

# INTERNATIONALIST PAPERS

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AUTUMN-WINTER 2011

15

From England's burning cities • They just don't know which way to turn! • Increasingly unstable, chaotic and destructive the world of capital • The Failure of Capitalism (and of all illusions of reforming it) • Meanwhile, in the Mediterranean Sea... • Greek chronicles • Gaza - imperialist butchery against the proletariat • Haiti and Chile • *The disasters in the Gulf of Mexico* - Putting an End to a Destructive Mode of Production • The anti-proletarian "Holy Alliance" celebrates its umpteenth, squalid ritual • The Immigration Issue • *Darwinian anniversaries* - Evolution and Revolution • *First of May 2010* - Against the bourgeoisie and its union and politician lackeys a single united proletarian battlefield • Democracy and the bourgeois state are two constant enemies of the proletariat • *Back to Basics* - A Document from a General Meeting of the Party (1952)

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# **The working class is revolutionary or it is nothing**

*Karl Marx*

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# To the reader

This will be the last issue of *Internationalist Papers* in printed form. Printing and mailing costs and the speed with which in the past few years, under pressure of the world economic crisis, events have followed one another, have convinced us of this decision.

We think it is more practical and immediate, for the moment being, to resort to our website (*please note its new address: [www.internationalcommunistparty.org](http://www.internationalcommunistparty.org)*), which will carry all political stances, documents past and present, articles and analyses. We'll do our best to make it a real instrument of theoretical clarification and orientation, as well as of polemics, propaganda and proselytism.

But of course a website is not enough: it is no substitute for political work, for direct contact with the party, with its activity and theoretical elaboration. Anyone who comes across our positions via the internet or other media, and agrees with these positions, and really feel the urgency to struggle for communist revolution, will get in touch with our party by writing to this address:

**Edizioni Il programma comunista  
Casella postale 962 - 20123 Milano (Italy)**

The work to be done for restoring the communist party and rooting it in the world proletariat is a long and massive one, and requires theoretical and political soundness, firm discipline, clarity of perspectives and strategies, and a compact organization. If you too feel that all this is necessary, write to us.

# From England's burning cities

When a complete blackout extinguished all the lights in New York in summer 1977, plunging the metropolis into a long night of riots, we drew “three simple truths for the proletariat”<sup>1</sup> from

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1. “From the great night of New York, three simple truths for the proletariat”, *Il programma comunista*, no.15/1977

the episode. The first two were only too evident: the extreme vulnerability of the capitalist mode of production, not excluding, indeed above all, its phase of peak imperialist centralization; the violence and anger that are exuded from every pore of bourgeois society, the peculiar fruit of this “best of all possible worlds”. Since then, thirty-five years have gone by and other revolts have repeatedly taken place all over the world (not forgetting that for the whole of the ‘60s the U.S. ghettos never ceased to burn): in Los Angeles, in Brixton, in Chi-

na, in Argentina, in Mexico, right up to the Parisian *banlieues* in 2005, the anger exploding on the streets of Athens during 2010, the social earthquakes that shook almost all the countries on the southern coast of the Mediterranean in the first half of the year (earthquakes whose initially proletarian nature we have emphasized – authentic “assaults on the bakeries” by the hungry and desperate lacking any reserves to fall back on – and the way they were subsequently “captured” and channelled into the democratic course of things by a part of the petit bourgeoisie aiming at reforms that would not, however, upset the status quo). On a smaller but no less significant scale, in Italy there have been the uprisings by the proletarian immigrants of Rosarno at the beginning of 2010 and more recently at Nardò – direct, immediate reactions against the beastly exploitation they were subjected to – as well as

the rebellions that are constantly happening in the *concentration camps* set up to deal with the so-called clandestine immigrants.

Now, this August 2011, while new and powerful tremors are shaking the rocky structure of the capitalist mode of production, the revolt has exploded in London (basically reduced to a state of siege), spreading quickly to other English cities which have for some time now been hammered by the economic crisis. In all these cases, entire communities in working-class areas, living on the margins of society and abandoned to their own devices in mega-cities that are increasingly becoming showcases of luxury and wealth and the crossroads of enormous commercial and financial interests, have flooded onto the streets, attacking the most obvious symbols of capitalist oppression and social inequality, emptying shops and chain stores, burning and destroying. In all these cases, journalists and observers, commentators and political experts, horrified and shaken, have asked themselves, “why on earth do such things happen?”, without being able (or wanting) to give the only possible answer: the agony of this mode of production has been dragging on for decades now with destructive and self-destructive effects, crushing lives, impoverishing populations, denying any sort of future to entire generations, swelling the numbers of the unemployed legions who are now beyond all hope. This is where the seed of revolution lies.

London and England have for some time been at the centre of the whirlpool in an

economic crisis that cannot find solutions inside the economic-social mechanism that produced it. Independently of the colour of the various alternating governments and their policy orientations, in the past few decades we have experienced the inexorable social polarization typical of capitalism on reaching its extreme phase: the glass and concrete skyscrapers and the tottering slums, the newly renovated city and the city abandoned to decay. Is this anything new? Quite the opposite! Why not go and read (or re-read more carefully) *The Situation of the Working Class in England*, written by Engels in 1844-45 (or even just a novel or two by Charles Dickens)? Surprise? Only a blind man or an idiot could fail to see what is swelling day by day in the guts of this disintegrating society, the potential for explosion accumulating beneath the foundations and behind the façades.

The young and the very young, black and white, new immigrants and Britons born and bred, furious and desperate, closed in ghettos and strangled by an increasingly enfeebled economy, pursued by a police force that is the armed limb of a State which is not neutral and objective but the *military bastion of the ruling class*, raid shops and chain stores, set fire to streets and neighbourhoods. Nothing but hypocritical and obtuse decent-thinking could fail to see in this the instinctive, unplanned expression of the violence exuding from every pore of a society involved in an eternal, daily war – a war at work (with waves of victims, in what are euphemistically termed “accidental

deaths”), wars between industrial, commercial and financial gangs (with their inevitable effects – in the form of deaths due to hunger, illness, exhaustion, the pure and simple impossibility of survival), wars fought with weapons to win raw materials or keep the worst feared competitors from them, wars for the control of distant and nearby markets, in order to re-locate areas of influence (massacring increasing numbers of various populations) ... the capitalist world is an immense battleground where blood never ceases to flow, where collective martyrdom is repeated day after day. Should we be scandalized?

An entire mode of production demonstrates in practice its bankruptcy, its physiological inability to solve even one of the problems that it itself has created, the emptiness of all the recipes, whether liberist or statist, right-wing or fake “left”, the impotence of gradual reform; the young proletarians from the suffocating suburbs have brought it to trial instinctively and without reasoning, in their anger and rebellion. We leave the bourgeois press’s journalists and opinion-makers to their reflections on the designer shoes, iPads and plasma-screen TVs stolen during the nights of rebellion, the sentimental, moralistic whining about the small shopkeeper who sees a lifetime’s savings go up in smoke, the pseudo-political and pseudo-sociological interpretations of the gangs, the thugs, the hooligans: all so many words. “These are not revolts for bread or hunger. These are rebellions by deprived consumers excluded from the market,” sentenced one of the

many “masters of thought” in the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* of 11/8: a fine thought, fully accommodated within the bourgeois ideology! In order to sell and make a profit, capital has made these products (those very designer shoes, mobiles, iPads) into as many “staple goods”; and now its underlings – the philosophers and sociologists – are surprised (and write about it in nice little essays) that these “staple goods” are made off with together with the *bread and butter*. The rebellion of the dispossessed always targets the symbols of the power and the wealth they are excluded from.

This said – we wrote in 1977 and in 2005 and we repeat it today (and this is the “third simple truth for the proletariat”) – it is not enough to feel immediately and instinctively on the side of the exploited rebels. What is needed is the clear-sightedness to affirm something more. To affirm that these flare-ups – so important as signs of the growing fever within capitalist society and the limits beyond which “patience” becomes unbearable – do and will occur more and more frequently under the pressure of the economic crisis. And that, however, abandoned to their own resources, they are destined to pass without a trace (except, unfortunately, for more proletarian deaths: the only solution bourgeois power knows to the social crisis is, in fact, *military and repressive*), to ebb into frustration or – worse still – to become channelled into the blind allies of rebellion for its own sake. The young proletarians who rebel do not automatically become a “class avant-garde” just because they protest against social

and police oppression and the class perspective does not evolve mechanically from street fighting, even the most furious of it. What is needed in this situation, as it develops so dramatically and explosively, is the revolutionary party (and this need is becoming more and more evident in the defeats, amplified by its own weakness): in other words, the organ and tool which alone, after having carried out extensive work in contact with the proletarian class and thus being recognized by the latter as a true and reliable guide, can take up the impulses (irregular, disorderly, irrational and fuelled by gut feelings) coming from below, gather the anger and energy that comes from the grass roots of this decaying society and direct it towards the real, fortified bastion of capitalist power, *the bourgeois State*, conquering it and shattering it, to build its own dictatorship on the ashes, as a bridge that must be crossed to finally achieve a classless and therefore State-less society.

In the face of battles that are destined to become more and more extensive and clashes that will become increasingly acute and extreme with all the forces that wish to harness and repress the will to rebel and struggle, the revolutionary party is the only link in the chain that can weld the responses (even the most instinctive of them) to the living and working (or non-working) conditions in which millions of proletarians are trapped and transform them into a political class struggle, directed towards insurrection and the seizing of power.

But this Party is not designed around a

conference table, as though it were the project of a forward-thinking architect, neither does it arise miraculously out of the fights themselves by virtue of a kind of spontaneous autogenesis coming from below, as so many fools would have it. It is the result of a long struggle carried out in an organized manner and in an international perspective by communists who, regardless of whether they were in a minority or few in number, managed to remain faithful, from programmatic, organizational, theoretical and practical points of view, to a tradition – the only tradition that over a whole century now has succeeded in maintaining the true revolutionary path – *ours*. There are no other ways. This one alone, with objective and subjective conditions having matured (including – and we stress it, to avoid any kind of voluntarist misinterpretation – the manifest inability of the ruling class to deal with the social crisis), can allow proletarians of any age, nationality, gender or skin colour, to make their way out of the blind allies and ghettos where they are compelled to live their daily lives.

England's burning suburbs today and who knows where tomorrow launch the umpteenth appeal to communists, to devote their best efforts and their revolutionary passion, courage and determination to strengthening the international communist party, extending it and sinking its roots in the international proletariat. Only in this way will it be possible to draw lessons from the flames of isolated struggles and channel them, victoriously, into the battle for a new, classless society tomorrow.



# They just don't know which way to turn!

Two years ago, at the time of Barack Obama's investiture as President of the United States, we wrote – to sum up briefly – that only a sucker could believe such a position would serve any interests other than those of big capital, with all the

inevitable internal contradictions that it generates<sup>1</sup>.

Two years have gone by and we all know the economic and social situation in the United States: soaring unemployment, the same trend in the public debt, production mechanisms jammed, commercial war all over the international chess board, clear and growing protectionist trends, industrial policies that heavily penalize the working class (at GM, the unions have accepted drastic salary cuts), an overall sense of discomfort and disillusion... Right in the middle, generous, billion-dollar transfusions for banks and corporations in the (vain) attempt to save the former and re-launch the latter; a health reform that is

laughable in its pathetic attempt to stick a miserable patch (in favour of a petit bourgeoisie on the way to becoming proletariat) over one of the most macroscopic black holes in US capitalism; a war (in Afghanistan) that is continuing and another (in Iraq) that seems to be everlasting, which together keep military spending up and fuel the state of fear and alarm; growing pressure on a mixed and already hard put to proletariat, though "privileged" compared to other sectors of international proletarians; and after this... words... words... words, im-

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1. See "The New US President and Suckers International Ltd.", *Internationalist Papers*, no.14/2008. It was precisely capitalism's internal contradictions that created the preconditions for Obama & Co.'s mid-term electoral thrashing: after the initial intoxication, the president proved not to be up to the role of the "Great Communicator" that was required of him (because *this and no other* is the role of the president) – under pressure from *these internal contradictions* he was unable to create the ideological glue capable of holding together different and contrasting demands in a single "national mission". If he does not succeed in the second half of his mandate, capital will need another "communicator": it will search for this figure and find it. In the meantime, however, the economic crisis will have taken gigantic strides forward.

mersed in the syrup that is so pleasing to the various “lefts” in the various countries, from re-varnished social-democrats to “extra-parliamentaries” wagging their tails and begging to return as “parliamentaries”.

For their own part the “experts” (the Krugmans, the Roubinis, the Stiglitzes, the “right-wingers” just as the “left-wingers”, liberals and conservatives) struggle vainly to find answers in the foul-smelling litter of their ideology, all of them more or less united in regarding what is happening and above all what may happen, with concern, all trapped in the false “liberist-state” alternative, incapable of grasping that a) it is not a case of two opposing “recipes”, one better (and for whom?) than the other, but two strategies that capital has *always* turned to, ever since its advent, to ensure its own dominion and the continuity of its mode of production, and that b) in any case, since the end of the second world conflict (which was supposed to have got rid of “totalitarianism” in the name of political and economic democracy), it has been the “owner-State” (entrepreneur, creditor, centralizer, as well as thug) that has dominated the scene, no matter the liberist rhetoric vomited at one time or another by one man (or woman) of straw, Reagan or Thatcher, interpreters of a *laissez faire* now rejected by history, but always ready to put themselves in the hands of the State to try and disentangle economic knots that are, in actual fact, impossible to unravel. This is what the *expertise* of the bourgeois world’s experts boils down to.

Obviously all this does not regard the United States alone: but, as always, the “American model” is transferred everywhere in exactly the same form. Everywhere chaos and collapse, inability to find solutions, blind navigation, bombastic statements and a little practical coasting, scandals large and small to create a smoke screen so that reality is forgotten – and the train charging faster and faster towards the cliff-edge<sup>2</sup>. The only thing the ruling class is capable of doing in this totally disastrous situation is what it has always managed to: tighten the chains on the proletarians, make them work harder (to “be more competitive on the world markets”), wring them dry in every possible way (wages, working hours, pace of work, pensions), fuel divisions inside their ranks (the immigrants! the *sans-papiers*! the terrorists!), beat them up every time they dare raise their heads (and in any case proceed to militarize society in general), knowing quite well that it has close, historical allies in the great institutional trade unions (and the little, aspiring ones) and in the parties and mini-parties that share a heritage lasting eighty years now of constant betrayals of the working class.

The economic crisis we are in the middle of cannot be reversed by capital, except by the classical method: *preparing for a new world war*. All the measures adopt-

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2. To remain in the context of the galloping rate of inflation alone, the director of the IMF, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, has recently declared that over the past two years 30 million jobs have been lost, bringing worldwide unemployment figures to 210 million; and that the number of jobs that will be lost over the next few years is expected to rise to an astronomical 400 million. If these figures are added to those of the world proletariat that is still lucky (?) enough to have a job, what does this say about the argument of the “disappearance of the proletariat”?

ed in the past few years have not only proved insufficient to get capital out of a crisis cycle that began in the mid-'70s – they have created the premises for other collapses and catastrophes even more profound and devastating than the ones

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3. See in particular the series of articles published in our Italian press between 2004 and 2008, entitled "Il corso del capitalismo mondiale dal secondo dopoguerra del XX secolo, verso il terzo conflitto imperialistico o la rivoluzione proletaria" ("The course of world capitalism from the second post-war period of the XXth century towards the third imperialist conflict or the proletarian revolution"). See also: "Il crollo dei mercati finanziari è la palese conferma del grado estremo e irreversibile cui è giunta la crisi del sistema capitalistico" ("The collapse of the financial markets is clear confirmation of the extreme and irreversible state that the crisis of the capitalist system has reached"), *Il programma comunista*, no.4/2007; "Altre brevi considerazioni sulla crisi finanziaria" ("Further brief considerations on the financial crisis"), *Il programma comunista*, no.5/2007; "Dalla crisi mondiale alla rivoluzione comunista" ("From world crisis to communist devolution"), *Il programma comunista*, no.3/2008; "A proposito della crisi economica. Pacifica metamorfosi o catastrofe?" ("On the economic crisis, A pacific metamorphosis or a catastrophe?"), *Il programma comunista*, no.6/2008; "La legge del valore e il crollo della competitività degli Stati-pedine d'Europa", ("The law of value and the collapse of competitiveness in Europe's pawn-states"), *Il programma comunista*, no.3/2009; "Sempre più instabile, caotico e distruttivo il mondo del capitale" ("The world of capital increasingly unstable and chaotic"), *Il programma comunista*, no.6/2009. It goes without saying that this work of analysis has been constant in our Party, ever since the beginning of the '50s: the list of studies on the "course of capitalism" would be too long to quote here in a simple footnote.

that preceded them: we have documented and demonstrated this and shall not refrain from doing so, as the crisis develops<sup>3</sup>.

Let us remember what communism has argued from the very beginning: "In commercial crises, a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises, there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity – the epidemic of over-production. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation, had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? Because there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the

wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented." (Marx-Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, Chap. I: Bourgeois and Proletarians).

So they just don't know which direction to take. Instead, we communists know where they are heading. We know that the crisis will deepen and become even more catastrophic, until the objective conditions are created for forcing the various capitalisms (and the States that *represent and defend* them) to clash in the war of all against all, securing the alliances that are in

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their interests at the given moment, breaking them and recreating them<sup>4</sup> – but always and above all agreeing in their repression of any proletariat that refuses to subordinate itself to the supreme interests of its own bourgeoisie and the national economy it represents.

However, we also know that the proletariat will not remain a passive witness to all this. We leave the petit bourgeoisie, grown increasingly nasty, to their theories on the “disappearance of the proletariat”, its “inexistence” and “incapability of reacting” (and on the many other “subjects” that are supposed to have taken its place: the “masses”, the “networks”, the “citizens”, the “temporaries”, the multi-coloured pre- and post-electoral carnival turns, all expressions of the parasitic half-classes terrorized by the possibility of slipping down into the proletariat and above all by the prospect of a revolutionary outcome). We shall leave them to the neurotic chase after “new recipes” which are as old as capitalism itself, after “new myths” that are already frustrated as soon as they appear (from the “first black president in American history” to the “first “trade-union president in the history of Brazil”, from neo-labour in Italian-Apulian sauce to the anti-capitalist neo-populism that finishes by setting up convergences between right and “left” which are not so paradoxical after all).

We know, thanks to a historical theory and historical experience, that – on reaching a certain limit – the exploited masses can do none other than rebel (the ruling class itself, *everywhere*, knows this and prepares for it). They will do so in sudden explosions, at times uncontrollable. And through these rebellions they will realize that spontaneous outbursts are not enough: that something more is necessary – organization, connection, coordination, continuity, autonomy, direction – both immediate and long term. *They will experience the need for all this.* And they will find it in the revolutionary party which has proved capable of fighting with them, unceasingly (even when it was ignored and apparently relegated to the sidelines) guiding them and organizing them, alerting them to enemies and false friends, revealing deception and traps, and above all proclaiming loud and clear, at all times, whilst showing the historical inevitability of it step by step, *the need for the supreme battle: the fight to seize power against the capitalist State, to establish their own dictatorial power, the only possible way to reorganize (worldwide) a society that has for so long been immersed in decay and degradation, suffering, hunger and war.*

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4. We are still a long way from seeing a clear picture of sides being taken but the recent deadlock between France and Germany on the one hand and the rest of the EU on the other with regard to the “Stability Pact” is already a step towards different scenarios to those that have dominated up to now.

# Increasingly unstable, chaotic and destructive the world of capital

Let us start from the objective, material fact – *the economic crisis*. It develops – we repeat this constantly because there are still very few people willing to take it in – from the mid-seventies onwards and it is a *crisis of overproduction*: hav-

ing operated to the full at a breakneck rate in the three decades following the second world war (and the entity and intensity of this production – and thus of the *exploitation of the world proletariat* – were directly proportional to the destruction of goods, labour included, brought about by the world slaughter), the capitalist machinery jammed, precisely because it had produced too much. But, attention here, it jammed not in one country or another (as had happened occasionally in those same decades: cycles of crises are built into the DNA of the capitalist mode of production); it jammed all over the world at the same time, gradually affecting both countries that claimed they were safe from it (for example Russia)<sup>1</sup> and countries that were just approaching the threshold of the capitalist paradises<sup>2</sup>. It is therefore a *structural*, systemic crisis that affects *the whole mode of capitalist production*.

From that time onwards (the mid-‘70s) the so-called “real economy” – i.e. the production of goods, with consequent production of plus value – precisely because the market was saturated, did not succeed in creating the right conditions for making a sufficiently intense and rapid valorization of capital to try and contrast its bogey – *the tendential fall in the average profit rate*. The slither

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1. See here our study “La Russia s’apre alla crisi mondiale [Russia opens to the world crisis]”, *Quaderni del Programma Comunista*, n.2, June 1977.

2. See the articles in the series “Corso del capitalismo [The Course of Capitalism]” published in our press around 1975.

ing operated to the full at a breakneck rate in the three decades following the second world war (and the entity and intensity of this production – and thus of the *exploitation of the world proletariat* – were directly proportional to the destruction of goods, labour included, brought about by the world slaughter), the capitalist machinery jammed, precisely because it had produced too much. But, attention here, it jammed not

into an economic crisis was profound and generalized, though it came in alternating phases: and all the strategies brought into play (for example in the course of the '80s and '90s) to try and halt it, to find short-cuts that might somehow get round a production that was strangled and incapable of generating plus value (briefly, applying an oxygen mask to what was at this stage a true zombie), proved not only to be insufficient but to aggravate the situation still more.

We cannot here go into a detailed re-examination of the various aspects of the crisis as it has manifested itself from the mid '70s onwards: we did this in the '50s (demonstrating the inevitability of it with theory and figures in hand, and with an examination of the close relationship between capitalism and crises), in the '70s (as the crisis drew closer and then exploded), in the '80s and '90s (tracing the various phenomena of *reaganomics* and *thatcherism* and their derivatives back to their material roots) and lastly, in more recent years (connecting yesterday to today on the thread of time). Readers who are seriously interested in understanding and grasping what is going on should refer to all this *party work* (not to the work of 'experts' or 'intellectuals')<sup>3</sup>.

Two quotations will suffice as examples here, taken from our classics, which once again demonstrate the superiority of a materialistic analysis of reality compared to the gushing of economists, politicians, ministers, hack writers, totally incapable of under-

3. See, at least, the article "Traiettorie e catastrofe della forma capitalista nella classica costruzione teorica del marxismo [Trajectory and catastrophe of the capitalist form in the classical theoretical construction of Marxism]", *Il programma comunista*, issues 19-20/1957, and the long series entitled "Il corso del capitalismo mondiale nella esperienza storica e nella dottrina di Marx [The course of world capitalism in historical experience and in the doctrine of Marx]", *Il programma comunista*, issues 16-18, 20-24/1957, 1, 2, 6-10, 23/1958, 1-7/1959.

4. Friday 30/10/2009, the newspapers were full of hymns to the end of the recession (because ... the USA's GNP had grown by 3.5%). A day goes by and ... we all fall down! The stock exchanges dive due to the consumer drop in the USA, there is fear on the American mortgage markets (them again!), more bubbles start to form... We are flying without instruments with a captain who is blind as can be!

standing what is going on<sup>4</sup>. The first quotation is taken from the *Communist Manifesto* (1948), and states:

*"In these crises, there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity – the epidemic of over-production. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation, had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? Because there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does*



5. Between 6 and 7 November, came the announcement that unemployment in America had gone beyond the... “psychological threshold” of 10%. We are well aware how unemployment figures are calculated in the USA: by extrapolating a series of categories and figures. Suffering caused by the loss of jobs is thus certainly well over 10% and particularly affects sectors of the population already at a disadvantage, such as Afro-americans, Mexican-americans, Puerto Ricans, immigrants, the poor white people in certain regional areas. *The New York Times* of 6/11/2009 states, in fact, that the real unemployment rate is over 17%.

*the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented”* (Chapter I: Bourgeois and Proletarians).

The second quotation comes from an article by Marx for the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, May-October 1850 and reads:

*“As a rule speculation appears in periods when overproduction is in full swing. It offers temporary channels of outlet for overproduction and for this very reason accelerates the outbreak of the crisis and increases its virulence. The crisis itself breaks out first in the field of speculation and only later shifts to that of production. Thus, it is not overproduction but over-speculation, which in turn is only a symptom of overproduction, that appears, in the eyes of the superficial observer, as the cause of the crisis. The consequent disruption in production does not appear as the necessary consequence of its own previous exuberance, but as a simple counter*

*blow from the collapse of speculation.”*

The fact that the crisis is serious and certainly not over is also demonstrated (as well as by the overall growth in unemployment and its inevitable future effects, both economic and social) 5 by the insistence with which, when there is no sudden intoxication over the tiniest, momentary claim to signals of a “change in the trend”, the “experts” resume their calculations regarding the “crisis of ‘29” (their recurrent nightmare), comparing it – in a manner that is, it must be said, largely improvised, as is typical of “bourgeois science” – with the present situation. And nonetheless it is not a cheerful picture. For example, the Italian economic daily *Il Sole - 24 ore* of 25/10/2009 publishes two graphs and a table, which juxtapose the crisis then and the present one: one regards the shrinkage in industrial production, the other Wall Street listings, and the third public intervention. Here are some interesting figures: Dow Jones did not return to pre-crisis figures until 1954 (i.e., 25 years later); between ’29 and ’33, unemployment rose to 25% of the labour force (today, after two years we are already at 10%, officially); the average loss of family assets was 3% (in the past two years we have already reached 17%); extra public spending in present-day dollars was then 500 billion (today 11 000 are allocated and 2 800 have been spent). It can also be seen from the graphs that 15 months from the peak of the crisis shrinkage was greater then than it is now (but the graph goes on for 50 months: there’s still time!); as

regards stock exchange listings, the crisis was more violent in the first ten months, whilst in terms of salvaging operations the fear of a vertical financial crash has been enormous...<sup>6</sup>

Once again the *Il Sole - 24 ore* of 25/10/2009, in another article<sup>7</sup>, warns us, alarmed, that this year the big American banks will record profits superior to those of 2007 and that, at the same time, the credit crunch for companies is without precedent (another bubble on the horizon: hold tight!). In addition, at the end of 2009, the world's unemployed will number 61 million, a... side effect of the present crisis. To save the banks (which nevertheless continue to go bankrupt: in the United States there are now over 140 bankruptcies, some of which involve institutes with important roles, such as the finance company Cit, which crashed right at the beginning of November 2009), national states have enlarged their public debt monstrously (almost all of them by something like 100%)<sup>8</sup>: in particular, the cost of the American programme (Tarp) could reach 23 thousand billion. The central banks, says George Soros (who deals with these things), don't know which way to turn: it is hoped (!) that the new bubble gathering on the horizon may act as a driving force for recovery; if, however, this fails to happen, we shall plunge into an even more devastating crisis. This is what bourgeois science boils down to!

Let us leave all this now and take a look at how the political-strategic scenario is changing. Without doubt – if we re-

6. Mario Margiocco, “Era Natale tutto l’anno, poi il crollo[It was Christmas all year round, then came the crash]”, *Il Sole-24 Ore*, 25/10/2009.

7. Morya Longo, “A Mr. Smith il conto della recessione [To Mr. Smith goes the bill of the recession]”, *Il Sole-24 Ore*, 25/10/2009.

turn to the evolution of inter-imperialist relationships over the past twenty years – its links to the development of the economic crisis clearly reveal themselves. To those who maintained that the collapse of Russian and the east-European countries (idiotically referred to as the “collapse of communism” by those who have never understood what capitalism is and what communism is), we replied that, on the contrary, the transformation of those régimes (where, to put it briefly, the state controlled an economy that was entirely capitalistic) was a signal of the planetary spread of a crisis that had for years already been tormenting the so-called “West” (to use the equally idiotic bourgeois geopolitical terminology). Only a few months went by and the

8. A trend which we have always pointed out as being inevitable in the capitalist world as it emerged from the Great Depression and Second World War: see at least the article “Imprese economiche di Pantalone [Pantalone's economic undertakings]”, published in no.20/1950, in what was then our newspaper, *Battaglia comunista*.

bloody sequence of wars at the threshold of Europe began: the first Gulf war, the war in the Balkans, the second Gulf war – with progressive intensification of their more destructive and bloody sides – breathlessly presented as “wars on terrorism”, “wars for democracy”, “humanitarian wars”, “pacifist wars”, etc. etc., but increasingly capitalist and inter-imperialist wars for the control of



areas of strategic importance for raw materials or their transport routes. To sum up, once more wars whose objective was the attempt by individual imperialist powers more or less directly involved in them to contrast the tendential fall trend in the average profit rate. Today the scenario has changed again and is continuing to change, characterized by total instability.

Indeed, the fear that an explosion in the eastern Middle-East (Afghanistan, Pakistan, western India) might attract greedy competitors to this strategic area (China and Russia) emboldened by the American weakness after eight years of warfare, is pushing the USA to broaden its war efforts and drive them to the utmost. On the other hand, Tibet and the Muslim western Chinese area, Georgia and the Ukraine are the new visiting cards (with hilarious claims to “human rights” on the one hand and the Islamic, Tibetan and Georgian “fight against terrorism” on the other), so that ... the engine driver is not disturbed. The most bitter contradiction is nevertheless in the belly of the European ally, who cannot wait to get out of the theatre of war, because its interests are only secondary and derivative (too onerous to deal with) and under these circumstances it is suffocated by internal economic interests: Barak Obama’s Nobel Peace Prize and the UN’s acceptance of an increase in the American contingent presented themselves as an opportunity and a means for persuading the “well-wishers” to stay but the failure of the election comedy in Afghanistan (cheating, candidatures

subsequently retracted) and the terrible “Taliban” (!) attacks on the UN’s armies and headquarters have again demonstrated how extremely dangerous the situation is, as well as the general impotence of those involved.

