

REVOLUTION or WAR #9

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Summary

First Skirmishes of the Massive Confrontations between the Classes

International Situation

New Communist Voices: Nuevo Curso (Spain) and Workers' Offensive (USA)

The Situation in Spain and the Catalan Question

IGCL Communiqué on the Situation in Spain and Catalonia (October 13th 2017)

After the Catalan Elections of December 21st:

How do we Escape the “Groundhog Day” of the Catalan Elections? (Nuevo Curso)

Does Venezuela have a Future? (Nuevo Curso)

Working Class Struggles around the World

Working Class Struggles in the World from 1917 to 1923

Correspondence

What Attitude to Adopt in face of the Left Political Forces of the Ruling Class?

Debate within the Proletarian Camp

Debate on the Period of Transition between Capitalism and Communism:

Elements for a Criticism of the ICC Resolution on the Period of Transition

(Partito Comunista Internazionale – *Battaglia Comunista*, 1979)

Text of the Working Class Movement

What is to Replace the Smashed State Machine ? (Lenin, *The State and the Revolution*, 1917)

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Content

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First Skirmishes of the Massive Confrontations between the Classes..... 1

International Situation

New Communist Voices: Nuevo Curso (Spain) and Workers' Offensive (USA)..... 2

The Situation in Spain and the Catalan Question..... 4

IGCL communiqué on Spain and Catalonia (October 13th 2017)..... 5

After the Catalan Elections of December 21st:

How do we Escape the "Groundhog Day" of the Catalan Elections? (Nuevo Curso)..... 6

Does Venezuela have a Future? (Nuevo Curso)..... 8

Working Class Struggles around the World

Working Class Struggles in the World from 1917 to 1923..... 11

Correspondence

What Attitude to Adopt in face of the Left Political Forces of the Bourgeoisie? 15

Debate within the Proletariat Camp

Debate on the Period of Transition between Capitalism and Communism:

Elements for a Criticism of the ICC Resolution on the Period of Transition

(Partito Comunista Internazionale – *Battaglia Comunista*, 1979)..... 17

Text of the Working Class Movement

What is to Replace the Smashed State Machine? (Lenin, 1917)..... 29

Call on Support

We thank our readers who understand and support our activity through written, material or financial contributions, as well as by other means. Publishing, printing and mailing costs of our review represent a large financial effort, given our limited resources.

The development towards decisive class conflicts, as well as our organization's overall activity (intervention in the class and regroupment...), all this demands, among other things, an important financial effort on our part. We appeal to all readers interested in our work, and the analyses that we defend, to show their support by subscribing and by getting the word out about our review, which is published in full version in English and French. We also publish a Spanish version with selected articles (any help with translations is also welcome).

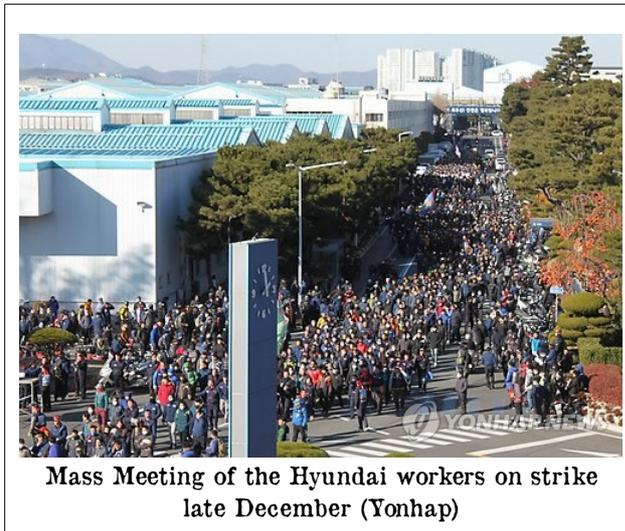
First Skirmishes of the Massive Confrontations between the Classes

As weak and limited as it may appear at first glance, the international dynamic of workers' struggles continues on all continents. Without being exhaustive, it is interesting to make a quick list of some of them in order to draw a vision and a general understanding. Greek workers went on a massive strike against Syriza's imposition of the austerity bill from the European Union. Similarly in Tunisia protests against unemployment and austerity spread throughout the country during the month of January. The masses of workers have not forgotten that such demonstrations led to the overthrow of Tunisian President Ben Ali. In Iran demonstrations erupted throughout the country at the end of December against unemployment and austerity measures. There were 3,500 arrests and three deaths. It was the same in many countries, from India, in Sudan to Iraqi Kurdistan ... In December, thousands of demonstrators clashed with the police around the Argentine parliament in Buenos Aires to prevent the adoption of a new "reform" against pensions. In January, in Korea Hyundai car workers rejected the agreement signed between management and the union and went on a wildcat strike. It was the same in gold mines in South Africa. At the announcement of the cuts at Carrefour, 28 supermarkets in Belgium went on wildcat strike on January 26.

Apparently less spectacular and without a doubt fully controlled and managed by the unions, the rolling strikes launched by the IG Metall union in the German metal industry are very indicative of both the strengths and weaknesses of the proletariat today as well as of its dynamic of resistance to capital. After the important and numerous strikes of these preceding years in transportation, rail and aviation mainly, the fact that the IG Metall union was obliged to launch such a movement with apparently "radical" demands (28 hours work week) expresses that the unions are today constrained, including in Germany, to occupy the "social" ground to confront the workers' increasing discontent and combativity and to nip in the bud any real struggle against capitalism and the ruling class. As we wrote in *RoW* # 8 in "an imperialist power

like France there are more than 270 strikes every day involving tens of thousands of proletarians (...) and this is the case for all the big imperialist powers with 150 to 300 strikes from a few proletarians to several thousand." While most of these strikes are tightly controlled by the unions, they nevertheless show that the working class is not ready to submit to the attacks of the capitalists and their state against their living and working conditions. This reveals the historical tendency towards massive confrontations between classes, which does not mean that it leads us to an inevitable victory of the proletariat. Indeed, worker militancy alone will not be enough if it is not accompanied by a political will to thwart the traps of trade unions and bourgeois left parties and prepare for massive confrontations against the capitalist state. Working class combativity and class consciousness are indispensable. The absence of an internationalist and international party is one of the factors that may considerably weaken the proletariat and may prevent its victory.

These struggles slow the austerity measures and delay the world war between the imperialist blocs. On the other hand, it would be a mistake to believe that the present struggles are only an economic nature. Every day, during each struggle, proletarians become conscious of the limits of their struggle, of the sabotage by the unions and left-wing parties that prevent a frontal struggle against the capitalist states. The abstention of the proletarians of Catalonia during the referendum, the failed strikes of the Catalan nationalists who could not rally the majority of the workers, as well as the lack of support for the Spanish bourgeoisie are facts which show that the proletariat is not ready to engage in one of the two



Mass Meeting of the Hyundai workers on strike late December (Yonhap)

nationalist camps to defend its ruling class. Let's recall the *Telefónica* strike in 2015. The proletarians saw an alliance between management and collaborationist unions that simply wanted to put an end to the independent organization they had themselves created and through which they fought for their demands, in contrast with the policy of concessions that unions are familiar with.

These struggles postpone the decisions of the imperialist blocs towards a world war. These imperialist powers have to “content themselves” with local wars to defend their interests. These local wars and the austerity measures are vain attempts of a capitalist system in complete decadence to attenuate the effects of the 2008 crisis. Crisis which has not only disastrous economic effects but also forces the national bourgeoisies to politically re-orientate themselves, as in the United Kingdom with the Brexit, in France with Macron, in the US with Trump and in various countries of East Europe.

This situation also has effects among the elements of the proletariat. It favours the appearance of new communist voices in the world. We therefore salute Workers' Offensive in the US and Nuevo Curso in Spain (see the following article).

In the October 2017 issue of *Intransigence* #1, Workers' Offensive writes that *“In light of the advanced state of rot of the present society and the urgency of the threat that it poses, the primary task of those of us who call ourselves “militants” can only be to regroup around a set of core principles to constitute ourselves as a political organization capable of participating in the struggles of the class. Such an organization would also be tasked with preparing the material and organizational means of struggle, engaging in a theoretical appraisal of the system to better fight against it, and putting forward the interests of workers against those of their exploiters in every situation. It will take an uncompromising stance against every faction of the exploiting class, not excluding its “left - wing” foot - soldiers, exposing them before workers and demonstrating to the latter how they collude with the enemy and sabotage their struggles.”*

As for Nuevo Curso, in four months, thanks to its activity and dynamism, it sets itself in its own way, active, open and non-sectarian, in an original

approach, in the fight which consists of gathering and focusing all of the revolutionary forces around the positions and the debates of the Communist Left and its material expressions, political groups, and circles.

The following writings by Rosa Luxemburg in *The Mass Strike* are as relevant as ever :

“The social democrats [the Communist groups of today] are the most enlightened, most class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat. They cannot and dare not wait, in a fatalist fashion, with folded arms for the advent of the “revolutionary situation,” to wait for that which in every spontaneous peoples’ movement, falls from the clouds. On the contrary, they must now, as always, hasten the development of things and endeavour to accelerate events. This they cannot do, however, by suddenly issuing the “slogan” for a mass strike at random at any odd moment, but first and foremost, by making clear to the widest layers of the proletariat the inevitable advent of this revolutionary period, the inner social factors making for it and the political consequences of it. If the widest proletarian layer should be won for a political mass action of the social democrats, and if, vice versa, the social democrats should seize and maintain the real leadership of a mass movement – should they become, in a political sense, the rulers of the whole movement, then they must, with the utmost clearness, consistency and resoluteness, inform the German proletariat of their tactics and aims in the period of coming struggle”.

Revolutionaries and the most conscious workers cannot shirk their responsibility: to face the stakes of the situation; group together to clarify them collectively; to proclaim and convince that there is no way out of the crisis and the war of capital if it is not destroyed; to be able to intervene and politically guide the inevitable class fights.

Normand, February 3rd 2018.

New Communist Voices :

Nuevo Curso (Spain) and Workers' Offensive (United States)

The evolution of the revolutionary and proletarian camps – the latter more directly linked to the International Communist Left – is also an expression of the evolution of the historic balance of forces between the bourgeois and the proletarian classes, even if it is not the direct and mechanical product and knows its own contradictory dynamics. In their turn, the revolutionary political forces, as the highest – or most developed – expressions of class consciousness, intervene, also, certainly in an indirect and non mechanical way, on

the development of the class struggle. They are, like the workers' struggles themselves, a product and an active factor. Not because today they would directly affect workers' struggles – this still happens only in rare exceptions and within very constrained limits – but in so far as they are able to defend and reaffirm class positions – especially class autonomy vis-à-vis the bourgeois state and proletarian internationalism in the face of nationalisms and imperialist wars – to define and advance a general understanding of the historical situation – in relation to the historical

alternative revolution or war – and to present concrete orientations for the most significant struggles in the direction of their extension and unification against state forces and the capitalist class. As such, these political class positions become material elements of the confrontation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and the evolution of their balance of power.

In this sense, the appearance of new communist voices such as *Nuevo Curso* in Spain (www.nuevocurso.org) or *Workers' Offensive* in the United States (www.workersoffensive.org/) confirms, according to us, that the international proletariat as revolutionary class tends also to equip itself with political tools, political groups and in the future the world communist party, that it needs for the massive confrontations to come.

Nuevo Curso is a blog of comrades that began publishing since late September regular statements on the situation and on wider, indeed theoretical, questions. Unfortunately, their blog is only in Spanish. All the positions that it defends are very clearly class ones and are within the programmatic framework of the Communist Left. It does not define itself as a political group and distinguishes between the “contingent vanguards” (of which it is part) and the “historical vanguards” (the political groups of the Communist Left). These categories and the comrades' approach do not correspond, at least formally, with our “own categories”, political groups, discussion circles or still “intermediary organs” (see *RoW* #8), etc. For all that, we are very positively impressed not only by their uncompromising reminder of class positions, but above all by the “Marxist quality” of the comrades' texts and their capacity of analysis and orientation in the course of events and situations: Spain and Catalonia of course, but also the proletarian demonstrations in Iran, the imperialist rivalries with the question of North Korea, or still Venezuela and Chavism... or even a history of the Communist Left in Spain that we particularly recommend.

For the most part, the same goes for the group *Workers' Offensive*, which publishes *Intransigence*. Unlike *Nuevo Curso*, it calls itself a political group. Nevertheless, its basic positions, which set themselves within the programmatic framework of the Communist Left, remain relatively more incomplete according to us. In particular, there is no mention in them of the class consciousness, “the role of the revolutionaries”, and the question of the party as “organ of political leadership” – even though the editorial of *Intransigence* #1 deals clearly with this question. It denounces particularly and brilliantly the ideology and the political bourgeois forces of the

Left on questions that are rarely tackled so far such as *Capital's Health Dilemma* or the use of the “racial identities” in the name of anti-racism, *The Dead-End of Racial Identity Politics*.

We also want to call the attention to the journal *A Free Retriever's Digest* which gather the articles of the revolutionary press that the editors think the most interesting. Apparently without other ambition than this one, the journal provides a point of reference for the debates and the disagreements that exist within the international revolutionary camp.

Without prejudging their fate and future impact on the revolutionary and proletarian camps, they are new experiences that we will follow with attention and interest. As far as our possibilities and in relation to our political priorities, we'll attempt to participate in making them known to the greatest number at the international level. One of the two political orientations at the foundation of our group is to gather and focus all of the revolutionary forces around the positions and the debates of the Communist Left and its material expressions, political groups and circles, and more particularly around its main component today, the Internationalist Communist Tendency. In a few months, thanks to their activity and dynamism, *Nuevo Curso* and *Workers' Offensive* effectively inscribed themselves in this fight, with an original approach, especially for the first, in an active, open, and non-sectarian way.

The increasingly acute contrasts that the capitalist world is passing through exert also their effects on the revolutionaries. The proletarian camp and more particularly the Communist Left are obviously affected by the first pre-seismic tremors of the massive confrontations between the classes. Under the historical constraints, some forces such as the ICC¹, which held its 22nd congress, and because of its own contradictions, become petrified mummies. In the reverse direction, new forces and generations are appearing. The future and the past. It is a challenge for the groups of the Communist Left that remain dynamic such as the ICT and ourselves.

