

Workers of the World, Unite!

Unity & Struggle

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The Platform of the Communist International¹

The contradictions of the capitalist world system which were hidden deep within it have burst forth with tremendous force in a single huge explosion – the great imperialist world war.

Capitalism tried to overcome its own anarchic nature by organising production. Instead of numerous enterprise-owners competing with one another, powerful associations of capitalists (syndicates, cartels, trusts) were created; banking capital united with industrial capital; economic life as a whole came under the influence of the finance-capital oligarchy, its power and its organisation giving it exclusive dominance. Free competition gave way to monopoly. The individual capitalist was transformed into a member of a capitalist association. Organisation took the place of reckless anarchy.

But, while in each individual country the anarchy of the capitalist mode of production gave way to capitalist organisation, at the level of the world economy, the anarchy, the competition and the contradictions intensified. The struggle between the largest and most organised exploiting states led, with iron necessity, to the horrors of the imperialist world war. Greed for profit drove world capital to fight for new markets, new spheres of investment, new sources of raw material, and the cheap labour power of the colonial slaves. The imperialist states which divided the whole world between them, turning many millions of African, Asian, Australian and American proletarians and peasants into beasts of burden, had, sooner or later, to discover the real, anarchic nature of capital in a full-scale conflict. This was how the greatest crime of all – the murderous World War – came about.

Capitalism also tried to overcome the contradictions of its social structure, bourgeois society is a class society. Capital in the great ‘civilised’ powers wanted to veil its social contradictions. By plundering the colonial peoples, capital was able to buy off its own hired slaves. It created a community of interest between the exploiters and the exploited at the expense of the oppressed colonies – of their yellow, black and red-skinned populations. In this way, the

¹ On the hundredth anniversary of the Communist International, the ICMLPO reproduces the Platform of the Communist International, which was approved in March of 1919, because of its great significance and historic importance.

European and American working classes were tied to their imperialist ‘fatherlands’.

But when war came, this method of bribery, previously securing the patriotism of the working class and its spiritual servitude, had the opposite effect. Peace between classes was finally paid for by physical annihilation, the complete enslavement of the proletariat, terrible repression, impoverishment and physical degeneration and world famine. Civil peace was shattered. The imperialist war turned into a civil war.

A new system has been born. Ours is the epoch of the breakdown of capital, its internal disintegration, the epoch of the Communist revolution of the proletariat.

The imperialist system is collapsing. There is unrest in the colonies and among the small nations which have recently gained independence. This is a time of proletarian uprisings, and of triumphant proletarian revolutions in some countries. The imperialist armies are demoralised; the ruling classes are completely incapable of continuing to govern. Such is the present state of affairs throughout the world.

Human culture has been destroyed and humanity is threatened with complete annihilation. There is only one force able to save humanity and that is the proletariat. The old capitalist ‘order’ has ceased to function; its further existence is out of the question. The final outcome of the capitalist mode of production is chaos. This chaos can only be overcome by the productive and most numerous class – the working class. The proletariat has to establish real order – Communist order. It must break the rule of capital, make wars impossible, abolish the frontiers between states, transform the whole world into a community where all work for the common good and realise the freedom and brotherhood of peoples.

World capital, on the other hand, is preparing for the final battle. Behind the cover of its ‘League of Nations’ and pacifist chatter, it is making a last attempt to piece together the capitalist system now in the process of spontaneous disintegration and to direct its energies against the steady advance of the proletarian revolution.

The proletariat must reply to this new and gigantic conspiracy of the capitalist classes with the seizure of political power. The workers must use this power as a weapon against their class enemies and as a lever to effect the economic reconstruction of society.

The final victory of the world proletariat signifies the beginning of the real history of human liberation.

The Conquest of Political Power

The conquest of political power by the proletariat means the destruction of the political power of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois state apparatus with its capitalist army commanded by the bourgeois – Junker officers, with its police and gendarmerie, its gaolers and judges, its priests and civil servants is the strongest weapon the bourgeoisie possesses. The capture of state power must not mean simply a change of personnel in the ministries, but the elimination of the hostile state apparatus, the concentration of real power in the hands of the proletariat, the disarming of the bourgeoisie, the counter-revolutionary officers and the White Guard, and the arming of the proletariat, the revolutionary soldiers and the Red Workers' Guard; the removal of all bourgeois judges and the organisation of a proletarian court; the abolition of the rule of the reactionary civil service and the creation of new proletarian organs of administration. The victory of the proletariat is guaranteed by the disruption of the enemy's power and the organisation of proletarian power. The bourgeois state apparatus has to be shattered and a proletarian state machine constructed. Only when the proletariat has finally broken the resistance of the bourgeoisie and is clearly the victor can former opponents be gradually brought under control and made to contribute to the construction of communist society.

Democracy and Dictatorship

The proletarian state is, like every other state, an apparatus of repression, but its repression is directed against the enemies of the working class. Its purpose is to break, once and for all, the resistance of the exploiters, who will stop at nothing in their desperate struggle to drown the revolution in rivers of blood. The dictatorship of the proletariat, which gives this class the leading position in society, is, however, a temporary form of government.

As the resistance of the bourgeoisie is overcome, its property expropriated, and its members gradually drawn into working for society, so the proletarian dictatorship disappears, the state withers away and the division of society into classes is ended.

So-called democracy, i.e. bourgeois democracy, is nothing but the veiled dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The much-vaunted 'gen-

eral win of the people' is no more a reality than 'the people' or 'the nation'. Classes exist and they have conflicting and incompatible aspirations. But as the bourgeoisie represents an insignificant minority it makes use of this illusion, this imaginary concept, in order to consolidate its rule over the working class. Behind this mask of eloquence it can impose its class will. The proletariat, which forms the vast majority of the population is, on the contrary, completely open about using the class power of its mass organisations and Soviets to eliminate the privileges of the bourgeoisie and guarantee the transition to the classless, communist society.

Bourgeois democracy consists essentially of a purely rhetorical and formal recognition of rights and freedoms, which are in fact inaccessible to the working people – the proletariat and semi-proletarian elements – on account of their lack of material means. The bourgeoisie at the same time has every opportunity to use its material means, its press and organisation to cheat and deceive the people. However, the new type of state power, known as the Soviet system, ensures the proletariat the opportunity of guaranteeing its rights and freedom in practice. Soviet power provides the people with the best palaces, houses, printing works, stocks of paper, etc. for their press, and clubs for their meetings. Only such measures make proletarian democracy really possible. It is only on paper that bourgeois democracy and its parliamentary system give the masses the opportunity to participate in the running of the state. In actual fact, the masses and their organisations have absolutely no access to real power and are denied any genuine participation in the state administration. Under the Soviet system it is the mass organisations, and through them the masses themselves, that are running things, inasmuch as the Soviets attract an ever-increasing number of workers into government. This is the only way the entire working population can gradually be drawn into the work of state administration. The Soviet system is thus based on the mass organisations of the proletariat, on the Soviets themselves, the revolutionary trade unions, the cooperatives, etc.

The separation of legislative and executive power and the absence of the right of recall, characteristic of bourgeois democracy and parliamentarianism, widen the gulf between the masses and the state. The Soviet system, with its right of recall, the combination of legislative and executive power and the consequent position of the Soviets as working bodies, is able to link the masses with the ad-

ministrative organs. This link is further strengthened by the electoral system which is based on production units rather than artificial territorial constituencies.

Thus the Soviet system makes possible genuine proletarian democracy – a democracy for the proletariat, by the proletariat, and against the bourgeoisie. In this system the industrial proletariat is guaranteed a privileged position as the leading, best organised and politically most mature class, under whose hegemony the level of the semi-proletarian elements and the poorer peasants in the rural areas is gradually raised. The industrial proletariat must use its temporary privileges to free the poorer petty-bourgeois masses in the countryside from the influence of the rural kulaks and bourgeoisie, to organise and draw them to the cause of communist construction.

The Expropriation of the Bourgeoisie and the Socialisation of Production

Given the dissolution of the capitalist system and capitalist labour discipline, and the present state of relations between classes, the re-construction of the economy on the old basis is impossible. Workers' struggles for wage increases, even where successful, do not result in the anticipated rise in living standards, because the rising prices on all consumer goods cancel out any gains. The living conditions of workers can only be improved when production is administered by the proletariat instead of the bourgeoisie. In countries where the crisis situation is clearly insurmountable the militant fight for better wages inevitably develops into a bitter struggle which tends to escalate. The continued existence of the capitalist system is consequently impossible. Before the productive forces of the economy can be raised the resistance of the bourgeoisie has to be broken. This must be done as swiftly as possible, since bourgeois rule prolongs the death agony of the old society, creating the danger of the complete destruction of economic life. The proletarian dictatorship must expropriate the big bourgeoisie and landowners and make the means of production and exchange the common property of the proletarian state.

Communism is now rising from the ruins of the capitalist system; this new system is the only way out of the historic crisis that faces humanity. Opportunists who put forward the utopian demand for the reconstruction of the capitalist economic system in order to defer socialisation only postpone a resolution of the crisis and create

the possibility of utter ruin. Communist revolution is the best – is indeed the only possible – means by which society’s truly productive force, the proletariat, and society itself can be saved.

Proletarian dictatorship does not involve any sharing out of the means of production and exchange. On the contrary, the greatest possible centralisation of the productive forces and the subordination of all production to a single plan is the aim.

The first steps towards the socialisation of the whole economy include: the socialisation of the apparatus of those big banks at present controlling production; the seizure of all the economic institutions of the capitalist state by bringing them under the control of proletarian state power; the nationalisation of all industries organised in syndicates and trusts and of those branches of industry in which the concentration and centralisation of capital makes nationalisation technically possible; and the nationalisation of agricultural estates and their transformation into publicly managed agricultural units.

As regards the smaller holdings, the proletariat must gradually amalgamate them in ways appropriate to their size.

It must be emphasised that small properties will not be expropriated and force will not be used against small property-owners who do not exploit hired labour. This layer must be drawn into the sphere of socialist organisation gradually. Example and practice will show them the advantage of the new system, which frees the small peasant from the economic yoke of the kulaks and the landowners, and the urban petty bourgeoisie from the weight of taxes (the cancellation of state debts is an important measure in this connection) etc.

In the economic sphere, the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship can be carried out only to the extent that the proletariat is able to create centralised organs for the management of production and introduce workers’ management. In its attempt to achieve this goal the proletariat will have to make use of those mass organisations which are most closely connected with the production process.

In the sphere of distribution the proletarian dictatorship must replace trading by a fair distribution of products. Measures necessary to this end include the following: the socialisation of large commercial enterprises, the transfer of all bourgeois state and municipal organs of distribution to the proletariat, introduction of control over large co-operative associations, whose organisational ap-

paratus will still have a big economic significance in the transitional period, the gradual centralisation of all these organs and their transformation into a single system, responsible for the rational distribution of products.

In the sphere of distribution, as in that of production, qualified technicians and specialists are to be used once their political resistance has been broken and they prove themselves prepared to work with the new system of production instead of capital.

The proletariat has no intention of oppressing these people – on the contrary, it will give them, for the first time, the opportunity to develop their creative energies. Under the proletarian dictatorship the separation of physical and mental labour, characteristic of capitalism, will be superseded by their integration, and in this way labour and science will be unified. Besides the expropriation of factories, mines, estates, etc., the proletariat must also put an end to the exploitation of the population by capitalist landlords, placing the large houses in the hands of the local Soviets, moving workers into the apartments of the bourgeoisie, etc.