For their part, at the moment China and Russia are in a state of political alert on several fronts, whilst exchanges between soaring Chinese industry (GNP 9%) and Russian raw materials involve a huge and immensely rich sweep of territory. China in particular is on the tracks of all kinds of raw materials and strongly in need of them: a chase that ranges from Africa to Latin America, from Australia to Cape Town, whilst the Asian front China-Korea-Japan is changing rapidly, driven by huge overproduction of consumer goods and the massive financial plethora. Sooner or later in the two seas of China and Japan we shall be witnessing a clash between the world’s colossuses, with three pawns acting as shock-absorbers: the two Koreas and Taiwan.

In turn, the Fertile Crescent-moon area is changing rapidly, with the fear of an overall conflict growing relentlessly. Increasing American weakness is having its effect on Israel and the Palestinian Territories: it is this same weakness that has caused Turkey to refuse joint military exercises with Israel in Turkish territory and is obliging Abu Mazen to withdraw from the electoral contest next January. It is also exasperating the “Iran affair” and rendering it increasingly dangerous: alternating between the constant threat of armed intervention and an out-and-out dance of

courtship by Americans, Russians, Germans and French for the uranium that is to be enriched somewhere or other; in the meantime, the Iranian régime is trapped in its corner and must tighten the noose around the necks of its opponents, who, on entering the scene against the Government, would be able to count on a dense “network of protection”: a long line of “democrats” is waiting at the patient’s bedside for the slightest sign of collapse. And so, oil or no oil (Iranian or Iraqi), political or social crises, never-ending wars: as we have always known, stability in the area is impossible, within this framework of inter-imperialist relations. If Iran served as an American “ally” against Iraq, closing its border (as did Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey in the two Gulf wars), thus limiting the scenario, today a game is being played in which the borders are much wider: the Russian Caucasus, the bordering Russian-Chinese lands and the entire middle-eastern area, if not India herself.

Meanwhile Europe, in the midst of an economic and political crisis, beyond the positive appearance of Ireland’s and the Czech Republic’s endorsement of the Lisbon Treaty, is falling apart in the methane-industry alliance between Russia and Germany, the Opel (USA) – Magna (Russia) disagreement and the re-launching of the American missile

bases in Poland-Czech Republic (directed east or west?). And whilst we realize that the Mediterranean and Baltic seas will soon be guarded by American ships carrying nuclear missiles, the east-European pawns fall silent, or fail to awake unless commanded by the great impulses coming from abroad. In time, the European continent, a jungle of nationalisms, will once again be opening up Pandora’s vase.

This is only the brief sketch of a picture to which we shall have to return, dominated as it is by extreme fluidity: but with the aggravation of every “new episode” in the world economic crisis, it becomes clearer. A picture which, if not immediately, pre-announces new world slaughter, when the precipitation of contradictions and impact with the dead-end of the crisis will drive the dominant imperialist powers well beyond their current strategy of blows beneath the belt, threats and reprisals, attacks through third parties, more or less mafia-style warnings, cooked up in the pots of occult diplomacy (and involving their respective secret services). It becomes ever more crucial and urgent for the world proletariat to return to the stage in an openly antagonistic position to the demands of national capital and for the international communist party, its revolutionary avant-garde, to take root in it.

# The Failure of Capitalism (and of all illusions of reforming it)

A series of recent facts unravelling over the months and weeks bridging 2009 and 2010, proclaim once again the failure of capitalism and all the ideologies that would wish to reform it, making it more human and sustainable, still (but of course!) keeping it alive. Let us leave aside for the moment the *evolution of the economic crisis*, far from being over as the bourgeois “experts” would have it (because we have already written about this and shall be writing about it again), as well as the progressive and subterranean appearance of other monstrous bubbles (from the public debt to futures, from raw materials to *credit default swaps*, from sovereign funds to toxic assets, an abundance of which are still circulating), which will not be long in exploding with even more destructive effects than those that marked 2008-2009. Let us pause instead to look at some other aspects. First of all, what is evident is the political incapability of all governments (right-wing or “left-wing”, or center, in whatever country) to deal with the crisis. All the measures taken – in the USA as in China, in Great Britain as in Italy, etc. – are merely temporary palliatives and in fact do none other than accumulate more explosive material, limiting themselves to delaying the conflagration for a little while but only *in a way*. On this scenario it is increasingly evident that the still dominant but for some time declining imperialism (that of the USA) is short of breath, dogged both by its direct competitors (the unpleasantly necessary China, India as the unwanted third guest, Germany and her ongoing agreements with France at the west and Russia at the east, Japan intent on licking her wounds after her own economic disasters...) and by a disastrous situation at home which is starting to become a replica of the Great Depression of the ‘30s (the collapse

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of over 140 banks at this stage, unemployment officially around 10% and *actually around 17%*, an exponential public debt, a health reform destined to turn out to be smoke in the eyes of millions of Americans lacking resources...). For their own part, the USA's direct competitors in Asia and Europe, although they have momentarily reacted to the crisis a little better than others, are still proceeding at a far slower pace than that celebrated during past years, and are in any case – due to dialectics that the bourgeois “experts” are absolutely incapable of seeing and comprehending – completely bound to a situation where there are no watertight compartments or happy oases.

As to Europe, she demonstrates ever more clearly the total failure of any real and credible prospect for integration or the creation of a pole capable of resisting the “war machines” brought into the field by the stronger imperialisms, against whom she is the classical clay vessel amongst the vessels of iron. As an independent economic and political entity, in fact, Europe does not exist and will never be able to, and it is certainly not the introduction of the euro as a single currency that will help to pull a European rabbit out of world capitalism's top hat. In 1915 Lenin was already forcefully declaring that “From the point of view of imperialism's economic conditions, in other words the export of capital and the sharing out of the world amongst the ‘advanced’ and ‘civilized colonial powers, the United States of Europe would be either impossi-

ble or reactionary in a capitalist régime.”<sup>1</sup> Since then, imperialism has moved giant steps forward (thanks mostly to two world wars!) going beyond the “pure-

ly” colonial phase of sharing out the world: making the prospects of the “United States of Europe” all the more “impossible or reactionary”.

Impossible because – as Lenin again reminded us – in a capitalist régime it is impossible to share out the world or organize its division “if not ‘by using force’” (thus by means of an armed conflict between necessarily competing capitalisms), “a regular pace of economic development is impossible, either for individual firms or individual States [...], there are no other ways of re-establishing the upset balance now and again except for a crisis in industry and/or war in politics.”<sup>2</sup> Reactionary, because if anything it would mean a *temporary* agreement amongst countries, with the objective of contrasting the rise of other economic powers (thus preparing widely ranging conflicts), but above all of “crushing socialism in Europe all together” – *thus with an openly anti-proletarian and counter-revolutionary function*.

The United States of Europe, United Europe, the European Union, “the pacific federation of many historical States, with such varied and different situations and structures, which have for centuries been in constant conflict, under feudalism as under bourgeois control, in a climate of despotism as under one of an elected democracy,” are then – as we wrote in 1950 in what was then our theoretical re-

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1. Lenin, “On the Catch-phrase of the United States of Europe” (1915)

2. Idem

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3. "United States of Europa", *Prometeo*, n.14/1950

view – "a mirage"<sup>3</sup>. A mirage hiding the true nature of that prospective "temporary agreement", which drugs a *petit bourgeoisie* always ready to let itself be

led by the nose and whose basic aim is to paralyze the proletariat, whether by means of ideas or by open and repressive police violence – this, on the other hand, is indeed unity.

The reality of all this is clear for all to see. The situation of Greece (to which other articles are devoted elsewhere in this issue) and, probably, as a future prospect, that of Spain, both of which are in the grip of an explosive economic and (above all) social crisis, demonstrate that this materialist analysis is correct. The whole of the European area is being pulled apart by a vortex of impulses. Germany (second to the United States for volume of exports) with its Austrian appendage, has concluded agreements with France and Russia, is moving to control the corridors of raw materials travelling between east and west (North Stream) and is increasingly seeking an outlet to the Mediterranean (through the Balkans, the strong link with Turkey, and intervention as a mediator in the minefield of the middle-east). Poland and the Czech Republic act as a pro-US buffer between Germany and Russia (and might be joined by the Ukraine, whose NATO candidature is openly opposed, not by chance, by Germany). Italy continues her traditional practice of waltzes with the USA and Germany. France is trying to project herself outside her tight European confines and attempting to set up relations with Brazil and enlarge her influence in Africa (experiencing harsh clashes with China and India there)... In all this (and future trends are increasingly towards the vortex), *where is Europe?* Is it still possible to harbour the illusion – as so many... "non-aligned reformists" do – of creating an alternative pole able to compete as a *unified whole* with the United States on the one hand and India-China-Japan (and other "emerging" forces) on the other?

In fact, the series of giddy crashes in the progression of the economic crisis, the struggle of individual governments to find a formula (or several formulas: as many as there are "experts") for getting out of it "once and for all", the decline of the United States and the aggravation of commercial and strategic conflicts worldwide, the continuation of bloody wars in critical areas of the globe, and – on this whole scenario – the dizzy growth in unemployment everywhere and the widening gap not only between "rich countries" and "poor countries" but between social classes in terms of their life conditions (and expectations), the increasingly evident polarization of wealth and poverty in individual countries, everything demonstrates the total failure of capitalism.

Now the failure of capitalism (which did not begin the day before yesterday: it reached its historical limit in the mid-eighteen hundreds, changing into a destructive and superfluous mode of production) goes hand in hand with the failure of any ideology that aims to reform it and still keep it on its feet. The recent summit

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on climate in Copenhagen is a glaring example. The comment offered by the Italian daily, *Corriere della Sera*, of 20 December, is revealing: "What has been called the 'Copenhagen Accord' is a document of under three pages, the result of negotiations that lasted two years and concluded with two weeks of hyperbolic Conference in the Danish capital. Minimum in terms of content: in practical terms it promises [?] money to the poorer countries to help them reduce their emissions and adapt [!] to the catastrophes caused by climate change. The rest is very general. Moreover it is not binding [...] The points that have been left out are the most important: the extent of cuts, both for developed countries and for developing ones; the type of agreement, essential for understanding what formal commitments have been taken by each individual country; if and when a binding treaty can be endorsed (officially there are hopes for 2010 but this seems improbable given the distance between the parties). The agreement on the protection of the forests, which seemed to be a foregone conclusion, has been 'forgotten' in the document." French daily *Le Monde*, for its part, again on 20 December, is even more scathing, with the headline: "The Checkmate of Copenhagen or the Limits of World Government", commenting on the "twelve days of world psychodrama [...] on the great declarations and little manoeuvres that have led the summit from hope to disappointment", recalling bitterly that it was a case of (surprise, surprise!) taking the bull by the horns on the issue of no less than "global warming – that is, the preservation of the planet's conditions for future generations." Not a bad failure!

The mountain has thus given birth to a blind and paralytic little mouse. Not only: the summit was instead more of an opportunity for the USA and China (the super-powerful friends-cum-enemies, the former in decline, the latter ascending) to reassert their dominant role: something they did explicitly and arrogantly, with China, as *Le Monde* again reveals, who, "for reasons of economic competition, [...] does not intend imposing over-restrictive environmental measures on its industries [and] above all cannot tolerate the idea of international control on its home territory"; as to India, Brazil and South Africa, other powerful emerging economies, these three instantly tagged onto USA and China; and Europe, the phantom entity, once again emerged [...] bruised and betrayed, powerless and incapable of dealing with such strong competition: emblematic was the fiasco of the great diplomatic moves made by Sarkozy [French *grandeur*! we all know about that!] towards Brazil and Africa, incapable of bringing home any results... " In practice, rather than an environmental summit concerned for the destiny of future generations, it was actually (in the face of all the reformist and environmental illusions about creating institutions that would be *super partes*) another round of hidden talks, manoeuvres in the wings, sounding out of the ground, amongst international bandits, some stronger others less, some armed with aircraft carriers and some with slings and arrows, all trapped by an economic crisis

that never ceases to make its effects felt, all intent on ruining one another, all in search of some sort of "temporary agreement" (once more in Lenin's words) before having to finally resort to out and out warfare.

But the failure of capitalism and of the various illusions of reform is certainly no surprise to us communists: these are things we have known since 1848. Working to overthrow the former also means working to neutralize the evil and paralyzing effects of the latter on the proletariat.

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**[www.internationalcommunistparty.org](http://www.internationalcommunistparty.org)**

**and its English and Spanish pages**

# Meanwhile, in the Mediterranean Sea...

*The first weeks and months of 2011 were swept by the large, impressive movements of revolt of the North African proletarian and proletarianized masses, soon appro-*

*priated and channelled by a bourgeois, democratic direction. We here reproduce articles and leaflets our party produced in those weeks and months.*

## Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt are close

The violent revolts that are shaking Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt in these weeks of early 2011 speak the language of a proletariat up in arms, in the same way as similar revolts before them elsewhere in the world, such as in Haiti and, time ago, in Egypt itself (where, not by chance, early in January 2011, we witnessed the classical attempt, invariably made by the ruling classes, to deviate social malcontent down the blind allies of religious clashes). From the edge (increasingly closer to the centre) of what is still for the

bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie the “best of all possible worlds”, come unmistakable signals. Poverty, hunger, unemployment, a total lack of prospects, the impossibility of survival are more and more frequently the conditions in which the proletariat finds itself: only a slight, privileged layer is safe (*and not for long now*), thanks merely to the crumbs that fell from the rich banqueting tables of imperialist reconstruction in the few decades following the second world war – the economic boom that the bourgeoisie and petit



bourgeoisie proclaimed would never end and which, in any case, was only made possible by forced exploitation of the proletariat in all countries. *And so, long live the struggle of Algeria's, Tunisia's, Egypt's proletariat, however the situation may develop over the coming days and weeks, because they are providing the whole of the world's proletariat with precious signs and lessons.*

Always obliged to play at massacres in the context of the psychosis invented over the past decade in order to divide and paralyze, the international observers, the mass media, are actually forced to “admit the inadmissible”: with ill-concealed concern, they have to recognize that here Islamic fundamentalism and Al-Qaeda (the rags and tatters that it is always useful to wave around) have really nothing to do with it and the afflicted masses in the poor areas of Algiers, Tunis, Cairo, Suez, the big cities and the towns in the interior, are out on the streets and battling with the police and the army, *driven by these material factors* and (at least for the moment) not in the name of one ready-made ideology or the other.

Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt are no far-off, under-developed backwaters: they are big countries that joined suave capitalist modernity time ago. The former, in particular, arrived by means of a long and bloody anti-colonial rebellion which concluded – in the absence of a militant proletariat in the capitalist strongholds and a revolutionary party able to direct it and give a class direction to the anti-colonial revolts – in the triumph of a young and aggressive local bourgeoisie, destined to go the way of all bourgeoisies:

that of competition on the world markets, the extraction of plus value from labour and thus the exploitation of the proletariat. The latter, on its part, has always functioned, in recent decades, as a second pivot for imperialist status quo in the Middle East, together with Israel: the Palestinian proletarian masses, closed in by those two terrible pincers, know it only too well.

Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt are “close at hand” (and not only geographically), because the world economic crisis (beginning in the mid-‘70s) is gradually burning up all the “counter-trends” that capitalism can bring into play to try and delay the final moment of reckoning: and this is something that the young and very young Algerian, Tunisian and Egyptian proletarians and just as young proletarians from the French banlieues some years back (French citizens to all effects) as well as the proletarian immigrants to Italy (whom so many would paralyze in useless claims for “citizenship rights”) all share, in the generous drive to break a social order and peace that are oppressive and castrating. The proletarians from capitalist strongholds, rocked asleep by decades of opportunist ideology and practice lavished on them by parties and trade unions whose only interest is to keep the lurid world of capital on its feet, are slow to understand that the only way is that of *open battle*. By acting in this way they also delay the help needed by their admirable Algerian, Tunisian and Egyptian class brothers: the creation of a battlefield reaching way beyond national borders, that unhinges once and for all

*reformist* and *nationalist* objectives, cementing the struggles in a single attack on the capitalist fortress.

If the martyrdom of the Algerian, Tunisian and Egyptian proletariat is not to be in vain, just like that (unfortunately inevitable in such conditions of isolation) of other cities on the borders and at the centre in the near future, it is nevertheless necessary not only to take the direction of open conflict once again and cement

struggles that today are separate and far away from one another, but also to understand, *in the very midst of these struggles*, the need for acquiring organization and political direction: *the need for the revolutionary party*.

Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt are close, both one to another and to the rest of the proletarian world, thanks also to this urgent historical need which can no longer be postponed.

## Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Libia... what next? The capitalist mode of production increasingly unstable

We leave it to others to report the daily chronicle of events, the journalistic accounts filled with local colour and sensationalism, the commonplace rhetoric. Let's get straight to the heart of the matter, the dynamics and prospects of what has happened and is happening in the stretch of countries that now reaches from Morocco to Iran, descending into the Arabian Peninsula. To differing extents and degrees, the proletarian and proletarianized masses in these countries have come out onto the streets, without the slightest regard for appeals to moderation. After decades of oppression and repression, of political cheating (both religious and non-religious), of betrayal and about-turns by movements that proclaimed themselves "brothers" or "friends", the constitutional and legalitarian lid that was keeping them down has finally been blown off. Unwittingly but magnificently *materialist*, they have demonstrated that, no matter how

profound the loneliness, isolation and fragmentation of the world proletariat today, no matter how devastating the counter-revolution over the past eighty years, it is *under the unbearable pressure of material conditions* that rebellion comes: hunger, misery, desperation, the impossibility of survival, the total lack of prospects... *Not* in the name of Christ or of Mohammed, *not* for some miserable reform of one set of laws or the other, not to uphold who knows what "right" that has somehow fallen at their feet: but because it's no longer possible to make a living or even to survive.

Now it is time to clear up a few things. We shall not devote more than a few words to denying that there has been a "revolution", as can be heard, instead, from all quarters and mainly from those in the West who wrinkle up their noses and give polite little smiles when they hear of *working for the revolution*, only to shoot

their mouths off, mistakenly, about “revolution” when they see an opportunity for spouting idiocies.

*It has not been a revolution. A revolution* questions not a régime (even the most barbarian) but a *whole mode of production*. In Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and elsewhere, there has been a powerful and wide-ranging wave of rebellion, starting from the proletarian and proletarianized masses who have said Stop! The weight of a counter-revolution lasting over eighty years (and thus both the inertia of the proletariat in the imperialist strongholds and the lack of a revolutionary party with international roots, plus the instinctive and unorganized nature of the revolts themselves) made it impossible *from the very beginning* for this rebellion (with all its splendid might) to transform itself into something even remotely similar to a revolutionary uprising. For the moment we shall stop here since we shall be returning to this later.

*Neither are we experiencing a delayed hiccup of anti-colonial rebellions.* The cycle of national and anti-colonial revolutions terminated in the mid-seventies, between Vietnam and Angola. Since then all those countries that have become familiar with the “delights” of colonial domination (the savage exploitation of labour and raw materials that made the post-war economic boom possible, feeding all the so-called “advanced countries” off the fat of the land and contributing to filling pockets with the useful and necessary reserves for delaying the outbreak of social discontent) – all these countries have been capitalist countries *in every way*, run by bourgeois wheelers and deal-

ers with connections to the old régimes, bound to one imperialism or the other and sitting on top of barrels of oil and lorry-loads of raw materials and precious metals, always ready to fuel “religious conflicts” and “ethnic clashes” (and probably even to proclaim themselves anti-imperialist!), hiring one band of foreign or domestic legionaries or the other (whatever the names they are given) to massacre entire populations of helpless people. The miserable history of the world bourgeoisie (England, France, Italy, United States, Germany...) thus continues in these countries with a degree of violence and cynicism made even greater by the unstoppable process of imperialist putrefaction. What is more, it continues in terms of the régimes that have taken over this change, from the colonial age to the post-colonial: *régimes* that are almost entirely military, headed by colonels, generals, dictators and autocrats, as befits a transition phase in which power (*even – if necessary – in a dynastic form*) is taken over more centrally, in a more authoritarian and more uncompromising (as well as corrupt) manner – because this is how social paralysis is guaranteed within the country, as well as the privileged channel of foreign trade with the outside world: the stick and the carrot, bribery. Once again, it will suffice to go and study the dynamics of power in capitalist régimes over the centuries of their history to become aware of this.

We are not witnessing uprisings of a religious nature, either. Here (at least for the moment) there are no fundamentalist aya-tollahs ready to ride the wave of social rebellion and replace Shahs who have be-

come unacceptable, as happened in Teheran in 1979. Neither do we have Hezbollah, Hamas and similar disgustingly bourgeois groups with a pseudo-religious façade, all after a larger portion of income from oil. Hamas remains silent (indeed they took action to control the Palestinian proletarians in the Gaza Strip) and the Muslim Brothers are standing aside, waiting to see which way the wind blows and meanwhile playing the part of a “national” and semi-religious party; as to Al-Qaeda, it is increasingly proving to be no more than a fundamentalist-style Foreign Legion, ready to hire itself out to any old national or international bourgeois faction for the dirty work of transversal vendettas.

We are, instead, witnessing a movement that arises *from the depths of the social substrata* and is unleashed by the *worsening of the economic crisis* which – despite all the cautiously optimistic declarations by “experts” and politicians – continues along its relentless path, destroying presumed stability and certainties and at the same time demolishing ideological walls and fences and bringing together, out of the urgency to survive, different sectors of the suffering, world proletariat abandoned to their own resources.

The sequence of events in Egypt demonstrates this clearly. Here, at the beginning of the year, it seemed that an attack in a Christian-Copt church was about to spark off the umpteenth spiral of religious conflict: our reading was that social tension must have reached a peak if it had been necessary to bring ... Al-Qaeda, or a substitute for it, into the field, according to a practice that has been tragically repeated

over the whole of the past decade. In fact, as some of the bourgeois observers themselves have had to acknowledge (*Corriere della Sera*, 26/1: “The massacre, certainly planned by Sunni extremists connected to Al Qaeda, had a precise objective: to create a conflict between Muslims and Copts. But the plan was unsuccessful...”), only a few weeks had gone by and the Egyptian proletarian masses, of whatever religious confession or political allegiance, found themselves side by side on the streets fighting their only enemy: daily capitalist oppression, embodied in Egypt by Hosni Mubarak, in Tunisia by Ben Ali, in Algeria by Bouteflika, in Libya by Gheddafi, and so on<sup>1</sup>.

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1. While we are writing, the “Libyan events” are still under way. We will comment on them on our website.

*Unfortunately*, for the reasons mentioned above, we are not witnessing a revolutionary process whose objective might be to overturn the capitalist mode of production, the prime and only cause of monstrous suffering throughout a whole continent, a whole world.

This is the endless tragedy of today as of yesterday, this is the reason for the rivers of blood that have been relentlessly wearing down the world proletariat for eighty years now. And so, particularly in Egypt, after the great initial flare-up (at least 300 dead), we have seen a gradual shift of the rebellion’s axis from the proletarianized masses to bourgeois factions (with double links to the international bourgeoisies that have enormous interests there), who have sniffed the wind and seen to it that “everything changes so that nothing will

change,” and to a democratic petit bourgeoisie whose sole interest is in reforms of the régime that will allow them (the eternal petit-bourgeois illusion!) greater room for manoeuvring. Under the constant pressure of the economic crisis and the pyramid structure of power that had guaranteed the passage from the colonial age to the post-colonial (and which, in doing so, had generated – thanks also to a wide network of centrally controlled corruption – a growing bourgeois class of business dealers of all types), this rigidity *had to* explode, *had to* make way for more fluid and “freer” dynamics – “every man for himself” – typical of bourgeois régimes in times of crisis. In one sense, very basically, and from the point of view of bourgeois dynamics, events in the southern Mediterranean area are a repeat of those that took place in Russia at the end of the 1980s: a “hothouse” of capitalist development centrally managed, with rigid State structures, through which trade and world exchanges took place exclusively, *had to* assume a new shape under pressure from the new phase of the economic crisis developing from the mid-seventies<sup>2</sup> onwards. This was the starting point of all the centrifugal pressures (on an economic, political and social plane) which followed and which we are only

too familiar with. Moreover, it is no contradiction that this shift (towards a yearned-after and *impossible* economic, political and social “liberalization”, *always, despite everything in the interests of capital*) should be controlled once again by the army, as has been happening in Egypt since the first few weeks of February. Or better, it is a “contradiction” typical of bourgeois régimes in an imperialist age and one that the whining petit bourgeoisie and the putrid pseudo-leftist fringes cannot grasp: capital can *only* be authoritarian, it *must impose* its own power in the workplace as in society. It is *intimately fascist*, at the very moment it spouts “democratic” and “liberal” words: Italian history, in the passage from the twenty-year rule of Mussolini to the blessed post-war period in which we are still immersed, demonstrates this supremely. And it is, above all, *intimately fascist* when this passage has been set in motion by mighty rebellions of the proletarian and proletarianized masses, taking to the streets for material and not ideological reasons – briefly, the eternal spectre of a proletariat which the bourgeoisie cannot do without and by which it is always, nevertheless, terrorized. It is no coincidence that the first measure adopted by the military régime in Egypt after the “despotic Mubarak” stood down, was a *ban on strikes*<sup>3</sup>.

To escape from this cul de sac (which does not exclude more bloodshed, in Egypt as elsewhere), new conditions will have to mature. The first will be the advance of the crisis itself: the removal of “guarantees”, worsening living and working conditions, repression by the

2. See what we wrote in “Il mito della ‘Pianificazione socialista’ in Russia (The Myth of ‘Socialist Planning’ in Russia)” (*Quaderni del Programma Comunista*, n. 1, agosto 1976) and in “La Russia si apre alla crisi mondiale (Russia Opens Itself to the World Crisis)” (*Quaderni del Programma Comunista*, n. 2, giugno 1977), well before the fateful 1989-90!

3. How menacing to the bourgeoisie is the proletarian mobilization is shown by the fact that, in the silence of mass media which devote pages and pages to “revolution via internet”, strikes in Egypt go on vigorously: in the textile industry (Cairo, Damietta, and Mahalla, which was already protagonist of great struggles in the past years), in tourism and transportation...

ruling classes by means of their State (which is not an “affectionate father” for everyone but a “machine gun” aimed to protect Capital), all this will once again, *materialistically*, bring open class struggle into the foreground. What will be decisive here will be the awakening and return to the battlefield of proletarians in the West (who have for some time worked with and shared the same conditions as tens of thousands of immigrant proletarians from the same countries that have been in the limelight in these first few months of 2011): Western proletarians lulled asleep and drugged by decades of *false well-being* and above all decapitated – deprived of their thinking head and directorship, the revolutionary party. This return onto the scene of the *prole-*

*tariat in arms* does in fact depend (second condition) on the extent to which the long and difficult uphill work *against the current* of putting down the roots of the international communist party proceeds and how far its decisive influence on the avant-garde battles affirms itself against all the traitors (unions and politicians) of the proletariat. Whilst we wait for the deflagration to spread with its inevitable pauses and low spots but with its sudden flare-ups too, we thus work to develop and establish roots for the revolutionary party, to combat our respective domestic bourgeoisies, to contribute to welding together the various sectors of struggling proletarians.

To make the Mediterranean a true *mare nostrum*: red like our flag!

## **The enemy of the Tunisian and Egyptian proletariat is identical to our own. It must be overthrown here in the imperialist heart of Europe**

The economic crisis that started out from the United States and from the centres of the capitalist world is surging like a tsunami towards the outskirts of the capitalist world and vice-versa, bursting its banks, in which deep cracks were found. The area stretching from Algeria (which tried to stop the protest with concessions on food prices) to Jordan (on the brink of collapse with its immense masses of starving Palestinian refugees) is in the grip of the same crisis. But in Yemen and Morocco, too, the streets are on fire, whilst

the traditional hotspots around Israel, Lebanon and the Strip of Gaza, are once again in a state of crisis. In the weaker countries the crisis, which had become social, because of overwhelming unemployment and the spread of poverty (the increase in food prices is merely the most obvious sign), has turned into a political one, as in Tunisia where the power of the old “bourgeois business committee” has been overturned by the people’s revolt, whose spearhead is represented by the proletarian masses, tired of putting up



with a situation that has lasted 23 years, with the approval of the great European bourgeoisies.

The same “bread revolt” (that of the dispossessed) then exploded in Egypt, the biggest and most industrialized country in the whole of Africa.

It’s an important moment for the world proletariat. *Not revolution*, but an announcement of events that sooner or later will set fire to the heart of the proletarian metropolises, now under the dictatorship of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Nonetheless, the reformist illusion will not be long in attempting, by other means, to patch together a compromise between the needs of the proletariat and the hymns to democracy, elections, “dignity and freedom”, reforms, government changes, before then unleashing a violent “clearing up” operation against the proletariat. As the old egime in Tunisia promises a political reshuffle whilst awaiting elections, in Egypt an attempt is being made to remedy the situation with a similar reshuffle, presenting a possible successor. The machinery of conservation and oppression will continue along its path unless it is stopped with the help of the entire proletariat: let us break the security barrier that keeps the two sides of the Mediterranean apart and bring the proletariat together in a fraternal embrace. This alone will decide whether blood has been shed in vain or not.

The first European countries to be shaken by the crisis (Greece in particular but also Ireland and Portugal) have been forced even further into debt by having to ask for considerable economic support against the growth in their public debt, the

crisis of the banks and financial system and widespread unemployment. But in the south of the south (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan, Yemen and today Egypt) the economic and political support that yesterday’s colonialist and today’s imperialist egimes are capable of giving, in the name of stability and a return to exploitation, will be directed towards the desperate attempt to re-launch the economic development that had taken place over recent years thanks to the massive presence of European companies, now feeling the backlash of the same crisis. Let governments come and go: just as long as profits, income, interest start to grow again! Whether lay democrats rule or Muslim Brothers, republicans or monarchists, just let the workers continue to sweat in the interests of the ruling class and its courtiers!