RL, February 2018

1 . It is quite possible that we will have to make a historical assessment of this organization in one of our next issues inasmuch as its last congress certainly sanctioned the disappearance of all proletarian vitality in this organization. Let us note in passing for our readers that no presentation or report of the 22nd Congress is made by the ICC. Nobody will know why, nor what political differences, have made a situation in which the international central organ of this organization found itself in minority on its report of activities after many most ridiculous vicissitudes. Let's move on. All this does not have much importance for the proletariat, nor for the proletarian camp.

International Situation

The Situation in Spain and the Catalan Question

The question of Catalan separatism has been the focus of international attention throughout the fall of 2017. At the time of writing, the question is not resolved for all the fractions of the Spanish bourgeoisie after the December 21st Catalan elections, which renewed a pro-independence parliamentary majority. We cannot provide here a detailed analysis of the particular difficulties with which the Spanish ruling class is confronted. The historical weaknesses and particular contradictions of each national bourgeoisie re-emerge because of the growing pressures exerted by the various economic, imperialist, and political effects of the economic crisis of 2008. It is clear that the Spanish ruling class is in turn directly confronted with the need to adapt its state apparatus. The upheavals and reconfigurations of the political apparatuses, including teams and personalities, are everywhere imposing, as shown by the last French and German elections – not to mention the Brexit and the Trump election.

The following three texts provide, it seems to us, some analytical elements, albeit incomplete, which may help to reflect on the particular issues confronting Spanish capitalism. But above all, it was necessary to warn the working class against the attempts to enlist it behind the flag of a Catalan Republic, and later against the opposing ones calling it to protest for "the unity of Spain" both in Catalonia and the whole country. Indeed, unlike other manifestations of nationalism in Europe, especially in Eastern Europe, Catalan nationalism has the historical particularity of not being right or far-right, but presenting itself as left-wing ; even as far-left with the CUP, which is a member of the Catalan parliamentary bloc; and anti-monarchical and pro-republican. Thus, on October 3, the main Catalan political forces and the main unions, including far-left and anarchist CNT called the workers to strike in support of independence. The situation thus presented the danger of seeing more or less important parts of the proletariat allowing itself be dragged onto the bourgeoisie's ground in direct or indirect nationalist clashes.

The communiqué (below) that we published on October 13, 2017 introduces the position of the British group of the Internationalist Communist Trend (www.leftcom.org): the CWO. We have no place to reproduce it here (the reader can find it on our site: <http://igcl.org/Communique-on-the-Situation-in>). The position of the CWO warns the proletarians against any participation in a nationalist camp in the name of proletarian internationalism. Rather than producing "our own" position, it seemed to us more useful that the communist forces speak with one voice on this occasion even if we do not quite agree with the hypothesis of the article that "local assemblies [could] reflect sparks of working class self-organisation". Indeed, to believe that a "movement" on a bourgeois and nationalist ground could turn into a class movement because workers would be "self-organized" in their workplace is a dangerous illusion and shows a tendency towards fetishization of self-organization that the Italian Communist Left had fought in its day against Gramsci. And even more is it politically confused and dangerous to believe that revolutionaries can "intervene effectively in events like the strike in Catalonia to push the struggle beyond the control of trade unions and institutional parties" as if it was a real class movement "simply" controlled and contained by the unions while instead it is a "bourgeois nationalist movement". In this case, the revolutionaries "have nothing to push" but everything to denounce and must call on the workers to break with this terrain and this movement. We hope to discuss and clarify this with ICT.

The second text is the statement of the Spanish blog Nuevo Curso (www.nuevocurso.org) that we precede by our introduction. It follows the result of the December 21st elections which renewed the Catalanist majority to the Generalitat (the parliament of Catalonia), to the great displeasure of Mariano Rajoy's Spanish government. This result expresses the failure of his Partido Popular, descended from Franco's regime, and the contradictions and weaknesses of Spanish capitalism. However, the emergence of the new party, Ciudadanos, and its electoral success to the detriment of the PP, announces that the clear-sighted fractions of the Spanish bourgeoisie prepare to get rid of the old political apparatus to the benefit of a new staff. Is not Rivera, the Ciudadanos' leader, already presented as the Spanish Emmanuel Macron?

January 17th 2017

Communiqué on the Situation in Spain and Catalonia (October 13th 2017)

How far can the nationalist conflict between Madrid and Barcelona lead? Up to a new 1936? What are the stakes and the risks for the proletariat in Spain and Catalonia? And for the international proletariat? The article of the Internationalist Communist Tendency (www.leftcom.org) that we reproduce hereafter states the position that the working class must adopt in this circumstance by reaffirming the communist principle according to which “workers have no country”. The proletariat in Catalonia must not let itself be dragged and divided between Catalan and Spanish nationalisms. The proletariat in Spain must not let itself be dragged into the defence of “the indissoluble unity of Spain”; nor even behind the banner, these days often waved in the streets of Madrid, of a Spanish Republic whose hands are not less stained of workers’ blood, the 3000 miners murdered in the Asturias in 1934 being its highest accomplishment, than the present democratic monarchy. Don’t forget that the current democratic monarchy was directly set up by Franco. Once more, as in 1936-1939, it would be the proletarians who would pay the highest price.

The present situation can result in a new farce of the Catalan petty bourgeois nationalism after that of October 6th 1934, when the President of the *Generalitat de Catalunya* Lluís Companys declared, already then, the independence of a Catalan Republic against “the Monarchist and Fascist forces” (see *El País*, October 7th 2017). This Republic lasted only ten hours. Or rather, more seriously, it could lead in time to a genuine bloody confrontation like precisely 1936. “Technically” if so we can say, the nationalist and democratic forces are already lined up on either side for such an outcome. Now, it is not guaranteed that in such a case, the other European and international ruling classes – whether they are conscious or not is secondary – would not allow the situation to deteriorate. Given the present situation of the capitalist world, that is its present economic (like the ICT recalls) and historical contradictions, the necessity and the perspective of a confrontation with the international proletariat to inflict it a series of historical defeats, become increasingly pressing so as to open up the path towards the generalized war in a manner that suits the interests of the ruling classes. And we can’t exclude that some fractions of the bourgeoisie among the most enlightened of the

present historical stakes do not consider a “remake” of the 1936 Spanish bloodbath and the proletarian ideological, political and physical defeat of that time, which definitively cleared the road to the 2nd World War.

That is why the apparently relative massive participation of the workers to the October 3rd general strike in Catalonia “against the Spanish repression” called by the whole unions, including the leftist and Anarchist CGT and CNT, is a bad sign. That is why the active presence and the nationalist radicalism of the leftist Catalanist group CUP is dangerous, as is the apparently “mediator” position of the leftist Spanish group Podemos, which calls for a new referendum and to the dismissal of Rajoy’s government “to safeguard the homeland unity”. In Spain and Catalonia, the workers have no illusion on Mariano Rajoy’s class policy, nor on the King who “went off his reservation” to support the first one, and they don’t forget their direct filiation with Francoism. Both are unable to convince them to engage for the defence of nationalism and republican democracy. But actually once more the left forces called “radical” can do it : Podemos, CUP, Catalunya en Comú of the Barcelona Mayoress, the unions CGT, CNT, CCOO, etc.

If this workers participation would be confirmed as it has been October 3rd, it would enable the whole Spanish (including the Catalan) ruling class to engage even more in the nationalist confrontation. Moreover, since this conflict does not develop in a “peripheral” country such as the Kurdistan, where the Kurdish nationalists supported by a great part of the international leftism and Anarchism are for sure going to suffer a bloody massacre, a new “Spanish war” would mean a first historic defeat of an important fraction of the European proletariat. It would mean that the international bourgeoisie absolutely wants to open **now** the path towards the generalized imperialist war. In this sense, Catalonia today would be a kind of 1936 “remake”, with the difference that it would be the first defeat and not the last of a series. The alternative *Revolution or generalized War* would not be resolved by this single event, but the capitalist option, war, would score a first point in the massive confrontations between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat which are opening up at the international level.

The IGCL, October 13th 2017.

Catalan Elections of December 21st 2017

We publish below the statement of the group in Spain Nuevo Curso (<http://nuevocurso.org/elecciones-catalanas/>) after the elections to the Catalan Parliament. Their result has renewed the political configuration that the Madrid government wanted to “decapitate” (in the words of the vice-president of the government) through the dissolution of the former Catalanist Parliament and government. Despite the unprecedented participation, 82%, which was to mobilize those opposed to independence, the “non-Catalans” living for the most part in the main Catalan cities, the “independence” bloc got 47% of the votes and the parliamentary majority. The other landmark of these elections has a national value : it is the electoral success of the Catalan branch of the new party Ciudadanos, right-wing and fiercely anti-independence, and the total collapse of the Partido Popular of Mariano Rajoy in power in Madrid, which received only 4% of the vote. The Catalan question reveals blatantly the inadequacy of the political apparatus and even of the Monarchist Constitution stemming from the Franco regime in the face of the new challenges with which the Spanish bourgeoisie, like its European counterparts, is confronted today. And the success of Ciudadanos to the detriment of the PP in Catalonia shows the path that more and more fractions of the Spanish ruling class intend to take and the fact that the political reconfiguration that has affected many European bourgeoisies is now underway in Spain.

Since the Catalan referendum of October 1st and the nationalist strike of the 3rd, the comrades of Nuevo Curso have made various internationalist statements denouncing both nationalisms, the Spanish and Catalan, with which we not only share the position of principle but also largely the analysis of the immediate situation. The same goes for the one we reproduce below.

We want to emphasize and especially support the comrades when they affirm that the fact the proletariat in Catalonia, both Catalan and non-Catalan, did not globally and massively commit behind one side or the other, is one of the factors that explain the inability of the catalanistas as well as the “españolistas” to increase conflict by several degrees as the stalemate continues; that is to say, to the point of confrontations with the Spanish state or between opposed nationalists, in the streets, as could have been feared after the violent repression of October 1st. At least until today. And despite its passivity as a class, “as independent political subject”, and its unprecedented participation in the December 21st elections, which expresses its submission to the ideology of bourgeois democracy. This vision, to say the truth this method of analysis of the situation that puts in the centre the taking into account the relation of forces between the classes, the class struggle and the very dynamic of the working class struggle – including when it is very weak if not seemingly fully absent – is essential to be able to understand the real stakes of the situation; above all when the question of war comes up.

As a result, it is quite secondary to point out that we don't fully share their vision of Catalan nationalism when they reduce it to the desperate petty bourgeoisie. It is true that the Catalan nationalism is historically strongly impregnated by features peculiar to the petty bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, there is a fraction, or even fractions, of the Catalan bourgeoisie whose interests are mainly identified with Catalonia and less with Spain as a whole ; even to the point of being opposed to the latter. The general crisis of capitalism exacerbates the rivalries also at the national level and Barcelona has seen its rival Madrid clearly taking the lead economically since the 2008 crisis. From this point of view too, it is possible that Ciudadanos, set up in Catalonia, not related to Francoism, and anti-Catalan as is the PP, may represent a bourgeois alternative to regain balance and overcome this antagonism that is destructive for Spanish capitalism as a whole.

The International Group of the Communist Left, December 22nd 2017.

How do we escape the “Groundhog Day” of the Catalan Elections? (Nuevo Curso)

No Parliamentary party is going to defend us from being crushed by exploitation, from more precarious jobs or from social exclusion. It is not a matter of language or country, it is a matter of class. To leave the “groundhog day” in which the Spanish bourgeoisie and the Catalan pro-independence petty bourgeoisie live, we have to abandon any idea of the nation, the “people” and “citizenship”.

1) Catalan elections were held yesterday. The participation rate was unusually high. The independence movement gave its all and won 50,000 more votes. The “Unionists” threw themselves into

an open grave to mobilise working-class neighbourhoods and managed to drag thousands of normally abstaining workers to the polls. The final balance has been a blow to the Spanish bourgeoisie. Puigdemont, has happily declared from Brussels: “the Spanish state has been defeated”. And it is true: overturning the result using the preventive detention of elected pro-independence candidates would only serve to undermine the legitimacy of the Spanish state still further. Using Article 155 [which suspended the regional government and led to this election – translator] again in three months, as suggested by the Popular Party candidate, Albiol, would be even worse. But the pro-independence

petty bourgeoisie does not have the capacity to go beyond its fake independence. To say that its victory will serve "to make the republic a little more real" No Parliamentary party is going to defend us from being crushed by exploitation, from more precarious jobs or from social exclusion. It is not a matter of language or country, it is a matter of class. To leave the "groundhog day" in which the Spanish bourgeoisie and the Catalan pro-independence petty bourgeoisie live, we have to abandon any idea of the nation, the "people" and "citizenship".

1) Catalan elections were held yesterday. The participation rate was unusually high. The independence movement gave its all and won 50,000 more votes. The "Unionists", as Rovira, the ERC [Catalan Republican Left] candidate, has done, makes it clear. What his statements demonstrate, alongside those of Albiol and Puigdemont, is the impotence of both parties in either imposing their solution or winning each other over. Neither the Spanish bourgeoisie nor the Catalan petty bourgeoisie know how to get out of the "groundhog day" which they have got themselves into.

2) What we are seeing in Catalonia is no different to what happens in many other places, inside and outside of Spain. After ten years of crisis, the bourgeoisie does not know how to satisfy or contain the petty bourgeoisie. This class, which is normally its panegyrist and its ally, is today a force without a compass, reactionary and utopian at the same time, pure poison for the workers and a new centrifugal force for the national bourgeoisie and the state. Everywhere the bourgeoisie has less and less capacity to contain an increasingly reactionary and utopian petty bourgeoisie, venomous for workers and a danger to the state.

3) In the current phase of the class movement, workers do not yet exist as an independent political subject. The whole "process" [towards independence] has attempted, at one time or another, to take advantage of that absence, and tried to drag us behind one banner or another. So far without great success. This failure of both parties to impose their patriotic framework has been very important. The only options that the independence movement had in escalating the conflict was to show its ability to set the agenda, and to get an imperialism opposed to the Franco-German axis (Great Britain? USA?), to commit to its cause, thus forcing the Spanish state to accept defeat or start a war. Their model at this point, as they have already said many times, was the Slovenian or the Croatian one. That is, having accepted the framework of one side or the other, we would probably have been led to sacrifice ourselves on the altars of both countries.

