care clinics, and other cuts*» (3).

Firstly, stopping a strike, even on a compromise, especially when it is the workers themselves who decide it, and not the trade union bureaucracies in their place, is not necessarily a failure and even less a betrayal. The balance of power may be too unfavorable to continue the struggle with a chance of success; it is then better to stop the conflict and resume it later with a greater chance of success, rather than risk a crushing defeat that would demoralize and disorganize the workers for a long time to come.

As Marx and Engels said in the Communist Manifesto: «*Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of the workers*». A struggle should not be judged solely on the basis of its immediate contingent

results. This is why it is necessary to know how to appreciate the real possibilities of success according to the balance of forces at a given moment and to set immediate objectives on the basis of this relationship of forces, without losing sight of the longer-term objective of maintaining and strengthening solidarity and class organization. It is clear that the workers of Virginia did not have the capacity and the organization to impose a more favorable balance of power to go further (for instance some strikers had proposed to occupy the Capitol).

Second, in addition to reformism («taxing the wealthy») there is another shameful process: dividing the ranks of the workers by accusing the strikers who obtained an increase of being responsible for the austerity measures that hit the proletarians (and these were planned anyways!) It is worthy of bourgeois politicians and media who like to present certain categories of workers as privileged. Whether the SEP/WSWS likes it or not, proletarians cannot, as long as the bourgeois state and capitalism persists, claim absolute victory every time and everywhere, even by using strike action, even with classist methods. But what they must be absolutely convinced of is that there is no more effective way to achieve satisfaction.

Virginia's education workers have shaken the malignant social status quo by using the only weapon to resist capitalist attacks: strike action. This strike was massive, unifying and generated class solidarity. Today, it serves as an example for large-scale struggles in education in Arizona, Kentucky, North Carolina, Colorado, and Oklahoma...

In Oklahoma, budget cuts have been very significant (30% in reductions in ten years), teachers have to pay for some school materials and schools have to close one more day a week to limit operating expenses.

In Arizona, the situation is staggering: «classrooms are overcrowded, desks are broken and not replaced, and ceilings are in danger of collapsing. Chairs are missing but there is no shortage of rodents invading the schools, the equipment is out of date and school buses are not equipped with air conditioning. One of the maps displayed in a classroom still displays the Soviet Union, textbooks still speak of President George W. Bush» (4).

There again, the workers organized themselves autonomously by taking advice from the strikers in Virginia.

They prepared the strike thoroughly for two months before commencing. This brought together more than 100,000 people – education workers but also families – in a thousand demonstrations on 11 April, which were also opportunities for discussion to decide on the forms of struggle to be implemented.

As early as 12 April, the governor was forced to swallow his 1% increase proposal and announced a 20% increase in teachers' salaries by 2020, but also an increase in the education budget. This first tactical thrust was not enough for the workers because they defended an increase for all staff and not only teachers. In a vote, nearly 80% of the 57,000 participating workers voted in favor of strike action. This took place from 26 April to 3 May, and it obtained satisfaction: an immediate increase in the wages of all workers of 10%, to which will be added 5% in 2019 and 5% in 2020.

EDUCATION WORKERS HAVE SHOWN THAT FOR THE EXPLOITED: «OUR WEAPON IS THE STRIKE!»

More than ever before, in the face

of the maneuvers of collaborationism, which puts forward its «days of action», its «go-slow strikes» or its «rotating strikes» and these only when all other legal, juridical and parliamentary means have been exhausted, the proletarians must know that only a strike without prior notice and without any time limit makes it possible to build the most favorable balance of power for obtaining demands and makes it possible to unify the struggles in order that tomorrow the proletariat is able to launch a proletarian counter-offensive against the bourgeoisie's attacks.

(1) 'West Virginia Walkouts a Lesson in the Power of a Crowd-Sourced

Strike', <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/08/us/west-virginia-teachers-strike.html>

(2) Strikers reportedly told union officials: «*You can either get behind us or we'll run you over!*»! See http://www.internationalist.org/westvirginiateachersrevolt_1803.html

(3) «Lessons of the West Virginia Teachers Strike», <https://www.internationalist.org/en/articles/2018/03/08/pers-m08.html> This is also the position of the Internationalist Communist Tendency (*Battaglia Comunista*) whose anti-unionism on principle makes it oppose even rank- and- file organizations. See: <http://www.leftcom.org/en/articles/2018-06-01/usa-the-role-of-the-union-in-the-teachers-strikes>

(4) «The Teachers' Revolt in the United States», npa2009.org

Brazil caught between economic crisis, political rivalries and class struggle

(this article was written before the presidential election of october and the victory of the backed by the big bourgeoisie, far-right candidate Bolsonaro)

Brazil, the Latin American giant with a population of more than 200 million, whose area is twice as large as that of the European Union, had risen to become the world's sixth richest economy, according to GDP (Gross Domestic Product) figures. A few years ago, it was included in the BRICS – a journalistic category which was supposed to include the most dynamic «emerging» countries, those who sooner or later were irresistibly destined to play the first violins of the world capitalist economy and which, in the meantime, were driving forces: Brazil, Russia, India, China (to which South Africa was later added). But the global economic crisis of 2008 has reshuffled the cards; nobody speaks about the BRICS anymore, and today, Brazil, whose GDP now sits in eighth place in the world, is in its third year of recession – the longest and deepest in decades, including the 1930s. From 2014, when the crisis began at the commencement of the year, GDP fell by more than 7%, the budget deficit exploded, the official unemployment rate reached a historical high of more than 13%, which corresponds to 14 million unemployed – this official rate only deceives part of the reality, real unemployment (including underemployment) is much more important.

Over the last fifteen years, Brazil has been governed by governments from the PT (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*, Workers Party), the main left-wing party whose charismatic leader is the

former trade unionist, Lula. Gathering trade union leaders, left-wing Christians, opportunist «far-left» currents (Trotskyist and others), etc., when the military dictatorship ended about 30 years ago the PT was born as the party of class collaboration which the democracy of the «new republic» needed in order to keep a tight rein on the workers' struggles (1).

After steadily increasing its electoral successes (winning municipal elections in major cities and regional elections in particular), the PT ended in 2002 by winning the presidential election. In order to be elected, Lula had had to convince the bourgeoisie that he really had the stature of a «statesman» – that is, someone capable of understanding and defending capitalist interests in a responsible way, and not only as that of a demagogue gifted in deceiving the workers, and that he was going to be in the continuity of previous governments. Upon his arrival in power, Lula, allied with the bourgeois parties, took measures in the direction demanded by the capitalist circles and welcomed by the IMF: raise of the retirement age of civil servants from 55 to 60 years, market flexibility, independence of the central bank, regular pay-downs of the debt principal (which the PT claimed it once wanted to repudiate or at least renegotiate), abandonment of agrarian reform in favor of the development of agro-business, etc.

The presidency of Lula corresponded to the boom in the price of raw mate-

rials on the world market; it led to strong economic growth in Brazil, which is a major exporter of these substances. This allowed the government to finance social measures; among others, in 2005, the *Bolsa familia*, a state allocation of roughly 35 to 45 US dollars per month allocated to the poorest families (more than 20 million people benefit). These measures were in fact only the crumbs of Brazil's economic boom (economic growth reached 4% per year in those years), whose main beneficiary was obviously the bourgeoisie, but they explain the popularity long enjoyed and still enjoyed in part by the PT among certain proletarian strata in spite of its pro-capitalist policy.

In 2006, Lula was comfortably re-elected, despite various corruption scandals involving elected officials and PT leaders, the main one being that of *mensalao* (the «monthly payment» distributed to the deputies!): The government bought hundreds of parliamentarians' votes to pass laws. To form his government Lula formed an alliance with the centrist bourgeois party PMBD, to which he entrusted important ministries.

The international economic crisis of 2008-2009 was also felt sharply in Brazil, where it was the largest since 1990, mainly marked by the decline in industrial production (-7.4% in 2009), but the recession did not last: as of 2010 the country's economy experienced a GDP increase of 7.5%! (this surge in economic growth fell in the following year).

Since the Brazilian constitution banned more than two successive presidential terms, it was Dilma Roussef, Lula's protégé, who ran for the presidential elections and became president in 2011.

The anti-social measures of the Roussef government, combined with the

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Brazil caught between economic crisis, political rivalries and class struggle

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economic slowdown, provoked major street protests in June 2013 against rising transport prices; the protesters were also challenging the sumptuous expenses for the football World Cup (in the country where football is king) when funding for the health system or education was chronically deficient. The petty-bourgeois political nature of this interclassist movement was seen in the banning of red flags and anything that evoked leftist orientations. After a reduction of the tariff on public transport in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and other major cities, the movement died off, just at the moment strike movements were beginning to appear.

In October 2014, as the *Lava Jato* (Laundromat Express) judicial investigation (2) began to reveal the extent of corruption of the politicians of the government coalition (PT, PMBD), and while Brazil was plunging back into crisis, Rousseff was narrowly re-elected. During the election campaign she had multiplied social and left promises, although she had chosen Michel Temer, the leader of the PMBD, as vice-president. But from the first days of her new mandate, on the pretext of the economic crisis and under the pressure exerted by the most powerful capitalist circles, she embarked on policies of austerity which she had constantly denounced throughout her campaign!

These policies, without successfully restoring fiscal balances and reducing inflation, were undoubtedly an aggravating factor in the recession. In 2015, the GDP fell by 3.8%, industrial production by 8.3%, exports decreased by 15% and imports by 25%; inflation reached 10% as did the budget deficit, while the official unemployment rate rose from 4.84% to 8.5%. It was against the background of this growing economic crisis that the enormous corruption scandal around the Petrobras oil company (3) brought to light by *Lava Jato* took on its full extent, showing that the entire Brazilian political system was corrupt to the core. In a situation where the government was unable to cope with economic difficulties, the economic crisis was inevitably transformed into a political one. Discredited among the workers, confronted with massive demonstrations (4) of the petty-bourgeois layers hit hard by the crisis, paralyzed by the political rivalries fueled by the scandals, the Rousseff presidency became an increasingly embarrassing burden for Brazilian capitalism. A process of impeachment of the president was therefore launched in parliament; after a

lengthy procedure it eventually culminated in May 2016 (meanwhile Lula had entered the government to try to obtain immunity from corruption charges against him), and Dilma Rousseff was replaced by her vice-president Michel Temer.

The government of the new president elaborated a series of austerity measures in order to redress the finances (increase of taxes, reduction of social expenses, constitutional amendment to freeze public expenditure for 20 years, etc.), while opening lines of credit to large companies and promising institutional measures to end corruption. The Temer reforms were designed to bring an early end to the crisis and restore the competitiveness and profitability of Brazilian capitalism. Whereas in 2016 the Brazilian economy continued to fall sharply on almost all levels (GDP: -3.6%, industrial production: -6.5%, budget deficit: -9%, exports: -3%, imports: -19.8%, unemployment: 12%), except for inflation which fell to 6% (due to the difficulty in selling the goods), by mid-2017 this decline seemed to have stopped: the government triumphantly announced an annualized rate of «growth» slightly above 0%

It was the proletarians and, in general, the laboring population, who are targeted by government policy. They are clearly destined to pay the costs of the restoration of Brazilian capitalism. In times of crisis, capitalism still considers social spending on health, education, pensions and other items, unsustainable, and measures of «protection» of workers and many social shock absorbers previously set up to buy or to consolidate social peace intolerable.

A CLASS RESPONSE OR PRE-ELECTORAL MANEUVERS?

The attack on the pension system (raising the legal retirement age to 65 for men, 62 for women, with the requirement for 49 years of contributions before retirement, etc.) was the most important measure for the bourgeoisie (5); it is therefore also the one which provoked the most reactions, with the reform of the labor code to allow more «flexibility» in labor regulation, that is to say, to bend the proletarians more to capitalist demands. In mid-March, major protest demonstrations against these «reforms» had already taken place in the big cities at the call of the trade unions. But it was at the end of April that the protests reached their maximum with the success of the general strike of 28, called by all the unions, including the «pelegas» (the

ultra-collaborationist unions linked to the right), the left parties (including the PT) and many others, including religious organizations.

