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What is fascism and how to combat it? A reading from the Bolivian reality

During the last 18 months the political situation in Bolivia has undergone abrupt transformations: after almost 14 years of the government of Evo Morales, the fascist oligarchy carried out a coup d'état and remained in government illegitimately for a year; the overwhelming popular mobilization against the coup was translated into a decisive electoral defeat for the oligarchy and the negotiated transition towards the government of Luis Arce Catacora (MAS-IPSP).

For the petty-bourgeois and post-modern intelligentsia, concepts such as fascism, neo-fascism, authoritarianism and totalitarianism are used almost interchangeably, referring to any phenomenon with which they do not agree; the conservative media and those related to the illegitimate Áñez regime have even gone so far as to state that any trial against the coup plotters is not only political persecution but is supposedly fascism. Faced with the campaign of disinformation and lies, it is just and necessary to clarify from Marxism-Leninism what fascism is, how it has been expressed and how it is expressed in Bolivia and how to combat it.

Post-modernism in its various presentations seeks to reduce the concept of fascism to discursive constructions that lead to acts of hatred or discrimination, or to a historical event of the Second World War (hence the insistence on using the term neo-fascism). It strives to abstract the concept of fascism or neo-fascism from the concrete reality of class struggle, nationally and internationally, and for that reason it focuses so vehemently on the construction of subjectivity (discourse, among other elements) to not addressing the objective facts, the class interests that drive fascism as a form of government.

Capitalism as a social economic formation is based on two antagonistic social classes (bourgeoisie and proletariat) together with a series of intermediate classes and social layers, in the Bolivian case these intermediate classes and layers are a product of the character-

istics of our variegated social reality due to the persistence of pre-capitalist production relations subsumed to the capitalist mode of production, by our situation of dependence on imperialist capital and the consequent technological backwardness. Capitalism as a mode of production can adopt different variants in terms of the form of government adopted by the state to meet the needs of the ruling classes and class factions in a given historical moment and geographical space; with variants of representative democracy (parliamentary or presidential), constitutional monarchy, fascist dictatorship, combinations of these or any other form of government, while maintaining capitalist exploitation as a base and guaranteeing great private property, it is still a bourgeois state. The specific characteristics of each form of government naturally affect the forms of struggle that the working class can or must assume and the conditions under which it must fight, but they do not deny the class essence of the state.

At the XIII Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (1933) fascism was characterized as the “open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital.” In this brief and precise characterization it is established that fascism responds to the interests of finance capital, that is, it is not just any capital, but the expression of monopoly capital that merges productive capital with bank capital; it is the sector that expresses the highest degree with concentration and centralization of capital. The characteristics of finance capital and its organic expression - the financial oligarchy, are explained in detail by Lenin in his work *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Finance capital and its development are part of the imperialist phase of capitalism, so it is not a merely a national phenomenon but is deeply intertwined with imperialism.

The finance capital of the imperialist countries, organized in cartels and associations, divides up the world, seizing not only markets but also control of the countries themselves; in this way an international division of labor is carried out. The developed imperialist capitalist countries relegate their colonies and semi-colonies to the role of exporters of raw materials, or cheap labor. So how is finance capital or the financial oligarchy expressed in dependent countries? In dependent countries such as Bolivia, the financial oligarchy is essentially dependent: economically, politically, socially and culturally. The dependent financial oligarchy does not seek to

contribute to sovereign national development, which is why it tends to export its capital, whether to tax havens or to invest it in other countries - in Bolivia according to Central Bank data, capital exports correspond to 15% of GDP. The dependence on finance capital is expressed in the debt that they maintain with imperialist capital, through private external debt and direct foreign investment, which in the Bolivian case reaches 31% of GDP.

Despite the imperialist character of finance capital (or pro-imperialist in the case of dependent finance capital), its discursive force is based on chauvinism, the extreme exacerbation of nationalism, which goes hand in hand with racism and xenophobia. In developed countries the emerging bourgeoisie fulfilled a role of advancement and modernization with regard to feudalism; in the imperialist phase of capitalism, the already dominant bourgeois class no longer has a goal of social progress but quite the opposite – it must retain and delay the advance of society since its very existence is at risk. In dependent countries like ours, the bourgeoisie was born as a product of the penetration of imperialist capital, and it is generally the product of the transformation of the old feudal and landlord classes, which is why it was born with a conservative and reactionary vision. The bourgeoisie as a class in general tends towards reactionary positions, but there are factions that assume this need with greater belligerence, which is why they resort to religion, sexism, racism and other schemes projected through the mass media to legitimize themselves.

This precision of the Communist International regarding the class interests represented in fascism is not complete if we do not consider the form of application that is proposed - the “open terrorist dictatorship”. Well, at certain times and junctures the financial oligarchy can govern using bourgeois democratic forms, with ample guarantees, freedoms and rights guaranteed by the Constitution. The full validity of bourgeois democracy is subject to a fundamental condition at all times – the guarantee of large private property over the means of production; when this condition is at risk, the bourgeoisie justifies the total or partial suspension of guarantees, freedoms and rights and even its own institutionality in order to safeguard private property. Beyond the institutional formality that may or may not exist, the ‘open terrorist dictatorship’ supposes the use of all the means at the disposal of the state to impose the interests of finance capital.

Based on these general guidelines, Dimitrov explains that “The development of fascism, and the fascist dictatorship itself, assume different forms in different countries, according to historical, social and economic conditions and to the national peculiarities, and the international position of the given country.” There are emblematic examples of fascism in Europe from the 1930s and 1940s, but these forms are neither the only ones nor are they exclusive. In Bolivian history we find important examples of fascism in the dictatorships of Banzer (1971-78) and García Meza (1980-81) that help to understand some of the peculiarities of fascism in our country.

The rise of fascism to power is not simply a change of government, nor is it an incidental event but it is the product of a process of the accumulation of forces, furthermore the separation of fascism from state power does not imply its total defeat. In Bolivia the embryo of fascism has been brewing for decades, during the first years of the Morales government (2006-2009) it had a high degree of articulation and unleashed furious attacks to defend its privileges against the threat posed by the ‘October Agenda’ (the the main demands of the Gas War in 2003 that were the nationalization and industrialization of natural resources and the call for a Constituent Assembly). During these years of confrontation between the popular bloc and the ‘media luna’ (‘half-moon – the name by which the articulation of the authorities and civic-business entities of the eastern and southern regions of the country was known) the country witnessed the attacks of paramilitary groups, massacres, seizures of institutions, economic sabotage and media bombardment. The populist national government of MAS-IPSP had two options: to advance together with the mobilized people to crush fascism or to negotiate with it. Negotiations behind the backs of the popular movement gave rise to a series of concessions and agreements between the MAS-IPSP leadership and the oligarchy in order to pacify the country, leaving the paramilitary groups, and those responsible for ordering and carrying out the massacres and sabotage unpunished.

The political crisis that erupted in 2019 had a series of causes, including the inter-imperialist dispute for control of strategic natural resources (lithium from Uyuni and iron from Mutún), the demobilization and co-optation of union leaders by the MAS-IPSP government and the accumulation of discontent of the popular sectors whose legitimate demands were repressed instead of being resolved. For months, the main spokespersons of the right-wing opposition

were preparing the discourse of fraud, appropriating the slogan of respect for the referendum of February 21, 2016 in which more than 51% of the population rejected the modification of the Constitution that would have allowed a new re-election of Evo Morales. They worked hard to construct an imaginary fight against corruption, of defense of the Republic and of national symbols as an apparent opposition to the Plurinational State; they instrumentalized regionalisms and religious convictions. The approval of the Social Companies Law was another key element in the accumulation of reactionary forces, despite the fact that it never was applied, the possibility of workers forming a social company if the employer declared bankruptcy was an unacceptable threat in a pre-crisis context. As in 1971, the oligarchy raised as a slogan the defense of private property, of the company in order to group the small owners around it, once again the threat of communism served as a pretext for organization.

When the Supreme Electoral Court suddenly decided to cut off the transmission of the electoral results, there was already a tinderbox, a systematic accumulation of forces that made it possible for reaction to rise. While the bourgeois parties that had governed alongside MAS-IPSP for the last 10 years limited themselves to press statements, fascism was already activating its paramilitary groups to impose terror. To ‘regain democracy’ it was necessary to get rid of all the country’s democratic institutions; the police mutiny and the insubordination of the military high command was the product of large payments from a business group to commanders of both institutions (this fact was publicly admitted). The appeasement by MAS-IPSP in 2009 not only allowed the oligarchy unprecedented monetary gains but also kept their paramilitary structures intact, waiting for the moment to reactivate.

The hours after the resignation of Evo Morales and Alvaro García Linera were key to building a story of legitimization of the coup; the combination of paramilitary attacks with house burnings, kidnappings and torture, along with a bombardment of the media and social networks with fake news full of racist hatred (‘the Indians are coming to attack the city’) led to the militarization of the country by an illegal decision of the joint chiefs. Reaction managed to mobilize important sectors of the petty-bourgeoisie to demand and support militarization. The coup in 2019 was not a palatace coup, fascism managed to captivate large sectors of the petty-

bourgeoisie, they managed to build what Dimitrov describes as the image of an “honest and incorruptible government.”

When the coup took place, the PCR characterized it thus:

“The new ruling regime represents the most reactionary, conservative, fascist and religious fundamentalist oligarchy, which responds to the interests of US and European imperialism. The illegitimate regime that assumed control of state power on November 12, 2019, led by right-wing senator Jeanine Áñez, is an organic representative of the financial oligarchy (agro-industrial, livestock and banking), strongly influenced by Christian religious fundamentalism.”

The year of government, the measures taken, the public statements, the appointments of ministers confirm the objectivity of the Party’s characterization: the coup d’état gave way to a government of the financial oligarchy at the service of US and European imperialism. The Áñez regime unleashed State terrorism against the mobilized people: the Sacaba and Senkata massacres with more than 35 deaths and hundreds of wounded, the thousands of political prisoners and political persecution by the Ministry of Government.

After the massacres, once their control of the state power was consolidated, the process of ‘pacification and reconciliation’ began, which was essentially a negotiation between the MAS-IPSP parliamentary leadership and the regime; they agreed to call new elections with a new Electoral Court, in which MAS-IPSP could participate as a party without Evo Morales as a presidential candidate. This negotiation allowed Parliament to reconvene, MAS-IPSP still had a majority in both houses, but its benches were in permanent internal conflicts. The existence or not of a parliament is not a reference in itself to determine the constitutionality of a government, nor does it define whether a regime is fascist. Dimitrov explains that there are countries in which fascism maintains a parliament with a certain legality to resolve differences within the bourgeois camp itself, while in other countries at certain times it tries to combine the terrorist dictatorship with a “crude sham of parliamentarism”.

When Áñez entered the Palacio Quemado (Bolivian presidential palace until 2018, symbol of the Republic) with the bible in her hands, around her were the main political representatives of the different bourgeois and oligarchic factions, almost all of whom gradually distanced themselves from the regime. The struggles within the ruling classes arise for a number of reasons, for example

divergent interests as a result of the origin of capital (the differences between the mining, industrial and agro-industrial sectors), particular interests of each financial group, antagonistic regionalist visions with centralism and tactical disagreements between conciliators and confrontational ones. These internal struggles have an important historical background; in 1981 the Santa Cruz oligarchy and the ADN party under the command of Banzer broke with the dictatorship of García Meza in opposition to the construction of the Sugar Plant in San Buenaventura (La Paz) that was not in their economic interests; this break without remedy weakened the García Meza regime but ensured a privileged place for private businessmen in the negotiations for the transition to representative democracy.

The pandemic reached Bolivia two months before the agreed date for the general elections and was the perfect justification for postponing the elections and re-militarizing the country. While the oligarchy, by supreme decree, approved modifications to financial regulations, the liberation of exports, the expansion of the use of GMOs, land titling for landowners and IMF loans, they launched a package of anti-popular measures to “confront the health crisis.” The lack of state management capacity led to an educational disaster; hundreds of thousands of children did not have access to education, discontent turned into national mobilizations in defense of education. Throughout the country there were massive layoffs of workers, and due to sanitary restrictions thousands of families living from informal trade were left without sources of income. By the month of August, the government once again suspended the elections and the mobilizations at the national level intensified under the slogan of “elections now,” which soon became the demand for the resignation of the de facto government of Ñeiz. The response of fascism was to unleash its paramilitary groups in coordination with the police to repress, while the de facto government carried out a campaign of provocation by taking a militarized caravan of oxygen tanks throughout the country in order to unblock the roads.

Faced with the rise of popular mobilization, once again the parliamentary and trade union leadership of MAS-IPSP returned to negotiate with the regime to set a date for the elections and demobilize the people. The call for elections for October was only possible due to the force and combativeness of the popular movement, once again curtailed by MAS-IPSP. In the negotiations, MAS-IPSP not only committed to demobilize the popular movement but also nego-

tiated trials of responsibilities (in Bolivia, the only way to prosecute a President or a minister for their acts as a government is the trial of responsibilities, to start the trial you must have the support of $\frac{2}{3}$ of Parliament); despite having $\frac{2}{3}$ of Parliament, instead of approving the trials of responsibilities for the massacres and corruption, it limited itself to approving a report and a recommendation to the new Parliament, facilitating impunity for the coup plotters.

In the general elections of October 2020, the oligarchy failed to present a unitary candidate; at first they had projected Jeanine Áñez as the unitary candidate but her fiasco in managing the pandemic left her without opportunities, so she withdrew her candidacy. There were two strong candidates: Luis Fernando Camacho, civic leader of Santa Cruz from an oligarchic family with ultra-reactionary positions, and Carlos Mesa, former President with a conciliatory tendency linked to the press, mining capital and with strong roots in the urban petty-bourgeoisie. The regionalist struggles (Camacho won in the department of Santa Cruz, which has the largest population), the differences between conciliatory and confrontational positions and the interests of economic groups made the unity of the oligarchic bloc impossible. Despite having an Electoral Court that was a lackey of the regime and having militarized the electoral process, the vote for the Arce-Choquehuanca (MAS-IPSP) ticket as an expression of popular rejection of the regime was imposed in the first round. This electoral victory was not announced by the state but by the private media. After hours of delay, the coup bloc entered a



crisis without knowing how to react. Once again protests appeared throughout the country with the cry of fraud and groups even appeared at the gates of the barracks calling for a “military intervention to protect democracy.”

The weeks that passed between the election and the inauguration of the new government were full of tension and uncertainty; groups of retired soldiers demanded that their comrades assume power and the cabinet was left empty. Days before Arce took office, the US elections were held; according to public reports if Trump had have won the elections, there was a plan to maintain state power through another coup; the uncertainty in the heart of imperialism prevented the plan for a second coup from being implemented. But the electoral defeat of the 2019 coup d'état does not represent a definitive defeat of fascism; its withdrawal from the Palacio Quemado has led to an internal reorganization, establishing new hegemonies.

The subnational elections have served to reaffirm the leaders of the new hegemonic bloc of the oligarchy and bury the political representatives who did not respond to their interests. In the first round of the subnationals, Luis Fernando Camacho, one of the main promoters and funders of the coup, was elected governor of the department of Santa Cruz; Manfred Reyes Villa was elected mayor of Cochabamba, he was an aide in the military dictatorship of García Meza, a water privatizer and responsible for the massacre of January 11, 2007 in Cochabamba; and in La Paz, Ivan Arias, minister of the Áñez regime, was elected mayor. The arrests of Áñez and some of her ministers were ordered days after the first round, all were accused of crimes committed before and during the coup d'état, none were accused of crimes committed during the de facto government because the Parliament has not approved any trials of responsibility. The elected authorities were not arrested; moreover, elected officials of the MAS-IPSP and elected authorities of the coup bloc have met to coordinate the forthcoming administration. Only two leaders of the paramilitary groups have been arrested, one for drug trafficking and the other for graffiti.

The experience of 2009 is clear: there must be no negotiation with fascism, there is only one way out - the mobilized people must crush it. Concessions from the leading cliques may temporarily postpone the attacks of the fascist oligarchy, but they will not stop it. Today from the governorships and mayoralties, fascism is

rearticulating itself, keeping its sources of economic income intact; it still controls the mass media, its paramilitary groups remain unpunished and organized.

The ICMLPO, in the document *A revolutionary order is possible and necessary*, states that capitalism, on the one hand, resorts to the neoliberal model and fascist forms of political domination to ensure its control, and on the other hand, it resorts to neo-Keynesian policies to grant crumbs to the people. Faced with this false dilemma, there is a third possibility, which is the revolutionary way out. While revisionism in its different variants once again lends itself to being the tail of the populist government of MAS-IPSP under the false pretext of unity against imperialism and fascism, we communists clearly say that an anti-fascist or anti-imperialist does not concede over and over again to the class enemy. We are aware that the popular bloc has a main enemy that is the fascist and pro-imperialist oligarchy, but we consider that the only effective way to combat the enemy is with class independence. The unity of the people does not pass through pacts between cliques, but by building from below the National Liberation Front that fights fascism, imperialism and capitalism, with the clarity that only the mobilized people will crush the latent fascist threat.

April 2021

Covid-19, the Vaccine and Capitalist Greed

Since the SARS-CoV-2 virus was detected in late 2019 in China's Wuhan province, it has killed more than three million people worldwide. In the United States of America (USA) alone, the main and richest capitalist country on the planet, 568 thousand people have lost their lives due to Covid-19. Brazil comes second in the number of deaths, with a toll of 382,000.

In the midst of the 21th century, which is celebrated by the bourgeoisie as the era of the greatest technological developments, of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, of the Internet and of 5G, we are seeing a virus forcing governments to close borders, industries, trade, schools, prohibiting travel within the country and decreeing lockdowns and various curfews.

To justify their inability, the bourgeois governments argue that Covid-19 was unexpected for everyone. But this fallacy was unmasked when the second wave came, causing more deaths throughout the world, and a third wave and several mutations of the virus, which spread through dozens of countries.

In fact the Covid-19 virus is far from being inexplicable. For years, international scientists and organizations have been warning that the conditions imposed by capitalism on nature and on human beings, such as the global warming and the worsening of living conditions, cause the emergence of viruses that threaten human life itself. However, the ruling class, concerned with increasing its wealth, pretended to know nothing.

It should be noted that on October 30, 2020, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), an organization linked to the United Nations (UN), published a report entitled *Era of Pandemics*, in which it is stated that:

“There is no great mystery about the cause of the Covid-19 pandemic – or of any modern pandemic. The same human activities that cause the climate change and biodiversity loss also drive pandemic risk through their impacts on our environment. Changes in the way we use land; the expansion and intensification of agricul-

ture; and unsustainable trade, production and consumption disturb nature and increase contact between wildlife, livestock, pathogens and people. This is the path to pandemics”.

The report also highlights that 70% of emerging diseases in the world, such as Ebola and Zika, and almost all of the pandemics (influenza, HIV/AIDS, Covid-19) are zoonoses, that is, diseases caused by microbes, originally infected animals. And their outbreak among the people is accelerating: it is calculated that there are five new ones every year. The researchers estimate that there could be about 1.7 million viruses that are currently unknown and have as hosts mammals, in particular bats – as in the case of Covid-19 – or birds: “Of these, between 540,000 and 850,000 could make a leap of species and contaminate humans” (*O Estado de São Paulo* newspaper, October 30, 2020).

The authors of the report point out that we should not blame nature but should instead “understand that the upsurges of these diseases occurs because of the impacts we cause to the environment, where microbes are not disturbed. Deforestation, agricultural expansion, trafficking of animal bring us closer to them.”.

The report concludes that the response to diseases only after they emerge, in particular the rapid development and distribution of new vaccines and of therapeutic approaches, “is a slow and uncertain process that, in addition, does not avoid the widespread suffering of human beings”.

In turn, the director of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr. Maria Neira, explained in an interview to the newspaper *El País*, that “The cutting down of the forest to replace it with intensive and polluting agriculture cause profound transformations to the animals living in these places where humans had never entered before. Species with which we have had no contact and can transmit diseases begin to appear. Agriculture using fertilizers and pesticides that had never been used in this ecosystem changes the type of vectors capable of transmitting viruses. Deforestation is one form of eliminating an environmental barrier between species that protects us in a natural way. A clear example of this phenomenon is that of the Ebola virus in the West African forests, which leapt from fruit bats to humans and unleashed the contagion. All the more serious is the fact that the same thing happened with AIDS and SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome). About 70% of the last epidemic outbreaks that affect us have their origin in deforestation and in this

violent break with ecosystems and their species.” (*El País*, February 6, 2021).

In fact there are between 540,000 and 850,000 yet unknown viruses potentially able to infect humans and cause new pandemics. This is not a distant possibility: on February 20, Russia reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) the first cases of contamination in humans of a new strain of the avian influenza virus, called H5N8, after an outbreak of influenza struck the workplaces in December of last year. (*GI*, February 20, 2021)

Is the vaccine a public or private product?

When this tragedy that is causing deaths on all continents was announced, the ruling class first promised that “salvation” would come through the vaccine, the immunization of people and the destruction of the virus. He said that we would thus return to the “old peace” and the “old normal”.

In support of the chorus of governments, a host of experts declared that never before had a vaccine been developed so quickly. They tried to hide the obsolete and outdated character of the capitalist regime, which is always presented as a perfect and efficient system.

Seeing the first people being vaccinated, the world population was filled with hope and joy, believing that the Covid-19 pandemic was really near the end.

The truth, unfortunately, is different. The pharmaceutical laboratories are, in their immense majority, private companies that belong to small groups of capitalists and aim to provide profits to their owners (shareholders). The consequence of this model is an unfair and unequal distribution of the vaccine in the world.

The fact is that the richest countries, although they constitute only 16% of the world population, bought more than 70% of the doses that will be produced this year. The United States bought vaccines for 230% of its population, and will receive, in the coming months, a total of 1.8 billion doses. Let us remember that the population of the United States is 330 million. Canada has bought six times more vaccines than the country’s population, and the United Kingdom has announced that it will vaccinate the entire adult population by July.

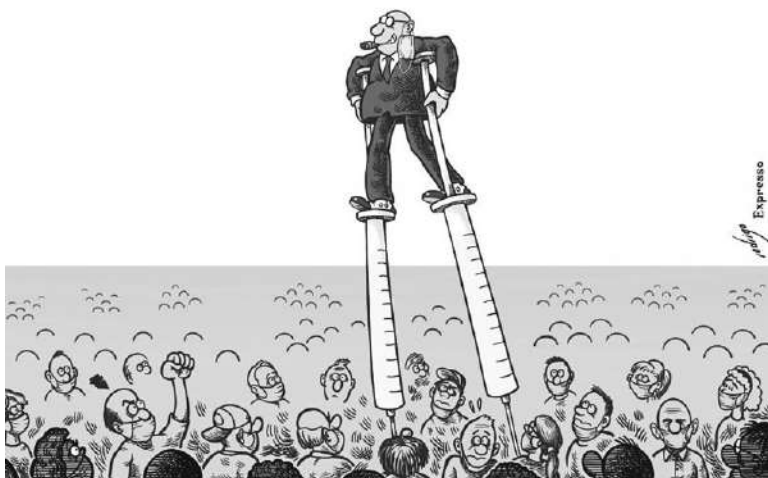
Meanwhile, on February 18, the United Nations (UN) warned that only 10 countries (the richest) administered 75% of all doses of

the vaccine and that 130 countries have not yet received any vaccines. According to the WHO, this reality will continue: 90% of the population in 70 countries have virtually no chance of being vaccinated in 2021.

Not even the words of the general director of the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, that “the world is experiencing a catastrophic moral failure, and that the price of this failure will be paid for with the lives of the poorest countries,” were sufficient to sensitize the world bourgeoisie and their governments to cause them to change this situation. Nothing is above sacrosanct private property and the relentless pursuit to enrich a wealthy minority. In short, selfish bourgeois ideology reveals all its wickedness in preventing billions of human beings from being vaccinated because they have no money to buy it.

Profit at any cost

Thus, shortly after the Covid-19 pandemic was declared in early 2020, a dozen powerful pharmaceutical companies began a giant commercial operation of selling shares to make billions. At the same time, separately, each laboratory carried out research and kept its discoveries about the virus under lock and key. Humanity has been deprived of important information, and the scientists involved in research have been prohibited from giving interviews under the so-called confidentiality clauses in the contracts they have signed. After eleven months, the vaccine was announced, a period in which



more than two million people died.

Nevertheless, some questions must be asked:

If all scientists had worked collectively, as a team, sharing their studies and discoveries, how long would it have taken to produce the vaccine?

If the laboratories, two in China, one in the United Kingdom, three in the United States, two in Russia, etc., instead of hiding their experiences and research from their competitors, shared them in favor of humanity, wouldn't the vaccine be more effective?

If the scientists worked together, sharing knowledge and forming a large world center with the goal of saving lives, what would have happened?

Isn't it clear that, in this way, we would have had the vaccine more quickly and with greater effectiveness, and that this would have saved thousands of lives?

It is clear that a vaccine resulting from this collective work could not be private property, that it would be a common good made available to all peoples, to the entire world population, whether they lived in Africa, Europe, the Americas or Asia.

Furthermore, none of the 13 vaccines produced give protection from all the strains of SARS-Cov-2, and the Covid-19 virus has undergone several mutations.¹

Let us look at two examples:

On February 7, the South African Ministry of Health, after taking note that the AstraZeneca vaccine does not protect against the coronavirus variant existing in that country, decided to suspend vaccination.

In the city of Osnabrück, Germany, 14 elderly people who received two doses of the vaccine produced by Pfizer-BioNTech, tested positive for the coronavirus variant B117, first discovered in the United Kingdom.

Based on these and other cases, the scientists concluded that most vaccines could prevent the virus from causing serious illness, but it does not prevent the person from being infected or even transmitting the virus. It is also worth remembering that no vaccine in the world guarantees total protection; while the virus is circulat-

¹ The coronavirus variants considered most transmissible are: the United Kingdom variant (B.11.7), the Brazilian variant, originated in the Amazon, (P1), and the South African variant (501y.V2)

ing and undergoing mutations, there is the possibility of people who have been vaccinated becoming infected. In fact, many believe that due to the insufficient vaccination and the emergence of new more transmissible and aggressive variants of the coronavirus, the so-called herd immunity will not be achieved before 2022.

Despite all this, the capitalist pharmaceutical industry, counting on the complicity of the governments, refuses to share its studies on the vaccine, preventing society from having a better and more efficient immunization. In fact, they present this anarchy stemming from capitalist competition as a lever for progress when, in fact, it is an obstacle to development and causes entirely preventable deaths.

Private laboratories and the profits from diseases

The orgy at the stock exchanges since the pandemic began proves that the owners of the world pharmaceutical industry have been moved by no humanist sentiment and no advancement in science. In fact, with each increase in the number of deaths, the shareholders of the laboratories celebrated the rise in the value of their shares. Stephane Bancel, one of the owners of the Moderna laboratory in the USA, explained this idolized “animal spirit”: “When I prepared my plan of stock sales, we had not yet injected anyone with the vaccine. I didn’t know anything” (*Neofeed, May 25, 2020*)

On November 20, 2020, after the death toll exceeded 1,300,000, and before the production of any vaccine, the *Investnews* website printed a euphoric headline: “Vaccine pharmacists have already gained 97 billion in the stock market”.

In February, after more than two million people in the world had died, the excitement continued:

“Billions in profits: pharmaceutical companies’ shares increased in value by more than 1,000% in the stock market”. “The pharmaceutical companies that have devoted themselves to Covid-19 vaccine research have made billions in profits in the stock market” (JB, February 15, 2021)

The Chinese company Sinovac, based in Beijing but is registered in the tax haven of Antigua and Barbados, sold 15% of its shares to Sino Biopharmaceutical Limited for 2.6 billion reales (1 real = \$0.18 – *translator’s note*).

Public money finances private laboratories

It is worth mentioning that in addition to making high profits from the billions in the increase in value of their shares in the stock exchanges, the powerful laboratories of the pharmaceutical industry received billions in public money for research on Covid-19.

A report published by the KENUP Foundation, a European organization that monitors health research, revealed that in 11 months of research on SARS-Cov-2, the governments have invested \$93 billion dollars in private laboratories. 32% of that money was from the US government, 24% from the governments of France, the United Kingdom and Germany, and 13% from Japan and South Korea.² (*BBC, December 16, 2020*)

Therefore, the “biggest stimulation” to accelerate the investments of the laboratories was the public financing, which destroys the legend that without private initiative the vaccine would not have been discovered.

There is more: although they have funded private laboratories, the governments of the imperialist countries, proving their immense subordination to the capitalist class, have signed contracts with secret clauses that prevent them from having knowledge of the studies, from disclosing the price paid for each dose of vaccine or from demanding delivery on the established dates, in addition to exempting laboratories from any adverse effect of vaccines. It is worth noting that the proposal defended by India in the World Trade Organization (WTO) to, in the face of the global calamity, revoke the patent for the Covid-19 vaccine, was immediately rejected and repudiated by the imperialist governments. This is further proof that the current governments are acting as true servants of capital; in return they receive good salaries and bribes for their parties in election campaigns.

² Johnson & Johnson, the world market leader in hygiene and cleaning products, and one of the largest companies in the world, received 100% public funding to produce its vaccine. The Anglo-Swedish Laboratory Astra-Zeneca, a leader in the sale of cancer drugs, for oncology, received 80%, in addition to the collaboration of Oxford University. Pfizer, one of the 500 largest global companies, joined the German laboratory BionTech, and still received 65% of public money. (*BBC, December 16, 2020*)

The price of human life under capitalism

In reality, the vaccines, as well as the rest of the medicines produced by laboratories for diseases caused by capitalist society itself, have made the pharmaceutical industry a highly profitable enterprise.

In fact, the growth of unemployment, the increase in the exploitation of the workers, the increase in the working day, the lack of leisure, the suffering imposed on those who do not get a job and who do not see any prospect of improving the lives of their families, are increasing the number of diseases in the world. Covid-19 is, thus, another one in this long list of diseases that affect human beings in the modern capitalist society. The so-called flu market, for example, although the vaccine has been in existence for decades, produces several billion dollars a year. In other words, medicines, as well as vaccines, produce immense profits for the pharmaceutical industry and the billionaires who own shares in these companies. In other words, while for 99% of the world population, diseases and viruses are a torment and mean the destruction of entire families and immense suffering, for the capitalist class all this pain is just an excellent opportunity to make money and enrich themselves.

Such is the law of capitalism: whoever has money is entitled to a vaccine, and whoever doesn't has to wait for death to come from hunger, from the Covid-19 virus or any other disease. After all, how many have already died because they have not been vaccinated?

What matters to the lords of the world, to the powerful, to the class of exploiters, is to increase their wealth even more, to plunder nations and to exploit the workers.

Stop capitalist carnage

Such a reality imposes on anyone concerned with the survival of humanity, to ask themselves what can be done in order to, instead of burying human beings, destroy this archaic and rotten capitalist system. After all, it is not just viruses, bacteria and diseases that capitalist imperialism imposes on the peoples of the world.

In effect, capitalist globalization, instead of improving the lives of the workers, has increased unemployment, misery, and spread hundreds of viruses on a planetary scale. According to the ILO (International Labor Organization), 255 million jobs were terminated during the pandemic and 436 million companies were affected.

Worldwide, 75% of the workers do not have access to protections such as health insurance or unemployment insurance. A total of two billion workers are employed in the so-called informal economy with no fixed salary, social protection or any rights. Of this total, 740 million are women who, during the first month of the pandemic, saw their income plummet by 60%.

Among the millions of unemployed workers, there are refugees from imperialist wars and hunger, who live in miserable conditions in the concentration camps of Europe and the United States, separated from their families and under strict rationing of food, water, and deprived of visits and the use of telephones.

However, in addition to unemployment, there is also the epidemic of hunger.

According to Feeding America, the largest organization that fights hunger in the United States with 200 food banks across the country, 54 million people, both adults and children, one in six inhabitants do not have enough to eat. In the richest city in the world and economic capital of the USA, New York, one and a half million inhabitants form huge lines every day in search of food to survive.

In the world, according to the Global Humanitarian Vision, at least 736 million people are in extreme poverty, and between 6 and 12 thousand people die of hunger each day, while trillions of dollars are invested in stocks, derivatives, public bonds or cryptocurrencies. Here is the reality: hundreds of millions of human beings do not have the money to buy food, let alone spend it on masks or hand sanitizer.

However, in the same year that millions of people died with Covid, the 100 companies considered at the top of the stock market increased their market value by \$3 trillion. Still, in the midst of the gigantic growth of deaths, hunger, misery and unemployment and confronting one of the greatest pandemics and crises faced by humanity, the top ten billionaires increased their wealth by US \$540 billion from March 18 to December 31, 2020. (Oxfam, report *The Inequality Virus*. 2021).

In China it was no different: the joint fortune of Chinese billionaires increased by more than 40% from April 2019 to July 2020. In total, the richest citizens of this country attained a wealth of US \$1.7 trillion.

This is the picture of the capitalist system: on the one hand, overproduction of cars and smartphones; on the other, billions of

people without housing, water, sewage, food, and now also without a vaccine. Furthermore, as shown by the constant displays of military might and investments in the war industry, the growing rivalry between imperialist countries, particularly between the USA and China, makes the possibility of a new world war real.

The facts clearly demonstrate: the existence of human beings, the survival of humanity, depends on the change of the current capitalist system, the end of bourgeois rule and the shameful exploitation of man by man. Under capitalism, even when there is some progress, such as the vaccine, it takes place at the cost of millions of deaths and benefits only the wealthy class. This is the dilemma in which humanity finds itself: it either lives to feed a minority of capitalist vampires, assassins of life and of the planet, or it revolts and organizes itself to build a new, truly just society.

All workers in the world are suffering this capitalist oppression and exploitation. They do not know, however, what is the origin of these evils and whether it is possible to end this grief and misery. That is why, to achieve their freedom, the new and old generations around the world need to undertake revolutionary agitation with more energy in order to rapidly develop in the masses, the consciousness of the need for the socialist revolution. As Lenin said, it is a task that has enormous difficulties, but every minute dedicated to this work will be rewarded “by driving the last nail into the coffin of capitalist society”.

April 2021

The Struggles of the People's Youth in the Sahara Sahel Sub-Region of West Africa against the Military Interventions and Occupations of the Imperialist Powers: Rejection of Neocolonial Imperialist Rule

In recent times, the movements of struggle have experienced significant growth despite the Covid-19 health crisis that has been used by the neocolonial powers to quell the people's struggles. In the different countries street we have been taking part in street demonstrations denouncing the military interventions of the imperialist powers that are developing under the pretext of fighting against the terrorist attacks of the jihadist groups. The peoples of Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, etc., based on their experiences, are bitterly aware of the resurgence of these attacks and their dramatic consequences for the populations, who are forced to leave their villages and go to refugee camps, where they face hunger, health problems and insecurity.

The peoples know very well the situation: these foreign troops are estimated today at 5,100 soldiers and equipped with a military arsenal since the Serval-Barkhane operation and the establishment of the G5 under the rule of French imperialism. The terrorist attacks are continuing with their series of brutal massacres against the civilian populations. The troops are sent as cannon fodder while the high command of the Defense and Security Forces hide in their capitals, where they do business through all kinds of trafficking and economic crimes.

In these demonstrations to demand the departure of foreign military troops from the Sahel and Africa, the young people are particularly active and are facing the forces of repression of neocolonial states.

Here are a few examples: In Mali, various demonstrations were organized to demand the departure of French military troops, such as the one on September 23, 2020, in the streets of the capital Bamako. The youths brandished banners with slogans against French imperialism. In the northern and central regions, faced with terrorist

attacks, the populations, especially women and young people, organized a demonstration in front of the MINUSMA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali) facilities in Sévaré, near Mopti. They attacked the warehouses of the camp and took food and equipment.

In Niger, despite government bans, several democratic organizations organized marches and meetings: the Citizen's Alternative Space, Turn the Page in Niger and Pan-Africanist Urgency. These demonstrations took place in the capital, Niamey, and in other cities of the country. Young people, particularly pupils and students, actively participated and denounced the situation by brandishing banners with slogans against the military presence of the imperialist powers on the national territory: "No to the presence of foreign military bases on our territory," among others.

In Burkina Faso, over the years, the anti-imperialist days of protest have become the occasion for an internationalist meeting of young people from different African countries and other European countries, especially France, against imperialist domination. The revolutionary democratic movement and the Revolutionary Democratic Youth Organization have put on the agenda of recent meetings the struggles against the military interventions carried out under the pretext of the fight against terrorism. They have clearly and forcefully expressed the need to link the struggle against terrorism to the struggle against imperialism.

The slogan "Foreign armed troops, out of Burkina, out of the Sahel and out of Africa!" is being chanted more and more publicly at the demonstrations. The presence of jihadist armed groups is intrinsically linked to the maneuvers and actions of the imperialist powers, which use them in their strategy of occupation of the territories. Their complicity due to their concrete actions in this area is increasingly perceived by the peoples of the Sahel Sahara sub-region in West Africa.

As the Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta (PCRV) clearly put it: "The jihadist terrorist movements are the product of the international and sub-regional policy of international imperialism, especially French imperialism. The first groups, in Egypt with the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Bin Laden group in Afghanistan, were formed, trained and financed by the CIA and the French DGSE to fight against Soviet social-imperialism in Afghanistan, and the nationalist power of Nasser in Egypt. The current jihadism

in the Sahel-Saharan strip has regained strength thanks to the French, U.S. and British intervention to destroy the Libyan state that was an obstacle to their plans.”

The context and challenges of the mobilizations and struggles of the people’s youth in the Sahel Sahara sub region of West Africa

These mobilizations and struggles of the people’s youth are taking place in a context of the deepening of the crisis of the system of world imperialism and their serious repercussions in the neocolonies. The young people in the cities and in rural areas face misery, neglect, illiteracy, hunger, thirst, precariousness and the agony of mass unemployment without any perspective within the failed neocolonial system. . They experience, in their own flesh the violence of this system, which has further demonstrated its notorious inability to ensure a dignified life for the peoples and the youth in the increasingly grave situation of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The youth from different African countries are at the forefront of the mobilizations and street demonstrations, to demand better living and study conditions, the right to work, democratic freedoms, the freedom to come and go, the right to health. They denounce the crimes of blood and economic crimes of the bourgeois factions, those who are in power and those who are not, , for plunging countries into reactionary civil wars and generalized chaos, in their rivalries to extend or to maintain the power of their neocolonial state.

Some young people chose the path of emigration to Europe and risk their lives by crossing the Mediterranean or the desert, putting themselves in the claws of the mafia-controlled networks. They are also the target of repressive and police measures implemented by the member countries of the European Union, which criminalize the migrants through massive human rights violations.

Faced with these multiple economic and social problems, the young people in the West African countries, as well as the people’s youth throughout the world, are developing multilateral struggles to demand democratic and social rights. These struggles are increasingly taking on an insurrectionary character with violent clashes against the Defense and Security Forces, which has caused many killings and injuries, as the repressive forces fired live ammunition at the protesters, among whom were adolescent youth from 12 to 14 years. There are many examples of criminal violence, such as the

powerful demonstrations in Senegal in March 2021 against the arbitrary detention of an opponent of the reactionary Macky Sall regime, for democratic freedoms and better living conditions. In Mali, the youth have been at the forefront of insurrectionary movements against the corrupt Ibrahim Boubacar Kéita puppet regime, and the imperialist domination, particularly French domination. These struggles saw their momentum shattered by a military coup.

In Burkina Faso, the MPP (People's Movement for Progress) regime of Roch Kaboré, has death squads that sent death threats and carried out targeted assassinations of activists, democrats and revolutionaries. This is how two activists from the Democratic Youth Organization (ODJ), Fahadou Cissé and Hama Balima, were coldly murdered in the province of Yagha after receiving death threats from local authorities and certain elements of the Defense and Security Forces.

These struggles of the people's youth are basically struggles against the failed neocolonial system. Although they are often spontaneous, they have an anti-imperialist dimension. They need the far-sighted leadership of the party of the working class to prevent them from being diverted by reformist and opportunist organizations of all kinds or manipulated by factions of the reactionary bourgeoisie.

The youth movement needs the correct democratic anti-imperialist and revolutionary guidance of the leadership of the



Marxist-Leninist party of the working class.

Since its foundation on October 1, 1978, the Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta (PCR/V) has worked tirelessly in the foundation of the Communist Youth Union of Upper Volta (UJCHV), which took place on October 1, 1980. As the Party clearly said in its program: “The Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta fights and will fight with all its might to associate the energy and revolutionary aspirations of the youth with the energy and aspirations of the working class to educate and lead it, through the class struggle, the struggle against reformism, revisionism in all its forms, opportunism and careerism, on the correct path that leads to national and social liberation.” The UJCHV is the right arm of the Party. It brings the alternative of the Party to the heart of the different layers of the youth of our country (working youth, peasantry, pupils, students, young workers from various sectors and young people from the informal sector). The Communist Youth Union urges the people’s youth to join their struggle with the perspective of the National, Democratic and Popular Revolution (RNDP). The UJCHV works to help the youth grasp and apply the political platform of action for a revolutionary change proposed by the PCR/V in its call to the people and to the people’s youth to organize “to expel imperialism, particularly French imperialism, to overthrow the classes and social layers that serve it as a base of support in our country, to destroy the neocolonial state apparatus, to dismantle the foreign military bases and to expel the forces of imperialist occupation from our country”.

This alternative is also viable for the peoples of the Sahel Sahara sub-region of West Africa who are facing the attacks by jihadist terrorist groups, the military interventions and the occupation of their territories by the military troops of the imperialist powers. It is imperative to develop the solidarity of struggle among the peoples and people’s youth of West Africa through initiatives such as the anti-imperialist days of protest of West Africa.

The platform of anti-imperialist and patriotic struggle of the people’s youth of West Africa proposed by the Communist Youth Union of Upper Volta constitutes a pertinent and healthy step today.

For a Platform of Anti-Imperialist and Patriotic Struggle of the People's Youth of West Africa

- Considering that the domination by the international imperialist powers, France, Great-Britain and the United States in particular, constitutes the key factor that keeps our countries in the appalling state of poverty, of economic, military, scientific and cultural dependency;
- Considering that this domination is possible thanks to the reactionary and sold out social layers and classes that constitute a base of support to the imperialist powers, with whom they organize the blatant looting and exploitation of the African working masses;
- Considering that the mechanisms of imperialist domination (economic, military, cultural, etc.) are established sometimes through secret and leonine agreements in consonance with the spirit of the colonial pact;
- Considering that the people's youth have no future or prospect under the current conditions (political, economic, etc.) other than to struggle in order to break with the neocolonial system, the only road is the change that leads to genuine social progress;
- Considering that the African peoples aspire for this real change to bring a better tomorrow, they commit themselves to participating daily in the multifaceted struggles for it;
- Considering that the African people's youth have enormous revolutionary potentialities and struggle with determination alongside the peoples who are fighting for their national and social emancipation;
- Aware that African people's youth should participate in this process of people's struggles for genuine change without vanguard pretensions;
- Aware that the people's youth of West Africa, despite their diversity (workers, unemployed, students and pupils, young enlisted people, girls and boys, etc.) face the same problems (miserable living conditions, underemployment, unemployment, absence of freedom, criminalization of struggles, difficulties of access to science and technology, difficulties of access to land, to credits, to real leisure activities, etc.) and should imperatively unite to form a bloc with the people;

We, girls and boys, democratic, patriotic and revolutionary youth, convinced that the only solution is the struggle on a just and organized basis, commit ourselves to carry out the following Anti-Imperialist Struggle Platform:

On the Political and Military Level

1. To fight against imperialist domination, in particular French, English and U.S. domination, and their local allies, that is, the reactionary and sold out social classes and layers that serve as a base of support in our region and our respective countries;
2. To fight against neocolonialism that plunges the youth and people into misery and the absence of prospects;
3. To denounce all the agreements and compromises, including secret leonine agreements established among the different reactionary powers and the imperialist powers;
4. To denounce the military bases of the imperialist powers (France, the United Kingdom, the U.S. in particular) and demand their dismantling, because that have, as their real function, to attack the peoples in struggle; they increase the insecurity and the risks of jihadist terrorism (for instance the attacks in Bamako, Ouagadougou, Grand-Bassam, etc.);
5. To support the people’s struggles against oppression and exploitation and help establish good neighborly relations on the basis of equality and genuine regional integration.