4) The mobilisation and pressure to get workers to vote in these elections has been the only notable success of the Spanish bourgeoisie. To achieve this, their political representatives had to break an old taboo that was part of the "Catalan consensus", that is to say of the "social contract" between the Spanish bourgeoisie and the Catalan petty bourgeoisie: to denounce the cultural and linguistic oppression suffered by the vast majority of workers [who don't speak Catalan – translator]. It was a risky bet: the coincidence between class and language is too close for it not to be. At the same time the independence movement has not been able to set the agenda as the strike of October 3 seemed to promise it would. The vote by definition demands so little commitment that it is secret and, on the other hand, we have not seen great expressions of real enthusiasm in the streets.

And now?

There is no doubt that many workers voted for Ciutadens [Catalan version of the pro-business party, Ciudadanos – translator] yesterday as a way to show their distaste for the Catalan petty bourgeoisie supporters of independence denial of the existence of the Spanish-speaking workers – who are the great majority in areas of high industrial concentration – a denial that the recent struggle for independence has exacerbated. But in that rabid denial, linguistic and cultural aspects are only the tip of the iceberg. "National" or linguistic division, "identities" and the "sense of belonging" are just attempts to exclude us and divide us by generating a stupid sense of superiority in that increasingly desperate petty bourgeoisie. At bottom, their continual attack is no different from anything that Ciutadens and all the other parties advocate in their economic programmes and carry out where they are in government. **It's not a question of language or nation, it's a class issue.**

Many workers in Catalonia may realise that now. But things are not going to be easy. The bourgeoisie in all its national forms and flavours wants us to feel defeated, and they will bombard us with defeatism in the coming days, weeks and months. Only one thing could make a difference. The emergence, not only in Catalonia, but throughout Spain, of independent struggles that, however localised or "small" they may seem, make it possible for the class to fight under its own banner, and nourish a conversation beyond the bounds of the nation, the "people" and being "citizens".

Nuevo Curso, 22 December 2017

(We thank the comrades of the CWO-ICT for the translation of the Nuevo Curso text. To read their introduction to this statement : <http://www.leftcom.org/en/articles/2017-12-24/catalonian-election-another-example-of-a-capitalist-impasse>).

Does Venezuela have a future ? (Nuevo Curso)

The statement by Nuevo Curso on Venezuela is remarkable because it provides a rapid history of the very specific capitalist development of this country until the present time. From a thorough and argued Marxist point of view, it destroys the mystification about Chavism maintained by all kinds of leftism around the world. To our admittedly limited knowledge neither the Venezuelan section of the ICC, nor that of the ICP-Communist Programme, has done such work.

One question, including for ourselves since our basic positions can lead to defending the same point of view : “Venezuela is the sad demonstration of the impossibility of an independent development of national capitalism in the period of imperialism”. What about China or still India in the last twenty years? We have no difficulty to humbly acknowledge that, for our part, we have no response for the moment. Thus it is to be debated and clarified...

The history of Venezuela as an independent country can be summarized by the first graphic on the GDP. Independence was not achieved by a bourgeoisie anxious to create an internal market by means of national liberation. In reality it was the result of an alliance between British capitalism, at a time when it was anxious to open up foreign markets, and the agrarian classes produced by the Spanish monarchy. Far from developing a booming capitalism, the history of the first century of Venezuelan independence is that of the decadence of the old mode of production, accentuated by new frontiers and dependence on the British. Finally, in the 1920s, Venezuela entered the sphere of North American imperialism as an oil supplier. At this moment its economy passed into dependence on cycles of demand – expansion of the US car market, world wars, crisis, etc. – and the price of oil with all its speculative derivatives.

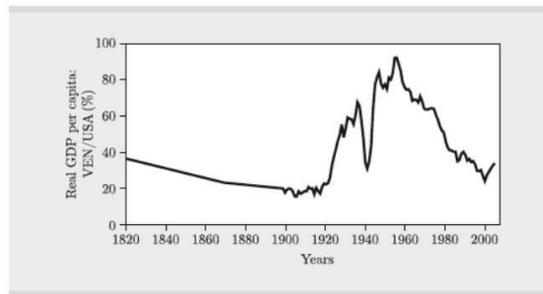
Generally, peripheral countries, weak in the face of the world market, benefited from state capitalism which served to align the old agrarian classes towards export markets, but also, to create a certain national capital that, subsidized by the export sector and protected by tariffs, developed the domestic market. These were Latin America’s golden years. In 1948 Peron built the first motorway in Argentina, from the capital to the airport; in his turn in 1953 Perez Jimenez built a motorway from the capital to the airport. In 1953, months before the suicide of Getulio Vargas, the first Brazilian motorway was built from Sao Paulo to Campinas, the location of the first airport of the economic capital of the country. It

is no accident that these structural developments resembled each other. What commodities were transported by air in the 1950s? In the same way as the railways in Britain brought raw materials to British ships from the interior of the country in the early part of the century, the first South American motorways connected their capitals to the new type of ports in which international finance capital arrived.

This model peaked in practically the whole continent in the second half of the fifties when exports stagnated. The definitive shock came with the end of the post-war reconstruction period

of the central capitalist countries at the end of the sixties. The importance of oil and the price increase imposed by OPEC in 1973 [1] masked at first the deficiencies of a capitalism that had had a miserable rate of profit of 17%, but the truth is that productivity was already falling (see the second graphic next page) and has not stopped falling since then. The reason: the value created in the oil sector and distributed to the rest of the economy. Therefore the relation between newly employed labour and the value created by it had already gone down by 40% from 1957 to the end of Chavez’s life. It is not a question of governments or ideologies. It is simply the verification of one of the main contributions of Rosa Luxemburg: in the imperialist era there is no possibility of independent national capitalist development in a peripheral country. Unable to produce more value per worker, the Venezuelan state attempts to maintain social cohesion by keeping the masses employed since it doesn’t know what else to do with them. It is the “rentier model” which drives

Figure 1. Relative GDP per capita in Venezuela



Source: Maddison (2010).

Change in GDP from 1820 to 2000

dependence on oil prices to the limit.

After the end of the development model of the 50s, the benefits of the rate of exploitation began to fall at an almost constant level. This is what explains the well-known turn towards “neoliberalism” since the devaluation of the bolivar in 1983. Using the recipes of the IMF, Venezuelan capital recovered profitability by the end of the 1990s. Economic stagnation feeds political crisis, fostering a change in political debate and internal reorganisation. In 1999 Chavez came to power. “Chavismo” became famous for its rhetoric and its “social” projects but survives until now for its ability to give Venezuelan national capital a way out. Its struggle against the sectors anchored in the old and unsustainable model, the so-called “Bolivarian revolution”, is in its favour precisely because of that. In the hour of truth, during the coup of 2002, the petit bourgeoisie and a significant part of the Venezuelan bourgeoisie, declared themselves for “el Comandante” because they already saw the results of political change. The “change” that consolidated Chavismo was the recovery, for the first time since the 1950s, of the rate of profit, which accompanied the redistribution of income at the expense of labour.

From then on, the reorganisation of the state apparatus and above all of the PDVSA, consolidated its own faction in the national capital, a characteristically chavismo “bolibourgeoisie” that would be the support of the regime during all these years. Paradoxically the reorganisation that followed the 2002 coup would have costs for capital by disorganising oil exploitation, and driving away that part of the petty bourgeoisie linked to the technical aspects of production.

Chavismo, moved by the very factions of state capitalism that it had strengthened and even created it, redoubled its commitment to the centrality of oil as the only viable engine of the national economy.

The non-oil exporting sector became moribund and a social cohesion policy was tried to guarantee a mixture of direct rents to the sectors excluded from a production process that did not know how to absorb them in a productive way amid a growing authoritarianism.

But from the point of view of capital, that is, its profitability, the model continued to work with

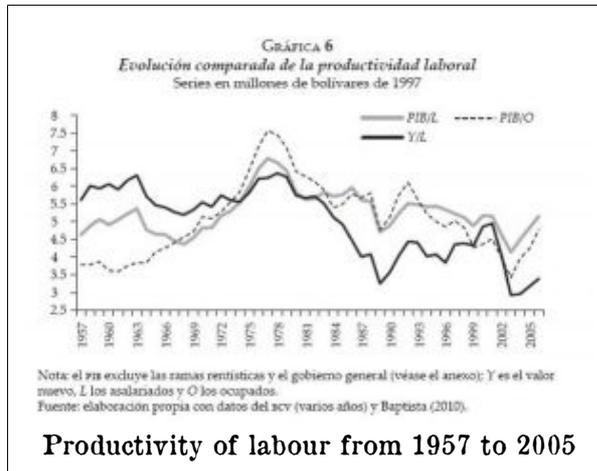
optimal results while oil prices continue to rise.

Just 15 months after Chávez's death in June 2014, international oil prices plummeted. The regime could not help but collapse, unable to maintain basic cohesion within the different bourgeois factions and more and more fearing a social revolt. In 2015, Chavismo lost the parliamentary elections. Then began an increasingly violent political battle between the two poles of the Venezuelan bourgeoisie – the Chavez camp and its opposition – that reached its zenith in the summer of 2017. The battle was settled with an official victory and the consolidation of the power of a National Constituent “Assembly” (ANC) representing all the Chavista supporters with dictatorial powers.

The strategy of Maduro and the ANC has been

focused up to now on saving the state from bankruptcy by increasing its dependence on Russian and Chinese capital. One of its first measures was to modify the “Organic Law on Hydrocarbons” to eliminate the minimum 50% of state participation in mixed projects. This disguised privatization of PDVSA, whose central body is already very undercapitalised, was the basic requirement of Rosneft (an alliance of Russian capital and British Petroleum) to enter the Orinoco basin. Privatization was then extended to all mining, in response to Chinese demands. The Venezuelan ANC of Maduro this summer privatised oil and mining at the demand of Russian and Chinese capital in order to avoid state bankruptcy.

This line produces growing conflicts within Chavismo itself and, even though it tries to manage the bankruptcy of the state, it does not seem capable of avoiding the deepening of economic collapse or social decomposition. Everything the state tries in order to recover, such as increasing fuel prices, further aggravates the pauperisation of workers and the middle classes and alienates its own clientelist base. That is why its measures are apparently contradictory: freeing prisoners of the opposition but nationalising adverse capital groups, rationing fuel and raising the minimum wage by 40% (although the cumulative inflation of 2017 was 2.735%) ...What the “crisis of the ham” has shown is not only the zero credit available to Venezuelan agencies from abroad, but also the extreme fragility of a large part of the



population that lives in despair and whom the armed forces do not know how to contain or to provide with food.

This Christmas in Venezuela has been one of shortages: scarcity of food supplies, lack of cash to spend in shops, lack of basic services and even care in hospitals. Social decomposition is already savage. In 2017, Venezuela counted more than 26,000 murders almost 70% of the total casualties for all the Yugoslav wars of the 90s put together. Four of the most violent and dangerous cities in the world are in Venezuela ... do we need to continue?

Does Venezuela have a future ?

Venezuela is the sad demonstration of the impossibility of an independent development of national capital in the imperialist era; the material refutation of all the arguments in favour of "national liberation" in the periphery of the world market and the denial by brute facts of all the progressive illusions in state capitalism that have been sold to us for decades by the leftists as "socialism".

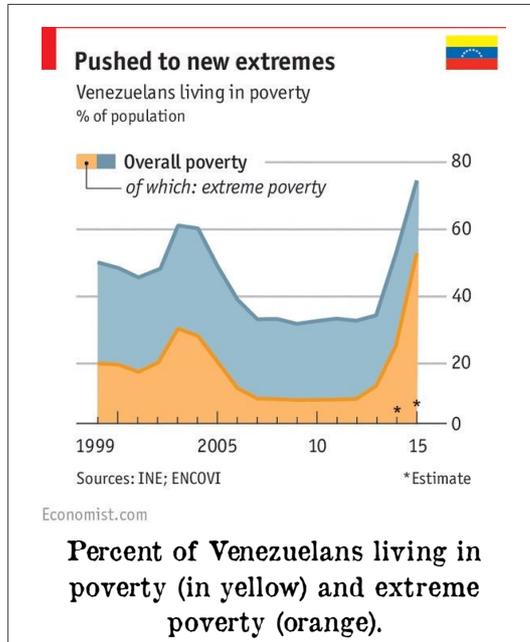
Today, capitalism in Venezuela has no other road

ahead than social decomposition, massive migrations and the authoritarian development of the state. The perspective of capitalism in Venezuela is that of a new failed state and dependent on this or that imperialism. For Venezuelan workers, the only way is to develop their struggle outside the Chavismo

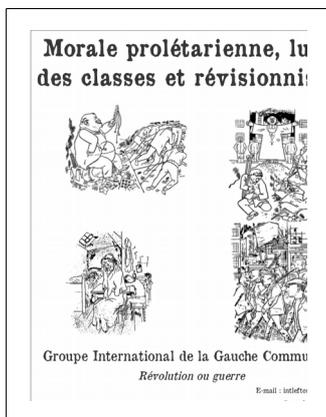
camp, or anti-Chavismo camp or any other bourgeois faction, to act for themselves just as the Kurdish and Iranian workers are doing and learn to become strong through autonomous struggle. Any confrontation that goes on in the name of the nation state, of the country, of Venezuela, even of the "great Latin American homeland" ... is condemned to be defeated again and again. More than any other reason because "the nation", the very impossibility of building an independent nation state in the current period, is the origin of the problem, the opposite of its solution, the barrier to be torn

down. In order to fight capitalist decomposition and those who continue to benefit from it, workers must break out of the jail of nationalism.

Nuevo Curso, January 1st 2018 (translated to English by the CWO)



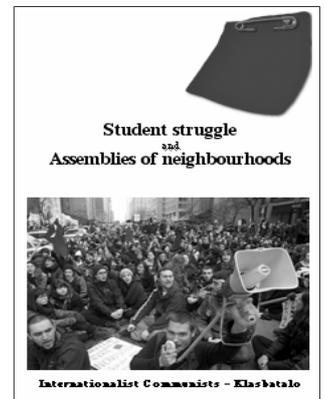
Proletariat Morality, Class Struggle and Revisionism



Against the opportunist theories of the International Communist Current of the years 2000... Read our pamphlet in French *Morale prolétarienne, lutte des classes et révisionnisme !*

Student Struggle and Assemblies of Neighbourhoods in Québec (2012)

(Internationalist Communists – Klasbatalo)



Working Class Struggles around the World

Working Class Struggles in the World from 1917 to 1923

The current situation of capitalism's crisis returns to the agenda the alternative revolution or war. The Russian October Revolution gives us the response to this alternative and that's what the media hide. Its lessons are still topical issues. The October Revolution was a response to the war. It was a conscious response guided by the world and historical course of the proletarian struggle.