This unanimity was linked to the wide discontent among the proletarians and the masses aroused by the Temer «reforms»; but it was also explained by certain measures which directly affected the trade union apparatuses such as the abolition of the compulsory payment of trade union dues. Following this strike, a major march was organized in Brasilia on 24 May; the authorities responded by appealing to the army (which fired real bullets, causing dozens of wounded) to maintain order; then a new general strike was called on June 30th.

But in reality it was just a day of demonstrations, virtually the only strikes which occurred were in the banking and education sectors. In fact, the big trade unions did not call for a strike or didn't mobilize much. This is the case of the CUT (*Central Única dos Trabalhadores*, Unified Workers' Central), the largest trade union confederation in Brazil, formed about thirty years ago on the thrust of trade union struggles under the dictatorship. Since then the CUT has demonstrated its effectiveness in class collaboration, and it represents the main point of support of the PT in the working class.

At the head of the current opposition to the Temer reforms, the CUT seeks essentially to prevent this opposition from becoming a real class struggle, which is why it has in fact sabotaged the June 30th general strike that it had been constrained to convene. It obviously prefers to deflect discontent into a movement for electioneering, in other words to steer it into the impasse of the bourgeois political system. Beyond the slogans *Fora Temer!* (Temer Out!), *Diretas já!* (Direct Elections Now!) or the denunciation of the removal of Rousseff as a coup against the Constitution, the CUT and the PT are in fact preparing for the presidential elections next year. Lula, who was recently sentenced to 9 years in prison for corruption, but who appealed the conviction, has already gone on the campaign trail and polls credit him with a high score (his election would also provide him with immunity!).

By skillfully playing the role of social firefighters at a time when the Temer government, weakened by the revelations of corruption (6) and breaking all records for unpopularity (7), has not yet managed to pass its attack against pensions in a divided Parliament, the CUT renders a proud service not only to the bourgeois order in general, but to the government itself: in practice it protects it from proletarian anger. The CUT is helped in its anti-proletarian work by organizations that claim to be «revolu-

tionary» or «socialist». We are not talking about the nationalist neo-Stalinists of the PC do B (Communist Party of Brazil) who were part of the Roussef coalition government, but about the PSOL (Party of Socialism and Freedom, a split from the PT, a heterogeneous grouping of various reformist currents, including Trotskyists), the main party to the left of the PT, which does not go beyond the demand for direct elections to eject Temer; or the PSTU (Socialist Party of Unified Workers, Trotskyist party affiliated to the LIT-IQ) which advocates a «workers' and socialist solution for Brazil» while inter-mingling the fight against the anti-proletarian attacks of the government with the defense of «national sovereignty»(8) – truly a bourgeois demand if ever there was one!

The anti-corruption struggle has undeniably been used by bourgeois forces as part of the rivalry that is tearing the ruling class apart (the Temer government is now trying to rein on this anti-corruption struggle) (9); but the proletariat finds and will find against it a united bourgeoisie determined to increase its exploitation and accentuate the repression; it finds and will also find against it the false workers' parties and the collaborationist trade union centers. The near future will see new onslaughts of attacks; to resist it he will have to find, against all false friends, the path of the class struggle, the way to the reconstitution of its immediate classist defense organizations, but also to the reconstitution of its class party.

This is a difficult but essential task to be able tomorrow to go on the counterattack against capitalism and to be able to give a reality to anti-reformist and anti-electoral slogans:

**Fora Capitalismo !, Revolução já!
Out with Capitalism!, Revolution Now!**

October, 10th 2017

(1) cf «A função do PT», Proletario No. 1 (May 1982), available on our website.

(2) Part of an investigation into money laundering, the case revealed an extensive network of bribes involving large construction groups and the Petrobras company. In June 2015 the investigation extended to the Odebrecht construction group, whose boss was sentenced to 19 years in prison. The confessions of company executives will affect the entire Brazilian political spectrum (including Lula) and extend abroad: to Venezuela, but also France where an investigation was officially opened last year for corruption during the sale of submarines to Brazil. But this French investigation is especially remarkable for its discretion...

(3) Petrobras is a state-owned oil

company and one of the world's largest companies in the industry. Like all companies of this type, it acts as a cash cow for a whole bunch of parasites, politicians, big or small companies, and so on.

(4) By March 2015, nearly two million people were demonstrating against corruption and demanding the resignation of Roussef. A year later, in March 2016, there were more than three million to demand her dismissal. The indecent corruption of the elites scandalizes the proletarians and petty-bourgeois; but corruption is the legitimate daughter of capitalism, the system where everything is bought and sold, and it is found in all countries: a clean and honest capitalism is a fairy tale. However, in some countries, corruption reaches such levels that it undermines the smooth functioning of capitalism by disproportionately increasing its operating costs. This explains the need for capitalists, not to eradicate corruption, but to maintain it within certain limits.

(5) According to the World Bank, pensions represent almost a third of Brazil's public expenditures. For a capital-

ism in difficulty, to cut back these expenses is therefore, according to the words of the World Bank: «necessary and urgent». See World Bank Staff Note, 4/13/2017.

(6) The media group Globo (the main Brazilian media group) revealed in May that the investigation of corruption related to the company JBS (an agribusiness giant, the largest global meat processing company), implicated Temer. The company was paying off officials to facilitate the utilization of spoiled meat in production; its boss admitted having bribed nearly 2,000 politicians and officials.

(7) According to polls, Temer has only 5% of favorable opinions, while more than 80% of respondents are in favor of his going on trial!

(8) Editorial of *Opinião Socialista* n° 542 (6/9/17)

(9) At the beginning of August the parliament rejected the impeachment of Temer; in June his government decided to abolish the «Lava Jato» group of anti-corruption judges. This respite earned by Temer should allow him to push his anti-worker reforms through parliament.

Nicaragua: The bloody end of Sandinism and the need for a class struggle orientation

As of mid-June, the savage repression carried out against protest demonstrations since April by the police, the military and organizations linked to the FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front, the ruling party) throughout Nicaragua, had resulted in 212 deaths (including children and adolescents) and more than 1,300 injuries, according to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (CIDH).

The protests began after the pension «reform» measure, introduced on the recommendation of the IMF by a decree of President Daniel Ortega on 17 April.

Allegedly balanced, because it provided for an increase in employers' contributions at the same time as those of employees, this reform aimed above all at workers who saw their pensions reduced by 5% – with retroactive effect. This reform, designed to reduce the social security deficit, was in addition to the rise in fuel prices and the fall in social assistance, measures implemented as early as 2017, which caused growing discontent among the population as their consequences (increase in unemployment and poverty) became apparent.

The bloody repression of the students who had been the first to demonstrate against the attack on pensions caused widespread outrage and set fire

to the powderkeg. The demonstrations spread across the country. The Catholic Church and the employers' organizations (COSEP: *Consejo Superior de la Empresa Privada*, Superior Council of Private Enterprise), which until then had supported the government, condemned the repression. Ortega was therefore forced to announce the withdrawal of the reform on 22 April.

But this did not disarm the opponents who continued the demonstrations: tens of thousands of people, mostly young people, marched the next day, April 23 in the capital Managua, as well as in other cities of the country against repression and in solidarity with students. The demonstrations and roadblocks subsequently spread rapidly, while government repression intensified, but without being able to break the movement that was generalizing and involving various sectors of the population: small traders, small bosses alongside proletarians, all demanding the departure of Ortega and demonstrating under the national flag.

In mid-May a «national dialogue» was set up with the support of the United States and the Organization of American States; but it was interrupted after a few days because of continued bloody re-

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Sandinism...

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pression and the government's refusal to accede to some opposition demands.

On June 14 the national strike called by the "Civic Alliance for Justice and Democracy", a gathering of student, employer, peasant and Catholic organizations, was a great success, completely paralyzing the country.

Following the strike, meetings within the framework of the "national dialogue" resumed. The opposition, which has agreed to call for the lifting of the roadblocks, is calling for early presidential elections (a proposal made by Ortega himself).

* * *

Nicaragua, with a population of just over 6 million, is the poorest country in Latin America (after Haiti). It exports mainly agricultural and textile products; its main economic partner is the United States, which is also the largest investor.

About thirty years ago, it experienced a powerful popular revolt that ended the dictatorial regime of the Somoza family (installed and protected by the United States since the 1930s). The *guerrilleros* of the Sandinista Front had taken over the revolt, but to channel it and prevent it from taking an anti-capitalist turn, practically limiting it to the fall of the dictator. However, despite the Sandinistas' openness to US imperialism, despite the very limited nature of the Sandinist reforms (only the large landowners most tied to the dictator were expropriated), the Reagan government supported the armed struggle of the "contras" (Somoza supporters) against the regime and imposed heavy economic sanctions.

In 1990 Daniel Ortega was defeated in the presidential elections. The following 15 years were marked by a disastrous liberal and antisocial policy for the impoverished masses (famine and poverty on the proletarian side, corruption and rapid enrichment on the bourgeois side).

In 2006 Ortega was again elected president; although his program had a significant social component (healthcare, the fight against illiteracy, etc.), he had made political agreements with right-wing politicians and had taken a former contra as vice-president. To consolidate its power, the Sandinista party relied on the Catholic Church (the parliament passed a law prohibiting abortion, including for therapeutic reasons) and employers. Congratulated for its economic policy by the IMF and international financial organizations, the Nicaraguan government received substantial financial aid from the United States and cooperated with it in various fields (1); this did not prevent it from also receiving substantial aid from Venezuela (in oil, equivalent to a quarter of the

annual budget) and from taking positions at the international level called "anti-imperialist" – entirely bourgeois in fact – (diplomatic support to Libya and Iran, etc.) but which were used to give itself a "left-wing" image internally.

The first years of the Ortega presidency were the years of renewed economic growth. Foreign investment increased, attracted by low wages and a business-friendly policy, reassured by a balanced budget, fuelled in part by remittances from emigrants to the United States (representing 60% of the country's budget). Ortega was re-elected in 2011 and 2016 (in the latter case with his wife as vice-president) – despite the deterioration of the situation of the proletarianized masses, criticism of the regime's corruption or opposition to the pharaonic project to break through a canal rivaling that of Panama (2); the sharp increase in abstention in these elections was undoubtedly proletarian in character.

But Trump's election (the US government has reduced its aid from \$10 million a year to only \$200,000, and is threatening sanctions because of Nicaragua's open support to Venezuela), combined with Venezuelan economic difficulties (which have led to a drastic reduction in its aid and a reduction in Nicaraguan exports to that country), and lower prices for agricultural products, have changed the situation in the last period. The employers and the government have passed the economic difficulties on to the proletarians and the masses. The average real wage is falling, and poverty is such that 60% of the population could not afford the basic necessities.

NOTONATIONAL DIALOGUE! YES TO CLASS STRUGGLE!

The person responsible for the fate of the proletarians and the poor Nicaraguan masses is therefore not only Ortega and his clan with its corruption: the whole bourgeois class has inspired government policy and the Catholic hierarchy supported it to the very end. But today Sandinism seems to have exhausted its usefulness for the maintenance of social order in Nicaragua; the employers' organizations, the Catholic Church as well as the student organizations and others participating in the so-called "national dialogue", have as their main goal to prevent the generalized anger against the situation from which the masses suffer, from taking an anti-capitalist orientation and turning into a real insurrection. That is why they preach pacifism against the crimes of the police and the organized gangs of the regime and that is why they advocate no other alternative than early elections in a few months and are ready to sacrifice the scapegoat Ortega.

But it is not new elections that can change the situation of the proletarians

and the exploited masses; this prospect of new elections has no other aim than to stop the current movement. Only the proletarian struggle, on class bases, can wrest concessions from the bourgeoisie. But to do so, it is necessary to break with the lie of the interclassist union, which leaves the proletarians under the control of the bourgeois and petty bourgeois, and with the lie of the national union, which only serves the capitalists.

The proletarians and the Nicaraguan masses have been deceived by interclassist and national illusions during their long history of struggle against imperialism and dictatorships. The bourgeois and petty bourgeois continue the same work today.