On the Economic and Social Level

1. To fight for monetary sovereignty and break the dependence on French imperialism that has taken as hostage the CFA franc (more than 14,000 million francs from the BECEAO zone (Central Bank of the States of West Africa) and BEAC (Bank of Central Africa States), blocked in the operation account at the level of the French treasury in 2011);
2. To denounce the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) as a strategy to keep the African countries underdeveloped and dependent;
3. To fight to ensure the control and exploitation of the natural resources, particularly in the mining sector, for the benefit of the peoples of Africa;

4. To fight against the seizure of agricultural lands, ensuring that the land belongs to those who work it, that is, to small tillers;
5. To denounce the Structural Adjustment Plan (SAP) and its weak copies, whatever they are called (CSLP, Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development, National Plan of Economic and Social Development, etc.) under which they are presented.

On the Cultural, Scientific and Technical Level

1. To fight for democratic access to science and technology for the children of the people;
2. To fight against the sabotage of the training of the people's youth with inadequate and liberal educational reforms (PAS, LMD) that do not take into account the concrete reality;
3. To denounce the institutions such as CAMES (African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education), a club of rascals and their friends, which suffocates young talents through a medieval education system to form a group of mandarins.

Brave people's youth of West Africa, girls and boys of all categories,

You who are fighting bravely for justice and freedom but who are without perspective under the current political system;

You who are hit by unemployment and the lack of prospects to fulfill yourself as young people.

Let us mobilize around this platform of anti-imperialist and patriotic struggle so that together with the peoples of the sub-region, we shall expel all the imperialist powers (U.S., French, British, Chinese, etc.) from our entire region, in order to let the peoples of West Africa take their destiny into their own hands.

Long live the anti-imperialist days of struggle of West Africa!

Solidarity in the struggle for change, because another world is possible!

Youth is life and "those who live are those who fight"!

The future is ours!

Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta

March 2021

Constitutional Convention: “Let’s Change Everything so that Nothing Changes”

The Social Outbreak of October 2019 shook the foundations of bourgeois democracy and the economic system controlled by the big monopolies, and endangered the whole stability of the capitalist system. It was not a revolution, given its spontaneous nature, the lack of direction and its eminently petty-bourgeois class composition. It was rather an anarchic protest, without valid spokespersons with whom to negotiate, which paralyzed the large cities and the industrial centers: Santiago, Valparaíso and Concepción.

This mass movement began to take shape long before its spontaneous and surprising emergence. It originated at the beginning of the year 2000 with the definitive turn towards the neoliberal model implemented by the government of Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet (Socialist Party). In 2001, there was a radical change in the economic policies. The Central Bank declared the free flow of capital and freed the exchange rate, leaving the economy at the mercy of the ups and downs of the international market and its crises (1999-2002, 2008-2009 and 2013 -2017). The GDP fell from 7% to 4%, which brought about a weakening in the distribution of income from 5.5 to 3.5.

These neoliberal policies had a direct impact on the quality of life of the workers and especially on their access to education, health care and the pension system, which up to 2020 had fallen by 16.49%. As a result, a series of mass citizens’ mobilizations began: in 2006, the “Revolution of the Penguins”, a protest by high school students for free and quality education, in 2009; the “Patagonia without Dams” citizens’ movement against the hydroelectric projects; in 2011, the “March of the Umbrellas”, a student protest that continued with the demands to improve education; in 2016, the NO + AFP (Administrators of Pension Funds) citizens’ movement that calls for the end of the individually funded pension system and for a shared solidarity system; and in 2018, the women’s student mobilization. The call to action was massive, and the movement at its peak brought together 400,000 people in the capital, all led by social organizations without a major presence of the political parties.

The parliament received these demands with the promise to legislate accordingly, but all the bills aimed at satisfying the demands were blocked by the parliament with never-ending discussions and modifications, and in the end the bills were frozen. The conjunction of all these factors led to a quantitative succession of mobilizations and protests, of apathy towards the political parties and a growing electoral abstention, which gave way to the qualitative leap of the Social Outbreak.

A Consensual Way Out

Faced with the possibility of an economic disaster, the pro-business government of Sebastián Piñera called on the opposition to save bourgeois democracy. All the opposition parties, Social Democracy, Christian Democracy and the Broad Front accepted the invitation to the dialogue, with the exception of the revisionist Communist Party. On December 6, the government and the opposition developed a formula to save the bourgeois state and its government: a constitutional reform, the “Agreement for Peace and for the New Constitution”, which planned a plebiscite to elect a Constitutional Convention to draft the new constitution, to replace the 1980 Constitution adopted at the height of the Pinochet dictatorship.

The announcement of the holding of this plebiscite led to a way out of the crisis. It damped down the protest, since the erosion of the movement, together with the increasingly violent confrontations of anarchist and lumpen sectors, led to the alienation of the petty bourgeoisie. They found an answer to their multiple demands, reinforced by the promises made by Social Democracy that a new constitution would resolve all the problems that had dragged on for decades.

For this purpose, a technical commission was chosen, among the parties that signed the agreement, to define the shape that the convention would have and the type of electoral system to be adopted. This commission is made up of 14 lawyers, constitutional experts and / or political scientists, seven from the government and seven from the opposition. Many of them are linked to large economic groups, such as Arturo Fermandois, a lobbyist for large companies such as Cencosud, the Banking Association and the Chilean Chamber of Commercial Centers, and Gastón Gómez, who represented the interests of the AFP Association, the Chilean Shipowners Association and Vapores Austral, a South American steamship line.

The Rules of the Game

A 2/3 quorum was established, that is, of 100% of the Convention, a sector that obtains 33%+1 of votes is enough to defeat any initiative voted for by a majority, and therefore, if a majority votes to eliminate the AFPs, a minority sector that is against this idea would be able to stop the initiative.

According to Article 135 of Law 21,200, the current Constitution will remain in force while the Convention is in place. Sovereignty resides in the authorities established by the Constitution, the Parliament, Constitutional Court, Supreme Court and the government. Finally, the New Constitution will not be able to modify the signed and executed judicial decisions, as well as the international treaties ratified by Chile that are in force. Thus, it will not be possible to interfere with the large foreign monopolies, allied to the large national business owners, their investments in the AFPs, in health care, education, natural and strategic resources, etc.

In accordance with Article 141, the convention delegates as well as the representatives will be chosen in the 155 electoral districts according to the same system that governs the election of representatives, the D’Hondt Coefficient [a form of proportional representation – *translator’s note*], or distributing seats. This coefficient favors large conglomerates since, regardless of the vote of each member of the list, seats will be assigned according to the votes obtained by the complete list. This creates the paradox that candidates with 1.5% of the votes can be elected compared to a smaller alliance or an independent with more votes. Also special “seats” were given to indigenous peoples and for gender parity to send a message of inclusion in order to distract the attention from



Piñeda officiates at the call for the constitutional referendum

the excluding nature of the electoral system.

Law No. 21,200, promulgated by Piñera on December 23, 2019, shielded the agreement by modifying Chapter XV of the current Constitution and by developing a body of rules to carry out the constitutional process, called: “On the procedure to prepare a New Political Constitution of the Republic.” This means that the constitutional delegates will not be able to discuss and approve their own operating regulations.

With all of the above considerations, it is obvious that this Constitutional Convention is far from being a Constituent Assembly with all its powers, by which the Assembly would become the highest body of government until the new type of state, nation and economy would be chosen by the sovereign people, and new elections are called under the new terms, as well as deciding on the powers of the State.

The Left

Once the Convention was accepted by the majority of the country in the October 2020 plebiscite, the revisionist Communist Party found itself obliged to participate in the elections in fear of being outside the electoral pacts of the opposition and losing ground with the Broad Front. It called on the parties of the extra-parliamentary left to join its list called “**Approve Dignity**”, in order to obtain all the necessary votes so as not to lose its representation. This is how the parties that had rejected the constituent process and that had called for the creation of territorial assemblies as a popular alternative to the system, changed their opinion and followed behind revisionism.

Even when the revisionist CP opened “seats” for independents, not all the left currents agreed to participate in this offer, nor did many social leaders who did not feel represented by the traditional political parties.

The danger that these groups will destabilize the elections by promoting abstention or boycott led the Government and the opposition to enact a law that facilitates the registration of independent candidates, requiring only 300 signatures or sponsorships and not the 0.5% of the votes cast by district in the last election of representatives. They will be registered electronically in the Electoral Service without having to validate them before a notary with the

economic cost that this implies. Thus, the whole society is being involved, increasing the legitimacy of the process.

On average, 42 independent candidates per district will participate, in a total of 79 lists, creating a division that only hurts the left. The right managed to bring order to its ranks and to incorporate the pro-Pinochet far right, while Social Democracy was divided, leaving the advantage to the far right.

The three main groups represented in the convention will be: the Right with 43%, followed by Social Democracy and Christian Democracy with 31.6%, and the Communist Party plus its allies with 19.6%. The independents will not exceed 1.2%. None of the large blocs will reach 2/3, so that the negotiations between the right and the more conservative sectors of Christian Democracy will determine the agenda of a convention that is bound hand and foot.

It is worth asking what is the object of the participation of the left in these elections, which are a creation of the right with social democracy that seeks to keep everything in its place, using the tools of the bourgeois state and creating the impression of change among the people and the workers until the next outburst.

The lack of revolutionary perspective of the Chilean left is clear. Once again, it puts aside its combative discourse and runs to the polls. Although they know the result, they do not lose hope of one day getting the platform from where they will make the call the people to revolt.

Meanwhile, the task of the Chilean Marxist-Leninists is to continue building the vanguard party in every trade union, factory and company, organizing the class-struggle unions that have the willingness to take power, in a strong union movement capable of taking on the big monopolies, a strong people’s movement of a combative character that fights for housing, education, health care and wellbeing, that organizes the revolutionary youth; in short, a movement led by the Marxist-Leninists in a front with all the parties and organizations that fight for a People’s Government as the first stage for the organization of the workers and the people’s power, to pass on to the insurrection of the masses towards the People’s Democratic Revolution on the way to Socialism.

April 2021

Colombia between the War and the Pandemic

Introduction

At the end of the first quarter of 2021, there were several features that distinguished the national political situation and on which there was a great national debate, given the great significance that the proposals being presented today have for the present and future of the country. It is noteworthy that we are witnessing a rather difficult and complex time in which the crisis and the neoliberal and pro-fascist policies of the regime are accentuated. The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic is evolving at an accelerated rate, producing quite heartbreaking destruction in a country that is at the same time suffering the impacts of violence, territorial disputes, corruption and drug trafficking, as well as the unpatriotic action of an anti-democratic and populist government sold to the monopolies and international banking.

The decrease of 6.8% in the GDP in 2020 reflects the deep economic crisis that the country is experiencing, today accelerated significantly by the coronavirus pandemic. But it is also the product of the disastrous application of neoliberal policies, the growth of the external debt, the State's commitment to IMF policies, the reduction in social spending, the unemployment and poverty of millions of Colombians.

The social and political crisis, expressed not only in the high levels of inequality, informal work (48.2% of the employed population) and misery of the majority of the Colombian population, but also in the harshening of an authoritarian and pro-fascist regime, which is characterized and outlined in the government of Iván Duque Márquez, as an inveterate, repressive and anti-democratic actor at the service of the monopolies and international banking.

In labor matters, the figures are quite worrying. The rate of participation in the labor force was 51.7% in February 2021, 4.1% lower than that registered in February 2020 (55.8%). Therefore underemployment and unemployment grew, reaching 11.1% and 15.9% respectively in February 2021. A careful and objective reading of the figures shows that the number of people without work in

Colombia is growing, and the number of people who lack the necessary resources to live in a dignified way is growing. In response and under the excuse of confronting the economic effects of the pandemic, the Colombian government considers it a priority to develop multiple actions aimed at protecting large companies, banks and investors within a framework of strengthening outsourcing and greater flexibility of contracts and labor relations. Along with the devastating effects of the pandemic on employment, working at home, tele-working, digital technologies, the use of new telecommunications and transport systems, as well as the automation of processes are making their way at different levels, introducing new characteristics to the labor market.

Another important feature of the national situation is the growth of discontent and social mobilization seen in the continuous actions of struggle of the workers, women and youth against the government, the monopolies and banks and their aggressive policy of super-exploitation, low salaries, higher taxes and/or fiscal charges, privatization and reduction in public spending.

The large mobilizations for health and decent medical care, a basic income, the defense of labor, increased wages and the NO to the tax, labor and pension reforms are being prepared again, **highlighting the call for a national strike for April 28** carried out by the Unitary National Command, the workers' federations, FECODE, the Union Workers Trade Union and many other organizations in the country.

On the political level, we highlight the unitary processes of a popular nature at the national level with a view to confronting Uribeism in the electoral contest that will take place in 2022. Attempts at establishing a Historical Pact of the left, progressive, democratic and popular sectors that allow people to act in a unified manner, both in the legislative, presidential and vice-presidential elections, highlight the important steps that are being achieved today with the view to forming a broad and vigorous front against corruption and the current anti-democracy in Colombia.

Given this scenario, we will focus this time on two major problems that affect Colombian society which constantly attract international attention: the coronavirus pandemic and the worsening of the war in our country, given the intensification of the military confrontations, the assassination of leaders and human rights defenders, the massacres and forced displacements.

In future issues of our magazine we will refer to other topics of interest that undoubtedly the revolutionaries and democrats will reflect on, as well as the strengthening of the processes of change in Latin America and the world.

I

The coronavirus pandemic and its effects in Colombia

On March 5, 2020, Colombia confirmed its first case of coronavirus and from then to April 8, 2021, 2,492,081 people with the virus have been reported in the country, of whom 2,355,832 have recovered; while 65,014 have died.

In the world, the disease has caused at least 2,894,531 deaths since its appearance in December 2019.

In the first year of the pandemic, Colombia registered two epidemiological curves or peaks. The first was on August 19, 2020, a day on which 13,056 cases of the disease were confirmed, and the second, arrived on January 15, 2021, after reporting 21,078 infections. As of April 7, a third epidemiological peak was registered in most of the national territory, much more serious and intense than the previous ones, with 12,464 new cases, 247 deaths and 62,688 active cases, which have made the health system collapse at the national level.

The seroprevalence or level of infection of Covid-19 in Colombia is an average of 40%, that is, 60% of the population would still be susceptible to being infected with the virus.

Regarding the vaccination plan, official voices point out that Colombia, through bilateral and multilateral mechanisms, ensured for its citizens the doses of vaccine for Covid-19 needed to reduce mortality and the incidence of serious cases of this virus, protect health-care workers, reduce infection to build the herd immunity recommended by experts. In this sense, it has been possible to buy 20 million doses for 10 million Colombians through Covax [Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access] and through bilateral mechanisms 46.5 million doses for 27,750,000 people. The government says that in this way we achieved 66.5 million doses for 37,750,000 people to be vaccinated in 2 phases and 5 stages, prioritizing groups at risk and progressively until reaching the target number of vaccinated Colombians.

In this vein, we are obviously forced to permanently evaluate the evolution of this pandemic and the policies adopted by the State and its various actors to face it accordingly. In this view, the world is certainly suffering from a pandemic of great proportions that deeply affects the present and future of humanity.

In general terms, the pandemic exposed the deep capitalist crisis that is being experienced in the world today, the great weaknesses of the States and the health-care systems, social inequalities and the impoverishment of a large part of the population, in addition, the absence of policies that put human well-being at the center. To this day the arrival and evolution of the pandemic has revealed the action of a new factor that disrupts health and social life and puts the role of States and different social actors to the test.

Thus it is clear that the vaccines are a success and a step forward; they also comprise an important scientific effort, which in the current context is seriously limited by the policies applied by the States that are interested in containing the economic and social effects of the pandemic. Above all they put in first place the interests, that is, goods, markets, investments and profits of the capitalists that they represent. In these terms, the strong market for vaccines opened mainly by the pharmaceutical companies and the imperialist States cannot be examined lightly without realizing the contradictions and struggles present in the capitalist society in the 21st century. The great differences in the vaccination rate of countries seen in this context, only a small part of the planet has its vaccine insured while the majority of the population will hardly be able to get vaccinated in the short term. In effect, as has happened on other occasions, the entire vaccine market, in addition to being an instrument of subordination and protection of interests, has become an incentive to exacerbate the crisis and the social contradictions of the capitalist system. On our part, we will work tirelessly so that in our countries the struggle of the peoples takes up the banner of the vaccines against Covid-19 as a global public good that allows the immunization of humanity against this deadly virus.

As for Colombia, we will continue to insist, together with the other actors in the popular field, in demanding that the government accelerates the national vaccination plan, the adoption of a basic income, and a greater and urgent social investment in the framework of a plan agreed with the representatives of the communities, the unions and social organizations of the country that would allow the revival of

employment, the protection of the national infrastructure, and the strengthening and expansion of the health-care system in the country.

II

The humanitarian drama that Colombia is suffering

In Colombia the horrible night has not stopped. It is the truth that we Colombians are forcefully confirming every day when we observe the worsening of the war and especially the continual assassination of social leaders, the massacres and the displacement of thousands of our compatriots, showing quite shocking figures.

The new spiral of violence registered in 2020 91 massacres with 381 victims. So far in 2021, 26 massacres have already been committed with 95 victims. Regarding the assassinations, the figures for 2020 speak of 310 social leaders and human rights defenders murdered. So far in 2021, there have already been 16 leaders assassinated¹, which show the repetition of a new cycle of violence, mainly in those areas considered strategic or in dispute, either due to their economic power, development of works of infrastructure, the exploitation of gold and other natural resources, illegal crops (mainly coca and marijuana production), or because they are transit areas or bordering on other countries.² The north and southwest of Cauca, lower Cauca and north of Antioquia, the Pacific Chocó, Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Nariño, Putumayo, Meta, Arauca and the Catatumbo



¹ <http://www.indepaz.org.co/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Informe-Li%CC%81deres.pdf>

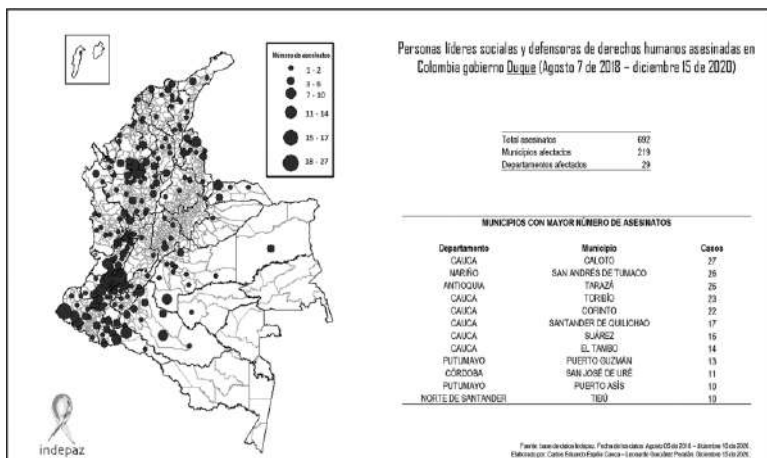
² <http://www.indepaz.org.co/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Cartilla-sistematicidad-con-ISBN-comprimido-1.pdf>

COLOMBIA – COLOMBIA BETWEEN THE WAR AND THE PANDEMIC

area in the North of Santander are the areas of greatest violence, confirming that this as a phenomenon that runs through and affects the entire national geography.



Social leaders and defenders of human rights assassinated in Colombia since the signing of the Peace Accords

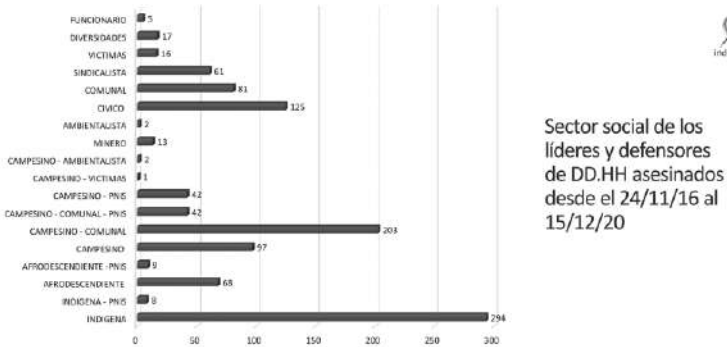


Social leaders and defenders of human rights assassinated in Colombia under the government of Duque August 7, 2018 to December 15, 2020)

These figures collected by the Institute of Studies for Development and Peace (INDEPAZ) as of March 30, 2021, and broadcast at the national and international level, show the enormous humanitarian drama that is being experienced in our country, which, as illustrated in the graph, are the communities and popular sectors most

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ML PARTIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

affected who are really suffering the horrors of war, contrary to the numerous comments in some media that consider business owners, ranchers and landowners as the main victims, who, according to them, have had to leave the country, arm themselves or secure their businesses to continue surviving.



Sector social de los líderes y defensores de DD.HH asesinados desde el 24/11/16 al 15/12/20

Desde que se suscribió el Acuerdo de Paz, en 863 casos de homicidios hacían parte de organizaciones campesinas, indígenas, afro descendientes, ambientalistas, mineros y comunales. Los conflictos agrarios por tierra, territorio y recursos naturales representan el 79,37% de los homicidios.

Social sector of the leaders and defenders of human rights assassinated from November 24, 2016 to December 15, 2020

Since the Peace Accord was signed, there were 863 cases of homicide among peasant, indigenous, afro-descendant, environmental, mining and community organizations. Agrarian conflicts over land, territories and natural resources represent 79.37% of homicides.

The above is not something accidental; it reflects an ideological, cultural and political offensive based on false considerations and facts (fake news), which stimulate and support the fanaticism, sensationalism, demagoguery and populism that characterize the discourse and campaigns of the ruling classes and their parties in Colombia. This is exemplified by the activities carried out before the plebiscite to endorse the peace accords in October 2016, then the electoral campaign that allowed Duque to win the presidency in 2018, the coronavirus pandemic and the confrontation that is rising today with the fraternal country of Venezuela. In this it is common to find leaders fully used to deceive the masses, as well as to legitimize the interests and the ruling power.

Comments on the killing of human rights defenders and leaders

- In 2020, more than 291 social leaders were assassinated. There was no let-up in the trend in these assassinations, which are close to the 2018 figure.
- There was a decrease in the number of municipalities (from 114 in 2018 to 114 in 2020); which shows the withdrawal of some armed groups, the stabilization of conflicts in others, the non-existence of strong dynamics of expansion.
- The most critical situations occurred in the North and Southwest of Cauca, Bajo Cauca and North of Antioquia, Pacific Nariño, Putumayo and Catatumbo.
- In these areas, the re-composition of territorial control and conflicts among various groups, regarding income from drug trafficking, gold mining, timber trafficking, surplus value from megaprojects and infrastructure works, appropriation of land and distribution of political power continues.
- The promoters of these conflicts in critical territories are complex macro-criminal groups and networks that operate in legal and illegal businesses, with companies that launder illicit enrichment and accomplices/partners established in State institutions.
- The neo-paramilitary and narco-paramilitary armed groups are a part of these macro-criminal groups that reproduce themselves by association and together with the legal ones.
- Those who have rearmed in the post-agreement period, for the most part, are dedicated to conflict over these incomes, trying to rebuild economies and controls that the FARC EP previously had.
- In about 45% of the cases, the gunmen that kill the social leaders are linked to the narco-paramilitaries and the groups left over after the agreement; the other 55% are made up of unidentified assassins, many of them at the service of mafias (35% of the total); ELN, dissidents from the FARC EP, and the police and troops.
- The State and government bear responsibility for these persistent acts of violence by inaction, harmful actions and complicity at various levels.
- The inaction consists of the weakness of an coordinated, prompt and sufficient presence in the regions most affected by armed violence and post-agreement conflicts; the major inaction has been the lack of implementation of social, political and security reforms, in particular comprehensive rural reforms, planned substitution, political reforms and security guarantees.

- The harmful action in the critical territories and in general is seen in the substitution of a security policy for peace with another one of security for a new war against drugs / anti-terrorism.
- Complicity at various levels is shown in the collusion of the political powers, clans, mafias, with armed activities. The capture of institutions has one of its manifestations in corruption and others in the re-composition in the armed forces using strategies of war contrary to the transition to peace.]

The Colombian conflict

As a harsh truth, we share the recent studies by INDEPAZ³ that confirm Colombia as a country with a very old internal conflict, which is growing and renews itself amid a tumultuous context of crisis and inter-bourgeois conflicts for control of profits, natural resources and strategic areas. It is a conflict in content and form, with dimensions and/or particularities that characterize and show it to be different from the type of conflict that was seen in the country in previous years. In concrete terms, the Colombian conflict today is no longer a confrontation between the State and its armed forces on the one hand, against strong military contingents or organizations aiming at socialist power as alternatives to the prevailing system. On the contrary, the situation is one of an open and brutal confrontation between the State on the one hand, with a group of organizations of resistance that are determined to oppose the regime and the government and advocate for political negotiation; and on the other, with dozens of military units and projects mainly of an economic nature, without ideological perspective or unity, characterized by their low political profile, territorial disputes, linked to crime, drug trafficking and mercenaries at the service of the bourgeois army, predominantly with the absence of collective social projects.

As part of the conflict, other types of confrontations burst onto the scene, distinguished and promoted mainly by unions, social leaders, human rights defenders and a variety of social and community organizations that reject exploitation, poverty, corruption and state abandonment. They are the confrontations of the State with the workers and organized communities that rise up in defense of life, sovereignty, ecology and the environment, the autonomy of com-

³ <http://www.indepaz.org.co/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Informe-Especial-asesinato-li%CC%81deres-2016-2020-L-15-12-20-Final.pdf>

munities, the defense of citizen's rights and freedoms. This type of confrontation complicates the panorama and shows both in its causes and expressions the conflict as an economic, social, political and armed phenomenon with deep edges in the country.

Peace is a great popular desire

As we have pointed out in numerous writings, peace is not a fantasy and it cannot continue to be treated as primarily a military matter that only calls for armed actors. Years of struggle and all the experience gained tell us that this viewpoint is wrong and requires a political change, which goes beyond that moralistic and religious vision of those who see the conflict as a confrontation between good and bad. For our part we have seen it through a evolutionary, integral, multifaceted and broad vision of the conflict that demands the reflection of its history, roots and multiple expressions, without losing sight of the context and characteristics of our economic-social formation. The future of the State and the economic, social, political and military policies that have been implemented for more than 70 years of confrontation, as well as all the social forces immersed in the confrontation, also point to certain values, imaginations, challenges and behaviors. That vision at stake today is what has allowed the left and the progressive and democratic sectors to consider that the events of the conflict to this day have their structural causes in the strong dependency, economic and social exclusion, the flagrant rejection of citizen's rights and political freedoms.

We think that today's conflict in all its details requires an analysis that makes it possible not to stay on the surface, promoting policies that have already been proven ineffective, such as welfare policies, or those that are promoted by friends of the military solutions, or also those who insist on negotiating and distributing state posts and budgets, denying that the conflict in the country has underlying structural causes.

The failure of the peace process

The failure of the "Agreement for the definitive termination of the conflict" signed by the government of Juan Manuel Santos and the FARC-EP on September 26, 2016, is clear and evident. On the one hand, because the agreements have only been implemented 16%, according to an analysis of the Party of the Communes itself (this is the name of the party of the demobilized FARC), and on the

other hand, because the conflict has not disappeared and much less has the State declared the abandonment of its warmongering policy, of fighting against the internal enemy, which according to its spokespersons includes a terrorist threat to Colombian society. In addition, in several regions there is an effort to exterminate of the former combatants that closes the doors to any reconciliation or negotiated solution to the conflict.

Regarding the Peace Agreement itself, we think that one should not have many expectations for it either, because although it speaks of the end of the conflict, its real purpose was only to agree with the Colombian government and State on the reincorporation into civil life of a force that believes that the social change that they proclaimed in their program of advanced democracy could not be achieved through armed action.

We also share the views of some analysts who point out that the Agreement, as a Letter of Good Intentions, ignores the balance of forces that exists and is necessary for the reforms it proposes, as well as the rules for the exercise of power and political action in Colombia.

On the other hand, it is necessary to consider in the force of the Communes errors and misunderstandings regarding the Agreement and its viability such as that:

- The economic, political and legal order of the country is intact and did not need changes; on the contrary, we have a democracy and a Constitution that requires some touch-ups or lively reforms that allow the State to bring the citizens closer, save thousands of lives, encourage reconciliation, and create the necessary social welfare that will make social and political confrontation unnecessary and useless.
- The cause of the internal conflict that plagues the country is in the countryside and fundamentally derives from a conflict over land, where on the one hand the lack of protection and neglect of the countryside is obvious and on the other hand the confrontation between the peasantry, the landowners and the State for the lands and income to be gained in the rural market. The strategy of development programs with a territorial approach (PDET) for 15 years included in the Agreement for about 170 municipalities in the country is based on the premise that these programs will make it possible to put an

end to illegal crops, poverty, violence and neglect of the State in important regions of the country.

- The concept of transitional justice as a systematic set of rules already elaborated and on which there is identity in international legal doctrine, aimed specifically at guaranteeing the rights of truth, justice and reparation for the victims. Disregarding transitional justice as an issue under construction in which the definition of both substantive and procedural objectives and rules depends on the balance and factors of power is a gross error; in addition the Agreement completely omits and ignores the combative nature of the guerrilla, self-defense and rebellion as political rights.

We think that all these omissions, errors, blurring and mainly the refusal of the State and the current government to comply with the Agreement are what have caused it to hang by a thread, filled with shocks and uncertainty, especially to the former combatants and the communities that were close to the defunct FARC-EP guerrilla.

Considering the existing facts and limitations, we highlight the efforts of the social and political communities and organizations in the country that have come out to defend the peace agreements, demanding that the government, in addition to compliance with these agreements, punish those responsible for heinous crimes and crimes against the humanity, greater social investment, protection of victims, and respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

In that same perspective, we see this opportunity to express our rejection and condemnation of the murder of 1,134 human rights leaders and defenders in the country, as well as the 263 signers of the peace agreement assassinated from the signing of the peace accords until January 30, 2021. We demand that the State and international courts punish these violations of human rights and international humanitarian law accordingly.

As fighters for change and peace with social justice, we reiterate our call to all revolutionaries, democrats and supporters of social progress to promote unitary efforts for winning a democratic and popular government that ensures peace with social justice, democracy, the well-being and building of the new and sovereign homeland.

Communist Party of Colombia Marxist-Leninist
Central Executive Committee
Colombia, April 2021

Deepen the political consciousness of the working class on the failure of capitalism

This document was presented at the APK's annual conference in November 2020 on strengthening the party work in the current situation of the crisis of capitalism and the pandemic.

APK has a policy for a revolutionary way out of capitalism and its crises – for revolution and socialism. Back in March 2020, two days after the Corona lock-down, the party presented a political platform demanding social, economic and health protection for the working class and the people and making capital and the rich pay for their own capitalist crisis. It is at the same time a platform for creating unity, organizing on a class struggle policy and with a clear perspective for a new social system with the working class in power.

It is clear that capitalism is in a general and acute crisis. It is at the same time an economic, political and social crisis that is even further deepened by the Covid pandemic, adding a health crisis. The consequences of this are seen, heard and felt every day. However, there is far more uncertainty and doubt within the working class and the people, as to why the solutions to the crisis by the bourgeois cannot work, and why a revolutionary rupture with capitalism as the real and long-term solution is necessary.

So, the question is, how can we change, reduce and in the end eliminate that doubt and ambiguity? In our propaganda and agitation, we must reflect and use the experiences from the everyday lives of the working class, we must spread knowledge about the struggles and protests that are going on and the experiences in the class struggle that are being made. But this is not enough. However, parts of our propaganda are limited to that. Other parts go in the opposite direction with complicated analyses and the accumulation of so-called scientific facts. We must use both forms, but with a revolutionary content, which is not created only by using the word revolution. We must empower the working class with a revolutionary perspective, pointing out the steps, direction and perspective in

the class struggle and we must be still better in incorporating the revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism.

A rupture with capitalism requires a great consciousness in the working class of the fact that there is no other way. A consciousness of the fact that one cannot patch up the capitalist system or convince it to become humane and just, as the left opportunists within the parties of European Left advocate. This is a major task in a country like Denmark, where the working class has been embraced by Social-Democratic class collaboration for more than one hundred years. For example, views today still are being raised in progressive militant workers groups, such as: we should only raise the battles that we are sure in advance to win, which in fact are holding back the development of the class struggle. Or views to limit the class struggle only to those waged within the trade union justice class collaboration system under the leadership of the reformist union leaders and workers' aristocracy, which are restricted to trade unionism.

A rupture and a revolutionary path require knowledge and conviction, combined with one's own experiences of the class struggle to develop a necessary revolutionary consciousness. This requires the organization of thought, of people, of struggles, of revolutionaries. A crucial element in doing this is the Communist Party as a political center for a revolutionary path that can maintain scientific socialism and convey it in the struggle of the working class and among the most class-conscious workers.

Class collaboration

Throughout the world, including in Denmark, crisis solutions are being implemented, in all of which it is the working class and ordinary people who must pay for the crisis once again. Meanwhile, the big monopolies and capital get state aid not only to make it through the crisis, but also to emerge stronger in a renewed imperialist competition and rivalry.

As the ICMLPO has pointed out, the economic crisis and the Covid crisis emerged in a situation of increased class struggles, large protest movements and popular uprisings against the raging living conditions, the prospects of capitalism and all the neo-liberal reforms. So it is not without reason that the great concern of the ruling class is how to avoid too much social protest and resistance. Right now, we are seeing how the extreme right moves forward – in

Denmark, with the state-funded parties such as Stram Kurs, which went on a road trip in Sweden to publicly burn the Koran, religious Islamist fanatics cutting off the head of a French schoolteacher, Nazis on the streets of Rome and Berlin protesting against Corona restrictions and armed militias in big US cities. And around the extreme right a growing right-wing populist movement in Europe is demonstrating for freedoms and rights opposed to the pandemic restrictions. All to turn the frustration and resistance in the wrong direction and to fight the popular resistance with “law and order”, fear, violence, and chaotic conditions.

We saw in the spring of 2020, when the government’s Covid lock-down was implemented, how the democratic parliamentary veneer disappeared overnight and was replaced by the Epidemic Law (which in 2021 was replaced by an even more repressive one). We saw how the government emerged in a new form as a “crisis task force” with the main ministers, the largest monopoly owners, the military, and the police in unison. Later we see how the leaders of the National Trade Union Confederation were called onto the stage from behind the scenes, in order not only to secure temporary salary compensation schemes, but also that some collective bargaining rights would be withdrawn. This was done in an open class collaboration within the “Danish/Nordic model”, through national agreements among the state, employers, and the National Trade Union Confederation.

The class collaboration policy and the heads of the labor aristocracy are right now the best bet for Danish capital to implement their policy for stabilization of capitalism and neo-liberal crisis policy as smoothly as possible. It is at the same time the greatest political and ideological obstacle to working-class unity on a class struggle and revolutionary basis. Therefore we must unmask them by exposing their deeds, class affiliation and reformist policy. In our propaganda and work on this we must be aware of both right and left deviations, both of which will separate us from the advanced trade union militants and workers.

Capitalism cannot be cured with more capitalism.

The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the existing crisis and shown how capitalism is cynical, coldly indifferent to the lives and needs of the workers and the labor force it no longer needs. It only wants a labor force as cheap as possible. In India, Latin America,

United States, Europe and all over, we see the consequences of the solution called “save the profits”: hundreds of thousands of deaths, millions of newly starving, destruction of jobs and communities, destruction of public and popular health-care and education systems. The industrial, technical, and digital developments do not benefit social development and the lives of the workers and people. They are only used to keep the wheels of exploitation turning faster and to create ever more wealth, value, and imperialist power among the few in the ruling class.

We might think this is obvious for everyone to see and understand. But among the youth in the ghettos and suburbs and among the young workers, many may not even know the word and term capitalism when we write it in our flyers, and cannot relate to it. We must therefore connect it to what they themselves experience and see and clarify that this is the capitalist system in action. Likewise because of the fact that the root of their problems is the capitalist system, their future can be changed by revolution and socialism. There is a growing revolutionary interest, not the least among a whole new generation to whom the “Corona crisis” can be an eye-opener in understanding the nature and laws of capitalism. And we as revolutionaries much capture the possibilities inherent in the present time.

Whether the bourgeois solution is the “new normal” of neo-liberalism, with all that it entails: increased flexible working hours, lower wages, more home workplaces with less opportunities to



develop social contacts and a struggle community, or whether it is the Social Democratic new Keynesianism, where the state actively pumps huge amounts of money into the business community without getting any benefit for society in return, neither way can solve the capitalist crisis. What we see now is that the government and a broad majority in the parliament are betting on a mix of both these crisis policies – neo-liberalism and Keynesianism. The austerity plans of the bourgeois parties and Social Democracy only help big business, the monopolies, the largest finance capital and business owners as well as imperialist institutions such as the European Union, the IMF, the World Bank and the state power, which play an active direct role in this.

While the consequences are clear to a large extent, the party has a major task in making the cause of this equally clear, why their solutions do not and cannot work, do not save jobs and social welfare, and why helping big business does not secure this, as the government and the bourgeois parties promise it will do.

The Finance Act is a concrete implementation of the crisis policy of the government. It is not enough for us to point out the class injustice. We must use it to break down illusions on the role of the state, the parliamentary illusions in the social protest movements and show the need to broaden the isolated local municipal actions and to add a national political perspective and demands.

The party must use Marxism-Leninism and political economy much more as a political and ideological tool to show that the plan and policy of capital to strengthen and cure capitalism with more capitalism can never work, that each individual step they take is a concrete expression of their false policy to solve the crisis. We must raise awareness that capitalism and the class in power really have no solution to the crisis, but that a revolutionary policy of the working class has. We must do this not just in our media, in what we write, but also in discussions and debates with the activists, co-workers and militants.

Having understood how capitalism works and why it never can bring the necessary change is one side of the coin. The other is the empowerment of the working class with the revolutionary understanding, consciousness and theory of how to implement this change in their class struggle.

Dead end alley

To promote unity on a revolutionary path, the party must make its ideas, goals and concrete demands and actions clear and make them known and discuss them with the advanced workers and youth. At the same time, we must expose all the stray and dead ends that not only reformism, but also revisionism and left-wing opportunism will lead the class struggle into. We must combine the political ideological struggle with the development of the concrete actions of the class struggle as well as expose their strategy and political platforms.

We not only see that the class struggle is intensifying and that there are movements within the working class, the public servants and among the youth. Alongside these we see the opportunist political currents moving to the right under the Social Democratic wings and at the same time to the left in words and the use of working class symbols. This is not to move the class struggle forward, but to conceal how inadequate and backward their thinking and actions are.

The Social Democrats and their government talk about a new Social Democratic policy with the core Social Democratic values of the past and the great community of solidarity that carries us all through the crisis. They even try to distance themselves in words from previous labor market and neoliberal reforms. But at the same time, they are taking an extreme course for national class unification, and in a manipulated mood of fear and disaster, they are raising legislation and state power with fascist traits and new ways for capital and the employers to step up the exploitation of labor. The exposure of and the political-ideological struggle against the politics of reformism and left-wing opportunism are part of deepening a revolutionary consciousness within the working class and youth.

To conclude

Let us summarize some key points about the question that was asked at the beginning: how can we deepen the political consciousness of the failure of capitalism and of a revolutionary way within the working class and the youth?

The harsh reality of the crisis does not mean that the struggle of the working class for economic and social improvement spontaneously or automatically develops into a political struggle for change

or into a deepening of revolutionary consciousness in the working class. It must come through implementing revolutionary theory, politics, ideology and action in the class struggle and in the working class – in a language and with methods that can be grasped and that confront the specific problems and needs of the class struggle and the working class and people. In order to do that we as a party must be self-critical on how we work with these tasks and how we can develop this side of the party's work. And to do that we must work to develop the Marxist-Leninist consciousness and political ideological level of the party itself, not only of those who are responsible for the propaganda work, but of all the party members.

No revolutionary action without revolutionary theory. No revolutionary theory without revolutionary action.

Workers' Communist Party of Denmark
APK Conference, November 7, 2020

The revolution continues to be a problem that awaits a solution

Capitalism is once again in a crisis phase. In general, it is a historical context of revolution. Because there is the “law of the non-correspondence between the development of the productive forces and the social relations of production”, revealed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

But it is only a historical context, in which the task of the revolution must be properly dealt with.

Revolutionaries, especially if we are communists, must maintain the perspective of the revolution in our daily lives; as a daily task, whatever the circumstance, or the relationship of forces that prevails between the revolutionaries and the conservatives. Because it is the supreme ideal that calls us to militancy. And it is a work that is built, day by day, under certain conditions.

Although there is no revolutionary situation in the country, what is consistent with our ideal is to work to create it, and more so, to make it lead to a victorious revolution.

Not seeing the revolution as a daily task and purpose leads to a work without perspective, a routine without a goal, and even letting opportunities escape that could be used to promote it. This happened in April 1984 when the popular masses took to the streets of the main cities of the country for several days with a willingness to fight that, had there been a political and organized vanguard focused on the purpose of the revolution, could have created a revolutionary situation.

As has been said, the revolution is a task to be built every day under the conditions dictated by reality. Tactics, not strategy, orients this daily building, which is what the general orientation indicates; however, tactics are subordinated to strategy, and aims at what to be done now, specifically, at each moment, according to the forces at stake, and especially our own.

In matters of tactics, there is an essential question that every activist must ask himself, especially if he is a Marxist-Leninist, or simply a revolutionary, which is: How many of the masses do you have for your politics?

If you do not have sufficient mass support for your calls to action, the tactics remain on paper, or in speeches sometimes of the obvious, about what should be done to make things change. But nothing happens; or what continues to happen is what the ruling classes decide.

In our environment, it is common to hear leaders for whom the revolution is a strident speech on each occasion, without contributing anything practical or building a sustainable social base for that purpose. They are commanders of the spoken word. Before April 1984, groups were often heard shouting that they were ready to repeat the war of April 1965. Their leaders always had the word revolution on their lips and used all kinds of adjectives to describe themselves as consistent revolutionaries, and also to discredit with adjectives those who disagreed. On the walls of the cities were visible words that stated “We have guns.” Such slogans still remain in the northern part of the city of Santo Domingo.

But April 1984 arrived with the force of a mass insurrection, spread throughout the country, but the promised revolutionary will and the guns that were available in words, never appeared in actuality.

One should not and cannot continue in this manner.

Nor to follow the routine of daily living; waiting for symbolic dates to praise the events of the past; or even to take advantage of burials to proclaim revolutionary generalities, which even the system’s media broadcast, aware that they are not dangerous.

To set out on the path of the revolution is to conceive a great work to which it is always necessary to add steps. We must stop seeing it as something that will happen one day **and take it up as a problem that we have raised and await a solution**, as stated by Comrade Enver Hoxha in his political report to the VIII Congress of the Party of Labor of Albania (PLA).

One has to want it and have the will to build it. This is fundamental, and it is an important factor in the revolutionary plan, without which the corresponding tasks will not be carried out.