The bourgeois media, supported by the Anarchists, claim that the 1917 October Revolution was a coup d'état. This theory of a putsch is contrary to the facts. Starting in February 1917, there were two governments in Russia. One was the Provisional Government of the capitalists and land owners, who wanted to re-establish the order and continue the war as well as not distribute the land to the peasants. The Western allies supported this government because it continued the war. The other government was the one of the workers' and soldiers' councils (soviets). It wanted to stop war and distribute the land to the peasants. The setting up of the soviets was a gain for the proletariat which had already set up soviet in St. Petersburg in 1906. Let us mention some facts from February to October 1917. Agrarian unrest had taken place all over Russia, going as far as the seizure of land and the burning of the land owners' houses. General insubordination in the army annihilated the old discipline. Kronstadt and the Baltic Sea fleet refused to obey the Provisional Government. The Soviet of Tashkent had taken power. On the Volga, an army of 40 000 men refused to obey. In Petrograd and Moscow and their suburbs, workers' red guards were forming. The Petrograd garrison had placed itself under the control of the soviets. Late April, there were armed demonstrations of workers and soldiers in Petrograd. The workers of the Putilov factory and of other districts of Petrograd were on near-permanent strike. In early July, they developed new, wider demonstrations with more revolutionary slogans. During these demonstrations, the Bolshevik party had an important role towards the masses, telling them to resist the bourgeoisie's provocation, which was hoping for a premature armed uprising. In his *April Theses*, Lenin explained to the masses that the soviets of workers' deputies were the only form of government. The working class, through its party, equipped the revolutionary movement with a

political leadership and an organization. Throughout the period from February to October 1917, the party gained the confidence of the masses, so that in September the majority of Mensheviks of the soviets passed peacefully to the Bolsheviks. This contradicts the putsch lies on the centenary of October.

Lenin, who on his return on April 3 did not address the leaders of the Petrograd Soviet dominated by the Mensheviks but the hundreds of workers and soldiers who flocked to the station, said: *"Dear comrades, soldiers, sailors and workers, I am happy to greet in you the victorious Russian revolution, to greet you as the advance guard of the international proletarian army ... The hour is not far when, at the summons of our comrade Karl Liebknecht, the people will turn their weapons against their capitalist exploiters ... The Russian revolution achieved by you has opened a new epoch. Long live the world wide socialist revolution!"* (quoted by Trotsky in its *History of the Russian Revolution* from the Menshevik Sukhanov Memoirs).

The 1917 October Revolution was part of the world revolution, as Lenin said in April 1917, and as the following incomplete report shows. It was the highest episode of the revolutionary process from 1917 to 1923 of *mass strike*, *"universal form of the proletarian class struggle resulting from the present stage of capitalist development and class relations"* as Rosa Luxemburg had recognized and defined in 1906. But it also was the product of a nascent international revolutionary wave and the first step towards an authentic world communist revolution. This wave ended the imperialist war and continued for several years. From 1917 to 1923, workers' and soldiers' councils (soviets) were created and great mass strikes took place everywhere in the world as indicated below.

As early as 1915 and 1916, strikes and demonstrations began to re-emerge, particularly in belligerent countries, heralding the beginning of the rejection of class collaboration and national unity for war. February 1917 and the fall of the Tsar in Russia are not just a Russian phenomenon. From the beginning of 1917, in many countries and on all continents, the international proletariat wakes up in factories and on the front against misery and war and accompanies the revolutionary process in Russia.

April 16th 1917, the Swedish city of Västervik is under control of a worker council, which imposes lower prices on the shopkeepers, while massive demonstrations take place throughout the country.

In France, in the middle of the war, despite the repression and hostility of the CGT union, the strike of the "midwives" in May 1917 comes to crown the rise of the workers' combativity since August 1914: from 17 strikes in 1914, through more than a hundred in 1915, up to 300 in 1916. There were 700 conflicts and 300,000 strikers in 1917 and the number of strikes was greater than in 1906 or 1910.

In May 1917, like within the Russian army, mutinies breaks out in the German and British armies and, above all, in the French army. "At their peak, they affect 68 divisions out of the 110 that compose the French army" (Wikipedia). September 9th 1917, at Étapes, there is another mutiny of the Scottish and Canadian soldiers within the British army.

August 1917, a mass strike, called "huelga general revolucionaria" (revolutionary general strike) spread throughout Spain at the call of the UGT and CNT. It is violently repressed: 70 killed and 2000 arrests.

August 2nd 1917, the Australian general strike begins in New South Wales (Australia). It lasted until September 8th and it remains so far the most important mobilization of the working class in the country.

But it is especially in Austria that the first event that directly verifies the prospects of extension of the revolution in Europe, on which the Russian Bolsheviks base their whole policy, takes place. "When, on January 14, 1918, the ration of flour was halved, the workers at Wiener Neustadt went on strike. The next day the strike spread to Ternitz, Wimpassing, Neuenkirchen, the Triesting Valley and St. Pölten. The movement spread wildly from one company to another, from one locality to another ... On January 16th, all the workers in Vienna went on strike. On 17 and 18 January, the industrial regions of Upper Austria and Styria were in turn affected by the movement. On January 18, it was the Hungarian workers who went on strike. The gigantic mass of

strikers, the fierce revolutionary passion of their mass assemblies, the election of the first workers' councils in the strike assemblies – all this gave the movement a grandiose revolutionary character and awakened among the masses the hope of being able to transform immediately strike into revolution, seize power, and impose peace." (The Austrian social

democratic leader Otto Bauer quoted by Roman Rodolski, *Die Osterreichische*

Revolution, [the Austrian Revolution], 1923).

Already on the 20th of December, Minister Czernin warned the Emperor Charles that "we cannot develop a foreign policy when starvation and the revolution burst out in the rear. [...]. If we continue in the current way, we will not fail in a short time to live circumstances that will not



**Mass Meeting during the January 1918
Mass Strike in Austria**

yield in any way to those that Russia knows ". A month later the Emperor wrote to him on January 17 "that the fate of the monarchy and the dynasty depends on a conclusion as soon as possible of peace in Brest-Litovsk. We cannot here reverse the situation for Courland, Lithuania and other Polish dreams. If peace does not come true, we will have the revolution here, even if there is a lot to eat. This is a serious instruction, in a serious situation."

Also in January 1918, the 19th, in Helsinki, Finland, is proclaimed the Socialist Republic of Workers, which will be crushed on April 13, 1918 by the white armies. Exactly at the same time, at least fourteen workers' councils were born between January 1918 and April 1918 in several cities in Norway including Bergen. In Ireland, on April 28, 1918, there is a general strike against the government. Also in January, in Barcelona, women workers revolt, protesting and striking against the cost of living.

The American continent is not spared. On March 28, 1918, riots against conscription began in Quebec, which lasted until April 2. There were four dead and several wounded. On the Pacific coast, August 2, 1918 Vancouver saw a general strike. This is the first general strike in Canadian history. In Rio de Janeiro on November 18, 1918, an anarchist insurgency was launched to follow the example of the Russian revolution. It was repressed and a state of emergency declared.

In Japan, July 23, 1918, began a series of "rice riots" against rising prices. The social unrest quickly degenerated into riots, strikes, looting, incendiary bombs thrown at police stations and administration offices, and finally into armed clashes. By mid-September 1918, more than 623 events had occurred in 38 major cities, 153 cities and 177 villages, with more than 2 million participants. Some 25,000 people were arrested, of whom 8,200 were convicted of various crimes, and their punishment ranged from minor fines to death.

In London, on August 16, 1918, the strike of the female workers of public transport takes place for wage equality with men. The strike extends to other cities like Hastings, Bath, Bristol, Southend and Birmingham on August 23rd. On November 9, 1918 in the Netherlands, at the very moment when the German sailors revolt, begins the "red week" as an attempt of socialist revolution.

And finally, as a logical and inevitable continuation of the international series of proletarian revolts, this generalized revolutionary perspective seems to come to fruition with the outbreak of the revolution in Germany in November 1918, the massive creation of workers' and soldiers' councils, the constitution of the Communist Party of Germany in December 1918 until the premature insurrection was annihilated in blood in January 1919 in Berlin – these events are better known and we do not present them here. The murder of thousands of proletarians and communist militants, and especially of the two leading figures of the Communist Party of Germany, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, by the Freikorps at the orders of the Social Democratic government of Ebert and Noske, does not signal the end of the international revolutionary wave, even if it marks a major setback to the international expansion of the revolution, thus reinforcing the isolation of revolutionary Russia.

In Great Britain, a strike for 40 hours a week began on January 30th 1919. In Glasgow, still in January, there was a tsunami of mutinies in Southwick, Folkestone, Dover, Osterley Park, Shortlands, Westerham Hill, Felixstowe, Grove Park, Shoreham, Briston, Aldershot, Kempton Park, Southampton Maidstone, Blackpool, Park Royal, Chatham, Fairlop et Biggin Hill, as well as in several London railway stations where troops refused to embark for Russia and France.

On March 21st 1919, the Republic of the workers councils of Hungary is declared. It was power until August 1919 when it too was bloodily suppressed. In Prešov, June 16th, it is the turn of the Council Republic of Slovakia to be declared. It is smashed July 7th by the Czechoslovakian army.

April 19th 1919, mutinies of French sailors in the Black Sea city of Sevastapol broke out on the cruiser *Le France*. They refused to fight the Bolsheviks. In June, a wave of strikes began in the Paris suburbs. The political demands had a dominant place. In the city of Saint-Denis, June 4th, the unionists made an assembly of 3000 strikers vote on a resolution specifying that "*the inter-union committee of Saint-Denis transforms itself into an executive committee of the soviet and addresses an ultimatum to the government to cede its power to the working class*".

February 5th 1919 in Spain, is launched the "*huelga de La Canadiense*" [The Strike of the *Canadiense*], a general strike which paralyzed 70% of the Catalan industry for 44 days and succeeded in obtaining the 8 hour working day. In Ireland, April 14th, a general strike in the city of Limerick set up a workers' council. As well, in Poland, hundreds of workers councils arose throughout the country. These councils gathered proletarians regardless of their gender and nationality.

The North American continent is not left out. In the United States, February 6, 1919, the general strike in Seattle would last until February 11. On September 21, 1919, another major steel strike in the United States continued until January 8, 1920. It affected the iron and steel plants of Pueblo, Chicago, Wheeling, Johnstown, Cleveland, Lackawanna, and Youngstown. In several states like Delaware, Indiana and Pennsylvania, the strike is brutally repressed (mass arrests, proclamation of martial law, etc.).

In Winnipeg, Canada, a citywide general strike broke out from May 15 to June 25, 1919. With tens of thousands of workers, it is one of the most influential strikes in the country's history. In 1919, at Kinnel Bay in North Wales (United Kingdom), Canadian soldiers mutinied, demanding their return to Canada and resisting any attempt to coerce them into imperialist interventions against Soviet Russia. The main actors in the mutiny would be executed by the military for openly declaring their solidarity with the proletarian revolution.

In Puerto Natales, Chile, inspired by the Paris Commune, the *Commune of Puerto Natales* was proclaimed on January 23rd 1919. It lasted several days.

In South Africa, in Johannesburg, an electricity and streetcar strike was declared in April 1919 in which the workers provided the service of the trams themselves under the control of a *Control Office* they had put in place for this purpose. The strike ended in a total victory for their demands.

In 1920, despite the growing isolation of Russia, the

defeats of the insurrections in Central Europe and the repression that went with them, the class struggles' intensity does not fall. In particular in Germany where, after the *Freikorps'* Kapp coup d'état and the general strike that defeated the coup, the creation of a red army 80 000 proletarians strong provokes the Rhur uprising which will finally be bloodily smashed after a month.

At the beginning of the year, February-March, a massive strike of the railroad workers is finally defeated in France while the labor unrest, demonstrations, strikes, repression, will continue until May.

But it is above all in Italy where the hopes for a new working class insurrection are felt the most. In Turin, March 29th 1920, all metallurgical factories went on strike in solidarity with the Fiat workers' strike. Factory councils are set up. The strike lasted until April 24th. In Ancona, on June 25th, soldiers refused to embark for Albania. The revolt transformed itself immediately into a popular uprising which from Ancona spread to other cities in the centre and north of the country.

The year 1921, although still experiencing massive and violent conflicts, marked a retreat of the international revolutionary perspective because of the bourgeoisie's capacity to both repress the proletariat and "offer" peace to exhausted populations and to great masses of the working class

still under the influence of the Social Democracy. It is only in Germany and Russia where the class struggle still remained intense. But overall, the isolation of Russia is felt including the weariness and the exhaustion of the Russian proletariat that is expressed in its strikes in Petrograd and which ended in the bloody repression in particular of the Kronstadt garrison by the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the Bolshevik party in March 1921. This drama signals and contributes to the international recession of the revolutionary wave that started early 1917. It took at least two more years for the process of *international and insurrectional mass strike* to run out with the fateful failure of the German October 1923 insurrection for rising Stalinism is largely responsible. The last expressions of this revolutionary wave extended until 1927 with the failure of the English general strike of May 1926, with up to 3 millions strikers and the country paralyzed, and with the bloody repression of the Chinese insurrection the following year.

Far from having been a putsch, the Russian Revolution was the highest expression of the international proletariat's revolt against capitalism and the imperialist war and of its aspiration to communism. The period from 1917-1923 was an international wave in which each new episode tended to respond to the previous and whose core was the revolution in Russia.

Normand

Pamphlets of ICKlasbatalo and the IFICC (orders at intleftcom@gmail.com)

- Student Struggle and Assemblies of Neighbourhood* (Internationalist Communists - Klasbatalo)
- La dégénérescence de l'IC : le PCF (1924-1927)* (International Fraction of the ICC, only in French)
- Groupe des Travailleurs Marxistes (Mexique, 1938)* (International Fraction of the ICC, only in French and Spanish)
- La question de la guerre (1935)* (International Fraction of the ICC, only in French)
- Morale prolétarienne, lutte de classes et révisionnisme* (IGCL from the IFICC, only in French and Spanish)
- Unions Against the Working Class* (1976, reprinted from the ICC Pamphlet).

Correspondence

Correspondence with a Reader :

Hello,

I was looking for other correspondences that you've sent me and I read this message again that you had sent me in May. Its conclusion questions me. There it is :

« That is why the striking point of these elections from the proletariat's point of view is the confirmation and a greater political preparation of a radical capitalist Left around Mélenchon. As it has already been the case during the 2016 Spring mobilization against the Labour Law, the France Insoumise around its leader and all the political and unions forces in its orbit, Nuit Debout, the Trotskyist, Stalinist, Anarchist groups, are getting ready to sabotage the coming working class struggles, by adopting the most radical language and by occupying all the domains of the class fight to distort them.