In order that the victims of the Sandinista regime will not have fallen in vain, in order that the gigantic mobilization of the masses will not lead to yet another cosmetic replastering of the bourgeois dictatorship, so that it is possible to put an end to misery, repression and exploitation, it is impossible to count on any "national dialogue" with the bourgeoisie; and it will not be enough to replace Ortega with another politician: it is capitalism that must be fought, and the bourgeois state that must be destroyed, by opposing class struggle to national dialogue.

And the first step on this path is the work for the constitution of the class organization of the proletariat, in union with the proletarians of the other countries, who know the same situation as the proletarians of Nicaragua.

June, 24th 2017

(1) According to an official statement by the US Government, "the Government of Nicaragua and the United States cooperate on law enforcement, combating drug trafficking, controlling migration flows, protecting against natural disasters, improving trade and other matters of mutual interest". The same text states that "the United States is Nicaragua's dominant economic partner, buying 51% of its exports, providing 32% of its imports, 20% of its investments, being the source of 54% of financial remittances from emigrants (...) according to 2017 figures" see: <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1850.htm>.

(2) The agreement for the opening of this canal with a Chinese company was shrouded in obscurity. It provoked opposition from peasants who were located on the route of the canal, opposition from those who suspected a vast corrupt enterprise, as well as that of the petty bourgeois nationalists protesting against the selling off of land to foreigners. But this agreement seems to have lapsed and the Chinese billionaire promoting the project has disappeared...

Energy, Ports, Plantations: Flaming up of Workers' Combativity in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is a small island in south-eastern India populated by twenty million people. The country occupies a geostrategic position that concerns different imperialisms because it is at the heart of the sea routes that connect Asia to Europe, the Middle East and North America. China is particularly interested in its "new silk routes" or what the US authorities call the Chinese "pearl necklace".

For a long time the country was ravaged by a civil war between central power and the Tamil minority of the North. This war ended in May 2009 with the victory of the central power.

This new political stability has allowed the country to experience strong economic growth (averaging more than 6% a year) and to become the most developed state in South Asia. Despite its growth, the country called for "financial assistance" from the IMF in return for the implementation of "structural reforms" (a catalog of anti-proletarian attacks and openness to economic "reforms").

If Sri Lanka has experienced a certain industrial and tourist development, it remains predominantly rural and poverty remains colossal. This is evidenced by the collapse of a rubbish heap on April 14, which left about 30 people dead in the Kolonnawa open-air dump, where 23 million tons of garbage are piled up in a town located at northeast of Colombo, the Sri Lankan capital. A 91-meter high pile of waste, weakened by torrential rains and a fire, collapsed, burying the homes of a shanty town.

A WAVE OF PROLETARIAN STRUGGLES

Recent years have been marked by proletarian struggles in many sectors.

Port workers fought hard last year to defend their working conditions under the privatization programs. The port of Hambantota went on strike in December 2016 to demand the permanent hiring of precarious jobs. Those in the capital, Colombo, did the same in February 2017 to request guarantees of job preservation after the transfer of 85% of the port to the China Merchants Port Holding Company. In both cases, the government's response was repression. In Hambantota, the proletarians had to face media hysteria, judicial sanctions, the use of strikebreakers and the intervention of the army and a witch hunt against the "ringleaders". In Co-

lombo, the cops fired tear gas and used water cannons against labor protests.

In July, the workers of the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) also went on strike against the risks on the working conditions and employment posed by the sale of certain facilities to Indian or Chinese companies but also for the renovation of the Sapugaskanda refinery. The strike hit the distribution of gasoline and diesel in the country hard. Again the government used the army to break the strike.

In February, the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) workers mobilized for the augmentation of wages which no longer make it possible to live a decent existence, particularly due to the devaluation of the currency and the increase of various taxes. These workers went on strike in September, causing power cuts. In addition to the demand for wage increases, there have been others: the end of anti-union repression and a premium for the electricians exposed to risk. The government threatened to fire the strikers.

Farm workers in tea plantations are also victims of capitalist policies that seek to reduce their personnel costs to compete in international markets. The aim of the tea bosses is to outsource the workforce: the proletarians would lose their status as wage earners (and become "self-employed") and all the (meagre) acquisitions that go with pensions, medical care, housing assistance etc. Even before the introduction of this new system, salaries have fallen, for example from 58 to 51 rupees per kilogram of tea harvested or with deductions under the pretext of poor quality. Finally, some bosses, in order to make an immediate profit, turn plots of tea into more lucrative corn plots, all of which lead to workers' reactions in the form of strikes and demonstrations. At the end of December 2016, a thousand or so precarious workers with Sri Lanka Telecom went on strike for their permanent hiring.

To these specifically proletarian struggles are added those of other categories of workers and poor strata. The nurses also mobilized to improve their working conditions. Students waged strike days against the privatization of the education system.

Poor peasants have struggled to obtain state aids, and fishermen against a seaport construction project that threatens fisheries resources.

TRADE UNIONS AND "FAR" LEFT: OBSTACLES TO STRUGGLES

The organization of the proletarian

masses on their land and with their objectives is here, as elsewhere, an urgent need.

Unions have diverted struggles from class goals. They did not fight for the interests of the workers but (to) disorient the proletarians by denouncing the change of owners of the companies (the privatizations) or the influence of the Indian or Chinese economic interests. Neither the nationality nor the public or private character of the exploiter has any interest for the proletarians. An exploiter is an exploiter and he must be fought! The proletarians have only their interests to defend and not those of the company or the national economy!

Class organization can only mean overtly breaking with and clear opposition to "revolutionary" forces that offer only purely bourgeois perspectives. The pseudo-communists of the JVP (Popular Liberation Front) want to "protect the country and develop it". The Maoists of the New Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party campaign for a "People's Democratic Republic" and those of the Communist Party of Ceylon (Marxist-Leninist) put forward a "revolutionary struggle for democracy and freedom". Their brother/enemy Trotskyists far from fighting capitalism intend to fight "neoliberal policies" (the United Socialist Party member of the Committee for a Workers' International) or "the influence of the multinationals" (NSSP, member of the Fourth International-SU). Those of the Socialist Equality Party (member of the International Committee of the Fourth International) are the

(Continued on page 8)

El Proletario

Órgano del partido comunista
internacional

**ESPECIAL Cataluña
Octubre de 2018**

- Cataluña, rompeolas de las Españas
- Proletarios, ¡Recordad 1934!
- Los Comités de Defensa de la República, organismos para la colaboración entre clases
- La cuestión de las nacionalidades en España

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Sri Lanka ...

(Continuation from page 7)

chants for a “workers’ and peasants’ government” which nationalizes “under the democratic control of the workers”. An *ensemble* of anti-proletarian recipes that are bourgeois goals and obstacles to class struggle.

PRIORITY OF PRIORITIES

Today, both Sri Lanka and all of

South Asia are ripe for the proletarian revolution. Only this – and not a national or popular “revolution”, which mean **bourgeois** – can liberate the proletarian and impoverished masses from misery, exploitation and oppression.

To do this, the proletarians will have to organize their force outside the paralyzing influence of reformers of all kinds and on the terrain of the class struggle. In this way they will be able to prepare for future struggles for immediate demands on wages as well as for the over-

throw of the capitalist order. In this perspective, the revolutionary vanguard party is indispensable.

It alone can connect the partial struggles of today to the general struggle of tomorrow by giving the working class in motion the unity of purpose, will and action. The bourgeoisie seeks to strengthen its power in the perspective of future clashes; it is up to the revolutionaries to work to endow the working class with its party. This is the priority of priorities.

Haiti

The proletarians of the textile industry confront the bosses, the State and their henchmen

Haiti occupies one half of a Caribbean island that comes out of media anonymity only when a “natural” disaster – earthquake or hurricane – again pumels this small country that is among the poorest on the planet.

Unsurprisingly, the journalists’ silence is almost total when the proletarians mobilize to confront the bosses, the state and their henchmen.

This is what happened in 2017, a year marked by an important wave of strikes and agitation against poverty wages in Haitian factories, especially in the textile industry which employs 40,000 workers, mostly women.

STARVATION WAGES AND SAVAGE EXPLOITATION

Salaries in Haitian factories (360 Gourdes, \$ 5.50 a day) are the lowest in the Americas. This daily wage officially corresponds to that of an eight-hour work day, but in reality, textile workers are paid by the job lot. To earn this pittance they have to work twelve hours or more and are paid less than 50 cents an hour. Moreover, the bosses do not respect the minimum wage and the majority of the workers have a salary that does not exceed two-thirds of the legal minimum. Haitian unions demand that the minimum wage be more than doubled to 800 Gourdes or about \$ 12.50 per day, which would officially be \$ 1.57 per hour. When we know that according to a report of the American union AFL-CIO (1), it would take an employee earning \$ 23 per day to feed themselves and two children, we see that this demand is not excessive!

Moreover, these wages are amputated by inflation which affects the price of transport and basic needs.

These starvation wages combine with an extremely ferocious factory despotism. In industrial areas, proletarians are victims of the omnipotence of employers and the bludgeonings (literally and figuratively) of their goons who insult, humiliate, mistreat. Workers were fired on the spot for not bending their heads when they entered their factory,

a real capitalist prison. In addition, proletarian women are doubly victims of these thugs who sexually harass and sometimes rape them.

OCCUPATION AND IMPERIALIST PILLAGE

Haiti is the caricature of a country subject to imperialism: if it is formally independent, it is the imperialist powers – and in the first place the United States – who reign supreme. This is the case in the textile industry. Most industrialists are Haitian or South Korean but they are closely dependent on US “multinationals” of which they are only subcontractors.

The Haitian proletarians produce for major American brands of underwear for men or women, jeans, work- or sportswear... Wretched wages are a boon for

US vultures: salary costs for the manufacturing and packaging of two hundred shirts are covered by the selling price of one shirt..

The US government is doing everything it can to prevent an increase in wages that would increase production costs. A cable released by WikiLeaks in 2011 showed that the US Obama administration has maneuvered to prevent raising the minimum wage to \$5 a day (2).

The imperialists also intervene directly against the proletarians with their henchmen – the troops of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) (3) – who reinforce the Haitian police.

THE REVIVAL OF WORKERS’ COMBATIVITY

Despite this difficult context – factory despotism and neocolonial occupation – Haitian workers have struggled.

From May to July 2016, the industrial zone of Port-au-Prince experienced a labor mobilization against low wages, slavery working conditions and the organized racket that is the increase in the cost of living. This movement has spread to other areas such as Sonapi Park, totaling about fifty companies. Confronted with the mobilization, the double game of the bourgeois was complete: the government played it “nice” by granting a salary increase of 25%, the bosses played it “mean” by refusing to apply this decision.

In May 2017, this challenge was confirmed and amplified. The proletarians



went on strike in Sonapi Park to demand a salary of 800 gourdes, almost a tripling. They marched towards the symbol of bourgeois power that is the presidential palace, and blocked the airport.

The strike spread to other factories, particularly those located in the East, on the border with the Dominican Republic.

THE BOURGEOIS RESPONSE: SLANDER, RUBBER BULLETS AND TEAR GAS

The bourgeois retort has been multifaceted. The bosses, grouped in the Association of Industries of Haiti (AIDH), launched a wave of slander accusing “ringleaders” of forcing the workers to leave the factory. To slander was added the repression of the employers: lockout and firing of the strikers.

The cops also launched a big repressive wave with beatings, tear gas and rubber bullets. When the workers returned to their workstations and folded their arms to demonstrate their refusal to work, the riot police intervened and carried out beatings particularly against striking women. Many strikers were arrested and many fled from the cops as they feared for their lives.

This did not succeed in defeating the struggling workers who refused to give up.

THE BOSSES AND THE GOVERNMENT STEP BACK

At the end of May, the unions demonstrated massively and the bosses decided – under pressure – to compromise. The bosses of the AIDH said to the workers that the government was responsible for the refusal to increase the base salary. The president passed the hot potato to a class-collaborationist organization, the Council for Higher Salaries (CSS), whose members he designates. From a scoundrel, to a scoundrel and a half!