But it is not only will; to support the work towards this can lead to confusing wishes with reality, to a deviation of voluntarism. Voluntarism, very present in the Dominican left, is a non-Marxist philosophical current, according to which will is more important than knowledge of reality, on which decisions are based.

It is not like that. The will must be adapted to the circumstances, to the objective conditions, external to our consciousness and which are just as necessary. The revolution is the result of the combination of a will to build it and the circumstances in which it is built.

It is a reality of mutual influences. The revolutionary will influences by strengthening the factors appropriate to the circumstances; and these can encourage certain wills. An idea and an action sometimes create situations that change the mood of the masses, create the subjective conditions of struggle, or of the masses' willingness to fight, different from the one that prevailed prior to that idea and action.

To advance from the instinctive and emotional state that the mass movement sometimes has, to a state of consciousness of why and for what they struggle, is the purpose of everyone who always proposes how to build the revolution in the movement of the masses in struggle.

The popular struggles are the main scenario in which the revolution arises and develops. That is why it is necessary to propose to organize them always and better, to prepare them and guide them away from deviations of the right or leftism, that hold back their development.

The question of the electoral struggle

The electoral struggle, which many of us have been taking up with for forty years, must be understood by consistent revolutionaries as one form among many that the revolutionary struggle takes up, within the framework of political circumstances. As a tactical matter, in order to accumulate forces; but never as an end in itself. One can and should participate in the elections, knowing that it is alien terrain, and besides with traps of all kinds.

It is important to always reflect on whether participation in one or another election, or at a particular time, accumulates revolutionary forces or simply invests energy, resources and ideas for a token presence.

It is a question of making the necessary assessment, not of having a theoretical discussion regarding whether or not communists and revolutionaries should participate in bourgeois parliaments.

In the prologue to the 1895 edition of Karl Marx's book *The Class Struggle in France, 1848-1850*; Friedrich Engels made an

assessment of the political and social process that followed the defeat of the Paris Commune (1871) and addressed the issue of communists' participation in bourgeois parliaments. In it, he saluted the German proletariat for how well it was conducting the parliamentary struggle, and the results it obtained for the organization and development of the political consciousness of the working masses.

In this prologue, Friedrich Engels expressed *the importance of preparing the proletariat for long processes, in which open forms of accumulation of forces would be the main ones; very different from how they had been at the time of the Paris Commune, in which the barricades and the revolutionary blow prevailed with the participation of a vanguard of the class, as forms of struggle to achieve power.*

The summary of V.I. Lenin in his book "*Left-Wing*" Communism, an Infantile Disorder, on the question of electoral participation, is better known. There he recognizes that, *in the struggle for the democratic revolution and socialism, the Bolsheviks took part in the most reactionary parliaments in Russia at the time of the Tsar.*

Therefore it is not the theoretical question about taking advantage of bourgeois elections that should be discussed; but rather the circumstances under which we have taken them up, and the practical results achieved by the Dominican communists and revolutionaries in the application of that policy.

This assessment must be made from a perspective of revolutionary honesty. *What are the results of the institutional struggle that we have carried out so far for the cause of the revolution that*



we are fighting for, and for the well-being of the people? Have we accumulated forces?

Is it possible to change the electoral system?

A different electoral system can be won, and different in a progressive democratic sense from the one that dominates the country. How many important things have been accomplished. And here too, we must *insist that it is possible with a broad and vigorous mass political movement. Mass struggle is the answer. To create with the masses a political situation that forces the ruling sectors to modify the established institutions.*

We must develop the imagination, and always create forms of struggle that contribute to advancing the revolutionary political process; and avoid the very present fossilization in the minds of many people that reduces the political struggle to the false dichotomy of revolution or electoral participation.

The revolution is a science.

Friedrich Engels said in the 1874 preface to his book *The Peasant War in Germany*, “Socialism, having become a science, demands the same treatment as every other science – it must be studied.” He spoke of the importance of theory for the revolutionary struggle, and emphasized that *the strength and invincibility of the German workers’ movement rested on the expanding attack that it developed, politically, theoretically and practical-economically.*

Anyone who takes up the revolutionary cause, especially if one is fundamentally dedicated to it, should concern oneself, even minimally, in studying revolutionary theory, its laws and categories of analysis. Marxism-Leninism provides a broad theoretical framework from which we communists and revolutionaries can interpret reality and guide our work with a view to advancing and carrying out the revolution.

In his book *What Is To Be Done* (1902), Lenin addresses the question of the organization and strategy to be followed by a communist party; and in chapter 4 he emphasizes the importance of study and theoretical struggle with the idea, “*Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.*” This point is even more important in the Dominican Republic since it is clear that in our movement there is a clear abandonment of revolutionary theory. Voluntarism (Saint Augustine, Arthur Schopenhauer and

others) and existentialism (Friedrich Nietzsche, Soren Kierkegaard, Albert Camus, Jean Paul Sartre and others) are very much present, whether or not their bearers are aware of them.

In the Dominican Republic there is a great deal of militancy without revolutionary thought. In this sense, groups appear from time to time without the most elementary concern in defining even a declaration of principles that unites them in the same purpose. They are united by a revolutionary verbal declaration, with more emotion than reason.

This is rebellion more than anything else. Something that is initially good. Because the rebel rejects indifference to injustice and decides to take up a practical response. This is a revolutionary potential that needs to make the leap to revolutionary militancy; this is only possible from taking up a theoretical position that supports revolutionary practice.

Theory is also necessary to overcome a very present problem in the Dominican revolutionary movement; which is, to make tactics an end in itself, bringing strategy along with it; or in reverse, to limit oneself to the general strategic discourse, without specifying answers that correspond to what is happening at the moment. The revolution does not advance if tactics do not seek to advance strategy; nor if they remain in the general discourse and do not enter into practice, responding to the specific situation.

The relationship and accumulation of forces are two categories of theoretical analysis that allow one to orient ones revolutionary political work. They express in living politics one of the three fundamental laws of Marxist dialectics, that **of quantitative changes into qualitative ones**, which is a universal law of development, existing in all phenomena, and therefore, in political and social ones.

**The mobilized popular masses are the possibility
of revolution in the Dominican Republic.**

The struggle of the popular masses constitutes the main scenario in which the revolution arises and develops. In this, the militants are forged, leaders emerge, and of course the communist and revolutionary parties grow.

In these struggles, the masses learn and raise their consciousness; they distinguish their true friends and allies from their open and concealed enemies. They learn the importance of their unity, strength, and the need to persist on that path.

Promoting these struggles, getting involved in their thought and action, always seeking their political clarity and the perspective of power, is an attitude of principle of the communists and revolutionaries.

But, thinking about the objective of the revolution and its immediate purposes, when speaking of the popular masses we must always take into account the place and role of the laboring classes, the working class and others directly linked to production. From the Marxist-Leninist perspective, we must always aim to put the working classes at the center, in the expression of the struggles; to ensure that they are linked to their own interests and demands, and succeed in uniting the other classes for the immediate purpose of the revolutionary process.

Because for that, and for the revolution to be crowned with success, one must unite a considerable majority that is the only way to defeat a minority that, being a minority, holds power *because it has managed to subject the majority politically, militarily and culturally*. It is not only a political and military domination, but also a cultural one, in terms of values.

Thus it is important to determine the driving forces of the revolutionary process, and within these, the main force. Only by having a clear the aim and the daily task of the revolution, can one determine an objective and daily work of the formation of its driving forces, and of the main force. These must integrate the political struggle in all its forms, the social, the ideological and the cultural, all at the same time. Because the struggle will only be consistently revolutionary if, while fighting the political positions of the bourgeoisie and the right in general, at the same time one demolish the theories that argue and justify the interests of that class, and the same with the values that it imposes on the collective consciousness. One cannot fight for the revolutionary victory, fighting the political positions of the bourgeoisie, while adopting its values.

We speak of building those forces, and by this we mean the organization and involving in struggle the sectors fighting permanently for their immediate and medium-term demands. They become such when they take a political position regarding the historical

political problems that they must face and overcome, and they launch into action in search of this objective.

There is thus the need of forming, in the sense in which this concept is meant here, the working classes, the workers as an important nucleus; but all those linked in some way to production, which is the essential activity on which the country's progress depends and which, therefore, determines everything.

For communists and revolutionaries, *the work with the working class and the popular masses in general only makes sense if one considers and takes it up in daily life from the perspective of accumulating forces for the revolution, and carrying this out.* This is the aim, although in practice it takes up intermediate forms and demands, such as in the trade union, the clubs, neighborhood councils, the electoral front, and any other.

The Dominican revolution must be the continuity of the political struggle of the working and popular masses.

In some countries, the guerrilla movement, or other military actions, opened prospects or created elements of civil war, favorable to the revolution.

But in our country, the guerrillas or attempts at military actions with revolutionary aims only created setbacks of historical dimensions, such as the losses of Manolo Tavárez and others of his companions in Las Manaclas in December 1963; and that of Colonel Francis Caamaño along with other combatants, after the expedition of Playa Caracoles in February 1973.

And, unfortunately, dozens of young revolutionaries have actually been lost who tried to be part of the possibility of marking the revolution. Some of these occurred as the mass struggle grew, and these deaths contributed to slowing down the movement.

The experience of the revolution of April 1965

As we said, in the Dominican Republic, only the political struggle of the popular masses has created revolutionary situations, or political crises that could develop into these.

The War of April 1965 is the most relevant case, which was a result of the eruption of the masses into the streets after the fall of the Trujillo dictatorship in 1961, demanding rights, public liberties, social justice and the distribution of wealth. . The 1962 elections, won by the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) and Professor

Juan Bosch as candidate, dampened this process of the rise of the popular struggles. But these would take shape again, after the Yankee-oligarchic coup against the government and the constitution that emerged from those elections.

The working class became the main one that began to demand “the return to the Constitution of 1963 without [new] elections.”

There was then a political crisis that created elements of civil war, and these developed into a civil-military insurrection.

The revolutionary war of April 1965 was not a spontaneous outbreak. It was the result of the accumulation of situations, events and struggles that ended up in the circumstances created in April 24 of that year.

The consciousness of the Dominican people, and the need to fight to win their freedom and democratic rights, has been developed since the struggles against the Yankee military intervention of 1916 and against the dictatorship of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina (1930-1961), which was a direct consequence of that intervention.

The Constitution of 1963, promulgated by the government that resulted from that electoral victory, was a programmatic synthesis of a good part of the popular wishes of the entire period since 1916.

In short, after the fall of the Trujillo dictatorship, the working and popular masses took to the streets demanding freedom, democracy, social justice, and the distribution of the wealth of the dictator’s family. The “floodgates were opened” to popular protest, which the repression had contained. This eruption of the working classes and other popular sectors would be a prominent development in the political situation of the moment.

Between 1961 and 1963, consciousness and purposes that had been accumulating slowly for decades were condensed, and this made possible a popular political and social front, with a common demand: *Restore the government and the Constitution of 1963 without [new] elections*. This led to the unity of civilians and constitutional military forces.

It is worth emphasizing this question of a broad political and social front around one demand, which united all the various interests. Because all the revolutions, without exception, that have been victorious have had this characteristic. *The vanguard force manages to unite other sectors around it in the crucial demand in that historical situation.*

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ML PARTIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

The revolution of April 24, 1965, was a resumption of the process of the political struggle of the masses and the military that the Dominican people had been waging for years.

This complete experience should be the object of further study, aiming at building the revolution in the Dominican Republic.

March 2021

The Proletarian Revolution and Inter-Imperialist Contradictions

We proletarian revolutionaries are convinced of Lenin's assertion that we are living in the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolutions.

Imperialism on a world scale is the main enemy of the working class and the peoples; it is based on the super-exploitation of millions of workers in all countries and continents, on the looting of natural resources and the degradation of nature on a planetary scale, on the conquest of spaces, regions and countries for the establishment of their domination, on areas of economic, political and strategic influence, on the exploitation and contention for markets. This is re affirmed with the export of capital, with the formation of economic and military groups to contest a new division of the world. Imperialism is established and confirmed by military strength, with the wars of conquest and pillage, with occupation troops and the formation of puppet régimes in the dependent countries. Imperialism supports its positions with reactionary ideology, under the pretext of bringing civilization and development to backward countries, with the defense of free enterprise, the freedom of international trade and individual freedom, with idealism and metaphysics, with post-modernism.

The formation of monopolies eliminated competition between the business owners and bankers of pre-monopoly capitalism; it elevated this competition to an inter-monopoly level, between the various imperialist countries. These contradictions originate in the tendency to accumulate and concentrate wealth that characterizes monopolies and the financial oligarchy. They are expressed in the fierce dispute for the appropriation of sources of human resources and raw materials, in the confrontation for markets and areas of influence. These contradictions, in determined conditions and places, are exacerbated and provoke localized confrontations; they have even led to inter-imperialist wars on a global scale.

The capitalism of free competition crossed national borders, and resulted in the formation of monopolies. The monopolies became the owners of the imperialist states in formation. According to Lenin, The five fundamental features of imperialism are: “1) the concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life; 2) the merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this ‘finance capital’, of a financial oligarchy; 3) the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance; 4) the formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves, and 5) the territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed.”

The development of the instruments of production and of the productive forces created by the scientific and technical revolutions, the great scientific discoveries, the new dimensions of communications, bioengineering, information technology, and robotization have expanded the tentacles of the monopolies and the imperialist countries all over the world. It is the stage that is called the globalization of capital or globalization.

The ideologues of imperialism praise globalization as a higher stage of the imperialist capitalist system, in which the relations of domination and plundering of monopolies would supposedly disappear and the interdependence of countries, nations and peoples would be established.

The expansion of monopoly capital through the export of capital, direct investments and predatory credits, while creating enormous wealth for the monopolies, results in the recruitment of millions of workers in the companies that are scattered among a large number of countries, on all continents. The monopolies locate their manufacturing factories looking for cheap labour.

The working class is growing numerically, as never before, in all countries. The appropriation of the wealth created by the workers is the main source of surplus value, of capitalist-imperialist accumulation and concentration. The working class has not stopped being fundamental in this era, their physical and spiritual labor creates wealth, the surplus value that is appropriated by a small number of multinational companies and imperialist countries.

To appropriate the wealth created by thousands of millions of workers, who work in all countries, the imperialist capitalist system

has established economic and political domination, the subordination of the ruling classes of each country, the establishment of an alliance between the governments and monopolies. The imperialist domination over the dependent countries is affirmed in the subjection and support of the most reactionary circles, with coercion, blackmail and threats, with the formation of agreements and commitments that turn the native ruling classes into partners and servants of the monopolies.

The ruling classes of the dependent countries are, objectively, the political, ideological, military and police support of imperialist domination.

The working class, the other toiling classes, the women, youth and peoples of the dependent countries are victims of the exploitation of monopoly capital, of the business owners and bankers, of the native bourgeoisie; they support the chains of exploitation and oppression, the pillage of natural resources and the subjugation of countries; they need, yearn and fight for emancipation . The banners of the liberation of the workers and the peoples of the dependent countries confront the domination of imperialist capital and the class of native capitalists. The main objectives of the social revolution of the proletariat are social and national liberation, the destruction of the chains of wage slavery, the liberation of the productive forces and the breaking of dependency. These high objectives are part of the same program, of the same organization; they cannot be achieved separately. To defeat imperialism it is indispensable to fight and overthrow the ruling classes from power; to achieve social emancipation it is necessary to abolish the domination of the big



bourgeoisie and destroy the chains of dependency.

In developed capitalist countries, the chains of dependency are also expressed between the monopolies and the imperialist countries. The working class and the peoples are exploited and oppressed by the national capitalists and international monopolies. The struggle for the social revolution of the proletariat confronts the working class of those countries with the national and international bourgeoisie, with imperialism.

The working class of the imperialist countries is exploited and oppressed by the capitalists, by the imperialist monopolies, regardless of the fact that it is a very partial beneficiary of the wealth created by thousands of millions of workers around the planet. The social revolution of the proletariat in those areas poses the task of opposing and fighting against them. The workers and communists fight for their liberation, for socialism and against the imperialist monopolies that exploit and oppress them directly and to destroy the domination of those same monopolies in the dependent countries. The organization and the struggle of the working class of the imperialist countries must converge with the struggle of the working class of the dependent countries, with the struggle of the peoples for national liberation.

In our times, in every country and region, the objectives of social liberation, of the abolition of wage slavery, can only be achieved with the overthrow of the capitalist class and the definitive breaking of the chains of imperialist domination.

Stalin accurately states in “The Foundations of Leninism”:

“Leninism has proved, and the imperialist war and the revolution in Russia has confirmed, that the national question can be solved only in connection with and on the basis of the proletarian revolution, and that the road to victory of the revolution in the West lies through the revolutionary alliance with the liberation movement of the colonies and dependent countries against imperialism. The national question is a part of the general question of the proletarian revolution, a part of the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

The imperialist capitalist system is the sworn enemy of the proletariat and the peoples of the world. The proletarian revolution confronts imperialism in all countries.

The monopolies and imperialist countries collude with each other for domination of the world, for the defense of the capitalist

system, of the international order, allowing them to position themselves while simultaneously competing for hegemony, for the appropriation of the wealth created by millions of workers, for the use of the planet's natural resources and raw materials, for markets and areas of influence. These contradictions occur in all areas, in trade, direct investments and credits, in diplomacy, in politics and in military confrontations, in localized wars.

The imperialist capitalist system is currently made up of international monopolies, multinational companies, and various imperialist countries: the United States, which despite suffering the effects of its own decay and decadence, of decline, continues to be the most powerful economic, political and military power. China, which is the second largest world economy and an imperialist giant, is struggling to reach first place; Russia, United Kingdom and Japan have specific areas under their rule, but are struggling to defend their positions and to expand them; Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Holland are part of the European Union, but they have their own expansionist desires and are actively included in the contention over markets and areas of influence.

The monopolies and imperialist countries are developing unevenly, but the tendency towards greater accumulation and the pursuit of hegemony is one of the laws of the development of capitalism and, consequently, of the monopolies and the imperialist countries. This trend marks the interests of each monopoly group, of each imperialist country.

Today's world is the scene of a closed dispute to preserve and expand the accumulation of wealth among the various imperialist countries; in the context of these contradictions, agreements and alliances are formed, groups of imperialist countries that propose specific objectives, in which developed capitalist countries are integrated alongside dependent countries for specific objectives.

Military alliances are in full force: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, led by the US for several decades; the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization, SEATO, which is also hegemonized by the United States; and, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, CSTO, lead by Russia and made up of various countries of the former USSR, are the main military groupings that include the imperialist powers and their most compliant allies. The arms race in which the imperialist countries are intensely involved and has spread to all States to fulfill the purposes of settling the

conflicts by arms that are for now, localized, but which threaten the preparations for a generalized war, and, on the other hand, it is part of the business of arms manufacturers and dealers.

In the economic and commercial field, the confrontation of interests among the great imperialist powers and, between these and the other imperialist countries are exacerbated daily. The freedom of trade, the opening of borders for the benefit of all, remains in words and literature, when it comes to defending the interests of the monopolies and the imperialist countries. The World Trade Organization, WTO, exhibited as evidence of globalization and free trade, has been relegated to agreements that are executed mainly in the dependent countries. The USA and China, as part of the “trade war,” re-established tariff restrictions. Trade agreements and Free Trade Agreements are nothing more than the distribution of markets and areas of influence among the imperialist countries, mainly the United States, the European Union, China and Russia.

In recent years, the so-called “trade war” broke out between the United States and China; it is the imposition of customs duties on the products of the other country; this is an economic attempt that puts thousands and thousands of millions of dollars at stake and it immerses them in measures and countermeasures. The Biden administration does not seem inclined to ignore the magnitudes of those confrontations. This China-US trade war has an impact on trade relations and the economy of a good number of dependent countries that are subjected to the see-saw of the monopolies. The Trump administration extended this tariff war to the countries of the European Union and Canada.

The wars of aggression and pillage, which are an expression of the nature of imperialism, are a constant to guarantee access to natural resources, to advance in the possession of areas of influence and to defend positions threatened by the interference of other powers. The US intervenes militarily, waving the banners of freedom and democracy, in Libya and Syria; while it threatens Iran, Palestine and North Korea. The United Kingdom, France, Germany, the European Union are openly involved in the same countries and others to support the United States, but also to defend their own interests. France is intervening politically, economically and militarily in its former colonies in Africa. Russia is actively involved in Syria and Libya, in order to defend its economic interests and break the US military encirclement; in the same way it does it in the Central Asian coun-

tries that are members of CSTO. Japan is dangerously rearming and legislating to allow it to intervene militarily outside its borders. Up to now, China has not carried out any military interventions, but it is the third military power and is continually rearming; it has the largest army of all times. In all the countries that are the scene of the military intervention of the imperialist powers, they use the local peoples as soldiers to settle rivalries among themselves.

The competition among the monopolies and the imperialist countries is an objective matter, it is in full force; it can become extremely acute, up to the possibility of a new world war. However, this confrontation does not eliminate the nature of imperialism; the fact that the concentration and accumulation of wealth allowed the formation of the big monopolies and the imperialist powers, is the result of the exploitation of the workforce of thousands of millions of human beings who work in imperialist companies scattered all over the planet. This wealth is the product of the surplus value created by the working class of the imperialist countries, by the workers of the developed capitalist countries, by the workers and peoples of the dependent countries.

The cyclical economic crises that have always been a part of capitalism; they constitute another scenario for the sharpening of inter-imperialist contradictions, but also to fulfill the plan of the monopoly bourgeoisie to unload the weight of these crises on the shoulders of the workers of the entire planet.

In the past and today the imperialist powers are involving themselves with the workers and the peoples, in the battles that they are waging for the liberation from the yoke of capital and imperialism; they speak of supporting the struggle for independence and development; they offer economic support, credits, technical assistance, weapons and military advisers, and under certain conditions even troops. In reality they seek to replace the dominant powers. The inter-imperialist conflict unfolds in foreign territories, far from its own borders, in any region or continent.

The peoples and the countries have bitter experiences regarding the “aid” of the imperialist countries.

The present and the future of the peoples that are fighting for independence have the workers, youth and women as protagonists. However, if the leadership of these processes is in the hands of sectors of the bourgeoisie and/or the petty bourgeoisie, the fate of those struggles – even if they are victorious – is to get out of the

clutches of one power to fall in the tentacles of another. This has been, is and will be this way, but this way is not enough to achieve true independence and liberation from the chains of capitalist exploitation. For things to change, for the battles for national independence and social liberation to be victorious, it is essential that the leadership of these processes is in the hands of the workers and the peoples themselves, that they have the leadership of the working class and its Party.

The aspirations for development and progress of the peoples of the countries that hold political independence cannot be fulfilled if they depend on one or another imperialist country. To achieve these goals, they have to rely on their own strength and on the international solidarity of the workers and peoples from other areas. History shows that these godparents seek to appropriate the wealth of these countries, to invest their capital in order to multiply their profits. The peoples must unmask and oppose the policies that development can be achieved through foreign investment.

Enver Hoxha, in “Imperialism and the Revolution,” notes:

“Marxist-Leninist class analysis and the facts show that the existence of contradictions and rifts among the imperialist powers and groupings in no way overrides or displaces to a position of secondary importance the contradictions between labour and capital in the capitalist and imperialist countries, or the contradictions between the oppressed peoples and their imperialist oppressors. Precisely these, the contradictions between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, between the oppressed peoples and imperialism, between socialism and capitalism are the most profound, they are permanent, irreconcilable contradictions. Consequently, the utilization of inter-imperialist contradictions, or contradictions between the capitalist and revisionist states is meaningful only if it serves to create the most favourable conditions for the powerful development of the revolutionary and liberation movement against the bourgeoisie, imperialism and reaction. Therefore, these contradictions must be utilized without creating illusions among the proletariat and the peoples about imperialism and the bourgeoisie.”

At present, ideas abound that China and Russia are imperialist powers that constitute a brake on the ambitions of the United States and the European Union and therefore, that they would constitute a reserve in the struggle for independence and to stop the danger of

war. Curiously, these ideas are promoted by the revisionist parties and by the petty-bourgeois leftist formations, by personalities of the nationalist intelligentsia who act as patriots.

Several of the countries in Africa and the Middle East have fallen into dependence on investments and credits, under the military umbrella of the Russians and the Chinese; they are caught in the clutches of a new colonialism.

The parties and movements in Latin America that call for “21st century socialism,” some of which were and are in power, go much further; they established economic, diplomatic, political and military ties with China and Russia under the guise of opposing the pressures and purposes of US and European Union imperialism. In fact, both China and Russia have become the new imperialist masters in those countries. Ecuador, for example, acquired an external debt from China equivalent to more than 60% of its total debt; these are hard loans, with high interest rates (around 10%) and short terms. In Venezuela, the Chinese capitals are invested and obtain huge profits in the extraction of oil, steel and platinum, in civil construction; the same is happening with Russian capital. The independence of Venezuela is alienated to Russia and China. Ecuador’s foreign debt with China has committed practically all its oil production, while the United States and the European Union continue to expand and tighten the ties of dependency through investments, credits and unequal trade.

Neither China nor Russia and even less the United States and the imperialist countries of the European Union are friends of the peoples, nor do they help the independent development and progress of the countries. Their interests are focused on the extraction of surplus value created by the working class and the looting of natural resources.

The competition between the United States and the European Union on the one hand and China and Russia on the other in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia is being fiercely fought in the signing of trade agreements, in direct investments, credits and trade. This is a permanent attempt in the redivision of the world. In some countries such as Syria, Libya and Yemen, this dispute is unfolding through weapons, military intervention and localized wars.

The ideas that there are “good” imperialisms, friends of the peoples and imperialist powers that stop Yankee expansionism are

no more than the illusions of the naïve and, in the case of opportunist political formations, an expression of a deliberate desire to change one master for another.

The fact that, so far, no armed intervention by China has been recorded in other countries does not mean that we are in the presence of a different imperialism, that practices new methods, with whom it is possible to come to an understanding. Actually, as Lenin states, imperialism is the main source of war against the workers and peoples; this nature has not changed, it is expressed when reactionary violence is necessary for expansion and for the defense of their interests and privileges. Sooner rather than later we will see Chinese troops invading other countries. This fact does not mean that Chinese imperialism is a friend of the people, or a factor in the process of the national liberation struggle.

We proletarian revolutionaries must bear in mind that it is necessary and possible to take advantage of inter-imperialist contradictions for the benefit of the peoples and for liberation.

The differences among the enemies of the revolution and socialism can, at certain times and conditions, sharpen and become antagonistic; they can provoke conflicts and wars that must be exploited by the proletarian revolutionaries in order to advance in the battles for social and national liberation. The scenario of the First World War, in which the main imperialist powers were involved, objectively allowed the organization and struggle of the working class to advance and develop.

History shows us various experiences of a correct attitude of the communists in taking advantage of these contradictions. The Russian communists, led by Lenin, organized and led to victory the first proletarian revolution, the October Revolution, and in the process of that leadership they gave us valuable lessons on how to develop this issue. We will cite a well-known example. Lenin and a group of communists who were exiled in Europe undertook the return to Russia on a train provided by the German government. This government provided this facility in the interest of the communists destabilizing the Russian government and causing Russia to withdraw from the alliance with England and France. Lenin completed this journey, arrived in Moscow and worked intensely to lead the revolution to victory. It is known that Lenin never condescended much less praised the German government; on the contrary he denounced it and identified it as a sworn enemy of the workers of

Germany, Russia and all the countries involved in the First World War. These were difficult and harsh conditions; the Russian communists faced them and used the contradictions between the imperialist countries at war, for the benefit of the revolution. Later, after the triumph of the Revolution, when the Entente led by the imperialist countries participated directly in the revolutionary civil war, the Bolshevik Party knew how to lead the struggles of the workers and peoples, of the Red Army to defeat them and affirm the victorious revolution.

Taking advantage of inter-imperialist contradictions demands that Marxist-Leninists analyze the concrete situation, the relationship of forces, the immediate and medium-term objectives of the revolutionary process, and, in correspondence with those circumstances, take advantage of the smallest fissure between the enemies in order to advance. This is so and in no way means that we must depend on the “help” of one imperialist country to oppose another. In our times it is not correct to sing praises to China and Russia in order to fight against the domination and aggression of the US and the EU. In Venezuela, Chinese “aid” is expressed in the looting of natural resources, in the collection of high interest rates for the growing debt. In fact, the chains of dependence on US imperialism are being replaced by others, by the ties of the Chinese and the Russians. It is not a question of any policy of taking advantage of inter-imperialist contradictions for the benefit of the independence and development of the country and much less for the benefit of the workers and people of Venezuela. It is a policy that, objectively, leads to the replacement of the Yankees by the Chinese.

Stalin in “The Foundations of Leninism” states:

“The strategic reserves of the revolution are direct and indirect, among the latter are:

“a) the contradictions and conflicts among the non-proletarian classes within the country, which can be utilised by the proletariat to weaken the enemy and to strengthen its own reserves; b) contradictions, conflicts and wars (the imperialist war, for instance) among the bourgeois states hostile to the proletarian state, which can be utilised by the proletariat in its offensive or in manoeuvring in the event of a forced retreat.”

Can and should we proletarian revolutionaries, in the course of organizing the revolution, make compromises with the enemies of the working class?

It is clear that the complex situations of the revolutionary struggle can make agreements and compromises with one or another sector of the class enemies necessary. In principle, this need must not be denied. However, it must be understood what kind of agreements and under what circumstances they occur.

One can make pacts to move forward, to reduce or eliminate obstacles. This is the case of agreements that can be made with forces or expressions of social democracy to oppose right-wing and reactionary positions. Under these circumstances, it must be understood that a fierce attempt will develop for the leadership of the popular forces that are part of these understandings. These agreements have two stages: the process and the results. If we proletarian revolutionaries act swiftly and firmly, we can advance; if we subordinate ourselves to social-democracy, they will take advantage. In the agreements it is not defined in advance who will win over whom, what force will get better results.

The Revolutionary United Front that is necessary for the victorious development of the social and national revolution in the dependent countries is a concrete expression of the policy of agreements and compromises. The Communist Party must work for the inclusion in this front of other social and political forces, apart from the working class, even sectors of the capitalist class that can coincide with the proletariat in opposition to the imperialist forces and policies. The foundation of these agreements is defined by the Program of the Revolution; however, the leadership of the Front itself demands a clear policy of unity and struggle, the disposition and practice of the Party to conquer and maintain hegemony without which, despite victory, the result will not be the revolution and socialism.

Hegemony is a necessary question to determine the leadership of the revolutionary process by the proletariat. But, that hegemony does not come by decree, nor does it respond to agreed commitments. It will be a consequence of the work of the Communist Party to strengthen the revolutionary forces, of the expertise and sagacity to develop the policies of unity and struggle with regard to the other forces of the Revolutionary United Front.

The course of organizing the revolution can raise the necessity, the indispensability of certain agreements and compromises with the class enemy, with a part of it. These are specific moments in which the proletariat must make some concessions to safeguard the

process, to avoid being overwhelmingly beaten or even defeated. In this area, the October Revolution offers us some examples of how the Party should and can conclude this type of agreement. By signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, by which the participation of Russia in the First World War was put to an end, even though some territories were lost, the survival of the Revolution and the preparation for the revolutionary civil war were ensured. Without a doubt, this Treaty was vital for the existence and development of the first Socialist State. It was part of the correct policy of agreements and compromises.

Lenin, in his work “On Compromises”, wrote:

“May an advocate of proletarian revolution conclude compromises with capitalists or with the capitalist class?... Indeed, it would obviously be silly to give a negative reply to this general question. Of course, an advocate of proletarian revolution may conclude compromises or agreements with capitalists. It all depends on what kind of agreement is concluded and under what circumstances. Here and here alone can and must one look for the difference between an agreement that is legitimate from the angle of the proletarian revolution and one that is treasonable, treacherous (from the same angle).”

The agreements and compromises that can be made by the proletarian revolutionaries are part of a correct policy of taking advantage of inter-imperialist contradictions.

In the end, inter-imperialist contradictions exist, they tend to become more acute, but they can also be moderated. The obligation of the proletarian revolutionaries is to keep them in mind as “indirect” reserves of the revolutionary process and, in no way, as decisive factors for the development and victory of the proletarian revolution.

Ecuador, April 2021

Let us follow in the footsteps of the Communards

150 years ago, the Communards “stormed heaven,” as beautifully penned by Marx, an event indelibly etched in the collective memory of the international workers’ movement.

In his book *The Civil War in France*, Marx drew lessons from this first socialist revolutionary experience, notably that “the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes”. The Commune managed to break up the old state organization and give way to a new, embryonic proletarian power. It was this lesson, as enriched by that of the Russian Revolution of 1905, and in particular that of the Soviets, which allowed Lenin to write *The State and Revolution*, a book that provided the Bolsheviks with a precious guide for the revolutionary struggle. The analysis, from a class perspective, of the failure of the Commune in France (which only lasted for a few weeks, from April 18 to May 28) and that of 1905 in Russia paved the way to the victory of the October 1917 revolution. It provided communists and revolutionaries all over the world with guidance on how to achieve their goal: the radical change of the current social order.

This is why the lessons from the Commune are still relevant and why our parties, those of the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations, cannot forget what they owe to the Communards.

This is also why we will not take part in the various demonstrations that are going to be organized in Paris to “celebrate the Commune” by reformists and revisionists of all kinds. What is there to celebrate for those who have abandoned the dictatorship of the proletariat, who abhor violence, especially that of the working classes, and whose only dream is to take the reins of the existing bourgeois state machine?

The way for us communists to celebrate this anniversary is to remain true to the lessons of the Commune, to keep drawing inspiration from it to **lead the revolutionary struggle in our time**, as did the young communists who founded our party on March 18, 1979 and named their founding congress the “Paris Commune”. Choosing this date of March 18, the anniversary of the Commu-

nards' accession to power in 1871, was not only meant to summon a glorious moment in the history of the workers' movement in our country; it was above all about showing a willingness to commit to following in the footsteps of the Communards; to affirm that the party was being established for the revolution and to take power, and for a radical change in society, for and through the working class and the popular masses.

The strategic objective of our party, enshrined in the program adopted at its founding congress, states: "*Overthrow the bourgeoisie, destroy the bourgeois state apparatus, establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and build socialism.... To achieve this goal, the proletariat and the oppressed masses, led by the party, must make use of insurrectional violence*". These lines assert the role of the working class and the working masses and frame that of the party: the masses make the revolution; the communist party is only a tool, of course an essential one, to guide the revolutionary process and help the working class find the right orientation by conveying the experience of the international workers' movement.

Nurturing the revolutionary spirit

The revolutionary spirit underlying the communist organization must be "nurtured". This notably involves strengthening the knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, the theory of the proletarian revolution, in our ranks. The study of Marx's work, *The Civil War in France*, is essential in this respect, as is the knowledge of other fundamental works by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. Knowledge of Marxism-Leninism allows our parties to analyze the concrete environment in which they operate. It serves as an aid to develop their political course of action and tactics, to forge a concrete path towards establishing the conditions for the revolutionary break with the system.

As we know, however, both a good analysis and a sound revolutionary line can only be developed in close connection with the struggles of the working class and the popular masses. The close ties between the party and the working class, as well as with the masses of working people, are essential. ***Indeed, and once again, it is the masses who make the revolution.*** It was the people of Paris who massively rose up with the national guard against the government of Thiers, who wanted to disarm it; and the fact that the Commune, "a government of the people by the people" (in Marx'

own words), could initiate unprecedented social transformations in a period of two months, was possible because it was backed by the mass of workers and the “little people” of Paris. This support went as far as defending the Commune by taking up arms and erecting barricades involving men, women and children ready to die for it during the “bloody week”.

Nurturing the revolutionary spirit within the ranks of our parties is to ensure that the objective of the revolution is never lost of sight of, that it always remains the focus of our militant activity.

It is this spirit that helped our parties hold firm, in particular when revisionism and reformism dominated among the working class. It is also thanks to their firm ideological convictions that they managed to face the unprecedented attacks of the bourgeoisie when it declared “the end of history” at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s in the wake of the breakup of the USSR and the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The sharpening of the contradictions of the imperialist capitalist system

The situation has evolved a lot.

In France, neoliberal policies have exacerbated the contradiction between labor and capital – and indeed all contradictions within society – triggering successive waves of massive workers’ protests. Since the mobilizations for the repeal of the El Khomri law (or labor law) in 2016, this confrontation has become more direct and more violent. Every single year in our country has witnessed powerful popular protest movements, from teachers to railway workers, “yellow jackets” to caregivers, high-school and university students to retirees, nursing and home care givers to bicycle delivery work-



ers, undocumented workers to the badly housed; millions of men and women, old and young have marched in the streets, denouncing the neoliberal reforms and their disastrous consequences for their living and working conditions. At the same time, the struggle against racism and police violence is mobilizing an increasing number of people, young and less young. It has increased awareness of the true nature of the state: a state for the bosses, a police state, an arms merchant's state pursuing a policy of war.

The health crisis of 2020 amplified the latent economic crisis and served as a magnifying glass exposing the evils of capitalist society; the responsibility of the economic, social and political system has become more evident to an increasing number of people. This growing awareness is the seeds of the revolutionary spirit that we must foster to help it progress further and transform into organized action.

During its last congress (in January 2020), our party analyzed this situation and took the following aim as the basis for its work: *“to increase the awareness of the need for, and possibility of a revolutionary break with, the imperialist capitalist system”*.¹ This means embodying and developing the revolutionary spirit of our militants, supporting and encouraging that which is already expressed in the ranks of the working class and the masses and in particular in certain sections of the youth.

Today, the revolutionary spirit which drove the Communards 150 years ago must materialize through offensive actions and initiatives aimed at finding ways and means to make the party's actions, program, analysis and slogans more widely known within the workers' and popular movement. It must prompt us to build contact with the sector of the youth that became politicized through the fights of the last decade and aspires to a radical change in the society, to revolution. The revolutionary spirit calls for initiatives resonating with the deep aspirations of the working class and the popular masses and enabling them to express those aspirations with us. The revolutionary spirit also requires us to take charge of the internationalist tasks towards the peoples dominated by French imperialism, the peoples of the French colonies. This is necessary to raise the awareness of the working class and the youth of our country of

¹ The document of our congress, with the title “For a revolutionary rupture with the system” has been translated into English and Spanish

the need to link the fight for a revolutionary rupture at home with that aimed at getting rid of rule of French imperialism over the peoples of the colonies and neo-colonies.

Keeping alive the internationalist character of the Commune

In the context of massive mobilizations abroad (in Latin America, Asia, Africa), we see a growing will for a profound and radical change. The popular youth of the imperialist European countries is very attentive to this development. It supports and expresses its solidarity with aspirations that resonate with its own. We remember how the revolutionary uprising of 2011 in Tunisia found an echo within our country's people and youth, putting the word Revolution back in the vocabulary.

In The Civil War in France, Marx wrote: *“If the Commune was thus the true representative of all the healthy elements of French society, and therefore the truly national government, it was, at the same time, as a working men’s government, as the bold champion of the emancipation of labor, emphatically international. Within sight of that Prussian army, that had annexed to Germany two French provinces, the Commune annexed to France the working people all over the world”*. The Commune’s internationalist character needs no proof: not only did it include militants of different nationalities in its governing bodies (Polish, Hungarian, Russians, Italians, etc.), but moreover all the exploited and oppressed of the world could recognize themselves in it, as Marx pointed out.

This is why Marx, who was at the time a refugee in England and in close contact with leading members of the First International who were elected to the Commune (Eugène Varlin, Zéphyrin Camélinat, Benoit Malon, Leo Frankel), wrote dozens of letters to the different sections of the International, drawing their attention to the Paris Commune and to the importance of the events happening in the French capital, in order to seek their support.

As revolutionary processes are developing in several countries where member parties of the Conference are active, making known these processes and the work of our sister parties is an integral part of our task as revolutionaries and communists. This is how our party understands the practice of proletarian internationalism, following Marx’s example.

Central Committee of the PCOF
March 2021

The Condition of the Indian Labouring Masses

Some gleanings from the *Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)* :
 July 2017 – June 2018

Part Two – The Urban Labouring People

In the previous part we looked at the broad demographic profile and noted that about 71% of the Indian population continues to live and work in the countryside and only 29% resides in urban areas. We studied different aspects of the labouring people in the rural areas including livelihood profile, education levels, rate of participation in labour, occupation, working hours, earnings etc. In this part we will examine the condition of the urban population with a special focus on the labouring people.

Who are the labouring people?

Households: The report estimates a total population of about 1074 million people living in about 257 million households giving an average of over 4 persons per household. About 29% of the Indian population lives in urban areas and constitutes about 81 million households and 315 million persons.

Table 1. Demographic Profile Estimates in (000)

	Rural			Urban			All		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
	388,882	370,273	759,277	160,213	154,569	314,826	549,095	524,842	1,074,103
%			70.7			29.3			
Sex ratio	1000	952		1000	965				

PLFS Statement 1: Estimated numbers of households, persons, average household size and sex ratio during 2017-18; PLFS Statement 2: Average household size (0.0) and sex ratio

The urban female sex ratio is 965 compared to the rural ratio of 952. Interestingly the urban sex ratio has improved significantly over the previous surveys (it was 909 in 2009-10 and 922 in 2011-12). Paradoxically the sex ratio for the rural areas decreased from

957 to 952 between 2011-12 to 2017-18. Does this indicate a shifting of women on a large scale from the rural areas to the urban areas? It has been observed that traditionally men move to the towns in search of employment while the womenfolk stay back in the villages taking care of small plots of land and very young and very old persons of the family. The significant jump in the female sex ratio of urban areas may indicate that with increasing rural distress, more families as a whole are migrating to the towns. The critical link between the rural small peasant household and the urban male worker may thus be weakening as small peasants and agricultural workers shift to urban areas with their families. This is a significant shift and needs to be looked into more carefully by demographers.

The pattern of urbanisation in India since the colonial times has been highly uneven, with a few coastal states having a higher degree of urbanisation than the highly populous interior states. This is borne out by the PLFS data too. While heavily populated states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have a relatively low degree of urbanisation (9% and 21% respectively), states like Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra have a much higher degree of urbanisation despite being heavily populated (48% and 44% respectively).

Table 2. Percentage of Urban households to total households in selected states	
States	% of Urban Households
Bihar	9
Assam	11
Odisha	16
Chhattisgarh	20
Jharkhand	20
Uttar Pradesh	21
Rajasthan	24
Madhya Pradesh	25
West Bengal	31
Andhra Pradesh	33
Haryana	38
Punjab	39
Telangana	39
Karnataka	42

Gujarat	43
Kerala	44
Maharashtra	44
Tamil Nadu	48
India	31

PLFS Table (3): Estimated number of households... for each State/UT

States like Telangana, Punjab and Haryana are emerging as urban hubs among the interior states. This unevenness of urbanisation has great significance for the working class movement. While demographically and electorally, the less urbanised states dominate the demographic of the country, the highly urbanised states on the other hand are economically significant and contain a substantial segment of the urban working class. While considering the state of the urban labouring population, we need to constantly keep in mind this unevenness in urbanisation.

	2011-12	2018-19
Self-employed	35	32
Salaried, Regular wage earning	42	42
Casual Labour	12	12
Others	11	14

PLFS Statement 3: Percentage distribution of households by household type

Nearly a third of urban households depend upon different types of 'self-employment' while a substantial proportion, about 42% of households have a regular salaried or wage income. A small segment depends upon casual labour. What is significant is that nearly 14% of the households are categorized as others – they could be pensioners, beggars, illegal peddlers, prostitutes or simply unemployed. What is more, the proportion of households in this category seems to be increasing over time (mainly at the cost of self-employed).

There is significant regional variation in this distribution. Industrially developed states like Maharashtra, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, etc have a much larger proportion of households dependent upon regular salaried or wage work – nearly half of the households. The pro-

portion is even higher in the north eastern states, where we can assume that the substantial portion of the urban households actually derive their income from government employment, even though the total number of households would be far fewer.