The vital living and working needs of the proletariat will not find a solution either in capitalism or in so-called social reforms, or in miserable religious charity, but in the destruction of the economic system itself.

The Maghreb and the Middle East, the “courtyards” of Europe, are thus starting to tremble: and with the advance of the crisis the latter is turning into a barrel of dynamite ready to be lit by the flame of the proletariat. Continuity of production and the re-establishment of business relations are essential for Europe, particularly at the moment as markets are being lost in the cut-throat fighting between world competitors and there is an urgent need for raw materials (gas and oil) and low-cost means of subsistence. But this situation demands “high-powered chal-

enges”, not the conjuring tricks and skirmishes heralded by full-scale trade wars and currency wars. The bilateral agreements between the big powers, the G8 and the G20, are only the external face of clear failure. The need for immigrant workers, whether seasonal or not, is becoming urgent, in close relation to the desire to “stabilize” the domestic proletariat.

And so the idea of “sending back home” the thousands of proletarians who come knocking on Europe’s doors is a mean illusion: “need” on both shores of *Mare Nostrum* constitutes an economic resource for all, productivity and profits on the one hand and income (which the African states cannot do without) on the other. The North-African market on the southern shores of the Mediterranean, far more economically advanced than Central-African areas, has its main gateway here. This is a place where the local economic situation, fully integrated into that of the old colonial powers, has lost its original bases (characterized by the land): both imports and exports (machinery against energy and agricultural products) move along exclusive, specialized routes towards Europe, with centralized division of labour managed from outside. The serious present crisis is thus heading towards disaster.

In the countries of the capitalist Centre, instead, no steps have yet been taken outside the framework of corporative protest: workers, precarious employees in industry and in the civil service and students are often in a state of rebellion, but the profound inertia of processes and the rust that has thickened over time in eco-

nomic and social structures are difficult to clear away. The democratic illusion is the basis and the breeding ground for all this. The demand to keep income up and the drive to resume work remain, and there is no real response to unemployment, the increase in precarious work, the prolonging of social buffers, or to the need for the banks to reinstate credit (in all its different forms) for production, trade and consumption. The defensive economic battle against poverty and unemployment is also fuelled by ancient Italianies on “rights”, on “past union victories”, and takes place on a terrain of whingeing strikes that prove to be merely useless and farcical processions: *not general strikes to the bitter end but pre-announced*, orchestrated, devoid of objectives.

If power in the capitalist outskirts of the world is being shaken, the proletariat in the centre cannot desert the battlefield and linger in the back lines, but must become the avant-garde that once shook the West with its revolution in the heart of Europe itself. Africa calls the world proletariat to its side: class defeatism must resume in the cities, the proletariat must contribute its strength, pushing the fight against the ruling powers as far forward as possible!

It is clear that the role of communists is central here, because an increasing awareness is needed that without its organizational organ of direction (*without the revolutionary party*) any proletarian uprising is destined to be defeated. Work on the international consolidation of the communist party is therefore urgent and cannot be postponed any longer.



## Algeria – Tunisia – Egypt... The fight has just begun!

### ***Proletarians, comrades!***

And so, in Egypt, Mubarak has resigned and the army has assumed full power, with the blessing of the United States (which has continued to finance it, interest-free, over all these decades) and the whole of the European bourgeoisie (whose only interest is to keep their own economic and strategic influence in the area). *Everything is changing so that nothing will change!*

“Events in Egypt” (a change of regime and *not a revolution*), which have involved at least three hundred deaths, have filled the front pages of all the media over the past two weeks, obscuring the fact that the whole of the “half moon”, reaching from Morocco to Jordan and Yemen has been overrun – in some places more than others – by a *powerful movement of struggle*.

Driven by increasingly hard living and working conditions, precariousness, oppression, the proletarian and proletarianized masses have taken to the streets. But their revolt, an instinctive, mass rebellion, has quickly been exploited to be used by those sectors of the national and petit bourgeoisie that have long been interested in modernizing their regimes, something made even more urgent by the pressing world economic crisis. Thus, in Egypt (the most significant country from an economic and strategic point of view), the wave of struggle has rapidly been channelled towards democratic objectives of reform and the fight against corruption: it has thus been deprived of its *potential power*. This could not have been otherwise, given the instinctive nature of the revolt and the absence of a revolutionary force able to pose openly, once and for all, the question of power: that is, the issue of *who really rules* – not one individual or another, but *which class and in whose interests*.

### ***Proletarians from Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia and from all the countries in the area!***

Have no illusions! The army will not be a guarantee of “greater freedom”! It will guarantee *exclusively* the interests (*opposite to ours*) of national and international capital. In the short term it may even make some concessions and allow a few illusory crumbs to fall. But they will be crumbs. The world economic crisis is rife and destined to become more serious: thus the army will guarantee ... a return to work and to exploitation, putting everyone back into chains again and squeezing hard to obtain profits (not by chance one of its first measures was to ban strikes!). And if it then occurs to anyone to demonstrate again for living and working conditions that are less harsh, to obtain more bread and houses and be less exploited, the “army of freedom” will do what all bourgeois armies do when *faced with a warring proletariat*: use beatings, guns and cannons!

### ***Proletarians, comrades!***

To the north and to the south of the Mediterranean, *two objectives* are always on the agenda, difficult ones but – *as history teaches us* – not impossible:

- *resurgence of open class warfare*, against our bourgeois counterparts, breaking the social peace that has been suffocating us for decades, answering every attack by capital blow for blow, organizing ourselves above and beyond any geographical, political, linguistic or religious barriers;

- *strengthening of the international roots of the revolutionary party*, the only guide and general staff of a final attack against our enemy – the capitalist mode of production and the State that defends it – , for the dictatorship of the proletariat and communism.

These are two enormous objectives, but urgent and inalienable ones. Any other path would only lead to more suffering and more massacres.

## **Against the “holy alliance” of the imperialist bourgeoisie and its train of pacifists and partisans: class defeatism**

As communists and internationalists, we know, through memory and the science of history, that, in the age of imperialism, any mission, *whatever mask it may wear*, is a war mission. The attack on the latest puppet in the imperialist chain, Colonel Gheddafi, is no exception.

*Imperialism does*, in fact, mean more international competition, more aggressive trade wars, export of capitals that inevitably enter into conflict with one another, control over the sources of raw materials and their transport routes and thus the attempt to exclude competitors, right up to the uncontrolled explosion of conflicts that start out as local and then, in perspective and where favourable material conditions exist, become *worldwide*.

This is what has been going on for decades (since the appearance of a new economic crisis of over-production on the scene of world capitalism) and still regards firstly the area reaching from the Balkans and embracing the Middle East as far as Afghanistan and Pakistan, the crossroads of more or less legitimate and legal trade (arms and drugs), of vital trade corridors, oil- and gas-lines, oil fields and sources of water, which imperialism has always been ogling and clutching at – not latest *Italian imperialism* which has considerable interests not just dating from the day before yesterday and which in any case wants (must) try to carve out for itself, in order to maintain its own portion of presence.

The bloody scenes of armed repression have now been joined by the area of the Maghreb, swept by a vigorous rebellion by the dispossessed proletarian masses. After Egypt, where the army imposed itself in Cairo with its massive line-up of tanks, the highest expression of bourgeois dictatorship, as a guarantee of the passage to so-called democracy; and after Tunisia, where the union organization Ugtt, a carbon copy of the national corporations dominating Europe, devoted itself to the social control of the Tunisian proletariat, the armed conflicts between separate sectors of the Libyan bourgeoisie have had the effect of suffocating any possibility of connection between the proletarians in the area, above and beyond borders. The broad-spectrum military attack by the imperialist powers (USA, France, Great Britain, Italy, the Arab League, etc.) confirms that the objective of the surgical operation is not so much and not only the colonel but social control of the whole North-African area.

Nothing could have been better suited than the pretext of a so-called Libyan war between factions of the bourgeoisie for exploiting the ‘casus belli’ with a “humanitarian” intervention (in aid of the so-called rebels), the military potential of which

is beyond imagination. According to script, this has been joined by pacifists who deplore the excessive use of violence, nationalist partisans and democrats of all descriptions, Libyan and non, whose only purpose is to check the social earthquake that has been threatening to cause havoc in their capitalist interests. All the bourgeois parties, all the sickening, war-mongering and democratic nationalism, are thus united in this Holy Alliance, with an openly anti-proletarian function.

As communists and internationalists, we know that it will be the proletarians and poor, dispossessed masses of *all countries* that will be paying the price. And as communists and internationalists, our slogans are clear, *against any form of pacifism and national partisan movement*:

- Refusal of any military adventure (whatever the mask it wears: humanitarian, democratic, bringer of civilization) by the home bourgeoisie
- Refusal to accept sacrifices in the name of the “national economy” (military expenditure is an essential component of any national budget, in war as in peace)
- Organization of struggles in defence of the proletariat’s living and working conditions, as an obligatory move for dealing a hard blow to the war effort of the home bourgeoisie
- A decisive return to the methods and objectives of the class war, breaking all ties with any logic of social harmony and peace – methods and objectives that for now represent the only real internationalist solidarity of proletarians in the imperialist strongholds against the oppression of the proletarian masses

Only according to these basic premises, which imply independent action by the proletariat, can open revolutionary defeatism be organized by placing it at the centre of the class strategy so that it can break and destroy the war front.

In this struggle who are our allies? Our allies are proletarians all over the world and in particular those from the countries massacred by the imperialist war. They are not and never will be any bourgeois faction, however armed or “resistant”, whatever appearance it may take, religious or reformist, democratic or so-called “anti-imperialist”.

The interventions that have been taking place in the last decade show that the capitalist mode of production has come to the end of its path; that its long agony is merely destructive; that it is therefore necessary to put it out of its misery, to finally achieve, through the violent seizing of power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat directed by the communist party, a classless society, communism. Thus the true achievement of the present age is the rebirth, extension, sinking of roots of the world communist party, whose programme and strategy may provide fuel for the class organizations that will arise to defend the living and working conditions of the proletariat.

Visit our web site:

**[www.internationalcommunistparty.org](http://www.internationalcommunistparty.org)**

**and its English and Spanish pages**

# Greek chronicles

*What follows is a series of articles and a leaflet, published on our Italian journal "Il programma comunista", in the course of 2010, chronicling and detailing the rapidly deteriorating Greek situation. At the moment (October 2010), no big demos are taking place, but the situation is still explosive, and things will be changing rapidly under the pressure of an economic crisis which only due to deepen further.*

## Ultimatum to Greek Proletarians

From 7th to 8th December 2009, on the anniversary of the police killing of young Alexandros Grigoropoulos, clashes broke out again on the streets of Athens and other Greek cities. At the same time, at European institutional headquarters an uproar of declarations were unleashed on Greece's serious economic-financial situation. During the various episodes of urban warfare, the young people, many of whom unemployed or temporary workers, working in education and in the service industries, either isolated or attached to left-wing and anarchist aggregations, faced ten thousand policemen in anti-riot gear. The legitimacy acquired by the Pan-hellenic Socialist Movement (Pasok) in the October elections (brought forward by two years from the normal term of legislation because of the collapse of the right-wing New Democracy party) was in need of a demonstration of strength and this is exactly what happened; the Ministry responsible for public order, re-baptized "Ministry for the Security of Citizens", attacked the young people, fending off stone-throwing and molotovs, in perfect accord with the harsh recommendations of the ECB (European Central Bank). The social recovery is clearly to be seen in the applause from the media, referring to the fact that degeneration of the clashes had been avoided, as well as the solidarity from the people that had occurred a year previously. The watchword "zero tolerance" with a number of arrests (120) and detentions (540) recorded throughout Greece, seems to have borne its fruits: this is demonstrated by the use of thermal video cameras, even by helicopters in the air over Athens, and the finger-

printing of all the demonstrators stopped, in order to create an archive to be compared to that of the “nameless” one of those responsible for attacks on police stations and other institutions over recent months. “Armour-plated democracy” in fact, *increasingly armour-plated*...

The storm being over, the real problem emerges in full daylight: the spectre of the economic crisis and the reality of starvation wages, as well as the illusion that the socialist government will be able to succeed where the right-wing failed. Greek proletarians will thus have to take up the class struggle once again, after the brief, ineffective and inconclusive youth revolt: the ultimatum by the Pasok and by the ECB is in fact directed at them, to make them bow their heads whilst the hangman’s rope is slipped on. Immediately the old leader Papandreou declared that “the financial crisis threatens our national sovereignty”; drastic economic measures are thus required “within the context of law and order.” Thus the Greek proletariat, too, will have to return to its *class memory* (the experience of struggle and the tradition of the world proletariat, incarnated in the revolutionary party), founding their own strength upon it and ultimately using it against bourgeois law and order.

## The economic and social situation

The Greek economy, the weakest in the Eurozone, is thus dealing with a new recession, following that of 1993, whilst its national debt is soaring. Papandreou’s legitimate, democratic government is being asked to deal politically with something it cannot deal with economically. And the first action taken in the field, as we have seen, has been an ostentatious demonstration of repressive force, stigmatized by the radical left as... “an unprecedented event”. We are writing about Greece here but the same economic contradictions are disturbing the sleep of countries like Ireland, Spain, Hungary, Portugal, without mentioning the smaller, East-European countries such as Latvia and Estonia which risk bankruptcy and being cut off by the rating institutions.

Some significant figures: 14% of Greek workers live below the poverty level, with an income that is 60% less than the national average (the EU average is around 8%); this poverty should not be attributed to unemployment (and here, as usual, the accounts have deliberately been faked) but to the inadequacy of family income, whilst the gap between wealth and misery is the most unbalanced in Europe. The unemployment rate for the third quarter of 2009, which rose to its maximum level in 4 years, is nonetheless said to be 9.3%, with an increase of 2.1 points from the 7.2% given for the third quarter of 2008. The “Financial Times” has reported that several pharmaceutical groups have appealed to Brussels, complaining of failure to settle payments by the Greek health system: a black hole of 7-billion-euro that joins the growing national

debt. The huge amount of the debt also makes any effective counter-measures impossible.

All this accumulates with the growing social tension, only kept under control thanks to the regime of “democratic legality” with the full support of the left-wing organizations (the Stalinist KKE party in the lead): youth movements for university reform, union “opposition”, maxi-strike by dockers and agricultural workers ... A few months ago there was enough going on to cause a government crisis, despite Karamanlis (leader of the centre-right party New Democracy, in power up to September) having tried everything to invert the course of things: a government re-shuffle, special new police departments to stem urban guerrilla warfare (in actual fact to mark off *non-class* territories: universities and *bohémien* neighbourhoods), new forms of control on public spending, the boasted “zero tolerance” against corruption, huge investments to guarantee ready cash and credit for small and medium-sized businesses ... It was not enough. Thus, whilst the situation was precipitating, on the other hand a more widespread social crisis was arising: unemployment grew and social buffers proved to be insufficient; the amnesty on the public and national debt seemed to be a “mission impossible” in view of the backward structure of industry (the strong points around which wealth had grown were tourism and the services offered by the merchant navy, as well as European public funding for backward areas amounting to 3.3% of the GNP); the results of the commercial balance and that of the balance of payments were both negative at around 15% of GNP; and lastly, from a positive position (4.5% in recent years) the growth rate crashed to -1% at the onset of the crisis.

## Europe's bankers

Greece's debt in the midst of the storm is “very serious”, states the Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs, in his term of office as president of the EU<sup>1</sup>. The governor of the National Bank of Austria replies: “the

high deficits run up by countries like Greece, Ireland and Spain are worrying the ECB, which is following the trend in public finances with close attention,” in the context of a general deterioration due to the financial crisis and the recession. But “none of the states risking deficits will be saved by the ECB.” The number one of the Bundesbank, a member of Eurotower's executive board, warns that Athens has one year to bring the present deficit (12.7% of GNP *and not* 3.2% as the previous government claimed) and public debt (leaning towards 126% of GNP in 2010 and 138% in 2012) back under control: if not, the temporary agreements with the Greek banks “which today provide the ECB with Greek State bonds as collateral against a cash loan, will no longer be able to do so.” And just

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1. All the figures and quotations that follow are taken from *Il Manifesto* of 8th December and the *Sole 24 Ore* of the 10th, 12th and 16th December last.

to confirm the central diktat, on 19th December, the leading credit banks were downgraded. The Deputy Financial Minister explains that the public debt has reached a sum total of 300 billion euros, the "highest in the history of modern Greece," to which should be added 220 billion of family debts and business debts with banks and financial institutions. By the beginning of February the EU commission will indicate the new deadline by which the country will have to put its accounts in order, bringing the deficit into line with the EU Agreement on stability and growth (3% and 60% of GNP). But rumours are adding new fuel to the ultimatum: Greece and Ireland may leave the eurozone by the end of 2010 because of their "intolerable" economic situation. Basically, the weaker links in the chain of the Eurozone are to be pushed in the direction of devaluation to solve their problems by printing banknotes.

Between one ultimatum and the next, in the general air of hypocrisy, Merkel manages to remember the oath of the Musketeers: "All for the euro, and the euro for all", or, less poetically, "What happens to one member state of the EU regards all the others, too, because we have a single currency, which means shared responsibility." The common feeling of the European bourgeoisie (since there is not and cannot be a bourgeoisie that is not national) is thus based for now on the stability of the euro: tomorrow, quite new determining factors will be playing "Russian roulette".

## The noose is prepared

A series of crashes on the stock market have shown that the contradictions amidst which Greece is struggling to survive possess deadly potential. Two in particular: the recent downgradings and unusable Greek state bonds (90% of which serve to gain financing from the ECB). The 47-billion-euro maxi-offer of these bonds (30 for immediate coverage of requirements and 17 for renewal of mature securities) is not, in fact, credible, it is impossible to manage in practice: all this shows that Greece risks bankruptcy. There is nothing else for it but *to attack the proletariat*, forcing it to deliver the ... accumulated poverty, attacking its living and working conditions. However, an open attack without alternative solutions and social consensus would mean political suicide: we therefore have no doubt that Europe, willingly or not, will do everything possible to save the Greek bourgeoisie. Between pressure from the Balkans (on whom the Greek economy depends politically and economically – in particular the Macedonian crisis area) and pressure from Turkey (an economic and strategic power standing astride three great crisis areas), Greek economic-financial weakness runs the risk of becoming linked to the previous Balkans crisis. Energetic action against the proletariat is therefore inevitable. In this dangerous situation, the various sectors of the bourgeoisie are getting ready, closely surveyed by the great imperialist bourgeoisies of



central Europe who are sounding out their anti-working class determination. The open meeting to discuss the problems threatening the country's stability (the special summit of national unity with all the political leaders) met with wide consensus, "despite the ideological differences" (!): the fight against corruption, tax evasion and the management of healthcare found everyone in agreement, but as to the entity of cuts to public spending and the rapidity of the manoeuvre, no-one would commit.

And so the dance begins again: only a few unions took part in the general strike on 17th December against the economic measures - those strictly obedient to the government refused to participate and the KKE "symbolically" occupied the Finance Ministry, accepting Papandreou's request. The recovery plan, which regarded a wave of privatization, pension reform, freezing the salaries of state employees and new jobs in state employment, has met with a negative reaction from Europe, being judged insufficient. "The crisis strikes indiscriminately", the media repeat, in order to facilitate national unity. Whilst the radical left-wing Syriza attributes responsibility for the situation to the right and accuses the Pasok of going back on the promises made during the election campaign ("salary increases and redistribution of wealth"), the right-wing is demanding that the neighbourhoods in the hands of the anarchists be pulled apart, as well as the end of the University's "right of asylum". The reform of the tax system is also disturbing the calm waters of the middle classes, who are in the eye of the storm in economic crises. A manoeuvre to bring home capital from abroad with special Italian-style discounts or the help of the IMF as against the ECB have not been taken into consideration for now. The reduction of the deficit from 12.7% to 8.7% is considered a mere bluff that no-one believes. It is thus foreseeable that if the situation should take a turn for the worse (with a sizeable increase in unemployment next month) the right-wing and the Pasok will decide to ban workers' demonstrations, with, sooner or later, a "severe warning" to the "Europe of the bankers" that wishes to ruin Greece.

At this point a far broader and harsher conflict than that of a simple revolt might open up: *the class conflict*. But this requires internationalist (not national), strategic and tactical preparation; it requires a centralized, militant political organization and organisms of economic defence which distance themselves from the whole of the democratic and Stalinist front; it also requires the final break with spontaneity and its travelling companion, the armed minorities. The path that leads to the return of the class struggle does not include any defence of the *bourgeois* centres of culture (the universities) and the bohémien youth neighbourhoods, or re-launching the old reformist watchwords "against the bosses and the government"; instead it includes a fight against the entire enemy front under the guidance of a political class organism, the international communist party. Without all this, there can be nothing but defeat, in Greece as anywhere else.



# Resisting the sirens of social pacification and nationalism

Athens, 10th February 2010

"It's a war against the workers and we reply with war" : this was one of the slogans launched during the demonstration called on announcement of the diktat against the Greek proletariat by the Central-European bourgeoisie, gathered (and, in this situation, solidly united) in Brussels. A slogan that gave it to be understood that the fight would continue indefinitely until the austerity measures announced by the government against the workers had been revoked. A slogan unfortunately submerged (and it could not have been otherwise) by the illusion that the present world economic crisis is just a transitory event, from which we shall recover "one way or another": a normal gust of wind from abroad that the good will and providential return of the socialists to government, faithful to their election promises, will chase back to where it came from.

The draconian conditions (9.8 billion euros) imposed on the Greek proletariat are no small matter: "Cuts and salary freezes in the public sector with no new jobs, tax reform and a fight against tax evasion, structural reform to improve the efficiency of public administration, review of pensions and healthcare, improvements in the operation of the labour market and collective negotiation mechanisms" (from Italian economic daily *Il Sole 24 Ore* of 4th February).

Right in the middle of the storm and as though at the end of a conflict in which it had been defeated, the Greek bourgeoisie, through its political and economic business committee, delegates all its class autonomy (its power to exploit the proletariat) to the combined forces of a body of bankers, at the head of which is the agreement, destined for failure, between Germany and France, the two countries most involved through the exposure of their banks in Athens, which have maintained sole leadership during the so-called "negotiations".

The transition towards the political integration of a "democratic Europe" (that of the "people", dreamed of by the so-called "left") thus begins to take an increasingly clearer form: for the moment it is not called a *German Reich* but a "*State of close surveillance*". All the chancelleries of the states in the so-called Union are feeling the profound tremors (the crisis on the European stock exchanges of 5th February was the umpteenth sign of how serious the situation is) produced by the general crisis, which has most certainly not been overcome and of which speculation is only a symptom, and are preparing to face it by patching it up with the means remaining available. The failure of the diktat on Greece may mean a series of flare-ups likely to involve not only secondary players such as Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece, Spain (the so-called Pigs: pigs to be slaughtered...) and all

the sequel of the East-European and Balkan buffer-states, but the *heart of the European continent itself*.

"No, we're only at the start," the workers seem to be saying in the slogan, and the as-yet vague awareness of the embryos of avant-garde militancy (i.e. that a class war is going on against the workers) correctly anticipates events. The workers, the majority public employees, the sector most fiercely attacked by the measures (salary freezes, no new jobs, raising of the average retirement age) joined a 24-hour national protest strike (schools, hospitals, ministries and public offices closed and air traffic blocked), during which riot police fired tear gas in Athens, after trucks attempted to break through a police cordon.

Unemployment, now sky-high (formally 10.6% but this is a false figure like all the others), fuels and will continue to fuel coming strikes like petrol on a fire. There were 7000 people in the streets of Athens, demonstrating their indignation at the austerity measures promoted by the socialist government now in power (which – an old story – states that these were taken "despite itself": the fault of the old government which had concealed the economic situation...). As the months passed, the economic situation, changing hands from the right to the Pasok in October 2009, has grown worse with a peak in the public debt because of an attack, so the government says, by "speculation", which is said to be undermining Europe's "joint scaffolding", considerably weakening its monetary glue, the euro.

The strike, which follows numerous others that have been taking place for around a year now and which was called before the cuts were known of, whilst not a general strike, was wide-ranging and involved 85% of workers: a strong demonstration, the proof of what is starting to make its way in their ranks. The isolation in which the Greek workers find themselves, because of the practice of all the formally recognized union corporations in existence today, as well as the feeble reaction of other European workers invested by the same crisis, thus the absence of a unified context of militancy by the European proletariat, certainly do nothing to open up the horizon. Consequently, the reply of "war" launched in the slogan, whilst very close to our call for "economic defeatism" in terms of defending general living and working conditions (at present the only possible counter-measure, faced with the austerity plan), is as yet incapable of dominating the social scene. Unfortunately the way out of the desert, of this horrendous class submission called "social peace" which has been forcibly imposed by the bourgeoisie ever since the end of the second world war (thanks to the corruption of broad sectors of the "national" proletariat by opportunist parties and unions and in the absence of an international class Party) will inevitably be difficult, contradictory, often dramatic: but, differently from the past, will open up positive future scenarios for our class.

The diktat of the bankers in Brussels with the blessing of Papandreou's govern-

ment ("closing ranks and tightening our belts for the good of the country!, respecting the "European recommendations" "to the letter") means attacking the working class decidedly on all fronts (a true example of "preventive decimation"), before it can recover and spread the workers' struggle on a vaster scale defending itself without quarter.

The union organizations of the public sector Adedy and the Pame (the militant workers' front, linked to the Kke, or Greek communist party), which called the strike, declare that they wish to oppose the diktat by means of a "hard fight". Instead, their control action means riding the wave of anger – however subdued – that is attempting to burst into being, in order to suffocate it later: the fear is that the social situation may become incandescent and the workers' reaction get out of hand. Against the threatened strikes the Pasok, in turn, hopes as soon as possible to succeed in ranging the country's middle classes and the support it enjoys from the more pro-government unions, which during the December strikes had been pointed to by the most combative workers as "the unions of the bosses and the blacklegs": in this way it hopes to continue keeping the situation in hand. This, indeed, is why the right-wing party has voluntarily stepped aside: the division of roles follows the old path that the bourgeoisie and social-democratic opportunism have always followed. As we wrote in a previous article, in this shifting situation what is needed is internationalist (and not national) strategic and tactical preparation; organisms of economic defence are needed able to distance themselves from the entire opportunistic front; definitive closure towards spontaneity and its travelling companion, armed minorities, is required; a centralized militant political organization is needed. *Briefly, the fight must be directed against the entire enemy front, brandishing the watchword of the "single international proletarian front", under the guidance of a political class organization.*

In the meantime, there is growing protest by the agricultural workers, who are demanding the payment of European subsidies and have been blocking roads with their tractors for almost three weeks ("there's no more tripe for the cats," is the answer they receive). On the same days, in Brussels, it seems that Greece's European partners are close to agreement on a salvage plan, an agreement which, the German officials have tried to stress, will only apply "in principle". History teaches us that, for the bourgeoisie, economic motif, immediate interests, come in second place after the reality of its class dominion: rather than the threat of Greece's financial instability, the fear is that *the spectre of political class contagion* may rear its head.

## Athens, 24th February 2010

Despite the Pasok's insistent appeals for social peace and national unity in the face of the serious crisis, a strike by millions of workers (trains, buses, banks,

schools, public offices, hospitals all closed) has paralyzed the whole of Athens and Thessaloniki. This time it was the private sector union, Gsee (General Confederation of Workers), to call the national general strike against the government's austerity measures and the wall opposed by industrialists to the renewal of contracts. After abandoning a government commission on pension reform (which, to the applause of the employers, foresees raising the retirement age), the union declared, lying shamelessly: "Workers in the public sector will fight and obtain rises despite the markets." Although motivated by an explosive situation, rather than just being pro-government and moderate, the union has managed to inoculate the alarmed and confused mass of workers with tons of calming camomile, so that, apart from the Pame demonstration, the strike took place according to the tired, liturgical ritual of the past: you can bet there was the ritual waving of banners and flags.

"A heartfelt condemnation" was inevitably issued by the head of the Csee union: "The Greek people are well aware that the country's tax situation is appalling and a fair distribution of burdens is required, so that employed people and pensioners do not pay the price of a crisis they did not bring about," – a real piece of play-acting, the fruit of a corporate embrace between State and union, to be accepted humbly in order to share out the recovery of tax resources and the distribution of the price to be paid... by the workers, of course. "Tax the speculators," read the slogan waved by one of the demonstrators in Athens; "People and their needs before markets and profits," was to be seen on another by the Gsee... all indications of a whingeing reaction to a storm conceived not as socially determined but as purely "natural". Meanwhile the union front, Pame, whose point of reference is the Greek communist party, held a separate demonstration with more thousands of people.

Apart from closing sorties by the anarchists and the repeated clashes through which a small number of workers upheld and defended their claims, thus being severely attacked by riot police with tear gas and truncheons, the demonstration left nothing but a desolate void. The appeal by the premier for unity, which still now continues to meet with the public's favour only 4 months after the vote, has found agreement with the vast majority of citizens (this is obvious) contrary to mass protests in the midst of a crisis, but also with the workers. The announcement of severe measures against corruption and tax evasion and the constitution of a parliamentary commission of enquiry to ascertain political responsibility for the crisis have obtained further endorsement. The "communist" party (Kke) raised its voice, calling the people to "a great revolt against the 'barbaric measures' the government had taken and might take" (where 'barbaric' means 'conditions imposed by abroad' on the sovereign people with all the nationalist implications involved).

And it was from Europe and Washington that the Commission's experts came,

from the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to see if the measures adopted by the government, and which were the original cause of the discontent and the strike, had been implemented and, above all, whether they were sufficient.