In the course of effecting these great changes, Soviet power must steadily build up a huge administrative apparatus and centralise its organisation, and, at the same time, draw increasing layers of the working people into direct administrative work.

The Road to Victory

The revolutionary epoch demands that the proletariat use methods of struggle capable of focusing its militancy – namely, methods of mass struggle which lead logically to direct confrontation and open battle with the bourgeois state machine. All other methods, including the revolutionary utilisation of the bourgeois parliament, must be subordinated to this aim.

An essential condition of victory in this struggle is that the proletariat make a break not only with the outright lackeys of capital and the hangmen of the Communist revolution, such as the right-wing social democrats, but also with the ‘centre’ (the Kautskyites), which abandons the proletariat at the critical moment to compromise with its avowed enemies.

It is vital at the same time to form a bloc with members of the revolutionary workers’ movement – certain syndicalist elements, for example – who, in spite of the fact that they did not earlier belong to

the socialist party, have more or less accepted the platform of the proletarian dictatorship through Soviets.

There are several factors which make the creation of a truly revolutionary and proletarian Communist International essential: the growth of the revolutionary movement in all countries, the danger that the revolution will be suppressed by an alliance of the capitalist states, the attempts by the parties of the social-traitors to unify their ranks (the establishment of the scab 'International' in Berne is an example) and so better serve Wilson's League of Nations and finally, the absolute necessity of co-ordinating proletarian action.

Only an International, capable of subordinating so-called national interests to the interests of international revolution, will organise aid on an international scale, for without economic and other kinds of mutual support the proletariat is not in a position to build a new society. Unlike the scab socialist International, the International of the Communist proletariat will support the exploited peoples of the colonies in their struggle with the imperialists, in the knowledge that this action will promote the final collapse of the world imperialist system.

At the outbreak of the world war the capitalist criminals maintained that they were concerned only with the defence of their fatherland. It was not long, however, before German imperialism showed its brutal nature in a series of bloody actions in Russia, the Ukraine and Finland. Now it is the Entente powers that are being exposed, even in the eyes of the most backward layers of the population, as international robbers and murderers of the proletariat. Together with the German bourgeoisie and the social-patriots, and with hypocritical phrases about peace on their lips, they use their tanks and brutalised, barbaric colonial troops in an attempt to crush the revolution of the European proletariat. The White Terror unleashed by the bourgeois cannibals is indescribable. Its victims in the working class are innumerable. The bravest fighters, including Liebknecht and Luxemburg, have been lost.

The proletariat must defend itself at all costs. The Communist International calls the whole world proletariat to the last fight. We must meet arms with arms, force with force.

*Down with the Imperialist Conspiracy of Capital!
Long Live the International Republic of Proletarian Soviets!*

Bolivia

Revolutionary Communist Party (PCR)

It Is Time to Settle Accounts: The Communists, Che and the Path of the Bolivian Revolution

It is time to settle the historical accounts of the Bolivian Communists with Comandante Ernesto “Che” Guevara, to make a correct demarcation regarding the capitulatory and traitorous positions of the (Khrushchevite and Maoist) revisionist leaderships, also making known the position of the Revolutionary Communist Party (PCR) regarding the path of the Bolivian Revolution.

Let us start by establishing the socio-historical situation in the country at the time the Comandante arrived in 1966, 14 years since the National Revolution had taken place and President Barrientos had taken power through a coup d'état, deepening the sell-out and pro-imperialist positions of the MNR [Nationalist Revolutionary Movement] of Paz Estensoro. The reactionary officers who were removed from the Armed Forces in 1952 were already reinstated, and the peasant movement was largely subject to the Military-Peasant Pact. The consequences of the Sino-Soviet split in the International Communist Movement had already taken its toll in Bolivia, with the holding of the first Extraordinary Congress in 1965 (less than a week after the arrival of Che, the anti-revisionist leader Federico Escobar had already died, with assuming Oscar “Motete” Zamora the leadership of the PCML [M-L Communist Party]. The discussion at that time among communist organizations and leaders regarding the path of the Bolivian revolution could be summarized into three general trends.

1. The line of peaceful parliamentary transition put forward by Khrushchevite revisionism (PCB [Communist party of Bolivia] – Monje), which underhandedly called for armed struggle, but actually never carried it out.
2. The line of Prolonged People's War, mechanically transplanted from Maoist revisionism (PCML – Zamora), which proved not only to be invisible and failed, but those who advocated it never realized it!
3. The line of Guevarist guerrilla focos (which the ELN [Army of National Liberation] would take), the only line that was actually

carried out, with so much courage and heroism, but that was not a correct path, due to the lack of links with the masses .

If there were to be an honest discussion among communists, the way to resolve this dispute would have been a profound debate with analysis of the national reality, the history of the revolutionary struggles in the country and the objective and subjective conditions. However the revisionist leaderships (Khrushchevite and Maoist) did not have the least interest in entering into this political discussion. Both cliques sought to monopolize the public role and legitimize the briefcases with money that would arrive from Moscow and Beijing respectively.

In the case of the Khrushchevites, the revisionist troika (Monje, Kollé and Domich) who had usurped the leadership of the PCB beyond the attempts at historical justification (who did not know the scope of Che's plans, that there were tactical differences, etc.) there was a despicable betrayal of the revolutionary cause. In the report presented to the Central Committee Monje argued that "the Party did not know about the arrival in the country of Comrade Guevara; he never invited him and, therefore, was not responsible for his presence... the Party did not inspire, did not plan, did not unleash the struggle; neither did it make any commitment to Comrade Guevara" (copy of Monje's report, typewritten, 1967). Despite having held meetings in Havana and contacts through liaisons, the revisionist leadership denied all political responsibility for the deed of liberation, expelling from its ranks those courageous members who made the decision to join the guerrilla ranks. Monje offers himself as combatant under Che by resigning as First Secretary, then recant-



ed and raised three conditions (a national meeting of the left, a Latin American meeting of pro-Soviet parties, the subjection of the military command to the Bolivian political leadership within Bolivia). In these meetings with Che, revisionist leaders such as Kolle, Otero and Ramirez also participated. Monje concluded by stating that “one cannot say: ‘they should not have tried to make the revolution’. But, on the other hand, it must be stated: ‘we should have tried to make the revolution in a new way’ (December 9, 1967, taken from the journal *Rojo y Negro* (Red and Black), Montevideo Year 1, No. 1). It is clear that the new way to which he refers is the peaceful and parliamentary transition, the method of Moscow revisionism, renouncing the historic necessity of revolutionary violence for the transformation of society. Comandante Che Guevara was completely correct when he said about Monje in his Diary on December 31, 1966 that: “he was vacillating and accommodating and preserved the historical name of those who should be condemned for their opportunist position. Time would prove me right.”

The action of Bolivian Maoism, like that of the PCB, was to expel from its ranks the consistent militants who joined the ranks of the ELN. In his Necessary Response addressed to Fidel Castro, Zamora as First Secretary of the PCML labeled as revisionism the whole armed experience in Bolivia, adhering to the “Mao Tse Tung Thought” and claiming that tactical differences exonerated his organization from the responsibility for what happened.

On the verge of extinction, from their comfortable government desks, both revisionist offspring still vindicate the decisions of their leaderships in 1966-67. On the one hand, Khrushchevism raises Monje as a hero (who died as a business owner in Russia) and the supposed correctness of his position that the “process of change” would have fulfilled its historical expectations. On the other hand the pro-Peking forces had the audacity to consider Monje and Che as two sides of the same coin, while uncritically enjoying the benefits of state administration.

Despite the shameful positions of the revisionist leaders, the Bolivian workers’ movement has shown its level of revolutionary combativeness: the Mining Assembly that was to be carried out at the Siglo XX mine and motivated the San Juan Massacre to stop its development. The miners wanted to morally and materially support Che’s deed of liberation, which would have substantially changed

the fate of the guerrillas, with the organic incorporation of the vanguard of the working class into the combat.

Our Party (PCR) pays homage to all those consistent and honest militants, whether from the PCB, PCML or other political origin who joined the ranks of the National Liberation Army, under the leadership of Comandante Che Guevara, fighting Yankee imperialism and its puppet government for the true national and social liberation of Bolivia. We consider it necessary to specify concepts from Marxism-Leninism that differentiates the foco path from the programmatic approaches of the PCR. We start from the teachings of Lenin that: “a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation; furthermore, it is not every revolutionary situation that leads to revolution” (The Collapse of the Second International, 1915), that is, that the role of the revolutionary is to prepare the working people for revolution under the objective and subjective conditions. Enver Hoxha reminds us that: “Marxism-Leninism teaches us that only by taking measured and sure steps, and only by firmly supporting the principles of Marxist-Leninist theory and making the masses conscious, is it possible to achieve success in the preparation and unleashing of the armed insurrection, and never falling into adventurism” (Interview with ML Communist Party of Ecuador, 1968).

The revolution will always be the work of the organized masses, tempered in combat and guided by the revolutionary program. The Party Program studies the history of the Bolivian peoples, the experiences of the struggle of the Federal War, the National Revolution of 1952, the confrontations of the people with military coup and the anti-neoliberal resistance, and it puts forward as the path of the Bolivian revolution – the popular armed insurrection. In order to guarantee victory, the united action of the peoples is essential, to incorporate the vast majority in the revolutionary insurrectional struggle to overthrow the class enemy and seize power, winning people’s democracy and building socialism.

La Paz, February 2019

Secretariat of the Political Bureau of
Revolutionary Communist Party (PCR)

Brazil

Revolutionary Communist Party of Brazil (PCR-B)

The Struggle of the Workers in Defense of Social Security in Brazil

Brazil officially has 12.7 million unemployed workers. However, 4.78 million people are also unemployed, but because they have given up looking for a job simply because they cannot find it, they are called “discouraged” workers and are not included in the official unemployment figure of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), a government agency. So if we add up these figures, we have 17.5 million unemployed workers in the country.

Moreover, according to the IBGE, 54.8 million Brazilians live in poverty and 15.3 million in extreme poverty. All of us who struggle against injustice are saddened by the fact that 18.2 million children are poor and 5.32 million children are extremely poor. People living with R \$406 [about \$100 US; 1 Brazilian Real = \$0.26 US] per month are considered poor, and those who subsist on R \$140 per month are extremely poor.

As millions of Brazilians were thrown into this situation of poverty and misery, it is not difficult to explain: just five billionaires (Jorge Paulo Lemann, Joseph Safra, Marcel Herrmann Telles, Carlos Alberto Sicupira and Eduardo Saverin) have wealth equivalent to half the population. That means that together these five people have more wealth than 100 million Brazilians. According to Oxfam, a British organization operating in 93 countries, only 43 super-rich in Brazil have a fortune of \$549 billion US, or 43.52% of the country’s wealth. On the other hand, the poorest half of the Brazilian population has only 2% of the national wealth. In other words, the vast majority of Brazilians are unemployed and poor because the wealth of the nation is in the hands of a minority of billionaires who super-exploit the working class, throw children into misery and plunder the wealth of the Brazilian nation, as does agribusiness with our lands and the food produced by the rural workers and Vale [a Brazilian multinational corporation – *translator’s note*] does with our ores.

