

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.

Nr 5

November 2009
Supplement to
«le prolétaire» Nr. 494
M2414 - 5 -
- £1 / US\$1,5 / €1,5 -

Iran :

For the proletariat, there is no other issue than the struggle on the class terrain in the perspective of the proletarian revolution!

The confrontation between the armored democracy of the rulers and the tepid petit-bourgeois reformism of the opposition is the result of the acute rivalries between bourgeois factions.

The brutal repression of street demonstrations that has hit Tehran and the larger cities shows that the Iranian government's Ahmadinejad does not tolerate any questioning of his political power.

Accused of electoral fraud, the supporters of Ayatollah Khamenei and the incumbent president have responded with arrests, beatings and shootings; the police, the Pasdaran Basji and volunteers headed by them are the instruments of the current repression.

Iranian democracy appeared dressed in black with the so-called "Islamic revolution" of 1979, which in reality was nothing revolutionary in economic and social

terms: the parasitic regime of the Shah, backed by the United States, had been replaced by a republic where religious clergy led the State and where nationalism is camouflaged by an Islamic ecumenism. Economic modernization initiated by the Shah did not stop under the Ayatollahs, but the social control which eluded the monarchy in full decomposition was forcefully restored by the reactionary regime of the Shiite clergy.

Capitalism in the countries on the periphery of imperialism as elsewhere develops using its own social and political forces rooted among the masses, whether religious in Israel or Iran, or secular as in Turkey or Iraq. The "Islamic

revolution" of 1979 did not at all shake the capitalist economic structure of Iran, but instead responded to specific national interests of the Iranian bourgeoisie, entrusting to its most authoritarian faction the task of defending these interests both domestically and in its policy of regional power based on the major energy resources of the country.

By 1979 these imperialist ambitions collided with those of Israel which since its creation has acted as a *gendarme* of the interests of Western imperialism, and especially those of the United States. The clash between Iranian bourgeois

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China 1927: The Stalinist Counter-revolution leads the Chinese Proletarians to Massacre

Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang: two names which the international proletariat must never forget because they are the names of the executioners of the Chinese proletarians and poor peasants; the Shanghai Commune and the Canton Insurrection: two splendid examples of the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese proletarians which the international proletariat must always remember.

But Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang could not have succeeded in their counter-revolutionary work without the tragically decisive contribution of Stalinism.

The bourgeois movement of which the Kuomintang was representative did not have anything in common with the French bourgeois revolutionary movement of 1793, even if its tasks were objectively national-revolutionary and anti-imperialist (in relation to Great Britain and Japan). Faced with the gigantic revolt of the Chinese peasants and proletarians and with the danger of a proletarian leadership of the revolutionary move-

ment of the exploited, its role was similar to that of defender of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat played by the German social-democrats at the end of the First World War. The real possibilities that the Chinese proletariat would take the head of the huge revolutionary wave in China constituted a serious danger to the bourgeois order not only in

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Iran:

For the Iranian proletariat, there is no other issue than the struggle on the class terrain in the perspective of the proletarian revolution!

(Continuation from page 1)

interests and Israeli and American bourgeois interests was inevitable.

Throughout these thirty years of the confessional regime and especially after the war with Iraq (a war neither won nor lost but which helped cement the collaboration between classes), the Iranian capital has undergone significant development. The essential resources of the country are undoubtedly concentrated in oil and gas of which Iran is one of the biggest exporters, but the metal and armaments industries, and the textile and construction industries have undoubtedly increased. This development is the basis for the growth of trade with China and Russia as with Germany and Italy, but it is also its ambitions as a regional power which forced it to accelerate its nuclear program.

These thirty years of capitalist development consequently have accelerated the urbanization of the country and increased the number of proletarians. But the confessional regime, responding effectively to the requirements of capitalist development, still exercised a strong influence over much of the population, the fact that the proletariat could not profit from the present political and social tensions to reclaim the defense of its own immediate interests, economic and organizational, shows that the road to the class struggle is still long and difficult.

The international situation, marked by ever-more-frequent economic crises and growing instability in the many tempestuous zones of world capitalism—and the Middle East has long been one of those powder kegs ready to explode—shows the tendency to accentuate the centralization of political power, as it turns to an increasingly marked authoritarianism to defend essential capitalist interests. The more economic crisis strikes the major centers of world capitalism, spreading in all countries, including the most distant of these nerve centers of the international economy, increasing instability in economic and trade relations, then the more the reactionary forces are entrusted the task of defending the local capitalist interests at all costs.

According to media reports, the world finds itself divided into democratic countries, dictatorial countries, and terrorist countries. Democratic countries have the noble task of driving, willingly or by force,

the dictatorships to democracy, and to oppose, especially by military power, the terrorist countries, there also paving the way for “democratization” after the defeat of “terrorism” (we have seen in Iraq and Afghanistan what kind of social and economic disasters the democratic wars unleashed by democratic Western countries have ended up in).

But it appears even more clearly today than yesterday that democracy, including in the countries of older liberal tradition, is strictly conditioned by advocating bourgeois national economic, financial, political, military and diplomatic interests that regularly conflict with the others as demonstrated by the present outbreak of wars across the world. This further demonstrates that democracy is still the most effective instrument of deception used by any bourgeois faction in power to obtain a consensus of the masses rather than just programs for better management of the economy, wider distribution of wealth and improved living standards, but on the ability to energetically defend these interests.

The confessional democracy of the Ayatollahs follows the same trend; electoral fraud or not, the masses are brought willingly or by force to support the rule of the strongest: if they do not support it voluntarily, democratically, they are induced by repression to knuckle under to the commands of the government because it must take precedence above all, above the rules of democracy, above the interests of the petit-bourgeois, the masses, the proletarians, it is the “national interest”, which always corresponds to the interests of the most powerful bourgeois factions who utilize state power to their advantage.

The recourse to brute force, to open repression alongside accusations of treason against the opposition, is not only a show of force, it also reflects a fear that the proletarian masses take literally the prospect of being able to express their discontent and put forward their own demands. But what awaits the Iranian proletariat, is not the opening of an era of free expression and free organization, but rather a period in which, once it has solved its internal problems, the bourgeoisie will use the Shiite clergy to concentrate all forces in the country towards a policy of regional power even more markedly than before.

The clashes with the United States, Israel, Britain and many of the Western partners of the Americans are not only due to Iranian efforts to acquire nuclear weapons, they derive from policies related to oil and gas resources, and Iranian ambitions of an alliance with Russia and China to oppose American pressure in Central Asia. The prudence of President Obama who, despite the crackdown, affirmed the desire to maintain the possibilities of “dialogue” with the Iranian government, demonstrates the importance of the issues. It would be unrealistic to expect real actions against repression in Iran from the major “democratic” imperialists, just as there was none issuing from the repression of the students of Tiananmen Square in China, there will be none in response to the current crackdown.

In the face of the politics of nationalism and regional power conducted by the Iranian bourgeoisie, there are only two possibilities for the proletariat of this country: either break away from the death embrace of interclass collaborationism, and therefore of the nationalism which is the antechamber of war-thirsty adventures, to begin to organize the defense of its own interests, or to abandon all hope of its struggle for emancipation in resigning itself to remain docilely exploited and the manipulated cannon fodder sacrificed for the sole profit of the capitalists.

It will not be easy for the Iranian proletariat to free itself from a religious poison that has lasted for decades and from a more recent democratic intoxication, it will be necessary for them to carry out harsh and bloody struggles because the bourgeoisie will not let go of power by mere peaceful demonstrations even if they are huge and even though the demonstrators smash up the symbols of the domination of the Ayatollahs. The proletariat has no force and no future if it cannot rediscover the means of the class struggle.

It is not the demand for elections without fraud, parliamentary representation for all classes of society and democratic freedom which are the means of preventing the bourgeois pressures and repression: the demands of “freedoms” of “rights” will remain wishful thinking for the proletariat if they are not ripped away and maintained by force, i.e. by the open class struggle, independent of religious forces and class collaboration.

The proletarians of the major capitalist countries which boast of their democratic institutions and the superiority of their civilization, will provide assistance to their class brothers in Iran and elsewhere, when they also return to class positions: the more the proletariat of the imperialist countries remain subject to

bourgeois interests and respectful of social peace, the more the proletarians of the world will remain exploited, crushed and repressed. The “common interest”, the “national interest” invoked by the bourgeois of all countries is nothing other than the mask of capitalist interests: the proletariat must respond everywhere by refusing any agreement with “their own” bourgeoisie and its State: class against class, proletarian interests against bourgeois interests!

The dictatorship of capital, which is manifested openly or hides under the mask of democracy, secular or religious, can be overthrown only by a greater social force, the proletariat. The proletarian dictatorship exerted by the sole authentic class party, is that necessary point of transition in Washington as in Rome, in Moscow as in Beijing or Tehran, in Paris as in Berlin, Madrid, Rio de Janeiro and New Delhi. In response to the bloody laws of capital and the counter-revolution we will have the implacable laws of the revolution!

June 2009

« Il Comunista »
Nr. 113 - Luglio 2009
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 - Redeyef, Tunisia, a sud di Lampedusa
- (bimonthly in Italian)* • One copy £ 1 / € 1,5 / Sfr 5. **Subscription:** £ 6 / € 9 / Sfr 35. **Subscription support:** £ 12 / € 19 / Sfr 70.

European Elections: Once again the Democratic Lie!

Workers! Proletarians!

The economic crisis that struck at the famous GDP of most industrialized countries; chilling the blood of the capitalists and attacking the living standards of millions of workers in Europe and beyond, starkly demonstrates the reality of conflict between the conditions of life and work of the proletarians and the privileges of the bourgeois classes.

Workers! Your reality consists of expulsion from production, layoffs, unemployment, chronic poverty; it consists of insecurity and the growing difficulty of everyday life, of the intensified exploitation of wage labor – when there is a job. The future which capitalism is preparing consists of the worsening of all conditions, including the basics of life and work, of a deep and lasting insecurity. To realize and increase capitalist profits, the bourgeoisie have no qualms about throwing millions of proletarians into hunger and misery.

Workers! Proletarians!

It is only through your exploitation day after day, hour after hour, whatever the political system, that capitalism draws its vital force, it is only through the systematic extortion of surplus value issuing from wage labor that the capitalists assure themselves of the profits and privileges of a social system where the survival of every human being depends on continuous good profits: without the exploitation of wage labor, there would be no capitalist profit.

The economic, social and political interests of the bourgeois classes are in fact completely opposed to the economic, social and political interests of proletarians. But the experience in government bourgeois class in power in Europe for 150 years taught them that the best way to maintain their domination over society is the use of democracy, i.e. of the most refined and most pernicious lies...

Democracy signifies “power of the people”, but since the bourgeois revolutions that have completed their historic task of breaking the chains of feudalism and absolutism that blocked the progress of the whole of society, the “people” can no longer be a reality: on the one hand it is the strongest bourgeois factions that have come to power and control society; on the other hand, a particular class has emerged, in opposition to this organiza-

tion of society of which it is the victim and which is based on commodities, capital, money, private property, private appropriation of social wealth: the class of non-possessors, those who own nothing but their chains, the proletarian class.

The bourgeoisie uses the same weapons in politics as in the economy: behind the fiction of equality, fraud, deception, racketeering, the use of political and military force to assert its interests. There is no bourgeois democracy without police and without the utilization of force by the State, there is no democracy without exploitation of most of the population by a minority, there is no democracy without the defence of profits and the protection of private property. Bourgeois democracy spreads illusions of the equality of all citizens, interests common to all, individual freedoms, to hide the reality of the fundamental social inequality, the opposition of interests between classes, systematic negation in practice of “rights” proclaimed by all republican constitutions: the right to live, the right to work, the right to choose one's lifestyle... In fact no “right” was ever achieved peacefully by the bourgeoisie itself when it fought against feudalism, no “right” has never been conquered by the proletariat in the bourgeois society without bitter struggles!

Workers! Proletarians!

For the umpteenth time, the bourgeois classes push you to “express” through a powerless and uncontrollable mechanical device, the “choice” of “representatives” that, according to them, will contribute to the construction of a “common home” called the Europe where all people would be on an equal footing. Nothing could be more false! Bourgeois democracy has already demonstrated that it cannot resolve the fundamental question for every human being, that of a dignified life, in harmony and solidarity. Millions of proletarians in France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Poland and all countries of the so-called European Union - and the world - are forced into an increasingly difficult life, always more uncertain, exhausted by their job if they have one, or by endless job-searching.

The current capitalist crisis highlights even more that the basic tendency in all capitalist countries is the prevalence of national interests, the defence of a network of economic and political

European Elections

interests whose pivot is the nation State. We saw this during the collapse of U.S., British, Dutch, etc. banks, and during the still-ongoing rescue of the banking and financial systems of each national state. It can be seen in the large capitalist concentrations such as in the automotive sector where American, Chinese, Russians, Italians, etc., compete for supremacy on the world market. It can be seen above all in the national economies: at the same time as the GDP declines, and with it the average rate of profit, welfare benefits, the “social shock absorbers”, also tend to diminish. After the Second World War the ‘democratic’ imperialist countries resumed the use of social welfare benefits established by the fascist imperialist countries for the support of the masses by means of a forced interclassism; the “democratic” bourgeoisies also in the search of long-term support by the proletarian masses developed a large network of “social welfare benefits”. The fascist method was effective for twenty years in Italy, the democratic method has been successful for more than sixty years, particularly thanks to the decisive contribution of reformist national-Communism! In both cases, the social and political order is the same: interclassism, the collaboration between classes, the belief that in modern society owners and workers, rulers and ruled, exploiters and exploited have the same fundamental interests, the same objectives and methods to express their views.

This alliance against nature between bosses and workers strengthens the strongest capitalist groups and marginalizes the weakest, precipitating a new form of imperialist colonialism. The submission of workers to the bourgeoisie is joined by the servility of the petty-bourgeoisie, which finds its repugnant place in the interclassist management of bourgeois power in drowning proletarian attempts to break with this mortal alliance under democratic superstitions. Capitalist expansion and the generalization of the interclass collaborators have not mitigated the social contradictions of the capitalist mode of production and this is demonstrated not only by the subsequent crises since the end of the 2nd World War, but by the increase of the phenomenon typical of capitalism: the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few bourgeois and the accumulation of poverty among the proletarian majority; no democratic constitution, no method of class collaboration can ever prevent the inevitable consequences of a capitalism which proceeds from one cri-

sis to another in an ever-increasing catastrophic spiral.