In the end, the president had to step back and on Thursday, July 27 officially proclaim the minimum wage be raised to 370 gourdes by adding 15 gourdes to the CSS proposal of 355 gourdes.

A PROLETARIAN SOLUTION FOR HAITI

This victory is undoubtedly very limited, but it shows that the Haitian proletariat has the capacity to make the bourgeois give in. However – and as elsewhere – this proletariat needs to reconstitute its class party.

The proletarian masses could oppose neither preparation nor organization when confronted with the preparation of the bosses and cops who defended democratic power and bourgeois property. Those who are conscious will have to draw this burning lesson. The

proletarians can expect only the most unrestrained repression when they try to resist oppression and exploitation, which even worsens in times of crisis. The proletarians cannot rely on the bourgeois politicians and the organs of the bourgeois state, nor on the reformist political and union forces, verbally in the service of the workers, but in reality always ready to collaborate with the bourgeoisie.

As well as in the struggle for their immediate economic and social interests, the workers can only rely on their direct action and their independent class organization, they must organize their class self-defense during social confrontations with the forces of bourgeois repression.

Even if it is not an immediate prospect, the economic and social subsoil works in the direction indicated by Marxism: the communist revolution. To prepare for it, the proletariat has no other choice than to return to the class struggle, to the fight against the forces of social conservation, in responding, blow for blow, organization with organization, by international solidarity against the alliance between the bourgeoisies, by violent struggle against bourgeois violence.

And the revolutionary communists have the unavoidable task, if they do not want to renounce victory in the class struggle, to form the class party indispensable to the defense of the historical interests of the proletariat, to intervene in all struggles for the immediate interests of the proletariat in order to make them the “school of war of communism” against the national and foreign capitalists and the bourgeois state.

(1) Report on the minimum wage in the textile sector (May 2014): <https://www.solidaritycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Haiti.Living-Wage-Study-FINAL-updated.3-11-15.pdf>.

The conclusion was that «*Minimum wage violations in the Haitian apparel industry are widespread and egregious. The WRC's research found that factories in Port-au-Prince fail to pay workers a third of their legally mandated wages. Average wages are even lower at the new Caracol factory complex despite the fact that the project was heavily subsidized with earthquake recovery funds from the United States government as a means of providing Haitians with a path out of poverty.*

(2) «WikiLeaks Haiti: “Let Them Live on \$3 a Day”. The US Embassy aided Levi's, Hanes contractors in their fight against an increase in Haiti's minimum wage». <https://www.thenation.com/arti->

[cle/wikileaks-haiti-let-them-live-3-day/](https://wikileaks-haiti-let-them-live-3-day/)

(3) The task of the Minustah mission was the “stabilization” of the country and the reestablishment of “the State of Law”, that is to say the stabilization of the established order and the defense of the bourgeois State, particularly by strengthening the police. It met the needs of the imperialisms and the local bourgeoisie, not the needs of the population and the proletarians in particular who saw the police repress them! Besides it has been established that the cholera epidemic that has hit the country with more than 9,000 deaths and 600,000 sick, has been caused by a contingent of UN soldiers. Finally, the blue helmets, acting as real occupation troops, were responsible for numbers of sexual crimes (as was also the case with NGO organizations)... involving thousands of soldiers, Minustah troops were commanded by various Brazilian generals. It was replaced in October by *Minustah* with reduced numbers but retaining 7 of 11 police units of the Minustah. At the same time, the United Nations has nothing planned for the fight against cholera for which it is responsible: what interests the imperialists is the maintenance of the order not the health of the masses!

November, 1st 2017

« Il Comunista »

Nr.155 - Settembre 2018

Nell'interno

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- Il capitalismo mondiale di crisi in crisi (2)
- Gli affari del fuoco, mentre gonfiano le tasche dei capitalisti, sterminano sistematicamente vite umane
- Migranti stranieri: braccia da sfruttare fino allo sfinimento o carne da macello
- Il “viadotto malato” ha fatto 43 morti e 9 feriti. 255 le famiglie sfollate, in totale 566 persone.
- Il “criminale” cemento armato?
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Oil pollution in Nigeria: Capital pollutes and kills. Only the proletarian revolution will end this greedy and criminal system

For decades, Nigeria has been ravaged by the exploitation of oil. The delta of the Niger River, in the South East of the country, is rich in oil resources. These have been exploited since the mid-1950s by European multinationals – mainly Shell but also the Italian ENI or French Total. The Nigerian State derives 70% of its revenue from the black gold, even if these last few months the production has severely declined due to guerrilla warfare – by the Niger Delta Avengers – which claims a greater share of the oil revenue for those regions of extraction. This oil is a strategic issue for the imperialists who plunder this wealth for their benefit. The 606 Delta oilfields provide 40% of total US crude oil imports.

Successive governments have focused on exporting oil. Not only has this been the source of widespread corruption but also of the collapse of the small industrial sector. Until the 1960s, the country's economic activity was dominated by import-substitution firms, such as UAC (Unilever), which produced food and household goods, machinery, office equipment, vehicle engines, etc. Since then, the country has become a major importer, including fuels because Nigeria has few refineries.

THE RAVAGED NIGER DELTA

The Niger Delta is populated by the Ogoni people, who number between 500,000 and one million. This population is struggling to make their livings from the many mineral, fish and agricultural resources present because it is suffering a huge ecological and human disaster caused by oil exploitation. Hydrocarbon leaks and flaring (burning off waste) of petroleum gases have from the outset occurred frequently and then multiplied over the years. The Nigerian authorities have officially recorded more than 7,000 oil spills between 1970 and 2000. And between 2005 and 2015, more than 6,000 oil spills.

According to two major surveys carried out almost ten years ago, the quantities discharged are gigantic. According to a 2006 report by the World Wide Fund (WWF) UK, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and the Nigerian Conservation Foundation, up to 1.5 million tons of crude – fifty times the Oil spill caused by oil tanker Exxon Valdez in Alaska – had spilled into the delta in half a century. In 2009, Amnesty International calculated that these leaks represented the equivalent of at least 9 million barrels, or 10% of current world production.

The Ogoni land has experienced continuous oil spills – some observers say 300 per year! – which spread into these approximately 1,000 km² of creeks cutting everywhere down through the delta.

The amount of oil that escapes each year from terminals, oil pipelines, pumping stations and oil platforms pollutes agricultural land, drinking water wells, fishing grounds, forests... Gas flaring in the atmosphere is so polluting that the palms are turning yellow.

Life expectancy in rural communities, half of which do not have access to safe drinking water, has fallen to barely 40 years from two generations ago.

A recent Swiss scientific study has shown that the exploitation of oil in the delta is directly responsible for the death of 16,000 infants every year! Scientists have found that exposing adults to oil spills for up to five years before a child is conceived greatly increases the risk of the newborn dying during the first twenty-eight days of life. And this, to the point of doubling the neonatal mortality rate to 76 deaths per 1,000 births or more in areas close to the source of the leaks.

RISKS AND POLLUTION FOR THE DISINHERITED MASSES, PROFIT FOR THE BOURGEOISIE

Beyond the Ogoni Land, all of Nigeria suffers from oil pollution and risks. The information on accidents is very fragmentary but what is known sends shivers up the spine. For example, in 2006, the explosion of an oil pipeline killed three hundred people in Lagos, the country's largest agglomeration (21 million) and one of the most important on the continent.

In addition, the large cities are affected by air pollution despite the country's production of relatively clean crude oil. This quality oil is exported to European refineries, in Rotterdam, Amsterdam or Antwerp; but the type of gasoline imported into the country is one of so-called "African quality": high in sulfur, benzene, lead, highly polluting components, it comes from so-called "heavy" oils which are cheaper, and, for economic reasons, the refining of which is "incomplete" (desulphurizing for example is expensive); additives such as lead are added to compensate for poor fuel quality. Result: the level of lead and other

heavy metals regularly present in the atmosphere of Nigeria's large cities are 15 times higher than the American standard defining a polluted site!

Of course, the capitalists derive huge profits from this situation. The absence of any respect for even elementary safety in production or the importation of low-quality fuels delights the multinationals, with Shell at the forefront.

REFORMIST DEAD END AND REALISTIC REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE

The «Committee for a Workers' International» is to our knowledge the only or one of the only allegedly revolutionary currents present in Nigeria with its section, the *Democratic Socialist Movement*. The DSM has embarked on the construction of a "broad party" (that is, without a precise programmatic line), the *Socialist Party of Nigeria* (SPN), through which it seeks to have legal recognition in order to participate in the 2019 presidential elections.

The SPN-DSM sees the oil as a "collective wealth of the Nigerian people

le prolétaire

N° 530

(Octobre-Novembre 2018)

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as a whole”, and it calls for its direct management by the bourgeois state – but led by “the government of the working and poor people based on a socialist program”. We already sense the good old social democratic program...

This “management for the good and benefit of all the people of Nigeria” would establish “a rational plan to create alternative and clean energy sources and restore the environment of the Niger Delta” (1)

Behind this ecologist-reformist verbiage hides (very badly) a complete prostration before capitalism and its servants. At no time does the SPN mention the clash with multinationals and imperialist states that would inevitably be provoked by the nationalization of the oil sector. At no time does the SPN speak of a seizure of power that can only be made by force and violence, at no time does it speak of a **proletarian** revolution.

The working class and the disinherited masses can expect nothing from the hypocritical humanitarian statements of NGOs or national-reformist illusions. They will find their only strength comes from their proletarian class struggle against the bourgeoisie, in union with the proletariat of other countries. This perspective cannot be immediate; it necessarily implies the rebirth of classist organizations to lead the daily struggle of defense against capitalism and the rebirth of the governing body of this struggle, the class party, communist and international, which unifies the working class across borders ethnic groups and nationalities and leads it to final confrontation with the bourgeois state and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is the only realistic prospect, in Nigeria and everywhere.

COMMUNISTS AND THE DEFENSE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Despite the statements of bourgeois and petty bourgeois ecologists (including those who make “revolutionary” declarations), Marxists have always defended the environment in the face of the destructions inherent in the capitalist mode of production. In *Capital*, Marx denounced the effects of capitalism on agriculture: “*Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth — the soil and the labourer*” (Volume I, IV, ch. 15).

They have also defended “nature” in the face of the misdeeds of bourgeois society: “*From the standpoint of a higher economic form of society, private ownership of the globe by single indi-*

viduals will appear quite as absurd as private ownership of one man by another. Even a whole society, a nation, or even all simultaneously existing societies taken together, are not the owners of the globe. They are only its possessors, its usufructuaries, and, like boni patres familias, [good fathers of families] they must hand it down to succeeding generations in an improved condition” (Volume III, ch.46).

A century ago, following the proletarian October, such a policy was initiated in Soviet Russia which was to – in the midst of the civil war – take emergency measures. A law of May 1918 limited the exploitation of wooded areas to preserve what today would be called biodiversity. In May 1919, a law limited the harvesting of certain game by limiting hunting seasons. Other laws protected fish resources by limiting overfishing. Other legislation was implemented to limit soil erosion or manage river basins.

Finally, the law of 16 September 1921, devoted to the protection of “monuments of nature” allowed the creation of natural parks protected from commercial exploitation. The first natural park in the world (*Zapovednik* – “nature sanctuary”) was created in the Volga Delta. In October 1925, a super-governmental agency was created: the Goskomitet, attached to the Education Commission and responsible for coordinating environmental conservation measures and programs. At the heart of its objectives: the development of natural parks devoted to basic research, but also aimed at informing economic practice or, simply, protecting endangered species. Starting from almost nothing in 1917, the area of Soviet natural parks already reached almost 10,000 km² in 1925 and some 40,000 km² in 1929 (the total area of Switzerland). They were not only sanctuaries but especially integral reserves, devoted to research, where all productive human intervention was (theoretically) excluded.

But Stalinism, with its policy of forced industrialization, completely reversed this orientation, ruining at the same time the proletarians, often subjected to forced labor, and nature. The near-disappearance of the Aral Sea is one of the most infamous consequences.