That is why the proletarians who are the most conscious of these traps and dead ends, and who wish to engage themselves in the extension and the unification of the class struggles against capitalism and its state, have to aim to regroup and organize to lead the political struggle against these forces and their sabotage all the more since these political forces already adopt, and will increasingly adopt, a radical, working class, and anti-capitalist image.»

Do you think you can unite the class struggle, seek to regroup and organize, excluding from the beginning and carrying the political struggle against "these forces and their sabotage," radical capitalist left ", Trotskyists, Stalinists, anarchists "? Is there a pure proletarian class ? I'm quite in agreement with your analysis of this " radical capitalist left around Mélenchon ". Nevertheless, as naive as it may appear (because I'm conscious of the shortcomings of my political knowledge), for me the proletarian class is all which is not the capitalist class. What is thus Mélenchon according to you ? " Sabotage " : voluntary/involuntary ? What does he play at ? On the other hand, I don't understand why you lump the Anarchists, Trotskyists, etc, together.

Soon, fraternally, V.

Our Response

The IGCL to the comrade V.

Dear comrade V.,

In the first place, we apologize for the delay of this answer. There are several points to address to answer your question. *"Do you think you can unite the class struggle, seek to regroup and organize, excluding from the beginning and carrying the 'political struggle against' these forces and their sabotage, 'radical capitalist left', 'Trotskyists, Stalinists, anarchists'?"* You ask us. There are two essential points in this critical interrogation to clarify:

- what is the unification of the class struggle;
- and if these political currents can act for this unification.

What is " the Unification of the Class Struggle " ?

The question of the unification of class struggle is not an abstract principle in itself. It responds to the need for the proletariat to impose, on the occasion of each struggle, a balance of power with capital and the bourgeois class in order to be able to defend, if

only minimally, its immediate interests and develop as much as possible its revolutionary perspective. Both, the defence of material interests and the development of the revolutionary perspective of confrontation with the capitalist state, are closely linked and "interactive" whatever the limits of the struggle itself and the immediate consciousness of the workers who participate in it; and that even in the revolutionary period. Concretely, it is a question of breaking the isolation of the workers' struggle, of seeking to extend it beyond the workplace, the enterprise, the corporation, the sector, etc., and even beyond the national framework when it arises, to be able to oppose with the greatest possible efficiency, depending on the situation, the capitalist state and the ruling class. In this sense the proletarian struggle is at the same time an economic and political struggle.

The unification of the class struggle does not therefore arise as a unification of political organizations, generally called "left", which claim - rightly or wrongly, we come back to it - its struggle and claim to speak on behalf of or to defend proletarian interests; but as a consolidation and unification of the workers themselves in the struggle.

Today, the bitter experience of the mobilizations of the preceding decades, which were all failures, both in France and in other countries, underlines the extent to which trade union unity and unity of left-wing forces are not synonymous with extension and unification of the workers' struggles, but rather with their division and powerlessness².

That is why we insist on the fact that the workers in struggle must take on the political confrontation against these union and political forces that, in fact, one way or another aim to prevent the extension and the unification of the fight. That is why we believe that the revolutionaries have an eminent and leading role to play in the political fight for the struggles' unification. By definition, they are among the clearest, if not the clearest, precisely because they are supposed to know the union and political forces that oppose the extension and the unification as well as to be theoretically, politically, and organizationally armed to understand and denounce the union and political traps and manoeuvres. That is ultimately why we struggle for the consolidation of the genuine communist forces and, as soon as possible of course, the formation of the world party of the proletariat.

The “ Left ” Political Forces against the Unification of the Class Fight

That being said, why do we denounce the so-called “ left ” political currents such as the *France Insoumise* of Melenchon, or still *Podemos* in Spain, *Die Linke* in Germany, *Syriza* in Greece, *Québec Solidaire* in Canada, to name but a few, and more generally the Stalinist, Trotskyist, or Anarchist political currents and the political organization³ that claim these currents ? Not because we would be incorrigible sectarians but because the experience of the struggles teaches us that these political currents and organizations always develop political orientations that oppose, in fact and in one form or another, the unification of the class fight and the confrontation against the capitalist state. It is enough to refer to their orientations, their support to the unions and their slogans during the last great working class mobilizations as in France of course (2003, 2007, 2010, and 2016) but also in all countries⁴. The main reason why they are unable,

independently of the sincerity and conviction of the individuals who are their members, to be within the camp of the fight for the class unification is historical. It is not “ we ” – the Communists – who decree that they are in the bourgeois camp but the historical experience.

There are two fundamental moments which determine the proletarian character of the political currents and organizations claiming the working class movement in regards with the genuine position they adopt and defend then : the imperialist war and the proletarian revolution. In August 1914, the international social-democratic current, the Second International, as a whole betrayed the principle of proletarian internationalism to the benefit of national unity for the First World War⁵ driving thus the majority of the large Socialist parties into class collaboration. Those parties and fractions of the 2nd International that did not betray the proletariat, and which were a minority, were later confronted with the Russian Revolution. These were either active in the October insurrection – the Bolshevik fraction of the Russian Social Democratic Party – or supported it, as with Rosa Luxemburg and the Spartacists in Germany, or the Abstentionist Fraction in Italy behind the figure of Bordiga, just to mention these two cases. The others, in Russia the Mensheviks that had remained “ internationalist ”, some pacifists during the war, one part of the “ centrist ” current of the German Social Democratic Party, and the Italian Socialist Party were opposed to the seizure of power by the proletariat in Russia and to the revolution in Germany. The position and the behaviour of the ones and the others in regards with the international revolution and to the question of the working class insurrection during the 1917-1923 revolutionary wave then finally clarified the split between the “ Socialists ” and the Communists, whose major political consequence and factor was the constitution of the Third International in March 1919. August 14 showed the death of the Social Democratic current as a whole for the proletariat, and the Russian Revolution, for its part, showed the death of the few parties and fractions that had remained pacifists during the war, which had no blood from the trenches on their hands, but which did not succeeded in breaking with the opportunist Social Democracy.

It is the same process that affected the Third International from its adoption of the thesis of “ socialism in one country ” under the influence of Stalinism , which meant its betrayal, as world party

countries... isolating and dividing the proletarian class and thus hampering its fight against the generalized attacks of capitalism since then.

5 . As well as much of the Anarchist movement following one its most famous leaders: Kropotkin.

2 . In France, as we saw again in 2016, the tactic of “ unified union days of action ” actually divides the workers and paralyzes any willingness for a general struggle.

3 . Except some few cases for what concerns the political groups and that we can't deal with here.

4 . We can't revisit here the different episodes of working class struggles at the international level that the unions and the left political forces of the bourgeois state, all “ united ”, have derailed and sabotaged since the end of the 1960s (to set a term and an historical period) on all continents and

of the proletariat, of proletarian internationalism. The participation of the “CPs” in the second imperialist World War marks definitively, supposing it did not happen sooner, the clear-cut and undebatable passage of these Communist Parties into the bourgeois camp. And it has been the same... for the Trotskyist and Anarchist currents, which on behalf of the anti-fascist struggle and Frontism with the left forces, participated actively in the “anti-fritz” Resistance during the world war after having led the workers into the dead-end and the slaughter of the inter-bourgeois, actually imperialist, war in Spain.

But history also teaches us that these political currents, having “once” betrayed the class and its fundamental principles, have definitively died for the proletariat. Not only because their betrayal is the result of an opportunist process at the theoretical and political level that precisely defines the peculiarity of these currents, Stalinism and “socialism in one country”, Trotskyism and anti-fascist frontism, with which one would have to break to remain faithful to Marxism and communism; but also because they are, to one degree or another, absorbed and integrated ideologically, politically, and organically into the capitalist state apparatus. The same goes for “formerly workers” political parties as for the unions. For the Socialist (SP) and Communist parties (CP), no need to argue, their various participation in power in multiple countries indicates their active participation in the preservation of capitalism and their integration into the state apparatus. But the same is true of the relations of the Trotskyist parties with the state political apparatuses. The links and the

bridges between the Trotskyist “Fourth International”, the NPA in France, with the PS for example, or Trotskyist entryism into the British Labor Party, are notorious; when it is not about “hidden” links, via Freemasonry for example with the Trotskyist Lambertist current in France again.

This means that these political currents and parties are definitively “lost” for the proletariat. They cannot go the opposite way, from the bourgeois camp towards the proletarian camp, unless they break their entire tradition and legacy, which only “individuals” can do. Again, it is not “we” who decide but the historical experience that instructs us.

To conclude, therefore, the question of the unification of the workers' struggles, a central and permanent question in any class struggle, necessarily involves political confrontation, in assemblies, in strikes, in demonstrations, in committees, and so on, against the orientations of and sabotage by “left” political and trade union forces, precisely because their origins in the workers' movement makes them among the most “credible” bourgeois state political forces vis-à-vis the workers in struggle, and therefore the most apt – oh so much more than the police forces or the traditional parties of the right – to deceive them and lock them in isolation and political impasses; to sabotage the unification of their class fight.

We hope that we provide you with elements of reflection and clarification. Do not hesitate to send us comments, criticisms, and questions.

Communist Greetings, the IGCL
November 30th 2017

Debate within the Proletarian Camp

Debate on the Period of Transition between Capitalism and Communism

We publish here the Resolution on the period of transition that the ICC had adopted in 1979 and we accompany it with a criticism, translated by us, made by the PCint-Battaglia Comunista – today part of the Internationalist Communist Tendency (www.leftcom.org) – which, as far as we know, has never been published in English or French. Their publication follows the theses on the period of transition presented in the previous issue of this journal. They were written by one comrade of our group to launch a reflection and a debate within our ranks on this question.

It may seem odd to consider the clarification of this question as fundamental today even though any revolutionary perspective and, even less, any dynamic of revolutionary struggle of the proletariat seem – only apparently in our opinion – to have fully disappeared. Yet, and we won't develop this point further in this introduction, the evolution and the exacerbation of capitalism's contradictions carry in them, more or less

rapidly, inevitable massive confrontations between classes at the international and historical levels. Depending on the outcome of this confrontation, the return of the revolutionary perspective may well be imposed very quickly through one of these historical upheavals and shocks of which the class struggle has the secret and from which only Marxism, the revolutionary theory of the proletariat, can remove the veil. And then the questions on how to put an end to capitalism, beyond the simple insurrectional act against the bourgeois state, will come back with force and speed such that the few lessons the revolutionaries could draw from the two previous experiences, the Paris Commune and the Russian Revolution, of the exercise of the Dictatorship of the proletariat, will be precious. If the revolutionary turmoil were to arrive, the revolutionaries and above all the party grouping them would be interested having a minimum of readiness – it will always be insufficient in itself – to confront the issues they will face and to define the best political measures the proletariat will have to adopt in the fire and whirlwind of the events. The main debates and lessons, however limited they may be, condensed, carried, clarified, and materialized in the political orientations of the Communist Party, will be essential so that it can best guide the struggle of the proletariat once it is exercising power and even before its seizure of power in the pre-revolutionary phase and in the insurrection – we don't develop either this particular point, which makes the success of the proletarian insurrection depend on the revolutionaries' abilities, on the party's ability, to have a minimum of clarity on the question of the period of transition that will follow.

The theses of the previous issue incorporated the concept of the transitional state as a non-proletarian state that the ICC had largely adopted in the late 1970s. It is precisely on this point that our internal discussion revealed disagreements, still not frozen or definitive. So we are going back to the debates of the day. There was some of this debate within the ICC, which can be seen in the brochure of this organization on the subject. But, for the most part, the internal critiques had been limited to defending a classic Bordigist point of view (so to speak) and, as such, are relatively uninteresting today to the extent that any contradiction and antagonism between the proletariat and the ruling party were denied in principle, ignoring the Russian experience and its internal dramas – the bloody repression of Kronstadt in particular. On the other hand, it is not the same for the criticism that the PCInt of the so-called "Damenist" current, Battaglia Comunista, today the ICT, had made at the time. Unfortunately, it remained largely unknown and ignored. The reader will be able to take note today and thus participate in our reflection and debate.

Resolution accepted at the 3rd Congress of the ICC (1979)

During the period of transition the division of society into classes with antagonistic interests will give rise to a state. Such a state will have the task of guaranteeing the advances of this transitional society both against any external or internal attempt to restore the power of the old exploiting classes and maintaining the cohesion of society against any disintegration of the social fabric resulting from conflicts between the non—exploiting classes which still subsist.

The state of the period of transition has a certain number of differences from previous states:

1. For the first time in history, it is not a state in the service of an exploiting minority for the oppression of the majority, but is on the contrary, a state in the service of the majority of the exploited and non—exploiting classes and strata against the old ruling minority.
2. It is not the emanation of a stable society and relations of production, but on the contrary of a society whose permanent characteristic is a constant transformation on a greater scale than anything else in history.
3. It cannot identify itself with any economically dominant class because there is no such class in the society of the period of transition.
4. In contrast to states in past societies, the transitional state does not have a monopoly of arms.

For all these reasons, marxists have talked of a “semi-state” when referring to the organ that will arise in the transition period.

On the other hand, this state still retains a number of the characteristics of past states. In particular, it will still be the guardian of the status quo, the task of which will be to codify, legalise and sanction an already existing economic order, to give it a legal force which has to be acknowledged by every member of society.

In the period of transition, the state will tend to conserve the existing state of affairs. Because of this, the state remains a fundamentally conservative organ that will tend:

- a) not to favour social transformation but to act against it;
- b) to maintain the conditions on which its own life depends: the division of society into classes;

- c) to detach itself from society, to impose itself on society, to perpetuate its own existence and to develop its own prerogatives;
- d) to bind its existence to the coercion and violence which it will of necessity use during the period of transition, and to try to maintain and reinforce this method of regulating social relations;
- e) to be a fertile soil for the formation of a bureaucracy, providing a rallying point for elements coming from the old classes and offices which have been destroyed by the revolution.

This is why from the beginning marxists have always considered the state of the period of transition to be a “scourge”, a “necessary evil”, whose “worst sides” the proletariat will have to “lop off as much as possible” (Engels). For all these reasons, and in contrast to what has happened in the past, the revolutionary class cannot identify itself with the state in the period of transition.