A simple comparison with the rural profile (see Table 1 in the first part of the study) shows that the urban environment offers far greater possibilities of regular wage employment compared to the rural areas, where only 13% households get such employment and of substantially larger segment (25%) depends upon casual labour.

Educational Levels of the Urban Population

We shall now turn from households to ‘individuals’ and look at the age/education profile etc. The literacy rate among persons of age 7 years and above is nearly 92% for men and 82% for women in the urban areas. A closer look at the education levels among the youth, who constitute and will constitute the core of the working population in the coming years, will be useful.

	Not Literate		Up to Class V		Up to Class VIII		Class IX and above	
	2004	2017	2004	2017	2004	2017	2004	2017-
	-5	-18	-5	-18	-5	-18	-5	18
Male	17	4	19	10	25	20	49	66
Female	14	6	17	9	22	20	47	65

(Statement 6 Percentage distribution of persons of age 15 -29 years and above... by general educational level: PLFS Report)

This in a sense confirms the effectiveness of the drive to spread education after the passing of the Right to Education Act, and what is noteworthy is the substantial narrowing of the gender gap in educational attainments. It is heartening to know that 95% to 97% of all urban children in the 5-14 year group are in school and more than 75% children are continuing studies in the 15-19 year group too. The gender gap in this appears to have been bridged completely. (See Table 7 below).

At the same time the persistence of illiteracy among 4 to 6% of the urban population and the fact that another 10% is barely literate with minimal primary education are causes for concern. Given the fact that nearly 34% of the urban population has not completed even

ten years of schooling severely restricts their employment opportunities and access to civic resources.

While the above statement pertains to the youth and prospective laboring classes, the following table tells us about the present urban adult population.

	Illiterate	Up to Class V	Up to Class VIII	Class IX and above
Male	9	14	20	57
Female	21	15	18	46

(Same as above)

This shows a much higher presence of illiteracy and poor education and a much wider gender gap. More than one third (36%) of adult women are illiterate or barely literate. Only 57% men and 46% women are in a position to leverage their education for employment. Its implication for quality of life or access to legal or constitutional remedies needs no further elucidation.

Nutrition and Health Status

The health and working capacity and quality of life depends upon the nutrition available to the people. The *NSS Report No. 560: Nutritional Intake in India, 2011-12* shows a steady decline in nutrition intake ever since globalization commenced in the early 1990s. “Comparison of estimates for India and the major States from NSS surveys between 1983 and 2011-12 shows calorie intake declining in both sectors after 1999-2000, the decline being sharper in the urban sector.” In 2011-12 the proportion of urban households with calorie intake below 2160 Kcal/consumer unit/day was 59% for the bottom 5% of population, falling to 47% for the next 5% of population. We can thus see that a large proportion of urban working people are grossly undernourished. Not only are they undernourished but they also get low quality nourishment, as a substantial part of the calorie intake comes from cereals and the protein intake has been declining. The bottom 5% of the urban population (by MPCE level) gets 66% of their nourishment from cereals, compared to 29% for the richest 5% of the population. While protein intake has been declining, the intake of fat in the non-cereal categories has been steadily increasing. This in effect implies that the population is

barely able to replace the energy spent in work with little support for growth or regeneration. This substantially increases the risk of morbidity in the working population, further crippling their capacity to work.

The NSS Report No. 574 on Health In India (2014) reports alarming levels of morbidity in the urban population. About 101 persons out of 1000 reported sickness during the previous fortnight and this includes 57 with chronic ailments. The same for women is alarmingly high – 56 reporting short duration ailments and as many as 79 reporting chronic ailments per thousand of the population. Thus nearly 12% of the population is sick at any point. A substantial majority of them (7%) suffer chronic ailments.

As is to be expected the poorest face the maximum ill health. The same report also indicates that the poorest strata are facing maximum health hazard: 16% of those in the lowest income group (among the five income groups) in urban areas reported illness during the previous fortnight. Even more than in the rural areas, chronic illness increases substantially in the 60+ age group to about 30% of the population. Given the fact that most of the urban labouring population does not have any health insurance coverage, they end up having to work in their old age to pay for their treatment.

An important feature of both the nutrition and health reports is that there has been a steady decline in nutrition over the last few decades and an increase in morbidity. While part of the rise in morbidity may be due to increased reporting, the fact that it is accompanied by lowering of the quality and quantity of nutrition may indicate the decline in health status may be real and not just apparent.

Labour Force Participation Rate

According to Statement 8 of the 2017-18 NSSO PLF survey, 57% of the urban male population and 16% of the urban female population are counted in the ‘labour force’. While the rate for men has remained stable over more than a decade, that for women has declined from nearly 18% in 2004-5 to 16% in the current survey. While this decline is not as steep as the decline in the rural areas, it should be read in conjunction with the increased sex ratio in the urban areas. More women are shifting to towns but are not getting absorbed into the labour force and instead are ending up as housewives engaged primarily in reproductive labour.

	15-29 years		15 + years		All	
Years	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2017-18	58.5	17.5	74.5	20.4	57	15.9
2004-05	68.3	21.7	79.2	24.4	57	17.8

PLFS Statement 8: Labour force participation rates (in per cent) in usual status.

Under normal circumstances we do not expect children under 15 years and elders above 65 to be ‘economically active’ and working. Hence, in international calculations for labour force participation only the age group 15-64 is taken into account. However, the survey data only tells us about labour participation in the age group 15 years and above, which is 75% for males and 20% for females in the urban areas. Labour force participation of youth under 29 years has declined from 2004-05 and this can be attributed largely to the increased school attendance mentioned above.

		5 to 9	10 to 14	15+	65+	All
Self-employed	Male	0.0	0.1	24.2	17.2	18.5
	Female	0.0	0.0	4.3	2.3	3.4
Helper in Self empl	Male	0.0	0.2	3.0	0.9	2.3
	Female	0.0	0.1	2.0	0.8	1.6
Regular Salary / wage work	Male	0.0	0.3	31.7	5.1	24.2
	Female	0.0	0.1	9.5	1.5	7.4
Casual Labour	Male	0.0	0.3	10.4	3.3	8.0
	Female	0.0	0.0	2.4	1.0	1.9
Non-wage work						
Domestic Work	Male	0.8	0.7	0.8	2.6	0.7
	Female	1.1	3.3	59.4	44.2	46.7
Begging & Prostitution	Male	3.9	1.3	1.7	10.3	1.7
	Female	4.8	0.4	1.5	12.5	1.6
				15-19	20-24	
Students	Male	95	95	75	34	27.2
	Female	94	96	76.4	28.5	24.8

PLFS Table 15, Percentage distribution of persons by usual status per age-group

While it is customary to consider education as a non-productive labour, in the realm of reproduction, we need to remember that most of these children are in the process of acquiring skills and work discipline required by the capitalist world and as such are part of the capitalist production process. The loss of childhood and free volition which such 'pre-labour' entails needs to be theorized and looked at as actually unpaid labour in a disguised form.

While the decreased labour participation due to increased school attendance may be welcome, there are many aspects of urban employment demography that are disturbing. The distressingly high percentage of children under 9 years begging etc is a serious cause for concern. As many as 4% boys and 5% girls are thus engaged. Equally distressing is the very high percentage of persons above 65 years engaged in begging etc – 10% for men and 13% for women. The non-existence of social security coverage for the very young and old age can be seen as the direct cause of this situation. In fact, across the board persons above the age of 65 are forced to work, as more than 26% of old men continue to work in different sectors. As many as 18% of elderly men are in the self-employed sector vending fruits and or food stuffs.

Another significant fact that emerges from this table is that while most of the urban women are out of the paid labour force they form a substantial part of the unpaid labour force. While only 20% of urban women are engaged in paid work, as many as 60% are engaged in domestic work. Their domestic responsibilities do not cease even in old age, as can be seen in the fact that 44% of old women are engaged in domestic work.

A comparison of the situation over the last decade or so indicates that while the proportion of men employed in different sectors has remained relatively stable, the proportion of women employed in the self-employed segment and in the casual labour segment has been declining consistently ever since 1980s, while the proportion of women employed in regular salaried or wage jobs has increased significantly and as many as 52% of employed women are in this segment. Of course, the actual number of such women would be very low; nevertheless it indicates that women are less engaged in petty capital-based self-employment or even in casual labour. They

work in situations where the master-worker relations are clearer and regularized. This has great importance for organizing women workers in the urban areas.

Having said that the overall profile we get of the urban employment scenario is that it is a ‘men’s world’ where in the three major employment segments of self-employed, regular salaried/wage work and casual work, men predominate to the order of 85%, 77% and 82% respectively. Women appear to have a better presence in the regular income work compared to the other segments. Secondly it would appear that nearly 47% of the urban ‘gainfully’ employed persons enjoy a degree of income security (which should not be confounded with social security) being in the category of regular salaried or wage-earning jobs. These are also the ones who work for some regular ‘employer’, be it a government agency or a private capitalist. Next come the workers with petty capital, the ‘self-employed’ who constitute about 38% of the ‘gainfully’ employed urban persons. Casual workers who have no job security or some capital to fall back upon are about 15% of those ‘gainfully’ employed (based on Table 15 of PLFS).

A third important feature of the urban employment scenario is that a substantial proportion of it is unemployed even though it is in search of work. Of the 15+ age group about 3.7% are unemployed though willing to work. This proportion rises to an alarming level of 11.6% for youth aged 20-24 years and 8.7% in the case of the youth aged 25-29 years. (For urban males aged 20-24 years this figure soars to 15.3%.)

In many ways the four segments of urban employment are complementary to each other, as a person in regular employment may find himself out of a job and if he has some savings (or ‘cultural capital’ in the form of education) take to ‘self employment’ or otherwise end up doing casual labour. In large cases those in self employment may be just waiting for a ‘regular’ job to come their way. Thus there is a regular osmosis between these categories, which the data does not reveal. It is nevertheless noteworthy that, at any given point of time those with regular source of income and employment are less than half of all who are employed.

The looming presence of unemployment over the urban world is clearly brought out in the ‘work participation rate’. The report uses two categories to calculate self employed working population: labour force participation (which includes potential workers who

are currently unemployed) and work participation (which includes only those currently employed).

	Male		Female		All	
	%	Persons 00	%	Persons 00	%	Persons 00
Labour Force Participation	57.00	912,966	15.90	245,304	36.80	1,158,270
Workers	52.90	848,596	14.10	218,814	33.90	1,067,410

Of the total urban male population, 53% are actually employed while another four percent are looking for employment. Likewise while 14% of women actually are employed, another two percent are looking for employment. In all 34% of the urban population is actually employed implying that nearly two additional persons are dependent upon every person employed. As in the rural areas the percentage of those employed in the bottom UMPCE (usual monthly per capita expenditure) decile classes are distinctly lower than for higher decile classes. Thus while the bottom decile class has only 28% persons employed the top decile class has 34% in employment. In other words the poorer people have to take care of more dependents than the rich. (PLFS Statement 12, Work Participation Rates by decile classes.) This also shows that female work participation improves significantly as the income levels rise – 20% women are employed in the top decile class while only 11% women are employed in the bottom decile class.

It should be noted that this is a statistical figure. In actual fact many urban workers may have families dependent upon them living in the villages, but these do not appear in this data as they are not living in urban areas.

The nearest to a class profile of the rural population that we get from this report relates to ‘broad occupational divisions’ (Statement 17), which gives us about nine broad divisions. While these should not be seen as class categories, they can be safely treated as income groups. If one may broadly see these as also income groups, then the managerial strata would come out as the richest crust of urban society, the middle income group would be constituted by profes-

sionals, technicians, clerks and service workers. The low income group would include the ‘skilled agriculturalists’, skilled crafts-persons (weavers, tailors, electricians, plumbers etc), machine operators (skilled workers) and ‘elementary workers’, probably unskilled workers. Thus the urban working population would have about 14% high income group, 37% middle income group and 49% low income groups.

Division	Male	Female	Persons
1. Managerial	15	10	14
2. Professionals	8	13	9
3. Technicians	7	12	8
4. Clerks	4	5	4
5. Service workers	17	15	16
6. Skilled Agriculturalists	4	5	4
7. Skilled Crafts-persons	19	17	18
8. Machine Operators	11	2	10
9. Elementary workers	15	22	17
Total	100	100	100

PLFS Statement 17: Percentage distribution of workers by broad occupation division & Table 25

Division 1: Legislators, senior officials and managers, **2:** Professionals, **3:** Technicians and associate professionals, **4:** Clerks, **5:** Service workers and shop & market sales workers, **6:** Skilled agricultural and fishery workers, **7:** Craft and related trades workers, **8:** Plant and machine operators and assemblers, **9:** Elementary occupations (unskilled manual workers)

This data roughly maps to the proportion of self-employed (the middle income groups) and regular salaried and casual labourers (the low income groups) given in tables 3 and 7 above. Of course the ‘regular salaried/wage workers’ is an omnibus category which will include the top strata of managerial and bureaucratic classes as well as those working in return for meagre monthly wages.

What is significant in this table is that the workers who work for wages in factories or outside of as unskilled manual workers consti-

tute a significant 27% of the working population of towns. Among women too, we find 24% of working women in this category.

The above statements should be read with some caution as these nine categories of employment really do not allow us to presume who exactly are wage workers, self-employed and managerial strata. The ‘skilled craft persons’, for example, can include women tailors who work in garment sweat shops and are not really self-employed persons.

The occupational structure of the urban labouring force shows a great degree of diversification and a decreasing reliance on manufacturing and agriculture over the last four decades or so. The significant decline of population, both male and female, dependent upon agriculture points to self employed intensification of urbanisation and a shift away from agriculture as an important urban activity.

Table 10. Change in Occupational Profile of Urban Labour Force 1977-8 to 2017-18 (in %)				
	1977-78		2017-18	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Agriculture	11%	32%	5	10
Manufacture	28	30	22	25
Construction	4	2	12	4
Trade, Hotel	22	9	25	13
Transport etc	10	1	12	3
Others	25	26	24	45

(Statement 16, of PLFS Report)

Significantly, the share of manufacture too has declined over the last four decades. At the same time the construction sector has been absorbing a very large segment of self employed urban working population, especially of male workers. Its share over the forty years has increased from 4% to 12% for male workers. Even if one were to include construction in the category of industry, it is the so-called service sector which appears to provide maximum employment. This sector employs about 61% of male and well as female workers. In terms of total employment, manufacturing and construction together employ about 33% of workers, while Trade and Transport etc employ about 27%. All other services together em-

ploy 34% of all workers. In other words self employed service sector employs about 61% of workers in all. (it should be noted that even within the service sector, 35% of all women workers are employed in education, health and household work.)

This indicates the tremendous expansion of the so-called service or tertiary sector at the cost of the primary production sectors.

Conditions of Employment

As noted earlier, nearly 47% of urban persons who are engaged in income-earning activities can look forward to a ‘regular salary or wage’ and these are overwhelmingly men. The PLF survey tells us about the precariousness of even this miniscule minority.

A degree of security is provided to the worker if he or she is formally engaged through a written contract, which then may enable them to invoke prevalent labour laws in their defence if there is any violation of the contract. The fact of the matter is that the bulk of the urban labouring population (in non-peasant-agricultural sector) which ‘enjoys’ regular income from salaries or wages, amounting to more than 72% of male workers, are engaged without any written contract. The proportion is the same for women workers in this category. To put it differently, just about 13% of all urban workers work under conditions of formal employment. The rest are either ‘self-employed’ or workers without any formal protection.

The absence of any formal arrangement naturally precludes other essential features of decent employment such as weekly holidays and fixed working time etc., paid leave including leave during sickness, maternity, etc. Most of ‘regular salaried/wage’ workers



were not entitled to any social security benefits (pension, gratuity, provident fund, health or maternity benefits). According to the survey results nearly 48% of urban workers in this category were not eligible for any social security benefits. If we were to include all urban workers (self-employed and casual workers), then less than 25% of urban workers are entitled to any social security benefit. No wonder we see such a high degree of begging among the 65+ year-old urban population.

The survey shows that 53% of urban regular wage earners are not entitled to regular paid leave. It also appears that this condition has been intensifying over the years, as the percentage of workers without paid leave appears to be steadily increasing over the last decade. The denial of paid leave is just the tip of the iceberg. It only indicates long hours of work without any respite.

	Male	Female
Self-employed	58.5	41.5
Regular Wage/salary	60.0	52.6
Casual	46.0	40.6

Statement 26: Average number of hours actually worked in a week by workers in different statuses in employment

The data on hours of work shows that almost all categories of workers worked for more than six days a week and put in between 40 to 60 hours every week. The self-employed men, who constitute 28% of the urban workforce, on an average put in 58-59 hours of work a week and worked almost on all days of the week (more than eight hours every day of the week). The hours of work for women in the self-employed sector is 41 hours a week, an average of six hours every day of the week. In addition they would be attending to domestic work like cooking, cleaning, attending to children and the old and ill persons.

It would appear that the low capital-intensive and low technology work that such self-employed persons do at a pace set by themselves, allows them to work longer on all days of the week. *From the unemployment statistics compiled by the NSSO, it appears that this category of workers feels that they can work for another seven or nine hours a week if gainfully employed.*

The regular salaried/wage workers of the urban areas appear to be putting in the longest hours of work, the men working for more than 60 hours a week (eight and a half hours in case of a 7 day week and 10 hours a day in case of a 6 day week); women in this category also work for over 52.6 hours a week (again averaging over seven and a half hours every day of the week). This is the price they pay for their ‘regular’ salaries or wages. In a highly insecure labour market, relative job security comes with a stiff bill.

In contrast, casual workers in the urban areas typically get less work. Male casual workers get work for around 5 to 6 days a week and appear to get on an average only 46 hours of work a week. Women casual workers too, get work for five days a week and an average of 40.6 hours work a week. However, this unskilled work can be highly exhausting, so much so that despite putting in fewer hours of work, they feel disinclined to work more, as this category of workers shows the least willingness to extend hours of work. Unlike in the rural areas, urban working hours do not appear to vary between seasons (however, casual labour does show marginal variation of about an hour or so).

Statement 27 of the PLFS gives further details which can be fairly alarming. As many as 34% of urban male workers work for 60 to 84 hours a week!

A simple look at these figures tells us that, as in the rural areas, in the urban areas too, the 150 year old demand of an ‘Eight Hour Day’ remains a distant dream for the Indian labouring masses. Condemned as they are to work for over eight hours every day of the week, there is little time left for either educational, political, cultural or recreational purposes.

Let us now turn to the issue of remuneration and earnings of these workers.

Earnings of Urban labouring people

Let us first take the category of Regular wage or salary earners (Statement 22 of PLFS report), as their earnings can be clearly expressed in terms of monthly earnings. As mentioned above, they constitute 47% of the urban workers. We learn that even though the earnings are supposed to be regular, they are not constant over the year and vary from season to season. The range for male workers is between Rs. 17,314 (in monsoon months) to Rs. 18,353/ (in Spring). Averaging the seasonal variation, we get a figure of a monthly sala-

ry/wage of Rs. 18,000 for men and Rs. 14,600 for women. Assuming, from the above discussion on working hours, that women work for 208 hours a month and men work for 240 hours a month, we get the following hourly averages for their respective incomes: women Rs. 70 per hour and men Rs. 75 per hour. Women thus get about 93% of the men's wages per hour.

Casual labourers who depend upon daily random employment constitute about 15% of the urban working population. Their per diem wage averages around Rs. 324/ (ranges from Rs. 313/ to 335/) for men which gives an hourly average (assuming an eight hour day) of Rs. 40/. For women it is a daily average of Rs. 192/ giving a paltry hourly rate of Rs. 11/. We also need to remember that they do not get regular work on all days. As such, the average monthly earnings would be both varying and much less. The wide gulf that separates the wage rates of the regularly employed and the casual workers is noteworthy. While in the case of men it is a little less than double, in the case of women those regularly employed get seven times the hourly wages of a casual worker. This huge difference can be attributed to the fact that the bulk of regular employed women are in the service sector, such as education, health, etc, which are highly paid compared to casual work.

We shall now turn to the most complex segment of all, the 'self-employed' workers. These constitute 38% of the urban workforce, with men dominating the profile. To recall the information from Table 2, the workers on their own account constitute about the 38% of rural workforce and helpers in the same category constitute about 17%. Unfortunately, the report does not give us any breakdown of the earnings of the two categories, assuming that the 'helpers' are largely unpaid. Despite some seasonal fluctuations, the monthly earnings of male self-employed workers average around Rs. 16,067/ and that of women is less than half of this at about Rs. 7000/ (Statement 25,



PLFS). These earnings are termed ‘gross’ in that they include both ‘profit and wages’. The profit ought to accrue to the capital investment in the form of land, equipment and animals. Also these are the income of the entire family and not of individuals, as in the case of regular salaried or casual wage workers. The average monthly income projection of about Rs. 16,000/ for men and Rs. 7,000/ for women is a lot better than the earnings of the casual workers but lower than that of regular wage/salary earners. If one were to go by the hours of work put in, it works out for male self-employed workers to be about Rs. 68/ per hour (compared to Rs.75/ for regular salary/wage earners and Rs. 40/ for the casual workers). Considering that this is a combination of return on capital investment and labour put in by an entire family unit, we can appreciate the extent of distress faced by the self-employed in the urban areas.

By way of a conclusion

We noted in the very beginning a highly uneven pattern of urbanization, with states like Bihar showing very low degree of urbanization and states like Tamil Nadu having substantial urbanization. Among the more populous states, it appears that only about six or seven states have urbanization to the extent of 40-50% of their populations living in urban areas. Likewise seven populous states have less than 25% of their populations in urban areas. Such uneven urbanization has important economic as well as political implications for working class development and organisation.

We had also noted that the sex ratio has improved in the urban areas but at the same time female participation in labour in urban areas has declined. This indicates that women in towns are engaged mainly in reproductive activities, sustaining the male labour force engaged in income earning work. This is not to deny a significant female workforce especially in the service sector (health, education, administration and shopkeeping), but it points out to the fact that the predominant segment of women in towns are engaged in unpaid domestic labour. This has serious implications for the organization of workers, and women workers especially. Domestic issues which hitherto had not occupied the concerns of the trade union and working class movement need to be addressed if women workers are to be organized and their latent militancy, which comes to the fore time and again, is harnessed for social change.

About 33% of all urban persons are ‘gainfully’ employed (the rest being either unemployed, students, housekeepers or persons engaged in ‘disreputable’ professions like prostitution and begging or boot legging). These amount to about ten crore [1 crore = 10 million] persons. Of this, about 47% have some regular work with regular periodic income. While this category includes all kinds of persons with salaried income and thus will include highest civil servants and also managerial strata of corporate houses, the vast majority of this category will be industrial workers, school teachers, clerks, shop workers etc. with some technical or liberal education. Another 38% are self-employed. Significantly, unlike in the rural sector, most of the self-employed are workers on their own account and not helpers. In the rural sector nearly 30% of the self-employed were unpaid helpers while in the urban sector this proportion is less than 15%. These urban informal sector workers play a crucial and yet unrecognized and unsupported role in the urban economy. Petty shop keepers, petty producers, peddlers, without any institutional support, not only act as links between large producers and consumers but also play an important role in the production chain as ‘outsourced’ producers. This sector was the most hit by the ill conceived acts of the Modi government such as ‘demonetisation’ and the new tax regime of ‘GST’. Even though this is largely a petty-bourgeois strata, this is a category of workers who put in long hours of work and get rather poor returns. Casual workers without any certainty of employment or wages constitute 15% of the urban population, whose main problem is the lack of regular work or social security support. The self-employed and the casual workers together constitute the most vulnerable segment of the urban employed persons.

One of the burning issues we noted above was the killing long hours of work urban labouring people have to put in to eke out subsistence wages. We saw that virtually all categories of workers, except probably the white collared, work for all seven days and work for more than eight hours every day. A large number of people actually work for more than ten hours on all the seven days of the week. For over a hundred and fifty years, the working class has been demanding eight hours day and six day week as essential for a civilized life in our times. It is an irony of capitalism that despite the tremendous leaps in productivity since then, workers still have to put in inhuman hours of labour in the service of capital.

A corollary of long hours of work is low wage levels, the average wage level being between Rs. 40 to Rs. 75 per hour. (At the present exchange rates this amounts to a maximum of one US\$ per hour.) We noted earlier that each working person has to support two non earning persons financially (who are either children or spouses who help to reproduce labour). The minimal wages would be insufficient even for one person and thus forces on them longer and longer hours of work.

Another burning issue we need to note is the low social security coverage available for urban working people. Less than a fourth of all urban workers are entitled to any social security benefit. This abysmal coverage combined with the growing privatization of basic services like health and education, not to say of basic needs like food and housing, pushes the labouring poor into a greater degree of self-exploitation through greater hours of work and they are forced to continue to work even in old age and sickness or to resort to begging etc just to keep themselves alive.

These are some of the issues that need the immediate attention of labour activists, trade unionists and communists working in the country.

March 2021

A year of pandemic, economic and social crisis in Italy

A pandemic catastrophe with precise responsibilities

The last year was the darkest in Italy since WWII. Never before has our country been hit with an economic, health and social crisis of such magnitude. The conjunction of pandemic and recession has had a devastating impact on the workers and people.

Italy was the first Western country to be hit by the Covid-19 pandemic, in January 2020. The “first wave” was characterized by a rapid increase in the number of cases, which in a few weeks overwhelmed the contact tracing and isolation capabilities in the epicenter of the epidemic (the Northern regions of the country).

It therefore became a disaster in terms of hospitalizations and deaths, especially in nursing homes for the elderly. At this stage virtually no help came from the EU.

Starting in October 2020, there was a “second wave” characterized by an exponential increase in positive cases with consequent difficulties in the territorial response capacity. Contact tracing went out. Mortality was higher than in the first wave and there was a rapid overload of hospital and care services.

Now – March 2021 – we are in the “third wave”. To date, the official number of Covid-19 cases in our country is more than 3.6 million (largely underestimated) with more than 109,000 deaths, among them hundreds of workers, especially health-care worker.

To this number we must add another tens of thousands of deaths due to diseases that were impossible to cure in the situation of the health emergency.

Italy has one of the highest rates of COVID mortality in the world. The causes of this high level of the impact of the pandemic in our country, which led to a humanitarian crisis, are different: decades of cuts in public health spending; therefore, the saturation of the hospital system, already in precarious conditions, and the lack of health-care workers; the massacre of the old people in the “nurs-

ing homes” where infected people have been sent; the lack of a recent pandemic plan and of a rational strategy; a chaotic, inadequate and superficial management by the government; the priority to continue to produce for profits at all costs; the social behavior of sectors of the population educated in the name of individualism, with poor social discipline.

Regarding the vaccines, the accumulation of delays in their delivery, the insufficient quantity to assure a good rate of vaccination and the poor quality and effectiveness of some of them, became an international scandal.

“Mistakes”, the mass media says. “Bourgeois crimes!”, the communists say.

Since the first case of Covid-19 was announced, no fundamental changes have occurred in the health-care sector, either in terms of the number of health-care personnel or in terms of hospital and care facilities. Even after the discovery of mutations in the virus, which spread faster and are probably more dangerous, the ruling class has shown no willingness to expand the National Health Service, or to make it totally public.

For their part, the corrupt leaders of the trade union bureaucracies have signed agreements that strengthen private health care.

The “lockdown” is hard only for the popular masses. The stock exchanges have continued to speculate without obstacles, large companies continue to produce for profits, which have grown in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, communication monopolies, private health-care services, large-scale distribution, etc.

On the political plane, the health emergency has become a weapon of the bourgeoisie to suppress workers’ rights and freedoms, dismantle social gains, introduce anti-worker measures, and militarize society.

An economic disaster

In this context the economic situation became more and more serious. Before the pandemic, the Italian economy was in stagnation. During 2020 Italian GDP fell about 9%. The recession was deeper than in 2008-9, despite the monetary stimulus measures.

During 2020, about 500,000 workers lost their jobs, especially women, young people and migrant workers. Many workers have been laid off and are living miserably. The small redundancy fund for the workers arrives with months of delay.

The official unemployment rate in Italy is 10.5%; for the young people (15-25 years) it is 33% (three times the EU average). The emigration of young workers, often high skilled, continues relentlessly.

For people who are working, working conditions have worsened more and more. Exploitation is increasing with old and new means and techniques. Many workers are in a terrible grip: either work or stay healthy.

Women have paid heavily for the consequences of the lockdown: domestic imprisonment, increase of workloads and acts of violence.

One year of the capitalist crisis, accelerated by the pandemic, has thrown millions of workers into unemployment, precariousness and poverty.

At the same time, a minority of big capitalists have increased their profits and incomes, taking advantage of government and EU support, loans, speculations, tax exemptions, etc.

The bosses are on the offensive all along the front. They want to use the collective labor agreements to reduce wages and rights, to increase precariousness and exploitation; they want their hands free for redundancies and demand to receive the entire “Recovery plan,” billion of Euros.

Last, but not least, the crisis created the basis to multiply the public debt, which hit a new post-war record in 2021 at 158.5% of GDP. The country is moving toward financial bankruptcy and this leads to more supervision and control by the EU Commission-ECB-IMF.

A political crisis piloted by the oligarchy

In this scenario, during the first and second wave of the pandemic, the Conte “2” government acted, supported by the 5 Star populist movement, the liberal-reformist Democratic Party and a small social-democratic party (LEU); this government had a small parliamentary majority.

This government acted through continuous emergency decrees, suspended constitutional rights and marginalized the role of the bourgeois Parliament. Italy has been in a permanent “state of emergency” since January 31, 2020.

The political line of the government and the measures it adopted are largely influenced and orientated by the interests of the major

associations of the bosses, which do not want to stop the production and circulation of non-essential goods.

In the “second wave” of the pandemic the government passed incremental measures through October with little success, before unveiling a new package of restrictions on November 3, when the infection was already very high.

The Conte 2 government adopted several decrees with a packet of measures to help capital, such as liquidity, grants, loans, tax exemptions, etc., totaling 750 billion Euros (almost half the GDP). The majority went to big capital and a little for the small capitalist.

Given the street protests of the lower petty bourgeoisie and some sectors of the workers against the impact of the measures, such as the curfew and shop closures without economic help, the government was under pressure to keep the economic impact to a minimum and to avoid the consequences of the lockdown, helping some sectors.

This politics of “half measures” in favor of some sectors of the middle class irritated the big bourgeoisie.

The political clash between the different bourgeois factions precipitated the use of European funds of the “Recovery Plan” (209 billion € for Italy). Various sectors, especially the big industrialists, scrambled to grab most of these funds. Another problem was the measures to reduce public debt, without touching the great wealth.

In January 2021 the severity of the political, economic and social crisis pushed the ruling circles into a political crisis in order to replace Conti with Draghi (former president of the ECB, former vice-president of Goldman Sachs, member of the Trilateral Commission and the Bilderberg group) and give this personality a larger parliamentary majority supporting the new government.

The formation of the Draghi government puts the working class and the popular masses face to face with a more concentrated, ferocious and cynical executive power. It has a large majority in a delegitimized parliament, but vast strata of the population have no faith in this government of big capital.

All the political parties of the ruling class have become weakened, including the populists and the social democrats, unable to carry out any progressive or reformist task.

The measures that Draghi's reactionary government will approve will raise mistrust and cause protests. The bourgeoisie will find greater difficulties to politically tie large sectors of the working masses of the city and the countryside to its politics.

Perspectives of the class struggle

The pandemic, and the economic and social crisis made evident and sharpened all the problems and contradictions of bourgeois society: the damages caused to the public health system by decades of liberalism, the unprecedented social inequalities (in Italy the 3% rich own 34% of the wealth), the chronic defects of the Italian capitalist system, the criticalities and weaknesses of the economy, the corruption and bankruptcy policy of the ruling class, etc.

Two phenomena are developing in this situation:

- 1) the level of social discontent is very high among the workers, the youth and wide sectors of the petty bourgeoisie; it could explode with massive demonstrations in the streets;
- 2) an increasing mistrust in bourgeois institutions, in the government, the judiciary system, the old and new bourgeois political parties.

The growing discontent on this basis plays a very important role in preparing the subjective conditions for overthrowing capitalism through the socialist revolution. Of course, the most important subjective factor is still missing: the organization of the working class in an independent and



revolutionary Party.

However, the pandemic has destroyed many illusions and the bourgeoisie has revealed its incapacity to remain the ruling class of society.

In the next period, no social class will be able to survive as in the old days. The “new normal” will be worse than the “old normal” for the great majority of the workers, women, and young people.

Until now the risks of the pandemic, government repression and the politics of the reformist and trade union leadership is preventing a large mobilization of the workers. Nevertheless, the situation is preparing an escalation of class conflict.

The question of “who must pay for the crisis and debt?” will arise once more, and more sharply.

In this scenario we work to transform the discontent into political opposition to the government in the factories, in the workplaces, in the schools, in the streets, with the unity of action for the vital and urgent interests of the proletariat.

To gain influence over sectors of the advanced workers we spread our slogans:

No to layoffs! Work and wages, dignity and rights, health and safety in the workplaces!

Down with the government of the financial oligarchy!

The crisis and the debt must be paid by the bosses, the bankers and the rich!

Unity and struggle for the reconstruction of the Communist Party!

The situation will open opportunities for the communists that demand the necessity of the revolutionary way out of the crisis of the imperialist-capitalist system, the revolutionary passage to socialism in order to abolish exploitation and economic crises, to prevent and manage the pandemics and develop the economy in equilibrium with nature.

Therefore, the struggle for the unity of the communists in a single Marxist-Leninist organization is the task that the situation puts on the agenda and that we have to solve.

March, 2021

The 4T Regime and the Fight of the Masses

In the first quarter of 2021, the regime of the “Fourth Transformation,” headed by Andrés Manuel López Obrador, has been in office in Mexico for more than two years. This has been enough time to show its continuity with the previous oligarchic regimes, demonstrating its true class character, proving to be at the service of a sector of the financial oligarchy.

The 4T serves a sector of the financial oligarchy

We will leave aside his already worn-out discourse of “*combating corruption*”, “*republican austerity*”, “*fourth transformation of public life*” and other hollow phrases, which no longer deceive anyone given the visible reality. According to the facts, we have a regime at the service of a sector of the financial oligarchy that is completely subordinate and servile to the U.S. imperialist bloc; however it is true that another part of the oligarchy, which had been favored by previous regimes, turned into an openly pro-coup fascist right-wing opposition against the “Fourth Transformation” (4T) regime. The facts show that 4T serves another majority sector of the financial oligarchy, a majority oligarchic sector that gives orders to 4T through the “Business Advisory Council” (CAE), the Association of Banks of Mexico (ABM) composed of more than 70 private banks in the country and foreign ones, through direct deals and agreements of oligarchs with AMLO personally, as in the case of *Carlos Slim* of the *Grupo Carso*, *América Móvil* and *Banco INBURSA*, among other companies, and also with the mandates dictated by the U.S. imperialist oligarchy, whether Republicans or Democrats at the head of the U.S. state.

The CAE is an official council, attached to the presidency of the republic, formed by López Obrador, and in charge of “*the strategic direction of the Mexican economy*”. It is a Council of financial oligarchs composed of Ricardo Salinas Pliego, President of the Salinas Group (*Banco Azteca*, *TV Azteca* and *Elektra*); Bernardo Gómez, Executive Co-Chair of *Grupo Televisa*; Olegario Vázquez Aldir, CEO of *Grupo Empresarial Angeles* (*Imagen TV*, *Excélsior*, *Hospitales Angeles*, etc.), *Camino Real* hotels, and *Grupo*

Aeroportuario del Pacífico; Carlos Hank González, Chair of *Grupo Financiero Banorte*, Vice-President of the Council of Administration of Gruma, and the Hermes Group; Daniel Chavez of the *Vidanta Hotel Group*; and Miguel Alemán Magnani, executive chair of *Interjet*.

A few months after the end of the three-year term of the current legislature of the Federal Chamber of Deputies, with an absolute majority of the 4T, not a single one of the oligarchic neoliberal structural reforms imposed by previous neoliberal regimes has been overturned, as promised in the 2018 campaign. On the contrary, they have used their parliamentary majority to approve annual income and expenditure budgets (for 2019, 2020 and 2021) that are openly oligarchic and anti-popular. These have provided billions in resources to the financial oligarchy, financed large megaprojects and private businesses such as the Maya Train, Santa Lucia Airport (both with the army's involvement in construction), the Transsystemic Project, the Morelos Integral Project, the “Dos Bocas” Oil Refinery – built by private companies – and a public-private infrastructure plan agreed on with the oligarchs, with several packages of projects; the first package, from October of 2020, consisted of 39 projects amounting to 297,344 million pesos and the second package was 29 projects with an investment of 228 billion pesos. And while the 4T regime subsidizes the financial oligarchy year after year with billions in resources and businesses, trying to “save” them from the capitalist economic crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic, at the same time, it strikes the economy of the masses of people with a continued reduction, year after year, of social spending and resources to support the popular majority. It pompously calls this policy of reducing social spending “*republican austerity*”, meaning in real terms a reduction of resources for public education, health care, science and technology, social housing, a reduction of resources for the countryside oriented to poor and middle peasants, resources for indigenous people, the disappearance of trusts for the protection of victims and journalists, and to support searches for missing persons, as well as trusts to support science and technology. These are trusts that the 4T regime eliminated, while leaving intact the trusts for the armed forces, which, paradoxically, are among the most noted for serious human rights violations, political repression, corruption and links to organized crime/ Moreover, the amounts for the military trusts are much larger (murky and discretionary in their

management) than those to support victims, protection of human rights and science and technology. In the latter case, this meant eliminating resources for research and creation of their own vaccine in public institutions, instead allocating resources to buy private vaccines from Slim-AstraZeneca's and other companies. In addition it provided more than 135 million pesos to AviMex (a private laboratory of a bird company) to develop a vaccine. This is an intentional policy of reducing public resources for the pressing needs of the popular majorities in times of economic crisis and the pandemic crisis, in order to grant these "saved" public resources to the current sector of the financial oligarchy in power.

At the same time, the 4T regime has maintained a budget for patronage programs, while giving crumbs, in the form of small amounts of money to some of the impoverished majorities. These, like previous schemes, are aimed at providing it with a "social basis", of a "secure vote", of patrons in favor of 4T, which together with the reactionary top military chiefs (also bought with billions in resources) and the operational structure of its 4T. They are people in the executive, legislative and judicial branches, super-delegates of the federal government in each of the 31 federal states, and their "servers of the nation" – executors of its patronage programs – whether they support the oligarchic regime or the 4T, displacing and dismantling the mass movement that won it the 2018 election, replacing it with all kinds of mercenaries, opportunists and scoundrels, the vast majority from the previous neoliberal political regimes.

The economy in the hands of the financial oligarchy

The cyclical economic crisis and the subsequent health crisis that deepened it represented for Mexico a fall of 8.5% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with 12 million unemployed (formal jobs, according to official data) in April 2020. This was during the first quarantine for Covid-19', with inflation rising since 2017; this meant a devastating increase in prices for basic products and services, growth in the pauperization and misery of the majority of the population, seen in 9.8 million more poor people (according to Data from the Coneval). In the same period, the fortunes of a few oligarchs grew, such as Ricardo Salinas Pliego, whose fortune increased by 5.40% , making him the second richest person in Mexico, after only Carlos Slim. The former made all the workers in his

companies work throughout the pandemic, without closing a single one, even if they were not considered “essential.” This caused the contagion and death of many of them, knowing that he is protected by the 4T. In addition, this same character is directly benefited by the 4T with juicy businesses, for example, Banco Azteca, which he owns, and is the one that distributes most of the supports of the 4T patronage programs. He has “won” million-dollar tenders from the federal government and the Mexico City (CDMX) government,, also governed by the 4T. In the CDMX his company Total Play won the contract for acquiring video surveillance systems for the Center for Emergency Care and Citizen Protection of Mexico City (C5), amounting to 954 million pesos. And another of his companies, Seguros Azteca, won another contract for accident insurance policies covering accidents by police and officials. And while the CDMX Government (GCDMX) provides millions to a single oligarch, tens of thousands of workers of the GCDMX live on meager wages and no job stability. In addition, Salinas Pliego owes the Mexican State about 40 billion pesos (\$200 million), according to data from the Tax Administration Service (SAT), the Mexican tax authority; in this case López Obrador, the president who claims he is combating corruption, merely said “... *nothing by force, everything by reason and right.*” In the same sense of maximum profits to the oligarchy are AMLO’s commitments to the banks, with its Association of Banks of Mexico (ABM), to whom he literally said: “*I assure you that the rules will not change, so that you continue to operate completely unhindered in the domestic market. Let no one be confused, we will always respect the companies and banks of the national and foreign private sector.*” In 2021 he ratified the commitments he made to them in 2020, and which are: 1. “*The contracts that were signed with previous governments will be guaranteed, even in the case of inequitable, unjust contracts...*”, 2. He guaranteed them multi-million dollar businesses through megaprojects in which the government would make an initial public investment as “*seed capital*”, and other investments (and profits) of private capital, such as the megaprojects “Transistmico”, and the “Maya Train”. The latter a year ago required an investment of 150 billion, of which the government guaranteed them a first major public investment, so that the private companies invested the rest and made their profits. 3. He also said to bankers: “*We will not promote from the executive branch any law that regulates, that obliges the collec-*

tion of commissions, that sets percentages in collection of commissions of the banks. The demand for declining commissions, (we will solve this) not with laws, not by regulating them. The banks will be regulated by the banks, regulated by competition; before regulating them an attempt should be made to improve the conditions for competition. Nothing mandatory, nothing with laws.” 4. He guaranteed that there will be no tax increase, no new or more taxes on bankers and private capital in general. 5. He offered them the juicy business of being intermediaries to hand over the resources of the supports of the “Welfare” program, one of its patronage programs, of supports in scholarships and credits, to be given over by bank cards. To make clear to them the size of the business he gave them an example of supports for older adults, which a year ago had an average of 8 million people, of whom only 4 million had a bank account and support was provided to them via bank cards, the other 4 million did not have an account and were therefore paid in cash, making the commitment that all supports must be handed over through banks. In this case the main bank in charge of the business of handing over the welfare supports of the current regime is Banco Azteca belonging to the oligarch Ricardo Pliegos Salinas. It is clear that also AMLO has made other non-public commitments to the bankers, such as retirement and pension payments in the UMAS (Updated Units of Measure) and not in minimum wages, reducing the number of retirements to the detriment of the retiree or pensioner and for the benefit of their banks and their Afores (private managers of retirement and pension funds).

The pandemic and its management to the detriment of the masses, with a result of 200 thousand dead and juicy oligarchic businesses

The 4T regime cut resources from the public health system, its institutes and components, its infrastructure, its staff, eliminating or restricting labor rights, reducing the budget for supplies resulting in a lack of conditions for adequate care during the waves of Covid-19 contagion. It is responsible for neglect of the hospitals for infected people and the extraordinary increase in deaths, continuing the abandonment and dismantling of the public health system operated by the previous regimes. At the same time, it benefited the oligarchy, transferring millions in resources to private radio and televisions for broadcasting class content remotely.

With more than 200,000 deaths by Covid-19 in Mexico by the end of March 2021, with a fatality rate of 9.19% while the global index is 2.2%. The oligarchic regime of 4T has no effective strategy to tackle the pandemic, that would really contribute to reducing the number of infections, effectively treat existing ones and prevent deaths in severe cases. It is strengthening the spread of a steady increase in infections and deaths with an extension of months and even years in the country.