## Athens 11th March, 2010

The third strike comes after the third round of provisions for recovering from the debt: an added 4.8 billion for the State coffers, 2% of GNP – increases in VAT, in tax on fuel and luxury goods, but above all new cuts in spending, 12% off unemployment benefit and 7% off salary support measures, the extension of the freeze on salaries and pensions for the whole of 2010, the “one off” elimination of 30% of the thirteenth month’s pay and 60% of the fourteenth month’s (see the Italian economic daily *Il Sole 24 ore* of 4/3).

The demonstration was called by the union confederations, the private sector (Csee) and the public sector (Adady). In Athens there was complete stoppage. “The march of the 100 thousand,” as the headlines in Italian leftist daily *il Manifesto* read on 12th March, “is the biggest demonstration that Athens has ever experienced in such difficult conditions, conditions whose negative effects won’t make themselves felt until the months and years to come.” Behind the banner reading “We will not pay for the crisis” march the employees who are to be deprived of their salary supplement (which constitutes a large part of it but is not computed for the purposes of pensions or severance pay), the Macedonian miners, the public transport workers, those in schools, hospitals and airports and from the Skaramanga shipyards. Against this huge show of strength “controlled” by the two union organizations, the massive front of riot police is ranged along the two-kilometre route, with tear gas, shields and truncheons. The university faculties go into action and the anarchists improvise clashes with Molotov bombs and stone throwing in the areas of the Polytechnic and the Exarchia neighbourhood – as per script. The workers, having been deprived of their fighting ability and any sense of class antagonism over all these years, continued their march without objectives, behind state-supported union formations.

“Never have such harsh economic measures hit the workers since the times of the military dictatorship,” declares a Gsee union representative; but this does not stop him from claiming that “the problem can be solved by increasing the taxes paid by the big companies and by strict control over tax evasion.” The spokesman for Syriza, the alternative left-wing coalition (13 members of parliament) can thus launch his little joke, “The demand to cancel the national debt, or part of it, must be the main aim of the European left.” In turn, the separate march by the Greek “communist” party (21 seats in parliament) had harsh words for the two unions, calling them “Papandreou’s henchmen.” We should certainly not be surprised if these “appear-

ances" from parliament, accompanied by some dissenting faction in the Pasok (which is already making itself heard) may offer to "save the country", when the intensity of the crisis grows.

Thousands took part in the strike at Thessaloniki, the traditional industrial barycentre of northern Greece, where the 15% unemployment rate has soared to 25% (youth unemployment to 40%), compared to a national average of 10.6%. The situation is "alarming and explosive": there have been massive lay-offs in the textile and manufacturing industries, in commerce and building. Even worse is the condition of the migrant Turks and workers from the Balkans in the building industry, with 70% unemployment. Not to mention the situation of Greek Macedonia and Thrace, the poorest areas in the country, now on the brink of collapse...

Thus, this third strike, too, has left room for the most widespread uncertainty. The masses marching behind false banners, false slogans and false objectives were unable to express their anger: disillusion will take the place of the fighting spirit, sombre resignation will spread because no objective has been reached or even posed. Mass is not organization, and organization is not awareness: without awareness of the final objectives (even just those of defending living and working conditions) there is no organization, numbers are useless. Nevertheless, the dynamics of the crisis will produce a demand to satisfy certain basic needs, to open up the cornucopia of promises and illusions. The Pasok has already used up the promises it made in the election campaign, the national alarm has already been notified to the mass of the proletariat, the reply to Europe's bankers has run its time, the card of the requests for aid has not found many sympathetic ears: the union organizations have oriented the workers towards resignation, whilst the "left-wing" national-communist puppets have started to unleash the dogs of Nationalism and "Greekness".

## Between Greek culture, war compensation and dynamite

The various forms of bourgeois Stalinist and radical politics, the Kke and Syriza (Colation of the radical left), old and new areas of the left hired out to nationalism and ready to give their support at the crucial moment to guarantee, as per script, "the security of the country, its industries, its independence, its sovereignty," could not fail to intervene.

Lo and behold, the litigation on war damages produced by Nazism, the claim for works of art taken by Germany and the hymn to the "greatness of Greek culture" were ready at hand. Thus *il Manifesto* of 25th February could not fail to emphasize the issue: "But the Greeks [no – careful – the Greek bourgeoisie that fuels nationalism! Ed.] are irritated with Brussels and above all Berlin. For several weeks now, politicians and the media in Athens [not the Greek bourgeoisie! Ed.] have been pointing out Merkel's hostile stance, considered the "main obstacle to a sympathetic attitude towards Greece."

With his chest thrust forward, one of the seminary brothers of Syriza starts to splutter that: "We have not asked the Germans for economic aid, instead for the moment we are paying them an enormous sum of money for arms purchased, but on their side there is no respect or sympathy for the problems we are facing at the moment!" And whilst the journal *Focus* stirs up nationalist feeling, calling the Greeks "The rascals in the euro-family" and publishing a cover showing the Venus di Milo telling the Greeks and their culture to go fuck themselves, in a parliamentary enquiry the whole of the Syriza, as well as the extreme right-wing party Laos, demand "compensation for the damages and slaughter the Greek people suffered at the hands of the Nazis, who wiped out entire towns." *The Manifesto* adds, just to keep the ball rolling, that these are "legally recognized debts" which Germany refuses to pay, despite the Greek left-wing having raised the matter in the past. And again, in an interview with the BBC, the Vice-Premier declares: "During the occupation, the Nazis made off with all the gold deposited in the Bank of Greece, taking all our money and failing to repay it." And who could not fail to appear here but the Greek anti-fascist hero of the resistance, Manolis Glezos, a "communist" of the Kke, who came to the Syriza after his militancy in the Pasok (these cunning old fellows never change!) which, in reply to the *Focus* cover, replies with an almost identical cover on its own journal and a pregnant title: "National independence" (see: *il Manifesto*, 12th March). Here we have the whole menu of nationalism (whatever its precise colour): Greece squeezed like a lemon, Greece in the claws of the speculators. "They want to turn us into a country hotel for their summer holidays," "Europe's agricultural policies [which] stop us cultivating our fields, promote the import of cars but halt the exploitation of our raw materials with which we could produce industrial quantities of aluminium." And so on, accusing Europe and the Pasok of planning Greece's exit from the monetary Union and spreading panic in the hope that the workers will accept the sacrifices. "Spending on defence – 4.5% of GNP and twice as much as the European average - must be cut." The declarations that Glezos makes to *il Manifesto* are a prime example of the counter-revolutionary function served by "democratic" Stalinists (an eminently Jesuit variety compared to the originals!). Since the polls speak of the Pasok's collapse (from 75% to 51%), in order to gain support, the Syriza (a mish-mash of vote-seeking agents) has decided to "concentrate on the ideological, political and organizational autonomy of the groups that make up our coalition." If we add here the declarations by the terrorist group "The Will of the People"<sup>2</sup> which has issued a document claiming responsibility for the recent dynamite attack on the Political

Office of the Ministry for the Protection of Citizens (the Greek Home Ministry), warning that it "will strike at the political and economic elites responsible for inequality and injustice," then we have reached the limit.

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2. In Russia, *Narodnaia Volia* (The Will of the People) was a populist secret society organized in 1879 for the revolutionary battle against the tsarist aristocracy. Which planet have these people been living on?



The sparks of a vast conflagration are thus spreading everywhere, under the pressure of the crisis and the workers' battles. The term for payments is approaching: the liberist doctors and left-wing priests are gathering around the dying man's bedside, with their prescriptions and their *de profundis* psalms; the nightmare of bankruptcy hovers like a ghost; "The country is at war against an unprecedented crisis," states a worried Papandreou.

Yes, it is true: "*It is at war against the workers and the answer must be class war, before it is too late!*"

## **To the bourgeoisie that promises the workers "blood and tears" the answer is class war throughout Europe**

### **A tiny earthenware vase**

In terms of world reality, what does the enterprise-Greece represent *economically*? A small thing indeed. And in the European Union? Only 2.5% of total GNP: a small earthenware vase in the midst of massive iron containers. What real difference is there in "her" crisis compared to that of America, Europe, Japan? None: it is the daughter of *the same global crisis of capitalism*. And it is her very economic insignificance that is leading Greece to bankruptcy, and not the scandal of faking the accounts with the help of Goldman Sachs, the bank that is today under investigation for having caused (so they say) the crash of home mortgages in the USA: *Greece is too small not to go bankrupt*. To this we should add the concern of petit bourgeois pro-Europe feeling: the entire framework, so to speak, of the monetary Union is said to be unravelling, alas, under the blows of the crisis... Whether Greece leaves the monetary Union, or whether Germany leaves to re-establish a new and more solid monetary agreement, as is being whispered on many sides, meaning that everything ends up by being temporarily patched up before its final annulment, by restructuring of the debt or some other expedient, as in Argentina, the dynamics of the economic crisis will run on through their transit stations towards an *inevitable political crisis between countries*.

There are those who call up the memory of events in Sarajevo in 1914, which opened up the way for the first world war, and there are those who think that the time has come for Germany's living space (*Lebensraum*) to be filled with quite different power politics. Nonetheless, the jungle of Europe's national sub-species is already ready to sell out, as always, dragged in the wake of the great powers and constituting the bases for the different alliances. It is the domino ef-

fect of the economic crisis that is worrying: that it may strike one country or another quite chaotically, one after the other, without any consistency. This is why we shall follow events in Greece as if her debts were the main issue, but keep the global scenario of the crisis of overproduction well in view, raging as it is like the perfect storm in the collision between the Asian cyclone of the emerging countries with amazing growth rates (youthful exuberance!) and the anticyclone of the old western countries with negligible rates (senile arteriosclerosis!). The statistics here and there and the estimates on Greece merely allow us to understand the secondary aspects of the matter, since it is the global context to which the little enterprise-Greece is bound that permits us to explain the local effects, and not vice-versa.

### Some figures on the real situation

3. Following figures are taken from *Il mondo in cifre 2010*, published by "I libri di Internazionale".

4. We are not going to discuss these figures: some of them are real disguise of reality. Only a relative comparison among diverse countries at the same empirical-statistical conditions would allow us to have some evaluation and to utilise "some times" these figures. But it would be a loss of time to try and put them in relation with reality – even less with Marx's parameters. Bourgeois economy has nothing in common with the depth of natural, mathematical and physical sciences, which were the pride of bourgeoisie in its heyday. It is incapable to read present-day reality, and so it is in its very nature, *counter-revolutionary*. Some critical considerations on the modalities of calculation of Gross National Product, for instance, are useful to understand the blunders of many assumptions called "data".

The population of Greece amounts to 11.2 million<sup>3</sup>, half of whom are concentrated in the main cities (Athens and Thessaloniki). The mountainous nature of the terrain, a characteristic of the Balkans (with only 20% of arable land), allows for only typically Mediterranean crops (mainly olives) and low density population (84.9 inhabitants per sq. km); employment<sup>4</sup>, with 12% in agriculture, 22% in industry and 66% in the service industries, places the country in a capitalistic trend of development, which it shares more with the Balkan area than with Central Europe and the areas immediately surrounding it. The pro-capita GNP amounts to 28,000 dollars (Germany: 40,320 dollars): 3.8% derives from agriculture,

20.3% from industry (from the puniest to the most important) and 75.9% from services. The employment figures (12%) and those on the source of GNP (3.8%), so high in agriculture, are no longer recordable in Central Europe (Germany: 2% and 0.9%; France: 4% and 2.2%; Austria: 6% and 1.9%). The average annual unemployment rate (10% from 1995 to 2007), despite being so high, says little about the origins of the unemployment (and employment), just as the average growth rate of real GNP says very little (4.8%, from 2002 to 2007). GNP amounts to 313 billion dollars; imports to 76.2 billion dollars and exports to 23.6 billion - in both cases, Germany and Italy are in the top places - resulting in a negative trade balance of 52.6 billion dollars. Average annual inflation (2003-2008) stands at 3.4%. Tourism is the only real service industry, with ship-building propping up the balance. Spending on health comes to 9.5% of the GNP (Germany: 10.6%) and spending on education 3.5% (Germany: 4.4%). The defence budget is decisive: 5% of GNP,

higher in percentage terms than that of Germany and France – 14 billion euros yearly from 2007 to 2009<sup>5</sup>, with a considerable army of 177,600. Proof of the fact that Greece is trapped in her strategic-military fault line with Turkey and a long-standing quarrel over Cyprus and other Aegean islands, making this a critical area<sup>6</sup>.

We shall not pause to factor in the percentages of corruption, tax evasion, hidden economy, through which an attempt is made to shift the significance and nature of the crisis, which is a *world crisis of overproduction*. The “moral cleansing” operation that is being demanded is artfully and politically designed to show the failure of the Greek economy both to the unseeing eyes of the Greek workers and to the carefully blindfolded ones of the German workers and is an operation that will soon prove convenient to all the States in trouble.

## The real situation and social control

The independent political existence of Hellades & Co. is by no means characterized by an underdeveloped form of economy, as described by socialists and national-communists in order to continue presenting themselves as the best reformists of the economy and the bourgeois State: its mercantile and maritime past and the delay in the emergence of industrial capitalism certainly do not make it backward (it is a case of what Lenin called “the unequal development of capitalism”). Greece’s economic level in the post-war period was on a par with the average in other European countries. The fact that the gap with other countries has grown is due to many historical factors and not only in this area. And the fact that the bourgeoisie in all its various manifestations has always tried to inebriate the proletariat with the grandeur of their rich cultural heritage, trotting out again (and not by chance!) the original bases of wealth, liberty and beauty for a minority in ancient Greek democracy, passing it off as a treasure-house for everyone and branding every factotum, wealthy or impoverished, with the bourgeois mark of national identity – this is also a time-worn and universal practice. It is therefore not by chance that the outrageous proposal to sell a few islands or the Parthenon or the fleet in order to pay off the debts should cause scandal!...

Certainly the economic situation has become hard after the “amazing” economic growth of past years: tourism is in difficulty, the real estate sector has crashed and shipping business has vanished, because of the dip in international trade which has led to a halt in orders for new commissions and to the crash of rental fees. On the financial side, the banking system is in great difficulty and the already considerable public debt is destined to increase (this is proven by the ex-

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5. Cfr. *Il Sole-24 ore*, 1/5/2010.

6. Turkey, Greece’s direct competitor, is a new economic force, itself in crisis and with a vast population. It is the Southern side of OTAN towards Middle East, as well as an area of commercial and military transit towards East European countries and Russia itself, through the Dardanelles and Bosphorus, a traditional war path in all world conflicts.

odus of capital and the tax shield for recuperating capital from abroad with a 5% discount proposed by the financial bill in the last few days [late April 2010]): the reduction of income from taxes due to the crisis and the increase in tax evasion make the picture even gloomier. Amongst other things, since it is amongst the European countries most dependent on emergency support from the European Bank, with the end of the old self-financing programmes at a limited rate of *interest*, the ongoing growth of the debt is guaranteed. For months it has been the auction of state obligations on the financial markets that has been used as a possible remedy for the public debt, in view of the urgency with which repayments are due, postponing until an uncertain future not repayment of the debt but that of the interests, which are becoming a growing burden. In these few days [28 April – 5 May] the downgrading of the obligations to *junk* has been the first step towards bankruptcy. The Piigs (the quintet of countries constituted by Italy, Greece, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, the latter also downgraded by the rating agencies) suffer from the same ill: what they need is considerable devaluation (at least 30%) of the exchange rate with the rest of the world to recover (?) their lost chance at competition, so the “experts” keep saying – and they believe that a mere nominal change would be sufficient to put the economy back on its feet, causing exports to increase and shifting the flow of international tourism to Greece... Nonetheless, to do this, these countries would have to leave the monetary Union and *attack the working class directly and without any form of safety net*.

In this situation, the 11.3% unemployment rate (false, like all the other indices;

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5 “We note that only those in search of work can be considered unemployed, on the other hand, those who do not work but are not looking for a job are considered to be outside the workforce. When unemployment is high, some jobless people stop looking for one and are thus no longer considered unemployed. These people are known as disillusioned workers. If all workers without a job stopped looking for one, the unemployment rate would be equal to zero.” *Macroeconomía*, Il Mulino, page 46.

youth unemployment, for its own part, touches on 30%)<sup>5</sup> and the “flexibility” of salaries are destined to grow. If there were an industry deserving of the name, restructuring, mergers, outsourcing would offer some certainty of accumulating profits: *but it does not exist*. Even by laying off a considerable mass of workers in the public sector (or using various social buffers, which require not financial bluff but hard cash) or ceasing unproductive activities, only

*limited effects* would be obtained: where a real industrial structure is lacking, it is impossible to raise either the rate of exploitation or the organic composition of capital. To a great extent, it is the unproductive work that supports the unsteady social scaffolding - of which the middle classes are the *real toxic substance*. On their own side, proletarians lacking any reserves now belong to the mass of statistically “non-existent” workers. The five strikes since the beginning of the year (the most recent ones on 22 April and 1 May) against the restructuring plans imposed by the diktats of Europe, are mere pinpricks *in the absence of a class organization (the revolutionary party) and of organisms of battle independent of the bosses and of the government*. The match that is being played in Greece is

none other than an episode in the class war which has as its theatre the whole of Europe and revolves around illusions of “social peace” that have been absorbed over the decades. The various “left-wing” organizations, union and political, have not been and continue not to be, anything other than associations for nationalistic recruitment in times of peace and they will be even more so in times of war. According to them, the deficit in the 2010 balance could be remedied without any need of foreign loans, by putting the public accounts in order, fighting wastage, increasing taxes on company profits, fighting tax evasion and restructuring the pension system, so that it stretches out a hand to the weakest: the old recipes for “structural reforms” are still on the agenda! Moreover, the path of democratic legality is simultaneously the means and the end and from this point of view there is no doubt that any fight that presses beyond this boundary will have to be suffocated. And with this is associated, as its inevitable accompaniment, the inconclusive rebellion by wide sectors of young people. This is *third-rate reformism*, the objective of which is to fuel more illusions and in the meantime guarantee social and democratic pacification: in the face of this, financial reformism (shifting repayment dates), carried – and this could not be otherwise – on the shoulders of the proletariat, would only guarantee a little more breathing space. In capitalism there is no discount for proletarians; reformism, whatever its nature, promises and demands in no uncertain manner *blood and tears*, otherwise no more loans: the Greek Government should therefore go ahead and openly declare *salary freezes in the private sector, a ban on new jobs, reduction in the thirteenth- and fourteenth months’ salary, even for pensioners, raising of the average retirement age from the present 53 to 67, the ban on renewing closed-end contracts for public employees, the introduction of greater contractual flexibility, the abolition of the right to appeal for those laid off in the private sector...* In practice, it is the *biggest operation of (democratic!) dictatorship over workers* ever witnessed in Europe in times of peace, thanks to the mediation of the institutions. The class instinct makes the bourgeoisie open up its eyes, forcing it to make its intentions clear: when the going gets hard, the tired old recipe, ever since an oppressed class has existed, has merely been to tighten the leash. Even if they should manage to grasp the fact that this is a world crisis of overproduction, in which speculation is only a symptom of the contradictions of the system, the bourgeoisie would not know what to do or how to do it, in order to find an economic solution to the situation: the fetish of money seems to be the only means, the only positive parameter capable of help and this is how it keeps them blindfolded. The bourgeois State, so vehemently reviled in front of the market in times of prosperity, becomes an anchor and a printer of Treasury bonds. More important, the political awareness that no economic recipes exist is growing: there is only one realistic course of action – the *proclamation*

*of dictatorship over the living and working conditions of the proletariat.* All that remains to the Greek bourgeoisie, then, is the plea to Europe and the IMF for financial rescue. Its various sectors know very well that a part of the recovery foreseen for 2010 may only arrive by unloading part of the responsibility onto the middle classes, the same middle class that has grown rich over the past few years at the cost of the working class. Yet the bourgeoisie does not wish to make an enemy of its chosen “sub-class”, the one that allows it to produce as much waste as it wants and on which the whole parasitical structure is built up, that has bought and sold stocks and shares, played the stock market, invested in real estate mortgages, and has never worked. And nonetheless this will inevitably have to be reckoned with, at least to a minimum degree, if for no other reason than to demonstrate some impartiality in the measures taken. Brussels is demanding that they proceed with cuts in spending on labour to the extent of 10% of GNP in two years, to recover the deficit on GNP which has risen to 14%: and so out with slashes to salaries, employment, healthcare, pensions, the thirteenth month’s salary! *They promise blood and tears and blood and tears it shall be:* a reduction of this sort is impossible, no national economic structure could manage it. And so it will be the workers to pay Greece’s debts, no doubt about it; and the “left” will not flinch from its... patriotic duty: it will haul out the old slogan of the “popular front”, inveighing against the “Germans who starve the people”.

### **Blood and tears: the noose round the neck from so-called aid**

Today, in the crisis involving the whole of the fictitious, economic and political scaffolding of the so-called European Union, the general problems have all risen to the surface. The banks having been bailed out by the United States, the financial bubble has swelled the other bubble – that of public debt – onto which financial speculation has flung itself and which has been joined by the inevitable increase in the prices of raw materials and food products, under the pressure of Asian steam. The inextricable knot lies in the excess credit previously granted to Greece by the European banks (55 billion from France, 47 from Switzerland, 30 from Germany); today Greek bonds are responsible for 10% of the Eurozone States’ overall debt, whilst the entire public and private debt has leapt to 373.4 billion euros. After the last three budgets (a total of 16 billion euros) and the added 20 billion of 30 April, a reduction of the GNP deficit to 3% according to the criteria of Maastricht is an undertaking that is nowhere near being achieved in the present climate.

Fine times they were when the European banks, to the great satisfaction of debtors and creditors, untied their purse strings and any minor or major petit bourgeois, Greeks or Germans (followed by a large portion of the working-class aristocracy), would go and slake their thirst by buying stocks and renting out

their “savings” or their “income” to their managers! Today those “miserable money-wasters” of Greeks, as they are called in Germany, who have filled the European banks’ portfolios with uncollectible credit titles (or junk), cannot pay off their own debts and flee abroad with their capital (there is always the right of asylum for capital!). These complaints clash with the fact that over all these years capital, mostly German capital, has found consumers in Greece for its exportations and growing cash flow: such a loyal, amenable client as the Greek petit bourgeoisie (apart from the Olympics and military spending) was not to be completely discarded after all!

The “magnificent agreement” reached in Brussels on 11 April foresees bilateral financing of 30 billion euros by the countries in the Eurozone, joined by 15 billion from the IMF: to be returned at an interest rate of 5% (the European funds) and 3% (those from the IMF). Using the European package for a total of 45+10 billion dollars, Greece would certainly obtain the money to pay off a part of the 55 billion-euro debt due this year: however, the real situation, on the brink of collapse, would not change much. In addition, here we are only talking about the 55 billion due in 2010 (or the 8.9 billion due on 19 May) and not about the rest, due over the coming years (figures in the realm of 130 billion dollars). If we add the fact that growth over the past few years came about thanks prevalently to the public debt and that it is presumed that GNP in the next few years may fall to -4%, default is assured.

Whilst everyone accuses Germany for having decided to maintain such a harsh attitude towards Greece, with her frequent reminders to all of respect for the stability statutes and permission granted to the IMF to make its appearance as one of the “rescuers”, everyone is looking anxiously at the situation of their own public debts: Italy (120%); Greece (115%); USA (93%); France (85.4%); Germany (84.4%); United Kingdom (81.7); Spain (69.6%)... In this situation, to cover the financial aid, Germany should contribute 8.376 billion, France 6.288, Italy 5.526, Spain 3.693, Holland 1.761, Belgium 1.071. Yet, what nobody finds bewildering is that, with a 5% interest rate, these European partners would cream off 2% each to the value of millions of dollars (some aid!).

If Greece should declare bankruptcy, she would be obliged to restructure her debt: this might mean paying back only a part of what she owes, with creditors losing at least 30%, or else postponing the deadlines, thus relieving the pressure for the moment. Nonetheless, not much time would go by before the debtor would again be *food for worms* on the financial market and to a greater extent than is happening at present. In fact, if there were no economic growth, the result would be to incur debts with even more punitive interest rates than the present ones. Indirectly, today the creditors have played the hand of raising returns on Greek obligations at “free auctions”, also betting on possible



bankruptcy and setting up the rating agencies, Moody's, Standard & Poor's and Fitch. Not being able to devalue the currency by forcing up exports (which would mean leaving the monetary union and returning to the dracma), the situation has become even more explosive. It is obviously not in the interests of Athens to leave Europe, since by staying she has better negotiating power.

Bankruptcy would have a boomerang effect on the creditor banks (first and foremost German and French ones), which would be obliged to register heavy losses with obvious repercussions on the European financial system, since disruption in Greece would set off a contagious effect on the weaker links in the chain and this would, in turn, add to the systemic effect: German banks possessing Greek obligations would become weaker and infect other banks. To sum up, there would be the risk of ending up with a crack on the European banking system, with devastating effects on the real economy, caused by the inevitable credit crunch deriving from this event: and this would be the most disastrous effect of the crisis. Talk of the *subprime* mortgage crisis!

Is there a way out? This episode is forewarning of the *definitive crisis of the so-called monetary Union*. "European politics" are quite unable to undo a knot like this in the long term – these politics, in fact, do not exist because a *supranational bourgeoisie does not exist*. At this stage Germany could shift to her historical power policy in Europe, if she were not caught up in the financial dimension of capital ("imperialism"), from which no-one can escape: in this dilemma the political signals have been sent out to her most direct competitors but escape implies a process in which the extreme principle *mors tua, vita mea* is affirmed.

What appears scandalous is that the markets, which continue to be blamed for the crisis, seem in this event, with the approval and recommendation of Germany, to have resumed their function as "severe but just" arbitrators on the issue of financial excesses. In this context, whilst the rating agencies are again accused of being the ones that, entirely guilty of conflicting interests, played down figures on the verge of financial collapse, it is again admissible to bear down on the Greeks, hitting out randomly at the proletariat and imposing their capitulation by means of an ultimatum. The CDS (*Credit default swaps*), insurance policies that quote the debtors' probability of becoming bankrupt, in other words the degree of difficulty in meeting their commitments, have acquired a halo of objectivity in the moral attitude to excesses: if they had not existed, so they say, who would have warned us about the disastrous crisis of the American mortgages?

In this circus of marvels, good old opportunism pulls out the old adage: "capitalism must be reformed". The capitalist mode of production "must be

saved", the "transgressors against the real social purpose" must be got rid of. Even public employees are the object of economic moralising: teachers, nurses, office workers, dockers who wanted to keep their salaries ahead of inflation by putting the *savings they had scraped together* into pension and insurance funds in the hope of accumulating miserable added interests. And so, as a punishment, salaries in the public sector will be frozen, the turnover blocked, overtime heavily cut. "And if the vampires of the Monetary Fund arrive on the scene, we shall have to spit more blood! We have already paid out, now let the rich pay!" shouts a union member of the PAME (the "leftist" trade union), on the same day that the head of the Government, Papandreou, having summoned the unions, announces a further attack on salaries, the thirteenth-month's salary, pensions. And he is echoed by the secretary of the other trade union, the GSEE, leaving the meeting only a few days before the general strike: "The country's production forces must unite to face up to the crisis" (!?)<sup>6</sup>. German egoism is a scandal, adds another. If the USA had acted like this, "when they had accumulated a debt of over 120% of GNP, the post-war boom would never have happened."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See: *Il sole- 24 ore*, 30/4.

<sup>7</sup> See: J. Halevi in *Il Manifesto*, 24/4.

Only a few days away from the repayment deadline for one instalment of the Greek debt, the crisis of the world's stock exchanges (27 and 28 April), accompanied by the downgrading of Portugal and Spain, reveals without a shadow of doubt the crash that is being prepared.

## All lined up in front of the German capitalist machinery

According to Marxism, it is the growth rates, the creation of plus value in industrial production, productivity, that allow money to represent a certain degree of competitive success in international trade. It is the law of value that imposes its conditions: trade is merely the manifestation of all this, whilst the widely varying functions of money (monetary and financial) are the expression of it, because *without the generation of plus value there is no accumulation*. Germany, who in the present crisis is laying off workers, reducing salaries, regulating the numbers of workers in factories, imposing drastic conditions with the help of the State unions, has increased productivity and imposed her exports (she is the country that exports most, together with China): her financial and democratic corporations, which include diversified social buffers and control savings, insurance and pensions, still allow her to hold up well. Whether under Bismarck, the Nazis, social-democracy or liberal-democracy, Germany represents the reactionary heart of Europe: with a proletariat that has been in chains for a good while, it is her industrial structure which, whilst taking shape in a context of the financialisation that – as Lenin wrote – now dominates the real economy, holds together the internal

and centrifugal forces in Europe. In the midst of the crisis this control has become the only glue strong enough to endure the buffetings from finance: her political strength cannot fail to impose her political diktat, starting out from the weaker backwaters of Europe – otherwise the machinery of unity would break down and the whole background of exports, the trade balance and balance of payments would disintegrate.

In her banks and through the ECB, Germany possesses the balances of the small national entities aggregated to her. With reunification, she suffered a decade of crisis, has been obliged to integrate an entire economy, has had to provide social buffers and guarantees against unemployment and pensions. However, it is one thing to integrate a territory that belongs to you historically in a politically centralized (albeit federal) form, bringing it under the same diktat, and it is quite another to attempt to integrate bourgeoisies that do not share the same history, the same union structure of control – that exalt productivity, keep salaries down, guarantee profits and income. Nevertheless, with this experience behind them, the German bourgeoisie did not understand (*because it was unable to understand*) that their smaller partners were entering a phase of real bankruptcy and presenting false accounts. Would they ever have been able to understand that this crisis, which appears as a crisis of finance and real estate, was to turn into a crisis of sovereign funds, at the mercy of the savage and anarchical dynamics of the financial institutions, managers and directors and investment banks? Would they ever have been capable of grasping the political significance of front-line capitalism, ready to destroy any obstacle in its path? No, they would never have been able to do this. The fear of now having to suffer a rush on the bank desks, as though they were cash points, the bovine tranquillity of their European partners, the assault of the next requests for help made it necessary to put on the agenda the crude frankness of those who are in a political and economic position to shake themselves free of petulant demands.