THE FUTURE BELONGS TO COMMUNISM!

In Nigeria as elsewhere, capitalism pollutes and kills. It destroys not only human lives but also the environment. It produces for profit, not for human needs. It produces in an anarchic way without worrying about the future.

Only the proletarian revolution will avenge the innocent victims of this predatory and criminal system by putting it

to death. Only the proletarian revolution is able to radically transform the relationship between man and nature, and to ensure a harmonious development of both.

Communism will create a world where material abundance will not compromise the future of natural resources and biodiversity. It is this world evoked by Marx in his Manuscripts of 1844, a world in which “*is the complete unity of man with nature – the true resurrection of nature – the consistent naturalism of man and the consistent humanism of nature*” (2).

(1) “Malabu Oil Block Fraud” socialistnigeria.org, March 29, 2017

(2) www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/comm.htm

The fundamentals of Revolutionary Marxist Communism in the Doctrine and in the History of the International Proletarian Struggle

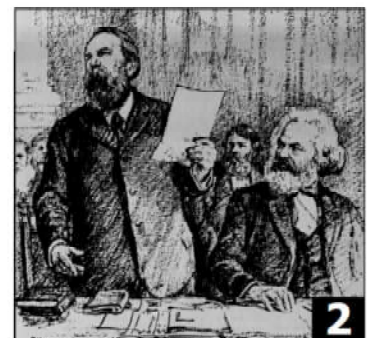
(Brochure A5, 56 pages, October
2010, Price: 2 €, 2,5 US\$, 4 FS)

- **Presentation**
- **Premise**
- **Part One.** Party and Class State, essential forms of the communist revolution
- **Part Two.** The economic organizations of the proletariat are nothing but pale substitutes for the revolutionary party
- **Part Three.** Petty bourgeois distortions of the characteristics of communist society in the "syndicalist" and "enterprise socialist" conceptions
- **Conclusion**

Proletarian

International Communist Party (programme communiste)

The Fundamentals of Revolutionary Communism



Elections in Catalonia: “Nationalist” parties and “constitutionalist” parties with one single objective: to maintain electoral, democratic and legalistic illusions within the proletariat

After more than a month that officially began with the independentist farce of October 1st and after the famous declaration of independence, the supposed government intervention into the Catalan Autonomy, the police repression, the arrest and the imprisonment of the Government of the Generalitat, the exile of Puigdemont ... we arrive at the pinnacle of the festivities: the elections of December 21st.

After the nationalist parties promised a referendum, the results of which would have had to be binding to declare independence, after a hundred thousand people on their way to vote unexpectedly found themselves under the flailing batons of the police forces stationed in the port of Barcelona, and finally, after the independence was declared and then immediately suspended, with zero time in office; after more than two months of theater and lies, the parties of the so-called independence bloc once again called on the proletarians of Catalonia to vote for them in elections almost identical to those held two years ago, to those of 7 years ago and all previous elections: what is at stake is not a supposed “independence” of Catalonia (the autonomous government had it in hand in October, but it did not go beyond a feast of little importance on the Sant Jaume square), but the maintenance of social peace and collaboration between classes in one of the regions of Spain where the crisis has hit the proletarians the hardest, whether they are of Catalan or Andalusian, sub-Saharan or Maghrebi origin.

3 years ago the Minister of Economy of the *Generalitat*, Santi Vila, who was arrested and who spent one night in prison for his participation in the “Declaration of Independence”, told the audience of the *Europa Forum*: “*If Catalonia had not put forward a national-type narrative, how would it have been possible to make as great a sacrifice given the savings demanded? How could it have been done without putting a dream project on the other side of the scale?*” Thus he explained, according to the *Vanguardia* of October 12/14, how it had been possible to make savings of 6 billion euros in Catalonia. As we know, these economies scrutinized the living conditions of the working class: they “slashed” health care, education, welfare, etc., coming down hard on the proletarian strata that were already suffering from a vertiginous increase in unemployment, a vertical fall in wages, the drastic reduction of social shock absorbers, etc. To im-

pose all this and preserve the social peace in a region that has seen the disappearance of a good part of the industry which employed a considerable part of its working population, which saw the center of its capital, Barcelona, be reduced to a deluxe tourist destination whose poor classes were driven out, the Catalan bourgeoisie kicked off the famous *procès* (process): it is nothing more than a mobilization of the petty bourgeois masses of the region (bearing the most retrograde and reactionary illusions synthesized in the slogan “Independent Catalonia”) in defense of an alleged Catalan homeland attacked by Spain, accompanying it with the parliamentary circus where the *señera* (Catalan flag) was waved to support the politics of the autonomous government. This mobilization served to channel the social malaise created by the reforms imposed by the *Generalitat* towards a supposed goal of independence that would have made it possible to escape the growing pressure exerted on the proletariat by bourgeois politics: nationalism was presented as a common objective to all social classes, from the bourgeois represented by the party of Artur Mas (the former president of the *Generalitat*, godfather of Puigdemont condemned for corruption in 2017) and the *Omnium Cultural* (created in the 1960s to promote the Catalan language and spread Catalan culture), to proletarians plunged into passivity by their political representatives and trade unions, passing through the petty bourgeois CUP (People’s Unity Nominations) and the Catalan National Assembly.

Three years after the statements of Santi Vila and six years after the beginning of the *procès*, the results are visible to the naked eye: Catalonia was one of the regions where the capitalist crisis hit the hardest proletariat and where the recovery of social consumption was the weakest and yet the proletariat remained inert, without any direct participation in the chauvinistic, patriotic and anti-working mobilization that filled the streets, but also with no strength to oppose the so-called “far-left” currents such as the CUP (representing in fact small traders, small entrepreneurs and “social cooperativism”, these ones have been able to have a certain control of all manifestations of social discontent in order to divert them to nationalism and parliamentarism). The road to the revival of the class struggle of the proletariat for the exclusive defense of its interests has

been completely blocked by the bourgeois forces of localism, particularism and, ultimately, the defense of the interests of the bourgeois ruling class.

Such was the great result of the *procès*; and it is now, when the sovereignist show ends with sterile declarations of independence and the manifestation of the extreme right in the streets of Barcelona, that the reality of this farce emerges clearly: the same ones who hoisted the flag of Catalonia, which has allowed the central government to intervene against autonomy without posing any resistance, continue to call for the continuation of the *procès* ... by voting again! As we have said, their real objective is not an independence that they have already proclaimed and that they have delivered fresh to the *Guardia Civil* (Spanish cops) and the Minister of the Interior, but simply that the democratic mechanism of conciliation between classes whose supreme expression is the electoral farce, continues to function in full. The watchword of the first of October was: **we will vote**, that of the 21st of December: **vote again**: that is to say, that the proletarians continue to collaborate, that they continue to not struggle unless it is for new elections intended to revive parliamentary illusions.

Faced with the mobilization of parties linked to the *procès*, are those who claim to be defenders of the Spanish Constitution and the unity of the country against the “sovereignty challenge”. For them the value of the elections is exactly the same as for the defenders of “independence”: to obtain the complicity of the proletariat in the defense of democracy, of the legality, of the unity of the country ... Which means simply to obtain the renunciation of the proletarian class in the defense of its interests, the renunciation of any initiative which would be contrary to the defense of the Spanish nation.

In reality there is no fundamental opposition between bourgeois and petty bourgeois who launched the Catalan process and their “opponents”, the so-called constitutionalists who defend the unity of Spain and the system of regional autonomies as guarantor of social coexistence in the country. In fact, Catalan nationalism exists to the extent that the Spanish bourgeoisie, during the Transition period (from Franco’s regime to democracy), set up a system of territorial management in which the various national bourgeoisies took charge of the government with regard to their specific

region. It is for this reason that the linguistic policy that is now criticized in Catalonia has been copied from that applied by the Popular Party (the great defender of Spanish unity now in power in Madrid) in Galicia; and that is why the development of a certain autonomy in the field of security, education and taxation has been the basis of the state configuration that has allowed the Spanish bourgeoisie to maintain the submission of the proletariat in a country historically impossible to centralize.

The so-called “constitutionalist bloc” waves in front of the proletarians the flag of “equality” and “solidarity” between the various Spanish regions, thus seeking to win to the democratic cause – through trust in state and autonomous institutions – a largely non-Catalan proletariat which has maintained close links with the areas of origin, in particular Andalusia and Extremadura – the two poorest regions of Spain against which come all the allegations of Catalan nationalism. But it would be kept in mind that it is precisely the Spanish bourgeoisie of Andalusia, Extremadura, Castile and Madrid that has developed territorial exception regimes all over the country, managing to maintain the stability of the autonomous system in Catalonia even when the situation pushed it to apply Article 155 of the Constitution (which suspended the regime of autonomy), and moreover at the very moment of the renewal of the tax agreement with the Basque Country, a real territorial privilege in favor of the Basque bourgeoisie to the detriment of the proletarians of the rest of the country!

Calls for national unity, even beyond the manifestations of extreme right-wing bands that the state police use to terrorize the population, are only the defense in the current situation of the Autonomous regimes, the only bourgeois form by which it is possible to govern Spain today.

The proletarian class can expect nothing good from either the “sovereignist” or the “constitutionalist” front. For the proletarians their programs are identical: the maintenance of social peace through democratic and parliamentary deception, which they used to mobilize the masses in defense of one or the other faction or the general interest which concerns the two fronts, through collaboration between classes.

The years that have elapsed since the beginning of the *procès* have shown the true intentions of the Catalan bourgeoisie behind the sovereignist project: to neutralize the social tensions engendered by its political and economic demands imposed on the proletariat and, if possible, to channel them towards supporting its specific demands vis-à-vis the central government.

In the same way, what the bourgeois

“unionist” or “constitutionalist” wants has become obvious: to soften the asperities generated by the Autonomous regimes, to eliminate the “excesses” of the regional particularism engendered by them by using the climate of exasperation provoked by the mobilizations for independence to impose a much stronger level of social control and repression under the pretext of the “exceptional” nature of the situation.

The proletariat must see in both fronts its class enemies.

To be able to get out of the political and organizational crisis in which it has been plunged for decades, the proletarian class, international in its constitution and internationalist by the historical force with which it is endowed, must break with all the bourgeois programs, be it the exaltation of localism and the nationalist exacerbation of regional peculiarities, or the call to defend the homeland and Spanish national unity. The proletariat will be able to revive its class struggle, in the immediate field of the defense of its economic and social needs as on the political field, only by making a clean sweep of all the influences of the nationalist type, of all the links with the bour-

geoisie, national or local, of all democratic and electoral illusions.

By following this path, which is the only one that will allow it to end its situation as a pariah of the world, it will find by his side the proletarians of all regions and all countries. But it will also find arrayed against it the bourgeois enemy of any nationality, armed with all the strength that its social domination gives it. It must respond to the struggle that the bourgeois class is constantly waging against it, through its struggle against the bourgeoisie and all its factions, unifying above all the corporatism, all the divisions, the proletarians of all regions, of all nationality, from all countries.

For the renaissance of the class struggle in exclusive defense of proletarian interests, against bourgeois national demands!

For the break with any bourgeois program of defense of the fatherland, whether Catalan or Spanish!

For the reconstitution of the communist party, international and internationalist!

December 16th 2017

Considerations on the Party's Organic Activity When the General Situation is Historically Unfavourable

(Continuation from page 1)

nor can it be, a question of being on the attack; it is a matter of revolutionary preparation, which requires facing objective reality, not in order to adapt to it, but in order not to be carried away by it.

Just as Marxism does not contain a grain of utopianism (Lenin), neither does our text – it is the opposite, even on the formal plane, of the innumerable platforms of the innumerable variants of Trotskyism – and makes no concession to the unctuous rhetoric of those who seek a quick, short and easy way out of the most terrible counter-revolution of history; or of the passive resignation of those who, because they have not found the way (or because they judged it too long and too difficult), lay down their arms. The party which produced this text does not hide, but rather overtly **affirms** that the present objective situation of society and of the class *«could not be worse»*. Not only does it not refuse to be, but it accepts being – by virtue of material determinations, and not because it wants or chooses it – a small and even very small nucleus of militants: the embryo of the party **of tomorrow**, the one which will finally merit *«the name of both historical party and formal party»*, when *«real action and history will have resolved the apparent contradiction ... between historical party, that is to say, content (invariant historical program) and contingent party, that is, form, acting as the force and physical practice of a decisive part of the proletariat in struggle»*.