It is not by chance that the business owners get rich and the workers – the ones who actually work and produce – are poor. This

injustice is possible because the state oppresses the workers to make the rich class even richer and the factories, land and banks are all in the hands of this minority. These are the laws, plans, and economic reforms aimed at expropriating the money of the workers and nation and handing it over to the bosses and bankers. So it has been for centuries. When anyone tries to do otherwise, the Armed Forces of the bourgeoisie use their power to carry out a fascist military coup, as they did on April 1, 1964.

The Social Security Reform Is against the Poor

The **Social Security** Reform that millionaire Jair Bolsonaro wants the National Congress to approve is another example.

Today, the needy elderly receive a minimum benefit (R \$998) from age 65. Under Bolsonaro's reform, the minimum age to be entitled to a benefit under the Continuous Payment Benefit (BPC) will rise to 70 years. Before that age, the benefits for the elderly in dire situations will be reduced to R \$400. What will the government do with the money it will collect from the needy elderly? Whom will it give it to? It will not be to the poor, for it is already taking it away from them.

But while former captain Jair Bolsonaro wants an elderly Brazilian to live with only R \$400 a month, he considers it normal that his son, Flávio Bolsonaro, receives 48 monetary deposits, each worth R \$2,000, in just five days, as revealed by the report of the Financial Activities Control Council (COAF), and that his party, the PSL [Social Liberal Party], uses "phony" candidates to divert public money from the party fund.

As for the rural workers, they retire after 15 years of contributions and at age 60 for men and age 55 for women. This age was fixed due to the fact that work in agriculture is very hard and one



begins working very early, usually at age 13 or 14. With the reform, rural women workers will only retire at age 60 and after 20 years of contribution. Today, it is already difficult for workers to contribute for 15 years; contributing for 20 years will therefore be impossible. Why? Everyone knows that work in the fields is largely seasonal. Anyone who works in cutting sugar cane or harvesting oranges can only do this work when there is cane to cut or oranges to harvest. In addition, wages are low and most employers do not sign the work document. Thus, to demand that the rural worker contributes for 20 years to be entitled to retire is, in practice, to do away with rural retirement.

In fact, the requirement for a minimum contribution period of 20 years (today it is 15 years) affects all workers. Now, how can workers contribute for 20 years, if many of them, because of the increasing informality and layoffs that the bosses carry out, are unemployed for years? How many workers are unemployed at age 50 and still get work?

Although this is a hard blow for all who work in this country, the woman worker will be the most affected, since the reform completely ignores the fact that women, in addition to working, have other responsibilities, such as home, children and even human reproduction.

Today, a woman who is 55 and contributes to the INSS [National Institute of Social Security] for 25 years, if she works for another five years, retires with the full value of her salary. Under the government's proposal, this will end: a woman will have to work another seven years instead of five to reach 62 years and the required minimum age. However, even so, she will not be entitled to her full salary, because she will have made 32 years of contribution. If she decides to retire she will receive only 60% of her salary. To be entitled to the full salary she will have to contribute for another ten years and she will only reach the full salary when she turns 70.

The bad things that Bolsonaro is doing against the poor and the workers of our country do not end here.

Under the current rule, the value of one's pension is based on the average of the 80% highest contribution wages to ensure that retirees receive a pension closer to what they earned when they were working. The government reform wants this calculation to be based on the average of all contributions so as to reduce the value of the pensions that will be paid out.

Another objective of the reform is to reduce the family pension in case of death. Currently the family receives 100% of the salary that the deceased received; with the reform, the value is reduced to 60%, causing a very great fall in the family income, especially if the worker who died earned no more than twice the minimum wage, as is the case for 80% of the people.

Today, all workers who earn up to twice the minimum wage are entitled to PIS [Program of Social Integration], a minimum wage each year. The reform wants only the right to receive the minimum wage. That is, those who earn 10 reales above the minimum wage lose this right won by the workers.

In addition to all this, the Proposed Amendment to the Constitution (PEC) of the Pension Reform increases the rates of contribution to the INSS of all workers.

An Authoritarian and Unjust Government

One must ask why a government acts so inhumanly towards the workers, the women, the poor and the needy elderly?

It acts against the people, because it is a government of the powerful, the bosses and the bankers. In fact, to date it has not announced any serious measures to end the so-called fiscal waivers and exemptions, privileges granted by the government to the big capitalist monopolies and finance capital. This year, the Bolsonaro Government will grant tax exemptions and tax incentives to companies, many of them multinationals, of R \$306.4 billion (\$80 billion US). With this amount, it would be possible to cover the deficit of the public accounts and billions would still remain in the Budget. In addition, the country's three largest private banks made a profit of R \$61 billion in 2018 and will continue to make greater profit this year, as the government has already set aside 40% of the budget (more than \$250 billion US) to pay interest to bankers and international finance capital. In addition, the companies and banks owe more than \$120 billion US to the Social Security coffers.

To deceive the nation, the bourgeoisie's government and media say that the Social Security Reform will create millions of jobs. They said the same to approve the labor reform and what happened? Did we have more jobs?

No, not at all; IBGE itself states that the total number of underutilized workers (unemployed, underemployed due to insufficient hours and the potential labor force) is 26.96 million people

and 35 million work without a formal contract or work in irregular jobs.

An honest and patriotic government would never present a social Security Reform with so many attacks on workers. It would seek to increase the minimum wage, prevent layoffs and factory closures, improve the living conditions of the people and not worsen them and would make a basic reform to end the misery that affects more than 100 million Brazilians. But that is not what the Bolsonaro government does; on the contrary, it is a puppet in the hands of the banker Paulo Guedes, the super-powerful Minister of the Economy.

Aware of this truth, 89 million Brazilians did not vote for Jair Bolsonaro. Now, when they become aware of all this injustice that the Bolsonaro government wants to carry out against the people, the whole nation will take to the streets to fight to put an end to this bourgeois and fascist government and to defend the building of people's power in our homeland.

**Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party –
PCR Brazil**

April 2019

Burkina Faso

Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta – PCRV

The PCRV Proposes to the People and the Popular Youth the Political Struggle for a Revolutionary Change

Against the bankruptcy of neocolonialism in our country, the PCRV calls on the people and the popular youth to struggle for a revolutionary change of the National Democratic and Popular Revolution, and the establishment of a Modern Democratic Republic that guarantees full equality among the different nationalities and true social progress for all.

The district of Barsalogo, located in the North Central region, whose capital is Kaya, was the scene of horrible massacres and manhunts in early January 2019. In fact, a terrorist attack by unidentified individuals on January 1, 2019 plunged the village of Yirgou into mourning, where the village chief, his son, the leader of the self-defense group, the Kolg-Weogo and four other people were murdered in cold blood. In response to these barbaric killings, from January 7 to 8, 2019, a punitive expedition led by people in several villages of the district of Barsalogo and the neighboring province of Soum, resulted in a massacre of 50 people according to official reports, mainly in the local Fulani community, suspected of complicity with the terrorist attackers. However, everything suggests that this official figure is too low. A counter-expedition this time directed against the communities of the villages of Guendbila, Gaslika and Sikiré also led to several victims and many displaced. The PCRV expresses its deepest condolences and compassion to the parents of the victims and the affected communities. It condemns the killings and terrorist murders.

This chain of massacres in Yirgou, Guendbila, Gaslika, Sikiré, etc., has plunged our people, the working class, the popular youth and all peace-loving people into suffering mixed with indignation. These horrors have been justifiably met by rejection and general condemnation because they put in question our ability to live together and challenge the collective national consciousness. Thus, the questions that everyone is asking are, among others: How have

we come to this situation for people who have been living together for a long time? What are the root causes? How can we deal with this situation that can spark a reactionary civil war that the imperialists and their allies are covertly preparing to punish our people who dared to carry out an insurrection and undermine the foundations of the neocolonial state? The PCRV, which is fighting alongside our people for their national and social liberation, here sheds some light on these nagging questions, in order to arm the people so that they do not mistake each other for enemies in their fight against counter-revolutionary jihadist terrorism, imperialism and its local allies, for the revolution and the real change in their favor.

The pogrom-like punitive expeditions, clearly proclaimed as ethnical, pose a great danger to our people and especially to their living together, which has been cultivated during different periods of our national history: the popular uprising of January 3, 1966, which swept away the first neocolonial government in our country, the historic strikes of November and December 1975, the collective struggle against impunity, and especially the popular insurrection and popular resistance of 2014 and 2015, etc. The inter-communal vendettas, which our people were able to avoid until now by focusing on what is essential whenever necessary, are a veritable plot to obscure the real issues of the day:

- The strengthening of imperialist domination and its consequences, which are reflected among other things by the occupation of our country and the sub-region by foreign armies (France, USA, China, G5-Sahel), which goes on without stopping the spread of the terrorist hydra monster throughout the national territory. Despite the many military bases established in the sub-region, despite the Operation Barkhane, despite the intervention of MINUSMA (military forces of the United Nations) in Mali, and the famous G5, terrorist attacks are only increasing. This shows that these foreign bases and troops are not there to fight terrorism, but to control of the sub-region and plunder its resources in the context of the struggle between the various powers for the redivision of the world.
- The economic choices imposed by the financial institutions, the World Bank and the IMF, that lead to the high cost of living, poverty, uneven development between the regions of the country, communal and/or religious frustrations, etc.

- The bankruptcy of the current MPP (Movement for the People) government and the reactionary bourgeoisie as a whole, the bankruptcy of the neocolonial state and its institutions (army, justice in particular, etc.) and the need to put an end to the neocolonial bourgeois regime and to replace it with a popular power. The neocolonial states, especially those of the Sahel-Saharan strip, created by French imperialism and managed by the reactionary classes and social strata that are its allies, are in a serious crisis. This crisis manifests itself at different levels and has catastrophic consequences, of which issues of security and the high cost of living are the ones that stand out.
- The terrorist plot, this invention of the imperialists based on the theory of chaos, is a formidable weapon against the peoples of the Sahel region and especially our country. It feeds on poverty, the uneven development of the different regions of the country, the ethnic discourses kept hidden by dishonest politicians and intellectuals; terrorism clothed with the banner of religion, fosters suspicion between communities; it is the source of various kinds of diversions such as that experienced by the people of Yirgou, etc. The manipulation of questions of identity, community and religion is more than obvious. The recent evolution of the situation indicates a worsening of the crisis, with the increase in terrorist attacks that affect almost all the regions of the country, the loss of the territorial integrity, the numerous displacements of the population with its procession of misfortunes and sufferings for the people, the closure of thousands of schools, the very worrying and complex situation is leading to a real rampant reactionary civil war.
- The extreme aggravation of the living conditions of the masses with the high cost of living, the plundering of rural and urban property with the growth in the number of landless peasants and the homeless populations, the savage exploitation of the peasant masses by the neocolonial trading companies SOFITEX (Textile Fiber Company), Faso Coton, etc., and the imperialist monopolies such DAGRIS which controls its resources. The hoarding of gold resources by the U.S., Canadian, Russian, Australian and Turkish imperialist powers and monopolies that drive the peasants from their lands and away from access to the resources of their lands and countries. The super-exploitation of the working class and public and private employees hit by low

wages, poor living and working conditions and the burden of direct and indirect taxes and attacks on their liberties. The state of emergency that has just been proclaimed, while being essentially directed against the revolutionary movement and freedoms, will lead to an even deeper degradation of the living conditions of the masses because of its impact on the social and economic activities in the regions concerned with the risk of masking or trivializing the excesses of the SDS in certain localities that people continue to denounce. The new fiscal measures to put pressure on the people by making them pay the costs of the crisis under the yoke of the imperialist institutions and powers (IMF and World Bank), the inter-communal massacres as in Yirgou, etc. The bankruptcy of power is more and more evident in the eyes of the masses, who are seeking a solution to the serious crisis in the country.