The 4T and violence against the popular masses

The increase in repression and violence with impunity against the popular masses is another characteristic of the regime led by López Obrador. The number of disappearances grew, as did assassinations in 2018 and 2019 in comparison to previous years, particularly the assassinations of journalists, defenders of the environment and of human rights and the assassinations of social leaders. At the end of August 2020, there was the assassination of our Comrade Tomás Martínez Pinacho of the Communist Party of Mexico (Marxist-Leninist) and the Revolutionary Popular Front (FPR), a state crime involving the 4T, the mining companies, the government of Oaxaca and the municipal government of Miahuatlán in that state.

Violence against women has grown, there has been an increase in femicides with impunity, exposing the functioning of bourgeois justice and the judiciary as decaying sewers, without any possibility of rectification; rather the tendency us to continue to sink more and more.

In addition to the above and most dangerous has been the great increase in public spending for the state's repressive forces, particularly the armed forces (Army and Navy), as well as for the complete militarized "National Guard" (with more than 100,000 new troops and with the construction of hundreds of barracks across the country). All these billions in resources have been handed over through the corrupt, mafia-like military chiefs inherited from previous regimes, which have since concluded juicy businesses.

The struggle of the proletarian popular masses during the 4T regime

The mass movement, during 2018 and 2019, was prey to confusion and demobilization in its ranks, partly because of the hope that there could actually be a change, but above all as a product of the

demagogic propaganda and populist maneuvers of AMLO, and his new regime. It still promised the fulfillment of an anti-neoliberal project and of democratic transformations in favor of majorities. It should be remembered that the victory of July 2018 was the product of the great discontent existing among the Mexican masses, not only against neoliberal politicians right and center, but also against the neoliberal economic policy and against the big bourgeoisie. Thus López Obrador's discourse that everyone who criticized, opposed and even more so, mobilized against his regime was a conservative, that they played the game of the right-wing and defended the previous order. This was accepted by large sections of the masses, demobilizing them for much of 2019. However, despite this situation, we, the revolutionary and communist sectors, kept firm our class tactic and strategy against the new oligarchic regime de the 4T, patiently unmasked its oligarchic class character, denouncing its anti-popular policy, a continuation of previous regimens, its populist and demagogic mask, its selective repression, sometimes frank and open, insisting on the tactic of elevating the forms of organization and struggle, calling for overcoming confusion and demobilization, going out onto the streets with concrete and heartfelt demands of the masses denied by the new regime or against specific of its reactionary policies. At the same time, pressed by the economic deterioration already heralding a new economic crisis, sectors of the proletariat and masses of people took to the streets in struggle. In the first months of 2019, the workers' movement broke out in Matamoros in the border state of Tamaulipas, workers of the maquiladoras and manufacturing factories, called the 20/32 movement referring to



their main demands for a 20 percent salary increase and a one-time bonus of 32 thousand pesos (\$1,600 dollars). Workers' strikes erupted in nearly a hundred companies, resulting in two major economic achievements: the first, the granting by most companies of the 20% salary increase and the 32,000 peso bonus, and the second economic achievement of the establishment and legalization of its National Independent Industry and Services Union 20/32. On the political level, the main victory was to overcome the demobilization imposed by the 4T regime and its propaganda, as well as the unmasking of its true class character before the working class, by standing openly on the side of the bosses throughout the movement, assisting them against the striking workers, through the Secretary of Labor, the President of the Senate member of the 4T Ricardo Monreal, the CATEM (pro-government trade union federation of the 4T) and other institutions.

The violence against women strengthened the movement of women and of family of victims without justice during the second half of 2019 and the first months of 2020, peaking on March 8, 2020, with a great mobilization of tens of thousands of women who shook the "Fourth Transformation" regime. It only subsided in the face of the imposition of quarantine measures for the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the rest of left-wing opposition movements to the regime that had grown, and which abruptly slowed down.

From April to August 2020, the demobilization and disorganization of the popular movement was almost general, with notable exceptions of mobilization and organization, despite the quarantine. This was a small encouragement for the movement, giving it confidence for its revival. Some highlights were: the struggle for the freedom of Susana Prieto Terrazas of the 20/32 movement, the VII National Meeting for the Unity of the Mexican People's (ENUPM), a unitary meeting that came a little after this VII meeting, the National Strike of the Telephone Workers Union of the Mexican Republic (STRM) with the participation of more than 34,000 workers in defense of the retirement clause in its collective work contract that the company TELMEX of the oligarch Carlos Slim tried to eliminate, the mobilizations and the day of struggle of the Revolutionary Popular Front in Oaxaca in August: for health care, bread, work and social security, and the mobilizations for justice for the assassination of Tomas Martínez Pinacho, as well as the struggles in the states for subsistence during the first quarantine.

At the end of August, and especially from September 1, 2020, a new wave of mobilizations against the oligarchic regime emerged, demanding that the rich pay for the crisis, and health care, bread, work and justice for the people, emphasizing the first unitary struggle, after the quarantine, in which hunger strikes, rallies, marches and pickets were carried out, denouncing the anti-popular policy of the “Fourth Transformation” regime, demanding justice for those who were assassinated, presentation alive of those who have been disappeared, freedom for political prisoners, cessation of the persecution of politically persecuted people; within the actions of this day of struggle were: the hunger strike of several colleagues of the Felipe Carrillo Puerto Civic Unity, the unitary march of workers in Mexico City, the precedent of the Coordination of United Workers of Mexico (CTUM), the march of the workers on strike of SUTNOTIMEX, the unitary rally at the Monument to the Revolution in the CDMX convened by the National Meeting of Leaders (ENADI), the Unitary Social Broad Front (FASU) and the ENUPM, within the framework of the report of López Obrador’s government and the rally of the FPR, in front of the CNDH, demanding justice for Tomás Martínez Pinacho.

After the day of struggle of September 1, several movements were revived, particularly the women’s movement, with mobilizations and seizures of public buildings. The most outstanding of these was the seizure of the headquarters of the National Commission on Human Rights (CNDH); also, the movement of victims of violence in Mexico was revived, groups of relatives of disappeared persons looking for them in clandestine graves, displaced persons, relatives of those assassinated or persecuted, journalists, critical artists, workers in science and technology. Many organizations marched, set up pickets, and besieged the headquarters of the Chamber of Deputies and Senators, demanding that existing trusts for the protection of victims and journalists not be eliminated, and to support searches for disappeared persons, as well as trusts of support for science and technology.

On September 26, the wave of mobilization continued with the day of unitary struggle for the presentation alive of the 43 student teachers of Ayotzinapa, and for justice for those assassinated, holding rallies, marches and pickets in several states of the republic and in Mexico City. On October 12, in the framework of the 528 years of the colonialist invasion and oppression of America and the strug-

gle and resistance of the original peoples, the building of the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI) was seized by Otomi indigenous people, members of the Indigenous National Congress, continuing the raising of the forms of struggle expressed in the seizure of the CNDH, that is, the seizure of public buildings, expelling the representatives of the oligarchic regime and holding the buildings. The regime's response was one of indifference and ignoring of its demands, demonstrating that the 4T was a worthy continuer of the policy against indigenous peoples carried out by previous regimes.

For its part, the unitary process of workers agreed to in the Coordination of Workers United, the forerunner of the CTUM, consisting of 19 trade unions, collectives and workers' organizations, held the days of struggle "against precarious work and unemployment" from October 12 to 14, in which they seized the Secretariat of Labor and Social Security (STYPS) in the CDMX, carrying out mobilizations and rallies in front of the headquarters of the Government of Mexico City, and federal agencies such as the Secretariat of the Interior, Secretariat of Labor, as well as rallies and various actions in the states of Veracruz, Baja California, Lázaro Cárdenas, Guadalajara, Morelos, Chiapas among others; emphasizing the strike of the workers of the company WP and the company Coconal, who were working for the construction of the new rolling mill of Arcelor Mittal in Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán.

Linked to the previous days of struggle, starting on October 16, a day of unitary struggle was carried out for a social budget and against the neoliberal and pro-oligarchic budget of 2021 presented by Andrés Manuel López Obrador, focusing mainly on Mexico City. It was convened by the Social Struggles Forum (FLS) and the CTUM, since beginning in October, the Federal Chamber of Deputies had initiated a discussion of the income and expense budget for 2021. In both cases, they had a pro-oligarchic and anti-popular character, continuing the previous neoliberal budgets.

The mobilization wave that began in September came to an end in late November 2020.

Since December 2020, the regime established control measures for 2021, with new shutdowns of activities, imposing a (health) red zone on much of the country, without any effective policy of relief for the majority, neither health nor economic relief. However, the year 2021 began with a worker and popular struggle against the

oligarchy and its regime, opening breaches in its policy of neglecting the urgent needs of majority, and of demobilizing social discontent. It focused on the mid-term elections of 2021, but unlike the first wave of Covid-19, in which the demobilization of the popular movement was almost general, taking months to overcome, in the second wave by Covid-19, from mid-December 2020 to mid-February 2021; the entire duration of the health emergency was accompanied by struggles and mobilizations of thousands of people who were unwilling to die or watch their loved ones die, while doing nothing. They did not accept the role of paralyzed and fearful prey that the oligarchs and their two political expressions, the 4T and the right-wing pro-coup fascist, intended to impose on them. Thus from the first days of January many struggles broke out, of which we will mention some:

On January 5, 2021, hundreds of displaced people from the Coordinator of Displaced People of Chiapas (from the Tenango and Cintalapa communities of Ocosingo, Shulvo Zinacan and Ejido Puebla Chenalho) took over the toll booth of Chiapa de Corzo in Chiapas, taking it over again on January 13. This gave a strong answer to the criminalization of this form of struggle (seizing of toll booths), which the 4T regime has done, imposing prison terms of 7 years on those who take over toll booths during his tenure.

On January 7, with red flags of the hammer and sickle, in front of the monument to the martyrs of Río Blanco, the combative militants of the Revolutionary Popular Front in Veracruz held a Rally commemorating the 114th anniversary of the glorious workers' movement of Río Blanco.



On January 8, Mexico's National Union of Air, Maritime and Land Communications and Transport Workers and Employees went on strike for non-payment of wages for 4 months, and of food vouchers for 6 months, Aguinaldo and savings fund for 2020, the payment of credits of INFONAVIT, FONACOT, and contributions to IMSS, by the Interjet Airline, the airline founded by the bourgeois Miguel Alemán Velasco, former executive chair of Televisa and former governor of Veracruz. Faced with this injustice, the Secretary of Labor Luisa María Alcalde and AMLO have been openly on the side of the bosses as well as in the Notimex workers' strike.

On January 9, 2021, hundreds of workers gathered in the Central Plaza of Matamoros, Tamaulipas, with the slogan 15 with 10!, that is, demanding a 15% pay increase and 10,000 pesos annual bonus, calling for a strike on January 25, continuing the historic 20/32 workers' strikes in Matamoros and on the northern border, maintaining the workers' struggle despite the repression, threats and support of 4T for the maquiladoras exploiters in the north of the country.

From January 8 to 12, days of struggle of the Revolutionary Popular Front developed in the Municipality of Coatepec, Veracruz (a municipality governed by Morena), for the freedom of comrade Leonardo Martínez García, achieving his release, and strengthening the FPR's fight against the attacks of the mafia chieftains of the 4T in the municipality.

On January 11, workers of the restaurant industry protested, banging pots in front of the government of Mexico City, with the slogan: "Cacerolazo [banging of pots]: We Will Open Them or Die", demanding plans to open restaurants which are still in the red zone; as well as the implementation of financial support in the face of the contingency for Covid-19.

Also, on January 11, the Single Workers Union of Notimex (SUTNOTIMEX) demonstrated at the Conciliation and Arbitration Board, during the hearing to resolve the strike at NOTIMEX. However, as a reactionary and anti-worker message, the president of the republic "invited" the director of Notimex, Sanjuana Martínez, to the meeting, according to him, in order to propose the settlement of the strike, without receiving the representatives of the workers after almost a year of strike and hundreds of layoffs. This strike stands out because it is at a news agency of the Mexican state, showing the

resistance of the workers, the injustice of the government and the true face of Andrés Manuel, who is not on the side of the workers.

On January 25, work stoppages and strikes broke out, convened by the National Independent Union of Industry and Services Workers (SNITIS), made up of by the 20/32 movement, demanding a 15% pay increase and an annual bonus of 10 thousand pesos, carrying out work stoppages outside of 9 maquiladoras in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, as well as rallies in others. At the same time, the state government, with police and goons, and with the support of the National Guard, they intimidated and in other cases openly prevented the work stoppages, extending them for several days, achieving pay increases in most maquiladoras, but also resulting in layoffs in some. The main thing is that working class along the border managed to break with the fear and demobilization, imposed by the reactionary bourgeoisie protected and supported by the state and federal power.

By the second half of January, several states-imposed quarantine measures again, including Mexico City, preventing and suppressing every attempt at mobilization.

On February 8, the “Caravan for Labor y Wage Stability” headed by the teachers of section XVIII of the CNTE, and student teacher graduates, left Lazarus Cardenas, Michoacán, arriving in Mexico City on February 11. On the way contingents from Jalisco, State of Mexico, Hidalgo and Mexico City joined in, meeting with a lockdown and lack of solution to their demands by the federal government. Part of the contingent remained in struggle for several days in Mexico City.

On February 11, workers of the Mexican Union of Electricians, the General Assembly of Workers (AGT), and student teachers of the Federation of Socialist Peasant Students of Mexico (FECSUM) took to the streets of the CDMX, demanding a solution to their demands, once again encountering the lockdown by the oligarchic regime of the 4T.

On February 12, precarious workers who deliver food for delivery services mobilized in Mexico City, with the slogan “Not One Distributor Less”, demanding safety and better working conditions, in the face of the complicity of the Morenista government of the CDMX with the exploiting companies that have fattened their profits at the cost of the death of many of these precarious workers.

On February 15, 16 and 17, the Days of National Unitarian Struggle for health, life, bread, work and justice, headed by the Revolutionary Popular Front, the Coordination of United Workers of Mexico (CTUM), the Felipe Carrillo Puerto Civic Union (UCFCP), SUTNOTIMEX, the General Union of Workers of Mexico (UGTM), the General Assembly of Workers (AGT) took over the front of National Palace in the capital of Mexico and set up an active picket. The slogans of this Day of Unitary Struggle were both economic and political, closely linked to the masses and aimed at “transforming our reality...” These were summed up as: Neither an oligarchic regime of neoliberal continuity, nor the fascist pro-coup right-wing! For a regime of the poor workers and peasants! The two political slogans have a content that is both oppositional and offensive; the first, in opposition to the “Fourth Transformation” regime, because it is one of neoliberal continuity and representative of a section of the financial oligarchy, but also against the fascist pro-coup right (in all its forms, not only the neoliberal parties PRI, PRD, MC, etc.) representing another section of the financial oligarchy. Just like the first, it is the enemy of the interests of the proletariat and popular majorities. The second political slogan is offensive, as it entails the need for the overthrow of the regime of the financial oligarchy and for the establishment of a regime of the poor workers and peasants. The Unitary National Day continued the wave of mobilization of September 1, 2020, forming part of a growing revival of the fight against the regime that began in January 2021, breaking the demobilization imposed by the 4T regime, and the fear of the Covid-19 Pandemic, showing that for the exploited and oppressed the “new normal” is also one of struggle.

The new wave of mobilization continued the revolutionary trend, for a revolutionary way out of the economic and health crisis, opening the way for the necessary proletarian and popular transformation.

After the days of struggle of February 15, 16 and 17, SUTNOTIMEX carried out its day of struggle for one year of its strike, followed by mobilizations of the democratic and retired teachers, led by section VII of the National Coordinator of Education Workers (CNTE) at the end of February 2021. On March 8 a successful day of struggle was held, with tens of thousands of women on the streets, in the framework of the International Day of Proletarian Women; also in March, unitary days of struggle led by the

FPR broke out: in Jalisco on March 4, in Oaxaca on March 16, in Chiapas on March 19. On March 18, on the anniversary of the oil expropriation the popular proletarian anger again erupted in the center of the CDMX, headed by the SME and the CNTE, and its retirees, against the social security system of neoliberal continuity, particularly against the payment of retirement and pensions in UMAS and not in minimum wages. Subsequently the Caravan of the South, headed by Section VII of the CNTE Chiapas, having left Chiapas, raised and stimulated the spirit of struggle as it passed through Oaxaca, Veracruz and the State of Mexico, arriving in Mexico City on March 24, 2021 – 7 months after the assassination of Tomás Martínez Pinacho, marching, and being received by the oligarchic regime of the 4T with doors closed, grenadiers and beatings, with the consequent response of part of the movement of breaking through the police encirclement and the takeover of the left side of its National Palace.

All these courageous struggles in the first months of 2021 were manifestation of discontent and the sharpening of the class struggle, a consequence of the cyclical economic crisis and of the pandemic health crisis resulting from capitalism; struggles oriented against the anti-popular and oligarchic policy of the 4T regime. It must be said that the masses took to the streets, despite the regime's threats, and despite its attempts to advance the electoral climate and position itself for the 2021 mid-elections. Not only the 4T regime, but also its right-wing opposition, tried to focus on the electoral process since January 2021, despite the tragedies and hardships of the majority, trying to convince people that it was only at the ballot box, and not in the streets, where their needs and demands would be met and resolved, as well as where the political and economic strategic direction of the country would be determined. The days of struggles of the popular movement were the vigorous response, that only from its forces and in the street fighting, would it be able to confront and resolve the serious situation; constituting the tendency of a revolutionary solution to the economic and the crisis, as opposed to the reactionary tendency of oligarchy, with its two expressions: the 4T regime and the pro-coup fascist right.

The situation of the 2021 mid-term elections

With regard to the 2021 electoral situation, in general, we are faced with the lack of conditions for revolutionaries to participate in

the elections for governors, federal and local deputies, with our own candidacies or these of allies, with a revolutionary democratic program. So it is necessary to unmask the electoral process as one in which only the bourgeoisie and the financial oligarchy are participating and will impose their candidates and their class policy. We, the popular majorities, will be mere spectators, without our own representatives or programs or proposals that represent our minimum demands and aspirations at these times of crisis and pandemic. Thus, even in the midst of the situation we will call for struggle for our demands (health, life, bread, work and justice), insisting that we can only make them effective with mass struggle in the street, wrenching them by force from the regime and the oligarchy.

In particular, in the elections in some municipalities in which revolutionary organizations will be in a position to participate with candidates and proposals, it will be our priority to raise the forms of organization of the masses, with Soviet forms, organizing them in the struggle, and in concrete work, in order to resolve their most pressing needs and demands. They must develop and concretize their demands, as well as their tactical slogans in the face of the crisis and the pandemic, closely linked to general tactical slogans. As opposed to parliamentary cretinism (believing and making others believe that from a position of bourgeois representation the main problems of the masses will be solved and profound changes will be achieved), we will put forward the organization, mobilization and creative action of the masses to meet their needs, and link them to the revolutionary process that can really achieve profound change in the country, in the interest of the proletarian majority.

We are moving towards the practical and concrete construction of the National Assembly of the Proletariat and the People of Mexico!

March 2021

Energy and electrification – keys to the success of socialism

“Without a plan of electrification, we cannot undertake any real constructive work.” So said Lenin in his Report on the Work of the Council of People’s Commissars, December 22, 1920. *“Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country”*, Lenin stated, before he concluded:

“We must see to it that every factory and every electric power station becomes a center of enlightenment; if Russia is covered with a dense network of electric power stations and powerful technical installations, our communist economic development will become a model for a future socialist Europe and Asia.”

Almost exactly a century later, the importance of these words is more striking and more engulfing than even Lenin could foresee. It would be foolish for us communists to neglect their importance, as imperialism is robbing many nations of their energy and their potential for electric power.

Today, electrification and more efficient use of energy is on top of the political agenda worldwide. Energy, and controlling it, is a necessity for advanced capitalist production, as it is for socialism. The electrical grid has long since become a fundamental infrastructure in the capitalist world of today, even though large undeveloped parts of the southern hemisphere still are literally left in the dark. Now, the global South is being told that they should not utilize their natural advantages like coal, oil or hydro power to speed up their own electrification and industrialisation. Instead, ‘for the sake of the climate’, they must continue to extract precious and scarce minerals like cassiterite, coltan and copper and hand them over to the high-tech auto and silicon monopolies. Or waste the electric energy they might have on “mining” crypto currency, as a new speculative branch of finance capital.

However, even in the industrialized northern hemisphere the electricity generation and grid capacity lag behind the soaring demand for electricity in almost every field; from modern industrial plants to electric vehicles, households and even crypto currency.

The Green Agenda deception

By asserting that changes in the climate are the sole responsibility of mankind and carbon-based fuel, the imperialist world has put forward the US “Green New Deal” and the European “Green Deal”. This is advocated as the wonderful and simultaneous solution to the climate crisis and to the dire economic crisis.

Politically, it is a concealed attack on the workers and the peoples, as well as on imperialist rivals like China.

Western imperialism views their Green Agenda as an opportunity to get a cutting edge on Chinese and Russian imperialism in particular, economically and politically. The European Union plans to impose tariffs on imported products that are not sufficiently “green”. On the other hand it is known that the EU is dependent on vast imports of Russian (and in part Norwegian) gas to keep its industry running. A number of “green” parties assist the bourgeoisie by appealing to the urban petty bourgeoisie and advocating that energy is far too “cheap”. According to them, ordinary people should pay even more for fuel and electricity. As always, they blame the people, not capitalism, for destroying the planet.

The gradual phasing out of German and other nuclear and coal plants is putting extra pressure on the EU project for finalizing its “fifth freedom”. The Energy Union is the latest extension to the free movement of goods, capital, labour force and services (the four “freedoms” of capital). The idea is to secure a free flow of electricity, gas and oil within the Single Market and partner countries, wherein lies a prohibition for each country to subsidize its own industry or to reserve a major part of its energy capacity and resources for its own needs. This is especially related to electricity production. The whole package has been falsely relabelled as “green”, based on an energy mixture where wind, solar and hydro power are playing a greater role. However, electricity from nuclear, coal and gas plants are dominant in the European grid. Renewable energy only amounts to about 20 per cent of the energy total in the EU, albeit it is on the rise.

In an interwoven European grid nobody can tell whether the electrons have a “green” or a “brown” origin. Electrons have no colour. Even so, electricity is being sold with so-called “green certificates” attached.

Dangers and possibilities

In our context, what are the implications of an Energy Union where the rules are set and administered by the supranational European Union and its energy agency, ACER?

The implications are that the countries of Europe will lose their sovereignty when it comes to freely exploiting and benefiting from the energy resources and opportunities given them by nature. Some countries have coal reserves, others have oil, others again are blessed with hydro power, lots of sun or even wind. The European monopolies want access and control over the lot.

Following their Green Agenda, the monopolies are heavily encouraging hydro power and wind power. Investor groups and municipalities are building gigantic wind parks abroad, often with subsidies from the states or from the EU. In Europe, the Balkans probably have Europe's largest remaining hydroelectric potential, on which the EU has set its eyes.

Unlike hydroelectric power, wind energy is highly unstable and cannot be stored. Therefore, in order to be effective, wind energy needs "balancing power" like coal or hydro power in addition. Another problem is that wind energy ruins the landscape and kills birds and insects *en masse*. In other words, in this way the climate is "saved" by devastating the environment and killing species.

Hydro power was the cradle of the industrialization of Norway more than a hundred years ago, 70 years before the offshore oil and gas fields came into production. In spite of what is commonly believed, modern Norway was built upon hydroelectric power, not oil. It was cheap and plentiful hydro power that attracted investments in heavy industry in faraway fiords.

Most important is that the founding fathers of the Norwegian state, after breaking out of the union with Sweden in 1905, made sure that investments in hydro power plants and waterfalls would be returned to the state as public property after a specified number of years. This was at a time when our bourgeoisie still had some progressive features, before it became imperialist and started to sell out national interests in the race for monopoly profits worldwide. Still today, oil and gas play practically no role in Norwegian internal production, some 98 per cent of our energy stems from renewable and clean hydro power. Oil and gas is almost entirely produced for export, bringing in vast revenues in the form of ground rent. But

when speaking of internal production and energy consumption, hydro power is supreme King.

The imperialist bourgeoisie of different European countries are eagerly selling out natural resources that in earlier times were not considered commodities, or even commercial services. Apart from land and forests, water is on the table. This could be water as in waterfalls used for hydro power, or it could be drinking water. Privatization of drinking water is known in countries of Latin America and elsewhere, while popular resistance has barred or reversed most similar attempts in Europe, as in Slovenia and cities like London and Berlin. But this struggle is by no means settled once and for all. On the contrary, the EU has only temporarily withdrawn its directive for water privatization.

Potential for anti-capitalist struggle

In the struggle for the right to free or cheap access to water and electricity (and of course health care as well) for every citizen lies a great potential for popular struggle and resistance against the monopolies and their bourgeois governments. In Norway, the popular resistance against the selling off of hydro power and other parts of our infrastructure (such as the railways), withdrawing them from national regulation, is fierce and intense.

The Marxist-Leninists actively support this struggle, not on a 'nationalist' basis in the sense that we do not wish to share our energy with our neighbouring countries. On the contrary, we have been doing this for more than sixty years. But it must be based on the principle of every nation's right to self-determination on how its own resources are to be utilized.

There is a growing opposition among the peoples, even within larger imperialist states like the United Kingdom, a demand confronting the interests of the cosmopolitan imperialist bourgeoisie. "*Take back control*" is a good and mobilizing slogan, disregarding the fact that it was coined by the Tories of Britain for their specific objectives. The important question is *which* forces, progressive or chauvinist, are able to fill such a slogan with content and vigour.

It is imperative that revolutionaries take part in and influence the struggle for national sovereignty, because not to do so would leave the field open for reactionary, chauvinist and even fascist forces who are scavengers on the people's national sentiments.

We therefore confront the notion of electricity as a commodity, just as we oppose water being treated as a commodity or a commercial “service”. Put differently, we do not accept that such necessities should fall within the orbit of the law of value. In reality such demands are compatible with capitalism. In the post-war Social Democratic era in the Nordic ‘welfare states’, neither of them were in fact commodities. Electricity and water services were not part of the capitalist market; they were part of the social contract between the state and its inhabitants. Maximum tariffs were set by the state and politicians, and for a long period there was no indirect taxation (VAT) on water or electricity, either.

Our demand that electricity (and water if it comes to that) are should be withdrawn from the capitalist market is a demand that has popular support and an even greater political potential. Such demands do not confront the system directly, and as such they are “reformist”. However, they induce people to put the blessed ‘market’ and capitalism as such into question.

Strategically imperative

Finally, perhaps the most important question of all is the matter of preparing the path for the revolution and transition to socialism in the economic field. Infrastructure and energy will always be of substantial strategic importance. Maximum national control and ownership, even in the form of state capitalism in these areas, would in given circumstances be of utmost importance as a strategic reserve for the revolutionary class and forces. It would greatly facilitate the revolutionary process of transition to a socialist economy.



This brief outline does not permit us to delve deeply into this subject and its broad implications in many fields. What we do want to stress is that the question of maximum national control of the infrastructure and resources of each country, is of the strategic importance at the outbreak of a revolutionary situation. Whether these resources are in the hands of the (bourgeois) national institutions or whether they are controlled by foreign monopolies or supra-national states, might in some countries be a decisive factor on whether a socialist revolution would succeed and survive. It would make it more difficult for the imperialist powers to “shut off” vital infrastructure, it might also delay attempts at imperialist intervention. In short, it would make a post-revolutionary country less vulnerable to attacks from the counter-revolution.

The banner of national independence is for us to raise. The ‘national’ slogans of the bourgeoisie and the fascists are hollow and false, even in imperialist countries. Let’s remind ourselves of what Stalin said in his speech to the 19th Party Congress of the CPSU(b) in 1952:

“Formerly, the bourgeoisie was regarded as the head of the nation; it upheld the rights and independence of the nation and placed them ‘above all else.’ Now not a trace remains of the ‘national principle’. Now the bourgeoisie sells the rights and independence of the nations for dollars. The banner of national independence and national sovereignty has been thrown overboard. There is no doubt that it is you, the representatives of the communist and democratic parties, who will have to raise this banner and carry it forward, if you want to be patriots of your country, if you want to be the leading force of the nation. There is nobody else to raise it.”

Revolusjon, Norway
March 2021

Pakistan's Labour Movement, Past and Present

Most of the industrial development in British India before 1947 took place in the areas which became part of India as a result of Partition of India in 1947. The areas which comprised Pakistan included, besides railways and shipyards, a local power plant, a few sugar and cement factories and textile mills.

At the time of its partition, Pakistan consisted of two parts, one called West Pakistan and the other East Pakistan. The distance between the two parts was one thousand kilometres and all the routes connecting the two parts passed through India. Both East and West Pakistan were industrially backward and in both parts of the country large agricultural plots of land were occupied by feudal lords; a large part of the country was under the influence of tribal chiefs where there was great poverty and backwardness.

West Pakistan was of special importance due to its geographical location. The discovery of oil in the Middle East greatly increased the importance of the region, as Pakistan supplies oil from the Middle East to Japan and other countries in the Far East. It was necessary for the oil trade monopolies to increase their influence in the region in order to maintain their supply. In addition, there was a land route between Pakistan and emerging socialist China. And from here, access to the Soviet Union was very easy.

The country, which came into being in 1947, had almost no industrial infrastructure, but the land of the five rivers had vast agricultural and fertile land. The land was occupied by the feudal lords and landlords, most of whom belonged to British India. It consisted of panderers to the rulers.

Since its inception, the Pakistani rulers have focused on strengthening their political relations with the United States and the United Kingdom to support their trade, economic and defence affairs, and soon after 1953, Pakistan became fully subject to U.S. influence.

The Communist Party was banned in Pakistan in 1954, and hundreds of Communist leaders, trade union leaders and activists, as well as student leaders, were arrested in both parts of the country. The Constitution was suspended and the Constituent Assembly

dissolved. And in May 1954, martial law was imposed on a part of the country.

At the time of formation of Pakistan, the number of industries or institutions that came under the purview of Pakistan was not large. There were a total of 209 registered unions in the public and private sectors, with 393,137 members. There was the Railway, Shipyard and Textile Sector. Apart from the airline, the leadership of the Union of Postal Unions, Teachers Union and other institutions was mostly in the hands of the Communists, and it was also very popular among the Communist students and farmers. In 1953, the students went on strike in Karachi, keeping up trouble for many days. Hundreds of students were killed and injured in this student movement.

Workers at the Orient Airways, an airline founded after the formation of Pakistan, also went on strike the same days making it the first labour strike in Pakistan. Later, Orient Airways, which has full control over BOAC [British Overseas Airways Corporation] had to remove this control from the company and create a national airline so that the revenue of the airline remained in the country. The workers of the company under the leadership of comrade Tufail Abbas struggled hard, and after making innumerable sacrifices in 1955 they succeeded in creating Pakistan International Airlines. The Airways Employees Union formed under the leadership of Comrade Tufail Abbas played a very important role in organizing trade unions, the student movement and women’s movements in Pakistan. Moreover, the Pakistan Railways and Shipyard Unions also played a significant role in organizing the labour movement and the Communist Party under the leadership of Sajjad Zaheer and Mirza Muhammad Ibrahim.

Pakistan’s communists launched a full-fledged resistance movement against growing US influence in Pakistan and Pakistan’s accession to US defence agreements.

It is important to mention here that the socialist revolution of 1917 in Russia rapidly attracted the workers, peasants and exploited people of the world and the voices of revolution began to be heard from every country. This was the time when the International Labour Organization (ILO) was founded in 1919 and the world’s industrialized nations played a key role in organizing it. The ILO, since its inception, had launched a plan to prevent workers from engaging in revolutionary struggle and had based all its programs

on the idea that industrialists and governments should enact labour laws that would satisfy workers to some extent. It was to protect their rights to form trade unions and to allow industrialists, governments, and workers to resolve their industrial disputes through dialogue and understanding. To this end, the ILO has been working tirelessly since 1919 until today. For this purpose “Conventions” have been drafted and ratified by UNO member countries and they are bound to implement these conventions.

The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) started its work in United India in 1920. It was a revolutionary workers’ organization. After its activation, the Government of India passed the Indian Trade Union Act 1926 and the Trade Disputes Act 1929, under which it was decided that the problems of the workers would be settled peacefully through dialogue between the two parties, the workers and the employers. Under ILO conventions 87 and 98, workers will be given the right to organize trade unions and conduct collective bargaining.

Immediately after the formation of Pakistan, the ILO fully supported the rights of Pakistani workers. Whether you consider it ironic or something else, both Pakistan’s emerging industrialists and Pakistan’s bureaucracy were against the formation of trade unions. The government of Pakistan established the Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) for industrial development in the country.

The majority of bureaucrats and industrialists not only opposed the formation of trade unions but began to weaken the unity of the organizations and they divided the unions. If the situation of this period is examined, the firing of labour leaders and their daily arrests never allowed the situation to remain peaceful and this situation created extremism in the labour movement. Why was that?

The main reason for this was that the grip of the communists on Pakistan’s trade unions was getting stronger day by day and its effects were being felt all over the country and the trade unions were also active in solving the problems facing the people.

It is important to mention here that after the establishment of Pakistan, its government had implemented the same labour laws that would be made in British India, and the same laws are applicable till today except for a few new laws.

Pakistani rulers have been part of the US camp since the founding of Pakistan, and US decision-makers have chosen Pakistani territory to encircle the Soviet Union and China.

Under these circumstances, how was it possible, with the US rulers and their allies, the Pakistani rulers, the British-trained bureaucracy and the capitalist class emerging with US aid, to organize the communist movement in this region on a strong footing?

Before the formation of Pakistan, the two largest trade union federations in India were the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), which was under the control of the Communists, and the Indian Federation of Labour (IFL), which was under the influence of the reformists.

After the formation of Pakistan, the Pakistan Trade Union Federation (PTUF) and the All Pakistan Federation of Labour (APFOL) were formed. The PTUF was under the influence of the Communists and its major influence was in large institutions like Pakistan Railways, 30 others Institutional unions were also affiliated; the APFOL, which was under the influence of reformists, was joined by 49 other unions. The PTUF was internationally affiliated with the World Federation of Trade Unions and was led by communists such as Mirza Muhammad Ibrahim, Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Fazal Allahi Qurban; when the Communist Party was banned in 1954, the PTUF was also banned and its leadership was imprisoned. The PTUF was revived in 1970.

In contrast, the All Pakistan Federation of Labour changed its name to the All Pakistan Confederation of Labour (APCOL). APCOL was affiliated with ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation) internationally, competing with communist unions and federations. Organizations such as APCOL have had government sponsorship, as internationally the ITUC, the ILO and other organizations have ties to the US, British and other anti-communist organizations and countries. The federation has played a significant role in Pakistan’s labour movement. The organization is currently operating under the name Pakistan Workers Federation and is a partner organization of the ILO in Pakistan. The federation is more interested in consulting the government on matters such as legislation and implementing ILO conventions. It remains active but has nothing to do with organizing the workers on a revolutionary basis.

Since 1986, NGOs in Pakistan have also started working in the name of educating the workers about labour laws and helping them to form unions. They have no shortage of funds. They pay labour leaders for foreign trips in the name of training; they conduct education and training programs for workers in 5 Star hotels, and pay

them a reasonable amount in the name of travel expenses. These NGOs have done a lot of damage to the progressive labour movement of Pakistan. Most of the leadership of these NGOs is in the hands of people who have been separated from the progressive movement in different periods and are opposed to the proletarian revolution and the workers' regime. Most are influenced by Trotsky's ideology and do not believe in any revolutionary organization.

Since its inception, the Railway Workers Union, Airways Employees Union PIA, Karachi Shipyards and Port Trust have played a vital role in organizing the progressive labour movement in Pakistan. Airways Employees Union PIA was active in both West Pakistan and East Pakistan. In Pakistan, workers as well as students formed a nationwide revolutionary organization called the National Students Federation (NSF). Comrade Tufail Abbas started his work under the name of the Karachi Coordinating Committee, with the help of the Airways Employees Union PIA. Later on he organised a Qaumi Mazdoor Mahaz (National Labour Front), a revolutionary organization. Despite all the government crackdowns and arrests, the people of Pakistan launched a massive protest movement against the martial law government imposed on the country for the last 10 years to get rid of martial law. In the movement against the government of General Ayub Khan, all the notable federations and unions of the country including the railways, as well as the students played a tremendous revolutionary role, and this was the first time in the history of Pakistan that the slogans of socialism were raised all around the country.

After the departure of General Ayub Khan from power in Pakistan, power once again passed to General Yahya Khan, who for the first time in the history of Pakistan announced the holding of elections in the name of adult suffrage. Meanwhile, two political parties are on the scene. One was the Pakistan People's Party led by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the other was the Awami League led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Both these parties came into the political arena with a more progressive political program than other political parties in the country. They also had the support of a large number of workers.

Elections were held in the country in 1970 and Mujibur-Rahman's Awami League in East Pakistan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party in West Pakistan won a clear majority in the elections. However, there were unjustified delays in the trans-

fer of power and many other international factors, due to which Pakistan was divided into two parts. Power in West Pakistan was given to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s PPP. East Pakistan power came under Mujibur-Rahman’s Awami League, which announced its separation from Pakistan. A new country called Bangladesh came into being.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came into power in the name of Socialism and he nationalised the private Sector.

The policy of nationalization of government institutions did not yield positive results, as the government handed over control of these institutions to the bureaucracy instead of to the workers’ committees, which severely damaged the performance of these institutions. The government-sponsored Labour wing leaders also forgot their class and political role and promoted “anarchy,” which had a very negative impact on the labour movement in Pakistan. The Bhutto regime was against the progressive and independent labour leadership. All such labour leaders were fired from all institutions. The PIA union was seized under government auspices and the labour leader and president of the Qaumi Mazdoor Mahaz (National Labour Front), Tufail Abbas, was arrested and imprisoned for 13 months. Many legal restrictions were imposed on the unions of many institutions.

The country’s industrialists and anti-government political parties launched a movement against the PPP government, as a result of which General Zia-ul-Haq imposed martial law, the labour movement was practically banned across the country and thousands of workers were fired from their jobs. In addition to evictions, more than 200 workers at the Colony Textile Mills in Multan were killed



in protest. During this period of martial law, the uprising in Afghanistan in the name of Islamic jihad against the revolutionary government of Noor Muhammad Taraki gradually began. War broke out between proxies of the Soviet Union and the United States, the Pakistani government, in line with US policies, handed over Pakistani territory to US planners and the Talibanization began. The Pakistani government defeated all the progressive unions in the country and formed labour organizations under regressive and Islamic ideologies under the banner of the National Labour Federation. It imposed them on many institutions, including the railways. The process of privatization of banks began. More than 6,000 employees were sacked by banning unions in the PIA. Thousands of employees from the banking sector were also forcibly retired and unions in the banking sector were banned. The Afghan war severely damaged Pakistan's industrial infrastructure and shut down countless industries in Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which severely damaged the trade union movement.

The damage that the Afghan war did to Pakistan's politics and economy also had an impact on Pakistan's progressive labour movement. Trade union activities were suppressed through martial law regulations. Despite arrests, violence and punishments, the Pakistan Labour Movement went on strike in the railways and other institutions to enforce their demands. Demonstrations and rallies were held. Many progressives labour leaders in this struggle laid down their lives. But the journey of struggle continued.

The number of workers in Pakistan at present is 61.04 million. At present, there are 12 national labour federations and 58 industrial ones. Federations and two workers' conferences are operating at the national level. The number of registered workers in unions in Pakistan is only 3% of the total number of workers.

This is due to the discouragement against forming unions by the rulers and industrialists despite the existence of labour laws. Pakistan's agricultural sector has been deprived of the right to form unions till up to date. All these are negative government measures towards the labour movement. Despite the weakening of the grip of the communists, thousands of government employees and women health-care workers from all over Pakistan staged four sit-ins in the capital of Islamabad in 2020 and 2021 to demand an increase in their salaries and service rules. The 15 unions and associations of the Railways have started a protest movement from the platform of

All Pakistan Railway Trade Unions Grand Alliance against government violence and for compliance with their demands and against the privatization and downsizing in Pakistan Railways. The National Labour Movement, a very powerful organization of loom workers, and the furniture makers ‘organization are working under the name of Furniture Karegar Mazdoor Mahaz (Furniture Workers’ Front). In addition, there is a powerful federation of miners across the country, the Pakistan Machine Workers Federation. There are also transport workers’ unions.

In Pakistan, the grip of the communists on the labour movement is weaker than in the past. Among many other reasons are the conciliatory and opportunist role of organizations like NGOs and ILOs and the anti-communist policies of the governments.

But in spite of all these factors, the struggle continues in Pakistan with the belief that the future belongs to the workers, peasants and revolutionaries.

Workers of the world, Unite!

Shaukat Ali Chaudhry
Secretary General,
Pakistan Mazdoor Mahaz (Pakistan Labour Front)
March 2021

About the Book “The Class-Struggle Unions and Their Principles”

January 19, 2021, was the 100th anniversary of the birth of Dr. Saturnino Paredes Macedo, historical leader of our Party who, based on his experience of trade union action and advising peasant unions and day laborers throughout the country, was able to systematize in a publication the most substantial elements of Marxist theory on the principles that should guide the class-struggle unions. From its first publication this work played a very important role in the development of the class consciousness of the workers and demarcated camps with revisionism. It was written at a time when an intense polemic was developing against Khrushchevism. This was represented in Peru mainly by Jorge Del Prado,¹ who had written a “Manual of Trade Unionism, Organization and Trade Union Struggle.” This in general oriented the working class to confine itself to the immediate economic struggle, advocated class conciliation and to evade its historical responsibility to be the vanguard force able of lead the most combative sectors of the popular movement to fight for Socialism.

In a national and international context in which the peoples were fighting for national and social liberation in the world, cutting off the revolutionary perspective to the working class, engaging it only in the wage struggle, coincided with the sabotage of the revolutionary struggle concocted from Moscow. In response to this, the writing of “The Class-Struggle Trade Unions and their Principles” by comrade Paredes was essential for our Party to be able to orient the workers and peoples in better conditions, to increase class consciousness in Peru and to revive the union organizational escalation that our country had in the 1960s, ‘70s and early ‘80s.

The recognition of the need to rely on one’s own forces, to forge the worker-peasant alliance and to develop proletarian internationalism were principles that were ignored in Jorge del Prado’s

¹ Prado was Secretary General of what became known as the “Communist Party (Unity),” after the expulsion of the Prado, Acosta and Barrio clique.

manual. Due to the initial influence of this tendency within the Communist Party, which had been expelled at the IV National Conference, the development of the class consciousness of the workers, agricultural proletariat and day laborers of the whole coastal strip of the country was hampered. Furthermore, due to the lack of principles, much space was ceded to the development of “free trade unionism” and other organizational forms. These continued thanks to the economic cooperation of the imperialist powers and their NGOs, and also to the support of the Catholic Church, which removed the workers from the class struggle and modeled the unions as mere centers of processing documents.

The systematization carried out by Dr. Satunino Paredes expresses seven principles that give a more complete form to the unions for their fight against the dictatorship of capital. They served to strengthen the organizations of mine workers, workers in education, the day laborers of the Valley of Chancay, of the sugar companies in the northern part of the country, which developed powerful struggles in the 1970s. This revolutionary writing helped us to lead the working class correctly in the winning of its immediate demands, without losing sight of achieving strategic demands for the working people.

In the polemic over the unions and the principles that should guide them, it was also possible to demarcate camps with the so-called “free unionism” that covered itself with a false “independence” and “political neutrality.” It fostered the spirit of class conciliation that was promoted by the bosses to ensure the domination of their interests in the country and allow the continuity of the domination mainly of U.S. imperialism in Peru. In the 1960s and 70s, with great social outbreaks and revolutionary advances in the world, free trade unionism sponsored division the working class to and to the denial of its historical mission.