To begin with the proletariat is not an economically dominant class, either in capitalist society or the transitional society. During the transition period it will possess neither an economy nor any property, not even collectively: it will struggle for the abolition of economy and property. Secondly, the proletariat, the communist class, the subject which transforms the economic and social conditions of the transitional society, will necessarily come up against an organ whose task is to perpetuate these conditions. This is why one cannot talk about a “socialist state”, a “workers’ state” nor a “proletarian state” during the period of transition.

This antagonism between the proletariat and the state manifests itself both on the immediate and the historic level.

On the immediate level, the proletariat will have to oppose the encroachments and the pressure of a state which is the manifestation of a society divided into antagonistic classes. On the historic level, the necessary disappearance of the state in communist society, which is a perspective which marxism always defended, will not be the result of the state’s own dynamic, but the fruit of the pressure mounted on it by the proletariat in its own movement forward, which will progressively deprive it of all its attributes as the progress towards a classless society unfolds. For these reasons, while the proletariat will have to use the state during the transition period, it must retain a complete independence from it. In this sense the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be confused with the state. Between the two there is a constant relation of force which the proletariat will have to maintain in its favour: the dictatorship of the proletariat is exerted by the working class itself through its own independent armed unitary organs: the workers’ councils. The workers’ councils will participate in the territorial soviets (in which the whole non—exploiting population is represented and from which the state structure will emanate) without confusing themselves with them, in order to ensure its class hegemony over all the structures of the society of the transitional period.

ICC, 1979

Elements for a Criticism of the Resolution of the ICC on the Period of Transition (PCint – Battaglia Comunista)

Although it is not our intention to deal fully with the problem of the transitional state (from the bourgeois capitalist society to communist society), we critically address the resolution adopted by the International Communist Current at its last 1979 congress on this question, which was published in its *International Review* #18.

Regarding our precise positions we refer to our fundamental documents, in particular to the *Program Outline of 1944* and to the *Political Platform of 1952*. The very fact that we refer to these texts means that, for us, the problem of the state of transition has been fundamentally solved for much longer than “a few years” and cannot be considered an “open question”. That is to say, while this question always deserves secondary enrichment and subsequent

definitions – always of an accessory character – in their fundamental lines and from past experience, the answers to it are for us definitive and discriminating for the political forces aspiring to the leadership of the proletarian movement.

What we will say then has the value of re-proposing these same positions of ours in a critical comparison with a false position and its erroneous theoretical consequences. It also has the merit of being a concrete contribution to discussion and clarification between forces of the Communist Left. The disagreements between organizations engaged in the work we have initiated with the International Conferences are the main terrain on which they must confront themselves in the search for the path that leads to the construction of the international party of

the proletariat.

This is especially true when such disagreements are found on essential subjects of the platform itself, on its *raison d'être*; that is on what kind of party we all formally agree to build.

For convenience and lack of space, our critical examination will refer directly to the text of the ICC resolution. As much as possible, we'll quote the text. But we recommend that the following be read in direct comparison with the resolution (see *International Review* # 18 of the ICC, Resolution on the Period of Transition, http://en.internationalism.org/pamphlets/transition/resolution_1979.html).

It is first of all affirmed that the state “ *will have the task of guaranteeing the advances of this transitional society both against any external or internal attempt to restore the power of the old exploiting classes and maintaining the cohesion of society against any disintegration of the social fabric resulting from conflicts between the non-exploiting classes which still subsist* ”

This assertion implies the notion of a state as an organ of society. This concept is wrong, already refuted by Marx and Engels. They fought their whole lives against the typically bourgeois concept of the function of the state as an element of mediation between classes. This concept is precisely the one the ICC expresses in the last part of the quotation (“*maintaining the cohesion of society*”, etc.).

It turns out that, for the ICC, the state is no longer the organ of domination of one class over another. This amounts to considering it as an instrument of mediation between the classes, as the organizing element of society exactly as in the conception already fought in the 19th century.

The fact that the State of which we speak is the State resulting from the proletarian revolution is not enough to justify such a new definition, and on the other hand, the resolution of the ICC does not give any other element of justification.

On the contrary, the revolutionary and proletarian origin of the state is that it limits its function to the elimination of the bourgeoisie and the capitalist economic and social relations according to the exclusive interests of the working class, as well as to the administration and the planning of “*the things*” (Lenin). Tactical alliances with other classes, distinct from the proletariat, are possible and conceivable only on the basis of proletarian interests. That these classes are not exploitative is only the elementary condition on which the evaluation of the opportunity can be founded, in the moment and in the given

situation, of an alliance such as that which the Russian proletariat was forced into with the peasantry.

What does the state of transition mean? That this state is in the reality of things the negation of the other function typical of any state that preceded it: to guarantee the reproduction and the preservation of the conditions of exploitation of the other classes by the class of which the state is the instrument.

The function of the state has always been twofold in fact: firstly, to guarantee the ruling class against the reaction of the defeated class which preceded it (the bourgeoisie against the feudal aristocracy – the bourgeois state destroys the remnants of the feudal and aristocratic order that preceded it); on the other hand, it guarantees the conditions of domination and exploitation of the exploited classes (bourgeoisie against the proletariat – the bourgeois state in defence of the relation of exploitation of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat).

Any state historically preceding the workers' state is the instrument of domination of an exploiting class. In contrast, the proletariat is an exploited class, the last exploited class. Its state does not have to ensure any exploitation by the proletariat over any other class.

The suppression from history of the relations of exploitation between classes, thus the abolition of the classes themselves, exhausts the political tasks of the state (administration of the relations between human beings). The workers' state thereby ceases to be a state to retain the sole function of administration of things. This is the true reason that Marxists apply the definition of semi-state to the workers' state.

But as such, the workers' state is the political instrument of domination and the revolutionary task of a class, the proletariat, which brings in itself not only its own emancipation but also the liberation of society from all relations of exploitation.

Point 1 of the Resolution fully confirms the validity of the previous criticism. It specifies that the state is “ *in the service of the majority of the exploited and non-exploiting classes and strata against the old ruling minority* ”.

Thus it is not a proletarian state but an amorphous state, deprived of precise class characteristics, which brings together diverse classes, and even strata, destined to confront each other.

Here the controversy is not that there may be conflicts between the proletariat and other social strata, distinct from the defeated bourgeoisie, in the period of transition. Certainly, such conflicts will

exist because they are “immanent” to the diversity of roles played in the very process of production and distribution – within capitalist society, diversity, which, at least in the first post-insurrectional phase, inevitably re-emerges. It is nonetheless true that such conflicts must be settled. But, and this is the point, these regulations do not occur within the state, as if it were an arena of simple mediation between equals, but by the state; that is by means of the state as instrument of the proletarian interests that ultimately, but only ultimately, coincide with those of the whole society.

The interests of the peasants (literally and to the exclusion of agricultural proletarians) are in the immediate future different from the interests of the proletariat and to a great extent they are opposed to it. The mediation between peasant interests and proletarian communist interests is possible only in the sense of tactical concessions on the part of the proletariat in the context of an economic struggle led towards the peasantry and tending to the elimination of the peasantry as a class. But tactical concessions presuppose substantial power. This power is that of the proletariat, organized autonomously in its state, freed from the peasants' own conditions.

What do we mean by peasantry? We mean all the workers of the land who are independent of wage relations, therefore owners or share-croppers. This very condition makes them strive, as far as possible on the basis of availability and individual capacities, to establish exploitation relationships with other workers, at the same time as they tend to hire workers on their own account on the land they own or aspire to possess. It is evident, therefore, that the peasantry is a distinct class, with interests peculiar to itself and different from those of the proletariat. In this sense, it does not matter that it is not a historical class, namely a carrier of its own theory and social practice. On the contrary, it is one of the reasons why the peasantry has always been recognized by Marxists as a class tendentially inclined to an alliance with the bourgeoisie, which has always managed to impose its own domination on it.

Supposing the presence of the peasantry within the state of transition therefore means two things:

- either consciously counter-revolutionary preparation for the conditions of the defeat – first of all – of the state of transition as such;
- or an appalling ignorance of the classical Marxist positions, which have been verified by a centuries-old historical experience.

Point 2 is an attempt to avoid the pitfall by means of the statement according to which the state “*is not the*

emanation of a stable society and relations of production, but on the contrary of a society whose permanent characteristic is a constant transformation on a greater scale than anything else in history”.

Here we are in the verbal expedient, grandiloquent but dialectical only in appearance. How such transformations could happen is in fact a mystery. For Marxism, it follows that they will be implemented by the proletariat, which utilizes for this purpose the most powerful instrument: the semi-state. Otherwise, it remains to explain the very necessity of a state that would be the expression of all that is not directly bourgeois, but also of the classes and strata that – like the peasantry – are above all the intermediaries of a bourgeois policy. The only active subject of the revolutionary transformation – unless we are to fall into the vertigo of new discoveries of unprecedented revolutionary subjects – is the proletariat. So either the state is the expression of the proletarian power and instrument of transformation according to the proletarian interests and program, or it is useless (for the anarchists), or it is still-born (for the confusionists of the ICC).

But it is exactly the conception of the state as an expression of the proletariat and its instrument of transformation in society that is rejected in the following point in the resolution: the state “*cannot identify itself with any economically dominant class because there is no such class in the society of the period of transition*”.

That would be enough to conclude. But we are armed with holy patience and continue to consider this pearl as one of many.

While it is true that in the period of transition there is no class with economic power based on exploitation of other classes, it is also true that the proletariat will have to assume the full management of the economy during the course of the revolution itself. In this, the proletariat becomes the ruling class of the economy based on the strength that comes from the combination of its political power and its character as a productive class. Furthermore, the revolution is precisely the act by which the working class becomes a ruling class, at least according to Marx.

“*The first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class*” (The Communist Manifesto, www.marxist.org). And Marx specifies that “*the proletariat (nobody else) will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degree, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of*

production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class” (idem).

On the basis of Marx's teachings and historical experience, we can now say that the concentration of the means of production in the hands of the state is not sufficient since it is not in itself contrary to the global interests of capital and may be – as it can also happen outside Russia⁶ – the form of existence of capital itself and its domination. With this clarification, we make an advance on one point and one formulation. But to deny that the state is anything other than the organization of the proletariat as a ruling class, that it is something more vague, that it consists of other classes already identified as non-revolutionary, would mean to retreat, to fall into bourgeois idealist ideology or, more sadly, into the most absolute void.

If there is no dominant and ruling class, as the ICC asserts, it must be admitted that this mysterious transitional state survives and develops its tasks according to a program that is not that of the working class but of a formless accumulation of classes and layers united against the old society by the mere force of anti-capitalist idea and hatred – which is also an idea. There are some who openly theorize similar fads. They do so from the thesis that the working class has dissolved in society, that it has lost its precise characteristics, inoculating its subversive function to the layers of society up to the bourgeoisie itself under the pressure of an ever more subtle and total oppression by capital itself. The driving force of this process of dissolving the proletariat and at the same time widening the revolutionary area to other "subjects" leads to the oblivion of capitalist domination itself and its oppression on society. The one who theorizes this aestheticism, comes to conceive the revolution as the act of liberation of the whole society from the power of oppression of capital, which would immediately be followed by the more or less harmonious organization of the "community" independently of a division into classes now out of date.

6 . Note of the translator : the text dates back to 1979 at a time the USSR still existed and when left political forces, particularly in Italy with the “compromesso storico” (*Historic Compromise*) put forward by the Italian Communist Party and in France with the “programme commun” (*Common Program*) of the French Socialist Party and the French Communist Party, presented nationalizations as being “socialism” with serious chances of coming to power. This was finally the case in France with the election of Mitterrand in 1981, the participation of the French CP in his “Left Unity” government, which was accompanied by series of nationalizations including of the main banks : “the project of the law was to nationalize the five largest French industrial groups, 39 banks and two financial companies” (Wikipedia).

Here at least there is coherence; there is the pleasure (a bit perverse), the capacity and the courage to unleash the brain of the aesthete intellectual of history to the ultimate consequences, no matter then that the bourgeoisie can use such theorizations through its more radical forces to disarm the working class and its struggles.

But the ICC, which lacks such “courage”, does not seem to be willing to jump so radically over the barricade.

So it must explain to its members and to the whole communist movement why there is no longer a ruling class with all the means of leadership, notably the state. It must explain how the revolutionary class leads and achieves the destruction of the bourgeois state as the first step of the revolutionary process, then how by renouncing the state, it allows the other classes, other “strata”, to continue this process.

The working class “directs and completes the destruction of the bourgeois state”. It is worth stopping for a moment. That the working class is directly implicated in the work of destruction does not seem to be questioned (by the ICC), nor debatable. But also, what does it mean to lead the act of destruction? In first place, this means that effectively the strata of other classes that are not simply assimilable to the proletariat actually participate in this act. Well, the essential fact is that such a participation in action, such implication, in the subversion is based on the class communist program of the proletariat, which includes the destruction of the bourgeois state, directly linked with the fact that only the proletariat can produce the conditions of its own emancipation, the affirmation of its own interests, in the destruction of the bourgeois state. Historically, all the other classes, which as such are reduced almost only to the peasantry (the other classes of the population being assimilable to one or another of the fundamental classes), have no need for the destruction of the bourgeois society to defend their own interests. Whether it is the peasantry, whether it is the commercial or *artisan* petty bourgeoisie, their defence as class or class strata lies within the framework of the capitalist state, and it is only in the dramatic moments of the catastrophic crisis of the system that they can be dragged on to the revolutionary terrain thanks to the tactical alliance that the proletariat can realize precisely when capital takes any future away from them. But it is the proletariat that, on the basis of its own autonomous and precise revolutionary program, makes such alliances. The immediate aim is the regrouping and the organization of the forces of impact of the revolution; the final goal is the

assimilation of these same forces either politically, or at the more direct social economic level, to the socialist camp. Both ends are realizable on the sole condition that the proletariat exerts its own direction, that the advance of the state emerging from the revolution is realized according to the communist program of the proletarian class.

That the state is the instrument of the revolutionary transformations after the act of the insurrection is demonstrated still by the history of the bourgeoisie itself, which in its ascendant phase as a class in power used its state to realize the economic and social transformations necessary for the affirmation of the capitalist mode of production as the universal and exclusive system in the world.