- The aspiration for genuine change by the revolution is reflected in the popular struggles that fundamentally challenge the oppressive neocolonial system. These struggles, which hinder the implementation of the post-insurgency road map of French imperialism, are superficially characterized as lack of civic spirit by the reactionary bourgeoisie and the radical reformist petty bourgeoisie, which are losing ground. The spirit of the insurrection still remains alive and this worries to the highest degree the imperialists and their local allies in power and out of power. The historic response of our people through the popular insurrection of October 2014 and the victorious resistance to the putsch of September 2015 al-



lowed them, not only to keep the spirit of the insurrection but above all to continue the movement in progress since 1998, and deepen the ongoing revolutionary crisis. Thus the popular movement, instead of taking a defensive position, remained on the offensive. It has expanded its social base, its forces and its platform as well as its territorial base. The revolutionary crisis and the popular movement are continuing, and a new revolutionary wave is in progress. The various actions of the bourgeoisie, despite its inter-clan struggles, are part of a vast counter-revolutionary plan to retake its positions.

Only the reactionary bourgeoisie and their imperialist masters, the ethnicists of all stripes, are interested in opposing the different nationalities of our country against each other: the working class, our people and popular youth must not be deceived by their enemies. This solemn appeal is being launched by the PCRV to our people in all its sectors.

Since the colonial period, French imperialism, in order to establish its domination over the peoples of its colonies and neo-colonies, has utilized the principle of divide and rule. This strategy, as old as the world, is today brought up to date against our people, with the manipulation of the nebulous “jihadist” terror. The bankrupt neocolonial and imperialist system is ready to do anything to maintain itself. With this logic, it does not hesitate to stir up xenophobic, ethnic and/or religious feelings to divide the working class and peoples in order to maintain its domination. This is particularly true in periods of extreme aggravation of crises (political, economic and social), the competition around the natural resources of land and water, today exacerbated by the fact of the increase of population and the effects of climate change.

Thus, the reactionary classes and social strata allied to imperialism, in their struggle for power, seek to divide and oppose the different nationalities to each other, using all harmful means: ethnicism, regionalism, religious affiliation. This is how they manage to foment the reactionary civil wars as we saw in Ivory Coast, Central African Republic and Chad in the name of ethnicity and/or religion. It is the same in Mali where imperialism, mainly French imperialism, manipulated the different communities at the risk of partitioning the country in order to continue to control the resources of the country and the sub-region. In our country too, the bourgeoi-

sie openly or covertly uses these same processes. During the collective struggles, human rights activists and democratic organizations saw their houses burned, were driven out of towns such as Koudougou, Titao, Seguenega, etc., on the grounds that they were “foreigners” in their own country. So it is not a completely new phenomenon that only targets the Fulani. But the manipulation of religion by terrorism takes a particularly worrying turn and demands the vigilance of all the sectors of our people. Indeed, the emergence of terrorism, with separatist rhetoric, notably on the reconstitution of the Fulani empire of Macina, favors the destructive action of all who fish in troubled-water in a situation where the reactionary bourgeoisie of all tendencies is struggling with difficulty to realize its class unity after the hard blow carried out by the people with the waging of the popular uprising of October 2014.

In the light of the lessons of the popular uprising of October 2014 and the popular resistance to the fascist coup of 2015, the people should build a popular unity based on the obligations of living together as the only bulwark against the terrorism inseparable from the struggle for social progress and against imperialism through revolution.

Faced with the bankruptcy of neo-colonialism in our country, the political proposal of the PCRV to the people and the popular youth is revolutionary change, the alternative of the National Popular Democratic Revolution [NPDR], and the establishment of a Modern and Democratic Republic which guarantees full equality between the different nationalities and genuine social progress for all.

The only alternative to ethnicism, terrorism, the bankruptcy of neo-colonialism, particularly French, and the neo-colonial state is Popular Unity, that is, the unity of the popular classes and strata, of democrats and revolutionaries, who are interested in genuine change, against imperialism, mainly French imperialism, and reactionary bourgeois classes responsible for the current crisis. Our people must fully take up the challenge. There are more and more conditions enabling them to do this. Indeed:

- The Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta is carrying out a wide-ranging work of education, organization and mobilization throughout the country, within the working class, all the sectors

of our people and popular youth. It is therefore what holds the Popular Unity together;

- The working class and people through their various sectors, including the popular youth, have an immense revolutionary potential. The will to fight for revolutionary change is alive within them.
- The different nationalities that make up our country aspire to free themselves from the dual yoke of imperialism and its local allies and to realize their unity and organize their coexistence in mutual respect;
- The unity of the working class, of the different nationalities of our people as well as the different sectors was reinforced by the popular uprising of October 2014 and the popular resistance of September 2015. These are valuable gains that our people must not lose; on the contrary, they must deepen them;
- There exists within our people a process of crystallization of the national consciousness that the PCRV strives to fortify by a correct understanding and analysis of the national question.

The realization of the NPDR is the only correct alternative to the failure of neo-colonialism and imperialist domination in our country and the evils it generates: terrorism, ethnicism, poverty, misery, etc. But it is the masses who make the revolution and the Communist Party that makes them conscious. The PCRV, the Party of revolutionary action, will not fail in this mission that is its own.

**No to Foreign Military Bases in Our Country
and the Sub-Region!**

Foreign Forces Out of Our Country!

No to the Looting of Our Country's Resources!

No to Ethnicism! No to Terrorism!

**Our People, United Under the Leadership of the PCRV,
Will Win!**

Bread and Freedom for the People!

Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta
April 2019

Dominican Republic

Communist Party of Labor (PCT) of the Dominican Republic

The Second International and the Leninist Theory of the Revolution

I. Preliminary

The Second International (1889-1914) arose and developed at the time of the upsurge of capitalism in its imperialist phase; it managed to unite a large number of parties that, in turn, influenced millions of workers and toilers. The theoretical and political orientation corresponded mainly to Frederick Engels, because Karl Marx had already died.

Under the leadership of this International, the working and laboring class was able to win important demands of labor and wages that, in sum, improved their material conditions of life. Also, the member parties had some electoral successes, constituting parliamentary fractions with a certain influence in several countries.

Nevertheless, the Second International would become bankrupt because of the liquidationist positions of a large number of its leaders in the face of the first imperialist war (1914), created by the problems of the capitalist system at that time.

The “crumbs” that imperialism had allowed to fall into the hands of political and union leaders through their huge profits obtained in the period of upsurge, created an “aristocracy” within the labor movement, which, moreover, had accommodated itself to bourgeois parliamentarism that the stability of the system had allowed.

In fact, within the Second International there were always theoretical and ideological confrontations among anarchists, reformists and Marxists, that were part of it since its foundation (1889). Reformism would always be expressed with great force, and would gain dominant status among the most prominent leaders.

Edward Bernstein, one of the most prominent, fundamentally converted to reformism in his work “The Prerequisites for Socialism and the Tasks of Social Democracy” (1889), in which he argued that since the defeat of the Paris Commune in May 1871 and the rise of the capitalist economy since 1873, there had been no revolutions,

and the working class had greatly improved its living conditions, so there would be no place for the ideas of revolution of Marx and Engels. He concluded that one could achieve socialism by evolution through reforms. Karl Kautsky, who had enormous prestige among the social democratic parties of that time, would also promote similar ideas.

In his pamphlet “The Foundations of Leninism,” Stalin says that the period of the Second International was the “pre-war” period, in which strikes, union struggles, and parliamentary work were developing “more or less normally” and where the elite of social democracy “were living in clover”.

The serpent of reformism and opportunism had laid its eggs in the Second International, and it was just a matter of circumstance until they hatched.

They hatched when the crisis of the capitalist system led to the imperialist war in August 1914 and changed the material and political conditions. These leaders and their parties bowed to the positions of capital, and could not take up the challenges of the class struggle in those circumstances.

The war could be seen coming for years, and within the Second International debates developed around the attitude that one should adopt to prevent it, or what to do if it broke out. In the Congress of Stuttgart (1907), and in the meetings in Copenhagen (1910), Basel (1912), and Paris (1914), agreements were adopted to fight against the danger of war, or to take intervene in it from positions of class independence and revolutionary socialism, if it became a reality.

When it finally broke out, the reformists set aside the agreements adopted, and sided with the bourgeoisie of their respective countries; they renounced the class struggle, so that their capitalist governments could be entirely concerned with the affairs of the conflagration.

In this context, the Second International was declared bankrupt by the communists of several countries, and under the influence of the October Revolution of 1917, the Third International emerged.

II. Lenin’s revolutionary conclusions

The theoretical struggle within the Second International and afterwards, to lay the foundations of the Third International, synthesized the experience of the October Revolution, and constituted the

theoretical scaffolding, theories and categories of analysis of Leninism.

In 1920, Lenin's book "'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder" appeared. This was three years after the victory of the October revolution and one year after the Third International was founded. That is, it was an important part of the generalization of the experiences, practice and teachings, until the revolution of 1917, which was also a synthesis of the revolutionary process since 1905, with its victories and defeats, its ups and downs.

Between the bankruptcy of the Second International and the subsequent formation of new communist parties and leaders, only four years passed (1914-1918) and they had not had time to analyze the unprecedented experiences of the October Revolution.

Lenin set out to make them known and to convince the new communist parties of them. Among these generalizations were the questions of reforms and parliamentarism, issues rejected by these new parties that, having fought against the extreme of reformism in the Second International, would have also adopted extreme positions rejecting them as possible in the tactical line of the communists.

Lenin countered that it was one thing to say that bourgeois parliamentarism was historically obsolete, because Soviet power had appeared in history which was higher than that; the other thing was what had to be done in practice. He argued that the Soviet power of the working class was superior to the power of bourgeois democracy from the historical point of view, but from the practical point of view, of reality, it was a fact that bourgeois governments and parliaments dominated in most of the world, and it was necessary to deal with this reality.

In the light of the experiences of the Russian revolution, Lenin emphasized the importance that the level of political participation and consciousness of the masses in each concrete situation should always have for the communists.

If the force of the masses is not sufficient for the call to action by the communists, the tactics remain generally correct in words. But they are not translated into deeds and what the ruling classes decide continues on its course.

The thorough and detailed study of the history of Bolshevism emphasizes that Lenin's party participated in the most conservative

parliaments, only motivated by the interest of closer relations with the working and popular masses.

III. The Categories of Analysis Emphasized by Leninism

In “‘Left-Wing’ Communism, an Infantile Disorder”, and earlier, in the April Theses, published in April of 1917, Lenin spoke of the importance of “making a concrete analysis of concrete conditions.” He emphasized that to be objective in analysis and faithful to reality was always a distinction characteristic of the Bolsheviks.

In this approach to the concrete situation, Leninism relies on two important categories of analysis, which are the “revolutionary situation” and the “balance of forces”.