Likewise, the so-called “revolutionary unionism” was unmasked as a form of ideological and political deviation of the radicalized petty bourgeoisie and anarcho-syndicalism, which denied the vanguard role of the (Marxist-Leninist) Communist Party. It spread the view that overturning the current bourgeois order and the winning of the liberation of the working class could only be carried out through the union with recourse to a general strike, denying the political struggle for the seizure of the political power of the State.

So what are the class-struggle unions, and what is their relationship with the Communist Party?

They are instruments of class struggle that the workers themselves organize for the defense of their interests, for their vital, fundamental and daily demands of the moment. These serve as bastions of the working class in the fight against the offensive of capital and fascism. They open the way to the fight for medium-term demands, that is, the struggles that lead to the emancipation of the working class with respect to the exploitation of man by man and for the passing of state power and the means of production into the hands of the workers.

The unions cannot limit themselves to the only daily struggle for economic demands. This is not intended to confuse the role of the (Marxist-Leninist) Communist Party with the unions; rather, it seeks to apply the approaches formulated by Marx. He pointed out that “Despite their primitive aims, the unions must now learn to act consciously as axes of the organization of the working class, for the higher interest of their total emancipation.” He pointed out that the unions in the hands of the working class should be “the lever in the fight against the political power of the exploiters.” Marx stressed the importance of the trade unions as centers of organization of the broad masses of workers, differentiating the political and economic organization of the working class by their specific methods. He pointed out the importance of “the formation of the proletariat into a political party as an indispensable means to ensure the victory of the Social Revolution and its supreme goal: the abolition of classes.”

Regarding the activity of the Party within the working class, Lenin pointed out: “The activity of the Party must be a contribution to the class struggle of the workers; the task of the Party does not consist in devising fashionable means to help the workers, but in joining the workers’ movement, in lighting the way for it and in helping the workers in this struggle that they have already started. The Party’s mission is to defend the interests of the workers and to represent the interests of the entire workers’ movement”.

In addition to contributing to the development of the class consciousness of the workers, which means the understanding that to achieve their aims they need to win influence in public affairs and that the interests of all the workers of a country are identical, in solidarity with all those who are part of the same class in the world.

What are the principles pointed out in Dr. Paredes’ work on class-struggle unions?

1. Irreconcilable class struggle against the exploiters, in defense of the interests of the workers

This implies the recognition of the class struggle as the irreconcilable clash of interests between the workers and the exploiters, which is only resolved definitively with the destruction of the dictatorship of capital and the establishment of proletarian democracy.

It is the nature of this principle to provide the worker with a more complete vision of his historical mission, which is not limited to the development of the union struggle over grievances that are negotiated, which after strikes and confrontations are partially fulfilled or rejected. These partial victories or defeats should not influence the union; the negotiation of the grievances should be the occasion for the union organization to gain more experience and strength to win victories, but they should not continue in the same circle of only winning wage increases. They should see further and put an end to that routine from which the capitalist always tends to recover with greater pressure to squeeze the workers and increase surplus value. A partial victory must be a scenario that allows us to build a stronger and more determined organization for future confrontations.

The unions, in understanding this principle, which was the most important one in the founding of the General Confederation of Workers of Peru by José Carlos Mariategui, is denied and concealed by the revisionists, opportunists and NGOs. These have led to the working class renouncing the struggle for its vital class interests, putting personal or group interests first. In other words, the lack recognition or assimilation of this principle led to the conciliation of the working class with its oppressors and the degeneration of the union leadership that has now taken over the leadership of the main union federation in the country.

2. Class united front of or combative union unity

This principle states that the unions should seek to bring together all the workers to defend and win their rights. This does not mean that the united front should maintain within the union alien currents and infiltrators of reaction, but rather because of its combative character it must also fight against the currents that hold back

its advance. This principle is not limited to developing the united front in breadth but in the search for the formation of the unitary federation of workers of Peru. This militant union unity be revived and carried forward.

3. Union democracy and conscious discipline

This implies that all workers have the same rights and duties within the union; that is, they are equally able to participate, propose and intervene in the making of agreements by democratic centralism, in the establishment of agreements and in the accountability after completion of these agreements. Everyone has the right and duty to propose and comply with all agreements. We define the General Assembly as the highest level of deliberation of the unions.

4. Promote the union struggle and development, based on our own forces

This principle implies being alert to some hypocritical hand-outs that the class enemies give to the workers to keep them colonized in mind and organization. This principle should be understood in its true dimension, in the promotion of the union struggle based on its own forces in the internal sphere of the movement of the exploited class in general, in the dues of its elements and in the creation of financial campaigns that give more possibilities of autonomy to the union organization.

This was one of the principles that unmasked the trend of “free trade unionism,” which developed its actions by receiving resources from international corporations and the church, to break with the



need to forge solidarity and cooperation among the exploited and to promote individualism within the workers.

5. The constant practice of class solidarity and proletarian internationalism

This principle points out that solidarity must be extended to the common interests of the working class beyond the limits of one union or one single federation and extends to the solidarity of the workers and peoples of the world. It makes the workers understand that their historical mission has a greater purpose, that of burying the gloomy period of capitalist rule on an international scale.

6. Forge the Worker Peasant Alliance

The workers and peasants, in order to free themselves from exploitation and misery, must forge a common front that is the basis for the formation of a truly broader revolutionary front that encompasses all working people. The vanguard of this front or its leader is the working class, as it is the most advanced class in society, led by its (Marxist-Leninist) Communist Party.

7. Political class independence

This principle is the consistent application of proletarian class policy against the State of the ruling classes, against the political parties of the exploiters, against the employers and the church. It implies breaking any ideological and corporate ties in order to develop a consistent struggle against the exploiters and their institutions, aiming at the collective interest of the workers and nurtured by the needs of the working class and laboring people.

In sum, these principles gave the most combative sector of the workers a theoretical support; the struggle not only developed instinctively within the union between a corrupt or treacherous leadership and an honest and combative alternative, but the unions would be centers where the class struggle also developed in the ideological field to become strengthened and be clearer about its purposes.

We currently see that the influence of free trade unionism is much greater than the tendency of class-struggle trade unionism; there are limitations to the workers’ struggle for their immediate demands. This is where our Party is working, fighting the revisionist, opportunist, anarchist and Trotskyist tendencies, which in the

long term, due to deviations to the right or left, lead the working class to conciliation with the bosses.

To regain the leaderships of the workers' federations and to displace the bad elements is a task that we Marxist-Leninists cannot renounce. We must spread more forcefully and promote the study of "The Class-Struggle Trade Unions and their Principles." This should be the way in which gain positions within the unions and help the working class to strengthen its perspective of struggle against capital; in the current scenario of economic, health and political crisis this is an urgent duty.

Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the PCP (M-L)
April 20221

Is China a socialist country?

The revolutionary and democratic movement in Serbia is going through a period of rearrangement, and this process raises many questions, some of them highly theoretical, in the center of these internal and external struggles. The question of the attitude towards China appears as one of the most important ones. There are many solid reasons for that: the rise of capitalism in China in general, and specifically its greater presence in Serbia on the economic, political and cultural levels. The modern revisionists, covering themselves with ashes, are also trying to find some opportunity in today's China to postpone their bankruptcy. Although the International Marxist-Leninist Communist and Workers Movement already gave its answers to the question of the character of China's system and its role in the world imperialist system, in the light of our regional development, and also to cut off the rising modern revisionist heads in the period of sharpened general capitalist crisis, we would like to present our contribution to these Marxist arguments. The title is an homage to the very important anti-revisionist text made by the Chinese Communist Party in its glorious days with revolutionary leadership, called "Is Yugoslavia a Socialist Country?"

Many so-called "communists" today are trying to prove that the People's Republic of China is a country of socialism, and not of state monopoly capitalism. "China and Russia will save us, as Stalin once did" – these lost souls say...

State monopoly capitalism in China

Despite all the clear indications of the capitalist mode of production, the presence of private, especially finance capital in the Chinese economy – a common "argument" used by fans of the *Chinese version of modern revisionism and social-imperialism*¹ to paint China with red colors – in that "in China most means of production belong to the state"; although this data is also deceptive and relative, and private business hires about half of the Chinese labor market...

¹ *Imperialism and the Revolution*, Enver, 1978

This naive argument disintegrates when we mention the well-known fact that in the process of “reform” in China, the *state monopoly on foreign trade* – which, in Lenin’s words, is an essential condition for the existence and development of a socialist economy – was *liquidated*. The state sector of the economy in China is a sector of capitalist monopoly, reduced to a capitalist management.

Even in capitalist countries, the state has a decisive role in the economy. It is known that imperialist countries save or nationalize large banks and industries in times of economic crisis. Also, production planning is a characteristic of multinational companies, with numerous examples. In general, closer ties, merging of finance capital and the state, i.e. the swallowing of the second by the first is a feature of the imperialist stage of capitalism.²

State ownership of the means of production would be *socialist* if: the state is revolutionary, proletarian, with the obligatory condition of abolishing exploitation and the system of wage labor; and finally by the production of the means of production which must not be based on commodity production.³ But the Chinese state is a revisionist-bourgeois one, with billionaires in the leadership; with growing labor market flexibility; all production in China is exclusively commodity production.

There is no single socialist sector of production in China. State ownership in China, as well as central planning, are the form and organization of state monopoly capitalism; which is known to be brutally exploiting the Chinese working class, as well as the peoples of the world, especially in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Balkans.

Modern revisionism, of all colors, is anti-communism

The mentioned non-Marxist, folklore “communists” are trying to prove that some of today’s revisionist mascots, the Cuban rulers, are also the bearers of socialism; although in Cuba, *as well as in China*, the collectivization of agriculture to this day was never carried out, the capitalist mode of production was preserved in the city as well in the countryside, which, in Lenin’s words, is renewing capitalism constantly, spontaneously, on a massive scale. Unfortunately, the leaders of this small revolutionary country faithfully followed their Kremlin masters, the Khrushchev-Brezhnev Soviet

² *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, by Lenin, 1917

³ *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, by Stalin, 1952

revisionist renegades, who gave up the socialist and proletarian-internationalist Lenin-Stalin path; the Cuban superstars today also threaten their country's independence and carry out China's dictates of deepening capitalist reforms, while holding Cuban revolutionary youth captive through pervasive corruption and apathy. These are the results of modern revisionist international ties and "friendships": subordination of the revolutionary energy of the oppressed and small nations.

There are also those "Maoists" who claim that China was a socialist country during the revolutionary leadership of Mao Zedong. But even that is simple idealistic thinking, unfounded in historical materialism. The Chinese people's new democratic revolution, led by the Communist Party, took place in the bourgeois-democratic but not in the socialist phase. New China never went through a phase of proletarian dictatorship, but a prolonged form of alliance of national classes, including the bourgeoisie – which in time was strengthened into a monopolist, imperialist class, and took over all power. Once holding high the flag of the revolution and proletarian internationalism, Mao Zedong in time completed his "thought" in the formulation of the revisionist "theory of three worlds" which became the foundation of bourgeois nationalist⁴ Deng Xiaoping's foreign and domestic policies: policies of cooperation with U.S. imperialism and the restoration of capitalism. The Chinese revisionists, as they themselves like to point out when they meet with representatives of our country, especially learned from the Yugoslav example;⁵ or, as



The revisionist cowboys

⁴ To learn more about the dangers of bourgeois nationalism in the communist movement read the *Resolution of the Cominform about the state of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, 1948*

⁵ *Is Yugoslavia a Socialist Country?, Comments on the open letter of the CC of the CPSU, by the CCP, 1963*

Marxist-Leninists would point out: “Maoism”, it is matured Titoism.

In the finale of the discussion on the character of the Chinese ruling system, let us recall these so illustrative words of Nikolai Bukharin: “*If my program stand were to be formulated practically, it would be, in the economic sphere, state capitalism, the prosperous muzhik individual, the curtailment of the collective farms, foreign concessions, surrender of the monopoly of foreign trade, and, as a result – the restoration of capitalism in the country.*” – said in his last address the infamous Bukharin, a representative of the condemned right-wing danger in the Bolshevik Party, a conspiratorial associate of Trotskyist terrorism in the service of imperialist forces. This notorious careerist, war lover and degenerate criminal has become popular again today among the new Chinese revisionist bourgeois intelligentsia, since Deng Xiaoping put into action Bukharin’s slogan “get rich!”.^{6,7} In the entire genesis of modern revisionism of all colors, from Tito’s gang and Khrushchevite gangsters to the rotten Chinese capitalist roaders – lies careerism, treason and murder.

What is the role of modern revisionism in the world imperialist system today?

After all, if a country claims to be but is not socialist, does it mean that we consider it a hostile? Liars are not to be trusted. But the peoples of Vietnam, Cuba, Korea, Venezuela, Rojava, continue to win the sympathy of Marxist-Leninists, as small countries defying the imperialist powers and seeking national independence and people’s sovereignty. Marxist-Leninist critiques of the revisionist



⁶ *Chinese Studies of Bukharin*, James D. White, Soviet Studies, Vol. 43, No. 4, 1991

⁷ Bukharin Inspired Deng Xiaoping to Change China, ICS, 2021

⁸ ***At the Roots of the Economic Theories of Modern Revisionism: Bogdanov/Bukharin’s Theory of Equilibrium***, Rafael Martinez Revolutionary Democracy Vol. XVI, No. 2, September, 2010

and opportunist mistakes of the leaders of these countries and movements are part of the internationalist duty and are formulated with the aim of victorious resistance and the struggle of the peoples of the world against imperialism. Modern international conditions and decadence of the general capitalist crisis impose the issue of people's revolution and the construction of socialism as a matter not only of aspirations and debates, but as a problem that needs to be solved.

It is well known that Marxist-Leninists rely on the contradictions and opposing interests among the imperialist powers. Moreover, at specific moments at the peaks of the world imperialist crisis and capitalist decay and of the rise of socialism, some less aggressive imperialist countries could facilitate the efforts of the revolutionary forces. The imperialist character of the First and the liberation character of the Second World War⁹ illustrate this thesis. After the First World War, victorious and bullying imperialist countries later found themselves subjected to an aggressive policy of the recently defeated but with their help growing imperialist, fascist forces, and then joined the world democratic anti-fascist front, gathered around the Soviet Union and the international communist movement, to win the Second World War.

Some say that China or Russia today are less aggressive than the US or European imperialists. But given the blatant anti-communism of modern revisionism, how much developed democratic tendencies can be expected in the lap of the social-imperialist countries? Modern revisionism leaves its infamous stamp on history and is still a fresh historical phenomenon, linked to a contemporary, complicated picture of the world imperialist system.



⁹ *Origin and character of the Second World War (For Peaceful Coexistence: Post War Interviews)*, Stalin, 1946

In conclusion, our position and a scientific Marxist analysis of China as a country of capitalist monopolies, a revisionist-imperialist superpower – still does not mean an anti-Chinese position. In the present international situation, we must answer the questions: what is the role of revisionist China in capitalism in decay and what would be the origin and character of conditions for a new war?

Proletarian internationalism or a superpower?

“If one day China should change her color and turn into a superpower,¹⁰ if she too should play the tyrant in the world, and eve-

¹⁰ To learn more about today’s superpowers, read an excerpt from Enver’s *“Imperialism and the Revolution”*, 1978:

“With the policy China is pursuing, it is becoming even more obvious that it is trying to strengthen the positions of capitalism at home and to establish its hegemony in the world, to become a great imperialist power, so that it, too, occupies, so to say, the ‘place it deserves’.

History shows that every big capitalist country aims to become a great world power, to overtake and surpass the other great powers, and compete with them for world domination. The roads the big bourgeois states have followed to turn into imperialist powers have been various; they have been conditioned by definite historical and geographical circumstances, by the development of the productive forces, etc. The road of the United States of America is different from that followed by the old European powers like Britain, France and Germany, which were formed as such on the basis of colonial occupations.

After the Second World War, the United States of America was left the greatest capitalist power. On the basis of the great economic and military potential it possessed, and through the development of neo-colonialism, it was transformed into an imperialist superpower. But before long another superpower was added to this, the Soviet Union, which after Stalin’s death and after the betrayal of Marxism-Leninism by the Khrushchevite leadership, was transformed into an imperialist superpower. For this purpose it exploited the great economic, technical and military potential built up by socialism.

We are now witnessing the efforts of another big state, today’s China, to become a super power because it, too, is proceeding rapidly on the road of Capitalism. But China lacks colonies, lacks large-scale developed industry, lacks a strong economy in general, and a great

rywhere subject others to her bullying, aggression and exploitation, the people of the world should identify her as social-imperialism, expose it, oppose it and work together with the Chinese people to overthrow it.” – Deng Xiaoping at the United Nations, 1974

“Philosophical eclecticism made Mao what one may call a moderator for the different currents which have existed continuously in China, which he permitted, encouraged and put in allegedly dialectical ‘collision’. Such a thing could operate only so long as Mao himself was alive. Now he is dead. Will China remain red?” – Enver Hoxha from “Reflections on China”, 1976

thermo-nuclear potential on the same scale as the other two imperialist superpowers.

To become a superpower it is absolutely essential to have a developed economy, an army equipped with atomic bombs, to ensure markets and spheres of influence, investment of capital in foreign countries, etc. China is bent on ensuring these conditions as quickly as possible. This was expressed in Chou En-lai’s speech in the People’s Assembly in 1975 and was repeated at the 11th Congress of the Communist Party of China, where it was proclaimed that, before the end of this century, China will become a powerful modern country, with the objective of catching up with the United States of America and the Soviet Union. Now this whole plan has been extended and set out in precise detail in what is called the policy of the “four modernizations”. But what road has China chosen so that it, too, will become a superpower?

At present, the colonies and markets in the world are occupied by others. The creation of an economic and military potential equal to that of the Americans and Soviets, within 20 years, and with their own forces, as the Chinese leaders claim they will do, is impossible.

In these conditions, in order to become a superpower, China will have to go through two main phases: first, it must seek credits and investments from US imperialism and the other developed capitalist countries, purchase new technology in order to exploit its local wealth, a great part of which will go as dividends for the creditors. Second, it will invest the surplus value extracted at the expense of the Chinese people in states of various continents, just as the US imperialists and Soviet social-imperialists are doing today.

China’s efforts to become a superpower are based, in the first place, on its choice of allies and the creation of alliances.”

Who still believes that China nurtures a policy of proletarian internationalism and support for the revolutionary movements and peoples? Who has ever received such support from the Chinese revisionists? The Vietnamese people well remember this typically Chinese revisionist calculating “support” that ended with a knife in the back, and officially put the quoted words of Deng Xiaoping into reality. We see this kind of calculated “support” by the Chinese social-imperialists in the present international relations in connection with the health crisis, which has become an established part of the corrupt geopolitical game. Such support was not received even by those revisionists who opportunistically do not give up on it. The revisionists rely in vain on an agreement with imperialism, because, as Enver would say: the bourgeoisie will use, but will never accept even the false communists.

China exports capital, that is the subject of its interest, not the proletarian revolution and the building of socialism and communism. None of the capitalist countries, young ones and the ones on the rise, could overcome the accumulated contradictions of such a system, so neither will China, no matter how enterprising is its top capitalist management in the form of a “communist” party.

Lenin noted the tendencies of decay as the main, decisive, defining characteristic of the imperialist stage of capitalism, and added that this decay should not be misunderstood as excluding the possibility of rapid growth of particular branches of production, strata of the bourgeoisie or even “individual countries”.¹¹ The current successes of the Chinese capitalist economy are only a prologue to the new crisis, part of the general world crisis of capitalism. “*Stabilization intensifies the crisis of capitalism.*” – Stalin spoke wisely, in a discussion with Bukharin, just before the infamous “Great Depression”, until then the rising superstar of capitalism, USA, at the end of the 1920s.

As the general crisis of capitalism escalates and contradictions between imperialist powers grow, Chinese imperialism, the increasingly powerful conqueror of new world markets, as a fresh superpower, will be seen as one of the faltering walls of a surviving decadent imperialist system with whom it is closely-knit and which leads nations and planet to disaster.

¹¹ *The Question of Fascism and Capitalist Decay*, R. Palme Dutt (The Communist International, Vol. XII, No. 14, July, 1935.)

The international situation, the role of monopolies and our tasks

“The international capitalist order is also characterized by the intensification of inter-imperialist conflicts, by the efforts that the powers – such as the US, China, Russia, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, etc. – are carrying out to win positions in world geopolitics, to protect and/or expand their areas of political-economic influence. These contradictions have various manifestations, but one of the most dangerous aspects is its billions in military spending” – from the Proclamation of the XXVI Plenary Session of the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations, ICMLPO, February 2021.

Where are Serbia and the Balkans in this dark imperialist map? *Independence, democracy, socialism!* – that is the basic, patriotic slogan of our Revolutionary Alliance of Labour of Serbia. *Workers and oppressed peoples of the world, unite!* – is supplemented by the inevitable proletarian internationalist call of the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations, the ICMLPO. Under these flags, guided by the invincible revolutionary scientific theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, we are marching forward against the unimagined modern conditions of the general crisis of capitalism.

People’s Democratic Anti-Imperialist and Anti-Fascist Front Against the Capitalist Crisis: a front of exploited workers, women, youth, the impoverished educated and owning classes, and the oppressed, small, and fraternal Balkan peoples, in alliance with the international workers’ movement and revolutionary and democratic peoples of the world – is a chance for the people of Serbia in the fight for progress and a dignified life.

We need peoples’ democratic power, to destroy corruption and speculation, exploitation of man by man and unemployment, to drive out all imperialists and foreign monopolies, to develop the state monopoly on foreign trade and the domestic trade without monopolists, so to accumulate the resources for socialist re-industrialization and building of socialism in our country and to be saved from capitalist catastrophe.

Revolutionary Alliance of Labour of Serbia
savezrada.org
March 2021

The Paris Commune

I. Background

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Paris Commune, one of the main events in the history of the workers' movement. Between March 18 and May 28, 1871, the city of Paris was ruled by the working class and the popular sectors, showing that it was possible to live without the rule of the bourgeoisie and that the workers could create a new world. The experience of the Commune showed for the first time in history that the proletariat, through the revolution, has the capacity to be master of its own destiny.

The Commune cannot be understood without explaining, even briefly, the period of Napoleon III's rule. On December 2, 1851, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, President of the Republic, nephew of Napoleon I, but who was light years away from the intelligence and military genius of his uncle, staged a coup. In 1852 he proclaimed the Empire and went on to rule as Napoleon III, counting on the support of the big financial bourgeoisie, the Army and broad sectors of the land-owning peasantry. In this way the revolutionary period that had begun in February 1848 with the overthrow of King Louis Philippe of Orleans and the proclamation of the Second Republic came to end.

Between 1852 and 1870 France experienced enormous economic development. In 1850, 2,915 kilometers of railways were built in the country and in 1869 the railway lines reached 16,466 kilometers. Advances in communications stimulated the development of commerce and industry, while banks and agricultural credit institutions expanded. The cities grew and were remodeled, especially Paris, where wide avenues and boulevards were opened that were intended to make it difficult to build barricades in case of popular protests and to make it easier to deploy cavalry and artillery.

Napoleon III tried to attract the working class by promoting public works and creating some social institutions, in an attempt to achieve social peace. However, the Bonapartist regime represented the interests of the upper bourgeoisie, although it tried to disguise

this by maintaining universal suffrage (in practice effective power was in the hands of the emperor), and with a paternalistic policy aimed at weakening social protests. In his quest for popular support and personal prestige, Napoleon III also pursued an active foreign policy to position France among the great powers again and to foster nationalist sentiments. He participated in the Crimean War, supported Italian unity, reinforced imperialist policy, and intervened in Mexico by sending a military expedition that overthrew the republican regime and made Archduke Maximilian of Austria emperor.

This foreign policy, which in the case of the Mexican adventure ended in absolute disaster – Maximilian was shot in 1867 by the Mexican patriots who reestablished the Republic, the French army lost 8,000 men and the cost to the French Treasury rose to 1,000 million francs – could not hide the growing social inequality and discontent of the working class and the Republican opposition.

From the mid-1860s opposition to the Second Empire increased. On the occasion of the elections to the Legislative Body in 1864, the Manifesto of the Sixty was published, inspired by Proudhonists, which called for political and social struggle. At the same time, social conflicts were increasing due to the economic crisis of 1866-67. The founding of the International Association of Workers in 1864 (First International) had immediate repercussions in France, where sections were formed in various cities. In April 1870 the Federation of Parisian sections of the International was founded and from December 1869 the newspaper *La Marseillaise*, an organ of the International, was published, with 145,000 copies. The French working class was not only strengthening organizationally, but also increasing its class consciousness. Gradually socialist ideas spread, in conflict with anarchist ideology.

At the same time, the republican movement spread and in the 1869 elections to the Legislative Body the republicans obtained an important advance. A good example of this republican sentiment was *La Lanterne* magazine, which had a circulation of 120,000 copies.

Although the government made some concessions to the opposition, such as the abolition of the Chapelier Law, which in 1791 had banned workers' associations, Napoleon III's situation was increasingly weak. On May 8, 1870, a new Constitution was submitted to a referendum in an attempt to give legitimacy to the regime. Despite the police measures to obtain a favorable vote, ap-

proximately 3,500,000 French people abstained or voted against it. The affirmative votes reached 7,500,000, but the manipulation in rural areas undermined the credibility of those results. In the context of growing opposition to the regime, which also included sectors of the industrial bourgeoisie, who were harmed by the free trade agreement signed with England in 1860, the Franco-Prussian war broke out.

Beginning in 1864, Prussia took the lead in German unification. Prussian foreign policy was directed by Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, an extremely conservative politician who ruled out popular participation in the unification process and considered that the unity of Germany should be carried out “from above” and its instrument would be the army. After the victories over Denmark (1864) and Austria (1866) the North German Confederation was created, but there were still German states, especially Bavaria, which were suspicious of this unifying process. For Bismarck it was clear that a great victory over France, the traditional enemy of Prussia, would whip up German nationalist sentiment and allow the last resistance to the process of German unity to be overcome.

In 1870 the throne of Spain was vacant, after the revolution in 1868 that had expelled Isabel II, and the Spanish government was looking to Europe for a candidate to occupy it. After several failures, the offer was made to Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, a cousin of the King of Prussia. Bismarck took advantage of the expected opportunity and maneuvered so that both the Prince and the King of Prussia accepted the Spanish proposal. Napoleon III was radically opposed to this, considering that a German prince on the throne of Spain would upset the European balance and would pose a threat to France. He even demanded guarantees from the Prussian King, Wilhelm I, for Leopold’s withdrawal. Bismarck, a master of diplomatic intrigue, sent a reply (the Ems telegram) that was deemed offensive by the French government. Napoleon III, in the opinion of many historians, entered the “red cloth” of the German chancellor and declared war on Prussia on July 19, 1870. Although intelligence was not one of his qualities, it is clear that the French emperor was not stupid enough to risk a war over the content of a telegram. The truth is that the clique that surrounded Napoleon III and he himself considered the war as the solution to the serious economic, social and political problems of France. The contest would create a feeling of national unity in the face of the class

struggle. Victory would also restore prestige to a regime that was in full decay. Nationalism, both for the Prussian chancellor and for the French emperor, was the cement that would forge their respective political projects.

The conflict showed the weakness of the French army and the superiority of the Prussians. On September 2, the French forces capitulated at Sedan and the emperor himself was taken prisoner. The defeat exacerbated protests and social and political discontent. On September 4 the Republic was proclaimed, but it was soon seen that the intentions of the bourgeoisie clashed with the aspirations of the popular masses of Paris.

II. The Revolution

A provisional government was formed with the intention of continuing the war. It included moderate and radical republicans, but it was chaired by a monarchist general, Louis Jules Trochu. Another monarchist military man, General Adolphe Le Flô, held the Ministry of War. This so-called government of “national defense” represented the interests of the bourgeoisie and viewed the events unfolding in the capital with growing concern.

Paris was subjected to a harsh four-month siege by Prussian troops. The cold, the hunger, the rise in the price of bread and the military failures of the new government increased the discontent of the popular sectors. On the other hand, the National Guard, which had 200,000 men during the siege and the “Republican Central Committee of Defense of the Twenty Arrondissements (Districts)”, which defended direct democracy and the right of the people to supervise public affairs, became organs parallel to the provisional government. On October 31, 1870,, and January 22, 1871, there were two insurrections against the government. Although both failed, the conservative forces, fearing new revolutionary movements, considered it urgent to end the war and reach an agreement with the Prussians. Between the foreign military enemy and the social enemy, the bourgeoisie made its class interests prevail. On January 28 the government signed an armistice with the Prussians. Then legislative elections were held (February 18) that led to the victory of the monarchist forces. The new Assembly appointed the reactionary Adolphe Thiers as head of the government and made the decision to move to Versailles. The legislative power distrusted Paris and preferred to locate itself in the town that was the symbol

of the monarchy. On February 26, a preliminary peace agreement was signed and Prussian troops marched through some districts of Paris.

In this context, what set off the insurrection was the government's attempt to seize the guns acquired through popular financing during the war and which, under the control of the National Guard, had been taken to the hill of Montmartre to prevent them from falling into Prussian hands. Government troops attempted to seize the cannons on the evening of March 17, but they were met with a powerful popular response, with a notable role of women, including Louise Michel. The insurrection spread and on March 18 Paris was controlled by the popular masses. The city was filled with barricades and the Hôtel de Ville, the seat of the town hall, was occupied and the Central Committee of the National Guard was established there, temporarily converted into the new revolutionary authority. That same day Thiers withdrew to Versailles, accompanied by a good part of his officials. His objective was to raise an army and launch it against the capital.

From the beginning, there was a notable political and ideological division within the new revolutionary authorities. Blanquists, Proudhonists, Jacobins and internationalists (within which there was a Marxist minority) disagreed on the model and course of the revolution. This division became clear when the new authorities refused to launch a military offensive against Versailles. This was a serious mistake because it allowed the enemies of the revolution to buy time and reorganize.

The Central Committee of the National Guard established freedom of the press, decreed a political amnesty and called municipal elections to elect a Council of the Commune. They were held on March 26 and 48% of the citizens voted. Of the 229,627 votes cast, 190,000 were in favor of the Commune. A 62-member Council became the new government of Paris and officially proclaimed the Commune on March 28. The red flag flew at the Hôtel de Ville.

In order to administer of the city, nine commissions were created. Finance, War, Justice, Subsistence, Foreign Relations, Public Services, Education and Labor, Industry and Exchange The new revolutionary power carried out some measures whose objective was to create a new social and political model based on direct and egalitarian democracy. Associations, political clubs, and district assemblies multiplied in the popular neighborhoods; numerous

newspapers and publications appeared, and the people's participation in public affairs became a daily reality. The churches were obliged to host citizen assemblies. The regular Army was dissolved, replaced by the National Guard; rents were decreased, night work was abolished in the hundreds of bakeries in Paris, pensions were granted for the widows of members of the National Guard who died in service, as well as for their children, there was free return of all the workers' tools deposited in the pawnshops, abolition of interest on debts and establishment of the workers' right to take control of a company if it had been abandoned by its owner. Church and State were separated, secular education was introduced, and in some districts free school supplies were given to the children. The death penalty was abolished and public officials could be recalled if they did not respond to the popular will.

The government of the Commune kept public services functioning and showed in practice that it was possible to do without the bourgeoisie and its bureaucratic apparatus. However, there were very significant and serious errors, such as not nationalizing the Bank of France, which led to a serious problem of financing. Between March 20 and April 20, the expenses of the Commune amounted to 26 million francs, but the Commune only received from the Bank 9,400,000 francs that belonged to the city of Paris and an advance of 7,292,000, while in the same period the Bank of France accepted about 200 million francs in bills drawn by the Versailles government to combat the Commune.

The government of Paris was aware of the need to receive the support and solidarity of the rest of France and, in this sense, it made two appeals: "*To the People of France*" and to the "*Toilers of the Countryside*."

The first one said:

"What does the Commune ask for?"

The recognition and consolidation of the Republic as the only form of government compatible with the rights of the people and with the free and constant development of society.

The absolute autonomy of the Commune, which must be valid for all the localities of France and which guarantees to each municipality the inviolability of their rights, as well as to all French people the full exercise of their faculties and capabilities as human beings, citizens and workers.

The autonomy of the Commune will have no limits other than the right of equal autonomy for all the other communes adhering to the pact, whose alliance will guarantee French Unity.

At no time did the authorities of the Commune want to break up the unity of France, but rather to organize the country through a pact that would unite all the communes on the basis of autonomy and equal rights. However, Paris found itself isolated. The revolutionary centers of Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse, Narbonne, Saint-Etienne, Le Creusot and Limoges were quickly suppressed. Paris was alone faced with Versailles. In the capital, a revolutionary government, workers' power. In Versailles, the government of the bourgeoisie that ruled France and prepared the assault against the Commune. Duality of powers that could not be maintained indefinitely.

III. Defeat and Repression

The Versailles government was determined to crush Paris and assembled an army of 130,000 men. 60,000 soldiers were prisoners freed by Bismarck. The war between the ruling classes was secondary to the revolutionary threat. The French and German bourgeoisie were in solidarity against the workers of the Commune and joined forces to crush a revolution that seriously endangered their class interests.

The Commune decreed the general mobilization of all Parisians between the ages of 19 and 40, but the National Guard, in which many women took part, lacked military experience in the face of a regular, disciplined and well-armed army. The participation of nearly 2,000 foreigners, refugees and political exiles, who were in Paris at that time, should be noted. An important role was played by the Polish community. Two of the most prominent military leaders of the Commune were Poles: Jaroslaw Dombrowski and Walery Wroblewski.

The city was first bombed on April 2 and on April 3 an attempt by the forces of the Commune to reach Versailles failed. On May 1, the creation of a Public Health Committee with broad powers was approved. However, this attempt to centralize power, as the Jacobins did in 1793, came late and, moreover, collided with other institutions of the Commune.

After seizing the outer forts that defended the city, on May 21 the Versailles army penetrated the capital through the western bourgeois neighborhoods, where it had support among the population.

On the 22nd, districts XV and XVI fell. The defenders of the Commune filled the city with barricades and defended them with tenacity and courage, but this was not enough in the face of the superiority of the attackers' fire. On the 23rd the hill of Montmartre fell and then the first fires started. Some were started by artillery fire and others caused by the Communards. It was a desperate gesture that symbolized the hatred towards the bourgeois regime represented by those buildings for the defenders of the Commune. It was also a way to slow down the attackers' advance. The Palace of Orsay, the Police Prefecture, the Palace of the Legion of Honor, the Palace of Justice and the Louvre library, among others, were burned. On the 24th the Public Health Committee evacuated the Hôtel de Ville and moved to the XI district. The defense then focused on the east of the capital, where the Commune had the most support, being the area with the highest concentration of workers.

The advance of the army was accompanied by savage reprisals. Prisoners were shot on the spot and the wounded were finished off in hospitals.

In this climate of extreme violence, the defenders of the Commune began to apply the decree on hostages. A hundred people were shot by the Commune members, including several members of the clergy. This was a defensive reaction to the criminal repression of the Versailles army.

On the 28th, after fierce fighting, the forces of Versailles took the last barricade on Ramponeau Street and the resistance ended.

There is no unanimity on the figures of the repression, but it was a real massacre. 17,000 people were summarily executed, without trial, although estimates put that number at 35,000. A study by the Paris Municipal Council concluded that more than 100,000 workers were killed, arrested or fled. When comparing the 1872 census with that of 1866, half of the 24,000 shoemakers had disappeared; 10,000 of the 30,000 tailors; 6,000 of the 20,000 carpenters and cabinetmakers and 1,500 of the 8,000 bronze workers (J. Merriman: *Massacre: The Life and death in the Paris Commune of 1871*). There were 399,823 denunciations and 39,000 people arrested, of whom 13,700 were sentenced to various prison terms.

Some places in Paris, such as the "Wall of the Federated" in the Père-Lachaise cemetery, symbolize the fight for freedom. In this place, on May 28, 1871, 147 combatants of the Commune were shot and thrown into a common grave.

What was the Paris Commune? Was it the last of the popular movements that began with the cycle of bourgeois revolutions in 1789, or a workers' revolution? We consider that the episode of the Commune as qualitatively different from the popular uprisings that accompanied the bourgeois revolutionary cycle of 1789-1848. These uprisings were led by pre-industrial social sectors: artisans, shopkeepers, servants, manufacturing workers, etc. They did not have their independent political aim, but took part in revolutions that were led by the bourgeoisie. Although at times these masses of *sans-culottes* [the common people – literally *without knee breaches*] acquired a strong prominence, as happened during the Jacobin Convention, they could not overcome the objective conditions in which they moved. On the contrary, in the Commune, although the artisan and petty-bourgeois component was notable, the participation of the workers and proletarians was sufficiently important to give the movement a different sociological character. But it is not only about the social aspect, but about the historical context and the political aim. The Commune triumphed within the framework of a fully consolidated bourgeois order; it did not accompany or radicalize the bourgeois revolution, but rather challenged the capitalist order and questioned the power of the ruling class. The brutality of the repression is a good example of what we say. The bourgeoisie felt as if its rule was questioned, and hence the thousands of executions and imprisonments were aimed at setting an example to the working class that would serve as a warning that the new bourgeois order was not to be questioned. The parliamentary Republic, universal suffrage and a certain number of rights marked the terrain of political life. Private ownership of the means of production and class



society were not subject to discussion.

Karl Marx defined with crystal clarity the working-class character of the Commune in *The Civil War in France*:

“The multiplicity of interpretations to which the Commune has been subjected, and the multiplicity of interests which construed it in their favour, show that it was a thoroughly expansive political form, while all previous forms of government had been emphatically repressive. Its true secret was this. It was essentially a working-class government, the produce of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour. Except on this last condition, the Communal Constitution would have been an impossibility and a delusion. The political rule of the producer cannot coexist with the perpetuation of his social slavery. The Commune was therefore to serve as a lever for uprooting the economical foundations upon which rests the existence of classes, and therefore of class rule.” (Marx, Karl: *The Civil War in France*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1977, pp. 74-75.)

And Engels, in the 1891 prologue to the third edition of that work, stated emphatically that the Commune was the practical expression of the dictatorship of the proletariat:

“This shattering of the former state power and its replacement by a new and truly democratic one is described in detail in the third section of The Civil War. But it was necessary to dwell briefly here once more on some of its features, because in Germany particularly the superstitious belief in the state has been carried over from philosophy into the general consciousness of the bourgeoisie and even of many workers. According to the philosophical conception, the state is the ‘realization of the Idea,’ or the Kingdom of God on earth, as translated into philosophical terms, the sphere in which eternal truth and justice is or should be realized. And from this follows a superstitious reverence for the state and everything connected with it, which takes root the more readily since people are accustomed from childhood to imagine that the affairs and interests common to the whole of society could not be looked after otherwise than as they have been looked after in the past, that is, through the state and its lucratively posi-

tioned officials. And people think they have taken quite an extraordinarily bold step forward when they have rid themselves of belief in hereditary monarchy and swear by the democratic republic. In reality, however, the state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed in the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy; and at best an evil inherited by the proletariat after its victorious struggle for class supremacy, whose worst sides the victorious proletariat, just like the Commune, cannot avoid having to lop off at once as much as possible until such time as a generation reared in new, free social conditions is able to throw out the entire lumber of the state.

Of late, the Social-Democratic philistine has once more been filled with wholesome terror at the words: Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Well and good, gentlemen, do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.” (Ibid., pp. 17-18.)

The Commune marks a turning point in the history of the workers’ movement by showing in practice the possibility of a government without the bourgeoisie and the ability of the workers to organize their own power. Undoubtedly, the government of the Commune made mistakes, but many of them were due to objective conditions: the French workers’ movement had not yet acquired the necessary organizational strength to take power definitively, nor was there a revolutionary party capable of becoming the vanguard of the working class and, ideologically, Marxism was far from being hegemonic among the workers. Even so, the working class pointed the way forward and paved the way that the Russian proletariat would follow years later in 1917.

One hundred and fifty years after those heroic deeds, we pay tribute to all the men and women who proclaimed a new world, without exploiters or exploited. Their fight and their death were not in vain.

IV. The State and Political Power

The study and analysis of the Paris Commune is fundamental for communist militants because that historical experience brought the question of the State to the fore. Understanding its true nature is one of the most important themes in the revolutionary struggle of

the working class. In this matter, as in so many others, the bourgeoisie has succeeded in instilling its ideological class conception into broad popular sectors. For bourgeois ideologists, the State is an organ above classes, destined to guarantee law, peace, order and the security of all citizens; that is, its essential character would be its neutrality. Faced with this widely attempted interpretation, we must reaffirm that the State, according to Lenin's definition, "is the product and the manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The state arises when, where and to the extent that class antagonisms objectively cannot be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that the class antagonisms are irreconcilable.... the state is an organ of class rule" (Lenin: *The State and Revolution*, Foreign Languages press, Peking, 1970, pp. 7-8). Indeed, the state is the result of the class struggle. The appropriation of the economic surplus, of the social wealth, by one certain social class makes necessary the existence of a concrete structure of domination called the State.

Throughout history the State has taken various forms in accord with the changes in the relations of production; that is, the economic structure of society is what has determined over time the type of legal-political structure of society (the superstructure). In this way, the slave, feudal and capitalist State have succeeded one another (we will not analyze the socialist state in this article).

The state is the **center of political power** exercised by the ruling class. Through this instrument, this class exercises power over the rest of society and ensures the appropriation of the economic surplus. As long as that surplus did not exist, as long as society was not divided into classes, a special apparatus of repression and domination was not necessary. This is the period that Marx and Engels called primitive communism.

Starting with the Neolithic revolution, which led to a great development of the productive forces, the first state forms make their appearance. And when slavery became the dominant form of exploitation, the classic slave state was formed: Athens of the fifth and fourth centuries BC and republican and imperial Rome. In the slave State, all the elements that make up any State are fully developed: the army as an apparatus of repression, an extensive administrative bureaucracy and a legislature that legally regulates existing relations of production, without forgetting religion, the ideological element

that represents a moral and a code of values destined to shore up the social order.

The disintegration of the Roman Empire gave rise to the long feudal era, with new economic and state forms. At the end of the 18th century, the development of capitalist relations of production and the growing economic power of the bourgeoisie began the period of the bourgeois revolutions and the consolidation of capitalism. The rise of the bourgeoisie to the ruling class implied the formation of the capitalist state.

While it is true that in the capitalist mode of production, exploitation takes place directly in the production process by obtaining surplus value, it is no less true that the State always intervenes to ensure and support the conditions that make exploitation possible. The Civil Code, the Penal Code, the entire legislative apparatus by which a society is governed, consecrates the private property of the means of production, and the courts of justice severely punish any action that violates that property. The police and the army intervene in its defense when it is seriously threatened. Nothing is more false than the bourgeois formulation on the neutrality of the State and its function in defense of the general interest. The capitalist State maintains the bourgeois order and its mission is to regulate the functioning of society in such a way as to ensure the reproduction of relations of domination and exploitation; that is, the capitalist relations of production. That exploitation under capitalism is not immediately visible does not in any way imply that the character of the State has changed. It remains the center of political power, a class dictatorship, in that only the bourgeoisie has a monopoly on legally organized violence.

The exercise of this power is concentrated and materialized in the **State apparatus**; that is to say, the material means in the strict sense through which it exercises that domain. In the capitalist state we find a triple differentiation of apparatus: technical-administrative apparatus, ideological apparatus and repressive apparatus. The joint action of the three guarantees class rule, although in certain moments and situations one of them gains the dominant role, as happened with the repressive apparatus in the fascist regimes. However, in the developed capitalist countries the ideological apparatus has become increasingly important. The police forces or the military apparatus intervene at specific moments, when the class struggle exceeds a certain level, but in general the rule of the bourgeoisie is

based on social consensus, on the acceptance of the current system by the popular classes. This acceptance is achieved through a broad and intense ideological control of the population that ensures the identification of the majority of the population with the code of values spread by the ruling class and prevents the working class from acquiring **class consciousness**. Ideology works as an element of cohesion of the social structure. Only in times of intense economic crisis, as is currently the case, do major ideological fractures occur in that consensus, but even in these circumstances class consciousness is not acquired spontaneously.