Workers! Proletarians!

The Europe for which you are called to vote is the Europe of capital, with a colonial past and who continue to exploit the masses of their former colonies; European bourgeois states which talk of peace while waging war far from their capitals, are preparing at length to respond to a more serious crisis and even more acute inter-imperialist contradictions by a Third World War. It is in times of peace that imperialism is preparing the political conditions of war, it is in periods of democracy that the ruling classes prepare the proletariat to accept sacrifices much more difficult than those known for years: poverty, hunger, extenuating hours of toil, the most desperate migrations.

Workers! Proletarians!

You should not leave your future in the hands of the blood-thirsty bourgeois classes, which are responsible for deaths occurring in today’s wars of plunder in Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan and those who fell just yesterday in the Balkans, Lebanon, Iraq and Africa. Bourgeois reality is not only that of social shock absorbers for some and good wages for others; it is overwork, death at work, miserable wages, job insecurity and servitude for the ever-increasing proletarian masses. Europe, which millions of potential migrants see as a shining hope reveals ever more clearly that it is a forced labor camp for immigrants, leaving the field open to police abuse. The bourgeois themselves do not hide their threat of crashing down such conditions onto the heads of all the workers!

Workers! Proletarians!

The future can be completely different from that proffered by capitalism and the bourgeoisie, but only if we really fight. We can not wage a fight with the ballot because elections only serve to feed the illusion of democracy and class collaboration which is one of the determinants of the paralysis of the proletariat.

To be effective, for it to open the way for a different future for all humanity, the workers’ struggle must be a class struggle: it must be clearly and consciously based on the physical reality of the antagonism between classes in bourgeois society. The proletarians are the majority of the population, but their numbers will not have any power if it does not mani-

fest itself in the openly collective struggle, in the class struggle!

The struggle should break with the collaboration between classes, breaking with social peace, with the methods that link the defence of proletarian interests to “economic growth” (which means the growth of capitalism), the interests of the national, regional or enterprise economy, it must break with the “anti-crisis plan” established by the bourgeois institutions, ie the complete subjection to capitalist interests.

Workers! Proletarians!

The elections are just to choose the politicians who each in their own way and including in the European parliament, will continue the democratic political collaboration between classes - which only means the interests of the ruling class and its system against the interests of workers: there cannot exist a “Europe of workers” or “citizens”, animated by a spirit of justice and equality, a Europe above classes and states, there cannot exist a bourgeois democratic state at the service of the exploited masses.

Not by the ballot! No to democratic falsehoods!

Yes to the class struggle for the reorganization of the class on the terrain of the immediate defence of living and working conditions!

Against any class collaboration, against all competition between proletarians!

Down with the Europe of capitalist exploitation-Victory to the class struggle!

For the unification of the struggles of indigenous and immigrant proletarians!

Proletarians! Seize control of your destiny by fighting for emancipation from wage labor and capitalism!

For the reconstitution of economic organizations based solely on the class interests of the proletariat!

For the proletarian class party, internationalist and international!

Workers of all countries, unite!

May 2009

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FRANCE

Despite the efforts of collaborationism and its lap-dogs on the far left: The first signs of proletarian anger herald the return of the class struggle!

On July 6 the unions gathered discretely to draw a balance sheet of what has taken place since their last call to demonstrate (June 13) and of what they had obtained from the government coming out of the meeting of 'social actors' with the President on the first of July, they should also have decided on actions to commence after the holidays or at least agreed on a date to discuss them. But coming out of that meeting, nothing was decided and no assessment has been made public.

UNION ACTION TO DEMOBILIZE PROLETARIANS

However, we can draw up the balance sheet in place of the unions: the 6 months of union mobilization have been 6 months presented to the owners and the State for them to carry out their dirty deeds, to manage the initial impact of the crisis without the fear of workers reaction: in short, 6 months of **demobilization** of the proletariat! The big union organizations have used the tactic of the 'national days of action' centered around demonstrations and strikes in some areas at intervals sufficiently spaced to gain time and to allow the inclination to struggle to deplete itself little by little; the cycle ending with the classic demonstration/funeral procession on June 13th. This well-established tactic relies on the agreement of all the trade unions, from the most collaborationist to the most agitational so as to leave minimal opportunities for any potential movement to move beyond the rigid framework of the pseudo-mobilization.

The Government provides its discrete support to this unity according to what was written in the pro-government daily *'Le Figaro'*, after rumors had circulated about a breach of this unity: «*At the Élysée, a division [of the trade union front -Editor's note] does not sit well. United, unions limit and channel excesses. Separated, the door is open to all bids. A nightmare scenario definitely wished to be avoided by Nicolas Sarkozy, who will meet with [union leaders] early July to make a point on the social provisions taken since the crisis began (...) before announcing at the beginning of the holidays measures likely to prevent this September from becoming really explosive.*»(1)

Another important factor that explains the continued strength up until now of this anti-worker unity is the implicit support it has received from the pseudo-revolutionary parties. As already noted, these organizations who enjoy a fairly significant audience among some workers and some unions (like the SUD), have carefully avoided any criticism or, at least any serious manifestation of opposition to the **trade union front against struggle**, pressing, on the contrary, for maintaining the unity of these apparatuses of class collaboration which they present as a precondition for the defence of workers. We explained in another article how, faced with a manifestation of proletarian struggle (undocumented workers occupying a trade-union meeting place) these organizations have placed themselves on the side of the union apparatus **against the workers**.

It's not an attitude taken on a whim or through a poor choice of leaders: it expresses the true **political nature** of these organizations and 'far-left' parties who for years have occupied part of the places once reserved for reformism on the bourgeois political chess-board, creating multiple ties with bourgeois institutions and the forces and parties committed to social conservation, including receiving State financial assistance without which their activities would be compromised. The so-called 'anti-capitalist' far-left (it no longer calls itself revolutionary!) has for a long time been integrated into the anti-proletarian operative policy where it plays the specific role of recuperating the most combative elements tending to rupture the social peace.

The new reality of recent years is that the terminal and irreversible weakening of what was the pillar of the counter-revolution, Stalinist-type reformism, forced the far-left to lower the mask, starting to reveal itself to the eyes of the proletarian vanguard as abandoning its 'extremist' postures and 'revolutionary' phraseology, in order to fill the void left by the gradual disappearance of the old French Communist Party. If at first this strengthens the power of the anti-proletarian front, this evolution signifies that the fake revolutionary and fake communist currents could find it more difficult to serve as a barrier to the reappearance of class organizations and the class party, the need of which will be increasingly

felt as the capitalist crisis worsens the conflict between classes.

SOARING UNEMPLOYMENT

The veritable explosion of unemployment is the most acute form of the capitalist attack against the working class that the crisis has provoked. It affects primarily temporary workers, those on a CDD (*Contrat à Durée Déterminée*: a fixed short-term contract), and young workers.

While official statistics, covering the first 5 months of the year, reported a 340,000 increase in the number of unemployed, the Minister of the Economy, Christine Lagarde (the same one who had assured everyone that France would be spared by the economic crisis) has welcomed the latest published figure as 'good news' because in May there were 'only' 36,400 more unemployed in France than the previous month! This being said when last September, when it was announced that the increased number of unemployed in one month (August) was on the order of 40,000, everyone, including the government, said it was a catastrophic figure... But it is true that, earlier in the year, 100,000 new unemployed were recorded every month, an unprecedented increase.

Being a little more realistic or just wanting to be a little more credible than his pricelessly comedic Economy Minister, the Secretary of State for Employment, admitted that unemployment figures will be bad at least until the end of the year. This is especially true as the number of people seeking employment is undoubtedly well above the 2,500,000 unemployed officially registered in the first half; if we take into account the data for all categories of statistics from INSEE (National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies), it yields a figure of 3,600,000. And even this figure is very probably below the truth. Whatever the critics make of these statistics which always minimize the actual numbers of unemployed, official figures reveal a particularly strong increase in unemployment among young people: in the first quarter of 2009 it was 24.2%, a figure not seen since they began to keep this statistic in 1975 (2). Young people have more trouble finding work, and when they do work they are often temporary and there-

FRANCE

fore the first to be unemployed.

INSEE does not mention it, but the percentage of young unemployed is much higher in the proletarian neighbourhoods where it sometimes reaches 50%. We should not look elsewhere for the source of tensions in these areas which regularly erupt into riots in the aftermath of police brutality or even mere incidents. Worried by this situation, the authorities strengthen police presence and aggressivity (including generalizing new weapons such as the *flashball* which has produced such damaging effects in the recent period), multiplying and beefing up repressive laws, but which can do nothing but prepare the grounds for further explosions, as the democrats lament...

WORKERS REACTIONS

Announcements of job cuts have continued to increase (...), but according to the press, experts are expecting the worst to occur at the beginning of fall especially with an explosion of lay-offs in the small and medium enterprises.

These dismissals have led to reactions from workers this spring, especially with the sequestration of some employers and other 'violent' actions that were, in some cases, widely publicized. If the bourgeois congratulate themselves – and congratulate the unions (3) – on the fact that the number of *bossnappings* has been relatively low, these struggles, no doubt partial and limited to single companies, have an iconic character because they reveal the state of mind that is spreading among workers, their readiness to struggle, but also the problems and difficulties of the struggles. Let's quickly look at three examples.

At the **Continental** plant in Clairoix (Picardy), in 2007 the 1,100 workers yielded to employers blackmail: through a referendum organized by management, they accepted the agreement signed by the CFTC (a Christian union) to work 40 hours while being paid for only 35, to 'save their jobs'.

So when they heard of the employer's decision to close their factory, their anger exploded; they held the bosses hostage, trashed company premises, sub-prefecture (local administrative offices) etc. The struggle of these workers found support among workers of the region and beyond. Ultimately the struggle of the 'Contis', directed by an *intersyndicale* (local coalition of unions) enabled them, if not to prevent the closing of the factory, to at least gain termination payments of 50,000 euros, in addition to legal

indemnities. But there is no doubt that it will be very difficult for them to find a job in their region where other plant closures are occurring (and other struggles are ongoing). In addition there are legal proceedings against 7 workers, including the local head of the CGT, considered to be responsible for the attack against the sub-prefecture. The CGT head, who does not conceal his ties to the Trotskyist *Lutte Ouvrière* party and who was one of the animators of the conflict, complained of the absence of Thibault and Chérèque (leaders of the CGT and CFTD unions) in the workers demonstration in Paris in late June in support of the defendants, saying that they are "rabble": but is this really surprising, when the main concern of the union leaderships is to avoid real struggle to the greatest extent possible?

At **Freescale** (Toulouse), April 23, the announcement of the closure of the company within thirty months leading to 1,100 job losses, sparked strikes for several days with pickets in front of the factory (and the participation of workers of other firms in the struggle). At a General Assembly a *coordinating committee* with no union officials was elected by the workers. The demand for a premium of 150,000 euros is advanced in the General Assembly. Members of the committee (thirty workers are present) attend negotiations of the management with the intersyndicale, they then give the GA of the various shifts accounts of the negotiations. This probably helps to maintain some pressure on management and the unions (and it shows distrust of the latter), but in reality the coordinating committee leaves it up to the Intersyndicale to decide on future actions, being content with an auxiliary role, or rather as an outlet for the workers' discontent. Moreover, the management agreed to pay 2 hours per week to the workers for attending the GA. (4) ...

But the most interesting example is that of **Caterpillar** (Grenoble). This is a big business in the city (about 2000 workers at two sites), famous for its high wages and the strong corporate loyalty which prevailed there. In recent years production was in full swing, hundreds of temporary workers had been hired. However, affected by the economic crisis (though its profits are still comfortable), Caterpillar has launched a plan to reduce its global workforce. Periods of temporary lay-offs multiplied, but the announcement of 600 to 700 job losses at the Grenoble sites touched off a powder-keg.

In this probably unique case, even before the forming of an intersyndicale, a group of workers formed a 'strike committee'. Throughout the struggle the

committee will be at the forefront of the struggle to mobilize workers and thwart the actions of the intersyndicale to end the conflict. Regularly followed by 200 to 300 workers always present at the General Assembly or the picket line, it was able at certain decisive moments of the struggle to regroup all the workers behind it: at the time of the calls for strike with occupation, when the company directors were held hostage (making it an experience in 'workers' power' according to one of the leaders of the committee). When the trade union delegates who were returning to Grenoble after concluding an agreement with the Minister of Labor in Paris to end the conflict, the 'strike committee' mobilized workers to physically prevent them from going to sign the Return to Work Directive; at an improvised workers' meeting the committee interrupted embarrassed explanations by the CGT official by denouncing the traitors and sell-outs and by issuing a clarion call to continue the struggle.

If the far left press has remained completely silent on the existence and activity of this committee, the bourgeois media themselves, hatefully denounced the 'minority' action of a score of "strong arms" who made "a climate of terror" rule: "Having nothing to lose because

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close to retirement or recently hired, their sole strategy is for increasing 'the size of the prize' (the amount of the settlement). "Coming for the most part from programs of social integration, recently released from prison in some cases, they have piloted the conflict in their own way in the permanently escalating haggling" (5)!

In fact it is significant that the members of the committee (which didn't contain any militants from the so-called far left) were older workers, knowing full well that they will never find work, and having already experienced struggles and the role which trade unions have played.

Without being able to find the effective solidarity of the proletariat of other companies in the metropolitan area because of the tight *cordon sanitaire* of union and political collaborationism, the courageous struggle of the "Caters" has been unable to win against a resolute management, wholly sustained by the government. In addition to "voluntary departures" more than 400 new redundancies were announced, while the management has raised the threat of more than one hundred additional layoffs in order to push through a worsening of working conditions for workers.

TOWARDS THE RESUMPTION OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE

These three conflicts, from among many others (we haven't even spoken about threats to blow up plants that have recently arisen in some conflicts) show the fighting spirit of which the workers

are capable, and show the objective need for the collective struggle of all the proletarians, going beyond the framework of a single plant or a single group of industries.