In the *Capital* Marx wrote: “Overproduction of capital never means anything other than overproduction of the means of production – the means of labour and means of subsistence able to function as capital, i.e. to be used in order to exploit labour to a given rate of exploitation, since the fall of this rate of exploitation below a certain point causes perturbations and slacks in the process of capitalist production, crises, and the destruction of capital”.<sup>8</sup>

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8 K. Marx, *Capital*, Book III, Chap. XV.

This rate of exploitation always guarantees continuity and can determine the decisions of a bourgeoisie that preserves its memory of past history and whose capitalist machinery has never been left to rust. On the contrary, according to the

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bourgeois economists who manage financial trash, the responsibility is to be sought in the low cost of money launched by the President of the FED, Greenspan, which facilitated the issue of low-interest mortgages. For a bourgeoisie that received its baptism from German social-democracy (the likes of Kautsky, Hilferding, Böhm-Bawerk), the financial crisis is only a secondary manifestation of the real economic crisis, which accompanies the tendential fall of the average profit rate. Instead, according to the lords of finance, by means of securitization, the banks granted loans without evaluating the borrowers' solvency. From 2000 to 2004, the interest rates go on a downward-pointing "roller coaster" ending up at 1%: the loans guaranteed by the credit giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac reach the staggering sum of 5.3 thousand billion dollars and then the rates suddenly peak again to almost 6% until 2007. House mortgages explode, insolvencies make the struts and ties quiver, house prices crash, repayments become too high, property seizures increase. No-one manages to recover the sums lent. The crisis of *subprime* mortgages, those high-risk loans that spread to all corners of the world due to securitization, transforms them into valueless wastepaper, deposited in a large number of banks. The crisis spreads throughout the world's financial and monetary system. According to the bourgeoisie, the events are monetary and financial, and only by means of financial adjustments and regulation of the rules is it possible for the capitalist monster to rise again.

Germany is affected, her banks have been shaken, but the supporting structure of capital, the industrial machinery, is holding out: 30% of her GNP depends on industry. Exports worth 1,327 billion dollars as against imports worth 1,058 billion yield a positive balance of almost 269 billion dollars, as against the negative balance of 800 billion dollars in the USA, a 92-billion positive balance in Japan and a positive 262 billion in China. And following the initial bubble, a second one, more wide-reaching than that of the mortgages, is hitting state insolvencies.

As Marx explained in an article published in May-October 1850 in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*: "Speculation generally appears in periods when overproduction is in full swing. It provides temporary outlets for overproduction and for this very reason accelerates the outburst of the crisis and increases its virulence. The crisis itself flares up first in the field of speculation and only afterwards does it filter into production. It is thus not overproduction but an excess of speculation, which is in fact only a symptom of overproduction, that appears in the eyes of the superficial observer as the cause of the crisis. The subsequent disruption of production does not appear as a necessary consequence of its own previous exuberance but as a simple whiplash effect of the crash of speculation."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> In Italian, see: Marx-Engels, *Opere complete*, Vol.10, page 501.

The global effects of the real crisis of overproduction are right before our very eyes: the drop in industrial production and in GNP, closure of companies, factories, commercial bodies, sold cut-price on the world market, the increase in working-class unemployment, a negative turn in the rate of inflation, drastic reduction of credit, particularly to companies, lay-offs and the increase in social buffers, rapid growth in the public debt, both in absolute terms and in relation to GNP, first in the pre-crisis process and then to save the banks from crashing, an increase in the deficit on GNP, the crisis of world trade, the exodus of capital towards Asian regions with a high rate of accumulation and low salaries, the relocation of companies attracted by Asia's high profit margins, a new and increasing trend towards industrial (car industry) and bank mergers, fuelled by the low purchasing prices...

### Latest news: the strike of 5 May

As we were hoping, spontaneously overstepping any attempt to curb the fight, the Greek proletariat went beyond legal, democratic protest. Thousands and thousands of workers in the public and private sectors took to the streets both in Athens and Thessaloniki, whilst the whole of Greece was invested by the same wave of anger. Syntagma Square, under the massive control of police defending Parliament and equipped with anti-riot gear, was the scene of violent clashes. The huge deployment of the forces of law and order was unable to halt the impulse, which reached right to the Parliament buildings where the blood and tears

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10 From The Italian daily, *Il Manifesto* of 6 May.

plan for the proletariat will be deliberated. Against the so-called "representatives of the people", in other words against democracy, the masses of workers

launched the slogan: "Thieves! Thieves! Burn down the Parliament-whorehouse!"<sup>10</sup>. Both governments, right- and left-wing, the banks, the international financial institutions and Germany are all under accusation. The violence with which the Greek workers engaged with the forces of law and order (stones, bottles, sticks against tear-gas and stun bombs) is the sign that the situation has taken an unexpected direction which will change the face of Greek society in the next few years: thus, not only the unions and the grassroots economic representatives, but above all the parliamentary opposition parties and extra-parliamentary groups will have to come to terms with this new reality that has surfaced after so many years of social reclusion. Despite high tension being expected in the demonstration, the Greek bourgeoisie was shaken by such spontaneous determination: they were expecting the umpteenth chapter in the history of opportunism in its immediate or democratic variations – and the same orchestration was partly to be seen, since *the unchangeable heart of the*

*problem, capital reality*, was never laid bare. Yet something failed to take the expected turn: the fear of physical engagement did not tame the anger and, the level of attack being too high, the strike veered off the tracks of economic struggle to defend living and working conditions and assumed a political character that no institutional political party is capable of managing, since there are no reformist alternatives or possible and credible compromises in such a situation.

The national-“communists” of the KKE, obviously wishing to jump on the bandwagon of this interesting situation, have only slight representation in Parliament, as does the SYRIZA. The union organizations in the public and private sectors, respectively ADIDY and GSEE, very close to the positions of the PASOK, are excluded precisely by a diktat that goes beyond their scope of action, since it does not allow them, as in the past, to obtain big or small favours of a clientele nature to maintain the organization. “A strike for whom and for what, since it is not a national Government that decides but the IMF?”, anxiously wonders the Italian “left-wing” daily *Manifesto*, artfully shaking up and mixing all the existing filth and decay to demonstrate that there is no way out, raising shields to defend the bourgeois State “under a socialist Government”, taking objection to corruption in general... which must end. The death of three bank workers *obliged to work* in such a moment of social tension reveals the illusion of social peace and counter-revolution that still weigh upon the scenario of history. But what is slow to die is the immediate protest, the spontaneous fight without a plan of action, chaos for the sake of chaos – all winning cards for opportunism in all its different forms, *and thus the bourgeoisie*, to regain social control. Urban guerrilla warfare and the destruction of power symbols – banks, cash points, shop windows, cars – *on the edges and never at the real centre of the fight*, served as the accompaniment (*an old performance that shifts nothing politically*) to the show of strength put on by the workers.

## At war, as in war

In order to get out of the social trap it has fallen into there is no alternative for the Greek proletariat but *to declare class war*. However, to do this, the proletarian front needs to be brought together on as wide a scale as possible, to face the bourgeoisie unmasked. Above all, it must understand that without the guidance of its General Staff, of the *revolutionary communist party*, there is no solution to be had. This is the start of the most widespread belligerence ever against the proletariat: with its crisis, Athens represents the start of an attack that will extend throughout Europe. *From the facts* the proletariat will understand that the whole financial lottery of stock exchange, credit, stocks and shares, is pure fiction (*junk remains junk!*): what has always been demanded of the oppressed class is that it should continue to remain oppressed, that it should go back to work, harder

than before, so that the exploitation of the labour force may continue to churn out, amidst blood and tears, more and more interest, income, profits, real wealth. This is a programme of war, to reduce millions of workers to hunger. *Blood and tears the bourgeoisie promises and blood and tears it shall be.* It is a question of real dictatorship over the workers, not of placing the Greek nation (dog does not eat dog), its ruling class, the speculators (rubbish!), on trial: it is an example for the future, decimation as a preventive measure.

In these proportions, the reduction of the Greek deficit over time is impossible: no national economic structure could manage it. It will be the workers who pay the Greek bourgeoisie's debts, no doubt about it. Attention: after this police action the old propaganda material will again be dusted down and waved about, that of opportunism, the "popular front", "all in the same boat", which will not fail to make its appeal to patriotic duty in order to save the country from the crisis, launching slogans "against the Germans who starve the people", fuelling nationalism and aggravating the conditions of the proletarians: who have nothing to lose except their chains, who have nothing in common with the "Greek nation", to which they owe nothing.

If the Greek proletariat does not take up the arms of its *own* class independence and if the proletariat in the rest of Europe does not join it, order, the peace of the cemeteries, will reign in Athens as an example and it will not be merely the Greek colonels in the military parades but also the democratic troops of the ECB, the IMF and the international Banks (the bourgeoisie's) that lead it over the precipice.

### ***A party leaflet***

## **Proletarians, beware! They promise us blood and tears!**

What is happening in Greece is not a remote and isolated incident. It is one more chapter in the now long and devastating economic crisis that began in the mid '70s and is destined to become even deeper, with increasingly serious effects on the proletariat in all countries. Arising in production, and not in the world of finance as they would like us to believe, it is a systemic crisis of the capitalist mode of production: it is a crisis of overproduction of goods and capital, which the bourgeoisie can only approach by striking at the proletariat and squeezing the most out of them – with tighter and tighter crunches in terms of living and working conditions and, lastly, when this is no longer sufficient and the situation of inter-imperialist contrasts (*mors tua, vita mea*) demands it, dispatching them to massacre one another on opposing sides in a new world bloodbath.



Proletarians, beware! The pitiless measures that the Greek Government is taking in response to the diktats of the ECB and the IMF are measures that any government in these same conditions will take in order to try and exit the crisis. "Blood and tears!" promises the Greek bourgeoisie, abandoning for once the language of rhetoric and metaphysics and becoming realist, even materialist: bread for bread and wine for wine! "Blood and tears!" will be promised and imposed by bourgeoisies all over the world, when the subsequent chapters of the crisis begin (and they are already getting underway: as bourgeois experts themselves admit, not even exactly between the lines, acknowledging that they ... don't know which saint to invoke next!). And blood and tears it will be. Proletarians, beware! Amongst the many risks that are accumulating in this situation of flux, which can change from one day to another and accelerate at amazing speed from one day to another, there is one which is extremely serious. This is the danger of nationalism. In fact, the bourgeoisie is not satisfied by merely deviating the instinctive anger of the proletarians, already squeezed to the utmost and under increasing threat, by setting them against one straw figure or the other: the individual dishonest banker, the vampire-banks, the real estate agencies, the rating agencies and so on. It has to start filling the air we breathe with the poison of nationalism, of chauvinism. In Greece this can already be glimpsed: "the bad guys are the ones who, by means of their interested aid (paid for at a high rate of interest), wish to strangle the country; and the most evil of all of them is Germany, who has blackmailed us for a long time, imposing sanctions, who wants to 'colonize' us!". Arguments like this are becoming increasingly widespread and intense with the passing of time, as the crisis broadens and deepens: each human being against the next, because the realm of capital is the realm of the war of all against all! This is the first, great danger that proletarians must be alert to.

The guilty party is not one individual or the other, one agency or institution or another, one country or another: the cause of the disaster, of the imminent catastrophe and collapse, with all the suffering that will follow and hit the proletariat all over the world, lies in a mode of production which, after having abundantly exhausted its own life cycle, is now on its deathbed, suffocating and killing the whole world in its death throes. This is the guilty party to be overthrown once and for all, this is the cause of all our ills, which must be completely and definitively uprooted.

Greece is the world! Proletarians, be aware of this before it is too late! The Greek bourgeoisie has launched a true war cry and this war cry will be echoing everywhere in the near future, launched by all the national bourgeoisies. Fine. Let's take it up and reply with our own war cry, the war cry that generations upon generations of proletarians have launched and fought for with fortitude and generosity:

*Not one sacrifice for capital! unrelenting defence of our living and working conditions! the refusal of all blackmail in the name of saving the national e-*

*economy! extension, organization and direction of our battles, with the creation of a single proletarian front! real, effective international solidarity, on the understanding that the attack on the proletariat is carried out by all bourgeoisies, always – even when ready to tear one another to bits – allied in any case against us! a blow by blow response to any attack by capital, by its state, by its legal and illegal cops! an open class war against capital, its state and its governments, under whatever guise, in the inevitable perspective of the supreme clash, class against class, to seize power under the guidance of the international communist party and to set up the dictatorship of the proletariat, the necessary bridge towards a classless society, towards communism!*

Visit our page in Greek in our website:

**[www.internationalcommunistparty.org](http://www.internationalcommunistparty.org)**

# Gaza - imperialist butchery against the proletariat

## Fellow proletarians and comrades

For weeks now the butchers of the Israeli army have been ploughing ahead with their decade-long criminal demolition job: using the pretext that Hamas must be destroyed, yet another horrific blood bath of Palestinian proletarians has occurred. To a greater or lesser extent, *all* States within the area (idle words and pathetic declarations count for nothing) and *all* the bourgeois factions – both lay and fundamentalist – responsible for this tragic Middle-eastern *cul de sac* (be they supporters of Al Fatah, Hamas, Hezbollah, the Muslim Brotherhood or the theocratic Israeli state – it matters not) closed a blind eye to what has been going on. The dreadful truth of the matter is that *no-one wants Palestinian proletarians: in peacetime they are exploited for their labour, and in wartime they are a rich source of cannon-fodder for war-hungry imperialist powers*. That is all: the obscene truth of the matter.

As long as the suicidal logic of national and nationalist bourgeoisies prevails, *there will never be a solution* to the Middle-eastern puzzle (one of the most poisonous of all post-war imperialist legacies). *There will be no peace* for as long as aggressive bourgeoisies – more or less a direct expression of north American imperialism (Israel), or those in a strong bargaining position as a result of spiralling oil revenues (all Arab states, ‘moderate’ and non; or ‘extremist’ states like Iran) – continue carving out areas of influence in the annual carnival of carnage served up by rival imperialist powers. *There will be no lull* in the veritable holocaust of the proletarian and proletarianised masses in the *entire* area as long as the horizon is dominated by abominable nationalist and religious ideologies and as long as world capitalism is allowed to pursue its insanely destructive course.

The Gaza massacres – and the blood of hundreds of proletarians – only serve to confirm that the obscene monster called capitalism must be destroyed. Only the proletariat – the class that has no reserves and recognizes no homeland, the class whose claim to liberation is human, and human only – can accomplish this. And it can do so only by *openly resorting to a classist – not nationalist – perspective, a class struggle against all bourgeois factions, a drastic boycotting of all war efforts*, in order to shatter once and for all the damnable vicious circle of proletarian massacres. *Only the dictatorship of the proletariat*, established at long last after centuries of domination by blood-drenched capital, will be able to sweep away the tragic consequences and problems wrought by a century of imperialist devastation. But this will *only* be possible *if* the proletariat of European and north American metropolises finally succeeds in breaking all ties with its own national bourgeoisies; and if it once again wages an open class struggle, independently of any bourgeois or nationalist formation, under the determined leadership of its *own* party, newly exhumed after decades of frightening counter-revolution – and then manages to finally seize power and establish its own class dictatorship, a necessary bridgehead towards a classless society, a society which is at last human: *communism*.

# Haiti and Chile

## Capitalism the murderer: the tragedy in Haiti

Faced with the apocalyptic earthquake that has half destroyed entire areas in the Caribbean island of Haiti, we do not have a lot to add to what we have already written on dozens of other occasions – more recently at the time of Hurricane Katrina on the coast of Louisiana or the tsunami that struck vast areas of Indonesia. As always in the case of such “natural events”, capitalism is the first to blame for the deaths of tens of thousands of people and the suffering of just as many. Savage urbanisation, miserable living conditions, the precarious nature of the infrastructures, the ever-widening gap between wealth and poverty, unequal development that condemns whole countries and geographical regions to absolute poverty and exploitation – these are purely capitalistic features that create and amplify the tragedy. Once the victims have been gathered and counted, the ruins pulled down and the orgy of media sensationalism is over, the immense business of reconstruction will begin, as always: not by chance, blessed by a Nobel Peace Prize-winning president, the far-sighted USA – after assigning the usual billions, and who knows where they will end up (in any case they are an investment for the future: the usual Marshall Plan for catastrophes) – have sent off a good ten thousand marines to keep order in the face of the – very real – threat of peoples’ uprisings (thus causing mutterings from other “interested” countries: see France). In any case, the USA have had

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their sights set on Haiti since 1915, inaugurating a century of endless tragedies for a population reduced to hunger and misery: the recent social struggles for bread (which we wrote about months ago) anticipated the “natural disaster”. *Capitalism the murderer*, then: in every way and with no chance of absolution.

## From the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile more lessons for the international proletariat

The dynamics accompanying and following the devastating earthquakes in Haiti and in Chile are full of lessons for the proletariat. Firstly, these events demonstrate that they cannot simply and fatally be labelled “natural disasters”. The entity of the destruction and its effects on the vast majority of the population in the areas affected are all to be attributed to economic and capitalist organization – in other words, the increasing gap between those who “have” and those who “have not”, the total vulnerability of the proletarian class when faced with events of these dimensions, the uncurbed urbanization and devastation of the territory, the incapability of science to come up with preventive measures and the organizational chaos of all the official organisms responsible for dealing with the events, etc. etc.

Yet from these recent huge events (as happened in 2005 when the U.S. city of New Orleans was half destroyed by the impact of hurricane Katrina) comes another important lesson for the world proletariat. The common denominator in all of them, apart from the previous general considerations, has been the practice followed by the central powers: the immediate militarization of the area affected, thus proclaiming right away, loud and clear, that the prime concern is always “to defend private property”. The American marines in Haiti, the military forces in Chile occupied cities and towns not only to discourage possible uprisings (Haiti had been the theatre of real revolts only a few months earlier), but *above all* to place a security cordon around supermarkets, big stores, shops of all kinds, against the people that the disgusting world media (newspapers, television, radio) continued to call “jackals” – in other words, the severely impoverished who, in their desperation, hunger and thirst, went to take *what they needed to survive*. There could have been no more eloquent graphic representation in all this of what we communists have always said about society based on capital: its great contradiction lies in the *incurable and explosive contrast* between the social nature of production (i.e. the fact that what is produced is of *potential* use to everyone, collectively) and the private nature of the monopoly of production by the ruling class (i.e. the fact that this monopoly makes these products *commodities*: simply

put, only those with money can gain possession of them, whilst those who do not have, or do not have enough of it are *deprived* of them). The poor people of Haiti and Chile who stormed the supermarkets (as poor people anywhere have always done in the past by storming the bakeries) found themselves faced with this contradiction in its *armed manifestation* as marines, soldiers and police forces – in a word, the State, their own or belonging to other countries, but still the *armed bulwarks of capital and private property*.

In a long piece that appeared in our party's press between 1946 and 1948 devoted to an analysis of the role of force and violence in history and to their manifestations, both present and virtual (i.e. both when openly declared with bloodshed, and when exercised in the form of threats, pressure and ideological propaganda, or mere, but eloquent, allusion through the presence of police forces), with particular reference to the capitalistic era and to the nonetheless repressive role played by the State, we wrote:

*"even in long periods of administration without bloodshed by capital dominion, the class force never ceases to be present and its virtual influence against possible false steps by isolated individuals, organized groups or parties remains the dominating factor for the conservation of the upper class's privileges and institutes. Amongst the manifestations of this class force we have already counted not only the entire state apparatus with its armed forces and police, even when the arms are at rest, but also the whole armoury of ideological justification for bourgeois exploitation set in place, implemented by schools, newspapers, the church and all the other means by which the opinions of the masses are shaped. [...] Whenever social unrest starts to rumble more threateningly, the bourgeois state makes a show of strength through measures for safeguarding law and order: a technical demonstration by the state police gives a good idea of the use of virtual violence: 'the police and the troops are confined to their barracks'. This means that there is not yet any fighting in the streets but if bourgeois law and order and the rights of the bosses were threatened, the armed forces would emerge and open fire. [...] The political state, even and above all of a representative and parliamentary variety, constitutes an apparatus of oppression. It can well be compared to a reservoir of dominant energy belonging to the economically privileged class, capable of protecting this energy in its potential state in situations where social rebellion tends not to break out, but above all capable of unleashing it in the form of police oppression and bloody violence as soon as revolutionary tremors arise from the social sub-strata."*<sup>1</sup>

From these dramatic episodes proletarians draw the awareness on the one hand of the inevitable conflict with capital and its State and on the other of the urgent and unavoidable need to prepare for it, in both organizational and political terms.

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1. "Force, violence, dictatorship in the class struggle", now in *Partito e classe*, Ed. Il programma comunista, 1991, pp. 93-94.



*The disasters in the Gulf of Mexico*

# Putting an End to a Destructive Mode of Production

If we return to the disastrous events of hurricane Katrina (2005) and the recent “black tide” in the Gulf of Mexico (as well as the latest accident in early September 2010: the fire on another oil rig) it is not out of a love of anniversaries or to pursue current issues in the style of bourgeois journalism. It is because once again these two events confirm quite clearly, as well as dramatically, the historical condemnation of the capitalist mode of production, demonstrated and proclaimed for so long by Marxist analysis. Let us just remember briefly how, at the end of August 2005, one of the many hurricanes typical of the regions around the Gulf of Mexico hit the New Orleans area, unleashing onto the city a tremendous mass of water and swelling disproportionately both the Mississippi river and the Lake of Pontchartrain, as well as the dozens of

smaller lakes and waterways that are a characteristic of these low-lying territories. The French Quarter (the historical heart of New Orleans, hub of an enormous tourist industry) was spared, whilst the Lower Ninth Ward and other areas inhabited by poorer people, mainly (but not only) of African American origin, were half destroyed. There was delay in evacuating the city and amidst total chaos, with thousands of poor people crowded together for some days in the big city stadium in disastrous conditions, the army and police took possession of the streets, arresting and killing “plunderers” guilty of having taken what they needed. The *certain* deaths amounted to around two thousand, the homeless to several tens of thousands, and today many are still missing, whilst more tens of thousands of people are scattered around the country in an entirely

precarious state, in the impossibility of going back to a home or a job. As to the “black tide”, the event is too recent to return to it in any detail. Suffice it to remember that the emergency is far from being settled, that a real solution has not yet been found (though the media have all but forgotten about the matter now) and that, according to many observers and “experts” at this point, the partial interventions that have been carried out (the chemical agents capable of “eating up” the oil spill, the burning of the bitumen deposited on the water) may prove, in the long term, to be even more disastrous for human beings, flora and fauna and, more in general, for the fragile balance of the ecosystem. For the moment, however, let us try and move a little further on from the recent past and the present.

The city of New Orleans was founded by the French in 1718 on what was basically the last great bend on the Mississippi before it met the sea a hundred or so kilometres downstream in the Gulf of Mexico – a point where the waters of the river slowed down considerably, a fair distance from the salt lakes and marshes of the final stretch. The French, busy with the colonization of the important Mississippi valley, were interested in setting up bridgeheads for trading skins and other raw materials and New Orleans (together with St. Louis a little further upstream) was the main and most important of them, almost at the mouth of the river and on the open sea.

The position of the city was, however,

one of the most unfortunate possible (in a dip, surrounded on all sides by huge masses of water): epidemics and floods were not long in making their appearance. But the city, by then almost completed and soon prospering as a trading port, stayed where it was. In subsequent developments, as the French (and for some years the Spanish) late-feudal mode of production was replaced by the American capitalist one, from 1803 onwards, the serious contradictions of the latter immediately became evident. On the one hand exploration and colonization meant the foundation of a type of agriculture destined to change from small-holdings to vast agricultural areas based first on slave labour and then on large-scale capitalism; on the other hand, the rapid industrialization made the river a great waterway for trade and the cities along its banks its nerve centres – first and foremost New Orleans. The Mississippi was destined to be harnessed to this use, which conformed in every way to the laws of capital. Thus, whilst in its “natural state” the river overflowed seasonally, carrying fertile mud onto the areas lining its banks, this overflowing – no longer acceptable to the logic of capitalist agriculture – was halted by building strong, high levees (whilst the fertility of the soil was increasingly encouraged by recurring to chemicals). The consequences were not long in coming: the surrounding terrain, no longer receiving sediment from the seasonal flooding or exposed to wind and rain, sank considerably (today

1. There are many eye-witness accounts according to which at the height of hurricane Katrina, the levees of the poor Lower Ninth Ward were blown up, so as to direct the waters of the overflowing Lake of Pontchartrain there and thus save the “jewel” of the French Quarter. In fact, something similar happened during the floods of 1927: to save the city, the levees upstream were blown up, devastating the surrounding territory and leaving thousands of farm workers, tenant farmers and smallholders in abject misery.

Louisiana continues to sink below the level of the Ocean; its southern parts, all around New Orleans, are 2% dry land, 18% swamps and 80% water); the poisoning of the river proceeded geometrically (today the entire stretch measuring several dozens of kilometres that leads to New Orleans is called “Toxic Alley”, because of the high frequency of poisoning, tumours and other illnesses deriving from water pollution); the deforestation along the banks to make room for canals, roads and industries connected to oil refining and the needs of the trading port both led to the banks becoming increasingly eroded by atmospheric agents whilst there are no longer any natural barriers against tidal waves and hurricanes.

Not only this: the creation of levees, bridling the river and preventing its natural overflow, means that a formidable mass of water travels along the riverbed towards the sea at an increasing speed: on the one hand flinging the sediment it carries too far away (directly into the abyss of the Gulf and no longer along the coast to strengthen it and rebuild the eroded parts) and, on the other, literally eating away the bends, carving out straighter paths than the original curving one and thus building up even greater speed and violence. When all this puts pressure on

the banks in the vicinity of New Orleans, they may break (the tremendous floods of 1927 and 1937, then the last of a long list, prove this) and disaster may follow<sup>1</sup>.

At every flood, every collapse, every disaster, the levees are rebuilt even higher – thus increasing the destructive potential. The whole area around the city is literally bridled by protective systems of containment, partly because the river would have a natural tendency to move a hundred or so kilometres to the west, regaining an old riverbed of former times – and this would mean the death of the city as the second commercial port in the United States (and thus, also its tourist business). This is an ongoing story: during the anniversary of the 2005 disaster, the authorities did, in fact, announce a project for building even higher levees, all around the city... On this diabolical scenario the disaster of the British Petroleum oil rig now makes its appearance – and all comment is superfluous.

It is evident from what has been said in a greatly summarized version, that *all this could not have been avoided*: the very laws of capital (those that oblige capital to *transform itself as quickly as possible into increased capital*) are what makes any solution impossible, making attempts by ecologists and reformers to patch things up ridiculous in a system which is fully integrated and in which each part always and unfailingly obeys this superior law. In these disasters (which are only the latest in a strikingly long

list, in the United States as elsewhere), we realize the absolute impossibility for capital (moved by the single, supreme necessity of extracting plus-value, or self-valorization) to foresee the immediate and long-term consequences of its anarchical activity.

Marx writes in the *Capital*: “In modern agriculture, as in the urban industries, increased productivity and the growing quantity of labour set in motion are bought at the cost of laying waste to and consuming the labour force. Moreover, all progress in capitalist agriculture is progress not only in the art of *robbing the labourer* but also in the art of *robbing the soil*; all progress in increasing its fertility for a given period is also progress towards ruining its lasting sources. The more a country, such as the United States of America, takes big industry as its starting point, the more rapid is this process of destruction [...]. Thus capitalist production only develops the technique and the combination of the

social mode of production by simultaneously undermining the primary sources of all wealth: the earth and the labourer” (Book 1, Chap. XIII: Machinery and Large-scale Industry). Only communism, a classless society, without profit and without money, will be able to solve these dramatic contradictions. It will be able to do so by eliminating the contrast between city and countryside, by distributing the population rationally over the earth’s surface and not basing relationships to nature on the extraction of plusvalue at all costs thus doing violence to natural rhythms and balance, by reclaiming entire regions, not with a view to making a profit but for collective well-being, and by activating technological and human resources that are not bound to economic interests. Utopia? The real utopia belongs to those who wish to solve the destructive contradictions and at the same time retain the mode of production that is at the root of them.

# The anti-proletarian “Holy Alliance” celebrates its umpteenth, squalid ritual

**Berlin: 9 November 2009**

They were all there, the bandits of yesterday and today: from the Gorbaciov-Walesa duo to the Clinton-Merkel one, blessed from afar by Pope Ratzinger and Nobel Obama (the only one missing, by *force majeure*, was Pope Woytila, but no doubt his spirit was fluttering over Berlin...). The big party at which the powers-that-be convened was supposed to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, erected by the anti-worker slaughterers of the German Democratic Republic (with the indirect assistance of the German Federal Republic) to consolidate the division of the German proletariat established by the Yalta agreements in 1945. A Hollywood set, lights to be switched on and then off again, a “polystyrene wall” made to fall like a set of dominoes... all eloquent symbols of the current bourgeois ideological trash.