The State apparatus is the center of the exercise of political power by the bourgeoisie, but it would be a mistake to imagine this apparatus as a monolithic whole, free from contradictions. The struggles among the different factions of the ruling classes are reflected in the conflicts within and among the apparatuses themselves. In the same way, the struggle of the dominated classes creates contradictions and tensions in the state apparatuses, insofar as they have a certain autonomy of action and certain specific interests that are a consequence of their social configuration. There is a difference among the ruling class and the members of the police, the army and the bureaucracy. The approaches elaborated by the Swedish sociologist Göran Therborn in his book *What Does the Ruling Class do When it Rules?* (Verso, 2008) shed light on this:

“In the State apparatuses, in the historical course of the class struggle, certain social relations come to crystallize, and in this way they come to assume a material existence, an efficiency and an inertia that, to a certain extent, are already independent of each other, state politics and existing class relations. It follows that, although the discrepancy between state power and the State apparatus is limited by the fact that both express the class relations of the same society, at certain times there are important variations and imbalances between the two. The coexistence within a specific state system of various apparatuses, in which different sets of class relations may have crystallized, make the possibilities of mismatch substantially increase” (translated from the Spanish).

In a crisis situation, social cutbacks also affect the police forces and create tensions within them. The question is whether this malaise can be exacerbated to the point of reaching a level that can neutralize the repressive function they exert on social protests. In a

word, would it be possible at a given juncture for a sector of the State apparatus to side with the working class in its struggle against the capitalist system? We believe that this possibility is feasible in revolutionary situations, but in no case will the transformation of the capitalist state be possible, without the need to destroy it, in order to build a socialist society. It is one thing to take advantage of the contradictions within the State and quite another to think that the State itself in its entirety can be used by the working class in its fight against capital and serve to build socialism. One position is Leninist and the other revisionist.

In his book *Eurocomunismo y Estado (Eurocommunism and the State)*, Santiago Carrillo, who for many years was Secretary General of the Communist Party of Spain at the height of the revisionist degeneration, argued that in the developed capitalist countries the revolutionary strategy was to turn the state apparatuses around and use them against the power of the State of monopoly capital. This is an extremely dangerous thesis because it disarms the workers politically and ideologically and leads the communists to disaster. The government experience of the Chilean Popular Unity between 1970 and 1973 was especially important on this issue, because it tragically demonstrated that it is one thing to become the government or win a parliamentary majority and quite another to take full political power. The military coup led by Pinochet revealed once again that political power is the ability of one class to carry out its specific objectives, and these can only be achieved if that class possesses its own state apparatus.

The working class needs to break up the bourgeois State, to destroy it, in order to build a political, social and economic model that is an alternative to capitalism. In the revolutionary struggles, it is possible that one part of the personnel that makes up the bourgeois state will place itself on the side of the proletariat, but the fundamental nuclei of that State will continue to serve the bourgeoisie and will be deeply hostile to socialism. The workers need their own state: the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Madrid, March 2021

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One hundred years ago the first communist cell in Tunisia was born

Since the beginning of this year, and despite the restrictions imposed by the spread of the Covid 19 virus, Tunis, the capital of the country, as well as other cities in Tunisia live under the sign of the “Centenary of the Communist Movement in Tunisia”. Numerous scientific activities and cultural festivities (photo exhibitions, film screenings, theatrical and musical performances) have been organized to celebrate this history that has always been neglected or even denied by the country’s official historiography.

The impact of the Great October Revolution and the birth of the Third International was not limited to the imperialist countries of Europe, but also widely affected the colonized countries on all continents, including the Arab countries¹.

Indeed, on March 27, 1921, the first communist cell of Tunisia was born in the small town of Ferryville², located in the north of the country, a town that was home to the first modern industries, and consequently the first nuclei of the working class. It brought together workers of various nationalities: French, Italians, Maltese but also Tunisians and it announced its affiliation to the Communist International. This communist cell was born only a few weeks after the famous Congress of Tours³ in which Tunisian and French delegates from Tunisia took part and which saw the birth of the French Communist Party.

¹ See in this regard our article “The Communist International and the Arab world”, published in “Unity and Struggle” Num. 38, March 2018.

² It was named in honor of Jules Ferry, Prime Minister of France in 1881, who ordered the occupation of Tunisia. Since the independence of the country, it took the name of Menzel Bourguiba, in honor of Habib Bourguiba, one of the main leaders of the national liberation movement and first president of independent Tunisia.

³ It is the 18th Congress of the SFIO (French Section of the Workers' International - Socialist Party) which was held from December 25 to 30, 1920, and which saw the formation of the SFIC (French Section of the Communist International – the future PCF).

The same year, Mokhtar Ayari, a trade unionist worker and one of the founders of this cell, launched a communist newspaper in Arabic, “The People’s Friend,” to spread communist ideas and to make known the exploits of the Great October Revolution. It was banned by the colonial authorities, but soon reappeared under other titles.

Four years later, this pioneer of communism became one of the founders of an autonomous trade union center, independent of the existing French trade unions: the General Confederation of Workers of Tunisia (CGTT) which was fought by all the reactionary and social-chauvinist forces: the colonial power, the Tunisian nationalist parties, the French social-chauvinists and the yellow trade unions from there, as the CGT remained under the control of the socialists after the Congress of Tours. It was conspicuous by its total absence from the struggles led by Tunisian workers and even denounced the formation of the Tunisian trade union under the pretext that it would increase the division of the forces of the workers in the face of united capital. According to Joachim Durel, its local secretary, “only racial and religious intolerance would prevent Tunisian workers from joining the USF”⁴, to which one of the founders of the CGTT replied:

“Nothing prohibits you from joining the Tunisian union since it is preparing to join the International (trade union), in accordance with the workers’ principles established worldwide. Thus we will avoid the division you fear. In all the countries of the planet, the formation of trade unions obeys the organization of the people. Each nation has an organization recognized by the International. Why should Tunisia not be recognized as a nation among nations – which it is in reality – if it were not assimilated to a French land. Under these conditions, nothing would prevent us from uniting, except your quality of protectors which forbids you from condescending to consider us as your equals. As for professional and union experience, which you deplore as lacking among the natives, I do not deny it. No doubt that if you join us, it will be filled. We are only workers”⁵.

⁴ Union Syndicale Française, section of the CGT in Tunisia

⁵ Quoted by Tahar Haddad “Tunisian workers and the emergence of the trade union movement”, Tunis, 1927.

The founders of the CGTT showed a great combativeness and crisscrossed the country to spread the idea of the trade union and convince workers of the need for organization. This journey led Mohamed Ali Hammi in all the workers' conglomerations, from the northern cities (Bizerte and its region, Ferryville) to the city of Tunis and its suburbs, to the cities of the mining basin located some 400 km south of the capital.

But the response of the colonial authorities was not long in coming. And as this union will only find support from this communist core, these authorities took the opportunity to strike a fatal blow at the nascent trade unionism and contain the communist propaganda and activity in Tunisia. The leaders of the CGTT as well as some communist leaders were arrested and put on trial, leading them to be banished from the whole territory of the French empire and their organization dismantled and banned. Some of them died in exile (Mohamed Ali Hammi and Mokhtar Ayari) and never saw Tunisia again; others returned clandestinely (Tahar Boudamgha, Jean Paul Finidori). Communist propaganda was then limited to the French-language press and became difficult to access for the local Arabic-speaking and largely illiterate population.

These conditions in which the communist movement in Tunisia was born influenced its subsequent development and especially its attachment to the PCF, perceived by Tunisians as a French party that was essentially aimed at the French in Tunisia and not at Tunisians. It was not until 1939 that the SFIC/Tunisia was transformed into the Communist Party of Tunisia, on the recommendation of the Communist International, and a Tunisian, Ali Jrad⁶, was promoted to the post of Secretary General of the Party. He was a militant who knew how to address Tunisians in their language and translate their aspirations for social and national liberation.

Before this date, the popular perception of the communist party as a French party did not change since its leadership was composed mainly of French elements and the language used in its meetings as

⁶ Ali Jrad, son of a worker who left his native village to settle in Tunis. He pursued traditional studies and became involved in the political struggle at an early age. His two years in prison made him discover the world of communism; he joined the party upon his release. For his militancy and dedication, he was trained at one of the schools of the Third International in Moscow.

TUNISIA – 100 YEARS AGO FIRST COMMUNIST CELL IN TUNISIA WAS BORN

well as in its written press was French. This was already a barrier for the Tunisian population to join the party.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the divergences within the party became more pronounced with regard to the connection between the national question and internationalism. If the question seemed theoretically resolved in the resolutions of the Communist International and in all the literature inspired by the spirit of the Baku Congress⁷, it was not always so in practice and in the political line of certain communist parties, such as the PCF. More concretely, in the post-war context should the communists of Tunisia (French and Tunisian) put on the agenda the struggle for national liberation against colonial France or align themselves with the position that advocated “the absolute necessity for the Tunisian people to ally themselves with the peoples of the world to fight against U.S. imperialism and its imperialist and warlike ambitions.”⁸

However, point 8 of the “Terms of Admission into the Communist International” clearly states: “Parties in countries whose



bourgeoisie possess colonies and oppress other nations must pursue a most well-defined and clear-cut policy in respect of colonies and oppressed nations. Any party wishing to join the Third International must ruthlessly expose the colonial machinations of the imperialists

⁷ Congress of the Peoples of the East held in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, in which more than 2000 delegates from the countries of the East participated.

⁸ Extract from a resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the Tunisian Communist Party in 1947

of its 'own' country, must support – in deed, not merely in word – every colonial liberation movement, demand the expulsion of its compatriot imperialists from the colonies, inculcate in the hearts of the workers of its own country an attitude of true brotherhood with the working population of the colonies and the oppressed nations, and conduct systematic agitation among the armed forces against all oppression of the colonial peoples.”⁹

Ali Jrad, who defended the first position and called for an intensification of the struggle against colonial France, which had emerged weakened from the war, was expelled from the party at its third congress held in 1948 for “nationalist deviation”. Thus, the Communist Party, already marginalized for the above-mentioned reasons, deepened its isolation among the Tunisian population and left the bourgeoisie the exclusive leadership of the national liberation movement.

With the advent of the country's independence in 1956, the Tunisian Communist Party no longer had any impact on the course of events and was unable to obtain any seats either in the Constituent Assembly elected in March 1956 or in the municipal councils elected a little later. It chose the policy of “critical support” for the new regime and was content to praise its progressive achievements. This did not prevent the new master of the country, President Habib Bourguiba, from banning the activity of the Communist Party in early 1963 and forcing it underground until 1981. Internationally, it aligned itself with the positions of the big brother party, the CPSU, and with the theses of its 20th congress, and sank definitively into revisionism.

This is what multiplied the dissidences within it with the formation of other organizations claiming to be communist from the beginning of the 1960s. This is what we will study in the second part of this article that we will publish in the next issue of “Unity and Struggle” and in which we will reserve a part to the process that led to the foundation of the “Communist Party of the Workers of Tunisia” and what this event represents for the working class and in the history of the communist movement in Tunisia.

April 2021

⁹ Resolution on the conditions of admission of the communist parties to the Third International adopted at the 2nd Congress of the latter.

What fascism is and what it is not?

The Class Character of Fascism

There once was more than enough debate on fascism. Although it has reached a certain level of clarification, it has not yet ended. At present, various approaches to fascism co-exist, i.e. as much as it is considered as a symptom of lunacy, it is also seen as repression of thoughts and demands that are not liked; this coexists with the adoption, advocacy and glorification of notions, axes and tendencies such as “*a nation with one voice*“, “*a strong state*“, “*a superior individual*“, the cult of the leader, chauvinism, xenophobia, etc. Social reformism and Trotskyism compete in severing or veiling the link between fascism, which they present as a general evil beyond classes or as the dominance of extra-class elements or leaders, with the monopolies and finance capital.

Especially under the conditions when the stagnation of capitalism is becoming clearer, when the contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between the monopolies and imperialism and the peoples, and between the imperialists themselves are sharpening, there is no doubt that the importance of the treatment of the question of fascism and of the fight against it increases with the need to clarify its class character and influence.

Especially in times of crisis, it is a fact that an increasing number of workers see that capitalism cannot give them anything, and tend to break away from the traditional bourgeois parties on the right and left of the “*centre*“, which they blame for the neoliberal policies and the governments that follow them. Moreover, although they do not blame capitalism directly, but only its negative consequences and the parties that they consider responsible for these consequences, the working masses are not only moving away from the traditional parties of the bourgeois system, but also from the sphere of influence of parliamentarism, which is the system that involves the change of government between parties that are not very different from each other.

Parliamentarism is the general form of today’s highly ossified bourgeois democracy, and the masses are actually detaching themselves from this form of hegemony of the bourgeoisie. This is evi-

denced by the falling percentage of votes for the traditional parties and of the electoral turnout in almost all countries. What appears again is that newly formed parties and new individuals, who not only criticise but also blame the old bourgeois parties and the usual old system of “democratic” hegemony, can even have “*a boom in votes*”. France is an example: While the centre right and left, the Republicans and the Socialist Party, suffered serious declines, the -non-party votes for Macron rose; however, the one who lost in last year’s local elections with a 40% turnout was he and his lately-founded party, La République En Marche!

On this ground, fuelled by the 2001 and 2008 crises, the fascist movement gained strength by blaming and exploiting the parliamentary system and the existing bourgeois parties of the right and left, which were exposed for not responding positively to the demands of the masses, and by exploiting these demands, claiming that their fulfilment was hindered by foreigners and internal and external enemies. In addition to traditional parliamentary deception and the parties of the bourgeois system to meet the demands of the masses with endless promises, xenophobia, incitement of nationalism and chauvinism are the main pillars of fascist movements to gain strength.

The practice of the class struggle has plenty of evidence in this regard. The fascist coup in Bolivia, which was subsequently overturned, and the fact that a fascist dictatorship is being built in Turkey, are examples of this; the advent of the presidency of Bolsanaro in Brazil – who does not hide his fascism, Orban in Hungary, Modi in India, and Trump in the US – calling for the attack on the Capitol on January 6, though he left it in suspense later – have all contributed to the debate on fascism being brought back on the agenda. Moreover, in addition to the neo-fascist movements, the far right reactionary fascist movements with a mass base in many countries and the development of the right populist movements are increasing the importance of having a correct approach and attitude on the subject.

I. Fascism likened to Bonapartism

In the past, the social democrats claimed that fascism was a Bonapartist power. This claim still has its defenders today. It is based on the illusion that does not lead to political blindness, and in fact stems from the state of being hand in glove with the bourgeois-

sie that fascism is not associated with it. The blindness raised to the level of theory assumes that the class character of fascism, which came to power by attracting the middle classes devastated by the crisis of capitalism in search of a way out, and seduced by nationalism, and even the backward sections of the workers, especially the declassed elements, is based on these sectors that it drags along.

In his article “On Fascism”, A. Thalheimer, a leading figure in the right wing of the KPD in the 1920s, stated the following about the rule of fascism in Italy:

*“It has essential features in common with the Bonapartist form of dictatorship: once again there is ‘the independence of the executive power’, the political subjugation of all the masses, including the bourgeoisie itself, beneath the fascist state power, along with the social domination of the big bourgeoisie and large landlords... The fascist party is a counterpart to Louis Bonaparte’s “December gang”... As with Bonapartism, there was an unsuccessful revolt of the proletariat, a consequent disappointment among the working class, and an exhausted, confused and prostrated bourgeoisie looking for a saviour who would reinforce their social power.”*¹

Otto Bauer, the left-wing social democrat and the founder of Austrian Marxism was of a similar opinion: “... just as in the 19th century Bonapartism was formed in a temporary equilibrium of forces between the bourgeoisie and the nobility on the one hand, and the proletariat and the bourgeoisie on the other, this new, fascist absolutism was also formed as a result of a temporary state of equilibrium, where neither the bourgeoisie could control the proletariat nor the proletariat could escape from the yoke of the bourgeoisie, and thus, both classes were subjected to the dictatorship of a band of thugs which was used by the capitalist class as a tool against the proletariat at the outset.”²

Strongman charismatic leaders at the head of the organized crowds and of aggressive terrorist militia, take advantage of the inability of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat to defeat one another and take these two classes under their diktat! The exaggeration of the relative autonomy of politics from economics and the state from

¹ Thalheimer, A., *On Fascism* (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/thalheimer/works/fascism.htm>); Bauer, O.; Tasca, A. (1999) *Faşizm ve Kapitalizm*, İstanbul, p. 54-55

² *Ibid*, p. 105

the ruling class: The bourgeoisie is economically and socially dominant, but politically it is kept under the fascist dictatorship, “*the fascist diktat also abolishes capitalist organizations, or at least puts them under its tutelage*”!³

To sum up: **the fascist dictatorship is not, at least politically, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or its form of state** – this is the poor formula that social democrats have come up with to separate the struggle against fascism from the struggle against the monopolies and the hegemony of finance capital, and some still support this!

Today, there is no lack of right-wing populist “*leaders*” prone to fascism. One can even say that they have become fashionable in order to exploit the workers and their reactions, to get them to tail behind them at a time when the ordinary right and left parties of the bourgeois system have difficulty keeping the working masses under their control, and when there is a growing reaction against the existing order, reflected in the indifference to and non-participation in parliament and in elections, but it is not directed against capitalism in an organized way. However, if one puts aside appearance, they do not even emulate Bonaparte and, successfully hiding their faces, they clearly defend the interests of finance capital and the monopolies.

II. Fascism is particular to the era of imperialism and proletarian revolutions

It is finance capital and the monopoly bourgeoisie that dominate under monopoly capitalism. As a current of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolutions, fascism is the **most reactionary**, aggressive and terrorist current of the **monopoly** bourgeoisie; the fascist dictatorship as a form of the bourgeois state is the **most reactionary**, distinguished by its blood-thirsty, terrorist character from a series of reactionary state forms which are characterized by the monopolies representing reaction.

As Lenin said, monopoly, as the name implies, as a tendency to monopolize and control everything, has stood beside but above competition, which is the dynamic of capitalist development; it had the opportunity to select and determine the investment, the amount

³ *Ibid*, p. 105

of production and the markets in accordance with the aim of achieving the highest profit.

“...imperialism is, in general, **a striving towards violence and reaction.**”⁴ This is because “Imperialism is **the epoch of finance capital and of monopolies, which introduce everywhere the striving for domination, not for freedom.** Whatever the political system, the result of these tendencies is everywhere reaction and **an extreme intensification of antagonisms in this field.**”⁵

“...the specific political features of imperialism are **reaction everywhere** and increased national oppression due to the oppression of the financial oligarchy and the elimination of free competition”⁶ and “imperialism contradicts all political democracy in general”.⁷

“Everything hinges on economic monopoly. The political superstructure of this new economy, of monopoly capitalism (imperialism is monopoly capitalism), **is the change from democracy to political reaction.** Democracy corresponds to free competition. **Political reaction corresponds to monopoly...** Both in foreign and home policy imperialism **strives towards violations of democracy, towards reaction.** In this sense imperialism is indisputably the ‘**negation**’ of democracy in general, of **all democracy,** and not just of one of its demands, national self-determination... **it seeks to violate democracy.**”⁸

Fascism is the concentrated expression of the domination of finance capital and the tendency of monopolies to violate democracy and establish reaction; the fascist dictatorship, for its part, is the most reactionary form of the political superstructure and of the bourgeois state organization. Undoubtedly, it cannot be argued that the fascist dictatorship is an automatic and necessary consequence of the reactionary tendency of finance capital; whether this tendency leads to a fascist state form depends on the concrete objective conditions and the balance of power between the classes as well as the needs of the monopolies.

⁴ Lenin, V.I. *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Chapter 7

⁵ Lenin, *ibid*, Chapter 9

⁶ Lenin, *ibid*, Chapter 9

⁷ Lenin, V.I. *A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism*

⁸ Lenin, *ibid*.

The fascist dictatorship is characterized not by the class affiliation of the masses that are swept along by the fascist movement or by the class origins of their leaders, but by the economically dominant finance capital and monopolies and by the reaction of objective class interests.

2. Fascism is an international phenomenon

Fascism, as a phenomenon of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolutions with a distinct international character, is not particular to individual nations; it cannot be explained by the local and isolated reality of individual countries.

Fascism, which emerged in certain countries as a form of current, movement, and state, is national in form with its chauvinistic nationalism, even racism, which it exalts and concentrates, and national values are among the most abused, and fascism in each country has different national characteristics with its establishment and formation.

However, it only exploits national values; for imperialist countries and their monopoly bourgeoisies, fascism does not only have an international trend, which is the dominant trend of advanced capitalism, but it also does maximum justice to this tendency with its use of monopolist aggression, plunder, brute force and war, by involving primarily the export of capital, and the division of the world economically and territorially.

The same international orientation is also functional for countries dependent on imperialism and their monopolies; those countries which have attained a certain level of development, scale and power try to export capital – although they import many times over – and participate in regional economic and territorial divisions in accordance with their power, and this also serves to exalt nationalism both on behalf of their monopolies and as subcontractors of the imperialists, waving their national flags outside the country and getting their people tailing along. As the scale of the country grows and the level of capitalist development increases – a factor that promotes fascism – the persecutions outside the country heighten. The only difference is that while adopting **disrespect**, expansionism and coercion against oppressed nations and weak neighbouring peoples, they have difficulty even defending their subcontractor interests in the face of imperialists, and they try to make room for themselves by taking inter-imperialist contradictions as the basis of their manoeuvres.

3. Fascism is associated with the crisis of capitalism

At the beginning of the 20th century, the fascist movement emerged in the atmosphere of the destruction of the imperialist war and the crisis of capitalism aggravated by the rise of the proletariat to power in Russia in an attempt to establish an alternative world system and by the disintegration of the capitalist market. With the strength it acquired due to the destruction of the war and the 1922-23 crisis in Italy, and in the aftermath of the 1929 crisis in Germany, it grew quickly and came to power.

The crises of capitalism that increased unemployment and poverty, when combined with the general crisis of capitalism, which sharpens and aggravates its major contradictions and their consequences, increasing to the extent that it strains the conditions of exploitation and its continuation, adversely affect the bourgeoisie and monopolies. The same factors, with the deepening of unemployment and poverty, grind down the working masses. On the one hand, the monopoly bourgeoisie tends to use the conditions of crisis to prepare for a new breakthrough benefiting from the bankruptcy of companies and getting hold of their assets cheaply, but on the other hand, it is straining against the rising discontent of the workers and the people who begin to express it and put it into action. In this framework, when the domination of capital and the continuation of exploitation within the old political forms become difficult



Adolph Hitler presiding over a Nazi parade in Nuremberg, 1927

in terms of internal and external conditions, fascism comes to the agenda as the pursuit of monopolies to “*ensure the future of and the consolidation of capitalism and its domination*”.

Aside from its deceptive anti-capitalist agitation, which it uses to win over the working people and the middle classes who are beginning to break with the existing order and are seeking new activities, and in order to manipulate their demands, fascism is the forceful organization of the direct need of the monopolies, of capitalism to stabilize – including the capture of new markets – domestically and abroad.

Any direct and mechanical relationship between fascism and every crisis of capitalism should be avoided; as we know in practice that capitalism can overcome its usual crises with more or less usual methods. For fascism, other conditions must come together and the crises in question must have the severity and the effect of leading to political crises. Spanish fascism, for example, was linked to the notorious 1929 crisis, in the aftermath of which the Republic was established in 1931 and the “*Popular Front*” won the 1936 elections, but the generals revolted and pulled in the fascist movement. Similarly, in Chile, we see the 1973 crisis, which was intertwined with the food and energy crisis as well as the collapse of the international monetary system in 1971, when the USA unilaterally lifted the dollar’s convertibility to gold. While crises on an international scale have conditioned strong fascist waves, the effects of less influential or regional and national crises are more limited. Recently, there was an increase in fascist movements in connection with the 2001 and 2008 crises, with the measures for and consequences of the former being carried over to the latter.

4. Revolution and the prospect of a potential revolution lead the monopolies to fascism

The experience of class struggles in the last century shows that fascist dictatorships often appear when revolutionary situations occur and the rise of the workers’ and labourers’ movements raise the question of power or when the tension between the struggling classes almost approaches this level.

Monopoly capitalism, which is “*the highest stage of capitalism*”, was defined by Lenin as “*capitalism in transition, more precisely a moribund capitalism*”. This means, in terms of finance capital and its dominance, that the emergence of the question of power

is a life and death problem. The ruling monopoly bourgeoisie definitely tested this with the October Revolution of 1917, and afterwards, whenever faced with the problem of power, even a possibility of that, it did not hesitate to take the harshest measures and implement the most reactionary policies. Fascism and fascist dictatorship are the counter-revolutionary response of the monopolies under conditions where the revolution is rising or the prospect of revolution arises and therefore their rule is put into question. This response to the revolution and its foundations appears as the concentration of the reactionary tendency of the monopolies in the context of the question of power.

This was the case in Italy, Germany, Spain, Poland, Bulgaria and Greece, then Chile and other Latin American countries such as Brazil, Uruguay and Guatemala. And it is natural in the sense that in the age of social revolutions, it is entirely understandable that the monopoly bourgeoisie, which has the hegemony and a network that spreads to all sections of society, is trying to reorganize the bourgeois dictatorship in the most reactionary form in order to maintain its rule when its power is in danger.

5. Fascism is the product of the conflict between the big monopolies and the working class and people

Undoubtedly, in terms of fascism becoming a necessity for the rulers, one cannot ignore the role of the sharpening of the inter-imperialist contradictions beyond the usual level. This is reflected in the quest of the imperialist monopolies, which did not fulfil their hopes in the old division, demanding a new redivision of the world, for the consolidation of the “*rear of the front*”, and in their orientation towards the war economy and militarism. However, although the inter-imperialist contradictions and the contradictions among the reactionary forces play a certain role in the establishment as well as the collapse of fascism and the fascist dictatorship, what is decisive mainly and primarily is the contradiction between imperialism and reaction on the one hand and the workers and the labouring people on the other, and the struggle within this scope. Fascism, apart from its international needs and orientations, is not a phenomenon derived as a solution to the struggle between the rulers, but it comes to the fore as the product of the need of finance capital and the monopolies to control the workers and labourers and to eliminate the

threat of their struggle, when they have difficulty maintaining their domination with the old methods.

6. The abolition of bourgeois democracy

As well as being the concentrated expression of the reactionary tendency of monopolies, fascism and fascist dictatorship are also a concrete form to be resorted to in times of crises, especially national political crises when the monopolies “search for ways” to “violate democracy”, or in connection with the possibility of a social revolution.

Bourgeois democracy, or the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie under democratic form, is structured in the shape of the parliamentary system in accordance with free competition. When the bourgeoisie is unable to rule due to internal conflicts as well as its shortcomings in repressing the opposition of the workers and labourers and overcoming the economic and political crisis of capitalism, changing the form of the dictatorship comes onto the agenda as well as the elimination of democratic rights and freedoms. There comes a stage of development in which the bourgeoisie cannot rule by the old parliamentary methods that include the availability of democratic rights. As the source of reaction, finance capital and the monopolies, which tend to violate democracy, abandon the bourgeois parliament as well as democratic rights and electoral principles that have turned into obstacles to their rule. Parliament, which is not the place where state affairs are decided anyway, makes it difficult to rule by prolonging the decision-making process; thus it cannot meet the need of the monopolies to rapidly centralize decisions or impositions and become unnecessary. Democratic rights make the realization of the interests of monopolies difficult, even impossible when used strongly and fully; moreover, they help the proletariat to complete its socialist education by using them in its intervention in politics. Therefore, what is necessary is neither these rights nor long and inconclusive discussions, but imposition, prohibition, brute force and terror.

7. Fascism is a political monopoly

The anti-worker and anti-people decisions, which are not far from reflecting the interests of the monopolies through rapid and democratic interventions, require a political centralization in line

with the centralization of monopoly in the economy: political monopoly. Fascism is a political monopoly.

What would guarantee swift decisions that fully meet the interests of the monopoly bourgeoisie is the transformation of the form of the bourgeois state by organising it as a fascist dictatorship, taking centralization as far as the decisions to be made by the leader, election to be replaced by appointment, the generalization of the diktat and imposition, and the repression of the opposition by brute force. The appointment of the directors of fascist state organizations and institutions by the leader is an integral part of fascism. The “*will of the people*”, the principle of universal suffrage and election are thrown away as phenomena belonging to the old democratic form of state.

8. Fascist dictatorship is the exclusion of the masses from politics

Feudalism requires and is based on extra-economic coercion: the relations of dependence on the person and on the land are the fundamental relations of feudal society. Capitalism, on the other hand, does not recognize extra-economic coercion, with exceptions. Even if the choice is limited to whether or not to die of starvation, the worker is free to hire himself and bargain for his labour power. Capital is the dominant force economically above all. As long as the economic domination of capital continues, this fact remains unchanged regardless of the character of the political regime, the confiscation of a part of the workforce continues with the economic hegemony of capital. Therefore, until the advent of monopoly capitalism, bourgeois democracy has been the usual superstructure of capitalism.

However, although bourgeois democracy is one form of bourgeois dictatorship and is the organization of tyranny over the working class and labourers, the working class not only enjoys democratic rights through its struggle under the conditions of bourgeois democracy, but it also becomes the guarantor of these rights by striving to use them, advancing its socialist education and establishing and organizing trade unions and political organizations of the masses. The possibility of social revolution as a result of crises and the danger of its realization in practice leads the bourgeoisie to destroy its own democracy in order to secure its hegemony, and the primary

motive here is to make the extra-economic force, i.e. the political force, the basis of capitalism.

The fascist dictatorship involves 1) the exclusion of the exploited masses from politics through their disintegration and disorganization, in order to get them to accept the impositions in the economic and social sphere; 2) the consolidation of economic force by combining it with political force: economic force involves the workers and labourers who are (politically) forced to accept working for extremely low wages, as well as prisoners of war and, for example, in Germany (and in the countries they occupied) the Jews being forced into forced labour in the form of “*slave labour*”⁹. Thus, fascism is, in fact, the negation of capitalism itself, which is based on economic force, and this appears as an orientation towards the realization of appropriation based on political force once again. Another element and example of fascism’s reliance on political force as a form of capitalist rule is mass slaughter, which was a common practice against the Soviet people, especially in the occupied zones, as well as in the gas chambers.¹⁰

9. Fascist dictatorship is the open form of the terrorist state of the bourgeoisie

It must be made clear that the fascist dictatorship is neither the hegemony of the petty bourgeoisie, whose demands are manipulated by the monopolies, nor the hegemony of extra-class elements, who are blown around by war and crisis, nor the hegemony of “*leaders*” of the Bonaparte type, who are handed power by the monopoly bourgeoisie to rule on their behalf at a time when they have lost strength to the extent that they are unable to rule in the face of the working class which also is not strong enough to seize power. Fas-

⁹ “*The Krupps... are directly responsible for employing enslaved labour and forcing prisoners of war to make weapons and ammunition to be used against their own countries... Records seized show that 54,990 foreign workers and 18,902 prisoners of war were employed in the Krupp trust in September 1944.*” (Official Documents (1947) Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal Nuremberg 14 November 1945 – 1 October 1946, Nurnberg, Germany)

¹⁰ Apart from those who were killed in battles, at least 20 million Soviet citizens were killed in order “*not to leave behind a living soul*” to “*secure the rear of the front*”.

cist dictatorship is a bourgeois dictatorship and, in the era of monopoly capitalism, is a form of the bourgeois state which is the instrument of the rule of finance capital by excluding the non-monopoly bourgeois strata, transforming it into its oligarchic rule. It is its most reactionary, overtly bloodthirsty, terrorist form unrestricted by any rule of law. It expresses the interests of the monopoly bourgeoisie, it is the instrument of its hegemony, and it creates and guarantees the external conditions of monopoly exploitation and plunder. It follows the policies that it needs, and its practices are aimed at meeting those needs. The fascist dictatorship is the instrument of the rule of finance capital, the tyranny of the monopoly bourgeoisie and the organization of its overt terror.

It is said that in the Comintern and especially in the 7th Congress Report, Dimitrov described fascist dictatorship not as the dictatorship of finance capital and monopolies, but as the narrowed down dictatorship of their “*most reactionary*”, “*most aggressive*”, etc. sectors or groups by excluding the others. This is not true. Dimitrov previously stated that “*Fascism is the system of class domination of capitalist bourgeoisie and its dictatorship in the epoch of imperialism and social revolution*”¹¹. In the report he said that “*The fascist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is a ferocious power, but an unstable one*”¹², and added: “*Fascism has proclaimed itself the sole representative of all classes and strata of the population... It pretends to defend the interests of all these strata, the interests of the nation. But since it is a dictatorship of the big bourgeoisie, fascism must inevitably come into conflict with its mass social basis...*”¹³ In his long report of the Central Committee to the 5th Congress of the Communist Party of Bulgaria in 1948, Dimitrov stated that “*... fascism is but the cruel, terrorist dictatorship of big business*”¹⁴.

On the other hand, the fact that fascist dictatorship is a **state form** also means that the rise of fascism to power and the change

¹¹ Dimitrov, G. (1989) *Faşizme Karşı Birleşik Cephe (On the Unity of the workers and Communist Movement in the Struggle for Peace, Democracy and Socialism)*

¹² Dimitrov, G. (1938) *The United Front: The Struggle Against Fascism and War*, L&W, London, p. 15

¹³ Dimitrov, *ibid*, p. 35

¹⁴ Dimitrov, *Faşizme Karşı Birleşik Cephe*

between bourgeois state forms is not simply a change of government: “*The accession to power of fascism is not an ordinary succession of one bourgeois government by another, but a substitution of one state form of class domination of the bourgeoisie – bourgeois democracy – by another form – open terrorist dictatorship.*”¹⁵ Therefore, every government that takes measures that are simply reactionary, fascistic, and generally paving the way for fascism should not be labelled as “*fascist*”.¹⁶

Fascist Dictatorship and the Monopolies

On the other hand, Dimitrov’s characterisation of German fascism as “*fascism in power*” and fascist dictatorships generally as the “*dictatorship of the most imperialist, the most hostile sections of finance capital*” is not without reason. Just as the fact that fascist dictatorship is a means to rule for the monopolies, and the most reactionary and openly terrorist form of bourgeois state, does not mean that the monopolies and groups of finance capital will maintain the same distance from fascism in the course of its entire reactionary adventure, nor does it necessitate it.

The practice of the processes of orientation towards fascism, on the contrary, shows clearly the differences in the approach and preferences of the monopolies and finance capital towards fascism, which is completely natural. It is not only normal but inevitable for groups of finance capital and the monopolies, despite generally uniting in their own interest against working class and toiling people, to have different interests and for their individual interests not to clash; and for them to have different interests due to monopoly competition as well as their concentration in varying sectors with the different positions that they have with regard to different investments, production, resources, markets, credit, etc. These differ-

¹⁵ Dimitrov, *The United Front: The Struggle Against Fascism and War*, p. 4

¹⁶ Wilhelm Pieck, in his ECCI Report submitted to the 7th Congress of the Comintern, stated that the German CP at the time had fallen into this error: “In Germany, communists were of the opinion that the social democratic Hermann Müller government implemented fascisization, and that the Brüning government was already a fascist dictatorial government.” (3. *Enternasyonal’de Faşizm Üzerine Tartışmalar Belgeler-II* (1992) İstanbul)

ences of interest are reflected in varying approaches by individuals and groups of monopolies during the formative stages and the development of fascism.

How and in what respects, individual and groups of monopolies differentiate from each other is another matter; however, for instance, as is often done, the counterposing of the “*industrial monopolies*” against the banks or the “*financial monopolies*,” or the “*light industry monopolies*” against “*heavy industry monopolies*”, could be accounted for by a lack of awareness about the development and the character of finance capital as formed by the coalescing of monopolies and industrial capital with banking capital. However, this is clear both according to Lenin and in capitalist practice. Lenin says “...*the merging or coalescence of the banks with industry—such is the history of the rise of finance capital and such is the content of this concept.*”¹⁷ and does not just leave it at the generalisation of “*coalescence*”: “*Some three to five of the biggest banks in each of the foremost capitalist countries have achieved the ‘personal link-up’ between industrial and bank capital, and have concentrated in their hands the control of thousands upon thousands of millions which form the greater part of the capital and income of entire countries.*”¹⁸

The practice of capitalist countries is the same. Financial institutions such as banks, insurance and investment funds, etc. are the heart of finance capital and, just as capitalist societies, the economic life of the world is controlled by a group of finance capitalists with a handful of banks at the core. As much as the monopoly capitalist economy organised under the rule of groups of finance capitalists, the capitalist states too – competing among each other, agreeing with each other on some matters and falling out at others – represent the political rule of the same groups. Despite being somewhat cohesive due to the advanced scale of internationalisation, the differences of interest and competition, generally presenting significant differences and spread over the long term and paving the way for conflict in almost all areas, is in between finance capitalist groups (such as USA, China, Russia and Germany, etc. of today) which are concentrated on “nationally” differentiated markets. On a lower

¹⁷ Lenin, V.I., *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Chapter III.

¹⁸ Lenin, *ibid.*, Chapter X.

level and smaller in scope, these differences of interest and confrontations are inevitable and are observed among groups of finance capital and monopolies of U.S. origin (and undoubtedly other countries too) such as Rockefeller, Morgan, DuPont, Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, etc. Differences of priority sectors in which the investments of the groups take place also play a role in these differences of interest; however, groups of finance capital, through investments and operation not only in one or a few but in many sectors at once, differ from the individual factory owners and tradesmen of the free competition era.

It is due to these differences of interests and the consequent difference in tendencies that groups of finance capital and monopolies display different attitudes towards fascism.

In the beginning of the 1920s in Germany, the fascist movement received financial support and help from the monopoly companies to attack insurgent workers and to disperse their class enemy. Unemployment increased during 1927 and a crisis erupted in 1929; production was cut in half, conditions worsened and the financial crisis led to another workers' insurgency, a broader portion of the monopolies came closer to fascism as their need and support for the fascist gangs increased. Hitler and his party began to receive a substantial support from monopolies, including primarily E. Kirdorf, the owner of the Gelsenkirchen Metallurgy Consortium; the head of Thyssen; H. Stinnes, media, shipping, coal -mining and bank magnate; locomotive producer Börsig, which later merged with AEG in 1931 and started producing military supplies; electro-chemical monopoly IG Farben and the banks. After 1930 he received the support of Krupp and others that initially withheld their support.

There were a significant number of monopolies, including AEG and others known for their investments in chemical-medicine and food sectors, that withheld their support; however, fascism, with the gradually increased support and finally coming to power, united the monopolies around its own programme.

The conclusion is that the establishment of fascism and of the fascist dictatorship, while being preferred and supported by some monopolies, may also not be preferred by some other monopolies with an undeniable reactionary approach. Taking a step further, it is known that the monopolies grouped around the programme of fascism in Italy and Germany, while those of countries such as Eng-

land, France and the US opted against fascism in the conditions of the same period.

Initially, those groups of finance capital and the monopolies that cannot make do with old forms under concrete conditions and feel the greater need for terrorist means, which acted as a battering ram, can and do tend towards fascism. This situation is reflected in the formulation of “*the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital*”¹⁹ made at the 13th session of the Comintern in 1934 and its 7th Congress in 1935 with the emphasis on the “*ruling fascism*” targeted at German fascism.

Furthermore, besides the differences of interests among the monopolies, there exist conflicts of interests among individual monopolies and between the monopoly capitalist economy and the specific and general interests of the bourgeois state, which is in a position of its executive committee, with politics relatively autonomous of economics. But the differences derived from these two, as can be seen from examples of the big fines imposed on the monopolies that fall foul of the anti-monopoly laws in the US and Europe, or in the case of Koç Holding in Turkey, which prevented them from taking part in state tenders, are not exclusive to conditions of fascist dictatorships. In connection with competition and contradiction between monopolies, the fact that the fascist dictatorship is more suitable to and meets the interests of certain monopolies, does not mean that it is not the most reactionary form of the bourgeois state ruled by the monopolies but a Bonapartist dictatorship of “*fascists*” and “*fascist leaders*” nor the “*half*” or “*petit-bourgeois*” dictatorships of the type where certain monopolies are no longer its rulers.

The contradictions among monopolies and the relationship of autonomy between economics and politics, under the conditions of the fascist dictatorship in Germany, led to bloody confrontations between generals and fascist leaders; the dismissal of some SA and SS units and the rest being attached directly to government; to the execution of SA chief Roehm and others; and to numerous assassinations, the last attempt of which was against Hitler (20 July 1944)

¹⁹ Dimitrov, *The United Front: The Struggle Against Fascism and War*

and led to the assassination of many generals, bourgeois and land owners.

Fascism from Below and Above, and the Fascisization of the State

*“The development of fascism and fascist dictatorship as such, takes different forms in different countries depending on historical, social and economic conditions, and the specific conditions and the international situation of the country in question.”*²⁰ There are parallels in history but no repeats. Nevertheless, within the variety of its forms, in terms of the characteristics of its development, notwithstanding its underlying secondary differences, fascism can be divided into two main groups: fascism “*from below*” and “*from above*”. The first is fascism that develops through militant organisation and becomes a mass movement extending to power; while the other is its organisation from above, through a fascist organisation/party (or those in the process of becoming fascists) that holds a certain position in the government, utilisation of state resources or those directly relying on them, primarily the military (and other armed forces of the state). But at a certain point of all those developed “*from below*”, usually the capture of the government is followed by turning it into a fascist one (establishment of fascism) in all cases and the two processes of development often merge.

Italy and Germany are examples of the development “*from below*” experienced in the 1920s and 1930s.

With the military coup of 11 September 1973 in Chile and of 12 September 1980 in Turkey, fascism had been “*built*” from above, having depended on the government taken over and on the state institutions like the army, police and special units.

It must be asserted that the diversity of the processes of becoming fascist and the building of the fascist dictatorship, as well as the intertwining of its forms from above and below, also incorporates the relationship between fascism and bourgeois parliamentarism. Whether building of fascism will unite with bourgeois parliamentarism, whether fascism will make use of the parliament or for how long the parliament will be used, completely depends on the given relations of class power. What determines this and whether or not the building of fascism will be accomplished is:

²⁰ Dimitrov, *ibid.*

- 1) Whether the discontent and movement of working and exploited masses and their organisations is suppressed and the extent to which it is controlled,
- 2) the extent to which the middle classes can be won over, and
- 3) how divided or united is the bourgeoisie, with its conflicts of interest.

In 1920s Italy, based on the relative weakness of the social base of fascism, the parliament remained open for a long period, while in Turkey of 1971 it never closed; in Greece in 1967, Chile in 1973, Hitler's Germany and Turkey in 1980, the parliament was closed. Today, in Brazil, led by the undoubtedly fascist Bolsonaro, as well as in Turkey, whether fascism can be established will be determined, once again, by the concrete configuration of the relations of class power.

What Is the Alternative?

It is no solution to adopt a perspective of turning to different forms of rule of the monopolies (parliamentarianism, etc.) in order to do away with fascist rule of the monopolies, which is the openly terrorist form of the bourgeois state.

Fascism has blossomed and developed in the cradle of parliamentarism; both fascism and parliamentarism are forms of the rule of the monopolies and the same bourgeois state. Hence, it is impossible to undertake a consistent struggle against and do away with fascism and the fascist dictatorship without targeting finance capital and the monopolies, their class rule and the bourgeois state that is the means of this rule.