They also testify to the obstacles against moving in this direction, to the difficulties presented for a vanguard of workers to break definitively with the actions and methods of defeatist collaborationism, to try to take control of the struggle and lead the rest of the proletariat; that is to say, to the difficulties in retracing the path of genuine class struggle, in reacquiring the classist methods and means which were in previous times those of the proletariat.

But the signs of proletarian anger are becoming more and more evident. Here and there this anger is beginning to break through the resignation and powerlessness instilled by the bourgeois and their valets; and it will inevitably lead to explosions of struggle more violent and more difficult to control by the parties and unions which are the defenders of 'social peace'.

The return of the generalized struggle unifying the young proletarians of the banlieues and the workers of the factory; the unemployed workers and those 'benefiting' from a job; the undocumented alien workers and those who have their papers in order; the return of the class struggle to defend immediate proletarian interests before moving on to the offensive against capitalism; will cease to be abstract and distant and will begin to become practical guidance when the upsurge in capitalist attacks constrains increasingly numerous groups of

proletarians to organize themselves directly, above all factory and corporate barriers, above all localisms, to defend themselves and forcefully retaliate in the incessant social war which rages in the bourgeois society.

(1) See 'Le Figaro', 15/6/09

(2) In the mid-70's, the youth unemployment rate was around 6%. It had steadily increased since then to a peak of 20% in the mid 90s. It had fallen below 14% in 2000, before resuming its climb, which was suddenly accelerated earlier this year, since it was 'only' 20% in the last quarter of 2008. See INSEE, *chômage en métropole au sens du BIT, série longue*.

(3) According to Martin Richer, director of a consulting firm specializing in social planning (!): 'Contrary to what one hears, the unions are very responsible. I identified only 22 kidnappings, an epiphenomenon.' See 'Libération', 14/7/09.

(4) According to «Convergence révolutionnaire» 7/03/09 See: www.convergencesrevolutionnaires.org/spip.php?article1940

(5) Cf 'Les Echos', 26/5/09. The radio program 'Là bas si j'y suis' on France Inter, broadcast a report on Caterpillar. Despite statements by the host to defend the unions and minimize the events, it was possible to hear the violent reactions of the committee members to the union delegates: «Today, we are going to smash you!» and the virulence of their interventions «to arms!», etc..

Venezuela: Nationalization of Sidor and «Workers' Control»

Last April all the left and far-left groups in Venezuela and everywhere else tried to outdo each other in loudly proclaiming: "the working class has triumphed in Sidor!". Chavez had just announced the nationalization or rather the re-nationalization of the largest iron and steel company in the country (and the region), and fourth largest in Latin America.

The Sidor company which had been created to provide the national oil industry with pipes, was privatized in 1997; it came under the control of Ternium-Techint, an Italo-Argentinian consortium which bought 60% of the stock.

Techint was founded in Argentina after World War II by the Italian steel magnate Agostino Rocca. Supported by

Mussolini, Rocca had been entrusted with the direction of the State iron and steel industries, the post of Secretary of the Metallurgical War Industries in 1933, etc.

But the prospect of a German defeat brought him, like other Italian bourgeois, to distance himself from the regime of Mussolini from 1943 and to contact the pro-American resistance. Held by administrative decree at the time of the legal purges until liberation, he could thus be quickly released; however he judged it more prudent to go to Argentina to establish enterprises, while the family group thrived in an Italy in full reconstruction.

Techint became the largest industrial group in Argentina, producing steel and oil; Argentinian political leaders can

refuse it nothing, as shown by the declarations of support by president Kirchner which were used to obtain a "fair price" from Chavez.

And when in May of last year Chavez had already threatened to nationalize the company, president Kirchner (who preceded his wife to the Argentinian presidency) had already rushed to the aid of Techint. Chavez reproached Sidor for wanting to sell its products at a higher price on the international market, rather than to the PDVSA, the national oil company, obliging it to import its pipes at this same international price. However if the blazing increase in oil prices makes it a lot of money, it seems that the PDVSA suffers periodically from cash flow problems, perhaps because of the economic

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pinches it feels from all sides...

The privatization of Sidor was accompanied by a sharp increase in the exploitation of its workers; in addition to an increase in the intensity of work, the workers lost a series of benefits which were agreed to previously like medical care, child care, etc

Above all, out of 13,500 workers, now no more than 4500 have permanent jobs and are employed directly by the company, the other 9000 being "outsourced" (tercerizados) i.e. employed by sub-contracting companies with only temporary contracts and at lower wages. Ultimately the workers of Sidor experienced a strong deterioration of their conditions, which is well below those of workers at other large firms in the area.

In 2007 during the renewal of the collective agreement of the permanent workers, the trade union SUTISS proposed the demand of an increase of 300% in wages (that is to say an increase of 80 Bolivars in the hourly wage) to recover the losses undergone by the workers, as well as other socio-economic claims, and the extension of the collective agreement to the outsourced workers.

The negotiations dragged on for... 17 months, 17 months during which the trade union did all that it could to prevent a real fight by the workers, instead organizing partial and temporary strikes, demonstrations/marches, etc, and especially to call for the intervention of the government and to demand nationalization of Sidor. Meanwhile it had reduced its wage demands to 53 Bolivars; the company directors proposed 45 and had agreed to reinstate 600 outsourced workers.

At the beginning of year the government sent its Minister for Labour, the "trotskyist" Jose Ramon Rivero, who had managed to resolve the social conflict at the PDVSA. However in Sidor neither democratic demagoguery (organization of a referendum among the employees), nor the threats of Rivero, nor the use of the National Guard against the strikers, succeeded in resolving the conflict, i.e. to calm the workers down; on several occasions they went well beyond what the trade unions counselled by launching spontaneous strike movements, while solidarity movements encountered a growing echo in the other companies in the area.

It is in this situation of increasing tension that the government suddenly announced the nationalization of the company in April.

Orlando Chirino, national organizer of the UNT union federation and a leader

in its C-CURA (Current-Classist, United, Revolutionary Autonomous) current made the following statement, expressing the opinion of the whole political and trade union spectrum of the Venezuelan left and far-left: "Undoubtedly the nationalization of Sidor (...) is the result of the struggle and the mobilization led by the workers for over a year and a half. It is an indisputable triumph of workers and an example for the whole Venezuelan working class".

Chirino added: "The vanquished are the multinational Ternium and the government of president Chavez himself which until last week supported the company, through the attitude of the Minister of Labour. (...) The change of attitude of the government, and its announcement of the beginning of a still indefinite process of nationalization, is a categorical triumph of the workers' strikes and trade-union autonomy" (1).

After the loud declarations of victory from all sides, it is understandable that the workers of Sidor reacted with glee to this announcement.

We published an official statement to explain that, nationalized or not, Sidor remained in the hands of the exploiters and that the proletarians could count only on their own struggle to obtain satisfaction for their demands (2). There we explained: "This nationalization, not even an expropriation, paid down to the last Bolivar, signifies the policy and the nature of the current government in Venezuela; it indicates to us that we are in the presence of a traditional bourgeois government which has a resultant horror of attacking private property.

Whether this nationalization is total or partial does not change the plight of the workers and the fact of their exploitation by an owner (in this case the State) national or foreign. Their exploitation is due to the laws inherent in the operation of the capitalist mode of production: wage-labor, the division of labour, competition, the market, etc (...) to defend ourselves, there is no other possibility than the united struggle of the proletarians against the capitalists and their State!"

* * *

It was not necessary to wait for a long time for the reality to emerge from the euphoria abundantly diffused by all the false "workers'" and "revolutionary" organizations and currents..

In spite of all the beautiful rhetoric about the new "socialist enterprise" that Sidor was going to become, the contract finally signed on May 6 in the presidential palace between the factory directors

and SUTISS (the steelworkers union) in the presence of Chavez, was far removed from the demands for which the workers had mobilized themselves for months: 53 Bolivars increase, but only 33 with the signature of the agreement, 10 more in November and 10 more the next year; since there is galloping inflation in the country which will rapidly corrode the future increases envisaged, this means that the trade union lowered its demands still further when compared to what it demanded before the nationalization! A merit premium of 10% has also been obtained along with revolorized holiday pay.

As for the "outsourced" workers, only 800 of them will be taken back by the company – barely two hundred more than what had been accepted by Ternium. And as if by chance, it will be learned later that these 800 employees are in fact **guards and watchmen**, charged with protecting the company and to police the workers...

The news of the concluding of this agreement stupified the "outsourced" workers. On May 7 they decided to occupy the trade-union local hall to try to get an answer to their questions: why had the trade union given up a whole series of demands, how would the reinstated workers be selected, in short, what was going to be their fate? The occupation took place again the following day, but in the reigning climate of uncertainty, the trade union leaders succeeded in demobilizing them while saying that the negotiations would continue to develop and that all the problems could not be solved at one blow.

On May 12, at the time of a signing ceremony of the law on the nationalization of Sidor and signing of the new labor contract Chavez made the same speech, alternating threats and promises.

Now, he said, the workers must exhibit "a new behavior", where conflict gives way to "a relation of affection and collaboration, where fraternal differences must lead to agreements, like brothers and comrades, because all must take care of the interests of the fatherland, of the revolution, so that we build socialism with Sidor".

As for the "outsourced" he ensured that he had their fate at heart, he declared: "do not despair, do not come to ask me to have in one day what you did not obtain in 10 years"; but "that does not go for the manipulators among you, because I will denounce them (...). I do not accept manipulation nor blackmail [and, you] the workers' leaders, be careful you do not get carried away by trade unionism" [obviously, what he was really saying was to be careful not to defend

the workers' interests too much].

He added: "anyone who comes to ask me out of the blue to sign for the reintegration of from 5 to 10,000 workers is insane", eliciting, according to the press, the applause of those in attendance; according to him the request for reinstatement of all the workers forming part of the "counter-revolutionary attitudes" which exist in Sidor.

He finished off by calling for "the union of the working class, the Armed Forces, the peasants, the students, of all the Venezuelans, so that in spite of differences, we have the maturity to put above private interests, the general interest which is the Bolivarian Revolution" (3).

In addition to being the classic appeal of all bourgeois to the proletarians so that they sacrifice their class interests to a supposed general interest which is never anything other than the **capitalist interest**, we can see that Chavez thoroughly utilizes the hoary reformist demagoguery according to which nationalization = socialism to demand that the workers give up their demands and the struggle, threatening that those who do not comply, are to be fought as **manipulators** and **counter-revolutionaries**: the nationalization of Sidor is above all a **weapon against the workers!**

Since then, negotiations with Techint are continuing. The nationalization is actually a share buyback sufficient to ensure that the Venezuelan State has an absolute majority of the shares, given that the government wants to leave a minority interest and a directors position to the Argentinian shareholder to ensure that it continues its activities in the country. Techint stipulates a price no lower than 2.4 billion dollars for 50% of the shares; on July 15 Chavez, who said he wanted to negotiate by amicable agreement, declared that a basic agreement on price had been reached; according to the

Venezuelan press it would be 2 billion dollars, and in addition the free delivery of products.

On June 11 Chavez and his principal ministers brought together 500 of the most important owners in the country in a luxurious hotel in the capital. At the conclusion of this meeting which was billed as a "productive revival", a whole series of measures favorable to the companies were announced; the objective was to make Venezuela a "middle power" through a grand "National Strategic Alliance" with the national capitalists.

While the government thus smiles and makes resounding and staggering offers to the capitalists all the while talking about revolution, the workers continue to be exploited as always – by the same capitalists and their confederates!

In Sidor, in the pretend "socialist" enterprise (still run by the same directors), more than 8,000 "outsourced" workers continue to toil under the same bestial conditions, still waiting until the commission which was to deal with their future reintegration gets set up...

* * *

We saw in the first part of this article last spring that all the left and Chavist groups unanimously welcomed the government decision to renationalise SIDOR steel company (4) as a great victory for workers.

But not all the workers were convinced, and certainly not the 8,000 "outsourced" (*tercerizados*) who had experienced a decline in wages and the loss of a whole series of benefits and loss of their status as employees of the company as a result of privatization.

Demanding their reinstatement, they have maintained their mobilization for months; in late October, following the arrival of Minister (of Basic Industries and Mining) Sanz (who has somehow

become a sort of honorary director of the company), it escalated into a blockade of entry points into the company, cutting off of the main state highway, the burning in effigy of shirts with Chavez's image on them, and soon.

The negotiations having yielded nothing, the organization representing them resigned itself to call a strike on November 11; very well supported, it caused a serious decline in production and after 2 days an agreement with Sidor was concluded under the authority of the Minister. The agreement basically paying a premium of 10,000 Bf (to be paid in several installments) and improvements in working conditions, it should be noted that union representatives had agreed in the spring to Chavez's demand that they be «patient» on the issue of reinstatement – ie to in fact abandon this demand.

But since November close to 2,000 workers still have not touched a penny of the promised bonus, while the others still are waiting for the realization of other promises! In the face of the workers' exasperation, the union was forced to give the impression of doing something; it organized the sending of delegations to the Ministry in Caracas and then appealed to Chavez. While the management of Sidor reacted by treating the most militant workers as "delinquents", the minister-director accused them of being manipulated and drawn into "political" actions.

On Friday February 27, the union leaders of the outsourced workers threw down a terrible ultimatum: "*If by Monday we have not had a reply, we could repeat scenarios that we do not want to repeat but it will be the workers who decide what they want.*" What the leaders wanted above all was to avoid struggle, and they also told journalists that since there were too many unfulfilled promises at Sidor, that this has set a "time bomb" in motion. This could have been avoided, according to them, if instead of promising the grant the government had come to an agreement on the calculation of the wage grid (5)! Having received no reply, they obviously did not call for any struggle: the only "scenario" that these union organizations understand, is that of class collaboration...

REFORMIST OPTION

The elements and currents who, all the while falsely presenting the nationalization of Sidor as a great victory for workers, were keen to distinguish themselves by appearing a little more left, called for "nationalization under workers' control." Behind this slogan from

Workers from Sidor in struggle (March 2008)



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Trotskyism there is nothing more than demagoguery and camouflage in order to support government policy.