But it was not simply the celebration of a twentieth anniversary: it was the confirmation of the anti-proletarian “Holy Alliance” in the midst of an economic crisis evoking the spectre of great catastrophes. More or less at the same time, France and Germany commemorated the end of the first world war; and, so as not to be left out, Italy remembered the “victorious ardour of Italian troops” in the Al Alamein nazi-fascist battle against the allied troops of democracy (with a few fine distinctions, true, but which did not affect the joint decision to dedicate the 12th November to the Nassiriya deaths, in the recent “Holy Imperialist War” in the Middle East). What’s then going on? Where does this impellent desire to celebrate, to find universal consensus in the name of the democratic fetish, come

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from? What is the crisis of global capitalism cooking up now? Has the spectre of communism once again started to stir in order to terrify and defeat its enemies? There is no doubt that the bourgeoisie is shit scared of communism. That the "people from the abyss", driven by social and economic contradictions, will finally come out into the open with their struggles, at first partial but getting increasingly antagonistic, is *inevitable* (just as its defeat will be inevitable if it does not equip itself with a Staff Command: the international communist party). Not by chance the anti-proletarian "Holy Alliance" has chosen Berlin for its celebrations, all smiles and embraces (watch out, proletarians: the more talk there is of peace, the more preparations are being made for war!). Firstly it has tried to rejuvenate the base anti-communism that has for decades marked dominant thought, thanks to the direct or indirect collaboration, immediate and long-term, of Stalinism: i.e. a form of anti-communism based on the assumption that in Russia, as in Eastern European countries, communism ruled – whilst we know and have demonstrated that an exquisitely capitalist form of state industrialism was dominant, characterized by all the economic categories of capitalism (goods, salary, market, business enterprises, etc.). Secondly, immersed in a devastating crisis (in which, the more the end is proclaimed, the greater the fear of a catastrophic collapse reveals itself), the bandits of the anti-proletarian "Holy Alliance" have tried to exorcise it by celebrating the triumph of democracy, a collective "let's kiss and be friends", faith in the solid nature of the present system, the proclaimed impossibility of other ways or perspectives: this is the minestrone and you've got to eat it. Thirdly, the "Holy Alliance" did not choose Berlin by chance and not only for the squalid celebration of the wall being taken down twenty years previously: they chose Berlin as an eloquent symbol of revolution (the Spartacist movements of 1918-19, led by Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Leo Jogisches and many other wonderful comrades; the workers' revolt of 1953 singing the "International") and of its strangulation by social democracy (which massacred the communists in 1919 and in successive years), by Nazism (which, finding its path smoothed by social democracy, completed the dirty work) and by Stalinism (which, according to a script repeated over the decades, labelled the workers fighting in the name of communism "Fascists" and "in the pay of the Americans"). As much as to say: hands off Berlin, our régime (dictatorial, between smiles) is solid, we've proved it with the facts. But the Emperor is more and more naked.

## The bourgeoisie's "Holy Alliances"

The first "Holy Alliance" between bourgeois and feudal forces (which decided the status quo in 1814 after the Napoleonic wars) ended in 1848, with the reawakening of the peoples and nations of Europe (of Europe's "revolutionary"

bourgeoisie) and with the first open, programmatic and active declaration of war by the proletariat: the *Communist Manifesto*. The second "Holy Alliance" was formed in Paris in 1870-71 during the Franco-Prussian war: the proletarian Commune found itself face to face with the two armies that had been at war up to then and were now united in its merciless repression, which ended up with the massacre of tens of thousands of proletarians and the imprisonment of hundreds of thousands of them in overseas territories. The third "Holy Alliance" followed the first world war, after the slaughter of fifteen million proletarians and peasants, and was dreamed up at Versailles by the American butler, U.S. President Wilson; at the same time, out and out war was declared on the proletarian Revolution in Russia, surrounded on all sides by the armies that rushed to bury it, and a hunt was launched for militant proletarians and communist revolutionaries by the German, Austrian and Hungarian social democrats, under orders from the victorious high bourgeoisie in exchange for an honourable peace. A different but parallel story took place in Italy, where the turncoats from the socialist party and revolutionary syndicalism, called to order by the high bourgeoisie, formed the Fascist Party, spreading terror amongst the proletariat, arm in arm with pacifist socialists, opportunist unionists and "legal" armed forces.

The economic crisis of 1929 destabilized that fragile alliance: the eggs in the nest hatched to a scenario that had changed radically. In the name of an imaginary "national socialism" and of a "nationalsocialism" which was the expression of capitalist dominion in its imperialist phase, the Russian and German bourgeoisies proceed systematically to clear the ground of any remaining revolutionary opposition, killing and imprisoning their political opponents: the former trying to wipe out all historical traces (theoretical, programmatic, organizational) of the Bolshevik party and of the Communist International, as an obligatory step on the way to new preparations for war, the new world conflict; the latter dealing the final blow to a proletariat that had struggled heroically for over a decade, but without the guidance of a true revolutionary party and all too often distracted and deluded by the tricks of social democracy. The result? A war alliance, first with Germany and then with the democratic governments, the disbanding of the Comintern, the revival of the "defence of socialist Russia": the balance of seventy-five million dead and the repression of millions of civilian proletarians in every nation, ethnic group, social group – a bloodbath of enormous proportions submerging the body of the Russian proletariat, the first to dare attack the world bourgeoisie. The second world war will go on to inaugurate bourgeois State terrorism against populations and territories: the strategy of massacre to defend its own mode of production.

The fourth "Holy Alliance", emerging from the "Yalta peace" in 1945, divides the European continent: with strokes of the pen, the world's brigands (Churchill, Eisenhower, Stalin) share out peoples and territories amongst themselves, but



what they are most concerned about is to stop the second post-war period becoming a repetition of the first, lit by the flare of revolt throughout Europe. Germany and its proletariat must be divided, Berlin must be divided: the "wall" will be the consequence of this infernal game that is supposed to guarantee stability by division. However, it will be the 1974-75 economic crisis that dictates law, with the final collapse of the whole Russian and East-European economy. Since then, the growing instability has brought Germany together, reuniting it; it has undone the USSR; it has balkanized the Balkans; it has set in motion civil, social and ethnic wars; it has devastated the whole of the middle-eastern area. Today, twenty years on, the world bourgeoisie needs to give the illusion that the peace of the cemeteries is still safe. We, instead, know that sooner or later new alliances will be made for the next conflict.

## Despite everything!

In those days of proletarian insurrection in Berlin, in January 1919, Karl Liebknecht, one of the co-founders with Rosa Luxemburg, of the Spartakus Bund (Spartacus League) wrote, shortly before being kidnapped, tortured and assassinated by the Freikorps death squads:

*" 'Spartakus overcome!'*

*"Yes, the revolutionary workers of Berlin have been beaten! Yes, hundreds of their best men massacred! Yes, hundreds of the most trusty of them thrown into prison! [...]"*

*"Their strength has been paralyzed by the indecision and weakness of their leaders. And the monstrous sea of counter-revolutionary mud from the most backward factions of the population and the well-to-do classes has submerged them."*

*"Yes, they've been beaten. And it was a historical necessity for them to be beaten. Because the time was not yet ripe. And yet, the fight was inevitable. [...]"*

*"Yes, the revolutionary workers of Berlin have been beaten! And Ebert-Scheidemann- Noske [the trio of social democratic butchers – Editor's note] have won. They have won because with them were the generals, the bureaucrats, the Junkers of industry and of the countryside, the priests and the fat wallets and everything that is small, limited, backwards. This scum won thanks to their machine-guns, gas bombs and mine-launchers. But there are some defeats that are victories; and victories that are more ominous than defeats. The defeated of this bloody week in January lived gloriously; they fought for something great, for the most noble aim of suffering humanity, for the spiritual and material redemption of the needy masses; they shed their blood for something sacred, which has thus been sanctified by it. And from every drop of blood*

*shed, the dragon seeds of today's victors, will spring those who will revenge the fallen, and from every torn fibre new fighters will rise for the great cause, which is eternal and imperishable as the firmament.*

*"The defeated of today will be the victors of tomorrow. Because the defeat is their lesson. The German proletariat still lacks a revolutionary tradition and experience. And only through uncertain attempts, youthful errors, painful defeats and failures will they be able to acquire the practical training to guarantee future success [...]"*

*"'Spartakus defeated!'"*

*"Not so fast! We have not fled, we are not beaten. And even if they put us in chains, here we are and here we will remain! And victory will be ours.*

*Because Spartakus stands for fire and spirit, it stands for heart and soul, it stands for the will and the action of the proletarian revolution. And Spartakus stands for every need and desire for happiness, every desire to fight in the class-conscious proletariat. Because Spartakus stands for socialism and world revolution. [...]"*

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1. We are here quoting from the Italian edition of Liebknecht's Works: *Scritti politici*, Feltrinelli, p.375.

*"And if we are no longer alive when it is achieved, our programme will live on; the world of redeemed humanity will rule. Despite everything! [...]"<sup>1</sup>*

Still today, this is the task handed down to us when faced with the gathering of past and present butchers in Berlin.

# The Immigration Issue

## Class solidarity and internationalism

The defence of the living and working conditions of immigrant proletarians is part and parcel of the economic and social defence of the whole of the proletariat. Active and militant solidarity with immigrant proletarians by proletarians in general and communists in particular is not a moral duty nor a claim to democratic and humanitarian ideals. It is a vital need for the entire proletarian class: without class solidarity it is not possible for the paralyzing divisions fuelled by the bourgeoisie to be overcome, for immediate and future class unity to be rebuilt, for us to defend ourselves effectively from capital, and therefore it will not be possible to face the questions posed by the need to prepare revolution. The immigrant masses are the link between the urban proletariat and the

proletarian masses of outlying regions and countries, and one of the keys to the future of the communist revolution. A class struggle that fails to make this unity a central issue is inconceivable, both in order to overcome the divisions set up in factories, in rural work, in the service industries and to repair the far more dangerous and deeper division between the immigrant “foreign” proletarian and the “native”, homebred proletarian <sup>1</sup>.

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1. In the same way, in imperialist times, the world party founds its organizational base on the local sections of a single organism and not as a sum of “national” parties.

The proletarian revolution must necessarily start out from this fusion of heterogeneous sections of the proletariat oriented towards the same class objectives. Internationalism is based on the principles of communism,

which is the arm of the revolutionary struggle for all the world's proletariat, not just for a sector of it (national, regional, professional etc.). The comrades who came before us in the course of history gave strategic importance to the class bond, always fighting against the plague of competition, both economic and national, that proletarians are forced into against one other, to the sole advantage of capital. The phenomenon of migration is accorded great strategic importance by the proletarian party, for the future revival of the revolutionary class struggle.

### **The nature of the migratory phenomenon and the bourgeois attack**

Emigration is not a marginal, temporary situation limited to a certain span of time. On the contrary, it is the product of growing proletarianization, a process intrinsic to the widespread accumulation of capital. The creation of zero-reserves worldwide, a readily available workforce, is the very essence of capital. From 1840 to 1914, for example, 47 million Europeans abandoned the Old Continent to move to America; it is partly to this influx of labour that the USA's extraordinary development is due, consequently overtaking England, participating in the first world war, gaining victory in the second. At present in advanced European nations, there are tens of millions of proletarians from far-flung regions of Africa, East Europe, the Middle East and Asia. Tens of millions are moving every day from a wide range of southern and

central regions of the American continent towards the USA and others to the Far East. The dynamics of migratory flows depend on the unequal development of capitalism, the growing polarization between wealth and proletarianization – non-linear, non-stationary dynamics with accelerations and decelerations according to the peaks of development or of economic crises. These flows follow the path of growing urbanization and sooner or later turn into flows of emigration beyond national boundaries. In periods of economic crisis the pressure of incoming immigration is accentuated and at the same time there is a strong demand for strict internal regulation, accompanied by repression and deportation. The nature of the class struggle becomes contradictory, because whilst there is an increase in workers' resistance to the crisis, there is also increasing intolerance towards foreign workers, fuelled and manipulated by the bourgeoisie and by opportunism. On the other hand, repression and deportation are dictated by the wholly bourgeois need to avoid the constitution of a class front, propelled by the crisis and thus potentially able to fuse the struggles of the domestic and the immigrant proletariat for the same objectives.

The concern of the bourgeoisie is to avoid extremely dangerous outbreaks in the big cities or at least to contain them and limit them to the outlying areas (of the cities and of the world). The violence that is expressed in daily persecution, intimidations, police control of any incident or event linked to the immigrant population, even going against the economic laws of capitalism themselves (which require flexible, low-cost labour), is function-

al to the political and military power exercised against the whole of our class: so that a part of the proletariat is subject to a regime of “special laws”, without the more integrated of the proletariat realising the gravity of it. From a dialectical perspective, the phenomena of intolerance and xenophobia are also accompanied by growing potential awareness by proletarians that they all belong to the same class. In times of prosperity (for example after the Second World War), the politics of many European states were even directed towards encouraging “clandestine immigration” as a means of alleviating the growing pressure of salaries and the union struggles that were going on. The lungs that Marx called “*the industrial reserve army*” are a necessity for capital, in times of prosperity as in times of crisis. It is the growing development of outlying countries, their entry onto the world market, the proletarianization that is going on in the remotest of countries and not some generalized abstract poverty or that of past times but the poverty produced by capitalist development, that are accelerating the shift of hands that fail to find salaried work in their countries of origin.

Capital rapidly deprives enormous masses of men and women (mostly poor or medium-range farmers and small or medium-range craftsmen) of their old means of production, of the possibility of a livelihood, even of their national character and flings them onto the world market (passing through the domestic market as far as possible). There is no close link between proletarianization and the immediate, local use of the workforce, since the cause of the process of prole-

tarianization is not national but international: the flow of labour may be excessive or insufficient for the needs of capital. The dynamic of capital knows no national limits to its accumulation: that proletarians may be sent back to their own countries is a pious illusion, which belies itself and is thus reactionary, whilst all the force in the bourgeois world would not be sufficient to halt the process of proletarianization and the shifting of the workforce.

The illusion that violence might be able to turn back the wheel of history is as old as the bourgeoisie itself. The question is particularly real, since all the varieties of “legal” and “illegal” are alive and kicking both at departure and on arrival: local organizers, ferry pilots, the *caporalato* (the illegal, direct hiring of labour), employment agencies, entrepreneurs, taxmen, extortionists... From an *economic* point of view capital considers the proletariat as a unit and is indifferent to its nationality: it is the *political* necessity of dividing the class front that forces the bourgeoisie to isolate the weakest link “making a present” of ... a national identity.

Deported from their countries of origin (by means of private- or state-run rackets), given a mass welcome and super-exploited in times of prosperity, left to fend for themselves or driven away using all the means at the state’s disposal (ships, police, army, walls, barbed wire) in times of economic crisis but not yet open warfare, the immigrants cannot be eliminated, since when they come into contact with the forces of production, they invigorate them and soon assume a strong social and economic role. In some sectors they are subjected to ex-

treme exploitation that the domestic workforce is no longer used to putting up with. Only the deliberate ignorance of the petit-bourgeois, “no global” fringes can attribute the cause of immigration to so-called “neo-liberal globalization”, forgetting the story of capital’s historical development.

For the masses of native-born workers, their own condition of dependence and growing poverty appears as though reflected in a mirror and this can call into question national identity, confidence in the State, the convictions instilled day after day, of security and protection. At first, inevitably, this questioning of certainties produces diffidence, irritation, intolerance towards the foreign workers; in the long term, physical contact with them at workplaces, in relationships and in struggles, can break down this diffidence. For this reason (which is instinctively grasped by the bourgeoisie), the intolerance is constantly re-ignited artificially. Against the immigrants the bourgeoisie uses all the means at its disposal, activating the classes in between, the media, the working-class aristocracy, racist and anti-racist movements, the poor and criminal sub-proletariat (both native and immigrant). The aim of all the apparatus, the laws, the administrative regulations, the isolation and detention centres, the police controls, delegation to the various churches is to create divisions amongst proletarians.

The politics of the State, which seesaw between assimilation and intolerance, are directed against different ethnic groups, nationalities, religions, cultures which often exhibit criminal or deviant behaviour. The latter are often accompanied by conditions in

which human beings are reduced to beasts and there is exultation of individual violence, all of which ends up by taking over the social scenario. The residue of a long-dead past, recycled in the media, during the fight for economic defence, these distorted ethnic, religious and national identities can easily lead to division (and thus to defeat), limiting the class struggle to a battle of an ethnic, cultural or religious nature. It is in the best interests of the ruling classes, supported by the middle classes and manoeuvring the sub-proletariat, to move the economic and political conflict in this direction. The ideas of multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious relations, bandied about by the so-called “left”, because of their idealistic nature fail to overcome the reactionary limits of culture, nationality and religion: they are *petit-bourgeois, conservative ideologies*, an up-dated, “modern” version of the bourgeois nation with its cursed general interest, which tends to conciliate social conflicts in times of peace and to favour patriotic unity in times of war.

From an economic point of view, instead, the temporary presence, integration, assimilation, naturalization of the immigrants corresponds to *capital’s need to use a readily-available, low-cost, precarious, flexible* labour force. Whilst corresponding to the demand for continuity and stability of employment to which the immigrant proletariat aspires, integration and assimilation are normally only feasible in conditions of capitalist economic development: in situations of crisis, instead, assimilation becomes counter-productive and dangerous. In a capitalist regime, the on-

ly integration really possible is the kind that is functional to the engine of production: outside this technical definition exist precariousness, disintegration, ghettos and discrimination. On the other hand, naturalization assumes the nature of a “reward for loyalty”, of “fawning to the ruling class”, whilst successive generations (still always subjected to scrutiny, to the eternal test of successfully completed integration-citizenship), often exert pressure to move backwards, to a “return to their origins”, respect for the old traditions or inconclusive rebellion.

The age of progressive and democratic capitalism is buried under the ruins of two world wars: in making legality, the defence of institutions, human rights the key issues and giving them priority, the only objective of reformism and opportunism is to control and extinguish potential struggles. After contributing to “civilizing” the native proletariat, castrating its fighting spirit, the turn has come of the “savages from outside”, the ones who “don’t know the rules”. Hypocritical tears shed over “police persecution” are always accompanied by the demand for controls “within the law”; moreover, the demand to adapt the migratory flow to the effective needs of the nation is doing none other than follow the political direction of exploitation, discrimination and division of the proletariat from departure to arrival. The positions of the right-wing and the “left” now tend to be alike as two peas: the bourgeois ideology unfolds with all its variations at the service of the *dictatorial needs of capital*.

The redefinition of a modern concept of nation (and bourgeois citizenship)

and the return in the 1990s of the concept of national identity are signs of the irreversible crisis that bourgeois society is heading towards. The objective of demands for identity (national, ethnic, religious) or for membership (“EU”, “non-EU”) is to “destabilize” the presence of immigrants, who are driven to cross national borders and thus forced into precariousness, the black labour market, illegality and from here to social exclusion and finally deportation. The clandestine and criminal behaviour induced in the immigrant proletariat in these conditions is the bourgeoisie’s alibi for the *social control of the territory*, to fuel social discrimination, to carry out *systematic and selective expulsion from factories* of combative workers and delegates. Intolerance and racism towards immigrants are not attitudes specific to the right-wing bourgeoisie but belong to a vast front ranging from right to “left”: *the single front of the bourgeoisie*. They are not the product of short-sighted provincialism but of a wide range of extremely modern, international political positions. They are the reactions of the bourgeoisie to the first signals of a broadening proletarian class front, even in a spontaneous form and unfortunately lacking its party as yet. The appeal to national identity is an appeal to nationalism, imposed by the bourgeoisie and by capitalism; the appeal to law and order is only apparently directed at immigrants on the surface of things but in fact at *the whole of the proletariat*: it is an affair of the Ministry of Home Affairs and, at the same time, a *declaration of war on the domestic and potentially internationalist proletariat*.



## The communist reply

The class response to the question of immigration thus draws a clear line between proletarian internationalism and the collaborationist and social-chauvinist politics of opportunism. All the political and union forces that pre-announce emigration control policies corresponding to the “country’s needs”, are *accomplices of their bourgeois state’s imperialist oppression towards the disinherited masses*: and are *the same political forces that every day betray the interests of the home proletariat in the name of social peace and national solidarity*. The great migratory waves produce mass movements of proletarians that are nothing new in the history of capitalism and are closely bound up with its characteristics, bringing *tremendous contrasts*, as well as *extraordinarily positive factors* to the proletariat as a whole. For capital, as well as high productivity, the positive elements are flexibility, mobility, low salaries, submission, the possibility of deportation, vulnerability and openness to blackmail which, in turn, are negative factors for the general conditions of the class. Workers coming from countries that export labour, poor workers and peasants without land, workers in the service industries and from the most varied of experiences, educated or not, constitute a huge portion of the industrial reserve army for world capitalism. Countries that import labour add a

considerable quantity of super-profits to their average profit rate, whilst countries exporting human goods see a return in terms of large quantities of strong currency. Bourgeois politics hide super-exploitation, the black market of labour, social discrimination of all kinds. Under the conditions of legal work contracts, family benefits for families remaining in the country of origin are 3 or 4 times lower, wages are the lowest of all; under illegal conditions there are no benefits or social security contributions but starvation-level wages that take years to pay off the cost of transport, working hours of between 10 or 12 a day. It is obviously not only because of the lack of a fighting tradition on the part of the newly-arrived workers that it is in the interests of the entrepreneurs to hire them and encourage the rapid rotation of this inexhaustible immigration.

Very soon, the immigrant workers end up by assuming great importance for the economy, constituting a massive proportion of employment in industry, in public works, in building, in the humblest of the service industries. Not “marginal”, but authentic proletarians without reserves, deprived of the guarantees that most domestic workers have at their disposal, immigrant workers have demonstrated on several occasions over the years that the competition created by capitalism amongst workers can be attenuated and opposed. Naturally more vulnerable

but also more willing to fight, immigrant workers often bring with them the impetus of a proletariat that has not yet been tamed, constituting a ferment that is a danger to social peace, an impetus and passion that repay the debt of confidence from the native proletariat.

The defence of the living and working conditions of immigrants and their struggle against bourgeois oppression must be positioned in an increasingly closer unity of the proletarian class and collocated on the territory, using the methods of the working class and refusing the lies and illusions of democracy which tends to leave them linked to other classes. All the new ideologies that attempt to divide and fragment the unity of the world proletariat are opportunist: both the “no-global” ideologies, that attempt to give the “migrant subject” a political and social identity distinct from that of the proletariat, and all the viewpoints that fill this subjectivity with cultural, religious and social values independent of and “superior” to those of class. The cross-class, democratic perspective is to organize them as both lay and religious “progressive forces”, legally and for electoral reasons: the internationalist perspective is transformed into *national multiculturalism*. The essential issue for opportunism is solely “regulation”, “equal rights”, “legalization” of immigrants: the rest is supposed to follow; in the meantime, the immigrants are to be kept away from “u-

nion battles”, preferably organizing themselves in committees outside the context of the economic struggle, and having themselves represented by lawyers, institutions, parties, at the most bringing a bit of publicity to the streets with their colourful marches.

Our perspective instead addresses all proletarians, immigrants or not, in terms of the practice of the struggle for survival, an essential requirement which corresponds to both immediate and historical needs. This means: a *basic union*, where possible, of immigrant and native workers, taking as its cue the struggles already in existence and the tentative embryos of broader organic formations of *solidarity between all proletarians*; the weaving of autonomous organizations open to *all combative workers*. The only possible battleground is the historical one of the working class: *strikes, class solidarity, independent self-defence of the class* (through mutual support organizations). The struggle must be conducted *inside and outside the unions, inside and outside the workplace*, and must tend towards the constitution of *an authentic class front against the united front of the bourgeoisie and opportunism*.

Thus: class unity against the present atomization, fragmentation, decentralization, pulverization of production which generates despondency, resignation, closure and impotent anger amongst immigrants; the unity of the entire proletariat against

the internal union divisions of labour, justified as differentiation of work descriptions or contractual differences (open-ended, term contracts, atypical), in order to break down the insulating walls between workers; attacks on the “social plans, plans for employment, plans against unemployment, plans for development” which introduce forms of premiums and/or exchanges in favour of native workers as against immigrants; the fight against discrimination, division and “decent-thinking” chauvinism, that worm their way into the masses of the workers themselves in order to defend and conserve the privileges they have acquired, fuelled by the working-class aristocracy, the middle classes, the bourgeoisie; the fight against nationalism and xenophobia carried forward even by broad sectors of the national working class, especially in old established cities, who have been the protagonists of past and present imperialist plunder.

### Watchwords

Let us now make a brief summary of the watchwords necessary for a fight that aims to defend the living and working conditions of the entire proletariat – a fight which, like smouldering wood under ashes, will flare up again despite the hood of conformity and repression. These watchwords do not divide the proletariat into two separate entities (domestic

and immigrant) but embrace all the different conditions in which they find themselves, in all their complexity.

They are:

- a) Wage increases, larger ones for the worst paid categories, inversely proportional to the conditions of the workers. No sacking and a full wage for the unemployed or those on temporary redundancy benefit;*
- b) Strike action with no limit to time, space, category or sector;*
- c) A united class front: immigrants, the employed, temporarily employed, “flexibly” employed, women and men, young and old, the unemployed and those who have been laid off.*

Alongside these watchwords, which regard the objectives and methods of an essentially economic struggle, for immigrant workers and above all those coming from countries excluded from European agreements, there are also more general political-social demands that regard so-called “civil rights”;

- a) Regularization, renewal of residence permits, permission to join family members without any bureaucratic formalities, all of which free of charge and open-ended;*
- b) No form of repressive control, registration, fingerprinting or registration of genetic code, no internment camps, deportation etc.;*
- c) Firm opposition to any admission of “stocks” of immigrant workers for specific, seasonal or temporary projects;*
- d) Automatic extension of any “rights” gained over time by the native prole-*

*tariat: from healthcare to housing, from education to social security.*

The development and practice of these watchwords will be the task of militant organisms open to all proletarians and

the fight against any form of union or association that proposes bringing together proletarians on the basis of their language or nationality must be the fiercest possible.

## The Events in Rosarno

*Early in January, riots broke loose in Rosarno, a village in Southern Italy, after a few immigrant fruit-pickers, mainly from Africa, were shot at in the night by a group of probably hired gunmen – a night of guerrilla by exasperated and exploited proletarians. The day after, in vigilante-fashion (infiltration and provocation on part of the local Mafia-like organization, the 'ndrangheta, was widely rumoured), Rosarno good citizens assaulted the immigrant community, and demanded its removal. Police arrived, and the fruit-pickers were rounded up and deported. The following article appeared on the pages of our Italian newspaper, Il programma comunista, n.1/2010.*

### Long live the proletarians of Rosarno!

Fleeing from misery, war, oppression and all the rest of colonialism's fine heritage, as well as imperialist present, crammed like animals onto the longboats of the human flesh merchants, the survivors of an odyssey by land and sea, processed by the concentration camps of the "reception centres" (!), more or less unofficially (more often than not with promises of regular work never to be kept) sent off to any place or any economic sector in need of cheap labour to promote the business interests of the owners, businessmen, bosses and mini-bosses, contractors, "foremen", pimps, drug dealers, greater and lesser extortionists of legal and illegal plus value (*the varied world of capital*), exploited in the fields at 20 euros a day for 15-16 hours of work three-four days a week, forced to sleep in stinking sheds, abandoned factories, revolting hovels... And as well as all that, the butt of the crudest racism coming from youths in search of excitement, from a rabble that is itself the victim of the same exploitation but incapable of grasping it, from the rabid *petit-bourgeois* who feels trapped but is too stupid (or media-drugged) to understand why, from ceaseless and growing state oppression and persecution by bands of what more or less amount to mercenaries... This is an X-ray of the conditions of Rosarno's immigrant proletarians (as, yesterday, of Villa Literno's, and as *always*, anywhere in the world – in Italy, France, England, the United States...).

After being shot at by some scoundrel or other, they rebelled against the constant persecution and demonstrated that “if we must die, let it not be like hogs, hunted and penned in an inglorious spot.” They fought back instinctively; they overstepped the limits of that disgusting, suffocating legality that pretends everything’s just fine until the pot boils over; they didn’t climb onto factory rooftops or factory chimneys to make themselves visible to public opinion but went out onto the streets; yes, they *revolted*, angrily, ferociously, indifferent to the supreme (and castrating) laws of democracy and non-violence. As the oppressed always have done and always will do, when they have reached the limits of what they can put up with.

All hell was let loose in the *bel paese* of capital: and the good citizens, respectful of law and order, turned into fascist squads in their “hunt for the nigger”. The outcome was evident *in this situation*: the forces of law and order moved in, questions were asked in Parliament, a surprise raid was made and there were expulsion orders issued. This is no surprise: law and order, whoever they are imposed by (the State with its cops, its priests and its politicians; right-thinking citizens who, instead of the blazing crosses of the Klu Klux Klan, exhibit the severed heads of calves...), are on the side of the bosses and of capital, that varied world mentioned earlier.

Infiltrated by the “*ndrangheta*”? Provocation? Artificially-fuelled exasperation? This is of no interest to us. The power of capital has *always* made use of any band, legal or illegal, to exert its pressure on the proletariat (in the practical, physical sense, *in the flesh*) and first and foremost on its weakest, most isolated elements – those most exposed to blackmail. Capitalism *always* divides in order to command, creates reserves of proletariats on which to wreck its hatred and its resent, to point to as “the enemy in our own home” – the Irish in England during the industrial revolution, the black former slaves and their descendants in that cradle of democracy that is the United States of America... Capitalism has *always* exploited ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious origins to oppress the proletariat and set them one against the other, to avoid their different sectors joining together in a single battlefront capable of blowing up once and for all, under the revolutionary guidance of the communists, this filthy world of wheelers and dealers, profiteers, exploiters and all sorts of rabble. What the sociologists, in their antiseptic terms, call “ethnic replacement” has always worked like this: in the United States (which, as the most powerful form of imperialism, is the mirror in which we can recognize ourselves) after the Irish proletariat in the mid-eighteen hundreds came the turn of the Italian proletarians, then of the Jewish and the Chinese and the Mexicans and the Puerto Ricans, right up to today – in the same economic sectors and often in the space of only a few weeks: away with one lot (with gunshots and kicks up the backside) and in with another (ready for more gunshots and kicks up the back-

side)... In Rosarno and the surrounding areas something similar has happened: the crisis is hitting the country, too, not only the cities, and so the labour-force, kept in conditions of semi-slavery, is reduced and re-shaped (as well as being terrorized, which is always just as well!), by any means possible: explosions in the night, the “indignation of the townspeople”, the “anger of the people”, the Home Secretary Maroni, and the cops. After the “niggers” it appears that it will be the Rumanians (the “devils” of some months previously), because the mandarins still have to be picked and, at 20 euros a day, the right-thinking citizens are careful to have nothing to do with this... Briefly, the immigrant proletarians (clandestine or not) *have been fired* and others will be brought in, still more vulnerable to blackmail and even more inhuman conditions. The “native” proletariat should think carefully about this, because it is the same fate that will be reserved for them when the time comes – with determination, rapidly and without social buffers - to get rid of excess labour on a market undergoing a crisis of over production. The factories in Pomigliano d’Arco, Termini Imerese, Porto Vesme and all the other places where riots are appearing in the fabric of capitalist production, are not so far away from the fields of Rosarno, Villa Literno, Castel Volturno...