Produced not by the contradiction and conflict between the rulers but by the contradiction and fight between the monopolies and the working class and labouring masses, the alternative to the fascist dictatorship, which monopolies resort to as the solution to suppress the opposition of the workers and the masses and to reinforce their own rule, can only be looked for outside and beyond the different forms of monopoly rule. Outside and beyond the highest stage of capitalism, monopoly capitalism, is socialism without any intermediary stage of the kind of "*social capitalism*".

Hence, the alternative to the fascist dictatorship must unarguably be a proletarian dictatorship or a “*people’s front government*”, and the example of the people’s democracies could be transitional forms to this.

However, the anti-fascist struggle should aim for people’s power rather than the restoration of parliament; but this cannot be grounds for obliviousness in the face of fascist attempts to trample on democratic rights and freedoms and to render parliament dysfunctional and abolish it. On the contrary, winning political freedoms is among the objectives of the struggle and this struggle against fascist attacks can also develop with the defence of parliament as a bourgeois democratic institution.

Furthermore, just as in its establishment, the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship and transition to democracy can also take varying forms.

It is undeniable that, to the extent that the establishment of fascist dictatorship is a question of counter-revolution, its overthrow is also a revolutionary question (of power) and that the anti-fascist struggle must be conducted with this perspective to achieve a firm victory. But this does not mean that liberal, social-democrat and anti-fascist reformist assumptions that do not target the monopolies and their rule, that are inconsistent and do not involve a confrontation with fascism, will not be present nor that the struggle against fascism should be carried out in isolation from these tendencies.

Having the perspective of revolutionary struggle that aims for socialism, against fascism and the rule of monopolies, and the unification of the people with this perspective as the basis, does not rule out, but on the contrary assumes, the long- or short-term unity of action and forces and alliances with those that propose “*struggle*” on platforms within the system; provided they serve the unity of the people against fascism.

On the other hand, the fact that the overthrow of fascism is a question of revolution and that the need for the struggle against fascism is carried out as a revolutionary one that aims to overthrow the rule of monopolies, one cannot deduce from this that fascism cannot be overthrown without a revolution or, for example, that it can be replaced by a certain form of a democratic state.

- Even if the anti-fascist revolutionary struggle, also targeting the rule of finance capital, is not strong enough to cause a change in power, and/or with the addition of other factors

outside itself – such as the national and international needs of the bourgeoisie – it could lead, as a by-product, to the overthrow of fascism. This is what happened in France, Italy and Greece towards the end of World War II.

- On the other hand, the spontaneous insurgence of people could also lead to a similar result. As a matter of fact, this is what happened in Egypt.
- Again, under the right conditions, it is not completely outside the realm of possibility for the anti-fascist struggle of the non-monopolised bourgeoisie, the middle and petty-bourgeoisie within-system to reach a certain level of success.
- And finally, another form of elimination of the fascist dictatorship, which has been seen as possible, is the kind of “*getting out of the way*”, that has been observed in the examples of the dictatorships of 12 September in Turkey, of Pinochet in Chile, etc leaving its power to a deficient democracy. The ever-increasing struggle of the workers and people leads to holes in the perimeter of the fascist dictatorships and the dictatorship becoming unable to function. Meanwhile, as democratic rights begin to be used initially *de facto* and later also legally, coupled with the breakdown of the unity among the bourgeois cliques – despite the continuing strong appearance of the military and its other supporters – that make the use of fascist methods harder can lead to a “*peaceful*” transition to bourgeois parliamentarism, which is supported by the constitution and laws that are a product of fascism. The only measure that will determine the form in which fascism will be swept away and driven from the stage is the relations of class power.

There is no recipe; but the revolutionary party of the working class has a clear and indispensable approach: the struggle against fascism as a component of the proletarian revolution cannot be separated from the struggle against imperialism and the rule of the monopolies.

March 2021

Elections Won't Defeat Fascism, Only We Can¹

The greatest enemy of fascism is and always has been a united working class movement.

The whole world watches the upcoming elections in the United States. While there are other powerful imperialist nations in the post-cold war world, the U.S. remains at its center. Speculation on the election directly affects the daily ebb and flow of investment in the global market, as capitalists consider the opportunities created by the over 1,000,000 lives lost during the COVID-19 outbreak and greater instability in the imperialist core. For Americans, the first term of Trump's presidency has greatly empowered the radical right-wing, seen the intensification of the oppression of immigrants, and the chipping away of basic bourgeois rights like voting. Right-wing violence against oppressed peoples has not only continued through the state's repressive forces, but also through the militant right wing movement that is emerging from the shadows of Charlottesville. In so many ways, this election casts a long shadow over the lives of everyone living in the United States.

There are many on the left that have decided that Trump must be defeated and that endorsements for Biden are the logical call to action. It cannot be denied that Trump must be defeated and that his presidency represents a grave threat to the working class in the US. But in this urgency, we cannot refuse to acknowledge the simple truth that these fascist policies and movements existed before Trump and will exist, stronger than ever, after Trump. There is no need for Trump to form a paramilitary group when the reactionary citizenry has been cultivated for generations upon generations into being that force. The police have been getting away with the violent suppression of oppressed peoples from the get-go. The American state, for all its talk about liberty of the private citizen, has no problem wielding great authoritarian power when it suits the needs of the ruling across, both at home and abroad. All the pieces existed

¹ This article was written on the eve of the 2020 US presidential election. A brief post-election addendum is added at the end.

before Trump, exist terribly under Trump, and will exist after Trump.

“Our lives as working people are too seriously imperiled to refuse to see, as the whole country did during this week’s debate, that we lose in either case—without a real popular movement.”

No Communist group in the United State has a meaningful level of influence over public opinion. Yet, many organizations have thrown their hat into the ring of endorsement, committing themselves to the electoral cause. There is pragmatism behind this but not much else. One might even argue that a Communist group in the United States endorsing a candidate would hurt that candidate more than anything else. After all, the liberals hate the radical left, and Communists especially, many times more than they hate the right-wing and fascism, the attack on even the social democratic Bernie Sanders campaign shows this.

As the election looms over US political life, from the unemployment lines, to the immigrant detention facilities built by Obama and Biden and made a home for eugenics and family separation by Trump, to the wealthy suburbs Biden and Trump both focus their campaigning on, we say that the slogan of “defeat Trump” is insufficient. As Malcolm X said in 1964, and as the Bolsheviks argued in 1917, the ballot can be a tool for revolutionaries, one that shouldn’t be ignored. But we should never, particularly as fascism grows in power in the United States, reduce our slogans to the old electoral games of “this election is too important.” Our lives as working people are too seriously imperiled by resurgent state and right violence to refuse to see, as the whole country did during this week’s debate, that we lose in either case—without a real popular movement.

The Long Decay into American Fascism

In the treatment of any disorder, it is necessary to get to the root cause of the disease. Treating the symptoms of the disease, while important, is not a cure, and will only provide temporary or partial relief to the sufferer. Trump is not the disease, he is a symptom of the disease, the festering rash the disease has brought up. The disease is capitalism. But, identifying the disease is not enough. It’s also necessary to trace its pathology.

Fascism is nothing new in American political life. From the second generation Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s to Father Coughlin, the German-American Bund, and the Silver Shirts of the 1930s, to the

American Nazi Party of the '60s and '70s to the Alt-Right of today, overtly fascist organizations and ideas have had a persistent presence on the American political scene. What is new is how these groups and the ultra-reactionary ideology they represent have moved from the fringes and shadows to the center stage. It is evident that they have been encouraged and emboldened by the Trump presidency.

It must however be strongly stated that, while clear and open fascism has only recently crawled out from the cesspool into the light of day, fascist tendencies and the process of fascistization has been a feature of American society for decades. Fascism is the crisis of capitalism in decay. Fascism is the uniform put on by a capitalism that is no longer able to effectively manage the class struggle and continue ruling in "the old way." It is the terroristic dictatorship of the most reactionary elements of finance capital. Seen in this light, fascism in the United States is not a question of this or that lunatic fringe group. Rather, it is part and parcel of the development of American capitalism in its final, imperialist stage.

The fusion of monopoly finance capital with the machinery of the state has been noted and commented on since the 1950s — the much vaunted 'military-industrial complex' assuming economic dominance. In the social sphere, there has long been an ongoing process of militarization in American life; with an increasing level of police violence and repression. Indeed, with the police presence in immigrant communities and communities of color taking on the aspect of an occupying army. On the ideological front, the Civil Rights, Women's, anti-war, and social change movements of the 1960s and 1970s triggered a conservative backlash that has continued to this very day. Reagan's presidency in the 1980s accelerated the attempt to undo many of the liberal policies enacted over the previous two decades. In the 1990s, both the ostensibly liberal Democratic Party and the overtly conservative Republican Party shifted to the Right. This rightward trend has not abated, it has intensified. This is ingrained in the very structure of American politics.

Thus, Trumpism must be seen as a part, and a particular manifestation of, this deeply rooted ongoing process.

The Historic Crimes of the Trump Regime

Yet, in tracing and understanding this history, we shouldn't lose track of the shifts and accelerations of criminality undertaken by the Trump regime. The crimes of the Trump government against the peoples of the United States are severe and innumerable. His response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been an utter failure, prioritizing profits over human health and distrusting scientists and experts in general, resulting in 200,000+ deaths. The coronavirus has disproportionately affected the African-American population, as well as causing untold deaths among Americans with no healthcare coverage, over 10,000,000 of which lost their insurance during the COVID-19 recession. Official figures of unemployment in the U.S. currently stands at over 30 million people, with no relief in sight except one pitiful \$1200 stimulus payment that barely covers one month of rent and living expenses for most U.S. citizens.

His government has been virulently racist and anti-immigrant from the start, and now U.S. policy manifests in ripping children from their parents and imprisoning them indefinitely into what must be called concentration camps. This atrocity is only compounded by the recent reports of forced hysterectomies within these detention camps, an outright genocidal action. The Trump regime has overseen a continuous erosion and rollback of the democratic rights of the people for self-expression, assembly, protest, and speech, through the use of murderous police terror and calls for violence against peaceful protestors, targeting of political opponents, and attempting to list the broad anti-fascist forces and Black Lives Matter activists as terrorists for opposing right-wing reaction and fighting for civil rights. All this points to a larger program of the suppression of dissent and the people's democratic rights.

“All the historians, all the experts, all the survivors of authoritarian regimes of the past, all the mass organizations, all the human rights groups, all the working poor of this country, and all the rest of the world, agree on this singular issue: we must be prepared to stop the rise of fascism in the United States at all costs.”

On top of this, Trump himself has made plain his intent to destroy and sabotage the remaining vestiges of bourgeois democracy still remaining, intentionally withholding funding from the Postal Service to sabotage mail-in voting, giving speeches with false claims of voter fraud designed to disenfranchise Americans, institut-

ing a block of payroll taxes designed to defund and dismantle Social Security (primarily hurting the elderly and working poor), and openly stating he will “negotiate” to serve a third term in office, despite threats of impeachment and calls to abolish the Electoral College that permitted him to win the 2016 election in the first place. All this is part of a clear agenda by Trump to move toward becoming an autocratic ruler.

The Trump government is actively working to destroy what is left of human rights and constitutional bourgeois democracy in the United States, as well as roll back social programs for healthcare and public education, bodily autonomy through *Roe v. Wade*, the right to organize in a union, minimum wage and protection for workers, basic universal voting rights, all the while clearing the pathway for the wealthy owners of monopolies and corporations to seize more power in society than ever before, not to mention ignoring and aggravating the natural disasters from the existential environmental crisis of climate change. The racist oppression of immigrants and the sabotaging of democracy echo the fascism of the past. All the historians, all the experts, all the survivors of authoritarian regimes of the past, all the mass organizations, all the human rights groups, all the working poor of this country, and all the rest of the world, agree on this singular issue: we must be prepared to stop the rise of fascism in the United States at all costs.

The Unique Features of American Fascism, and Our Unique Responses

Many left commentators have been slow to recognize this fascist progression in the US since 2016, because they conceive of fascism as a rational, objectively identifiable ideological movement. In 2016, when the American Party of Labor identified Trump as a proto-fascist, we were often attacked, and accused of reformism for not attacking Hillary Clinton enough. Leftists and liberals attacked us for flying a banner that equated Trump and Mussolini.

But we know that Fascism has historically moved in many different patterns and has its own character in each country it festers in. Instead of a pure aryan race, we have a more general white supremacy, replacing the Japanese Fascist desire for a Pacific empire we have American Exceptionalism and international hegemony supported by both blue and red. Yet all of these explicitly American concepts have a common theme, they are anti-rational manifesta-

tions of the general fascist desire to bring about a despotic dictatorship of the most chauvinist forces in the country and capital. There is little one can do to sway a white supremacist because the entire frame of mind relies on a rejection of reality, as the recent debate proved with little doubt. Due to this the standard political discourse falls short of removing Fascism from power. As Jean Paul Sartre argued of the fascists, “They know that their remarks are frivolous, open to challenge. But they are amusing themselves, for it is their adversary who is obliged to use words responsibly, since he believes in words. The anti-Semites have the *right* to play.”

Recognizing the threat of American fascism cannot blind us to the fact that the Democrats have time and time again proved either incapable or unwilling to combat that Fascist threat, in fact they have often aided their efforts in congress or directly with state sponsored violence against protestors and the rounding up of undocumented people to be sent to concentration camps. The time has long passed to “vote blue no matter who,” this is the time to explicitly and intentionally build unity amongst all workers separate from bourgeois Institutions. Only we can save ourselves. As Malcolm X said in his famous “Ballot or the Bullet” speech, the time is now, not tomorrow, not next election, but now, to build a united front that delivers the demands of the workers not in the halls of power but on the ground in every city in this country.

Building a Real Working Class Alternative

Given these historical circumstances and the challenges the US working class faces in the era of resurgent fascism, it is essential that we bring this united banner of solidarity against hate, real de-



mocracy, and universal access to healthcare, jobs, housing, and the tools necessary to live fulfilling lives to every corner of the country. It is the business of electoral reformists to conceive of the country as “red and blue states.” For too long the US left has lived exclusively in urban enclaves and favored national issues campaigns over local organizing.

“The US left is often quick to praise the work of the interwar CPUSA in organizing the south and black communities, but in contemporary practice often renounces the deep ideological struggle required to do such things, and refuses to redress themselves to the contradictions within the US working class, even sometimes refusing to acknowledge that US working class exists.”

Everywhere reaction and hatred is, we must be there to counter it with working class organization, journalism, and mutual aid. In Orlando, Alabama, New Jersey, New York City, and beyond, the American Party of Labor has found success in organizing through and allying with local working class organizations that bring a national program of working democracy and socialism. Stronger local organizations bring the great urgency of our platform to working people, and orient them with greater accuracy to the needs, worries, and demands of the working class.

In this era of electoral red, blue, and purple states, communists must intentionally cross those lines. In doing so, however, we have to be willing to speak to local people, address their concerns, and be willing to educate and discuss with those who hold reactionary positions. The US left is often quick to praise the work of the interwar CPUSA in organizing the south and black communities, but in contemporary practice often renounces the deep ideological struggle required to do such things, and refuses to redress themselves to the contradictions within the US working class, even sometimes refusing to acknowledge that US working class exists. To defeat fascism, we have to face those influenced by the fascistization of US politics and discuss and educate them.

As fascism rises in the US, refusing to do the hard work of revolutionary organizing could prove a fatal mistake. For this reason, we say that we must defeat the rise of fascism with radical working class organizing, not just Trump, and not just with cynical, pragmatic, and “tactical” electioneering. More than anything else, we have to amplify the power of the workers of the world, who often feel powerless and blown about by fascist policy and anti-science fanati-

cism in 2020. We all felt and saw how alienated most of the country felt, both right and left, by the recent debate. That is the power of the socialist movement, to weaponize the discontent of the working class into organization and power. A national organization of working class people, deeply-linked with local organizations, can, like the revolutionary movements of the past, fundamentally remake society and vanquish fascism once, and for all.

Addendum

Trump was defeated. However, as is known to the whole world, Trump refused to concede defeat and did everything in his power to derail and nullify the popular will as expressed in the election results, up to and including an assault on the US capitol building that resulted in loss of life. On January 20, 2021, the Biden/Harris administration assumed office. Although vehemently opposed to altering the results of an election when his own interest is at stake, Biden endorsed the illegal, putschist claims of Juan Guaido on the Venezuelan presidency. On February 25, the United States bombed Syria.

The struggle remains the same: To eradicate capitalism and fascism once and for all.

January 2021

Why We Believe in the Centrality of the Working Class

1

The capitalist mode of production is based on the private appropriation of social labor.

The owner of the means of production buys the labor power of the workers (the only thing they own), thus appropriating the product of their labor, the value of what they produce.

Labor power creates a value greater than what it is necessary for its reproduction; what the workers produce above the value of their labor power goes to the capitalists; this is what Marxism calls surplus value.

The development of capitalist production finds one of its driving forces in competition.

The laws of competition determine that the totality of the surplus value appropriated by the bourgeoisie is not distributed equally among all the capitalists. The companies that have the most productive machines and technology manage to produce at a lower cost, obtaining higher profits; consequently these companies constantly increase the productivity of social labor.

The bigger company is as a rule the more productive and in its development ruins or absorbs a group of small companies.

The evolution of capitalism itself leads to ever greater contradictions. The development of the productive forces allows for an almost unlimited multiplication of commodities that could satisfy human needs, but placed on the market they face the limited purchasing power of the masses, and new economic crises occur that push millions of workers into unemployment.

This contradiction becomes even sharper because, as a result of free competition, competition itself is curtailed and large monopolies are created that control the world production in strategic areas.

In this way, the mass of producers (the workers) are condemned to poverty and an uncertain existence while the capitalists increase their condition as social parasites.

This situation can only be overcome objectively when the workers become owners of the means of production and make use of them to satisfy their needs, not from the individual point of view but collectively. Then the productive forces can be freed; the more powerfully they are developed, the sooner social needs will be met and the less labor time will be used for that purpose by the workers.

The socialization of the means of production, socialist production, resolves the contradictions inherent in capitalism.

In other words, capitalism reveals its end; it deepens the contradictions to a degree that makes the system unsustainable and shows the need for its replacement by the socialist mode of production.

This process of replacement of one mode of production by another is not a mechanical process but takes place through a social revolution.

All relations of production are human relations.

Overcoming these relations is the work of men and women conscious of their interests and of the irreconcilable struggle against their enemies.

The interests of the working class are opposed in an antagonistic way to the interests of the possessing classes, in the class struggle.

The class struggle may begin with isolated confrontations, but progressively as the class character of the competing interests is understood, the workers unite and create their own organizations.

Within these struggles, the workers go from being a “class in itself” to a “class for itself,” that is, a class with its own historical and social project.

Therefore, socialism will not come from the understanding on the part of all reasonable men of the fact that it is better than capitalism and resolves its atrocities.

Socialism is the consequence of a necessary victory of the working class in the class struggle; therefore, it is born of the class struggle itself.

2

To undertake the historical task of burying capitalism, the working class needs to fully understand its social function and objectify its power in reality.

What is the power of the working class based on?

First of all, in its numbers; workers make up the vast majority of the planet's population, even though in certain circumstances they depend on a minority to survive.

Second, to the numbers we must add their economic importance, due to its irreplaceable role in social production.

But numbers and economic importance do not by themselves give power to a class, if it is not conscious of the one or the other, when it cannot identify its particular situation, when it supports the rule of its oppressors and considers it natural. For this reason one must also have knowledge and consciousness.

The working class has a science of society in its combat, which enables it to understand the cause of its misery and the purpose of its struggle.

This science, Marxism, that is, socialism made into a science, gives direction and certainty to the organized actions of the workers.

The socialist theory constitutes one of the most prominent elements of the power of the working class.

To the numbers, the economic importance, and the consciousness, we must add a decisive factor, the organization, the Party.

What transforms a large group of people into an organization is the clarity of its objectives and its discipline.

Conscious discipline, the subordination of individual interest to collective interest, the need to unify the dispersed forces of the class into a single fist constitutes the major force of the proletarian organization.

Although the very nature of capitalism and its evolution create the conditions for its overcoming, the ruling classes do not commit suicide and resist violently in defense of their privileges. A material force must be faced with another material force; only by definitively destroying the bureaucratic military apparatus of the bourgeoisie and its State will it be possible to lay the foundations of the new society. In this sense, violence operates as "the midwife of history."

3

The working class and its organizations do not behave as a homogeneous whole; on the contrary, multiple contradictions and various tendencies coexist within them that are part of the ideological struggle.

URUGUAY – WHY WE BELIEVE IN CENTRALITY OF THE WORKING CLASS

The tactical and methodological divergences are frequently expressions of the different ideological currents that exist in the workers' organizations.

Starting from their own experience, that is, the struggle, the workers appropriate the correct conceptions by confronting the points of view of the bourgeoisie and the other currents that operate as its agents for it in the workers' movement.

A correct dialectical connection between theory and practice makes it possible to arm the workers with the indestructible force of Marxism.

Thus, the battlefield of the class struggle is at the same time the school of learning and the terrain of exercise.

From the very birth of the workers' movement as an organized collective and particularly since the second half of the nineteenth century, a fierce struggle takes place between Marxism and the anarchist, reformist, and revisionist currents.

The German Bernstein became the most conspicuous exponent of the revisionist current by demanding the revision of the program of socialism.

This struggle was not limited to Germany; on the contrary, it went around the world in the confrontation between Marxism and revisionism. This was expressed at that time in the definition in the Second International of a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing, which finally betrayed socialist ideas during the First World War.

Classical revisionism undermines the revolutionary foundations



of Marxism; it denies the goals of the working class and replaces them with an uncertain movement that seeks partial improvements within the capitalist system, rejects the social and political revolution as the path of liberation for the working class, and seeks to put the working class behind reforms to get gifts from the ruling classes.

In Uruguay, the main exponent of these ideas was Emilio Frugoni, leader of the “Partido Socialista” and representative of the revisionist wing that existed in this Party in its beginnings. His extensive work was centered around placing its main axis on the struggle in parliament, and respect for the bourgeois institutions. This added to the contempt for the revolutionary ideas, which show us the characteristics of this current.

Another example of the currents that we mentioned is anarchism. In the same way as revisionism, it is a bourgeois boil in the workers’ movement. They link a bourgeois vision of the world to proletarian ‘sentiments. Anarchism is a petty bourgeois ideology that in its theoretical foundation is a continuation of individualist and subjectivist logics typical of this class.

Autonomism and other currents try to revive these ideas that were already defeated in the last century. Without a doubt, anarchism played a positive role at the beginning of the workers’ movement in Uruguay, but very early on it showed its limits. The dogmas of anarchism led to practices at the beginning of the nineteenth century that damaged the incipient workers’ organizations: practices such as ‘caudillismo’, the constant abuse of decisions to resort to ‘general strikes’ decided on by a select nucleus of leaders behind the backs of the workers, anti-politicalism that lowered the role of consciousness in the workers’ movement and opposed the gains from the laws of the Bourgeois State, among others.

What we could call opportunism or modern revisionism, which arises from within the Communist Parties in the twentieth century and whose class nature it is necessary to understand in order to locate it correctly, would deserve a separate chapter.

This current with significant weight in the workers’ movement, which inherits and focuses its efforts on conserving, represents the main obstacle to raising the levels of consciousness and mobilization of the working class. It does not represent a sector of the workers who are in incorrect positions, but rather represents the bourgeoisie in the workers’ movement; this trend is a guarantor for this social class.

Marx explains the nature of capitalism as a contradictory development that constantly produces new contradictions.

Capitalism can only exist by developing new productive forces; it spreads more and more and thus paradoxically becomes more and more fragile. Its vital law is at the same time the cause of its death.

Each time it develops as a result of an economic situation, it collapses shortly thereafter as a result of a new crisis that exhibits its own contradiction.

Capitalism by itself produces the force that will bring it down definitively, the workers' movement and its organization.

Understanding this is of cardinal importance to confront the currents that suggest that capitalism is simply a perversity that can be overcome through a "moral" battle or a succession of gradual reforms that bring well-being and happiness to the oppressed. That is a fantasy that only serves the interests of the exploiters.

In the same way, it is necessary to confront those who believe that capitalism can be defeated through the valient action of a group of enlightened and courageous people, who undertake the task that Marxism has reserved for the socially and politically organized working class.

It is not an external power that attacked and defeated capitalism, but rather a force that lives within it and receives all its strength from it.

The fight against capitalism is not at all artificial, but will last as long as capitalism itself; our fight consists of a daily, patient and determined work, a work in which we fight for concrete improvements, but this fight only makes sense if it is part of a whole, and this for us is the revolution and the workers' world.

4

Trade unions are the natural and primary form of workers' organization.

This form is derived from the economic function of the proletariat as a seller of his labor power; the immediate interest of the workers consists in obtaining better conditions to sell their labor power; the fight against the boss for better working and living conditions is the first, almost instinctive form of the class struggle.

The commodity 'labor power' is paid below its value; the buyer abuses the seller's weakness and thus cheats him.

The weaker the workers' organization, the harsher the conditions imposed by capital.

The unions are not by themselves revolutionary organizations as long as they do not propose to overthrow the system. But it is in the union struggle where workers raise their consciousness and their ability to understand that only the overcoming of capitalism can offer a definitive resolution to their cardinal problems.

Whether a union contributes to raising the consciousness of its members, whether it sets higher goals, whether its members are educated in the science of Marxism, or on the contrary whether it contributes to the taming of workers, to social peace with the bourgeoisie and to reformist resignation, depends largely on the character of its leadership.

To contest the leadership of the unions whenever possible is an obligation of the revolutionaries in the workers' movement.

Also within the trade unions, bourgeois currents and opportunist tendencies operate, against which we are in an irreconcilable struggle.

Trade union activism provides workers with a first link of consciousness, a school of struggle. The very adherence to the union tool is proof of the incipient appearance of class consciousness.

Although the union struggle helps to understand the exploitative nature of capitalism, this understanding is still insufficient since in union action the worker only sees the employer or the bosses, but not the entire bourgeois class or the State as guarantor of the interests of the possessing classes.

The worker in struggle must also know the more general reality, must acquire a political understanding. He must understand that behind the bosses and himself there are entire classes that fight each other for political power.

Only when the working class attacks capital as a whole can it definitively defeat the capitalists.

Only the political struggle allows the general understanding of social phenomena and a correct judgment about the general tactics of the struggle at each historical moment.

The practice of union organization and daily struggle teaches workers to subordinate their immediate and personal interest to the general interest of the class, to sacrifice their personal advantage for the victory of the collective.

URUGUAY – WHY WE BELIEVE IN CENTRALITY OF THE WORKING CLASS

Each strike won, each demand won by common and unitary action, or each defeat suffered educates and puts us face to face with the reality that we must transform.

Only by presenting the workers to the struggle as a coherent and indivisible mass can they defeat the powerful state of the ruling class.

Though they are not being revolutionary organizations in themselves, trade unions have enormous revolutionary importance. Marxism sees the conditions for the revolutionary transformation of reality in the daily struggles and the organization of the working class, whose historical function continues to be the gravedigger for capitalism.

The masses enter the battle for their immediate interests, with consciousness, discipline and energy learned in previous battles. The union is its natural organization but the Party is its superior organization for the fight for political power.

Lenin said, “without power, everything is illusion.”

March 2021

The Ideological Struggle and the Reality of Venezuela

In memory of Raúl Marco

Modern society, that is the capitalist society in its imperialist stage, is developing in ways that confirm that, in general, the Marxist-Leninist method of analysis and interpretations have been correct both in theory and in practice. Historically in general and not only in particular cases, the revolutionary ideas have reached all strata of society.

On the one hand, even those who attack or reject Marxism have to read and analyze our classics. This reaches the point that, during the crises, *Capital* has become the most widely read book, and no faculty of economics or school of economic, political and social thought can avoid analyzing, distorting or trying to refute the postulates of Marxism.

On the other hand, the working class and its vanguard adopt the Marxist postulates as their own and spread them among the masses. Marxism is a science and an ideology, because on the one hand it explains rationally the various phenomena with theories and concrete practice, and studies reality by presenting an accumulation of verifiable historical facts that support it. But furthermore, when it is grasped by the masses, it becomes a powerful tool of struggle for the proletariat, giving it a battering ram that develops its class instinct, advances towards the conquest of the future, arms it with the certainty that its actions are correct, with correct answers to many of its questions.

Indeed the Marxist method, due to its solid foundations, in spite of what some people say, does allow one to define the course of society and to identify the possible scenarios, with conclusions confirmed by facts. Social processes are, of course, lengthy, they are not always immediate, and must often be measured in decades, nor is their evolution perfectly linear.

It is to be noted that the transition from one mode of production to another, in the evolution to capitalism, first occurred in totally unknown ways, without a clear idea of where society was going. It

was only inspired by vague dreams of a paradise or ideas of some reformer of the world, caudillo or martyr. The contributions of Marxism changed this by giving a clear and complete way to evaluate the way society evolves, to visualize the transition from one mode of production to another, and even to identify its fundamental laws and the people required to carry out such important transformations.

The struggle for the building of the new society is no longer seen as being based only on the spontaneous impulses of the oppressed, nor is it explained through metaphysics or mysticism, but on theoretical bases, on adequate forms of organization and struggle, on successful experiences, capable of guiding the peoples through the various necessary stages until mankind will arrive at a society without classes. There will certainly be advances and setbacks in the historical process. It will be necessary to discover and apply the laws of social movement in concrete actions that will support, in theory and in practice, the necessary revolutionary tasks.

In the current stage of the revolutionary struggle, the proletariat needs to regain strength and break the siege to which it has been subjected after the betrayal of revisionism. This constitutes a requirement in order to prepare the offensive. It is therefore very important to develop the struggle against imperialism, and also against left and right deviations, to achieve unity in criteria, to correct the weaknesses and to consolidate a common tactic by applying the principles of criticism and self-criticism. This requires the rejection of what Raúl calls “ideological laziness”¹. For this task, comrade Marco has left us an invaluable legacy that we must take advantage of, not only with his various contributions over time, but especially with his last two works, “Ráfagas y retazos de la historia del PCE (ML) y el FRAP” (“Pieces and Fragments of the History of the PCE (ML) and the FRAP”), of 2018² and “El ayer ayuda a situar el hoy” (“Yesterday Helps to Understand Today”), of 2019. These works present a vision of the experiences of the Marxist-Leninists, especially the latter on the development of the ICMLPO to what it has become today. They give us bases to make an important evaluation,

¹ Raúl Marco: “El ayer ayuda a situar el hoy”, Aurora Publishers, 17, 2019, p. 11.

² Raúl Marco: Ráfagas y retazos de la historia del PCE (ML) y el FRAP”, Aurora Publishers, 2018.

and, why not?, to make an assessment to sketch out how to improve our work.

With his works, Raúl fulfilled a very important task that was noted with insistence. For this reason, aware of his role, he dedicated his last years, his great skills, experience and discipline to leave us very appropriate observations that can help us greatly to optimize the actions of every party and especially of the ICMLPO.

These contributions, as well as other lived, read and heard experiences allow us to understand the need to try to learn and improve our practice, to assimilate the essence of Marxism-Leninism and the experiences of the revolutionary movement in general. In many instances, the movement has debated some of the issues that concern us today, evidently in other circumstances and conditions.

While waging this necessary and permanent ideological struggle, we must go forward with some premises that can support the immediate action and make all the processes more agile. Based on a French revolutionary, Lenin said that we need among other things “boldness, boldness and more boldness”

The well-known fact of the sharpening of contradictions is an undeniable fact from all points of view. We must therefore hasten the pace of our march, improve organizationally both internally with the broad popular masses. Guided by the principles of the Communist International and of our classics, we believe it is important to support the forces that are fighting against imperialism, for national liberation, confirming the theses on the national and the colonial questions, as well as Dimitrov’s orientations on the United Front policy.

It is important, in this struggle, to unmask the Trotskyist ideas that isolate the proletariat, that separate it from the masses and thus from the struggles of a bourgeois-democratic, national-revolutionary and national liberation character in the dependent countries. The Trotskyist theories prevent the working class from becoming the vanguard and leader of the whole society, including other non-proletarian strata of society, and make it a self-contained sect. On the other hand, the theory of the three worlds, among other anti-Marxist pearls of wisdom, states the need to subordinate oneself to one imperialist faction in order to confront another; this is another deviation that we must confront.

Some of these ideas lead to the isolation and contribute to the defeat of the revolutionary popular movement. According to them,

no agreement is possible, and the only solution is the tactic of entryism, a Trotskyist deviation that leads to boycotting and destroying the possibilities of building a People's Front. The opportunist line of the Maoist theory of the three worlds, in the first place, takes as a basis the maneuvers and gambles with an imperialist force, and in second place, the force of the proletariat itself. For consistent Marxists, the proletariat must always be the central actor of the revolutionary action. This opportunist policy also attacks the unity of the proletariat and the Popular Front by opening the doors of the party to the bourgeoisie.

These situations are developing while all the contradictions are accelerating, linked to the general crisis of capitalism, to the new cyclic crisis and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. These are great challenges, which are even greater for the revolutionaries and especially for us Marxist-Leninists. We must fight both in practice and in theory, first, against the imperialists, by exposing them as the common enemy of all mankind, against the social democrats, who play a wavering role and end up siding with capital, and against the fascists, who are trying to raise their heads in the midst of despair. We must also denounce revisionism and the Trotskyist tendencies that confuse and shackle the proletarian movement. We must denounce revisionism and reformism, partners of all the others tendencies. At the same time, we must integrate ourselves in the mighty popular torrent, which, at the beginning, is not led by us, but we must win the masses to support our positions. This is the way to continue advancing by gaining experience, organization and numbers.



The only way to carry out such a complex task is by applying the appropriate tactics, and the classics tell us that this is done by giving concrete answers to the concrete conditions. Stalin defines it very clearly: “Tactics are the determination of the line of conduct of the proletariat in the comparatively short period of the flow or ebb of the movement, of the rise or decline of the revolution, the fight to carry out this line by means of replacing old forms of struggle and organization by new ones, old slogans by new ones, by combining these forms, etc.”³

Elements of the Current Situation in Venezuela

Faced with the elements that characterize the current situation, our party considers it necessary to adjust our tactics and optimize the use of resources to overcome the strong impact produced by the junction of elements that are external to the population and the militant forces, and thus to prepare to meet the challenges of the immediate future.

In Venezuela, the people are clearly advancing in their process of resistance and struggle against imperialist aggression. This process has had a deep impact the ways of life, ideas and the form of grasping the struggle. It has reached the point of provoking debates in the organizations, many of which have disappeared or changed their position. It also had consequences within the revolutionary movement at the international level, with debates on the correct Marxist-Leninist tactics to adopt, and especially on the policy of critical support with demands to the Bolivarian process that we are applying. Other organizations, especially of the revisionist type, oppose it, and even, in the midst of their confusion, resort to armed attacks against the government while it is blockaded, threatened and attacked by the imperialist bloc of the United States-European Union and its lackeys.

It is thus unavoidable to address the ideological problem, such as to clarify the national and international tactics that must be applied in the present situation. This task is central and determining in the current political struggle.

Stalin should again be quoted on this question. When asked if it is possible to convert the dependent countries and colonies from be-

³ Stalin, J. “The Foundations of Leninism,” in *Problems of Leninism*, FLPH Peking, 1976, p. 82.

ing a reserve of the imperialist bourgeoisie into being a reserve of the revolutionary proletariat, into its ally, Stalin tells us: “Leninism replies to this question in the affirmative, i.e., it recognizes the existence of revolutionary capacities in the national liberation movement of the oppressed countries, and the possibility of using these for overthrowing the common enemy, for overthrowing imperialism.”⁴

Concerning these situations and especially the armed confrontations that have occurred in recent days on the border with Colombia, the Political Bureau of our party has issued a statement on the situation in the region of Apure state: we maintain the assessment that we made for several years on the possible scenarios of political developments in Venezuela.

In this statement, we analyze the attack carried out by gangs of armed thugs against the command of the National Guard in Caracas, and the clashes between the Bolivarian Armed Forces of Venezuela (FANB) and groups that are presumed to belong to one of the factions into which the FARC-EP disintegrated. It is worth saying that these factions are engaged in confrontations and differences among themselves on many questions, especially on questions of arms.

It is clear that these armed confrontations, regardless of their causes and the reasons of their leaders, will be of great use for the campaign of aggression that the U.S.-E.U. imperialist bloc and its lackeys intends to carry out, especially to justify an action of greater violence.

We ask ourselves what are the class origin, the tactics and the objectives of the forces in conflict. This leads us to have serious doubts in relation to their action in the Apure area. It would be expected that the border would serve as a rearguard and as a respite for a force that is fighting on Colombian territory. It would thus be normal to avoid any confrontation in Venezuela, and even more, not to claim part of its territory, in a type of struggle of position, which includes blowing up buildings with explosives.

In our statement, we concluded that “We could make many conjectures, but the truth is that this is the first stage of an armed intervention, which is gaining strength due to recognition by the U.S. institutions that the blockade and sanctions against Venezuela, although they have directly affected the majority of the people, have not achieved the expected aim of removing President Maduro. They

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

have, on the contrary, unified the people in developing the mechanisms of resistance and struggle, and the conscience of who is their enemy. This has led some U.S. senators and Luis Almagro (secretary general of the O.A.S.) to conclude that Guaidó requires direct help because “he cannot do it alone”. This would explain the current actions and lead one to suppose that we are on the verge of another violent intervention, to be developed with the combination of warlike and non-warlike actions.”⁵

After evaluating the information obtained from the region and the pronouncements of the parties, we propose the following assessment: “Faced with this situation of great danger and complexity, we call on the revolutionaries of the world, the democrats and the anti-imperialists to support the efforts of the people of Venezuela who are resisting and fighting against the imperialist aggression, by engaging in practices and contributions that will support an international policy based on the premises of Marxism-Leninism, on the decisions of the congresses of the Communist International, and on the correct policy of support for the processes of national liberation and anti-imperialism in dependent countries, calling for the rejection of any fratricidal war and to point the cannons against imperialism and the bourgeoisie, always in defense of the interests of the exploited and oppressed of both countries. “

Any military options would only activate the mechanisms of war, the preparations for which are underway, which gradually try to develop them until they result in a direct confrontation in broad areas of the national territory, if those who confront them cannot contain them.

Many theoreticians aim at explaining the particular characteristics of modern warfare and at describing its “new generation”. But wars have never started without preparations or actions of softening up, perhaps without the technology and means that exist today. But the resorting to threats, propaganda, infiltration, destruction of the enemy’s media and blockades are nothing new, are nothing to be surprised about. In the past, the present and the future these measures are part of the preparations for war action. It happened in the last wars of aggression in Syria, Libya and Iraq, and before,

⁵ Acero Revolucionario (Revolutionary Steel), Special Issue, March, 2021.

against Vietnam and Korea, against Revolutionary China and also against the USSR.

The war has not really arrived yet, but we are in the phase of preparations, of the actions of positioning of the contending forces, and of softening up by the national and international aggressor forces. Clearly the forces being attacked are also preparing. The border of Venezuela [with Colombia] has become a strategic site or perhaps a decoy.

The psychological, electronic, computer, economic warfare, each has its objective, but they do not constitute total war, but rather parts of it. Particularly today in Venezuela they are part of the preparations for the open war.

The military offensive that is being prepared by the U.S.-E.U. bloc aims to consolidate its control. However, in the case of Venezuela, the bloc has met a people who are willing to resist and fight, who have been doing so for years, and who have allies, such as the popular, revolutionary and anti-imperialist movement, as well as the true Marxist-Leninists of the world.

For the U.S. monopoly leadership, this can only end with the U.S.-E.U. imperialist bloc positioning itself as the sole dominant force in the whole of the Americas, after having displaced the China-Russia bloc and the various national tendencies from the spaces that they have conquered. The objective of the U.S. imperialist state is identical, regardless of which bourgeois tendency is in office, whether Trump or Biden, Republicans or Democrats. It is to regain absolute control of the region, based on the thesis of Manifest Destiny, the Monroe Doctrine and the use of brute force. This leads directly to a tendency towards fascistization in order to eliminate all resistance of the working class and the left, inside and outside their country, and even to crush other bourgeois factions that question its policies.

Until now, the China-Russia bloc has shown that it is willing to defend its investments and the strategic positioning it has achieved in the Americas, but without giving themselves over fully to this purpose, by using a different method. The anti-Yankee tendencies of a popular and left character have kept alive the determination of the peoples to resist and fight, which constitutes a very important ingredient making it possible for the fundamental contradictions to give way to the revolutionary struggle, if the Marxist-Leninist leadership is capable of understanding the phenomenon in order to ad-

vance, by identifying the enemy at each stage, as well as the auxiliary and the reserve forces that they can mobilize.

In the medium or long term, we will go from the stage of the threats that are becoming more violent every day, to the direct confrontation. The actions of the government and of other actors may accelerate or delay it, but inevitably the interests of the imperialist monopoly groups will try to control the immense natural resources of the region to be able to overcome the current economic crisis that affects them. They will not calmly allow their opponent to make use of these resources without opposing them. This is why the U.S.-E.U. bloc has been trying to retake the control of some governments through legalized aggression, military or palace coups d'état, or paramilitary violence. But the bloc was met with greater or lesser opposition from the peoples, and with an "unusual and extraordinary" resistance from the people of Venezuela and the Bolivarian government. This has led them to threats, robberies and a blockade, in preparation of what is called "politics by other means", that is, open warfare: War between powers, war of resistance of a people facing aggression, civil war, irregular warfare or low intensity war that is prolonged in time between skirmishes and attacks.

The U.S.-E.U. imperialist bloc needs its so-called "back yard" as a source of raw materials, of cheap labor and a market. Likewise, it requires national industries in its own territory, to be able to go on the offensive and try to recover the space of world domination, in which it is harassed, economically by China, militarily by Russia, and politically-ideological by the anti-U.S. tendencies in Latin America and in the Caribbean, which are both strong and diverse and have a long and heroic history of struggle.

In this framework, the class struggle is sometimes underhanded and other times open. In any case, the project of the popular masses, represented in the program of the proletariat, gives it a strategic revolutionary profile, encourages the majority to struggle against the program of the exploiters, mainly of the bourgeoisie that limits its rights and tends towards fascism. Hundreds of variants and discourses move between these extremes, with veils and nuances that raise the banners of democracy, social justice and equality, trying to hide the answer: Democracy, justice, equality, for whom? Freedom, equality and solidarity for the oppressors and in particular for the owners of capital, in exchange for slavery, marginalization and abandonment for the proletariat? This is an open debate in all our

countries and that is why the common position and unity of action take effect and open up immense opportunities for development.

The Latin American region has faced aggression from the successive administrations of the U.S. in various ways and different periods. At this moment, it is expressed in the fight to regain control, mainly in the confrontation with Venezuela, which is at such a high level that it necessarily radiates towards other countries with pronouncements in favor or against, even by governments and the vanguard, in all continents, before which neutrality is impossible. On the contrary it is time to unify forces and confront the main danger recognized by the peoples of the region.

The expressions of struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between the imperialists and the resistance forces in a dependent country lead us to have similar positions with those who are willing to fight against the common enemy. At the same time, we maintain our position of denunciation and action against the main danger and its allies. We fight first against imperialism, the bourgeoisie and all the exploiters. We understand the priorities of each scenario within the framework of a plan that aims strategically to seize political power, and tactically to accumulate forces, through a policy of critical support accompanied by demands. We repeat what Stalin said: “support must be given to such national movements as tend to weaken, to overthrow imperialism, and not to strengthen and preserve it.”⁶

**“Socialism is only built with the worker-peasant alliance
in power and the people in arms”.**

Political Bureau of the PCMLV
Venezuela, March of 2021.

⁶ Ibid., p. 71.