We will consider the case of the Trotskyist group “*Opcion Obrera*” (Workers’ Option), linked to the Argentine Workers Party (6), which appeared to distinguish itself from other more or less pro-Chavist far left formations. O.O. has indeed had the merit of pointing out the “trap” of “*capitalist nationalization*” (what exactly would signify a non-capitalist nationalization?) of Sidor, correctly explaining that it would serve to extinguish the workers struggle. But the fundamentally tailist and manoeuvrist nature of Trotskyism rapidly returns to the scene.

In O.O.’s document on Sidor, there are criticisms of the union (SUTISS), especially because it refuses to call for the unlimited strike, but it reads as an analysis in which the main issue of conflict at Sidor, is the right of unions to strike: “*A union which cannot strike is not a union, it is a state drug dispensary. The conflict in Sidor is a battle in the war being waged by the Chavist government to satisfy the unions, to put them under the direct tutelage of the government and install a bureaucracy under its orders, ie to liquidate them as organizations of the working class to defend its working conditions. If the union leadership gives in to the government pressure and accepts arbitration, it will turn into a transmission belt of the ‘Bolivarian’ State against the workers*” (7).

In fact, the union bureaucracy of SUTISS didn’t have to wait for government pressure in order to prevent any real struggle, to the extent that Chavez was able to remind it that it had accepted deteriorating living and working conditions and the outsourcing of thousands of workers at the time of the preceding privatization of the company!

These collaborationist unions have as their primary function the maintenance of social peace and not the defense of proletarian interests. When they come into conflict with the government, as did the CTV union in the oil sector, it is not because they are “*organizations of the working class*”, but because they are tied to sectors of the bourgeois opposition. O.O. wants to “democratize” these unions, by supporting some currents in the bureaucracy which call themselves “classist” because it occurs to them to criticize the government sometimes... in the name of the “Bolivarian Revolution”! In fact, from a class point of view there is **nothing to defend** in the

trade union apparatus, on the contrary, it is independent from them and against their practice of class collaboration, against their ties to the owners or the State, that the proletariat must organize on a really classist basis to fight against the bosses, private or State.

In the introduction to its document, O.O. correctly writes that the nationalization of Sidor is not a victory for workers and that this can only come about only insofar as they are able “*to conquer*” their demands by putting their interests before those of government and union bureaucrats. But aside from the demand for reinstatement of outsourced workers back into the company, O.O. close this introduction with the more than dubious demands for the resignation of the Minister of Labor (as if the change of a minister could change the pro-capitalist policies of the Government) and “*workers’ control of production and democratic election of the direction.*”

But it’s in its May 2008 issue following the nationalization, that *Opcion Obrera* completely discards its “radical” mask. In the editorial entitled: “*With the nationalization of TERNIUM-SIDOR, what is the role to be played by the workers?*” the denunciation of nationalization as an anti-worker trap disappears. O.O. now fixes the workers with the task of ensuring that there is a **real nationalization** and that the multinational Ternium will derive no benefit! “*Has Sidor really been nationalized?* [there follows a description of government proposals in the negotiations on the purchase of shares of Ternium]. *At Sidor, especially today, it is only the workers who could ultimately decide when to conclude the negotiations* [with Ternium]. (...) *Sidor workers have a golden opportunity. The effective actions of workers’ control over production with their factory committees put them in a strong position in the face of crass government bargaining to reach an honorable agreement with the multinational (...). But for this to be possible, workers in Sidor should themselves take the final decision to conclude the negotiation and that they in no way allow this decision to be made behind their backs.*”

The political role of workers is limited to the negotiation of enterprise agreements – the specific role of the trade union bureaucrats. “*The workers of Sidor have placed their role in the class struggle in our country on the table. They clearly demonstrate that they are the ones who must prevail over those who exploit them. The political role of the Venezuelan proletariat has ceased to be insignificant due to the attitude*

assumed by the workers of Sidor. Here is the attitude that must be repeated in each plant in each company so that their actions are influenced by autonomy with respect to government decisions and class independence against those who exploit them.”

In fact up until now Sidor workers have been unable to obtain the satisfaction of their immediate demands, their long struggle having been interrupted by the decision to nationalize the companies, the union managed to convince them to wait with “patience” until the government finally gives them satisfaction. O.O. is obliged to falsify reality to make pass what is actually an **alignment** towards certain sectors of the reformist and patriotic union bureaucracy, as seen in the following editorial:

“*For the political role of the Venezuelan proletariat to be really successful, workers must ...*” (what? Form a class party? No, and indeed what would it be of use for when we read the following) “*... convene a congress of workers which defends clearly in its program of struggle the objectives and methods of the policy of industrialization and administration of the country by mobilizing the unemployed and the oppressed majority of the country. Here is socialism as it should be (...).*”

Long live workers’ control over production at Sidor. Not a penny to Ternium-Techint nor its slightest participation in nationalized Sidor. (...) For a Congress of workers which defines the program of the struggles for socialism and the development of the country based on national interests. For a worker, peasant and peoples’ government.”

This so-called “socialism”, which does not aim to destroy capitalism but to industrialize the country and defines its program based on national interests, certainly contains **nothing socialist**: it is just as **bourgeois** as the “Bolivarian socialism” of Chavez! The real political role of the proletariat begins with its **organization into a class and consequently into a party**, as specified in the Communist Manifesto. If the objective of each proletariat is to seize power and destroy capitalism in its own country, its goals are not national but **international**, if it is impossible for it to establish socialism in one country it has even less the function of industrialization and development of each country before making the revolution and destroying capitalism! It is only after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of its **dictatorship**, that the proletariat will be able to **begin** to transform the country economically and socially, and it is only after the international victory of the Communist

revolution that it will be able to elaborate a **unified global plan** to solve problems of inequality social and economic development throughout the world (including over-development of certain areas ravaged by industrialization).

But just as they as they task the proletariat with the bourgeois objective of industrializing and developing Venezuela, ie to develop capitalism, the trotskyst O.O. does not advocate the **dictatorship of the proletariat**, but a “*worker, peasant and peoples’ government*”, ie a multi-classist government of the bourgeois State. Nobody can be astonished that if it then occurs to them to evoke the need for the party, they prefer in general to use the fuzzy formula expressing a desire towards the “structuring of the working class”: when one capitulates to anti-worker reformism, it is impossible to fight for the constitution of the class party, with well defined tactics and policies and with its program firmly rooted in authentic Marxism ...

WORKERS’ CONTROL AND REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE

The slogan of “workers’ control” first appeared during the revolution in Russia, in a situation of “dual power”, where the workers had created the “Soviets”, which constituted an embryonic proletarian power opposed to bourgeois power.

Lenin in April of 1917 advanced as an immediate objective “*the passage to the control of social production and the distribution of products by the Soviets of Workers Deputies*”, this is inextricably linked to the demand that all power pass to the Soviets. In late May, in a resolution for the Conference of Factory Committees of Petrograd, it puts forward, among other things, the demand for a “*real workers’ control of production and distribution*”. But Lenin *is at pains to state* that the implementation of all measures of this resolution “*is only possible if power passes entirely into the hands of the proletarians and semi-proletarians*”. As he said in May in battle at the conference of the party against the conciliatory trends in Moscow who dreamed of controlling the capitalists, “**control without power is the most hollow of phrases**” (8). In the correct Bolshevik tactics, workers’ control is inextricably linked with the seizure of power.

Thereafter, unfortunately, this hollow phrase will be used *ad nauseum* by all those, “trotskysts” or others who want to **avoid** the thorny problem of the central seizure of power, preferring to substitute a harmless or impossible con-

trol... of the enterprise. How can the workers of Sidor control the production of their company, “*to ensure that the priorities [of this steelmaker] support the people*” as written by O.O.? It is not at the factory level that they can decide the priorities of social production, but at the central level, at the level of the political power of the State! Regardless of whether the State has 20% or 100% of the shares, regardless of whether the management is elected by the workers or imposed from above: as long as bourgeois state power has not been overthrown and the capitalist mode of production has not been eradicated, the enterprise can do nothing but obey the economic laws of capital, whatever its juridical status and whatever its ownership.

We are not, as the spring of 1917 in Russia on the eve of the outbreak of the great revolutionary struggle, there is no “dual power” in Venezuela nor workers Soviets.

As the economic crisis affects the country, in particular causing oil revenues to plummet, attacks against proletarians are being set in motion, the workers’ task is not to prepare the **assault** for power, but to prepare for the struggle in **defence** of their immediate interests. In January, the murder by police of 2 Mitsubishi workers who occupied the factory in protest against the dismissal of 135 workers, or threats of Chavez militarizing subway workers in case of a strike, show concretely what is meant by anti-working class repression (9): these are warnings for the future.

Today, the vital need of workers in Sidor and other companies, nationalized or not, is not workers’ control over production, but **control of their own struggle**. This “control” begins with the break not only with the overtly Chavist currents, but also with fake revolutionary oppositions as a precondition for work towards the independent class organization of the proletariat from the strike committee and union to the class party.

That is the true **proletarian option**, this is the only certain perspective for the proletarian vanguard and authentic revolutionaries!

(“le prolétaire”; N° 490; August-October 2008 and 492; February-March-April 2008)

(1) cf www.aporrea.org/trabajadores/a54788.html

(2) “Nationalization of Sidor, a victory for the workers? Before or after its nationalization, Sidor will remain in the hands of the exploiters!”, April 18, 2008.

(3) cf www.soitu.es/soitu/2008/05/12/info/1210629092_485226.html

(4) This nationalization is not expropriation and the State assured itself control of the company by buying a 50% stake in SIDOR from the Argentine multinational Techint which will keep 10%. Negotiations on the payment of these actions are still not concluded at the time of writing, although at the end of January the Minister of Mining Industries again indicated that an agreement was near. The collapse of steel prices in the last 6 months is probably one of the causes of the difficulties of these discussions.

(5) “El Universal”, 27/2/2009. After

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- Pese a sus crisis: ¡El capitalismo no se derrumbará sino bajo los golpes de la lucha proletaria!
- Israel masacra a los palestinos por cuenta propia y por cuenta de las potencias imperialistas mundiales

(Theoretical review in Spanish) • One copy £ 2 / € 3 / Sfr 8 / Latin America: US \$ 0,5 / USA and Cdn: US \$ 3 . **Price support**, one copy: £ 4 / € 6 / Sfr 16 / Latin America: US \$ 1 / US and Cdn: US \$ 6.

Suplemento N° 8
de Abril de 2009
– VENEZUELA –
al N. 48 de

«el programa comunista»

En este suplemento:

- Nacionalización de Sidor y «control obrero»
- ¡La anarquía del transporte, la construcción y la basura en Caracas, es la anarquía propia de la producción capitalista!
- La enmienda constitucional. La abstención en este referéndum ha sido el gran enemigo para chavistas y anti-chavistas

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VENEZUELA

nationalization, the union abandoned its demand for reinstatement of outsourced workers and replaced it by that of the definition of a method of calculation of wages (*tabulador*) identical for all workers.

(6) The Argentine Workers Party (Partido Obrero) animates an international grouping, the "Coordination for the Refoundation of the of the Fourth International", which in Europe is the Italian organization "Communist Workers Party." (Partito dei Lavoratori comunista)

(7) Article of P.O. published on 6 March 2008.

(8) See in Volume 24 of Lenin's Collected Works, the article "The tasks of the proletariat in our revolution" and his "Report to the Seventh Conference of the Party." On the issue of "workers' control" the reader can refer to a study published in Nos. 198, 199, 200 and 201 of "le Proletaire".

(9) In a speech on January 30th Chavez attributed the murder to «mafias» that exist in the police. But he immediately added: «We must also appeal to the workers for good sense. Once in Guyana it so happened that they occupied a factory. This lasted for some

time and they had guns. Why did the workers have firearms if they wanted to protest, to demonstrate and to threaten to sequester a minister? (...) I am not saying that this is what happened in the case of Anzoategui [area where the Mitsubishi factory is located], no. There was gunfire and we do not know as yet from where it came.» In short, it is the fault of the workers ... This murder is in addition to the killing of 3 union leaders in November after a strike in the State of Aragua, and many others.

In mid-March, strikes continued at Mitsubishi and Toyota, by contrast the subway workers union had renounced its threats to call for a strike ...

Israel, Bloody Executioner for the World Capitalist Order

On Saturday evening January 3, after one week of air raids which left more than 450 dead and more than 2000 wounded, the Israeli army began its land offensive into Gaza. Its military officials declare that the operation will be «long». After two weeks the total number of fatalities leaped to 1250 with untold thousands of children women and men mangled, torn and suffering active festering wounds caused by the use of white phosphorus. The odious Israeli propaganda, broadcast by the majority of the international media, presents this bloody attack as a «response» to the salvos of the «terrorists» of Hamas in power in Gaza.

It «forgets» to mention that for nineteen months Israel has imposed a blockade (which has been total for a year) on the million and-a-half inhabitants of Gaza, which has plunged most of the population into misery (some profiteers enrich themselves by smuggling, while 80% of the population has sunk below the poverty line), causing massive unemployment (nearly 65% of the active population) and hunger (60% of the children are malnourished).

When it was Hamas, and not more collaborationist currents as they had wished, who won the elections in Gaza in January 2006, the democratic governments of Israel and America declared that they were going «to strangle» this government; the democratic European governments lent their support by withdrawing all «humanitarian aid» to Gaza (except that earmarked to pay the police!), and the slightly less democratic Arab governments of the area followed. This political military and economic pressure continued until the imposition of the blockade of the territory with the aid of Egypt (which controls one of the exit points from Gaza), when the partisans of Fatah (armed by Israel) were militarily beaten by those of Hamas.

Reactionary, religious and anti-worker, the Hamas party won the elec-

tions because of the anger of the population against the waste, corruption and naked pursuit of self-enrichment by the leaders of Fatah; it also presents itself as an irreconcilable adversary to Israeli domination. However, since its election, it proffered numerous gestures of openness in Israel's direction. But for the Israeli government as for its imperialist godfathers, that was not at all sufficient: what they desire in Gaza is authorities **entirely under their boot, obedient slave-drivers** who only concern themselves with controlling the population as is the case of the «Palestinian Authority» of Mamoud Abbas in the West Bank! **«Democracy» must serve the interests of the colonialist and the imperialists, if not it is worthless...** Israel broke the truce discreetly negotiated with the «terrorists» of Hamas in June, by killing 14 Palestinians in Gaza in November and 8 others in December (4 Palestinian had already been killed by the Israeli army in the West Bank in October): the inevitable response of Hamas, with the launching of its crudely-made rockets, gave the pretext necessary for the attacks. According to the Israeli press (cf *Haaretz*, 31/12/08), this military operation actually commenced preparations 6 months ago, at the same time as the negotiations for the truce, the Israeli army needing sufficient

time to collect intelligence information on the positions of Hamas and the «militant groups» existing in Gaza!