The proletarians of Rosarno have shouted it aloud: *the problems are the same, it is urgent for the response to be the same – a united proletarian front, the unyielding defence of living and working conditions, awareness that in the régime of capital life cannot be worth living, the will to fight this régime until it is destroyed.* And above all, so that all this does not boil down to empty words, *the recognition that there is an urgent need to establish the roots of the international communist party and extend its growth.*

### **Yes to a general strike by proletarians of all origins and categories everywhere!**

### **No to a strike of only the “immigrant workers”!**

In the last few weeks in France, Italy and elsewhere, the proposal has been launched for an “immigrants’ strike”, intended as a reply to the recent, repeated episodes of persecution against them (an embryo of the sadly famous pogroms of a not-so-distant past).

*We communists do not agree.* The economic crisis, which is far from being over, as politicians and hack reporters would have it, but is in fact experiencing new and dramatic sprints forward, inflates the world of the unemployed to the utmost, gradually worsening the living conditions of the proletariat, exposing those who are still in work to exhausting régimes with the threat of losing it from one day to the next. And it gradually affects *everyone*, if not today then tomorrow: workers



in all sectors, of all ages, genders – *and geographical origins*. Meekly obeying capital's every *diktat*, the disastrous practice of political and union opportunism that has developed over so many decades of betrayal and abandonment, cheating and face-changing, has progressively isolated proletarians and kept them locked in their categories, firms, areas, regional wage differentials, terms of contract, the thousand and one traps of the world of work which, in order to respond to the economic crisis, has conceived and introduced every possible kind of segmentation, dispersion, job insecurity.

In this situation, a mean breed of imbeciles and opportunists has decided to organize this “immigrants’ strike”, which even more cuts to pieces the proletarian class within firms, fields, services, isolating it from the rest of the workers – and, in this way, helping and contributing to separation and division. Once again, this is a sign of the devastating job by which political and union organizations (opportunist and corporative) rule the social reality. The immigrant proletarians of Rosarno (Italy) and the thousands of workers scattered in similar local situations have already shown their (unfortunately, “solitary”) action of force: they have placed at its center *not* their condition as foreigners (strangers, aliens), but *the condition of all proletarians*. What they now need is the rousing contact of the *force of the whole class*, not the equivocal and self-interested solidarity of charlatans. That the self same mean breed now also contrives to shed confusion, by organizing a farcical strike on March 12, 2010 (which they have the cheek to call “general”!) is still another proof of the fact that *an attack is under way against the whole proletarian class*, and it is waged not only by the State and by the bosses! To win a victory, even if it is only an immediate one, the reply can only be *to resume open and unrelenting class warfare, refusing to tolerate any separation, ghettoization, division within that enormous army that continues to swell whilst the crisis proceeds and that we call the world proletariat*. To launch the slogan of an “immigrants’ strike” means going down the road of betrayal. It is not a sectional strike that proletarians need today, not the thousandth segmentation within their ranks. They need strike action that is *as widespread as possible* in terms of both time and place, which involves *every sector* of the exploited, attacked, repressed and divided proletariat. They need to re-experience the sense of their *collective strength* in practice, to feel and make it felt that “an injury to one is an injury to all”, to close ranks in a *single battlefield* – because this is how to shake the world of capital.

Let's put an end to betrayal, an end to cheating! We communists side with the proletarians of all origins, ages, categories, genders and in all places, who refuse divisions, delaying tactics, appeals to good-heartedness and to peaceful co-existence, and who once again feel part of the *single army* in their daily fight against the bosses, against capital, and against the State that represents and defends them.



A Leaflet (distributed in several occasions)

**Beyond residence permits,  
for a united front of the whole proletarian class,  
for internationalist organization of proletarian forces**

***Proletarians, comrades!***

Remember the struggle of the immigrant proletarians in Rosarno (Southern Italy), their self-determination against exploitation, against the indifference and hostility that surrounded them? They challenged a world that was oppressing them, consisting of work-gang leaders and police, bosses and union organizations, which constantly kept them separated from the rest of the proletariat for fear that a spontaneous alliance might be formed against the existing social order. They had residence permits, they didn't need to apply for them in order to work, so this was not what they were claiming or fighting for: they were fighting the deplorable and inhuman treatment they received and to defend themselves from their horrendous living and working conditions. During their struggle it was clear to them that in a capitalist regime, whether you have a residence permit or not, there can be no life worth living unless this regime is fought against until it is destroyed.

***Proletarians, comrades!***

the fight you have begun in order to procure the “piece of paper” can do no more than place you in the condition of legal salaried slaves, just the same as other, Italian proletarians. Of course it saves you from a clandestine existence, created precisely so that you have to beg and accept starvation wages, hovels to live in, police controls, being chased on the streets to end up shut up in monitoring or expulsion centres. Nothing will stop us supporting the fight you have begun. But this fight, arising out of total desperation, is nevertheless doomed to defeat, unless it is accompanied by more widespread action from the whole of the working class and avoids condemning itself to recognizing its own humanity in a “job”, in a productive jail. In these conditions isolation cannot be overcome by facile charitable solidarity; it cannot be overcome unless a united battlefield is formed, with a view to spreading over the territory and organizing a relentless response – a unified internationalist organism, characterized by methods of class struggle and the following immediate claims:

- \* **Refusal, in an organized form, of any persecution, expulsion, confinement of immigrant workers**
- \* **Residence permits for everyone, with no limits**
- \* **United front of internationalist struggle**

## Darwinian anniversaries

# Evolution and Revolution

This year in academies, cultural circles and more or less “specialized” magazines, two anniversaries linked to the name of Darwin are being celebrated: the bi-centenary of his birth (1809) and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his most famous work, *The Origin of the Species by Natural Selection* (1859). Before examining our position on the problems posed by the theory of evolution, however, we have to start with an explanation of the Marxist concept of science, for just as we deny the existence of “science in general”, we deny the existence of a “general” aspect of Darwinian theory, above and beyond society. We do not accord any special status to bourgeois science, which we have, indeed, recognized as having an *anti-social* function, to the extent that it is inevitably (and since its early appearance) subjugated to the demands and will of capital. Once the means and systems of original accumulation had become established, through the most brutal, state-organized violence, and once the bases had been laid for the subsequent development of manufacturing, the study of nature was directed and conditioned by the need to produce and reproduce capital. “Scientific” geology, developing the basic concepts of tectonics and stratigraphy and arising in the sixteenth-hundreds out of the art of mining practised by metallurgists in the previous century (Biringuccio, Georg Agricola, etc.), needed to provide the knowledge required for developing the first iron industries, i.e. metallurgy. This same art of mining prompted research in the difficult field of the chemical transformation of matter, in particular that of metals, attaining the status of an independent discipline which, thanks to precise weighing procedures, at the end of eighteenth century succeeded in (re)defining the atomic theory. The tumultuous concentration of human masses

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around the first great manufacturing centres obliged medicine to develop new research in the field of hygiene, infectious diseases and epidemiology. The need to develop new and precise tools for production led to some fundamental discoveries in the field of thermodynamics (Kelvin) and thermo-chemistry (Hess), as well as those previously made in the field of calculus (Leibniz, Newton), eminently suited for producing a solution to the problem of differentiation and integration: time and space are connected; speed and area, apparently independent “abstractions”, are brought together in the essential knowledge of how to make engines and wheels. And no-one can fail to recognize that the sole aim of modern-day studies in agrarian genetics is to attempt (*vainly, in our opinion*) to infuse new life into a basic sector of capitalist production, agriculture, which has always weighed on the production sector.

Taken as a whole, science does not, therefore, have a parallel life independent of society and the production system. And in the total and absolute extent to which it must serve the interests of this system and the class that holds control over it, it becomes *anti-human* and a source of suffering for the class over which it exerts its influence.

Nonetheless, it would be madness to deny that bourgeois science has played a part in the millenary process of accumulating human knowledge. The roots of the process are to be found in the dawn of humanity (work and knowledge are indissolubly linked and the latter follows the former); it continues with the establishment of the first farming communities and then with those that develop technologies based on metalworking; it reaches its peak in the west with the theoretical formulations of the Greek philosophers in the IVth and Vth century B.C. It was thanks to the bourgeoisie in its revolutionary phase that the ancient, feudal “walls of China” were overturned, in terms of knowledge, too, breaking down the schemes of a universe frozen in unchanging categories and demonstrating the *historical quality of nature*. The first name that comes to mind in this process might be Galileo: the last that of Darwin.

Paying the closest of attention to what the bourgeoisie was producing at a theoretical level, too, it did not take Marx and Engels long to realize Darwin’s significance, *in positive and in negative terms*. It may be interesting here to quote parts taken from their letters<sup>1</sup>.

1. Our translation.

*Engels to Marx, 11-12 December 1859* (thus just one month after the publication of *The Origin of the Species*) “[...] The Darwin I’m reading now is truly stupendous. From a certain point of view the issue of teleology had not yet been unravelled and now it has been. What’s more, such a grand attempt has never been made to demonstrate a historical development of nature, or at least, not so successfully. Of course you have to forgive the clumsy English methodology.”

*Marx to Engels, 10 December 1860*: “[...] I have read a great deal of stuff.

Amongst it the book by Darwin on 'Natural selection'. Clumsily executed as it may be in the English style, here's the book that contains the foundations in natural history for our way of seeing the world".

*Marx to Lassalle, 16 January 1861*: "Of great importance is the work by Darwin which gives me pleasure as a support from the natural sciences to the class struggle throughout history. Of course one must accept that crude English way of elaborating things. But notwithstanding all its faults, not only do we have the first mortal blow to 'teleology' in natural sciences, but its rational meaning is explained empirically".

*Marx to Engels, 18 June, 1862*: "I'm entertaining myself with Darwin, whom I've taken another look at, where he recommends applying the 'theory of Malthus' to plants and animals *as well*, as if the essence of Mr. Malthus were not the very fact that it is *not* applied to plants and animals but instead – with geometrical progression – to men only, in contrast with plants and animals. It is striking that in the beasts and plants, Darwin recognizes his English society with its labour divisions, its competition, the opening of new markets, 'the inventions' and the Malthusian 'struggle for existence'. It is Hobbes' *bellum omnium contra omnes* and reminiscent of Hegel in his 'Phenomenology', when he depicts bourgeois society as an 'ideal animal kingdom', whilst in Darwin the animal kingdom is depicted as a bourgeois society."

Lastly, *Engels, in a letter to Lavrov of 17 November 1875*, summed up the entire point of view as follows: "Of the Darwinian doctrine, I accept the *theory of evolution* whilst only admitting D's method of demonstration (*struggle for life, natural selection*) as an initial, temporary and incomplete expression of something that has only just been discovered. [...] The reciprocal action of natural bodies – both inanimate and animate – comprises both harmony and conflict, fighting as well as co-operation. [...] The entire Darwinian theory of the struggle for existence is simply the transposition of Hobbes' doctrine of *bellum omnium contra omnes* from society into living nature with that of competition – derived from bourgeois economy – together with the Malthusian theory of population. [...] If, however, as happens now, production in its capitalistic form produces a quantity of means of survival and development greatly superior to what capitalist society can consume, because it keeps the great mass of its true producers artificially distanced from these means of survival and development; if this society is obliged by its own vital principle to constantly increase this production, which is already excessive, and therefore resort to destroying not only a mass of products but also forces of production every ten years – what sense remains to all the talk of 'struggle for survival'?"

Thus, whilst on the one hand Marx and Engels readily acknowledged the enormous scope of the theory of evolution, on the other hand they also distinguished

those aspects of it strictly connected to its original context, that of a *society divided into opposing classes*. The law of the “survival of the fittest” was to be parodied as the victory of the “strong” (the capitalist or, in English Victorian society in the mid eighteenth-hundreds still shaken by *Carlylean phantoms*, the nobleman or the more or less declining landowner)<sup>2</sup> over the “weak” (the proletarian, the dispossessed peasant reduced to forced labour in the new prisons of the capitalist factory). And in fact it was in this

very direction that the bourgeois academies endeavoured to deviate the theory of evolution. Because they saw its dangerous dialectic and revolutionary aspects, they turned the limelight onto its purely lay and anti-religious aspect on the one hand, in a sort of illuminist heritage inspired by the Goddess Reason, rendering the content sterile through polemics which, instead of drying up over time, always seem to rage amongst supporters of “chance” and those of “intelligent design”: polemics by which Darwin himself was tormented for years; on the other hand they made efforts to deviate the content towards so-called “social Darwinism”, eugenetics, some sectors of modern socio-biology and, of course, reform by degrees.

For our part, we refuse Darwinism’s tacit consensus to bourgeois economic theories and the attempts (subsequent to Darwin’s death, it must be said) to apply the theory of it to human society.

However, Darwinism contains an element that makes it a theory relevant to the whole of human history and indeed the whole of the Earth’s history. This element is to be found in the *application of the method of dialectic materialism to the natural sciences, though with some considerable limits*.

Numerous commentators from “critical left” traditions (Trotskyists, ICCs, etc.) start out from these elements, known under the name “social Darwinism”, for their criticisms of Darwinism. It seems to us that by doing this the causes are confused with the effects, the latter being the expression of the class war transferred onto an ideological plane, whilst the former – the causes – have far deeper roots, in the dialectic movement that no longer belongs to the bourgeoisie but is now part of the theoretical heritage of the revolutionary class.

The bourgeoisie rapidly took possession of Darwinism, transforming its potentially explosive dialectic content into a sort of teleology, or philosophy suitable for demonstrating that the whole of history works towards the formation of a developed market economy based on competition, exchange of equivalents, salary and capital (the so-called “end of history”). Derisive of its more obvious aspects (humankind “descending from the apes”, the subject of thousands of ironic cartoons ever since the first appearance of the *Origins*), the bourgeoisie attempted

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2. “*Carlylean Phantoms*” is the title of an article which appeared in the series “Along the Thread of Time”, in our Italian newspaper *il programma comunista*, no. 9/1953, in which the celebrated English essayist, historian and philosopher Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) is counted “among the many enemies and critics of the emerging and sordid capitalist society [...] who, whilst sometimes capturing its contemptible sides in a sculptural fashion and whilst revealing the quagmire of progress and civilization, were not, however, able to understand its irreplaceable contributions”.

to highlight the mistaken ones, such as the Malthusian theory of population. The young Marx had already succeeded in establishing the impossibility for the bourgeois class reaching any reconciliation between the human species and nature. Bourgeois polemics turn this same accusation against Marxism, considering communism as the “end of history”. For them, history can be none other than the struggle between social classes, whereas for Marxism this is only the *pre-history* of humanity. But for Marxism does a “teological” vision exist in human history? On the one hand, it is certain that Marxism blocks any attempt at possibilist tendencies, any choice of options that are all valid or all to be refused as they gradually arise in the course of history. On the other hand, it is undeniable that since communist society does not yet exist, what we communists have been doing for 150 years is to demonstrate in our analysis of the successive forms of production that all the economic and social impulses, necessarily forced in the processes of centralizing capitalist economy, must lead, through a phase of violent destruction of ties and chains in the forms of circulation and exchange, to the “society of free producers” so often referred to by Marx or Engels.

Thus the theory of evolution in its classical 1859 formulation is a product of the social history of humanity. We may ask ourselves: was it necessary for it to have been bred in bourgeois society? Could it not, for example, have been formulated by the Greeks in the Hellenistic age, like so many other scientific theories that anticipated the millennia?

The answer may be yes or no. Darwin’s theory is in some ways a parody of bourgeois society applied to nature and this is its weak side, being the creature of a mode of production based on extreme polarization of classes and wealth. Its strong side, instead, lies in the fact that it has, unwittingly, succeeded in using the dialectic method – at least within the limits that will shortly be outlined – within the material world, eliminating any form of teleology or transcendence as an “unnecessary hypothesis”. For the same reason, the “seeds” of evolutionism are also to be found in ancient Greece: some surprising affirmations of this kind are already to be found in Aristotle<sup>3</sup>, whilst Democritus placed movement as the ba-

sis of his concept of the physical world, just as Epicurus was to do later. The fact that this was the “dangerous” part of Darwinism is demonstrated by the fury with which theologians transformed into biologists and biologists won over by theology attacked the ideas of “random transformations”, the absence

of “intelligent designs” and the intrinsic laws of movement applied, after those discovered by Kepler on the movement of the stars, to organic matter on Earth. On the other hand, we must firmly refuse society using genial ideas which, born in the mind of a genius, migrate and by a process of osmosis become an “accepted opinion” – albeit sometimes controversial – with the masses. The glue that

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3. “In nature the passage of inanimate beings to animate ones takes place a little at a time and imperceptibly, so that it is not possible to establish limits between one class and the other”, *Historia animalium*, libro VIII.

makes economic and intellectual forms adhere so closely in the general development of society, what embraces all the knowledge useful for its overall functioning, is precisely the fact that *actions precede thought*, that the social reality in which the dialectics of struggle develop anticipates its comprehension and its laws, which are nonetheless perceived in a more or less confused or blurred fashion. If this is certainly valid with respect to social conflict (and this is where the Marxist concept of the class party originates), it proves no less valid for those aspects that might be defined scientific. Darwin and the theory of evolution are no exception to the rule. Dozens of "precursors" might be mentioned, from Bonnet to Hooke to Buffon to Maupertuis to Diderot to Cabanis to Robinet to Herder and Goethe, the exponents of the German and English geological schools of the seventeen hundreds and many more besides. But what is interesting to observe is that the chronological context in which the fight against creationism and fixism begins and then flares up (the former theory affirms the divine act of creation; and since this is perfect and creates perfect organisms, these cannot change for all eternity: they are "fixed") is between the end of the sixteen hundreds and the mid eighteen hundreds: it is the period that sees the maturing of social forces which give rise to the anti-feudal revolutions that are to upturn the whole of Europe in the space of two centuries.

Classical Darwinian theory is a *gradualist theory*. According to its inventor, changes proceed by slow modifications leading to the appearance in the old species of new biological forms. As can easily be seen, this process is not exactly dialectic, does not proceed by oppositions and is probably – as modern theory tends to demonstrate – *not so*.

Nevertheless, bourgeois "scientific progress" has replaced this flaw by another. Whilst Darwin proposed a theoretical evolutionary model, for several decades contemporary developments in biology retreated to mechanistic positions, like, for instance, those found in neo-Darwinian theories that try to explain biological complexity through a mechanical and one-way gene-character relationship.

It is interesting to observe how, within the theory of evolution, bourgeois science itself has had to acknowledge once again (and *obtorto collo!*) the powerful revolutionary construction of phases of "accumulation" followed by phases of "severance". The classical Darwinian construction of gradual and progressive evolution was followed in the nineteen seventies by the "catastrophe" theory – firmly anchored to dialectic materialism in the natural sciences – of the transformation of quantity (the sum of variations in a single species) into quality (the accelerated transformation of the previous species into a new biological form). And after the mechanistic genetic theories of the nineteen fifties (the discovery of DNA structure and the mechanism of protein biosynthesis) there followed a fully dialectical concept of mutual relationship and reciprocal conditioning (although the molecular complexity of the entire process has not yet been under-



stood) between what appeared up to a short time ago as the untouchable *deus ex machina*, DNA, and its natural "environment", the overall biochemical content of the cell. A sort of reconciliation *post mortem* between Larmarck (individual transformations of the phenotype, in other words the sum total of external physical characteristics and their transferral into the genetic heritage) and Darwinism (hereditary characteristics are independent of the environment). One thing is certain: contemporary "epigenetic" theories<sup>4</sup> reveal the flaw in vulgar, mechanistic materialism even at the molecular level.

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4. Between the years 1980-2000, the theory of epigenesis introduces the hypothesis of hereditary elements transmitted not by genes, i.e. by segments of DNA, but by other means, molecular (proteic or other). A return to the much denigrated theories of Lamarck?

If, by any absurd chance, we had to take sides in this competition, we would declare ourselves supporters not of evolution but of *biological leaps* just as they have now also been recognized by the most recent bourgeois schools of thought: in particular, we are all for *social severances*. But just as we have no sort of cooperative, or factory council or anything else

prefiguring communist society within bourgeois society to promote, we do not support any form of "communist science" within this society. We observe with interest the unstoppable process by which bourgeois "science" constantly pulls itself to pieces. Nonetheless, we know very well that this same science is constantly transforming itself into a *weapon of bourgeois conservation*. The bourgeoisie makes use of knowledge about the natural world to construct its own social science, which it wishes to be above and beyond class. In the science of nature, it cannot help but accept dialectic materialism (attempting, it must be said, to deviate it where possible into idealism or mysticism: certain developments in contemporary cosmology for example), but in the science of society it refuses it, because here it has long recognized its own executioner. This is why we do not deal at all with the "progress" that bourgeois science may make. We know that the social dramas that torment the modern world are in no way linked to a lack of scientific knowledge but to the fact that society cannot yet control its own forces and, in fact, is periodically obliged to destroy them. Humanity's liberation from the burden of capitalist work will also be the liberation of its ability, for the first time, to have knowledge of the natural world and the social world.

Charles Bonnet outlined his own thought on evolution in his *Palingénésie philosophique* (1770) using the following words, which we can adopt as our own, even though in a different sense to his: "Our world really seems to have existed in the state of a worm or a caterpillar: at the moment it is in the form of a chrysalis: the ultimate revolution will give it the apparel of a butterfly."

*First of May 2010*

# Against the bourgeoisie and its union and politician lackeys a single united proletarian battlefield

## *Proletarians, comrades!*

The economic crisis has started to have a devastating effect on our already hard living and working conditions. In the name of profit, a class of parasites (the bourgeoisie in all its variations, both right- and “left”-wing) and its attendant officials (the embodiment of a union aristocracy that has nothing to do with the workers) continues to keep us chained like slaves, without ever being made to pay for the destruction of our lives – indeed, continuing to collect its incomes, dividends, interests. We pay the price of this exploitation without a moment’s respite in terms of those thousands of our comrades assassinated in their workplaces, by the so-called “social diseases”, the harmful factory environment, the infernal acceleration in production rates, the work that suffocates our existence, and our miserable salaries. This terrible situation is now aggravated by lay-offs, mass unemployment, relocations, clandestine labour everywhere, widespread insecurity in employment, the drastic reduction of salaries – all delights that we share with our brother immigrants. This mode of production, whose only objective is profit, fuels the competition of each one against the other and produces today’s commercial wars and tomorrow’s real warfare. It must therefore be removed by using the scalpels of our class violence.

## *Proletarians, comrades!*

The bourgeoisie is well aware that far more is needed than consumer support, a few social buffers and the distribution of alms for those who are worn out by years of labour and are “out of production” or have been thrown out onto the streets to

share the same conditions as part-timers, immigrants, young people. They ask us to have patience, to be well-disciplined and alert in the factory-gaols, to appear peaceful and obedient, to kneel down before the State, the bosses, the priests and the police, to make sacrifices to give a new boost to the machinery of capitalism, choked by over-production, and so start to swell the profits once again. Briefly, they encourage us to take everything optimistically and with resignation, because *they are afraid of our fight*, which they are already calling “a social emergency”. The truth is that our class (the class of those with no reserves) will have to pay an enormous price *in every country of the world*. And in the end, when it has been demonstrated that there is no way out of the crisis except by cementing the national economies by means of the stimulus provided by war production, we shall be taken directly *from our workplaces to the battlefronts*, to be used as *cannon fodder*. *War is their solution for emerging from the crisis* – no other ways exist for them, as has already become clear in the past.

### ***Proletarians, comrades!***

The union organizations, who should be safeguarding our living and working conditions, have not called a single strike for the purpose of responding to the attack blow by blow: around us they have placed a sanitary cordon to stop our anger from fully venting itself. And yet, an important episode has highlighted our great potential for battle: the audacious immigrants of Rosarno (in Italy) and elsewhere in the world, who showed how to respond to the violent attack on their living and working conditions. *They are our real class brothers* and this is no coincidence: they have not been educated in the corporative, fascist-like school of the present national trade unions, they have “nothing to lose but their chains” and have attempted to shake them off. This is the lesson that must be spread and promoted in the ranks of our class: the “*united front of all the exploited*” *against the bourgeoisie and its lackeys*, the re-birth of “fighting organisms”, of “workers’ self-defence organizations”, of “territorial organizations for economic and social battle” closed to the bosses and their lackeys and able to fight without quarter and with courage and constancy.

We must take up *the weapons of the class struggle*: those weapons that the institutions organized by the enemy have defused over time but that all of us are familiar with from direct experience, from the struggles we have taken part in in the past. The demands of this “independent front” must correspond to *our living and working requirements* alone and it is around these demands and these fighting methods that it will be necessary and possible to reorganize our *class front*.

**Large wage increases for everyone and larger ones for the worst-paid categories  
A drastic reduction in working hours for the same wage**

**Full wages for those made redundant, the unemployed, immigrants and workers with insecure jobs**

**A general increase in pensions**

**Class unity without any distinction of race, gender, religion, age or nation**

**Unrelenting strikes with no limits in time or space**

**Block of production and services**

**Extension of the struggle beyond the borders of categories and companies, outside the confines of local territories and nations**

Only by starting from this type of determined defence will it be possible to develop the necessary strength to *move on to a general offensive*. In fact these immediate objectives of ours, whilst being necessary for survival and for reorganizing our ranks today, will not suffice alone to shake off the dictatorship that the imperialist bourgeoisie imposes on us through its parliamentary democracy and all its democratic institutions. *The regime of capital is a regime of war, of destruction of human qualities, and means a deterioration of life on earth to the extent of threatening its very existence.* In order to win, the offensive to which we are summoned must be located in the perspective of a *social and political revolution*, of the *conquest of power* and the *establishment of our class dictatorship*, until the final victory of *communism, a society that is finally classless*. For all this a basic weapon is needed, made up of theory and practice, science and organization: the *class Party, the revolutionary Party*. To this fight and to this perspective, to the class war, *our party, your party*, calls you and awaits you.

# Democracy and the bourgeois state are two constant enemies of the proletariat

The nature of the uprisings that have been taking place during the last few months in the area stretching from the Maghreb to the Arabian Peninsula, the way they have been covered in the international media and the “imitation effect” that has been witnessed in several countries reveal the degree of manipulation and mystification by which, thanks to the work of its aides and lackeys, the ruling ideology still manages to curb and trick the exploited proletarian class, by deluding and paralyzing it.

First let us get things clear. As we have demonstrated in several articles, what happened in the Maghreb and surrounding areas was initially a wave of proletarian uprising, ridden and gradually deviated and channelled towards the dead-end of democratic claims by sectors of the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie which, faced with the persisting eco-

nomic crisis, took advantage of this to try and make its own “class needs” felt: intolerance for the rigid structures of the “old” régimes and a demand for more freedom of action by the former (bourgeoisie), the anxiety of keeping afloat and pleas to be saved by the “powers that be” (the state unions, the army) by the latter (petit-bourgeoisie), fearful of growing proletarianization. The whole of the technical-linguistic “armoury” ranged as symbol and privileged vehicle of these claims (the media, the social networks, the “coloured squares”, the “Arab spring”, the “jasmynes”, the orange movement, etc. etc.) explicitly declares, in its substantially inconclusive nature and declared inter-classism (and thus its own vulnerability and lack of substance in the face of reactions by the “old” as well as the “new” régimes), the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois nature of the hat skilfully popped onto the head of a

movement arising from a proletarian rebellion driven by the needs of day-to-day survival.

Repercussions on an infinitely smaller scale were soon to be seen on the northern shores of the Mediterranean, too: in Spain, for example, with the “indignados” movement, but also in France and, in an even more miserable form, in Italy, where the recent elections have allowed all of the petit-bourgeois mud accumulated over decades at the bottom of the inter-classist swamp to rise to the surface.

At the centre of these claims were mostly the “appeal to democracy” and the “appeal to the State”: and it is right there that the depths of the abyss that has been dug over almost ninety years of counter-revolution can be measured. We communists have always been quite clear as to the nature and role of both “democracy” and the “bourgeois State”. The former is merely the *form* that class domination takes: whilst exalting the “power of the people” (this is the meaning of “democracy” - and it is no coincidence that in ancient Greece where it first came into being, helots and slaves were excluded from the “people”), no attention is paid to the fact that, different classes *with opposing interests* agitate within this undifferentiated “people”, and that they are therefore not all “equal” in terms of living and working conditions and *therefore* in terms of truly understanding the dynamics of collective living and making themselves heard. Not only this: the very interests of the dominion by the ruling class over the past century

have ended up by draining all those exquisitely bourgeois claims of any real significance, apart from becoming a sort of bait: the imperialist transformation of capitalist society has produced profound and permanent changes in the way power is managed, centralizing it, exasperating its repressive nature, emptying any apparently democratic container (parliament, and then all the various forms of so-called “participation” – right up to the condominium meeting!) of any reality or significance. Already in 1917, backed by the whole of Marx’s and Engels’ analysis of the forms of capital’s dominion, Lenin reminded proletarians all over the world that “the democratic republic is the best possible packaging for capitalism,” and “for this reason capital, after having taken possession [...] of this packaging – which is the best – bases its power on such strong, such safe foundations, that no change, either in people or institutions or parties in the area of the democratic bourgeois republic can shake it”, and finally that “universal suffrage [is] a tool of bourgeois dominion” (*State and Revolution*, Chap. 1).