In summary, either we acknowledge that the communist program is carried only by the working class, which can find allies in its affirmation but which remains its unique holder (we do not speak of those individuals who come to the knowledge and possession of the communist program and who betray their own class of origin) and then the working class must use its state to carry out its work; or it is speculated that, during the period of transition, the communist program, the elimination of the classes, the abolition of wage labour may be during the transition period the objective of these other amalgamated classes and strata of which the state is the expression – and then it has to be explained how the devil these classes would become revolutionary and communist after the insurrection. Or (given this absurdity), it must be admitted that it is not true that the proletariat is the only revolutionary class who bears a program of liberation of all of humanity – with all the unfortunate consequences that this would imply. On the other hand, many people, in particular among the best bourgeois intellectuals, are engaged precisely in these “demonstrations” – as already mentioned.

Monopoly of Weapons?

Point 4 concludes “*crescendo*” the series of novelties in the theory of the state of transition: “*In contrast to states in past societies, the transitional state does not have a monopoly of arms*”.

First of all, it is necessary to note the flagrant contradiction: on the one hand, the ICC decrees that the state is not proletarian, that is to say that the proletariat is not organized into a dominant class, and with that it abdicates also the role of catalyst of the consciousness with which, or according to which, the state will have to act; on the other hand, it decrees that the same state with which neither the proletariat nor the ICC will have anything to do will not hold

the monopoly of arms. It is largely enough to be confused. Let’s try to see the contradiction we have underlined.

The revolution is made when the proletariat wins on the military level (in theory, the possession of the monopoly of the weapons, the army's ones included, and their exhibition without great shootings could suffice even though there will always be situations in which these weapons will have to be used; but it is not something that counts). More precisely, to return to the foregoing, the revolution is made when the weapons are ready to fire in the direction indicated by the proletariat's communist program, even if physically held by diverse strata of the population.

What becomes of the weapons?

We should expect that they remain in the proletariat's hands outside the state (and actually, as we shall see, the ICC speaks of armed proletarian organs). But what a strange state is the one that leaves to others the monopoly of arms! And vice-versa, whoever possesses the monopoly of arms, are they not forced to be the state? Obviously, these like these cast off towards confusion and become confused. But let's continue.

“For all these reasons, marxists have talked of a 'semi-state' when referring to the organ that will arise in the transition period”.

Here we don't know if we are dealing with blissful ignorance or simple bad faith.

We have pointed out previously, in criticism of the first paragraph of the resolution, why Marxists (and especially Lenin) have always spoken of a semi-state. As such, the above affirmation of the ICC is simply a... novelty (obviously the “innovative” tendencies are strongly felt in this organization). Here it is not about defending an abstract “conservatism”, but of rejecting absolutely concepts and principles that are in insuperable opposition to the core of the consolidated doctrine of Marxism. The state of transition has always been regarded as a semi-state and it remains so simply because it lacks the function of defending the privilege of exploitation, but has the function of the revolutionary transformation of society according to the interests and the program of one class, the proletariat, which moreover coincides with the very extinction of the state. All the ICC has previously rejected as characteristics of the transitional state is what characterizes the very role of the semi-state. In the best of circumstances, therefore, for the ICC any state comes to just not exist.

Revolutionary State and Conservative State

The resolution goes on to tackle the problem “from another angle”: “*On the other hand* (it says), *this state still retains a number of the characteristics of past states. In particular, it will still be the guardian of the status quo, the task of which will be to codify, legalise and sanction an already existing economic order, to give it a legal force which has to be acknowledged by every member of society.*”

The confusion continues unabated. If everything that has been asserted can obey, and in fact does obey, the ICC's argument that the transitional state will not be a proletarian state, it has no historical, let alone political, basis.

All successive states have gone through a revolutionary phase during which they played precisely a revolutionary role by eliminating the old social relations, by transforming the economic, social, and political structures. The bourgeoisie had a state of its own, different from the previous one because it tended toward the elimination of the social relations that the latter defended. Thus, the bourgeois state, as the other states, was born to transform the society along lines adapted to the interests of the ruling class. This revolutionary function accomplished, all states have always maintained their particular function of conservation and defence of the relation of exploitation of one class by another. The first state, for instance, in ancient Greece, did not behave differently unless... we reinterpret the very clear text of Engels on this subject. As an example and about the transformations :

“The smooth functioning of the organs of the gentile constitution was thus thrown so much out of gear that even in the heroic age remedies had to be found. The constitution ascribed to Theseus was introduced. The principal change which it made was to set up a central authority in Athens – that is, part of the affairs hitherto administered by the tribes independently were declared common affairs and entrusted to the common council sitting in Athens.”

A revolutionary transformation is accomplished through the work of the state. In fact, “*the first step had been taken towards undermining the gentile constitution...*” (Engels, *Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State*⁷).

If all this holds for the succession of states in the “Western Civilization” of the so-called ancient community, it is not less valid for the different forms of primitive communities that, before the imperialist

conquest of the world, went through a different path in the modes of production and social organization.

To be clear, we refer to the civilizations that gave life to the Asiatic mode of production (that of ancient Egypt, China, India...).

We thus understand that the function of revolutionary instrument of transformation that each state assumes in its first phase is a constant in the history of societies. The proletarian state exhausts its own existence with the depletion of this function, unlike the states that preceded it which, on the other hand, continue to play the role of an instrument of conservation of class exploitative relations.

On the other hand, the ICC claims that the permanent and original characteristic, and the only function, of each state is conservation; it assigns this sole function to the state of transition and thus by assimilating it to all other states, it considers it as a competing, if not antithetical, factor in its function within the revolutionary process itself.

It should be noted that the core of the discussion is there. It follows effectively for the ICC that its initial theses are confirmed, that they can't be “purely and simply” rejected because they contain an element of truth that it is the task of revolutionaries to assess at its true value.

The “Conservatism” of the State

“In the period of transition, the state will tend to conserve the existing state of affairs” continues the text that we're examining. This is not wrong in the absolute. But still we must agree on the use of the word state. If we understand by this all the people integrated in the state, the particular organizational institutions in which they participate, the statement is certainly correct. The function of the bourgeois state (to respect, defend, and represent the general class interests of the bourgeoisie) is an objective and a real fact, as is the objective and real resistance of such organs, of the bureaucratic apparatus as a whole, to all modifications and “innovations” as minor as they may be, that bourgeois conservation itself requires within its own state and in its relations with the “public”.

For one thing, such an affirmation is simply banal. On the other hand, it is fraught with... idealist dangers. Its approach is idealist. In other terms, for the idealists of all kinds, the “innate tendencies of man” (otherwise the legacy of the division of society into classes) assume the role of motive force of history, the ultimate basis of social determination. It follows for the idealists of all kinds that phenomena such as certain “ways of being” (for us just as historically determined) are not limited to existing

7 . <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1884/origin-family/ch05.htm>.

and influencing the ground to which they belong – that of the superstructure, of subjectivity – but become the distinctive feature of society and its history.

From there, and only from there, one can come to claim that the state is either simply and always an enemy (as the anarchists say) or that the state must be controlled by the dictatorship of the proletariat (as the ICC says).

However, this does not mean that the tendency of the state structure to rise above the classes themselves is not the result of the bourgeois tendency (destined to disappear only gradually in the long period of real construction of socialism) of men integrated into the organizations of power to maintain their own privileges and their own "prestige".

The real problem is "to render impossible the spreading and the development of any bureaucracy" and instead make it accept "its gradual suppression".

This is not a point we directly deal with in our 1952 Platform. But, on the other hand, there is no magic recipe that could provide its guarantee since it is true that the so-called new recipe of the ICC can be finally summed up in the elimination of the class attributes of the state itself and in the "suppression" of its necessity. And on this point, it is worth quoting again the 1944 schema of our party program:

"The state, bourgeois remnant that the proletariat can do no less than use to eliminate the residues of a society divided into classes, even though it must hasten its dissolution, tends even more to survive and be reinforced, rather than whither away, if it isolates itself from the international proletariat's movement by pretending to build socialism in its own zone, and to oppose itself as a workers' state to the bourgeois states in the international arena" (translated by the IGCL).

The inattentive reader, reading the subsequent points in the ICC resolution, might conclude that the tendency toward survival and strengthening of the state are spelled out there and that, in the final analysis, we agree. Instead, the contrast is profound. And it is not so much in the recognition of these tendencies of the bureaucratic-administrative organs, which the state must nevertheless use, but in the weight attributed to these tendencies.

For us, they are present and active but they are not characteristic from the class point of view. They are and have always been present in any form of state independently not only of the classes that have become ruling classes, for whom the state is the instrument, but even in the states, also having a class nature of course, characteristic of societies with

different courses. The bureaucracy of the Chinese empire, perfectly organic with the characteristic state of "Asian despotism", always represented a problem for the despot through whom, moreover, the class power of the mandarins⁸ was embodied.

Can one thus affirm that the whole state apparatus constituted something (a power) different from the power of the upper class (to use a Confucian term) and to reduce it to that of the despot?

For the ICC on the contrary, as for anarchist idealism, the tendencies that we can define as "autonomous" of the state bureaucracy become the fundamental characteristic of the state itself. The ICC concludes that the state is quite necessary – unlike the Anarchists – but that it is different from the organization of the proletariat's power. As a result, for the ICC, the formulation that the revolutionary class cannot identify with the state of the period of transition – behind its ambiguity – actually means, as we have explained, that the state is not that of the working class.

After that, the resolution moves on to the "argumentation" of the second thesis according to which the proletariat is not the ruling class "*either in capitalist society or the transitional society*". During the period of transition, the proletariat "*possesses neither an economy nor any property, not even collectively: it will struggle for the abolition of economy and property.*"

Already this formulation is, to say the least, incorrect. If it is indeed true that socialization means the elimination of all property relations, it is just as true that all the productive sectors, that all the means of production cannot be socialized at once, in the moment of the seizure of power. Let's return to the peasant problem. Will the land remain the peasants' property? The resolution does not say but we can think it would respond negatively. Can it be socialized everywhere and in any situation? Common sense says no, that areas and situations will be maintained where the socialization of the land will be one of the intermediate objectives of the transition period. To whom does the land return then? To the state, which will therefore be the owner. Then we can consider the proletariat as not owning, even collectively, only on the condition that the state is the peasants' state. In other words, either the proletariat presents itself as the owner of the land through the state in its relation with the peasants, or the state will seize the land with the intervention of the peasants themselves by "granting the socialization". On the

8 . Translator's note: "a mandarin (Chinese: 官 guān) was a bureaucrat scholar in the government of imperial China and Vietnam." Wikipedia.

contrary, the land is really socialized through a large process throughout which the proletariat will have to choose the best means to ensure that the peasant class sides with it and its program.

However, beyond the imprecision, the assertion of the ICC contains a background of truth: it is certain in fact that the proletariat will fight for the abolition of property. But that does not mean at all what the examined resolution wants to make believe, that is to say that the proletariat would not be a ruling class.

If the proletariat, which is the only class to have for its historic program the abolition of property and the division of society into classes which result from it, does not dominate the whole of the economic and social relations, then these relations can in no way change.

Either we reach the idealist thesis according to which it is all people, finally recognizing themselves in a new and superior "Gemeinwesen" [a "community"] that would assert itself within capitalism, who want a new society or new relations, or we must recognize that the *de facto* domination by the bourgeoisie, resulting from the economic and social relations characteristic of capitalist society, must be opposed by the political and economic domination by the proletariat, by the class historically antagonistic to the bourgeoisie and the only one capable of breaking these relations.

If the proletariat does not have the property⁹, how can we consider it as ruling in the economic sense? The catch, for the ICC, is all about this Hamlet-like problem. The societies that have existed to date have seen economic domination accompanied by property, by the fact that the people who exercised this domination were those that owned the essential means of production, in their respective areas and epochs, which resulted from property relations. For the ICC and for the debates that ensue – property relations vanishing, the relations of domination vanish too – the dictatorship of the proletariat would become then a dictatorship based solely on the willingness for a different future; and not on the material possibility of seizing the means of production.

On the contrary, the reality is quite different. The property relations of the means of industrial production, within the limits already indicated, vanish. But even so, the domination that the working class must exert on them does not disappear. This is possible only due to the particularity of the

proletarian revolution in relation to all previous revolutions, since for the first time the revolutionary class is also the class directly employed in the means of production.

The bourgeoisie was not the productive class in the sense of its direct and material engagement in the means of production. It matured within aristocratic society as a ruling class.

On the other hand, the proletariat must conquer its own domination with the revolution itself.

The bourgeoisie made its revolution at the very moment when the contradiction between its property and its economic domination on the one hand, and the political power on the other, reached maturity. But the proletariat comes to revolution because of the contradiction between the socialized character of labour and the private ownership of the means of production. Both revolutions (the bourgeois and the proletarian) rely above all on the means of production (or the relation of domination between human beings and nature) but they are qualitatively different because of the starting positions "of power". For in order for the transformations of economic and social relations to take place, it is always necessary for a class to push in this direction with all the instruments that its domination confers on it. Otherwise, it only remains to wait for the maturation of Man and the Gemeinwesen of so many idealists who, as they often do while they wait, find themselves on the side of those who exercise the power today, that is to say the bourgeoisie.

What Control?

And then we come to the second argument according to which the proletariat has nothing to do with the transitional state. "*The proletariat, the communist class, the subject which transforms the economic and social conditions of the transitional society, will necessarily come up against an organ whose task is to perpetuate these conditions*".

Here we are simply faced with a corollary of an earlier incorrect thesis: that the state is only a conservative organ. Having already examined and dealt with it, we need not return to it, just to add, for the tranquility of the ICC, that the working masses, organized into factory and territorial soviets, will certainly have to keep attentive watch over the correct functioning of the administrative, bureaucratic, hierarchical – if you will – organs of the state apparatus, according to the indications of Lenin against the bureaucracy. It is a task that we consider acquired by past experience, but which, with its formulation, does not guarantee a victorious march towards communism. The only guarantee is

9 . ["Tendanzialmente mancando di proprietà il proletariato...": *Tendentially lacking of property, the proletariat...* is the original Italian sentence, translator's note].

internationalism and the internationalization of the revolution, the existence of concrete conditions that reject the socialist homeland as socialist state. It is not by chance that the struggle for the affirmation of the theory of socialism in one country was accompanied by the bureaucratization of the state and vice-versa. It is not by chance that in Russia, the state “bureaucratization”, the identification of the state and party apparatuses, were marked by the real liquidation of the function of the organs of power that are the soviets.