DIRECT COMPLICITY OF CANADA, THE UNITED STATES, THE EUROPEAN STATES AND THE ARAB STATES

The United States officially approved the Israeli attacks. But an operation of this breadth could not receive their green light, **beforehand**; this is demonstrated elsewhere by the fact that in September the American Congress authorized the delivery to Israel of loathsome bombs fabricated out of depleted uranium (which had already been used to ravage Yugoslavia and Iraq); the first deliveries took place at the beginning of December so that these bombs could be rained on Gaza from the beginning of the bombardments. For their part all the European governments took great care not to condemn the Israeli attacks (when they did not give outright approval, like the current Czech president of the European Union); at best they hypocritically appealed for a «humanitarian cease-fire» to give each other a clear conscience with their respective public opinion. Actions are more illuminating than hollow speeches: under French impulse, on December 8, after the European rump-Parliament decided to postpone the signature of this agreement because of the situation in Palestine (so much the worse for the rare simpletons who still believe in the European elections!), the Foreign Ministers of the 27 European countries decided with unanimity to accelerate the process of «*re-elevating*» relations with Israel, in order

to confer the status of quasi-member State to it. It was necessary to move quickly, such a decision being a little more difficult to justify in full-out war... As for Russia, member of the «Quartet» («...for peace in the Middle East») supposedly being responsible for the progress of the so-called «the peace negotiations», it is far too interested in the development of its economic relations with Israel (principally arms material) to think of causing it any problems.

Lastly, before starting its attack, the Israeli government went on to inform the Egyptian government which, apparently, did not express any dissension (cf *Haaretz*, *ibid*): this says all that needs to be said on the sincerity of Egypt's «condemnation», after several days, of the Israeli bombardments... Just as at the time of the war in Lebanon, the majority of the Arab States desired the victory of the Israeli armies to put an end to the potential danger to the stability of the bourgeois order which the Palestinian masses represent: even in the extraordinary case of Israel acceding, it would be impossible to grant them the right of self-determination; that is, the right to form a true State, without upsetting regional balances and, especially, without giving encouragement to the social struggle of all the oppressed in the region. In the 15 years since the alleged «historic peace agreements» in Camp David were signed; under the aegis of the United States and with the blessing of the «international community», the nationalist organizations which then accepted giving up the struggle in order to devote themselves to making money, were integrated into the Palestinian bourgeoisie of the Palestinian Territories; but the situation of the proletarians and the Palestinian masses never ceased worsening, colonization never ceased extending itself and Israel never ceased reinforcing itself. The religious organizations, Hamas in the lead, which have taken over the failed nationalist formations, cannot constitute a real alternative for the oppressed and exploited masses of Palestine, because, in addition to the fact that they already proved their anti-proletarian nature by breaking strikes, they only seek, as good **bourgeois organizations**, to find a place in the regional imperialist order.

However, it is this **imperialist order**, of which Israel is the most solid pillar and the bloodiest henchman, but not its author, which is ultimately responsible for the oppression of the Palestinians. Without the political, but more especially economic, financial and military support of the United States, and also of the European States, the Jewish State would not have the force to maintain one of the

strongest armies of the world and to carry out its perpetual wars; on the internal level it would not have the force to obtain this solid «*union sacrée*» between classes which is the true secret of its military power. Everyone knows that this «international community», that is the great and not-so-great bourgeois States which dominate the world, never did anything to concretely oblige the Israeli state to respect the innumerable resolutions voted in the UN, or the innumerable peace resolutions signed with great fanfare. In international policy as in the relationship between social classes, it is **the interests of most powerful which take precedence** and it is **force which rules**.

However the Palestinian masses are not eternally condemned to be crushed under the Israeli and imperialist iron heel, in the same way that the proletarians of all the countries are not eternally condemned to be exploited and to be used as cannon fodder. The **revolutionary struggle of the proletarians**, those who have nothing to lose but their chains, is able to put an end to the world imperialist order and of all bourgeois States, because it is their exploitation which makes the capitalism of every country function; they themselves thus have hold of a **superior force than that of the bourgeois States**, the force to overthrow capitalism, provided they find the means of struggle and the class organization, revolutionary and international by nature.

The proletarians of the imperialist countries have a very particular responsibility, because the Israeli state has a vital need of assistance from «their» States, «their» imperialisms, to continue its crimes in Palestine. In again taking up the anticapitalist class struggle, they would bring decisive aid to the Palestin-

ian masses by the weakening of this assistance; especially they would indicate to the Palestinian proletarians (and those of the world) the only way of effectively fighting oppression, while contributing to the rupture of the Jewish proletariat of Israel from its bourgeoisie. This prospect is not easy nor immediate, but it is infinitely more **realist** than the calls to make the «International community» or the UNO respect the «right», or the wishes for the «peace negotiations to begin again» which for decades have only succeeded in bringing about repeated wars and massacres.

The only solidarity with the Palestinian masses which is not a vain word, takes place through the **resumption of the proletarian struggle** right here, **against capitalism and all the bourgeois states**. Today there is no more urgent a task than to work to prepare recovery, to work towards the rupture of the working-class away from the class collaborationist organizations which paralyse them, and to reconstitute the future organ essential to the proletarian struggle: **the class party, internationalist and international** which will have as its task the unification of the struggle of the proletarians and oppressed of the world to achieve the triumph of the **international communist revolution** necessary to overthrow world capitalism.

Israel Assassin, Canada, United States, European and Arab States Accomplices!

Internationalist Solidarity with the Palestinian Masses!

Long Live the International Proletarian Struggle Against World Capitalism!

January 4, 2009

A propos Solidarity with the Palestinian Masses: The impasse of the concrete and the immediate

Our leaflet on Israel has provoked, as usual, various reactions adverse to a class position, these hostile reactions are often «justified» in the name of the necessity of the «concrete» or of «emergency».

Since this kind of criticism recurs regularly, it is perhaps worthwhile to spend a little time here, taking a specific example.

An internet visitor questioned us in these terms: «The International Commu-

nist Party talks a lot about the 'proletarian' struggle and the glor-r-r-rious revolution against global capitalism. But you do not say a single word on what practical measures 'the proletarians' can take to help the Palestinians.»

This reaction can be understood: at the sight of the daily bombings and killings, it is natural to want to come to the immediate aid of the victims to the point where evoking a long-term perspective may seem suspect. But immidia-

Solidarity with the Palestinian Masses

tism is always the justification for all manner of opportunism, all the deviations which ultimately retard that which they want to accelerate. And indeed our critic continued :

«You do not say a single word about for example a campaign to boycott and protest against the companies/individuals that do business with Israel, the organization of a boycott of Israeli products, to unmask or oppose the Israeli lobby, to organize protests outside the offices and headquarters of specific governments or politicians, or in front of the Israeli consulates/embassies or the residences of ambassadors or consuls, etc.. Your goal seems to be primarily to make publicity for yourself!

There are a whole lot of things that can be done before having the opportunity to overthrow global capitalism. As long as we don't intend to do anything concrete, your rhetoric is as empty as that of Western and Arab governments (...).

We see that the « whole lot of things that can be done » would have been absolutely powerless to stop the bombings and killings: no boycott, no protest rally could stop military action decided and planned for months with the agreement of the American imperialist godfathers! These proposals, which give the impression of «doing something» while they represent only a pale substitute for what should be in other circumstances, real proletarian solidarity, ultimately end up diverting energy away from the only terrain on which they will be effective tomorrow, the terrain of the class struggle. By putting forward the objective of putting pressure on inter-classist «public opinion» or even state institutions, by advocating a «consumers» action of all classes mixed together and not an action specific to the workers considered as members of the only class capable of frontally opposing capitalism and the bourgeois state, or by wishing to have Israeli «war crimes» condemned by international democratic-imperialist organizations, this genre of orientations show themselves to be a direct obstacle on the path leading to the reconstitution of a proletarian class force.

The sententious claim that it is impossible to do anything, that no proletarian solidarity action is possible, as long as global capitalism has not been overthrown, could only come to mind in those who wish to hide – a guilty indifference vis-à-vis the situation of the

proletariat and the masses of the countries under the yoke of the major imperialisms – behind phrases.

But to refuse any classist orientation in the name of «urgency» and the «concrete» can only come from opponents of the anti-capitalist struggle. After all, what our text highlighted is that without the unfailing support of the major imperialist states, the United States of course in the foreground, but also the European states and Russia, and with the implicit support of the most influential Arab States, the State of Israel could not continue its wars, its colonialism and its abuses of all kinds. What *can* loosen the vice which has crushed the Palestinian masses for decades, are not opinion campaigns, boycotts targeted at companies doing business with Israel or demonstrations outside embassies of these countries, etc. but the development of real and truly anti-capitalist struggles in these states. Before the proletariat finds the strength to threaten the survival of capitalism, it could paralyze the shipment of arms, or to remain with the case of France to organize robust protests against the sending a warship patrolling off the coast of Gaza to assist the Israeli blockade (1), and to agitate in this direction within the military (whereas today the unions take care not to mobilize the workers!), etc.. We may recall the work of the young French CP in the twenties against the war in the Rif (Morocco), which was concretized not only by demonstrations but by a national strike, unrest in the navy, etc. Regardless of the criticisms that may be made as to the course of this action, this is a completely concrete example of what can be done when circumstances permit.

And a genuine action of proletarian

solidarity would result in facilitating the rupture not only of the Palestinian but also with the Israeli proletariat with their bourgeoisie by showing that the class struggle is the only way to effectively combat oppression and exploitation.

We're not there yet? Obviously not. Such a proletarian orientation is not easy to implement? Undoubtedly. Can it not be immediate? Unfortunately not.

But while decades of democratic agitation have had no other effect than to reduce the proletariat and the masses to ever-increasing impotence, there is now no more urgent task in this issue of struggle against imperialism and Zionism, as in others, than to work to prepare for the resumption of the class struggle, on the theoretical, political and organizational levels. To start with this means the ruthless criticism of all the wrong solutions, of all the immediatisms, of all the democratisms, of all the class collaborations...

(Le Prolétaire Nr.492; Feb.-March-April 2009)

(1) On 23 January France dispatched to Gaza a frigate helicopter carrier «Germinal» which crossed from Lebanon as part of the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL). According to the official French government source, the ship had to «participate in the struggle against the smuggling of weapons (...) in cooperation with Israel and Egypt.». This direct military participation of France in the blockade of the Gaza Strip has provoked little reaction beyond the pro-Palestinian mileus ...

Swine Flu and the Working Class

A few weeks ago the first news about an epidemic, known as «swine flu», appeared in Mexico; according to statements by the Mexican Minister of Health, it was a «highly contagious mutant virus» which had moved from pigs to humans.

The alert triggered in the U.S. and Europe was accompanied by the information that it was already responsible for 20 «confirmed» deaths with forty still being «verified». Day after day these reports have made the headlines in newspapers and on television.

The WHO (World Health Organization) immediately gave the alarm, stating

that the contagion could spread to the world, mainly through air travel. Over a few days the alert level was elevated continuously, from Level 3 to Level 4 and then 5: «Pandemic threat». The big pharmaceutical industries, already alerted by the avian flu (which has proven to be a gigantic bluff) immediately undertook every effort to provide the health services of various countries with thousands of doses of antiviral drugs (such as Tamiflu by Roche, which soon became a star on primetime TV).

In a few days the panic over swine fever has spread around the world.

In Mexico it was the immediate clos-

ing of schools, stadiums, museums, libraries, universities, along with the use of surgical masks protecting mouth and nose that appeared to symbolize the «seriousness» of the situation! Even a single infected individual (real or imagined) in a country reved up the media machine that fueled the urgency and the fear of coming into contact with anyone who became ill!

According to media reports, in Mexico there are around 3,000 cases and 150 deaths (but from this total there were no more than 20 deaths actually caused by the fever), 1 death in the United States and a dozen patients, one case in Europe and only a handful in the rest of the world.

What kind of alarm should have been raised when, this past winter, during the European epidemic of influenza and respiratory diseases, there were 6,000 deaths in France alone (1) and probably as many in other countries – that is in the super-developed countries, with ultra-modern hospitals, pharmaceutical and health services? Faced with real epidemics that regularly occur each winter, capitalist society is only equipped to sell quantities of medicines and vaccines (usually also unnecessary or even harmful) and bury the dead. And the same thing occurs in summer during heatwave episodes!

One must not underestimate the danger that a disease can cause when it takes an epidemic form, a society that really has as a priority the welfare and health of mankind, would organize social life to meet that goal.

But this is not the priority of bourgeois society, the same as its priority is not the preservation of the environment and nature in which humanity lives. As in every «natural» disaster (earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, etc..) negligent deaths and massive destruction are in fact the responsibility of a social organization based only on the search for profit: it is the search for the quickest profit that induces construction in areas prone to flooding, to economize on anti-seismic measures, etc..

Faced with a threat of epidemic, the society of Capital reacts in the same fashion, trying to «do business», either by selling drugs, newspapers or by obtaining additional grants for its «health organization» the more panic spreads, the more we sell: all participants in the «panic» win, whether they be doctors, industrialists, owners of newspapers or parish priests.

But there is another aspect.

Spreading the panic, the bourgeoisie accentuates in the proletariat the feeling of powerlessness against superior forces that influence its fate and against

which there is no possibility of resistance – be these forces a deadly virus or the «laws of the economy». And, at the same time, the ruling class and its state reinforce their apparent omnipotence by providing «solutions», presented as the only possibility: in the case of the epidemic, drugs and other vaccines, in the case of economic crisis this or that measures, to stimulate anti-worker measures. Moreover, the capitalists feel that they control the situation, the more their domination over the proletarian masses is unquestioned, the more easily they can falsify reality: their propaganda is that of half-truths and open lies, guilty silence during the phases of prevention (which are never realized) and deafening noise during phases of speculation.