As with Lenin in the first chapter of «What is to be done?» but with all the more severity because the current phase lags behind that of 1902 and it is important that all militants are clearly aware of this, it knows and is not afraid to say that history has entrusted to it «the task of surviving and transmitting the flame along the thread of historical time», which is a thousand times more difficult than attacking, and at least as difficult to win after being able to attack... Like Lenin's classic text, it is not afraid to assert in the face of all «concretists» that «the restoration of the doctrinal principles» of the communist movement, that is to say, of the theory, is **the first condition, essential**, of this transmission, on which depends, not the return of revolutionary situations—which are the product of a combination of circumstances 95% external to the class party (to every party, even the best armed) – but their culmination in the conquest and the exercise of power.

(Continued from page 1)

Considerations ...

(Continuation from page 13)

And, as with «What is to be Done?», it **rejects** the idea that the complete restoration and integral defense of the Marxist doctrine can be accomplished otherwise than by means of an organ, a militant organization, a compact nucleus carrying out all the functions that characterize both the historical and formal party – even if the objective conditions restrict its overall field of action, and even more so its intervention in the different sectors; **if it did not exercise these functions, and if it did not prepare itself** through training which is difficult, painful and without glory, even this distant junction would not be **possible**.

We would not be Marxists if we were to erect a «barrier between theory and practice» because materialism teaches us that «beyond a certain limit, this would be to destroy ourselves and the bases of our principles». But this affirmation is not enough; our text supplements it by asserting that the party opposes on principle, as it has always overtly declared, conceptions which would reduce it to a secret sect or to an elite, a «workerist» association composed solely of proletarians or to a cultural, intellectual or academic cénacle; it develops within itself (in an embryonic way, starting from today), «organs capable of various functions, which we call propaganda, proselytism, union work, etc., and tomorrow [a tomorrow that will never come if we do not prepare the minimum conditions long in advance] armed organization»; Therefore, insofar as the real conditions offer the objective possibility, it devotes to **each** of these functions the same attentive care, without ever considering them as separate sectors («for such a distinction is mortal not only for the party as a whole, but also for every militant»), proclaiming, on the contrary, that «in principle no comrade should be foreign to any of them»(2) because all are qualitatively equally vital to the party, and not one of them, modest as it is, should be abandoned under the pretext that it gives, in the immediate future – not a surprise for us – derisory results.

Like «What is to be done?», our text has as its point of departure the vigorous and passionate defense of **dogmatism**, that is to say, of the invariance of doctrine, and the affirmation of its primordial role, so that action, whatever its quantitative importance, is consistent with principles; it continues to claim the indissociable nature of these more modest and less exalting tasks, but also necessary as the oxygen for theory, which are proselytism, propaganda, union work, agitation, and so on, – in short, the importation of theory even into a small layer of the class. Thus the «Considerations ...» are fighting to defend the weighty **and** inseparable task – now almost super-human – of reaffirming the «doctrinal principles» by specifying them ever more, **and** the more humble but equally difficult tasks of preparing the little communist nucleus which had survived – but was determined to survive – for all the missions it could not neglect without condemning itself to death.

They do so by considering less the chances – obviously infinitesimal – of influencing the class or even a small minority of it, than the possibility of preparing and thus forming the nucleus that will become the general staff of the revolution –

* * *

1. The question of the party's internal organization has always been a matter of concern in the positions of orthodox Marxists, and of the present Communist Left, which arose in opposition to the errors of the Moscow International. Obviously this question is inseparable from the framework of our overall positions; it is not an isolated sector within an impervious compartment.

2. All the elements of the doctrine, of the party's general theory, are to be found in the classical texts and are taken up in detail in more recent documents, in Italian texts such as the Rome Theses and the Lyon Theses (1), and many others in which the Left foresaw that the International would be destroyed by phenomena equally serious as those which had appeared in the 2nd. Today

in situations which, without doubt, will be radically different from today's, but which will be dialectically and indissolubly linked to it.

Either one accepts with humility but firmly that these tasks, all these tasks without exception – though inevitably in varying degrees – are **mutually conditioned** so that one of them dies out if it is cut off from the others; **or else** the party is destroyed along with the theory and along with it **the future of the class**. **Either** it is recognized that the party organ is formed precisely in counterrevolutionary situations by developing (albeit in different degrees, as is the case with any organism in certain phases of its life cycle), all its specific functions and therefore by preparing militants who are as complete as possible (which does not mean that they are not more capable of exercising one function rather than another while integrating into the collective life of the revolutionary party – this is the meaning of unitarism and organic centralism); **or else** one falls back into the metaphysics of sects, elites, and intellectual, cultural, and scholastic circles: and consequently one commits suicide as a party.

Our text is a severe and powerful **warning** against this final debacle born of the inability to draw the «lessons of the counter-revolutions». This is our watchword, not for 1965, but always.

(1) «We are marching in a compact group along a precipitous and difficult path, firmly holding each other by the hand. We are surrounded on all sides by enemies, and we have to advance almost constantly under their fire. We have combined, by a freely adopted decision, for the purpose of fighting the enemy, and not of retreating into the neighboring marsh, the inhabitants of which, from the very outset, have reproached us with having separated ourselves into an exclusive group and with having chosen the path of struggle instead of the path of conciliation. And now some among us begin to cry out: Let us go into the marsh! And when we begin to shame them, they retort: What backward people you are! Are you not ashamed to deny us the liberty to invite you to take a better road! Oh, yes, gentlemen! You are free not only to invite us, but to go yourselves wherever you will, even into the marsh. In fact, we think that the marsh is your proper place, and we are prepared to render you every assistance to get there. Only let go of our hands, don't clutch at us and don't besmirch the grand word freedom, for we too are «free» to go where we please, free to fight not only against the marsh, but also against those who are turning towards the marsh!»

Lenin, «Dogmatism and «Freedom of criticism»» in «What is to be done?» (1902) www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1901/witbd/i.htm

(2) It is also the meaning – the only possible one for Marxists – of the tendency to overcome in the party – not the social division of labor, but its ignoble barriers: no reduction of all functions to one, be it simple or complex, nor does it equalize all personal gifts and even the «skills and specializations» of individuals, but integrates them into the party collectivity and the militant action of each of its members.

we have used some of this material in our work on organization (in the limited sense of party organization, not the broad sense of organization of the proletariat in its various historical and social forms). Rather than summarise this work here, we refer the reader to the texts themselves and to the far-ranging study under way on the History of the Left (*Storia della Sinistra Comunista*).

3. Everything concerned with the theory and the nature of the party and relations between the party and the proletarian class, which can be summarized in the obvious conclusion that only through the party and the party's action does the proletariat become a class **for** itself and **for** the revolution – all this belongs to pure theory, which all of us accept and which is therefore beyond discussion.

4. We usually refer to as **tactics** (with the reservation, as always, that there are no autonomous terrains) those questions that arise and develop historically in relations between the proletariat and other classes, between the proletarian party and other proletarian organizations, and between the proletarian party and bourgeois and non-proletarian parties.

5. The relations between tactical solutions (which must never be in contradiction with doctrinal and theoretical positions) and the many-faceted, manifold developments of the objective situation which in a sense are exterior to the party, and are certainly quite mutable. But the Left always said that the party must master and learn to anticipate these relationships, as it was explained in the Rome Theses on tactics, which were draft theses for international tactics.

In extremely simplified terms, there are periods when the objective situation is favourable, although the party as subject is in an unfavourable condition. The opposite might also be true. There are also rare but significant examples of a well-prepared party and a social situation that pushes the masses toward revolution and toward the party that anticipated it and described it in advance. As Lenin showed, the Bolsheviks in Russia fall into this category.

6. Leaving out pedantic distinctions, we might ask ourselves, «what is the objective condition of society today?» The obvious answer is that it is the worst imaginable; a large part of the proletariat worse than being crushed by the bourgeoisie, is controlled by parties that operate on its behalf, preventing any revolutionary proletarian class movement. Consequently it is not possible to predict how long it will be until this mortal paralysis is overcome and there are once again signs of what we have defined as an «ionization» or «polarization» of social molecules, that is the prelude to the explosion of powerful class antagonisms.

7. What are the consequences of this unfavourable period for the internal organic dynamics of the party? In all the texts mentioned above, we always stated that the party cannot fail to be affected by the real situation which surrounds it. As a result, the large proletar-

ian parties which now exist are necessarily and avowedly opportunist.

One of the fundamental theses of the Left is that our party must not therefore cease its resistance, but that it must survive and transmit the «flame» along the historical «thread of time». Clearly this would have to be a small party, not because we wanted or chose it that way, but because it is an ineluctable necessity. With regard to the party's structure, we have refuted all the various accusations, with arguments it is not necessary to repeat [here](#), dating from the degeneration of the 3rd International, and in a number of polemics. We definitely do not want the party to be a secret sect, or an *elite* that refuses any outside contact because of its mania for purity. We reject any formula for a workerist or labourist party that excludes non-proletarians, because this has characterized all the opportunists in history. As can be seen from polemics going back more than half a century, we do not wish to reduce the party to a sort of cultural, intellectual or scholastic organization. We do not believe, as certain anarchists or Blanquists do, that the party is a conspiratorial group that plots armed actions.

8. Given that the degeneration of the social whole is reflected in and concentrated in the falsification and destruction of the theory and correct doctrine, the small party of today must essentially be devoted to restoring the doctrinal principles, even though the favourable conditions under which Lenin accomplished this task after the disaster of the first world war are lacking today. However, we have no reason to raise a barrier between theory and practice on that account because beyond a certain limit, this would be tantamount to destroying ourselves and our principled basis. We therefore lay claim all forms of activity characteristic of favourable periods to the extent that the real relationship of forces permits.

9. This question should be developed in more detail, but we are now in a position to draw some conclusions for the organizational structure of the party in such a difficult period. It would be a fatal error to divide the party into two groups, one devoting itself to study and the other to action. Such a distinction would be fatal not only for the party as a whole but also for each militant. Organic centralism and unitarism signify that the party develops within itself organs specialized for various functions (such as propaganda, proselytism, organization of the proletariat, trade union work, etc., and later, armed organization), but that the number of comrades delegated to such functions means nothing in itself, because in principle no comrade should be alien to any of them.

It is a mere accident of history that,

in the current phase, comrades working on the theory and history of the movement seem too many, while those prepared for action seem too few. It would be senseless to try to determine how many comrades should be occupied in one activity or another. We are all aware that when the situation becomes radicalized, innumerable elements will flock to our side immediately and instinctively, without going through courses mimicking scholastic training along the way.

10. We are conscious of the fact that, ever since Marx's fight against Bakunin, Proudhon and Lasalle, and in all subsequent phases of the opportunist infection, the danger of degeneration has always been tied to the influence of petty-bourgeois false allies on the proletariat.

Our infinite distrust of the contribution of these social strata must not and can not prevent us – following the powerful lessons of history – from utilizing exceptional elements which the party will employ in restoring the theory, without which we would be dead and the spreading of which will in the future reach a dimension measuring up to the immense increase of the revolutionary masses.

11. The high voltage discharges that have leapt from the poles of our dialectic have taught us that the comrade, the communist, revolutionary militant is the one who has been able to forget, renounce, free ones' spirit and soul from the classification in which the civil state of this putrefying society has placed him; the one who sees and integrates himself into the millennial perspective that unites our tribal ancestors fighting against wild animals with the members of the future community, living in the fraternity and joyful harmony of the social man.

12. **Historical party and formal party.** Marx and Engels, who formulated this distinction, had no need to be in a formal party, and they were correct in that their work placed them in the line of the historical party. However, no militant today could therefore conclude that he had the right to choose between being in line with the historical party and snubbing the formal party. Certainly not because Marx and Engels were supermen of a distinct type or race, but because of the correctness of their dialectical and historical position that it is necessary to understand...