Both are approached from the perspective of the general category of dialectics, fundamental for the analysis of the situation and the perspectives of the revolution, which is that of “possibility-reality”.

One must analyze the situation on a permanent basis, as the ICMLPO does at each Plenary when it discusses the international situation and the tasks of the communists. And for that Leninism provides us with a broad theoretical instrument. If one wants to engage in revolutionary political activity, being revolutionary is to love revolutionary theory. So that “without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement,” and as Engels said, “since Marxism is a science, it deserves to be treated as one,” that is, it must be studied, analyzed and its laws and categories of analysis must be made use of, in order to address the issues with which we must deal with in our revolutionary task.

From the process of the October Revolution, Lenin emphasized some generalizations that are an instrument of universal validity for revolutionary analysis and leadership.

In the course of the Russian Revolution, several concrete periods stand out: the outbreak of the revolution in 1905 and its defeat in 1907. Another is the reaction and ebb in the mass movement between 1907 and 1910. Then followed a slight rise in the mass movement, from 1910 to 1914, followed by a steeper rise of the mass struggle, from the First World War in 1914 until the victory of the revolution in October of 1917.

The Leninist category of the “revolutionary situation” arises and develops from this experience.

In a pamphlet entitled “May Day Action by the Revolutionary Proletariat,” which appeared on June 15, 1913, Lenin points out what at that time was understood by a revolutionary situation:

“Russia is experiencing a revolutionary situation because the oppression of the vast majority of the population – not only of the proletariat but of nine-tenths of the small producers, particularly the peasants – has intensified to the maximum, and this intensified oppression, starvation, poverty, lack of rights, humiliation of the people is, furthermore, glaringly inconsistent with the state of Russia’s productive forces, inconsistent with the level of class-consciousness and the demands of the masses...

“But that is not all. Oppression alone, no matter how great, does not always give rise to a revolutionary situation in a country. In most cases it is not enough for revolution that *the lower classes should not want* to live in the old way. It is also necessary that *the upper classes should be unable* to rule and govern in the old way.”

In “The Collapse of the Second International,” written between May and June 1915, that is, two years later, at the height of the revolutionary struggle of the masses, he says:

“To the Marxist it is indisputable that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation; furthermore, it is not every revolutionary situation that leads to revolution. What, generally speaking, are the symptoms of a revolutionary situation? We shall certainly not be mistaken if we indicate the following three major symptoms:

1. “When it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the ‘upper classes,’ a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for ‘the lower classes not to want’ to live in the old way; it is also necessary that ‘the upper classes should be unable’ to live in the old way;
2. “When the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual;
3. “When, as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in ‘peace time,’ but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the circumstances of the cri-

sis and by the 'upper classes' themselves into independent historical action.

"Without these objective changes, which are independent of the will, not only of individual groups and parties but even of individual classes, a revolution, as a general rule, is impossible. The totality of all these objective changes is called a revolutionary situation.

"Such a situation existed in 1905 in Russia, and in all revolutionary periods in the West... although no revolution occurred in these instances.

"Why was that? It was because it is not every revolutionary situation that gives rise to a revolution; revolution arises only out of a situation in which the above-mentioned objective changes are accompanied by a subjective change, namely, the ability of the revolutionary class to take revolutionary mass action *strong* enough to break (or dislocate) the old government, which never, not even in a period of crisis, 'falls,' if it is not toppled over."

In 1920, when the Russian Revolution had already won, in the book "Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder," Lenin speaks of the "fundamental law of revolution", confirmed by all of them, and particularly by the three Russian revolutions of the 20th century, consisting of the following: "it is not enough for revolution that the exploited and oppressed masses should understand the impossibility of living in the old way and demand changes; it is essential for revolution that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. Only when the 'lower classes' do not want the old way, and when the 'upper classes' cannot carry on in the old way – only then can revolution triumph."

"Victory cannot be won with the vanguard alone. To throw the vanguard alone into the decisive battle, before the whole class, before the broad masses have taken up a position either of direct support of the vanguard... would be not merely folly but a crime."

Observe that in this conceptualization three categories appear, which are: possibility-reality; the revolutionary situation, linked to the balance of forces, which, in this case goes beyond a quantitative issue, but includes the level of consciousness of the masses to take revolutionary action.

This last one is vital, because the level of consciousness and that of the predominant values among the masses at a given moment can lead them not to take up positions of a break with the established order, or certain slogans, even if they are mobilized.

The study of the Russian revolutionary process, specifically between February and October of 1917, at a high moment of revolutionary upsurge, reveals the care of the Bolshevik leadership not to put forward slogans or actions that were still beyond the reach of the masses, and they preferred to stay within the movement, at the head of the struggles, carrying out agitation and propaganda, educating the masses politically, and leading them to learn from their own experiences, and through that process to prepare them for high-level slogans.

The analysis of the balance of forces is more than a quantitative analysis, of how many, and for how long they are mobilized; it is also what the mobilized masses are willing to do. If this question is not even taken up, the vanguard elements could run far ahead of the movement and isolate themselves, and even split it.

In the analysis of the elements that make up a “revolutionary situation,” it also linked up with the general category of possibility-reality. That, in summary, expresses, in fact or reality, what conditions may appear that, if developed, can lead to a revolution.

That they can lead to this does not mean that they will lead to it mechanically. In this analysis we can observe the presence of properties or elements that can lead to a revolution; but they cannot be confused with the revolution itself. The revolutionary consequence starting from this analysis of the possibility would lead to putting into practice a line that would lead these conditions to maturity, to fill the gaps or deficits, so that there is a revolutionary outbreak.

It is clear that the general poverty and



struggle of the oppressed by themselves do not constitute the elements of a revolutionary situation; but it is necessary that those who govern and even more the classes that rule cannot continue governing as before.

This is a magnificent Leninist synthesis of the general category of the analysis of possibility-reality.

Here is one example of the analysis of the possibility that did not in practice advance to a reality. Shortly after its founding in 1980, the Communist Party of Labor (PCT) made the analysis of the sharpening of the economic crisis in the country at the beginning of that year and the attitude of the struggle of the masses. It said: “in the Dominican Republic, the factors that make possible revolutionary popular outbreaks are quickly maturing.”

That accurate forecast was fulfilled in April 1984, with the outbreak of movements that began in the Capotillo neighborhood in the north of the capital, Santo Domingo, and moved in waves across the country. For four consecutive days throughout the territory, day and night, the masses took to the streets of the cities and rural roads. This was an insurrection of the masses. But there was no vanguard to turn those elements into a civil war, and there was no revolution. The insurrection was crushed with a result of thousands dead and imprisoned.

IV. Some conclusions.

The experiences of the Second International emphasize some lessons and challenges. Namely:

1. We must continue to build the ICMLPO, as the content and form of the Communist International at the present level of development of the Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations;
2. The building of the ICMLPO is all the more urgent as it is seriously possible to return to a situation of crisis of the capitalist system, given the fragility of its recovery since 2008 and the social and political cost to the working class and the popular masses imposed by the ruling classes for their recovery;
3. There are enormous potentialities for the struggle of the working class and the popular masses on all continents. And, although unequal and still weak and sporadic in many countries, it can be said that there is a tendency for these struggles to grow in most countries;

4. The struggle between imperialisms is a reality, for gaining or maintaining areas of influence, with the corresponding military threat. Syria, Africa, North Korea, the Near East, Latin America and Venezuela are especially scenarios of competition between U.S., Russian and Chinese imperialism.

In short, it is necessary for us communists to put ourselves at the forefront of the popular struggles, to grow, strengthen and build communist parties with great influence on the working and popular masses, and to give a correct answer to the problem posed concerning the revolution.

Communist Party of Labor – PCT
April, 2019

Ecuador

Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Ecuador – PCMLE

Pablo Miranda

The Communist International and the Struggle for the Proletarian Revolution in Latin America

In March of 1919, the First Congress of the Third International, known as the Communist International, took place in Moscow.

It emerged as a historical necessity to fulfill the tasks of the working class and the proletarian revolutionaries. It was born to fulfill the internationalist responsibilities that the First and the Second International could not completely fulfill, due to their nature and the concrete conditions.

As is known, the Workers' or First International was founded by Marx, Engels (1864-1872) and an important number of trade union and communist leaders of the struggle of the working class, "laid the foundation of the proletarian, international struggle for socialism" (Lenin). It became an ideological, political and organizational reference point of the working class of the countries of Europe and the United States, a tool for the organization and struggle of the workers and revolutionaries; it was the scenario for the theoretical and political debate between the supporters of scientific socialism, the reformists hiding behind the mantle of social democracy and the anarchists; in this confrontation the ideas of Marx and Engels gained ground, they were affirmed in the conception of a large number of workers and trade unionists.

The Second International (1889-1914) was founded by Engels in order to advance the international struggle for socialism; it fulfilled the task of expanding the workers' and trade union movement among the working masses of a good number of countries. In the intense ideological and political debate, in the midst of the concrete struggle of the working class, the reformist and social-chauvinist ideas and conceptions gained ground. The preparations for and later the First World War itself showed the treacherous nature of some of the union and political leaders of the Second International; it led to collaboration with the bourgeoisies, to preaching the incorporation

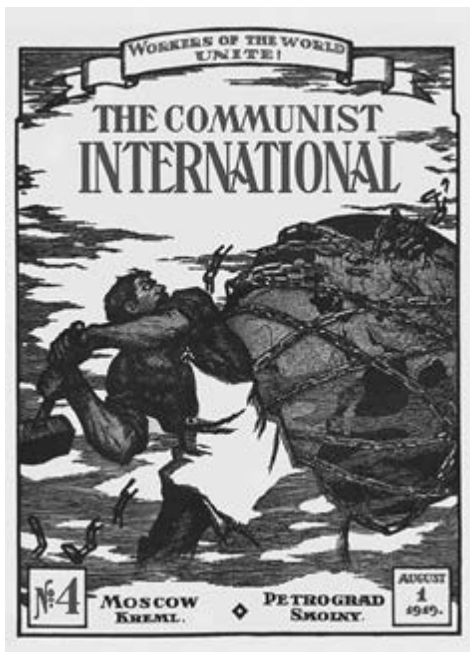
by the workers into the imperialist war, defending the interests of the ruling classes. The Second International lost its character and activity as an expression of the interests of the working class; it was taken over by opportunists and renegades.

The Third International (1919-1943), known as the Communist International, was formed by the communist and workers' parties influenced by the victory of the October Revolution, by the historical and political significance of the social, economic and political achievements that took place in the old empire of the tsars.

The Communist International was a long-standing concern. Faced with the union bureaucracy, the labor aristocracy, the social reformists and social chauvinists who had become entrenched in the organization and leadership of the Second International, the Bolsheviks of Russia, headed by Lenin and other proletarian revolutionaries of Europe who defended internationalism and the ideas of Marx and Engels carried out an intense struggle against positions that sought to involve workers in the “defense of the fatherland” in the imperialist war that was being prepared.

This ideological and political confrontation between communists and reformists allowed for demarcating lines in the ranks of the trade unionists, but it did not prevent the workers from becoming cannon fodder for the bourgeoisie and the imperialists.

The relentless struggle that the Bolsheviks waged, in the concrete conditions of old Russia, confronting the Czar and his reactionary policies and against the imperialist war, led to the victory of the anti-feudal and anti-capitalist revolution in February 1917; and then to the victory of the socialist revolu-



tion in October.