Even on such occasions proletarians are encouraged to put their lives, their health, their future, in the hands of capitalists. It is well known, for example, that bourgeois society is incapable of providing a real solution to respiratory diseases caused by the poisonous atmosphere of large cities (Mexico City is one of the most polluted) rather than by all avian or swine influenza epidemics. There is no alert by the WHO, because to cure it, the destruction of capitalism – which causes the split between the rural areas and the city and stifles millions of proletarians in huge cities – is necessary!

Consequently, it's the masses and the working poor who are always the most affected by every disease; periods of economic crisis thrust whole segments of the population into misery, even in the richest capitalist countries; – further exacerbating this phenomenon.

Bourgeois society which can only solve its crisis by impoverishing the masses, is not more «humane», more attentive to the needs of the proletariat; by nature it can only strive to exploit the forces of the workers to enhance the profitability of capital, ie to earn a profit at any cost, whatever the cost in terms of health or people's lives or the looting of nature.

The proletarians must not expect from the capitalist class and its state any cure for their ills, any solution to their miseries. When the bourgeois concedes a few crumbs to workers, it's either because they were forced by their classist struggle; or because they want to paralyze them by pitting them against each other in order to prepare for much more horrifying events: those of wars!

Against the bourgeois propaganda campaigns, aimed to sow widespread panic and helplessness among the exploited, the proletarians have to ascend onto an entirely different field: the field of class confrontation, the only one where

their organized force can be reconstituted, the field on which solidarity can become real and unity effective, capable of thwarting all political and ideological influences spread by the bourgeoisie to infect the proletarians and subjugate them.

The working class has an historic task to perform: to destroy bourgeois society which is no longer capable of bringing any progress for humanity. To get rid of bourgeois society, with its capitalist mode of production, with its market, with its wars, with its ideology, propaganda and lies, will be only possible when the proletariat takes control of its own destiny, reconstitutes its class party, armed with the science that can decipher the contradictions of capitalism and sets the path to revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat and communism: Marxism.

Then the panic will switch sides and hit the ruling class, terrified by the prospect of losing its privileges, its wealth, its domination; then, the chains that bind the proletariat will be finally broken and capitalism, its society and all its rotten institutions, including the «social» and «health» ones, will be thrown into the dustbin of history.

(1) figures of the «Weekly Epidemiological Bulletin» (April 15/09) for the first two months of 2009.

« le prolétaire »

Nr. 493

(Mai-Juin-Juillet-Août 2009)

Summary

- Malgré les efforts du collaborationnisme et de ses valets d'extrême gauche. Les premiers signes de colère prolétarienne annoncent le retour de la lutte de classe!
- Le combat de la CGT pour «libérer» la bourse du travail ... des sans-papiers
- Mars 1919: Fondation de l'Internationale Communiste
- Elections européennes: encore le mensonge démocratique
- Pour se défendre contre la crise capitaliste une seule solution: la reprise de la lutte de classe!
- La grippe porcine et le prolétariat
- Iran: pour le prolétariat iranien, il n'y a pas d'autre issue que la lutte sur le terrain de classe dans la perspective de la révolution prolétarienne
- L'Iran en quelques chiffres

China 1927: The Stalinist Counter-revolution leads the Chinese Proletarians to Massacre

(Continuation from page 1)

this country, but in the whole world. It is this world bourgeois counter-revolution of which Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang were the supremely effective instrument in China and the Stalinized Communist International with its influential leadership over the international proletariat, which would crush the Chinese proletarian movement: its destruction would also be the destruction of the revolutionary potentialities of this formidable historical period.

“Those objective socio-historical causes which pre-determined the “October” outcome of the Russian revolution—Trotsky wrote in his work *The Third International After Lenin*—rise before us in China in a still more accentuated form. The bourgeois and proletarian poles of the Chinese nation stand opposed to each other even more irreconcilably, if this is at all possible, than they did in Russia, since, on the one hand, the Chinese bourgeoisie is directly bound up with foreign imperialism and the latter’s military machine, and since, on the other hand, the Chinese proletariat has from the very beginning established a close bond with the Comintern and the Soviet Union. Numerically the Chinese peasantry constitutes an even more overwhelming mass than the Russian peasantry. But being crushed in the wise of world contradictions, upon the solution of which in one way or another its fate depends, the Chinese peasantry is even less capable of playing a *leading* role than the Russian. At the present this is no longer a matter of theoretical forecast, but a fact verified completely in all its aspects” (1).

Although it appeared twenty years after the 1905 Russian insurrection and ten years after October 1917, the Chinese revolutionary wave of 1925-27 could have opened the way to a general resumption of the revolutionary proletarian movement on an international scale, because of world contradictions—whereby the great imperialisms present were implicated in China because of the formidable social revolt of the Chinese proletarians and peasants. History is not made with “if’s”, but it is absolutely certain that the prime cause of the failure of the Chinese revolution in 1927 must be charged to the Communist International, its policy and its tactics. Nothing from the theses on the national and colonial question defined in the second congress of

the CI of 1920 and in the congress of Baku was taken up by the leaders of the International (Stalin, Bukharin and their supporters); that it is from the point of view of the organization of the Communist Party, independent of any other organization, from the point of view of an analysis of the Chinese bourgeoisie and its class interests or from the point of view of the specifically proletarian revolutionary prospect. After having reduced any opposition to the Stalinist policy to impotence (defense of the interests of capitalism and its national State in Russia behind the slogan of “building socialism in one country”) and after having erected a bureaucratic apparatus which servilely obeyed this new policy, the International could only persevere in the abandonment of the correct Marxist orientation and, at the time of each major problem which arose for the international proletariat, to continuously and always more profoundly betray the class traditions which the Russian proletarians under the leadership of the party of Lenin had transmitted to the world.

Collaboration with the Kuomintang, the support of the policy of the “block of four classes” (bourgeoisie, peasants, urban petit-bourgeoisie, working class), and finally the adhesion of the young Communist Party to the Kuomintang were the decisive stages which prevented the revolutionary movement of the industrial proletariat of the cities from taking its place at the head of the peasant masses of the countryside, obliterating the imperialist order in the Far East and also calling into question the Stalinist prospect for construction of national capitalism to Russia.

Executing a complete about-face, the International, created to lead the world labor movement through orientations adapted to the advanced capitalisms as well as with those where the problem of emancipation from colonialism and destruction of the pre-bourgeois *Ancien Régime* was still posed, became the agent of the counter-revolution in the Chinese question through a series of betrayals which could only lead to disaster.

By enabling the Kuomintang to pass for a party which, although undoubtedly bourgeois, was able to fight in general against imperialism, served to justify the support that the International gave to it and to its fusion with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

After having quoted how the representative of the CCP in the VIIth plenum

of the executive committee of International (at the end of 1926) described the policy of Kuomintang:

“In the sphere of international policy it occupies a passive position in the full meaning of that word. . . . It is inclined to fight only against British imperialism; so far as the Japanese imperialists are concerned, however, it is ready under certain conditions to make a compromise with them.”

Trotsky emphasized precisely that:

“The attitude of the Kuomintang towards imperialism was from the very outset not revolutionary but entirely opportunist. It endeavoured to smash and isolate the agents of certain imperialist powers so as to make a deal with the selfsame or other imperialist powers on terms more favourable to the Chinese bourgeoisie.”

A little further on he writes:

“The Chinese bourgeoisie is sufficiently realistic and acquainted intimately enough with the nature of world imperialism to understand that a really serious struggle against the latter requires such an upheaval of the revolutionary masses as would primarily become a menace to the bourgeoisie itself. If the struggle against the Manchu Dynasty was a task of smaller historical proportions than the overthrow of Czarism, then the struggle against world imperialism is a task on a much larger scale; and if we taught the workers of Russia from the very beginning not to believe in the readiness of liberalism and the ability of petit-bourgeois democracy to overthrow Czarism and to destroy feudalism, we should no less energetically have imbued the Chinese workers from the outset with the same spirit of distrust. The new and absolutely false theory promulgated by Stalin-Bukharin about the “immanent” revolutionary spirit of the colonial bourgeoisie is, in substance, a translation of Menshevism into the language of Chinese politics. It serves only to convert the oppressed position of China into an internal political premium for the Chinese bourgeoisie, and it throws an additional weight on the scale of the bourgeoisie against the scale of the trebly oppressed Chinese proletariat (2).

However the International had at its disposal not only the fundamental positions set down in its theses but also unambiguous directives, which can be easily observed in a reading of the texts of its second congress. For example the “Supplementary Theses on the National

and Colonial Questions” affirm in item 6:

“6. The foreign imperialism violently forced upon the peoples of the East has without doubt hindered their social and economic development and robbed them of the opportunity of reaching the same level of development as has been achieved in Europe and America. Thanks to the imperialist policies whose efforts are directed towards holding up industrial development in the colonies, the native proletariat has only come into existence fairly recently. The dispersed local cottage industries have given way to the centralized industries of the imperialist countries. As a result the vast majority of the population was forced to engage in agriculture and export raw materials abroad. On the other hand we can observe a rapidly growing concentration of the land in the hands of big landowners, capitalists and the state, which again contributes to the growth of the number of landless peasants. The vast majority of the population of these colonies lives under conditions of oppression. As a result of these policies the underdeveloped spirit of outrage that lives in the masses of the people can only find an expression in the numerically small intellectual middle class. Foreign domination constantly obstructs the free development of social life; therefore the revolution’s first step must be the removal of this foreign domination. The struggle to overthrow foreign domination in the colonies does not therefore mean underwriting the national aims of the national bourgeoisie but much rather smoothing the path to liberation for the proletariat of the colonies”.

And in item 11 of the Theses, after a series of tactical directives, one can read in paragraph 5:

“It is necessary to vigorously fight the attempts made in the backwards countries by liberation movements to call themselves communist whereas in reality they are not. The Communist International must support the revolutionary movements in the colonies and the «backwards» countries with the sole aim of uniting the elements of the future proletarian parties—Communist in fact and not only in name—in all the backward countries, to make them become aware of their particular tasks, which consist in fighting against the bourgeois democratic tendency in their country.

The Communist International must enter into temporary relations and even form an alliance with the revolutionary movement of the colonies and the backward countries, but it cannot amalgamate with them; on the contrary it must absolutely defend and maintain the independent character of the proletarian

movement, even if it exists only in an embryonic form” (3).

Difficult to be more clear!

But, to the inverse, Stalinism sacrificed the independence of the party under the pretext of not frightening the bourgeoisie and of not turning it away from its revolutionary objectives; and it could pursue these aims by utilizing the enormous influence on the proletarians and the liberation movements of the colonies which the victory of the Russian revolution had conferred on the International. Trotsky will recall that:

“Marxism on the contrary invariably taught that the revolutionary consequences of one or another act of the bourgeoisie, to which it is compelled by its position, will be fuller, more, decisive, less doubtful, and firmer, the more independent the proletarian vanguard will be in relation to the bourgeoisie, the less it will be inclined to place its fingers between the jaws of the bourgeoisie, to see it in bright colors, to over-estimate its revolutionary spirit or its readiness for a ‘united front’ and for a struggle against imperialism” (4).

Anti-proletarian opportunism, even when it labels itself communist, socialist or revolutionary, calls, always and everywhere, for the proletariat not to pursue an autonomous policy, not to organize itself independently, not to defend its class interests, but to dissolve itself in a “popular” front to maintain “unity” against imperialism or reaction. The tragic Chinese experiment showed in an irrefutable way that this method assures the crushing of the proletariat.

Disavowing its original theses, in obliging the CCP to dissolve itself within the party of the bourgeoisie which is what the Kuomintang was, the Stalinized International prevented it from playing its role of autonomous revolutionary leadership of the proletariat, precluded its class independence and paralyzed it by imprisoning it in a popular interclassist alliance which signified in fact placing its fate in the hands of the bourgeoisie.

* * *

Constituted in 1920 with 57 members, the CCP had quickly conquered a notable influence on the proletarian masses; and despite its numerical challenges (a thousand in April 1925, 10,000 at the end of the year, nearly 60,000 at the beginning of 1927), it had conquered a determining influence on the mass movement and in particular it led the trade unions growing rapidly throughout the country. After 1922 the proletarian and peasant movement took on imposing proportions; not only was it strongly impregna-

ted with the influence of the CCP but it was moreover savagely hostile to the Kuomintang in which it correctly perceived the organization of the hated bourgeoisie. In May 1922 the first congress of the Chinese trade unions which brought together 200,000 members was held. On May first, 1925 the pan-Chinese trade unions counted 570,000 members; 10,000 workmen paraded in Shanghai, then the economic and industrial capital of China, and 200,000 in Canton. The peasant movement also quickly developed thanks to the constitution of the peasant “Unions” which as of 1923 in Kwantung (province of Canton) clashed violently with the landowners and the army. Meanwhile the International had constrained the young CCP to adhere to the Kuomintang, in spite of its initial opposition.

The proletarian movement was to culminate in the general strike begun on May 30, 1925 in Shanghai, following the bloody repression of a demonstration by workers and students. The strike extended to Canton and Peking finally involving 400,000 workers. On June 23 the repression of a demonstration of workers and students by English soldiers in Canton resulted in 52 deaths. The response was immediate: the general strike started in Canton and Hong Kong. 100,000 workers from Hong Kong rushed to Canton to reinforce the 200,000 strikers there. Strike pickets in all the ports of Kwantung rendered the boycott of foreign goods (especially English) effective, completely paralysing British trade with the Far East. On the basis of this powerful movement, the Kuomintang drove out the puppet authorities under the orders of the imperialists and installed itself in power throughout the whole province with the blessing of the CCP and the International which will consequently describe Canton as “the center of the Chinese revolution”. Its government will put the promises of land reform back under wraps; will preoccupy itself with silencing the workers’ demands and to finish off the strike under the pretext that it is initially necessary “to drive out the imperialists and to unify the country”. With the enthusiastic support of the CCP and Soviet support, it will then launch the preparation of a military campaign against the Northern warlords tied to the various imperialisms.