The events that followed the Second World War have merely confirmed (and, indeed, consolidated) this evaluation: the dictatorial régime of capital, once it no longer needed to reveal itself as brutal and explicit in its dominion, returned to democratic *forms*, giving proletarians the illusion that, thanks to the latter and through them, their conditions would steadily improve, making revolutionary uprisings useless.

Yet, *in actual fact*, the fascist dominion over capital in its imperial phase was maintained and, indeed, has grown monstrously: economic-financial centralization and concentration, the preponderance of the executive powers, profound and widespread militarization of society, the positioning of union organizations in the state mechanism, the creation of various Leviathans (those totalitarian nation-states over which bourgeois intellectuals waste endless words without managing to draw the due conclusions!), obsessive recourse to the polls, to the same extent that any democratic process is emptied of its real value and significance, the repression of any sign of intolerance by the exploited class, the insistence on nationalist and patriotic rhetoric...

The same arguments apply to the “appeal to the State”, without any specification as to what characterizes it. Just as “democracy” has become the one supreme value, so the State – which for us communists is the *armed wing* of bourgeois power, and a faithful husband to Madame Democracy – has become an ... impartial organism, a good father, strict when necessary, but reassuring in times of crisis, to be turned to for help and rescue. Once again Lenin, and again following the analyses of Marx and Engels, demonstrated that instead “the State is the organ of class *dominion*, an organ for the *oppression*

of one class by another; it is the creation of an ‘order’ that legalizes and consolidates this oppression, moderating the class conflict,” – and, when it is no longer possible to moderate it, intervenes with all the “wisdom” of its own laws and its own magistrates (*another class organism*, and not neutral and impartial as the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie would have us believe) and with all the violence of its own legal and illegal organs of repression.

For entire hordes of petit-bourgeois terrorized by the economic crisis and the very real prospect of precipitating (horror of horrors!) down amongst the “people of the abyss”, “democracy” and “State” are the two things that still have to be saved – the miserable, patched-up lifebelts that they scramble to inflate constantly by means of their decent feelings, cheap commonplaces and rhetoric, revealing their characteristic inability to come up with any political project that does not rely on keeping this feeble and poisonous mode of production on its feet.

The proletarians who, perhaps without fully realizing it, taste the delights of bourgeois dominion in all its various forms and through all its means of repression, should be very careful: their slogan should not be “more democracy and more State”, but a refusal to be deluded and curbed by the former and open struggle against the latter.



# **A Document from a General Meeting of the Party (1952)**

## **I. The Historical “Invariance” of Marxism**

1. The expression “Marxism” is used not to designate a doctrine discovered by the individual Karl Marx, but to refer to the theory that emerged alongside the modern industrial proletariat and “accompanies” it throughout the whole period of a social revolution. We retain the expression “Marxism” in spite of the speculation and abusive exploitation to which it has been subjected by a whole series of counter-revolutionary movements.

2. Marxism, in its only valid definition, has three major groups of opponents today. First group: the bourgeoisie, which claims that the capitalist, mercantile form of economy is definitive and denies that it can be superseded by the socialist mode of production. This group therefore - quite consistently - rejects the entire doctrine of economic determinism and the class struggle. Second group: Stalinist (and post-Stalinist) self-proclaimed communists who claim to accept the Marxist doctrine of history and economics, but advance and defend, even in developed capitalist countries, demands that are not revolutionary, but which are identical to or even worse than traditional reformism in the fields of politics (democracy) and economics (populist progressivism). Third group: avowed disciples of the revolutionary doctrine and method who attribute the fact that the majority of the proletariat has now abandoned them to original omissions or defects in the theory, which consequently has to be corrected and modernised. Deniers, falsifiers and modernisers: we combat all three, and we believe the third group is the most pernicious today.

**3.** The history of the Marxist Left, radical Marxism - more precisely, Marxism - is a series of struggles against all the waves of revisionism that have attacked various aspects of the theory and method since their first organic, monolithic expression in the *Manifesto* of 1848. In other texts we have recalled the history of these struggles in the three Internationals: against utopians, work-erists, libertarians, social-democrats, reformists and gradualists, left or right syndicalists, social-patriots and, today, national-communists or people's communists. This struggle extends over four generations and, in each phase, it is associated not with series of names, but with a well-defined, compact school and, in the historical sense, with a definite party.

**4.** This long and difficult struggle would lose its link to the future resurgence if, instead of drawing the lesson of the "invariance" of Marxism, we were to accept the banal idea that Marxism undergoes a "continual historical development", changing with the course of events and their outcome. This is the invariable justification for all the betrayals we have experienced in history, and for all the defeats the revolution has suffered.

**5.** When materialists deny that a theoretical "system" born at a given moment (or worse, emerging from the mind and expounded in the work of a single human being, a thinker or historical leader, or both at the same time) could embrace the entire course of future human history and establish its rules and principles once and for all, this does not mean that systems of principles that are stable and valid for a very long period of history cannot exist. In fact, the stability of such principles and their resistance to attempts to demolish or "improve" them is a primary source of strength for the "social class" to which they belong and whose historical task and interests they express. Rather than to the appearance of brilliant individuals, this sequence of systems and corpora of doctrine and praxis must be related to the succession of "modes of production", i.e. types of material organisation of the life of human collectivities.

**6.** Although it recognizes the formal content of the doctrines of all the major periods of history as being obviously partial and obviously erroneous, dialectical materialism by no means denies that they were necessary in their time. Nor does it imagine that their errors could have been avoided by better reasoning on the part of thinkers and legislators, and that they could have been detected sooner and corrected. Each system possesses an explanation and justification in its own cycle, and the most significant systems are the ones that have remained unchanged throughout a long period of struggle and retained their organic integrity.

**7.** According to Marxism, there is no continuous, gradual progress in history, especially as regards the organisation of productive resources. History is instead a series of periodic leaps forward that completely and profoundly overthrow the entire economic and social apparatus. There are veritable cataclysms, catastrophes, sudden crises in which everything is transformed within a short time after remaining static for a very long period; cataclysms such as occur in the world of physics, in the stars and galaxies, in geology and even in the evolution of living organisms.

**8.** Since class ideologies are superstructures of modes of production, they are not formed from a daily accretion of atoms of knowledge. Instead, they appear in the breaches opened by violent shocks and guide the classes from which they emanate in a monolithic and overall stable form through a long series of struggles and attempts, until the next critical phase, the next historical revolution.

**9.** The doctrines of capitalism, while justifying the social revolutions of the past, assert that, beginning with the bourgeois revolution, history would advance by gradual stages and without new social catastrophes, and that ideological systems would progressively absorb the successive conquests of pure and applied science. Marxism demonstrates the falseness of this vision of the future.

**10.** Marxism itself is not a doctrine that can be shaped and reshaped each day with new contributions in a veritable patching and mending process: it is still one (although the last) of those doctrines that are the weapons of ruled and exploited classes called upon to overthrow existing social relations and which, in the course of their struggles, are subjected to the conservative influence of traditional forms and ideologies characteristic of enemy classes.

**11.** Even if it is possible as of today - or at least since the proletariat appeared on the stage of history - to envision the history of a future classless society, a society without revolutions, it must be stated that during the very long period leading up to it, the revolutionary class will not be able to accomplish its task unless it acts throughout its monumental struggle in accordance with a doctrine and method that remain stable and are codified in a monolithic program, though naturally the number of militants and the outcome of social conflicts in different phases will vary considerably.

**12.** The theoretical heritage of the revolutionary working class is no revelation, myth or idealist ideology, as was the case for previous classes. It is a positive science, and requires a stable formulation of its principles and rules of action, which play the same role and have the same decisive effect as past dogmas, catechisms,

tables, constitutions and guidebooks, such as the Vedas, the Talmud, the Bible, the Koran or the Declaration of the Rights of Man. But the serious mistakes of substance or form contained within these documents have not detracted from their immense organisational and social force - first revolutionary, then counter-revolutionary, in a dialectical sequence - and often precisely these "defects" have made the greatest contribution.

**13.** Because Marxism denies that a quest for "absolute truth" could have any meaning, and sees doctrine not as a gift of the eternal spirit or abstract reason, but as an "instrument" of work and a "weapon" of combat, it postulates that this instrument or weapon should not be abandoned "for repairs" in the midst of an operation or at the height of the battle. Victory is secured by having good tools and weapons from the very start, in peace as well as in war.

**14.** A new doctrine does not appear at any moment in history. There are certain characteristic - but very rare - epochs of history when a doctrine may appear like a dazzling beam of light, and if the crucial moment has not been recognized and its fulgurant light has remained unobserved, there is no use resorting to the candle ends with which the university pedant or the faithless fighter attempt to illuminate their way.

**15.** For the modern proletarian class, formed in the first countries that underwent large-scale capitalist industrial development, the darkness was dispersed just before the end of the last century. At that time, the integral doctrine in which we believe - in which we must believe - was provided with all the conditions it required to take shape and describe a phase of history which would verify and confirm it after a series of momentous struggles. Either the position will remain valid or the doctrine will be acknowledged as false, and consequently the Marxist assertion that the proletariat emerges as a new class with its own revolutionary character, program and function in history will be proclaimed null and void. Anyone who undertakes to replace essential parts, theses or clauses of the Marxist corpus, which has been our heritage for over a century, evirates its strength more than those who deny it openly and pronounce it to be bankrupt.

**16.** After the "explosive" period in which the immediacy of the new demands had clarified and delimited them better, there followed a period in which the so called class "consciousness", instead of being improved and heightened, regressed and degenerated as a result of the stabilisation of the world situation. As the history of Marxism has shown, the theory returns during periods when the struggle becomes intensified, with remarkable references to its origins and its initial monumental expression: witness the Paris Commune, the

Bolshevik Revolution and the class movements after the first world war in Western Europe.

**17.** The principle of the historical invariance of doctrines that reflect the tasks of different historical classes, and of momentous returns to original formulations, applies to all major periods in history and stands opposed to the futile hypothesis that each generation, each season in intellectual “fashion” is superior to the previous one, just as it opposes the stupid cliché that human progress is an uninterrupted stream, and other bourgeois fads from which few people who call themselves Marxists today are able to distance themselves.

**18.** All the myths express this principle of invariance, especially those involving demi-gods or prophets who have had an audience with the supreme being. It would be quite foolish to laugh at such representations; but only Marxism has been able to uncover their real material foundations. Rama, Moses, Christ, Mohammed and all the prophets and heroes who inaugurate the epic histories of different peoples are so many expressions of this reality, which corresponds to an enormous leap in the mode of production. In the pagan myth, wisdom (Minerva) emerges from the head of Jupiter not in order to dictate huge amounts of books to energyless scribes, but as a result of a hammer-blow from the worker-god, Vulcan, who was summoned to calm a persistent migraine for the father of the gods. At the other end of the scale of history, in the Age of Enlightenment, in opposition to the new goddess (Reason), Gracchus Babeuf, though perhaps crude in his theoretical presentation, stands up like a giant to state that physical and material strength lead further than reason and knowledge.

**19.** There are many examples of disciples who fought to restore a doctrine against a revisionist degeneration: the Gracchi vis à vis J. Brutus, Francis of Assisi vis à vis Christ when Christianity, born for the social redemption of the humble, lounged in the courts of Medieval lords, as would later occur in the case of the precursors of something that has yet to come about vis à vis revolutionaries who had denied the heroic phase of previous classes: the battles of 1831 in France, and 1848, 1849 and innumerable other phases throughout Europe.

**20.** We state that all the recent events in history are so many uncontestable and total confirmations of Marxist theory and its predictions. In particular, we refer to points which have (once again) caused major defections from class positions and plagued even those who consider Stalinism utterly opportunist. These points are, on the one hand, the advent of centralised, totalitarian forms of capitalism, in terms of both economy and politics (regulated economy, state capitalism, unconcealed bourgeois dictatorships), and on the other, the social and political devel-

opment of Russia and Asia. For us, these confirm both our theory and the monolithic form in which it was born at a specific crucial epoch.

**21.** Anyone who was able to find a conflict between the great events of our time and Marxist theory would thereby succeed in proving the theory incorrect and completely discredited, and conclude that any attempt to deduce the general course of history from economic relations is in vain. At the same time, he would succeed in proving that events in any phase necessitate new deductions, explanations and theories, and consequently lead to new and different methods of action.

**22.** In the face of momentary difficulties, it would be illusory to seek a solution by admitting the possibility that the fundamental theory could be changed continuously and stating that now is the time to work out new chapters in order, through this act of thought, to reverse this unfavourable situation. Moreover, it is an aberration that this task should be undertaken by grouplets with only a few members and, worse yet, accomplished by means of a free discussion that, on a Lilliputian scale merely apes bourgeois parliamentarism and the infamous confrontation of individual opinions - which would be an old stupidity rather than a new recipe.

**23.** We are currently in the depths of a supreme depression in the curve of revolutionary potential: a time like this is anything but propitious for the birth of original theories of history. In such a period, when the prospects of an imminent large-scale social movement are nil, the political disintegration of the world proletarian class is a logical result of the situation. But it is also logical that small groups should maintain the historical continuity of the revolutionary movement suspended like a great arc between two social revolutions. Yet it is essential that these groups not seek to alter the original content, and that they remain firmly attached to the traditional formulations of Marxism.

**24.** Criticism and doubt of all the old, established positions were decisive elements in the modern bourgeois revolution which, in gigantic waves, mounted its assault on the natural sciences, the social order and political and military power, and later, with much less iconoclastic verve, focused on the sciences of human society and history. This was the essential result of an epoch of profound upheaval lying between the feudal, landowning Middle Ages and the industrial, capitalist modern era. Criticism was the effect, and not the motor, of this immense, complex struggle.

**25.** Doubt and control of individual consciousness are the expression of bourgeois reform against the compact tradition and authority of the Christian church. They were expressed in the most hypocritical puritanism which sanctioned and

protected the new class rule and the new form in which the masses were enslaved under the banner of bourgeois conformity to religious morality or individual rights. The proletarian revolution takes an utterly different path: individual consciousness is nothing, and a homogeneous leadership of collective action is everything.

**26.** When Marx, in his famous Theses on Feuerbach, stated that philosophers had only interpreted the world, but the point was to change it, he did not mean that the will to change conditioned the fact of change. He meant that change came first, determined by the clash of mass forces, followed by a critical consciousness of the transformation in individuals. The latter therefore do not act as a result of their individual decisions, but under the influence of factors that precede science and consciousness. The transition from the weapon of criticism to the criticism of weapons displaces this process from the thinking subject to the militant mass: its weapons are not only its guns and cannons, but especially the very real weapon constituted by the uniform, monolithic, constant, collective party doctrine, to which we are all subject and bound, leaving behind once and for all the debates of gossip-mongers and pedants.

## II. The False Resource of Activism

**1.** There is a current objection - by no means original, since it has already surfaced in the worst episodes of the workers' movement - that consists in underestimating the clarity and continuity of our principles and seeking to "be political", to plunge into the activity of the movement, which would itself indicate what path to follow, and in not pausing to study our texts in order to draw the lessons of past experience before making decisions, and instead forging ahead blindly in the thick of the action.

**2.** This practical activism is yet another deformation of Marxism, either because it seeks to give priority to the decisiveness and vigour of leadership and vanguard groups without substantial theoretical scruples, or because it reduces everything to the decision or a consultation of "the class" and its majorities on the pretext of choosing the path most workers prefer, impelled by economic interest. These are old tricks, and no traitor who has sold out to the ruling class has ever left the party without claiming first that he was the best and most active "practical" defender of the workers' interests, and second, that his actions were sanctioned by the manifest will of the mass of his partisans - or electors!

**3.** The revisionist deviation (e.g. Bernstein's reformist, legalitarian evolutionism) was fundamentally activist, not ultra-determinist. It did not merely consist in replacing



the revolutionary goal, deemed too high, with limited demands the situation brought within reach, but in closing ones eyes to the burning vision of the complete trajectory of history. It reasoned: the immediate result is everything, so let us set ourselves immediate, limited goals, not on the universal scale, but on the local, transitory one, and we will be able to shape the results by our will. The Sorelian syndicalists, who advocated violence, said the same thing, and came to the same end: the former concentrated on obtaining legal concessions through parliament, and the latter on winning sectoral victories in the factory. Both turned their backs on the historical tasks.

4. These forms of eclecticism - a deviation which consists in claiming the freedom to change the battlefield and alter the doctrine - began, like all others, with a falsification: they claimed that this continuous self-correction (or rather, changing of course) derived from the attitude and writings of Marx and Engels. In all our work, with the help of quotes and detailed studies, we have revealed the continuity of the Marxist line, noting that their later texts are intimately connected with passages and fundamental theories in their first works, with the same expressions and the same scope.

5. Hence the emptiness of the legend that attributes two different, successive "spirits" to Marx: the young Marx was presumably idealistic, voluntaristic, Hegelian and, under the influence of the last tremors of bourgeois revolutions, insurrectionary and ready to leap on the barricades; whereas the mature Marx is alleged to have occupied himself with a cold study of contemporary economic phenomena and to have become positivist, evolutionist and legalitarian. This is just one recurring deviation in the long series that we have analysed, and it may appear as extremist or moderate. Unable to resist the revolutionary tension of dialectical materialism, this deviation leads to another, equally bourgeois, deviation which, idealist and individualist in nature, gives priority to the role of "consciousness": futile, concrete and minimal in the short run; passivity, or rather irremediable revolutionary impotence on the historical scale.

6. We need only recall that the conclusion of the first volume of *Capital*, which describes the expropriation of the expropriators, is - as is indicated in a note - nothing other than a repetition of the corresponding passage in the Manifesto. The economic theories in the second and third volumes are only a development of the theory of value and surplus value expounded in the first. The expressions and formulations are the same, as are the symbols (in Italy, Antonio Graziadei tried in vain to break apart this unity). Any attempt to separate the analytic part of the description of capitalism from the programmatic part, which defines the conquest of socialism, would be a fiction. None of the deviations has ever understood the strength of the Marxist critique of utopianism, or of the critique of democratism. It is not sufficient to imagine a goal and

content oneself with dreaming about it or despairing because the pretty colours of the dream do not inspire people to make it come true. The problem is to identify a goal that can be solidly and physically achieved, and to aim straight for it, aware that human blindness and lack of consciousness will not prevent it from being attained.

**7.** Marx's fundamental achievement was to establish the connection (sensed by the best of the utopians) between the distant conquest and the immediate physical movement of a class in struggle, the modern proletariat. But this is not sufficient for an understanding of the complete dynamic of the class revolution. Anyone familiar with the overall construction of Marx's work, which he was not able to finish, can see that he intended to summarize the whole with a study of the problem of the impersonal character of the class and its activity, which was already explicit in his thought and writings. Only by establishing this connection would the entire economic and social construction of Marxism be perfectly settled, in accordance with the method that forms its foundation.

**8.** It would be quite insufficient to say that Marxist determinism eliminates the quality and theoretical or fighting activity of exceptional individuals as the motive force of history (as usual, one should not confuse motive force and direct agent), and replaces them with classes, understood as statistical collectivities of individuals, merely by shifting the factor of ideas (consciousness and will) from the individual to the mass. This would imply no more than a passage from an aristocratic philosophy to a democratic, populist philosophy, which in fact is just as alien to us as the former. Instead, Marxism inverts the cause-effect relationship completely, placing the cause not in ideas (consciousness), but in physical, material facts.

**9.** The Marxist thesis states in particular that it is not possible for an individual brain to encompass a consciousness of the entire course of history in advance, for two reasons. First of all, because consciousness does not precede, but follows being, i.e. the material conditions that surround the subject of this consciousness; and secondly because all forms of social consciousness emerge - with a certain lag that enables a general determination of this consciousness - from the analogous, parallel circumstances, i.e. economic relations, in which the individuals who (thereby) constitute a social class are placed. These individuals are forced to "act together" historically long before they can "think together". The theory that defines this relationship between class conditions and class action and its ultimate goal has nothing in common with a revealed doctrine proclaimed by individuals, i.e. by a specific author or leader, or by the "whole class" conceived of as the gross, momentary sum of a number of individuals in a given country or at a given moment: and it most definitely cannot be deduced from a very bourgeois "consultation" within the class.

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**10.** For us, the dictatorship of the proletariat is not a consultative democracy transplanted into the proletariat; it is the organised force which, followed at a given moment by part of the proletariat, not necessarily the majority, expresses the material pressure that overthrows the bourgeois mode of production to open the way for the new communist mode of production. One factor in this process, whose importance is not negligible, is repeatedly pointed out by Marx: the deserters of the ruling class who go over to the revolutionary camp. They counteract the action of whole masses of proletarians which, because of their material and ideological subjugation, are subservient to the bourgeoisie and almost always represent the statistical majority of the class.

**11.** The balance sheet of the revolution in Russia drawn by our current shows that its degeneration must not be attributed to a violation of internal class democracy, and that we have no reason to doubt the Marxist and Leninist theory of the dictatorship, which is to be valued and defined and , not by constitutional or organizational formulae, but by historical relationships of force.

The complete desertion of the terrain of class dictatorship is shown on the contrary by the Stalinist complete inversion of revolutionary method. Not less than all the others, the former communists everywhere have moved onto the democratic terrain, and have placed themselves on the terrain of popular and national democracy. And in Russia, not less than outside, they desert class aims in favor of national ones in all their policies, and even in the usual, banal description of them as a simple network of state espionage over the border. Anyone who seeks the democratic road takes the capitalist road. And so it is with the vague anti-stalinists themselves, crying out in the name of a proletarian opinion trampled on in Russia.

**12.** Quotations from Marx are countless, which show such an impersonality of the "historical event" factor, without which impersonality theory itself, in its materiality, would be inadmissible. We know that the great work of *Capital* was completed by Marx only in its first book. In letters and prefaces, Engels recalls the arduousness of the work necessary to prepare the second and third books (not to mention the fourth, which is a history of bourgeois economic theories) for publication. Engels even had doubts as to the order of the chapters and sections of the two books, which study the process of capitalist production as a whole, not in order to "describe" the capitalism of Marx's time, but to show that, whatever may happen, the general process advances not toward an equilibrium or a "state of normalcy" (like a river whose waters neither swell nor subside), but toward a series of increasingly acute crises and a revolutionary collapse of the "general form" Marx was studying.

**13.** As he indicated in his 1859 preface to the *Critique of Political Economy*, the first draft of *Capital*, after discussing the three fundamental classes of modern society -

landowners, capitalists and proletarians - Marx intended to examine three other questions: "The state, international trade, and the world market". The question of the state is dealt with in the text on the 1871 Commune, in Engels' classic chapters and, naturally, in Lenin's *State and Revolution*. The question of international trade is dealt with in Lenin's *Imperialism*. The work is that of an entire historical school, not someone's "complete works". The question of the world market is today written in letters of fire in the book of facts that nobody is able to read, and there is a reference to it in the stupid theory of the double market advanced by Stalin shortly before his death; it would nonetheless reveal the embers of the fire which will consume world capitalism in the second half of the century if those who study it were not to concern themselves so much with Country and Nation and did not pursue the decrepit chimeras of the bourgeois epoch: Peace, Freedom, Independence, the sacredness of the individual and the constitutionality of government decisions!

**14.** After explaining how the social product is divided among the three basic classes as rent, profit and wages, and after showing that the transfer of rent to the state would not change the capitalist structure of the economy and that the transfer of surplus-value to the state would not transcend the boundaries of the capitalist form of production (since the wastage of wage labour, i.e. the intensity and length of the working day, would stay the same, while the division into enterprises and the mercantile character of the system would remain unchanged), Marx concludes the strictly economic part as follows: "The second distinctive feature of the capitalist mode of production is the production of surplus-value as the direct aim and determining motive of production. Capital produces essentially capital, and does so only to the extent that it produces surplus-value." (Only communism will be able to produce a surplus that is not capital.)

The determining factor is thus by no means the existence of the capitalist, or the capitalist class, which are not only just effects, but unnecessary effects as well. "Whereas, on the basis of capitalist production, the mass of direct producers is confronted by the social character of their production in the form of strictly regulating authority and a social mechanism of the labour process organised as a complete hierarchy (i.e. bureaucratised!) this authority reaching its bearers, however, only as the personification of the conditions of labour in contrast to labour, and not as political and theocratic rulers as under earlier modes of production - among the bearers of this authority, the capitalists themselves, who confront one another only as commodity owners, there reigns complete anarchy within which the social interrelations of production assert themselves only as an overwhelming natural law in relation to individual free will".

It is therefore necessary, and sufficient, to hold to the monumental invariance of the text in order to reject all the false modernisers who have, in reality, plunged into the depths of the most vulgar bourgeois prejudice, which consists in seeking the cause

of all social inferiority in "free will" or, worse yet, in the "collective responsibility of a social class". After Capital everything was quite clear: the capitalist, or the capitalist class, could easily cease here or there to "personify" capital, which would nonetheless remain opposed to society as a "social mechanism", an "overwhelming natural law" of the productive process.

**15.** Such is the monumental Chapter 51, which closes the "description" of the modern economy, and on each page evokes the spectre of the revolution. We then come to Chapter 52, which amounts to little more than a page. Under the point at which the last sentence is interrupted, Engels' tired hand wrote, in brackets: "Here the manuscript breaks off".

Its title: "Classes". We are at the threshold of the reversal of praxis, and, having eliminated free will, we seek the agent of the revolution.

In essence, the chapter says this: we have given the laws of pure capitalist society with its three classes. But this doesn't even exist in England (even in 1953 it doesn't exist there or elsewhere, and it will never exist, any more than the two material points with mass to which Newton's law reduces the cosmos). "The first question to be answered is this: What constitutes a class? At first glance - the identity of revenues and sources of revenue. However, from this standpoint, physicians and officials, e.g., would also constitute two social classes, for they belong to two distinct social groups, the members of each of these groups receiving their revenue from one and the same source. The same would also be true of the infinite fragmentation of interest and rank into which the division of social labour splits labourers as well as capitalists and landlords - the latter, e.g., into owners of vineyards, farm owners, owners of forests, mine owners, and owners of fisheries..."

The sentence and the thought are interrupted here. But we have what we need.

**16.** Without applying for a copyright for a single sentence, we can complete this crucial chapter cut short by the author's death, an arbitrary individual incident according to Karl Marx, who liked to quote Epicurus (about whom he had written his doctoral thesis) in this connection. As Engels once said: "Every event conditioned by necessity bears its own consolation." No unnecessary regrets.

Classes are not defined, as it appears "at first glance", by the identity of sources of revenue.

This single sentence buries forever all past and future syndicalisms, labourisms, corporatism, Mazzinisms and Christian socialisms.

The insipid ideologues of the spirit and the individual, of liberal society and the constitutional state, are content to recognise only the existence of collective sectoral interests, and that these cannot be ignored. Our theoretical conquest goes far beyond this. The fact that it was not possible to make a face and close one's eyes to the "social question", even reduced to pills, was only a preliminary victory. It would

gradually penetrate the modern world. But penetrating the world is one thing, smashing it into a thousand pieces is another.

There is no use building statistical tables to “qualitatively” select classes according to the source of their pecuniary income. It is even more stupid to select them quantitatively according to a “pyramid of income”. Such a pyramid was built centuries ago. The Roman state censuses indicated an income scale. It was also centuries ago that simple arithmetical operations made it possible to answer the philosophers of poverty that by decapitating the pyramid and reducing it to a trapezoid with the same base they would only have founded a society of beggars.

How could this predicament be avoided, both quantitatively and qualitatively? By giving a senior official the same wage as the wage labour in the nationalised salt industry? But the former has a higher income than many traders and industrial capitalists who live off profits. And the latter has a higher income than small peasant landowners as well as small landlords who live off apartment rents.

A class is not defined only by economic criteria, but also by the historical position it occupies in the gigantic struggle through which a new general form of production transcends, defeats and replaces the old.

If it is stupid to claim that society is a mere sum of individuals in ideological terms, it is just as stupid to claim that the class is a mere sum of individuals in economic terms. Individual, class and society are not pure economic or ideological categories, but products (changing continuously according to place and period) of a general process of which the powerful Marxist construction reproduces the real laws.

The operative social mechanism determines and models individuals, classes and societies without “consulting” them in any way.

A class is defined by its path and historical task, and our class is defined by the fact that it quantitatively and qualitatively demands its own disappearance (and above all its own disappearance, since the disappearance, under way, of enemy classes represents almost nothing): this is the dialectical culmination of its immense effort. Today the class as a whole continues to seek changing goals: now it is for Stalin and a capitalist state like the Russian state, for a clique of parliamentarians and candidates who, in terms of anti-Marxism, far outdo the performances of yesterday’s Turati, Bissolati, Longuet and Millerand (all of them reformist leaders).

**17.** All that remains is the party as an extant organ that defines the class, struggles for it, governs for the class in the crucial moment, and prepares the end of governments and classes. On the condition that it is not the party of Peter or Paul, that it is not overcome with admiration for its leader, and that it returns to defend, with blind faith if necessary, the invariable theory, rigid organisation and method of Marxism, which is not based on sectarian a priori, but knows that in a society that has achieved its typical form (Europe in 1900, as in Israel in the year 0) the battlecry “he who is not with us is against us” applies unconditionally.

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  - El proletariado y la guerra imperialista
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  - Teoría marxista de la moneda
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