The seizure of power by the workers inaugurated a new era, the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolutions; it reined in the rampant development of capitalism and imperialism; it showed the strength and potential of the revolutionary proletariat, the necessity of the unity of the working classes, of the worker-peasant alliance; the indispensability of revolutionary violence; it made clear the role of the communist party as the leading vanguard of the working class, as organizer and leader of the insurrection for the seizure of power, as organizer and leader of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The role of the Bolshevik party in the whole process of the October Revolution made clear the need for the international organization of the working class and particularly of the communists; it meant for the communists of Lenin's Party the decision to contribute decisively in that direction; it demanded that the communists of other countries should intensify their efforts to realize that great objective.

The great influence of the October Revolution, the elimination of capitalist exploitation and the liberation of the workers, who went from a dominated and exploited class to the role of ruling class and leader of society; the great social achievements became a glittering beacon for the workers and the peoples of the world; it showed in the active solidarity with the new workers' State, the condemnation and struggle against the imperialist military aggression.

The October Revolution became an example for the workers and peoples, for the proletarian revolutionaries who fought and organized revolutions that were unfortunately defeated, they strengthened the trade union movement of the working class, they pushed the anti-imperialist movement to new levels in the colonial and dependents countries.

In this context the communist parties were strengthened ideologically and politically, they affirmed themselves in their nature of vanguard of the working class, they went beyond the confrontation for trade union rights, for freedom and democracy, and they launched themselves in the struggle for the seizure of power; new communist parties emerged in a large number of countries.

In broad strokes this was the scenario in which the Third, Communist International, emerged.

The Bolsheviks, the Party of Lenin and Stalin, played a prominent role, they contributed with everything that the Bolshevik Party

and the October Revolution meant, the heroic and victorious battles for the defense of the revolution, with the theoretical knowledge and experience. For the foundation of the Communist International, delegates from several countries came together, who outwitted the surveillance and came to Moscow to affirm their internationalist decision.

The discussions of the Communists were mainly concerned with the need to organize and promote the international proletarian revolution. They understood clearly that this great responsibility demanded the formation of strong communist parties, rooted in the working class, prepared and ready for the revolutionary war, the seizure of power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The formation of the Communist International meant the largest articulation and coordination until then of the revolutionary forces of the working class, the idea of “building a unique entity and under a solid structure and leadership, which would bring together the emerging Communist Parties (CPs) of the five continents,” an International Communist Party.

This conception was present in the theory and practice of the Communist International, in the parties that attended the first Congress and in those that joined later.

The International set its sights on the parties of Europe and North America, but did not relegate the parties of Asia and Latin America to secondary importance.

Latin America, its reality

Capitalism and imperialism extended their tentacles to all countries of the world. Latin America was a subcontinent in which capitalist industry was still developing in a limited way and the bonds of economic and political dependence to international monopolies were being consolidated. They were, however, backward countries in which the domination of the landowners and the presence of feudal serfdom weighed heavily. The great majority of Latin American countries had won political independence from the Spanish, Portuguese and French empires; however, foreign investments in the extraction of minerals and petroleum, in the nascent industry and the bonds of foreign debt turned them into dependent countries.

More than twenty countries make up the Latin American subcontinent. They extend from south of the Rio Bravo [called Rio

Grande in the U.S. – *translator's note*] to Patagonia. The American continent before the voyages of Columbus in 1492 was unknown to the countries of Europe and to the Catholic Church. The inhabitants were organized in peoples and cultures different from each other; they were in a lower stage compared to that of the European peoples. There were important developed cultures scattered throughout the subcontinent, among which stand out the civilizations of the Aztecs in what is now Mexico, the Mayans in Central America and the Incas in western South America.

The conquest of these lands by the Spanish, Portuguese, English, French and Dutch constituted a real genocide, the physical extermination of millions of indigenous people through arms and the spread of unknown diseases that were brought by the conquerors; the elimination of indigenous cultures and knowledge, the imposition of strange cultures and religions and the cultural, religious and economic subordination of the peoples; the destruction of social organization and the establishment of new bosses and rules.

The Latin American countries emerged from the struggle for independence that was waged on a continental scale more or less at the same time (with the exception of Brazil, whose struggle for independence culminated at the end of the 19th century); the anti-colonialist fighters came from all directions and fought in all countries.

The indigenous cultural roots, the cultures and the languages of daily communication imposed by the European conquerors, the joint struggle for independence, the historical vicissitudes forged fraternal ties and similar social and cultural characteristics among the peoples and countries of Latin America.

U.S. imperialism has always imposed its economic and political interests. Since the 19th century it has proclaimed the Monroe Doctrine, “America for Americans.” Under this thesis it has imposed its political and economic domination in all countries (with the exception of Cuba since 1959); it has intervened militarily in various countries. It is the sworn enemy of the workers and peoples of all the countries of Latin America.

The struggle against imperialism, particularly U.S. imperialism, is a cause that unites the workers and peoples of Latin America.

The Latin American countries of our time were formed after the wars of Independence that freed them from colonial domination. These are national states in which Western culture and the Catholic

Church prevail; they were formed in countries whose languages come from Europe, mainly Spanish, Portuguese and French. In almost all of these countries expressions of pre-Columbian peoples and cultures, indigenous peoples and nationalities who fight for their cultural, social and political rights, survive. In several of them, over time they formed a culture that merges indigenous cultures with the culture of the conquerors, a cultural mixture, a national identity that allows them to recognize themselves and differentiate themselves from others. Each of the countries of Latin America is its own, particular, entity; each has a history and a present that endows them with a characteristic economic and social reality.

The working class emerged in the various Latin American countries under specific conditions, coming from the mines and agricultural plantations, from the old looms and artisan workshops, with the construction of railways and ports, with the establishment of factories that transform raw materials.

With the emergence of the working class, and as a response to the exploitation and oppression by the capitalists, there arises] trade union organization and strikes; the need appears for the political organization of the workers, the communist party.

Before the victory of the October Revolution, factory workers and agricultural workers of several countries in Latin America (Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia) began organizing unions and fighting for their rights. The socialist party was organized in Mexico and Argentina.

The historic victory of the October Revolution spread its teachings and its example in all countries of the world; its echoes reached the workers and peoples of the countries of Latin America; the organization of the Communist International was a great stimulus for the creation of the communist parties in Latin America.

The organization of communists in Latin America

Before the victory of the Bolsheviks there were no political organizations in Latin America calling themselves communists; this does not mean that the social struggle against the exploitation and oppression of the feudals and bourgeoisie, against the rising wage slavery, did not take place in this part of the world.

The Mexican Revolution that triumphed politically in 1910 showed the peasants and the agricultural workers, the democrats and revolutionaries, leading and carrying to victory a great social

revolution that demanded land for the peasants and freedom for the people.

With the direct inspiration of the October Revolution and the concrete activities of various internationalist communists, the Socialist Party was formed in May of 1919 and in November of that same year as the Communist Party and joined the Third International.

In Argentina, the socialist party was formed in 1919 as a form of union organization and struggle and the positions of a sector of the intelligentsia. In 1920 the most advanced current formed the Communist Party.

In Bolivia, in the heat of the struggle of the miners for their rights, the Socialist Workers Party emerged in 1919 and became the Communist Party several decades later.

The Communist Party of Uruguay was founded in 1921

The Communist Party of Chile emerged as a result of the organization and struggle of the workers of the mines; it was formally established in January of 1922.

In Brazil, the trade union organization of the industrial and port working class supported by the revolutionary intelligentsia gave rise to the Communist Party in March of 1922.

In Cuba communist activities were developing since 1918 that led to the founding of the Communist Party in 1925.

The Communist Party of Colombia was formally established in 1925.

In Ecuador the impact of the October Revolution was expressed in several struggles of the working class from the beginning of the 1920s; in 1925 the Ecuadorian Section of the Communist International was established; in 1926 the Socialist Party that belonged to the International was founded and in 1931 the most consistent revolutionary wing formed the Communist Party.

In 1926 the Communist Party of Honduras was formed; in 1928, the Communist Party of Paraguay. In El Salvador the Communist Party was founded in 1930; in March of 1931 the Communist Party of Venezuela; in June of 1931 the Communist Party of Costa Rica. In Puerto Rico the Communist Party was founded in 1933.

It is clear that when the Communist International was found, the communist organizations and parties of Latin America do not participate, since they did not exist.

However, the concern of the leaders of the International led them, in the debates and resolutions of the Third Congress, to form the Latin American Section of the Secretariat of the Communist International that functioned between 1921 and 1923. Here was found the inspiration and guidance, the practical work of the International for the agitation and propaganda of communism in Latin America, for its contribution to the formation of the communist parties in this subcontinent.

These facts testify to the concern of the International to contribute to the building of communist parties in Latin America; obviously these decisions had to count on the Latin American workers and their leaders; they could not be fulfilled in a voluntarist manner. The protagonists in the formation of the proletarian parties were mainly workers and union leaders; also in some countries, there were revolutionary intellectuals who joined the cause of social emancipation.

The communist parties were formed in Latin America raising the banners of the rights of the workers, of the peasantry, of the indigenous peoples; they targeted the capitalist and landlord class. All of them understood that they should raise the banners of the struggle against foreign domination, against the chains of dependence that was being created by the international monopolies, by imperialism, mainly U.S. imperialism, that could be seen in mining extraction, in the building of railroads and highways, in the looting of raw materials and in manufacturing industry that was formed mainly in Argentina, Mexico and Brazil.

With the same purpose of promoting the struggle against capitalism and for communism, the Executive Committee of the International formed the Latin Secretariat, which dealt with the affairs of the Latin countries of Europe and of Latin America, which functioned between 1926 and 1928.

At the Fifth Congress of the International (1924), delegations from the Americas already attended: from Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. Then, the CI recognized the existence also of sections in Uruguay, Chile and Central America.

Penelón, of the Communist Party of Argentina was named a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, ECCI. José Fernando Penelón was one of the founders of the party, but then left it and formed another organization.

One of the enlarged Plenums of the ECCI, in 1925, recorded the existence of 7,500 communists.

On the celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the October Revolution, hundreds of delegates from communist parties and revolutionary syndicalists from all continents went to Moscow, including a large number of delegates from the communist parties of Latin America.

The number and representativeness of the delegates of the communist parties of Latin America; the enthusiasm, the disposition to revolutionary struggle; the news of the union organization of the working class, of the popular battles that took place, were an encouragement to all the delegates and parties that attended this event. In 1928, during the work of the Sixth Congress of the Communist International a leading comrade said: "I discovered Latin America on the 10th Anniversary of the October Revolution."

These events debunked the idea that for many years the Communist International ignored what was happening in Latin America; this was promoted by the distorters of the history of the International, coming mainly from the ranks of Trotskyism. Facts show the contrary, from the outset the internationalist communists looked to the Latin American subcontinent for the propaganda of the revolution and communism, for the denunciation before the world of the exploitation and plundering by imperialism; they carried out concrete activities, through delegates and participants who moved to the region; they received and gave theoretical and political training to a good number of delegates from the communist parties at the Workers' University; they promoted the organization of communist parties, which materialized in several countries, as we said above.

The Latin American Secretariat of the Communist International was organized, whose activities were carried out between 1928 and 1935.