But on March 20, 1926, against the organized labor of Canton, and under a false pretext Chiang Kai-shek, commander-in-chief of the young army, delivered his blows: the headquarters of the trade unions were devastated, their chiefs arrested (the communist leaders and the Russian advisors undergo the same fate);

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in a few hours the workmen were disarmed, their organizations destroyed, Chiang had all the power in his hands, without the CCP and the workers being able to react.

But it's only a dress rehearsal. Chiang is excused for the "misunderstanding" while on its side the CCP capitulated completely, abandoning any criticism of the official position, surrendering the list of its registered members to the Kuomintang, etc.

However this political capitulation could not but cause resistance within the party and in June 1926 the central Committee of the CCP proposed to recover its independence and to give up the policy of complete submission to the Kuomintang for a policy of alliance with it on an equal footing. Therefore it was not the return to a true class independence which was proposed; but this was still too much for the leadership of the International which refused (and it even refused to allow the CCP to organize left fractions in the Kuomintang). The policy of the International was defined in an expressive way by its envoy Borodin, who was to advise Chiang that: "during the present time the Communists must work like coolies for the Kuomintang"! The CCP was thus constrained to continue "for the present time" to work in the service of the nationalist bourgeoisie. The consequences came quickly.

In July 1926, a few days after the beginning of the Northern expedition, i.e. after the departure of the regiments where the Communists had a certain influence from Canton, bands of thugs and gangsters recruited throughout the region were launched against organized labor; after six days of confrontations during which approximately fifty workers were slaughtered, the authorities reappeared "to restore order", i.e. the order of the capitalists: the workers were disarmed, they were forbidden to demonstrate, compulsory arbitration was instituted to prevent strikes, etc, the social rights of the proletarians conquered during previous years demolished, before a downright martial law prohibiting strikes is imposed in December. This did not prevent the International from declaring, at the end of 1926, the Kuomintang a "sympathizing party"...

THE MASSACRES OF SHANGHAI

It was thus comprehensible that when the nationalist army of the Kuomintang commanded by Chiang arrived in the proximity of Shanghai, the CCP bent all

its efforts to facilitate its victory. On February 19, the trade union council commenced a general strike, with 350 000 workers taking part, that the CCP was reluctant to transform into an insurrection. In spite of this indecision, during several days the workers held the repression of the local soldiers in check, while the Kuomintang troops remained inactive a few tens of kilometers away. On March 21, a new general strike started, but this time with precise plans of insurrection; at the end of a few days combat, the workers who had not been brought to their knees by repression, seized power. Meanwhile the nationalist army in the city suburbs had not stirred. Given the importance of Shanghai in Chinese economic life, a proletarian seizure of power in this city would have automatically meant that an anti-capitalist direction was given to the Chinese revolution which would have found a formidable new stimulus there. On the contrary the workers and the CCP who held power yielded it immediately to Chiang Kai-shek, who was received in the city as the uncontested chief of the revolution. The CCP subordinated itself to the Kuomintang, and the rumors of attacks against the workers circulated with all the more earnestness. Respecting the formal instructions of the International, the CCP disarmed the workers pickets so as not to risk a confrontation. Chiang who had immediately contacted the capitalist circles in the city, started by replacing the Communists in all important leading posts with the faithful; then he removed the soldiers influenced by the workers (5), then decreed that the trade-union pickets were to come under control of his army, before passing to open repression.

On April 12, 1927 at 4 o'clock in the morning, detachments of the Kuomintang army, aided by bands recruited among the local underworld attacked the strongholds of the workers' organizations, massacring all those which were there; in spite of an impromptu resistance hundreds of proletarians were massacred, the Communist leaders killed or constrained to hide. The following day, the General Council of the trade unions, dispersed and hunted, called for a general strike. In spite of the terrible situation 100,000 workers answered the call; a peaceful demonstration (!) was organized to protest near the headquarters: its repression by machine-gun fire left nearly 300 dead.

The imperialists helped with the repression the very best that they could; the French authorities in particular were in the leading ranks thanks to their police force, directed by one of the gangster

chiefs in Shanghai, who multiplied searches and arrests to feed the exceptional military tribunals which pronounced thousands of death sentences during following months. After the massacres and the introduction of white terror in Shanghai, the International transferred its hopes to the section of the Kuomintang which in central China controlled Wuhan and its province. On April 21, Wuhan was decreed by Stalin as the new "center the Chinese revolution" and the CCP was enjoined to continue with this the same policy of servile collaboration with the "Left Kuomintang" which had led to the disaster in Shanghai. Two communist ministers entered into the government of Wuhan: the Ministry of Labour and that of Agriculture. To maintain unity in the Kuomintang, the essential action of the Communists inside as well as outside of the government consisted in calming workers' dissatisfaction and to fight the "excesses" of the peasant movement which was attacking the landowners with regularity. (5).

In mid-June repression started in this pseudo-"revolutionary center", white terror against the peasants intensified throughout the area, but the 5th Congress of the CCP reaffirmed, under the influence of the representatives of the CI, that it would continue his disastrous policy of tailism with respect to Kuomintang: "at the current stage of the revolution, the relations between the Communist Party and Kuomintang become closer than they ever were. The withdrawal of the bourgeoisie [allusion to the massacres of Shanghai!] transformed the Kuomintang into a revolutionary block of the three oppressed classes: proletariat, peasantry and urban petit-bourgeoisie, and the engine of this block is the proletariat".

The CCP increasingly prostrated itself in the face of the increasingly threatening attitude of this so-called "revolutionary bloc". On June 20, it published a complementary update where one could read, among other things:

"The mass workers and peasant organizations must accept the direction and the control of the Kuomintang. The demands of the mass movement of workers and peasants must be in harmony with the resolutions of the Kuomintang congresses, the decisions of the Central Executive Committee, and the decrees and laws of the government (...) the armed groups of workers and peasants must be controlled by the government. In order to avoid any political agitation, the armed pickets which currently exist in Wuhan will be reduced or incorporated into the army (...). The economic requirements of commercial employees

will not exceed the economic capacities of commercial traders and storeowners. The trade unions will not intervene in the right of storeowners to hire and fire. The trade unions will not interfere with commercial traders and storeowners, neither to halt trade, nor to impose fines on them or to dress them in dunce's caps, etc." (6)

Nothing new here; 15 days later the Kuomintang Council called for the purging of the Communists in its ranks, attacked the now disarmed trade unions arms in hand, reconciled itself with Chiang Kai-shek while the Communist leaders and their Soviet advisers fled... The decapitation of the revolutionary movement (partial sources give the figure of 25,000 proletarians, Communists and workers and peasant leaders executed throughout the country at the time of the counter-revolutionary wave in the first half of 1927) and the destruction of the workers and peasants organizations were not the only results obtained by the Chinese bourgeoisie and imperialism. The policy of submission to the Kuomintang followed by the CCP for so many years alienated the support of the masses which felt betrayed by their own leaders; the peasants deserted their organizations, the workers no longer even mobilized themselves to defend their immediate interests and abandoned the CCP. To the physical destruction of the movement the demoralization of the masses with regard to the Communists must be added. The revolutionary movement was broken. After having foisted the responsibility for the catastrophe onto the leaders of the CCP who had however only applied its directives, it is at this time that the Stalinist International gave to the Chinese Communists the order to rise in "taking up again the flag of the left Kuomintang" to carry out the prospect for the "democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants": in fact the revolts of the "autumn harvest", primarily in the countryside, all failed. In Wuhan and other cities the Communists tried without much success to rouse the proletariat, but in general they did not even have the power to organize strikes, the trade unions having been destroyed or "reorganized" as anti-proletarian structures. These insurrections could only have results leading to the massacre of the militants and proletarians who took part in them.

THE CANTON COMMUNE

In Canton the CCP organized an insurrection on December 10, 1927, with the intention of benefiting from a disagreement between several generals. The combatants were few in number and were

very badly armed and the working-class masses remained spectators: recognizing that the majority of the proletariat did not take part in the insurrection, the communist leadership affirmed thereafter that they had 20 000 workmen with them. But one year before, when the International preached the "wait-and-see" policy and subordination to the Kuomintang, the communist council of the workers' delegates could count on a base of almost two hundred thousand workers! As of December 11, the insurrectionists with the new cry of "down with the Kuomintang!" had become masters in part of the city and had released more than one thousand political prisoners. They proclaimed the Commune, installed a provisional Soviet and diffused a program whose radicalism cut against the previous demands of the CCP: a general increase in wages, the State taking responsibility for the unemployed, control of production by factory committees, nationalization of large-scale industry, transport and the banks, nationalization of the land, extermination of the rural landlords, abolition of debts to usurers, confiscation of all the apartments of the big bourgeoisie and all their goods to the profit of the workers, etc. As Trotsky commented, although Canton has a character definitely more petit-bourgeois than Shanghai and other industrial centers of the country, the revolutionary insurrection "carried out against Kuomintang, automatically led to dictatorship of the proletariat; as one of its first steps, because of the overall situation, it had to apply more radical measurements than those which were taken at the beginning of the October revolution", whereas all the perspectives of the International went no further than a "democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants" under Kuomintang control.

But the same slogans which only a few months earlier could have mobilized hundreds of thousands of proletarians, now fell flat because the movement had already been broken. The absence of revolutionary fermentation was such that the Communists had not even dared to launch a general strike call! The installation of the provisional government was not enough to rally all the proletarians. Without flinching, the railwaymen and boatmen of Canton transported the troops which were heading to crush the insurrection. On the evening of December 13 the insurrection was smashed and a dreadful repression was unleashed: proletarians were shot, boiled alive, and decapitated by the thousands (the number of dead was estimated at 5,700).

With the defeat of Canton, a whole

revolutionary period is terminated for the Chinese proletariat. According to its own estimates, the CCP which in spring 1927 was composed of 63.8% workers, counted something less than 15% the following year and it possessed "not even one healthy cell in the industrial proletariat": the workers had left it by the thousands, and they were never to rejoin its ranks again; taking refuge in the countryside, fixing itself on the political objective of the "real Kuomintang", whatever remained of the Chinese Communist Party definitively ceased being a proletarian organization. The proletarian class which had begun to move, from 1920, along with the masses of poor peasants, had animated a revolutionary movement of gigantic importance; a movement which under the direction of the Communist Party could have simultaneously defeated world imperialism and the Chinese bourgeoisie could have established the dictatorship of the proletariat in China. But this splendid movement did not achieve this goal which would have meant the resumption of the proletarian movement on a worldwide scale—because its power had been put at the service of the Chinese bourgeoisie by an International tied to a Russian State from now on entirely occupied in developing its national capitalism.

After the defeat of the revolutionary movement, the fragmentation of China became even greater, the Kuomintang of Chiang Kai-shek being unable to impose its rule over the various military cliques of "warlords" who carved out their own fiefdoms, often with the support of this or that imperialism—demonstrating the incapacity of the Chinese bourgeoisie to carry out its own revolution. In certain isolated regions, the CCP instituted a so-called "Communist China" where there existed "at the same time as the rudimentary forms of primitive economy, the need for an exploitation of the masses even more intense than that in force in other areas". In connection with an assessment of the defeats of Shanghai and Canton, "our current maintained that if the non-revolutionary situation does not make it possible to advance the fundamental slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat, if thus the question of power is not posed in an immediate fashion, that is not a reason to revise the program of the party; this must on the contrary be reaffirmed completely on the theoretical and propagandistic level, while the retreat cannot be carried out other than on the basis of the immediate demands of the masses and their corresponding class organizations" (7).

As Trotsky wrote "the lessons of 1848, 1871, 1905, 1917, the lessons of the

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Communist Party of Russia and the foundation of the Communist International" were lost. The proletarian movement was thrown behind by decades. Our theses on the Chinese question continued: "And in fact, in the great battles of the Chinese revolution between 1924 and 1927, it is not the fate of 'independent, rich and powerful' China which was compromised for many years, but that of the whole labor movement in the colonies for an infinitely longer and more painful historical period" (8).

The fate of the labour movement in the colonies was so compromised that even today the prospect for a resumption of class struggle in the least comparable with that which heralded the great struggles of the Russian proletariat in 1905-1917 or for the Chinese proletariat in 1924-1927 is all but closed. That does not discourage Marxists because they know that the extension and the development of capitalism causes an accumulation of social contradictions in a colossal way and on a much broader surface than at the beginning of last century. The proletariat, the mass without-reserves, always increases by including the peasant masses ruined by capitalism from the four corners of planet. The social magma boils deep inside the capitalist volcano and its formidable explosion is inscribed in history.

It is the duty of the Marxists to patiently devote their forces and their energies to the formation of the class party based on the very heavily-paid-for lessons of revolutions and counter-revolutions; to the proletarians of America, Europe, China and everywhere falls the task of returning to the terrain of class struggle, commencing with the basic but essential struggle of economic and immediate defense.

(1) cf: Trotsky, "The Third International After Lenin" Pathfinder 1970 p. 184

(2) Ibid: p. 174-5

(3) "Supplementary Theses on the National and Colonial Question" (presented by Roy at the 2nd Congress of the Communist International), Point 6.

(4) Trotsky, "The Third International After Lenin" p. 175-6

(5) On March 31, according to Chen Duxiu, then the leader of the CCP: "The International telegraphs us to hide, to bury all the weapons in possession of the workers, in order to avoid a military confrontation between Chiang Kai-shek

and the workers". The commander of the first division which was in the workers' district, having received the order of Chiang to leave the city-this meant that Chiang prepared a military action against the proletarians-had gone on to propose to the communist leaders and to the envoys of the International to refuse to obey and to use his troops to arrest Chiang for counter-revolutionary plotting. But paralysed by the policy of tailism and appeasement towards the Kuomintang, the International refused, being satisfied to write to Chiang to respectfully request of him to reconsider his decision, and ultimately they let these soldiers move off. cf Harold Isaacs, "The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution", trans. from Gallimard, 1967, p.206, 214.