We then learn from the resolution that “*this antagonism between the proletariat and the state manifests itself both on the immediate and the historic level.*” Developing its argument, the ICC expresses its more serious mistake in another form : “*On the immediate level, the proletariat will have to oppose the encroachments and the pressure of a state which is the manifestation of a society divided into antagonistic classes*”.

This means again that for the ICC, the transitional state is a historical necessity because classes exist but it is not the instrument of the proletariat. The reasoning appears to be the following: where there have been antagonistic classes, a state has existed, so a state must also exist in the transition period. What may have been the global function of states and what the function of the transitional state should be is a problem that obviously does not concern the ICC.

It is important to recall Lenin's concise words in *The State and the Revolution* : “*To confine Marxism to the theory of the class struggle means curtailing Marxism, distorting it, reducing it to something acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. (...) Opportunism does not extend recognition of the class struggle to the cardinal point, to the period of transition from capitalism to communism, of the overthrow and the complete abolition of the bourgeoisie. In reality, this period inevitably is a period of an unprecedentedly violent class struggle in unprecedentedly acute forms, and, consequently, during this period the state must inevitably be a state that is democratic in a new way (for the proletariat and the propertyless in general) and dictatorial in a new way (against the bourgeoisie).*” (www.marxism.org)

These words were addressed particularly to right-wing opportunism, especially to Kautskyism; but we can today turn them against these new “left” opportunists who, from the same premises, fall into symmetrically opposed deviations.

In fact, for the ICC, the state is the product of the class struggle but it is not the instrument that the ruling class uses in this struggle, or it is in the capitalist regime and for the bourgeoisie, but no longer – rising up to the skies far above the petty material existence of classes – in the period of transition. Effectively, and fundamentally, the ICC does not extend the theory of class struggle to the point of recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the state of the workers’ councils as its instrument.

But what happens at the historical level according to the resolution? “*On the historic level, the necessary disappearance of the state in communist society, which is a perspective which marxism always defended, will not be the result of the state’s own dynamic, but the fruit of the pressure mounted on it by the proletariat in its own movement forward, which will progressively deprive it of all its attributes as the progress towards a classless society unfolds.*”

It is another way to express the same distortion of Marxism. Even here, in fact, the state appears as something completely distinct from and antagonistic to the proletariat, as something against which the proletariat must fight. The enemy is not the always possible tendencies toward bureaucratization of its apparatus that are present in its very structure, in the human material that composes it, but the enemy is the state itself, its structures that would rise above the classes to regulate the relations between them. That is why “*if the proletariat will have to use the state during the transition period, it must retain a complete independence from it*”.

One may wonder how the proletariat can use the transitional state while remaining completely independent of it, but it would be wasted effort. Except to admit, something that is difficult in the case of the ICC, which is certainly recalcitrant, that the state can be used independently of holding it, which would sadly lead to the reformist, indeed counter-revolutionary, terrain.

On the other hand, we can make the banal observation that it is very difficult that the holders of a thing, if we don't play verbal and formal games, can declare themselves independent of this very thing...

And we approach the conclusion. We have already seen and underlined the general, theoretical deviations from Marxism. But in the conclusion, and not only in the conclusion, we find the, so to speak, “practical” implications.

Reaffirming that, in the sense above, “*the*

dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be confused with the state. Between the two there is a constant relation of force which the proletariat will have to maintain in its favour: the dictatorship of the proletariat is exerted by the working class itself through its own independent armed unitary organs: the workers' councils".

From this it emerges that the organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat are one thing, the state another. Who will exercise the legal power, sadly still necessary? If it is the hypothetical state of the ICC, the dictatorship of the proletariat will be a very strange dictatorship. If instead it will be the dictatorship of the proletariat, there will be a very strange state. Since we continue to navigate in the darkest confusion we have to make hypotheses. The only hypothesis on which such a mess can be sustained, with many salutations to the proletarian dictatorship, is a division of powers according to the best bourgeois tradition. Example: the "State" (still the ideal one of the ICC) makes the laws (legislative power); the dictatorship of the proletariat carries them out (executive power) if it pleases them. In this desperate case, the ICC should adopt a hundred new resolutions to anticipate the complexity of relations. If instead it is not so and the taste of the paradox has pushed us too far, there is the resolution of the obvious bickering of the ICC.

For us, the state is the dictatorship of the proletariat and its articulations are the articulations of the soviets, from the lowest level to the higher level, and the soviets are the workers' councils, proletarian organs.

On the other hand, and here is the other practical implication of the theory of the Current, *"the workers' councils will participate in the territorial soviets (in which the whole non-exploiting population is represented and from which the state structure will emanate) without confusing themselves with them, in order to ensure its class hegemony over all the structures of the society of the transitional period"*.

We have seen that, for the ICC at the theoretical level, the state is not the exclusive instrument of the working class. Here we see that, in practice, it is the

expression of the non-exploiting "classes and strata", and not the workers' councils. The revision is clear and complete.

The idea of a soviet representing a generic non-exploiting population is directly borrowed from bourgeois democratism, which has nothing to do with the proletarian revolution and is highly opposed by the proletarian revolution. In addition to presenting the conspicuous contradictions already seen, the "state of the ICC" will no longer be the expression of the class of producers organized as the ruling class but the expression of a jumble of sterile popular strata which will converge on the basis of their residence and non-ownership of the means of production. The workers' councils, no longer the backbone of the state, will no longer exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat, but a generic hegemony that too closely resembles Gramscian hegemony.

It remains only to observe, if it is not clear in the foregoing, that the maintenance of the ICC on these positions will progressively distance it from the terrain for the construction of the international party of the proletariat, as and when its acceleration, or at least the consciousness of its necessity, will deepen.

Nor is the opportunistic attitude that wishes to present this resolution as a simple contribution to the discussion on an "open question" acceptable.

The nature of the state of transition is a key question for the revolutionary party by the simple fact that it is fundamental for the party to define its task and its functions during the period of transition with respect to the state itself.

The very insistence on considering such a question open, with the subtle aim of introducing positions that are theoretically and politically deviant, is increasingly becoming one of the forms of opportunism that it is the duty of revolutionaries to eradicate forever from their camp.

Prometeo #3, December 1979, *PCint-Battaglia Comunista*, translated by us

(<http://www.leftcom.org/it/articles/1979-12-01/elementi-per-la-critica-alla-risoluzione-della-cci-sul-periodo-di-transizione>).

Text of the Working Class Movement

What is to Replace the Smashed State Machine? (Lenin, *The State and the Revolution*, 1917)

It is still necessary to suppress the bourgeoisie and crush their resistance. This was particularly necessary for the Commune; and one of the reasons for its defeat was that it did not do this with sufficient determination. The organ of suppression, however, is here the majority of the population, and not a minority, as was always the case under slavery, serfdom, and wage slavery. And since the majority of people itself suppresses its oppressors, a 'special force' for suppression is no longer necessary! In this sense, the state begins to wither away. Instead of the special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officialdom, the chiefs of the standing army), the majority itself can directly fulfil all these functions, and the more the functions of state power are performed by the people as a whole, the less need there is for the existence of this power.

In this connection, the following measures of the Commune, emphasized by Marx, are particularly noteworthy: the abolition of all representation allowances, and of all monetary privileges to officials, the reduction of the remuneration of all servants of the state to the level of "workmen's wages". This shows more clearly than anything else the turn from bourgeois to proletarian democracy, from the democracy of the oppressors to that of the oppressed classes, from the state as a "special force" for the suppression of a particular class to the suppression of the oppressors by the general force of the majority of the people--the workers and the peasants. And it is on this particularly striking point, perhaps the most important as far as the problem of the state is concerned, that the ideas of Marx have been most completely ignored! In popular commentaries, the number of which is legion, this is not mentioned. The thing done is to keep silent about it as if it were a piece of old-fashioned "naivete", just as Christians, after their religion had been given the status of state religion, "forgot" the "naivete" of primitive Christianity with its democratic revolutionary spirit.

The reduction of the remuneration of high state officials seem "simply" a demand of naive, primitive democracy. One of the "founders" of modern opportunism, the ex-Social-Democrat Eduard Bernstein, has more than once repeated the vulgar bourgeois jeers at "primitive" democracy. Like all opportunists, and like the present Kautskyites, he did not understand at all that, first of all, the transition from capitalism to socialism is impossible without a certain "reversion" to "primitive" democracy (for how else can the majority, and then the whole population without exception, proceed to discharge state functions?); and that, secondly, "primitive democracy" based on capitalism and capitalist culture is not the same as primitive democracy in prehistoric or precapitalist times. Capitalist culture has created large-scale production, factories, railways, the postal service, telephones, etc., and on this basis the great majority of the functions of the old "state power" have become so simplified and can be reduced to such exceedingly simple operations of registration, filing, and checking that they can be easily performed by every literate person, can quite easily be performed for ordinary "workmen's wages", and that these functions can (and must) be stripped of every shadow of privilege, of every semblance of "official grandeur".

All officials, without exception, elected and subject to recall at any time, their salaries reduced to the level of ordinary "workmen's wages" — these simple and "self-evident" democratic measures, while completely uniting the interests of the workers and the majority of the peasants, at the same time serve as a bridge leading from capitalism to socialism. These measures concern the reorganization of the state, the purely political reorganization of society; but, of course, they acquire their full meaning and significance only in connection with the "expropriation of the expropriators" either bring accomplished or in preparation, i.e., with the transformation of capitalist private ownership of the means of production into social ownership.

"The Commune," Marx wrote, *"made the catchword of all bourgeois revolutions, cheap government, a reality, by abolishing the two greatest sources of expenditure--the army and the officialdom."*

Lenin, *The State and the Revolution*
(<https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/staterev/ch03.htm#s2>)

OUR POSITIONS

- Since World War 1, capitalism has been a decadent social system which has nothing to offer the working class and humanity as a whole except cycles of crises, wars and reconstructions. Its irreversible historical decay poses the single alternative for humanity : **socialism or barbarism.**
- The Paris Commune of 1871 was the first attempt by the proletariat to carry out this revolution, in a period when the conditions for it were not yet ripe. Once these conditions had been provided by the onset of capitalist decadence, the October revolution of 1917 in Russia was the first step towards an authentic world communist revolution in an international revolutionary wave which put an end to the imperialist war and went on for several years after that. The failure of this revolutionary wave, particularly in Germany in 1919-23, condemned the revolution in Russia to isolation and to a rapid degeneration. Stalinism was not the product of the Russian revolution, but its gravedigger.
- The stratified regimes which arose in the USSR, eastern Europe, China, Cuba, etc., and were called 'socialist' or 'communist' were just a particularly brutal form of the universal tendency towards state capitalism, itself a major characteristic of the period of decadence.
- Since the beginning of the 20th century, all wars are imperialist wars, part of the deadly struggle between states large and small to conquer or retain a place in the international arena. These wars bring nothing to humanity but death and destruction on an ever-increasing scale. The working class can only respond to them through its international solidarity and by struggling against the bourgeoisie in all countries.
- All the nationalist ideologies -'national independence', 'the right of nations to self-determination', etc.- whatever their pretext, ethnic, historical or religious, are a real poison for the workers. By calling on them to take the side of one or another faction of the bourgeoisie, they divide workers and lead them to massacre each other in the interests and wars of their exploiters.
- In decadent capitalism, parliament and elections are nothing but a masquerade. Any call to participate in the parliamentary circus can only reinforce the lie that presents these elections as a real choice for the exploited. 'Democracy', a particularly hypocritical form of the domination of the bourgeoisie, does not differ at root from other forms of capitalist dictatorship, such as Stalinism and fascism.
- All factions of the bourgeoisie are equally reactionary. All the so-called 'workers', 'Socialist', and 'Communist' parties (now ex-'Communists'), the leftist organizations (Trotskyists, Maoists, anarchists) constitute the left of capitalism's political apparatus. All the tactics of 'popular fronts', 'anti-fascist fronts' and 'united fronts', which mix the interests of the proletariat with those of a faction of the bourgeoisie, serve only to smother and derail the struggle of the proletariat.
- With the decadence of capitalism, the unions everywhere have been transformed into organs of capitalist order within the proletariat. The various forms of union organization, whether 'official' or 'rank and file', serve only to discipline the working class and sabotage its struggles.
- In order to advance its combat, the working class has to unify its struggles, taking charge of their extension and organization through sovereign general assemblies and committees of delegates elected and revocable at any time by these assemblies.

- Terrorism is in no way a method of struggle for the working class. The expression of social strata with no historic future and of the decomposition of the petty bourgeoisie, when it's not the direct expression of the permanent war between capitalist states, terrorism has always been a fertile soil for manipulation by the bourgeoisie. Advocating secret action by small minorities, it is in complete opposition to class violence, which derives from conscious and organized mass action by the proletariat.
- The working class is the only class which can carry out the communist revolution. Its revolutionary struggle will inevitably lead the working class towards a confrontation with the capitalist state. In order to destroy capitalism, the working class will have to overthrow all existing states and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale: the international power of the workers' councils, regrouping the entire proletariat.
- The communist transformation of society by the workers' councils does not mean 'self-management' or the nationalization of the economy. Communism requires the conscious abolition by the working class of capitalist social relations: wage labour, commodity production, national frontiers. It means the creation of a world community in which all activity is oriented towards the full satisfaction of human needs.
- The revolutionary political organization constitutes the vanguard of the working class and is an active factor in the generalization of class consciousness within the proletariat. Its role is neither to 'organize the working class' nor to 'take power' in its name, but to participate actively in the movement towards the unification of struggles, towards workers taking control of them for themselves, and at the same time to draw out the revolutionary political goals of the proletariat's combat.

OUR ACTIVITY

- Political and theoretical clarification of the goals and methods of the proletarian struggle, of its historic and its immediate conditions.
- Organized intervention, united and centralized on an international scale, in order to contribute to the process which leads to the revolutionary action of the proletariat.
- The regroupment of revolutionaries with the aim of constituting a real world communist party, which is indispensable to the working class for the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a communist society.

OUR ORIGINS

- The positions and activity of revolutionary organizations are the product of the past experiences of the working class and of the lessons that its political organizations have drawn throughout its history. The IGCL thus traces its origins to the successive contributions of the Communist League of Marx and Engels (1847-52), the three Internationals (the International Workingmen's Association, 1864-72, the Socialist International, 1884-1914, the Communist International, 1919-28), the left fractions which detached themselves from the degenerating Third International in the years 1920-30, in particular the German, Dutch and Italian Lefts, and the groups of the Communist Left which had specially developed in the 1970s and 1980s and which were stemming from these fractions