Marx says: The party **in its historical meaning**, in the **historical** sense, and the **formal** or **ephemeral party**. The first notion implies continuity, and our thesis is that the doctrine remains invariant since Marx formulated it, not as an invention of a genius, but as the discovery of a result of human evolu-

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Considerations ...

(Continuation from page 15)

tion. But there is no metaphysical opposition between these two notions, and it would be stupid to express them in a formula such as: I turn my back on the formal party and move towards the historical party.

When we deduce from our invariant doctrine that the revolutionary victory of the working class can only be achieved through the class party and the dictatorship of **that party**, when, guided by Marx's own words, we state that before the existence of the revolutionary communist party the proletariat might be a class for bourgeois science, but not for Marx or for us, the following conclusion is necessary: the victory requires the existence of a party worthy of being called both the historical party and the formal party. In other words, it requires that this apparent contradiction – which has dominated a long and difficult past – between the historical party, i.e., the **content** (the invariant historical program), and the contingent party, i.e., the **form**, acting as the force and physical praxis of a decisive part of the fighting proletariat, be resolved in real action and history.

We can briefly apply this synthetic presentation of the doctrine to past historical stages.

13. With the founding of the 1st International in 1864 the collection of small groups and leagues that grew out of workers struggles was transformed for the first time into the International party stipulated by the doctrine. This is not the place to recapitulate the history of the crisis of that International, which Marx took the lead in defending against the infiltration of petty-bourgeois programs, such as anarcho-libertarianism.

The 2nd International was reconstituted in 1889, after Marx's death, but under Engel's control, although his instructions were not applied. For a time, the formal party tended to represent the continuity of the historical party, but the bond was broken in subsequent years by the International's federalist, non-centralist system, by the influence of parliamentary practice and the cult of democracy, and by the nationalist outlook of most of the sections, which no longer saw themselves as armies at war with their own states, as the Communist Manifesto of 1848 had indicated. The overt revisionism arose, depreciating the historical **objective** and exalting the contingent, formal **movement**.

When the 3rd International arose after the disastrous failure, in 1914, of almost all sections into pure democratism and nationalism, it was for us, in the years immediately after 1919, the com-

plete convergence of the historical party with the formal party once again. The new International was born overtly centralist and anti-democratic, but the historical praxis by which the sections federated to the failed International were integrated into the new organizations was particularly difficult, and too much hurried by the concern that the extension of the conquest of power in Russia to the other European countries could be immediate.

The section that formed in Italy on the ruins of the old party of the 2nd International was especially quick to grasp the necessity of welding the historical movement to its momentary form, not because of the merits of any individuals, but for historical reasons. It had waged very determined fights against the degenerated forms, resisting infiltration not only by currents infected with nationalism, parliamentarism and democratism, but also by currents (such as Maximalism in Italy) which allowed themselves to be influenced by petty-bourgeois extremism, e.g., anarcho-syndicalism. This Left current fought especially hard to make the conditions of admission rigorous (construction of the new formal structure). It applied them fully in Italy, and when they yielded dubious results in France, Germany, etc., it was the first to point out the danger for the whole International.

A proletarian state was born in one country, while power had not been conquered in the other countries. This historical situation made the clear **organic** solution of keeping the leadership of the world organization in the hands of the Russian section, highly problematic. The Left was the first to understand that if deviations in the internal economy as well as in international relations began to appear in the behavior of the Russian State, the result would be a dissociation between the politics of the historical party, i.e. the revolutionary communists of the world, and the policy of a formal party defending the interests of the contingent Russian state.

14. Since then the abyss has deepened to the extent that the «apparent» sections, which are dependent on the Russian leader-party, are now involved, in the ephemeral sense, in a vulgar policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie that is no better than the traditional collaboration of the corrupted parties of the Second International.

This situation gives to the groups derived from the struggle of the Italian Left against Moscow's degeneration the possibility (we don't say the right) to better understand the road which the real, active (and therefore formal) party must follow in order to remain faithful to those features which distinguish the revolutionary, historical party; a party which has existed in a potential sense,

at least since 1847, whilst from a practical point of view it asserted itself in great historical rifts, along the tragic series of revolutionary defeats.

To effect the transition from these faithfully transmitted traditions into an effort to create a new international organization of party without historical rupture, it is not possible to **organize** on the basis of a selection of especially qualified individuals or best versed in the historical doctrine; but organically we must use in the most faithful way the continuity between the actions of the group which struggled for it forty years ago and the current line. The new movement cannot expect any supermen, nor a Messiah, but it must be founded on a **reanimation** of all that it has been possible to save over a long time; preservation can not be limited to the teaching of theses and the retrieval of documents, but must use living instruments which form an old guard and which intends this preservation to transmit an incorruptible and powerful guideline to a young guard. This one is moving towards new revolutions that will perhaps require no more than ten years before they appear on the stage of history. But the names of these militants, young and old, is not a matter for the party and for the revolution.

Transmitting this tradition correctly beyond generation (and therefore also beyond the names of living and dead men) means not only transmitting critical texts and using the doctrine of the communist party in a manner faithful to the classics. It also means joining the class battle that the Marxist Left (we don't confine ourselves solely to the Italian region) waged in the midst of the fierce real struggles of the years after 1919, and which was broken less by the relationship of forces *vis a vis* the enemy class than by the bonds that subordinated it to a centre degenerating from being the centre of the historical world party to the one of a contingent party politically destroyed by the opportunist pathology, until it was historically *de facto* liquidated.

Without abandoning the principle of centralized world discipline, the Left tried to conduct at least a defensive revolutionary combat to save the proletarian vanguard from collusion with intermediate strata and their defeat-prone parties and ideologies. Since the historical possibility of saving, if not the revolution, at least the backbone of its historical party, has failed, today we have resumed the work, in an objective situation of total paralysis, with a proletariat deeply infected by petty-bourgeois democratism. But the nascent organization, utilizing all the doctrinal tradition and practice confirmed by the historical verification of its timely predictions, also applies this tradi-

tion to its daily activity, striving to re-establish contact on an ever-widening scale with the exploited masses. It purges its structure of one of the initial errors of the Moscow International by doing away with the thesis of democratic centralism and the use of voting mechanisms, just as it has eliminated any concession to democratic, pacifist, autonomist or libertarian positions from the mentality of every last member.

This is the direction in which we are striving to make further progress, using

the bitter lessons of the past to prevent new crises in the path of the historical party, and eliminating the wretched abortions we have seen in the history of so many doomed formal parties. Here too, we follow the warnings of our original mentors regarding the difficult struggle

(1) The Theses of Rome on Tactics were adopted at the Second Congress of the Italian Communist Party (March 1922); The Theses of Lyon were pre-

against the influence of a bourgeois milieu dominated by commerce, personal adulation and the vulgar quest for power and popularity by gnomes who all too often resemble those which Marx and Engels with deep contempt swept away from their path.

presented by the Left to the Third Congress of the Party which, because of the coming to power of fascism in Italy, was held in France (January 1926).

When the ICC “polemicizes” it is in order to evade the issue!

In its journal *Révolution Internationale* No. 464 (May-June 2017), the ICC published an article entitled: “Controversy with the PCI. Daesh, a decomposed avatar of the national liberation struggle!” It is a reaction to an article on the attitude of the ICC in relation to the attacks in Paris, published a year earlier in the columns *le Prolétaire* No. 519: “The ICC and the attacks. Stupor and tremors”. In our article, we wrote that “*the impressionism and the superficiality of the analysis*” of the ICC on this subject (analysis which was nothing other than a re-hash of the most worn-out bourgeois propaganda) demonstrated its “*deviation from Marxism*”; this fatal deviation led it to seek an explanation in the smoky domain of ideology, preventing him from understanding what was happening and condemning it to uttering impotent moans.

The ICC has found it necessary to reply to our article with a “polemic”; but what is obvious in reading this “polemic” is that it does not answer any of our arguments! There is just a little note indicating that, in the framework of its article, that it cannot deal with “*other important issues*”, such as the accusations of pacifism we brought against it, its bizarre analysis of the balance of power between classes (in fact : its implausible conception that the proletariat and the bourgeoisie have had an equivalent strength, which has lead, for decades, to a “*blockage*”(stand-off) of society), etc., and its theory of “*decomposition*”, used to “*explain*” everything and anything, from far-right Front National’s election scores to jihadist attacks ...

Since it does not want to or cannot answer the “important questions” on which we attacked it, the only thing left for the ICC is to evade the issue. It devotes its long article to talk about **something else**: notably the question of the national and anticolonial struggles, where it thinks it may find us in default.

Let’s follow it on to this terrain. The ICC quotes excerpts from *le Prolétaire* articles dating back more than thirty and forty years (1) to assert that we retain “*certain confusions which [led us] in the past to punctually abandon the position of proletarian internationalism by supporting even if it was critically, the capitalist forces of the Palestine Liberation Organization*”.

These excerpts say nothing of the sort and the party never supported the PLO nor abandoned proletarian interna-

tionalism; but it is true that in the early 1980s erroneous positions appeared in the party press which contributed to the crisis of our international organization in 1982-83. A too optimistic vision of the general situation and excessive expectations of what this situation could yield, fueled a theoretico-political weakening of the party of which, dialectically, they were also the consequence. Considering that the party remained irremediably clinging to too rigid political and tactical orientations that were an obstacle to the quick successes they believed at hand, certain elements saw the only solution in the break with our organization, that is, with the current of the so-called “Italian” communist left.

This was the case, among others, of the Algerian militants of *El Oumami* who accused the party of “indifferentism” because we had written for example that it was not “for the revolutionary communists to redo the capitalist map of the Middle East by becoming the “consequent heirs” of the national bourgeois-Arab wave” (2); the goal of the Communists is the proletarian revolution, the international socialist revolution and not a national bourgeois revolution. Communists do not turn away from bourgeois revolutions; on the contrary, they call on the proletarians to participate in them and to push them as far as possible, not as an end in itself, but in order to clear the way for the subsequent transition to their own international revolution, according to the schema laid down by Marx and Lenin. .

But in reality the divergence with *El*

Oumami activists did not fundamentally focus on this issue, but on their **activism** – this recurrent disease of revolutionary movements that drives the search for immediate success at the expense of loyalty to political and programmatic principles.

In putting political and programmatic principles aside, just momentarily they swear, the activists think they are making a skilful maneuver, whereas in reality they yield to the pressure of the dominant currents; and when the hoped-for successes are obviously not encountered, they accentuate the abandonment of their initial politico-programmatic positions even to the point of disappearing in the best of cases, or of transforming themselves, at worst, into mere appendices of counterrevolutionary reformist parties. After breaking with the party while swearing to remain faithful to its program, *El Oumami* began to chase after the Palestinian bourgeois nationalists, then after the bourgeois democrats, the Ben Bellists, etc. until eventually flirting with the Islamists. In the meantime, it had discovered that the party’s program was worth nothing, and basically that it was the revolutionary perspective that had to be abandoned; in the end the only thing left to do was the individual rallying to the established order...

* * *

Let’s go back to the ICC. We reported having to defend in a meeting the Marxist positions in front of a speaker who evoked a possible support for Daesh (ISIS), while claiming to be faithful to the Italian communist left. As minoritarian and paradoxical as it is, it is a position we find among the Spartacists of the LTF and other marginal groups, which is why we have brought it up, as a small example of the prevailing confusion. The ICC makes a big fuss of this writing that it actually causes it “stupor and trembling”! As it is quite clear that its indignation on this subject is a smoke screen and after recalling that we are not responsible for the positions we are fighting, we will not dwell on it any further.

(Continued on page 18)

When the ICC “polemicizes”...

(Continuation from page 17)

The ICC also reproaches us for speaking in another article of “imperialist countries” and others that are not, and the particular tasks of the proletarians of the imperialist countries to make possible the unity with the proletarians of the dominated countries.