(6) A telegram by Stalin on June 1 stipulated, among other points that: "excesses [of the peasant movement] must be fought, not by soldiers, but the Peasant Unions". A certain Mao Zedong was president of the National Federation of Peasant Unions and he got busy applying this directive with a zeal which made Roy state that he was located on the extreme right of the CCP. Cf North, Eudin "M.N. Roy's Mission to China", Octagon Books 1977, p. 102, 106 (Roy was then the new envoy of the C.I. to the CCP). A few months earlier, Mao in a report to the CCP where it indicated that the country Unions in Hunan counted 2 million registered voters, had however written that the denunciation of alleged country "excesses" was only used "to sabotage the revolution"...

(7) See H. Isaacs, op cit. p. 316-317. June 30. The General Union of Labor (directed by the CCP) published an official statement to hammer in the final nail: "In order to consolidate the united front of the troops and the workmen and in order to remove any basis for the charges of the reactionaries and the counter-revolutionaries, the trade union has ordered the dissolution of the armed pickets (...). Weapons and ammunition were handed over to the Hankow office of the Wuhan garrison". Ibid, p. 318.

(8) cf O Perrone "La tattica del Comintern", Ed. Sociali 1976, p.76. This text appeared previously in Prometeo, the theoretical review of the Partito Comunista Internazionale, in 1946.

(9) Report to the general meeting of Marseilles of July 11-13, 1964, "Programme Communiste" n°32. We do not have anything to add to the powerful criticism of Trotsky, against the orientations of the International, to which we could refer only very briefly here. It is not the same for his positions during the following period and our current polemicized hard against them. Trotsky sustained that an

"intermediate watchword was to be advanced: that of a Constituent Assembly and a democratic constitution in China". He thus fell into the democratic orientations which he himself had fought against, in the watchword of the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants, from the point of view of the revolution by stages, as if they were short cuts. But history does not know short cuts; a tactic based on expedients or interclassism can lead only to defeat, with the aggravating factor that the resumption of the revolutionary movement on correct theoretical and programmatic bases is rendered more difficult and more distant in time.

le prolétaire

parti communiste international (programme communiste)

La tragédie du prolétariat allemand dans le premier après-guerre



- La tragédie du prolétariat allemand dans le premier après-guerre -

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**ENGLISH VERSION
IN PREPARATION**

In renewing its great traditions of struggle, the American proletariat will have to fight the coming blood and tears policy of the Obama presidency

BARACK OBAMA, NEW MOUTHPIECE OF AMERICAN RULING CLASS INTERESTS.

The proletarians of America and the world should not expect changes in their favor from the government, the capitalist crisis which commenced last year will get worse and last much longer, with serious consequences for workers. Perhaps slowly, but inexorably, it increases and continues to increase the intensity of exploitation, the number of unemployed, to lower real wages. The crises of **overproduction** - not overproduction in relation to the **needs** of the population, but to the market - are a congenital phenomenon of capitalism.

The bourgeoisie cannot respond by improving conditions for workers, but only by maintaining or increasing the profits which it extracts, ie by worsening these conditions to decrease the «cost» of labor and wages in general, by the closure of insufficiently profitable enterprises, layoffs, etc..

Already the number of unemployed increases in the United States as in most countries, these are not only employees of various financial institutions, but workers of all productive sectors, automotive to aviation, Construction to computers ... More than a million jobs have been lost during the first ten months of the year, bringing the number of unemployed to nearly 10 million (6.5% of the working population) according to official statistics, less than a third of whom are receiving unemployment benefits (1). The increasingly tense international situation compels Barak Obama just like his predecessors to defend imperialist interests through the massive military machine of the United States - and even before his election he had already criticized Bush for the insufficiency of his war effort in Afghanistan! Clashes between capitalist powers are destined to worsen in different parts of the world: certainly in the Middle East, but also in Africa, Asia and the oil fields of the Caucasus as we saw this summer. And in Europe, the historic cradle of capitalism and hearth of inter-imperialist wars, where factors of crises and tension continue to accumulate.

The electoral victory of Obama has been hailed by the media throughout the world as the symbol of a **new era** for the United States. The election of an "Afro-

American" Democratic candidate in a State which was officially racist (as was the Democratic Party itself) just a few decades ago is undoubtedly a novelty, as the victory of a woman would have been if Hillary Clinton had been nominated by her party.

But if this aspect created a sensation, what was the program of the candidate?

Exactly the same one as that of his rival, McCain: rescue of the financial and banking system (see his full support for the so-called "Paulson plan" that gigantic legal robbery to come to the assistance of the Wall Street bankers), defense of the profits of the American capitalists, the only difference being that Obama spoke - very vaguely - to better "share" the wealth and to tax and the largest fortunes (2).

However because he is a member of a racial minority whose majority belongs to the proletariat, Obama, with the support of virtually all the media, has been seen as a bearer of positive "change" by the exploited layers of the population, even though his campaign has received record funding and strong support from financial and industrial circles (3).

Whereas voter turnout is traditionally very low in the United States, this time there was a slight increase compared to the last presidential election: 61% compared with 60% of registered voters (4). If this falls far short of the wave of participation described by the media at the time of the vote (the rate of abstention actually increased in large cities like New York or Washington), there is however no doubt that Obama's candidacy has drawn in a large number of new proletarian voters, black or otherwise, to the ballot box, attracted by his promise of "change" or by the desire to get rid of the present government.

A British daily newspaper confirms this, writing: "If Obama had lost the election while the party which has presided over an economic collapse of historic magnitude and 2 unsuccessful and unpopular wars while three-quarters of Americans are convinced their country is moving in the wrong direction (...), it would have been the greatest missed electoral opportunity in generations. This could persuade a whole generation that there was nothing to expect from elections. (5). Millions of people could conclude that the only way for the Republicans to lose power lies in a form of armed

insurrection"(5).

The electoral illusion, this powerful means of defense of the established order, thus functioned perfectly! Millions of proletarians, black, white, Hispanic and others, believed that it was possible to change their situation at least a little by the electoral, democratic, peaceful and legalist road. They believed that on the day of the vote all individuals were equal and that the policy of the State was determined by the number of votes obtained by this or that candidate.

This was a **dream**, which reality will quickly dissipate. Already they can see that the personages approached to fill future official positions to carry out the alleged "change" are the same politicians as yesterday, they can already see that if Obama expressed himself in favor of a plan of support for the automobile industries, he has not spoken of support to the proletarians who work there, they can already see it taken up in his statements in favor of **national unity** ("We must come together as one nation - young and old, rich and poor, black and white, Republicans and Democrats") a classic bourgeois theme, but used with greater insistence in times of crisis: the more the bourgeoisie speaks of national unity, the more it prepares for the **social war internally and imperialist war externally!** At the end of October Biden, Obama's running mate for the vice-presidency, publicly warned that, in connection with the crisis, the new government "would be obliged to make incredibly tough decisions" in the first two years, on the internal plane as well as in foreign policy (6).

American capitalism boasts of being "the most democratic" in the world, it has been undoubtedly **the most aggressive** since it was imposed at the end of World War II as the dominant imperialism (including within the framework of Russo-American condominium over the world).

President Obama will continue on this path; after quickly abandoning his initial statements in favor of a military withdrawal from Iraq, he repeated many times during his campaign that he would increase the American military effort in Afghanistan. He endorsed the old theme of the "fight against terrorism" that has already been used as a pretext to justify the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. In fact the biggest and most lethal terrorists by far are the imperialist states, and espe-

Obama presidency

cially American imperialism, whose victims are estimated in the tens of millions during the butcheries of two world wars or in countless "localized" slaughters!

Behind the veil of electoral democracy lies the unyielding reality of the **armed dictatorship of capital**. It is easy to note that when faced with even the most meagre requests for social ameliorations, the democratic governments respond that they have no money, then they immediately find billions and billions of dollars or euros to come to the assistance of the banks or companies!

Whether left or right, socialist or conservative, Democrat or Republican, bourgeois governments are only mobilized to defend capitalist interests. As for the proletariat, though they may be evicted from their homes, forced from their jobs, expelled from the country where they work, or exploited in the most savage way, they will receive, in the best case, a few crumbs to prevent them from revolting. The new president will use his social rhetoric to more easily implement anti-proletarian measures inevitable in order to save the capitalist system; he will use the renewed patriotic propaganda to more easily implement military intervention on behalf of a "historic mission" of the American people to spread democracy.

But American democracy has never been anything other than the mask of the super-gangsterism of U.S. imperialism, a worthy successor to the old European imperialist gangsters. Capitalism bears war within itself, and American capitalism, the realm of the world's most powerful "military industrial complex", is no exception. For the American and world proletariat, American capitalism is and will remain **the most powerful enemy** and the **pillar of global capitalism**, even if it calls itself democratic and has a black president.

Faced with this overwhelming domination of capitalist forces, there does not appear to be any way out.

Yet it is the proletariat - the class of non-owners, forced to be exploited by the bosses in order to live - that create all the wealth of society, it is their wage labor that creates the profits that are essential to the life of capitalism. The proletarians potentially have in their hands the immense power to put an end to the capitalist system of misery and blood!

But for this force to begin to concretize itself they must overcome all the obstacles created by the bourgeois class and its reformist servants; they must overcome all the democratic lies, class-collaborationist propaganda for social

peace, all racial, national, class, age or sex divisions.

As difficult as this may seem, it is not impossible to fight against the American capitalists, as the 57 day strike of Boeing machinists demonstrated this fall. There is no alternative to class struggle to resist capitalist attacks which will grow sharper with the crisis. The American proletariat, which in the past has carried out great struggles against a ferocious capitalism, will lead even more gigantic struggles in the future.

Their fate depends on it, and that of the proletarians of the whole world!

- **No confidence** in bourgeois democracy, which has systematically misled the workers and led them into the massacres of local and world wars!

- **No confidence** in a political change which is nothing other than the changing of the guard of the temple of His Majesty: Capital!

- **No confidence** in the agreements and solidarity between the large capitalist countries against the crisis!

- **No confidence** in collaborationist forces which claim to uniquely defend the interests of the exploited masses in order to better control them and to deliver their avant-garde minorities to repression!

- **No confidence** in the political parties of the "extreme left" which want only to take the anti-proletarian place of a worn-out traditional reformism until sterner measures are needed!

- **Confidence** in the force that the proletariat expresses as it ruptures with the interclassist traditions inculcated by decades of collaborationist policies!

- **Confidence** in the organizational ability of the proletariat when it takes into its own hands control of its struggles.

- **Confidence** in the resumption of the class struggle, when the proletariat, reacting to exploitation and repression, will organize a struggle of resistance to capital extending to the broadest layers and maintaining itself for the longest possible period of time! This resumption of the class struggle will make it possible for the proletarians to distinguish who are their friends, their open enemies and their even more dangerous false friends.

- **Confidence** in the analysis carried out 150 years ago by Marxism according to which the exaggerated economic development of capitalism inevitably leads to more and more acute crises until its gigantic system of production of profits becomes seized up, leading to generalized wars. Confidence in the point of view according to which the proletariat, the class of those without-reserves,

which produces all social wealth, will be the class which will put an end to capitalism and all class societies!

- **Confidence** in the Marxist point of view according to which the proletariat organized and directed by its class party, will seize political power by insurrection, will found its own class dictatorship on the ruins of the bourgeois state in order to intervene despotically in the economic and social organization in order to extirpate capitalism, to revolutionize society from top to bottom and to definitively free mankind from any form of oppression and exploitation!

7th November 2008

(1) Official figures of US Department of Labor for the month of October. The unemployment rate was 5.9% for whites, 7.8% for latinos and 11.4% for blacks: racial discriminations are always alive! This month the financial sector lost 24,000 employees, whereas the manufacturing industry lost 90,000, the construction sector 49,000, service sector 51,000, etc. If one includes part-time workers, workers "discouraged from seeking employment", etc, the unemployment rate then reaches 11.8% (against 8.4% one year earlier). www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm

2) That earned him accusations of being "socialist", which he said ironically: "It's a little difficult to imagine how are Warren Buffet and Colin Powell to support me, if I practice socialism" New York Times, 8 October 2008. Warren Buffett is a famous multi-billionaire and Powell, former Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces during the first war against Iraq and Bush's former Secretary of State during the last war against Iraq

(3) The Obama campaign has received unprecedented financial support: more than \$ 600 million against probably a hundred for McCain. Supporters of Obama insist on the number of small contributions, but according to the New York Times a third of the funds came from campaign contributions exceeding \$ 1,000, a higher proportion than for McCain or his previous rival Clinton. NYT, 6 August 2008.

(4) Estimates a few days after the election: www.elections.gmu.edu/preliminary_vote_2008.html

(5) The Guardian, November 5, 2008. www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/nov/05/barackobama-uselections20081

(6) http://blogs.suntimes.com/sweet/2008/10/joe_biden_seattle_fund_raiser.html

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Registration number to the «commission paritaire de presse»: 52926. Managing Editor: Dessus. **payments:** by checks or international money, **order to:** Dessus.

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Printed on our press.

CORRESPONDENCE:

France : Editions Programme, 3 rue Basse Combalot, 69007 Lyon
Switzerland : Editions Programme, Ch. de la Roche 3, 1020 Renens
Italy : Il Comunista, C. P. 10835, 20110 Milano

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PROGRAM OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTY

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

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

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

3. The proletariat can neither crush nor 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 dominant class and set up its own dictatorship. It will deny all functions and political rights to any individual of the bourgeois class as long as it 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 of which it is characteristic. It is this party therefore which exclusively represents, organizes and directs the proletarian dictatorship.

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, governments adopting a more totalitarian form. All these are neither new sorts of social organisations as a 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 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 repel 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 middle class as well as the pseudo-proletarian and reformist parties.

9. The imperialistic 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 workers' world 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. It is from its revolutionary nature and not its conformity to any existing constitutional model that the proletarian State draws its power for social reorganization.

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 stamping out inside the country the rebellion of the vanquished classes and of the middle class and opportunist sections which are inevitable allies of the counter-revolution at the decisive moment.

11. The integral realization of socialism within the limits of one country is inconceivable and the socialist transformation cannot be carried out without failures and momentary set-backs. The defence of the proletarian regime against the ever present dangers of degeneration is possible only if the proletarian State is always co-ordinated with the international struggle of the working class of each country against its own bourgeoisie, its State and its army ; this struggle permits of no respite even in wartime. This co-ordination can only be secured if the world communist party controls the politics and programme of the States where the working class has seized power.