The great battles of the workers in Latin America

At the dawn of the Communist Movement in Latin America there were major social and political events led by the workers and peasants, in which the initial proletarian revolutionary groupings decisively intervened. Those struggles showed the capacity and potential of the organization and struggle of the working class.

The so-called "Tragic Week" took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in January 1919. It was the culmination of a strike movement that involved thousands of textile and railroad workers, threatening the tranquility of the bourgeoisie. The workers of the Vasena

Workshops worked 11 hours a day. They declared a strike in December 1918; in the week of January 7 the government, in open defense of the interests of the business owners, ordered the army and the police to ambush the workers and carried out a massacre that claimed the lives of more than 700 people, about 4,000 injured and the huge number of more than 55,000 detained. In this massacre, a paramilitary force, the so-called Patriotic League, which preached nationalist positions, participated.

This massacre aroused the solidarity of the workers of the country, the condemnation by democratic public opinion, the political pressure of the people and led to a victorious outcome. On January 14, the doors of the factory opened, with the workers working an 8-hour day.

In these courageous struggles of the working class, the communist revolutionaries played a role in the agitation, preparation and organization of the strike.

The victory was extraordinary, though it had a very high cost; it became a reference point and an example for the workers and peoples of Argentina and the peoples of Latin America.

The general strike of November 15, 1922, in Guayaquil

The international economic crisis and its impact on Ecuador, the fall in the price of cocoa, the main export product of the country, the devaluation of the currency and the tyranny of the plutocratic government of the bankers worsened the living conditions of the workers and the peoples to the point of despair.

The railway workers, the peanut plantation workers, bakers and longshore workers who formed a nascent union organization, declared a strike which thousands of workers and people of Guayaquil joined.

The strike was transformed into a political struggle against the government, which was expressed daily in political mobilizations and speeches that threatened the tranquility of the bankers and merchants.

On November 15, a massive demonstration was put down with fire and sword by the army and the police. The demonstrators stormed a barracks and the stores that sold arms, and they bravely fought against the repression. That massacre caused more than a thousand dead, who were thrown into the river and disemboweled so that they did not float.

Women workers, led by the Rosa Luxemburg Brigade, participated actively those days. Several sailors uttered socialist and communist slogans that were chanted by many of the protesters.

The communists of Ecuador take this action as the political birth of the working class.

The struggle of the banana workers in Colombia

On November 12, 1928, a large strike broke out in the banana region of La Ciénaga, near the Caribbean coast. More than 25,000 workers on banana plantations belonging to the United Fruit Company refused to work, to cut down bananas. The arrogance of the U.S. company and the pressure of the authorities could not defeat the workers, who received the support and solidarity of the Colombian workers and people. The U.S. government threatened to militarily invade Colombia if U.S. interests were not respected. The justification put forward by the government and the reaction of Colombia was that “it was necessary to eliminate the communist conspiracy.”

The unified strike in the action of the agricultural workers and producers of bananas, the poor and middle peasants, demanded improvements in wages, housing and health care.

The Colombian government, faithful servant of U.S. imperialism, put an end to the strike on December 5, firing on a meeting in which thousands of workers participated, killing more than 400 workers and wounding many more.

The strike was drowned in blood, but it sowed the seeds of the organization and struggle of the working class, which in 1934 carried out another massive strike that forced the employers to recognize some of the rights of workers.

The peasant insurrection in El Salvador

The economic crisis of 1929 hit the economy of El Salvador hard; the decline in coffee prices severely impoverished the peasantry and the workers.

Tens of thousands of indigenous peasants, mainly of the Nahuatl-Pipil ethnic group, began an uprising on January 2, 1932, demanding ownership of the land, better living conditions and government attention; they seized haciendas, blocked highways and communications, and besieged some important military and police barracks.

The leaders of that great uprising were the leaders of the indigenous communities and Farabundo Martí, leader of the Communist Party of El Salvador that had arose in 1930.

The uprising was stifled in blood by the army and the police, causing the massacre of more than 30,000 peasants, arresting as many others and condemning its organizers to death.

The struggle of the peasantry for the land and against the feudal oppression had a first great expression that was drowned in blood by the representatives of the bourgeois feudal government of El Salvador. These battles and the repression ignited the solidarity of the peasants and workers of Central America.

The Prestes column

Various revolts and uprisings of young officers of the Brazilian army took place in the first decades of the 20th century. They demanded honesty and democracy, and came out against the tyranny and abuses of the rulers.

In 1924 the Paulista Revolution broke out in Sao Paulo; after deposing the state government it put the federal government in check. The military superiority [of the government] and the limited [popular] support in other states and regions allowed for the defeat of the Revolution. The surviving military fled to the South and joined Captain Carlos Prestes.

There began great guerrilla fights, a military force of 1500 men was organized that undertook a great march of 25,000 kilometers, proclaiming freedom and land; in each village to which they arrived, they took over the property registry, they obtained the property deeds of the large haciendas were and set them on fire in the public square.

The Prestes Column was defeated militarily after two years and five months and moved to Bolivia.

Prestes traveled to Argentina, contacted the leaders of the Communist International and joined the Communist Party of Brazil, of which he was its main leader.

In 1934-35 the National Liberation Alliance was organized, of an anti-fascist and anti-imperialist nature, which worked for the popular-military insurrection to overthrow Getulio Vargas, but it failed.

The struggle of the young soldiers, the peasantry, the working class and the democratic intelligentsia marked these great events, in which the communists and other revolutionaries participated.

The liberation struggle in Nicaragua

In 1927, U.S. troops invaded Nicaragua and placed in the government the conservatives who had disputed power with the Liberals and tried to openly impose an electoral fraud.

A wave of indignation shook the country. Augusto César Sandino was a liberal fighter who had been fighting with arms in hand and at the head of a guerrilla force. He was baptized by Henri Barbusse the “General of Free Men,” who led the Nicaraguan people to fight against the U.S. occupation.

Sandino maintained political relations with anarchists, socialists and communists in Mexico. The International played an important role in the solidarity campaigns that developed in Latin America, the United States and Europe.

The Yankee troops were driven out of Nicaragua in 1933 after a long guerrilla struggle and major political actions carried out by the people.

The First Communist Conference of Latin America

Convened by the Communist International, the conference was held in Argentina in 1929. It took place after the First Trade Union Conference in 1927 and marked a milestone in the process of the revolution.

The debates that concerned the communists in the Conference were the problems of the revolution in Latin America:

1. the definition of the character of the revolution as bourgeois-democratic, agrarian and anti-imperialist, the task of the worker and peasant masses, under the hegemony of the proletariat.
2. the structure of the working class in Latin America; the Conference emphasized the need to work in large industrial complexes and mines, leaving the masses of artisans on the secondary plane.
3. the national question, the role of the indigenous peoples and nationalities in the struggle for social and national liberation.
4. it determined that the central task was the building, strengthening and development of the communist parties.

The development of the class struggle and the role of the Communist International

The work of the Communist International took place in the diverse economic, social and political conditions that the world was going through.

The period immediately following the victory of the October Revolution saw the exacerbation of the crisis of capitalism and imperialism and, at the same time, of the impetus of the working class that moved towards the revolutionary struggle for the seizure of power, seen in the insurrections and revolutions in Germany and Hungary, of the great combats of the workers in almost all the countries of Europe, in the rise of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat.

In the colonial and semi-colonial countries, in China, Persia, India, Indochina and the Near East there were great revolts and insurrections against imperialist domination that were not ignored by the Communist International. This let Lenin elaborate the thesis that the world proletarian revolution relied on the workers and the peoples of the East constituting a powerful bulwark that, united with the workers of the imperialist countries, would assure the victory of the revolution on a world scale.

The recovery of capitalism in Europe and the United States a few years after the end of the First World War influenced the organization and struggle of the working class, defeating it in some of its most important battles and affecting the mood of the workers. The



communist parties considered and debated inside the International; they concluded that this recovery was temporary, that a new crisis and a new rise in the workers' and peoples' struggle for the revolution and communism would soon ensue.

The communists fought and we are fighting in the most varied conditions. We adapt the tactics to the concrete situation, to the relationship of forces; we use all forms of struggle. The revolution, socialism and communism have the certain perspective of defeating imperialism and capitalism, of establishing the new society, socialism and building communism.

At the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, the discussions took into account the experiences of the communist parties, the forms of reaction and capitalism and said: "The revolution was, and continues to be, a struggle of living forces on determined historical bases."

It insisted on the thesis of the role of the proletarian parties: "The communist parties can only develop in the struggle; even the smallest of the communist parties should not limit themselves to simple propaganda and agitation. In all the mass organizations of the proletariat, there must be created a vanguard that shows the backward and vacillating masses how to carry out the fight, formulating for this concrete combat objectives, encouraging them to fight to demand the satisfaction of their vital needs, and thereby reveal to them the betrayal of all non-communist parties. Only on the condition that they know how to place themselves at the head of the proletariat in all combats and to provoke those combats, can the communist parties effectively win the great proletarian masses for the struggle for their dictatorship."

Activities of the Communist International in Latin America

In Moscow the First Latin American Trade Union Conference took place in November 1927.

The Second Latin American Trade Union Conference was also held in Moscow in April 1928.

The Third Latin American Trade Union Conference took place in Moscow from September to November 1930.

In Montevideo, the Latin American Trade Union Congress was held, which decided on the creation of the Latin American Trade Union Federation.

The First Latin American Communist Conference took place in Buenos Aires in June 1929. Delegates of the parties of Latin America, the United States, and the Executive Committee of the Communist International took part.

The Second Latin American Communist Conference took place in Moscow in October 1930.

The Third Conference of the Communist Parties of South America and the Caribbean took place in Moscow in October 1934.

In September 1938 the Latin American Workers Congress was held in Mexico, which created the Federation of Workers of Latin America.

In New York in 1939, the meeting of the communist parties of the Western Hemisphere was held.

Several organs of the Communist International were set up and carried out their activity in Latin America, including:

- *Latin American Bureau of the Third International (1919-1920)*: founded by decision of the CC of the Mexican CP based in Mexico City.
- *Pan-American Bureau (American Agency, 1920-1921)*: founded by decision of the Small Bureau (September 29, 1920) based in Mexico City and New York.
- *Bureau of South American Communist Propaganda (1921-1925)*: founded by decision of the Small Bureau instead of the Pan-American Bureau, based in Buenos Aires.
- *South American Secretariat (South American Bureau) of the Communist International (1925-1935)*: founded in February 1925 by decision of the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the CI with headquarters in Buenos Aires (1925-1930) and Montevideo (1930-1935). It edited *South American Correspondence*.
- *South American Secretariat of the Communist Youth International (ICJ)*: based in Buenos Aires, then in Montevideo.
- *Caribbean Bureau (1931-1935)*: founded in 1931 with headquarters in New York. It edited *The Caribbean Communist*, *The Caribbean Worker*, *Workers World* and *Workers Life*.
- *Caribbean Bureau of International Red Aid (IRA)*: based in Mexico until 1929, then in New York after 1929.
- *Continental Committee of the Anti-Imperialist League of the Americas (1924-1929/1930)*: founded in 1924 with headquar-

ters in Mexico City. It edited *The Liberator*, a journal of great importance.