But did we invent this situation? Are French cities being bombarded by the Syrian air force, while mercenary troops paid for, say by Libya, Mali or the Central African Republic would seize portions of French territory, while large enterprises from Chad or Afghanistan would divide what is left of the economy of the country and hundreds and thousands of French proletarians would be willing to risk their lives to try to emigrate to Africa or the Middle East?

The ICC recognizes that our position is that of Lenin and “*the workers’ movement of the past*”; but according to it, the historical conditions have been changed radically for a century, and it produced a rather unfortunate quote from Rosa Luxemburg against the recognition of the right to national independence of colonized countries: she writes that this recognition by the Bolsheviks will bring “*ruin of Russia as a state*” (3) ... This was indeed the last concern of the Bolsheviks who had their eyes fixed on the world revolution!

Historical conditions have indeed changed. The cycle of anticolonial struggles and revolutions is over; it has ended, not for a century as Rosa Luxemburg believed and as the ICC still believes, but only a few decades ago. During this gigantic wave that affected hundreds of millions of people after the Second World War, the oppressed and colonized masses had to fight the colonial and imperialist powers alone, without finding any help from the proletarians of these countries, paralyzed by the domination of collaborationist reformism, that agent of the democratic corruption.

This lack of support by the proletariat for these struggles of yesterday, as with the absence today of support for the masses of refugees and migrants, is a far-reaching historical fact that will weigh negatively tomorrow on the efforts for proletarian unification. Currently it makes it difficult to understand that the societies of the opulent imperialist metropolises are divided into opposing classes with opposite interests, and this gives some credibility to the discourses, religious or not, which see there an undifferentiated mass of people in solidarity with the actions of their state, therefore, even when they are civilians, responsible and guilty for its crimes.

But if the bourgeois revolutionary cycle ended with the appearance of dozens of new independent bourgeois states, national oppressions and exactions and imperialist looting did not disappear. This obliges and will force the proletariat to take up the fight against these injustices and oppressions (and others, not reducible to the simple antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie) which can no longer be solved, in general, except by the proletarian revolution. To take up the struggle does not mean to resume the usual democratic or nationalist orientations on this terrain, but on the contrary to integrate the fight against these oppressions in the anti-bourgeois class struggle. The struggle of the proletarians of the big capitalist states against imperialist intervention, whether armed or not, against all the misdeeds of their state vis-à-vis the populations who suffer from them, is a necessity for the future concretization of the international union of proletarians. .

But the ICC does not suspect anything of this; and its calls for “solidarity” between proletarians can only sound hollow in the ears of the victims of imperialism to whom it explains learnedly that this does not exist, just as with the victims of other oppressions (sexual, racial, etc.) which it never talks about.

Contrary to what the ICC insists, we do not advocate for the working class to defend itself exclusively within a national framework; it is, however, inevitable, as the **Manifesto** states, that it must first fight against its own bourgeoisie, within the national framework therefore (4).

But it cannot stop there; the working class must, as the **Address** of 1850 stated, make the revolution permanent until it has conquered power at least in the principal countries of the world. But for that it will have to reconstitute its party, rediscover its program.

We do not know why the ICC has found it necessary to write an article so as not to answer us – and, to tell the truth, it does not concern us very much; but what is certain is that it cannot make any useful contribution to the exalting but difficult path of the classist and revolutionary reorganization of the proletariat.

(1) This is an article from *le Proletaire* No. 164 (January 1974) presenting Bordiga’s talk on “The Multiple Revolutions” (Genoa, 1953) and another of No. 370 (March 1983) polemicizing with *El Oumami*.

(2) See *le Proletaire* No. 365, text defended in the article of the n° 370

(3) Rosa Luxemburg in “*The Russian Revolution*”. The English translation is: “*the disintegration of Russia*” (as a matter of fact the disintegration of the **Rus-**

sian empire, the so-called “prison house of the peoples”). <https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1918/russian-revolution/ch03.htm>

(4) “*The workers have no country. We cannot take what they do not have. Insofar as the proletariat must first of all conquer political power and set itself up as the ruling class of the nation, it is still national, although not in the sense that the bourgeoisie understands it.*” “Manifesto of the Communist Party” chapter II. To be an internationalist does not mean to refuse to see that the workers’ struggle cannot but be carried out first in a “national” framework: it is a state of affairs that can only be overcome when the struggle has reached a certain level...

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Canada: a good Indian...

Canadian «justice» has just reanimated, once again, the infamous quote attributed to genocidal US General Philip Sheridan: «A good Indian is a dead Indian». On February 9, a jury in Saskatchewan found the murderer of Colten Boushie, of the Red Pheasant Cree «First Nation» Reserve, not guilty.

RACISM ASSASSINATES, «JUSTICE ACQUITS»

C. Boushie was killed by Gerald Stanley, a farmer who shot him from behind with a bullet that pierced his skull in August 2016. The 22-year-old First Nation man was with a group of friends on the property of the murderer after their vehicle had a puncture. The murderer accused the youths of wanting to commit a vehicle theft. This is how he justified the bursts of a semi-automatic weapon he fired at the group and the bullet he fired point-blank into the young man's skull. Canadian «justice» did just as its American neighbor does so often in the murders of young black proletarians: It took the side of the murderers. The police acted as if the victim was the culprit, launching an illegal search at his mother's house.

Instead of fighting racism in First Nation communities, the provincial government has chosen to deploy the police in the name of fighting «rural crime», a pretext constantly used to stir up anti-Native sentiments in Western Canada. Justice has conducted prosecutions only under the pressure of the indigenous populations. The media outlets reflected this. They blamed Colten and his group for entering the farmer's land and looking «threatening». It was only after long delays and much pressure from the First Nations that Stanley was indicted for Boushie's death.

The trial confirmed this state racism. The jury – from which all aboriginal people had been excluded although they represent a quarter of the region's population – not only found him not guilty of murder, but even of manslaughter.

Less than 12 hours after the verdict, thousands of people took to the streets of cities across Canada and North America to demand «Justice for Colten». The protest was organized by the *Idle No More* movement, an Aboriginal rights 'network' launched five years ago in Saskatchewan starting from a tweet.

CANADA, A PRISON OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

There are one million eight hundred thousand «Aboriginals» (First Nations, («Indian»), Métis and Inuit) in Canada, representing 5.6% of the total population. Taken alone the 634 First Nations make up 2.8% of Canada's total popula-

tion, but they make up one-tenth of the population of Saskatchewan (10.7%) and Manitoba (10.5%) and almost one-third of the total population of the Northwest Territories (32.1%).

Despite all the Canadian government's hype about the «Multicultural Nation» Aboriginal people still suffer from racism and misery. Whether on-reserve or in cities, the aboriginal population everywhere is plagued by unemployment, poverty and disease.

Although Aboriginal peoples make up only 5% of the Canadian population, more than 25% of all men in federal prisons and 36% of women are Aboriginal. Nearly half of all Aboriginal adults are unemployed and more than half have less than a high school diploma. Le taux de suicide chez les populations autochtones et tout particulièrement chez les jeunes est parmi les plus élevés du monde.

The conditions in many First Nations reserves are often worse than those of the shantytowns of the imperialized countries: frequent lack of drinking water, lack of housing or moldy freezing habitations, few basic services and little employment. Many families live in uninsulated tents or huts with no running water or electricity, with all the lack of sanitation that this entails including the necessity of using buckets as toilets to empty into nearby ditches. En moyenne 30% des familles autochtones souffrent d'«insécurité alimentaire» (c'est-à-dire ne mangent pas toujours à leur faim) et cette proportion peut atteindre les 70% dans certaines communautés.

The conditions are not better for those who live in the city, with living conditions well below the rest of the population. Aboriginal workers earn 15 to 20 percent less than their work colleagues. In addition, 40,000 Aboriginal children are placed in residential care, representing more than half of all children separated from their families in Canada.

Aboriginal people are also victims – directly or indirectly – of police terror. According to a recent surveys, dozens of women and girls in British Columbia (Alberta's neighbor to the west) cities have been abused by police with at least one rape. Some were pepper sprayed, tasered; attacked by police dogs, beaten, searched by male police officers, were groped etc.

Finally, the police and the «justice» system have refused to protect women. More than 1,200 Aboriginal women in Canada – some sources say 4,000 – have disappeared or been murdered over the last 30 years. The police often ignored these disappearances or turned the vic-

tims into culprits, accusing them of being prostitutes or alcoholics; often driving them many kilometers from town only to abandon them in freezing temperatures if they do not rape them first.

In the formation of Canada, Aboriginal peoples were and are considered «savages». This racism has been the cover for seizing the lands and natural resources found there.

COLONIAL RANSACKING CONTINUES

Like the other peoples of America, the Aboriginal people of Canada have undergone a colonial conquest by the English, the French, the Spaniards ... They have been deprived of their lands and have suffered genocidal massacres and violence of all kinds.

The intensification of rivalry between the imperialist powers is pushing the Canadian bourgeoisie to accelerate the exploitation of «its» territory – particularly that of the many natural resources in the North. There is therefore a lot of pressure to rescind or ignore all the regulations that prevent or limit the looting of native lands. At the end of 2012, under the pressure of the oil pipelines industry and the big oil companies – including Total, which exploits the infamous Oil Sands – the government virtually liquidated the protection of thousands of lakes and rivers across the country. It also severely limited the environmental assessments which are a precondition for all projects for the exploitation of resources and the opportunity for Aboriginal people to be consulted on these issues.

As at Standing Rock in the United States, indigenous peoples refuse to give up their lands but are also mobilized to prevent the anarchic exploitation of resources – inherent in capitalism – destroying ecosystems, polluting soils and waters, degrading the health of the population... In Alberta, where

(Continued on page 20)

The Tragedy of the German Proletariat after the First World War

(Brochure A5, 60 pages, January
2010, Price: 2 €, 4 FS)

- Introduction
- Germany 1918-1919: the tragic retard of the party («le prolétaire», No. 491, Nov. - Dec. 2008 / Jan. 2009)
- The tragedy of the German proletariat after the first World War (Report to a general meeting of the party - 1972)
- The situation in Germany and the communist movement («Il Soviet», No 18, 11 July 1920.)
- Postscript: Berlin 5 January 1919

Canada...

(Continuation from page 19)

the Oil Sands are exploited wantonly, First Nations must bring in bottled water while living on the edge of once pristine rivers, which are now polluted with lead and mercury.

Risks also comes from pipelines that cross their territories and expose them to gas and oil spills. In July 2017, a leak from a Husky Energy pipeline discharged more than 225,000 liters of oil into the North Saskatchewan River in the center of the country, leaving two towns and indigenous communities without running water several days.

In addition, the harassments are numerous. Seismic tests are performed along riverbanks and the West coast for oil or gas exploration. They consist of the emission of super-powerful sounds (290 decibels) under water, for given periods, every ten seconds, and 24 hours a day for five years. This is likely to kill marine mammals as well as the rest of the ecosystem and therefore the fishing that is essential for the survival of many Aboriginal communities.

Unfortunately, the numerous protests against these destructive and risk-generating projects are made on the petty-bourgeois grounds of native «nationalism» or ecology (sometimes with «socialist» fig leaf).

Indigenous peoples are not outside capitalist society, even if they are marginalized in it. The «First Nations» population, as in all nations, is divided into classes with different interests. There are proletarians who a few years ago waged big workers struggles. Well-integrated into the capitalist machine are many if not most Chiefs and a thin layer of sycophants. The disinherited indigenous populations will not be able to find a way out through a national union to create an independent or autonomous state, an objective of those bourgeois or petty-bourgeois layers who dream of exploiting the riches of the subsoil for their own profit. Their fate depends on the anti-capitalist struggle of the united proletarians of Canada and the world – above the barriers of ethnicity, language and nationality, origin and sex. Only this revolutionary struggle will succeed in destroying in a continuous revolutionary wave this despicable mode of production with its procession of misery and blood, to lay the foundations of a life and a society totally free from exploitation and oppression.

To put an end to capitalism, which is a criminal system that menaces the living conditions of proletarians, both workers and oppressed populations, but also directly threatens the survival of humanity, there is only one way out: the struggle for communism.

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.