- *General Council of the Latin American Trade Union Federation (1929- 1938)*: founded in 1929, based in Montevideo. It edited *The Latin American Worker*.
- *Continental School of the South American Bureau of the Comintern*: based in Montevideo.

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Red Flags on the Streets

During the last few months, the streets of Indian metropolises like New Delhi and Mumbai have been inundated with demonstrations of *lakhs* [1 lakh = 100,000] of workers and peasants carrying red flags. The bourgeois media and the governments in power of course have chosen to turn a blind eye to these phenomena, but given their power and regularity they cannot be ignored for long. These have been demonstrations of distressed farmers and urban workers who have been turning out in unprecedented numbers to protest against the policies of the current government in particular and the neo-liberal policies of the Indian state in general. The heartening feature has been that this expression of protest has been led by the left of all hues. Even as this note is being written millions of peasants carrying red flags are marching toward Mumbai in the state of Maharashtra, which has witnessed acute agrarian crises and unabating suicides by desperate farmers. This comes in the wake of massive street protests of urban industrial, informal and white collar workers in all major cities of the country as a part of nation-wide two-day general strike called by all central trade unions (including both left and centrist political tendencies).

While the Indian left has been somewhat disoriented after the poor show of the Left Front in recent popular elections, leading to the end of an almost quarter of century government in West Bengal, it would appear that this massive turnout with red flags indicates a mood swing against the neo-liberal policies pursued by both the Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) governments. The agrarian distress, which is a direct result of these policies, and peasant anger is supposed to be the reason behind the unseating of BJP governments in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh states. Of course this did not result in any electoral advantage for the left parties, but it did enable the centrist Congress to form governments in those states.

The agrarian crisis has been brewing for a long time and has been much written about. It is the urban industrial crises that have

not drawn enough attention. The nation-wide general strike of workers has therefore forced attention to the plight of the working class. We will look at the special features of this strike and then examine the changing condition of the workers which may explain the massive participation in this strike.

“General Strike”

The term ‘General Strike’ refers to strike action by workers across an industry (industry-wide), or a territory or region or across the entire country (nation-wide). It was conceived as both a symbolic act to draw attention, or to force a government to accept specific demands or to precipitate a revolutionary crisis leading to the seizure of power. Working class theoreticians like Rosa Luxemburg argued that general strikes were possible only when a large mass of unorganised workers (who formed the bulk of the working class) came out in support of the strike demand, and could not succeed just by the efforts of organised workers and their unions. The larger political import of the general strike as a political tool emerged in the wake of general strikes in Belgium (1886-93) and in Russia against absolutism and in support of democracy in both 1905 and 1917. Luxemburg, who studied this phenomenon, argued that it was largely marked by spontaneity and a seamless movement between political and economic demands. While she was reluctant to see it as having the potential to bring about a revolution, it was an essential part of the schooling of workers into revolutionary politics. Luxemburg somehow missed out on the organisational fallout of the general strikes of Russia, namely the Soviets of workers’ deputies, which were to play a critical role in the subsequent revolutions in 1917.

Anarchists and Syndicalists generally favoured general strikes as a means of achieving both short-term economic and long-term political goals. Socialists were in general reluctant to use general strikes as a weapon till the Russian revolution established their importance in working class tactics. Perhaps the reason was that the mass of the workers were not unionised and encouraging autonomous action would lead to the breakdown of working class organisational discipline.

If we were to look back at this rather dated history of the idea, two broad issues need underlining. Firstly, the relation between the unionised and unorganised workers and secondly the relation be-

tween the economic, political and revolutionary agenda of the working class.

The weapon of the general strike has been used in recent decades for both political and economic purposes, especially to resist neo-liberal policies that the nation-states have been falling prey to. The 2002-3 General Strike (Oil Strike) of Venezuela against the policies of Chavez provides an interesting example. Chavez sought to use the oil revenues from abroad to fund his social security policies, which in turn meant both intensification of oil production and increased controls over the mining industry. As the oil prices declined, resulting in mounting financial crunch, a wave of anti-Chavez movements arose. At this juncture the workers of the oil industry went on an indefinite general strike to force Chavez to leave office or order fresh elections. Chavez adopted strong measures like dismissing tens of thousands of oil workers and managerial staff, firing on demonstrators, etc. The complete stoppage of oil supply crippled exports and precipitated a foreign exchange crisis and a steep decline in GDP. Finally the strike was defeated, and Chavez too was able to win a popularity referendum with the support of the urban poor who continued to gain from his social security policies.

This pattern of using a General Strike by trade unions to force the government to accede to political demands can be seen in Guinea where the workers struck to force the autocratic president to concede demands for devolution of power. Of course, there were several economic demands like reducing the prices of fuel, increasing wages and clamping down on police corruption, but these were not pressed for in the interest of the main objective of appointing a prime minister of the union's choice with real powers. The strike called by the United Trade Union of Guinean Workers, a centre of the country's trade unions, lasted for nearly two months in January and February 2007. The workers faced severe repression, but they did not budge and forced the president to negotiate and appoint a prime minister of the union's choice.



Europe has been seeing a number of strike actions against neo-liberal cuts in wages, social security, working hours, retirement age, etc. A Europe wide strike against such reforms proposed for November 2012 failed as it could not get the requisite support from trade unions of different countries. However, unions in individual countries have been going on strike to stall the proposed 'reforms'.

In a General Strike in Belgium in 2016, thousands of public sector workers took part in a 24-hour national strike against budget cuts, changes to working hours and a rise in the retirement age. These strikes came in the wake of similar strikes in France over controversial labour reforms. Even as this essay is being written the workers of Belgium (February 2019) are on a general strike against the planned government cap on wage increases to 0.8% over the next two years and raising the retirement age. The strike has brought the country to a virtual halt with all transport including air traffic crippled and all institutions including schools shut down.

The pattern that emerges is as follows: an alliance of central trade unions at the national level supported and egged on by opposition political parties target the apex of the political system to seek a change. It may be successful or otherwise depending upon the support it will get from the unorganised masses. In both these instances, the strike was indefinite and could not be described as symbolic. They were a real 'fight to the finish' accompanied by intense negotiations with the government.

A general strike then is a political act with the intention of putting pressure on the state to either gain political ends like change of government or to negotiate changes in wage regime and social security on a national scale.

General Strikes in India

General strikes in India have had a paradoxical character of involving massive numbers of workers for symbolic protests rather than effective negotiations. The two recent strikes in 2016 and 2019 have been called the largest General Strikes in human history involving about 150 to 200 million workers (about half to two-thirds of the entire population of the USA). Even though such estimates are accompanied by some degree of scepticism and doubt, the fact remains that Indian General Strikes manage to touch huge numbers compared to the strikes in other countries. Despite this, the impact of Indian strikes has been rather limited, mostly confined to sym-

bolic expression of working class displeasure. A part of the reason lies in the demographics – the fact that nearly half of the Indian working population consist of small farmers and unorganised agricultural workers (43%), and that manufacturing employs less than one fourth (24%) and the fast growing ‘service’ sector employs the rest (33%). The impressive term ‘service sector’ in reality is a euphemism for the vast reserve army of labour engaged in petty production and casual labour. About 97% of the Indian workforce is employed in what is called the ‘informal sector’ and not covered by any formal social security system. The trend has been towards a decline in dependence on farming and massive entry of dispossessed farmers into the urban or migrant informal sector. Even sectors where the production units are formally registered employ very large numbers of casual workers without any social protection. Most of these workers also fall outside trade union organisation. The presence of such a large reserve army of labour engaged in production in the informal sector seriously limits the impact of strike action by the segment of unionised workers. For the most part the general strikes called by the trade unions impact only the minority of organised workers and at the most the formally registered firms in which unorganised workers work. The vast production sphere of agriculture or services which together contribute 70% of the GDP remain unaffected. An important exception of course are the public sector banks which have strong unions very sensitive to neo-liberal policies. In this context the two successive general strikes of 2016 and 2019 have sought to work towards a broad-based unity of the entire working class and especially towards drawing in the informal sector workers and the contract workers within the so-called formal sectors.

12 Point Charter of Demands

The central trade unions had called for a nation-wide general strike on 2nd September 2016 pressing for a charter of 12 demands. The Narendra Modi government has effectively refused to negotiate with the unions over this charter and it remains the basis of the two-day General strike of 8-9 January 2019. What is significant about this charter is its focus on issues concerning the entire working class, especially those in the informal sector. The very first demand relates to controlling prices of essential food items, effective implementation of food security act and strengthening of the Public

Distribution System (PDS) of food items. The second demand relates to employment generation given the fact that the neo liberal growth has virtually created no jobs, even as more and more distressed farmers are entering the employment market. The third demand relates to raising minimum wages from the present dismal levels to what is considered a decent 'family wage' or Rs. 18,000/ per month [1 R. = \$0.014 US, so Rs. 18,000 = \$252 US] (Rs. 700 [\$9.80 US] per day). The fourth demand relates to the practice of employing workers on a casual basis (contract labour). The charter demands an end to the contract labour system and ensuring the same wages and same benefits (social security) as regular workers for similar work. The fifth and sixth demands seek to stall the proposed reforms to the existing labour laws, which deprive the working class of its hard-won rights. The seventh, eighth and the ninth demands seek to extend social security cover like pension, provident fund, gratuity, bonus, Employees State Insurance Scheme (ESIC, health insurance) etc. for all workers including those in the informal sector and a minimum pension of Rs 6000/ per month per person. The charter also opposes the attempts to privatise social security and utilisation of provident funds for speculation in the stock markets. The tenth demand relates quick registration of trade unions and removal of obstacles in the way of formation of trade unions and their recognition by the management. Given the fact that the vast majority of workers are unorganised, and the emerging firms are very inimical to workers' organisation, this demand assumes great significance. The last two demands oppose the increasing privatisation of public sector undertakings including the railways and insurance.

A couple of days before the 2016 strike the Union Finance Minister addressed the press to inform the nation that the government was increasing the minimum wage to Rs. 350/ per day (as against the demand for Rs. 700/). He further added that the central government will issue an advisory to state governments to ensure registration of trade unions within 45 days. The unions had demanded a statutory provision which would be binding rather than an advisory. It may be noted that in the proposals on labour 'reforms', the Government has already put so many conditions that would make registering trade union virtually impossible. An important subsidiary demand of the workers had been the treatment of 'scheme workers', persons employed in various government schemes like anganwadi (a centre providing care for mothers and young children in a rural

area) crèches, mid-day meal, ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) etc, be treated as government servants and brought under minimum wages regulations. The minister dismissed this demand with the suggestion that all such persons are not ‘workers’ but ‘volunteers’. He offered to set up a committee to look into social security coverage for such persons, and subsequently the ESIC offered partial coverage (of medical insurance) on a payment of 8.33% of the meagre earning of such workers. (Regular workers pay 1.75% of their standard pay to get full coverage.)

Meanwhile the government went ahead with its plans for restructuring the labour laws to facilitate freedom for hiring and firing workers, making organizing difficult, opening a range of non-standard employment possibilities. It is proposed to amalgamate 44 existing labour laws into four labour codes in the name of streamlining and simplification, but in effect creating the framework of a neo liberal labour regime. Social security provisions too are being interfered with to dismantle the existing ESIC and provident fund schemes to open them up to the play of market forces.

In view of the continued impasse and refusal of the government to discuss with the unions the charter of demands, the National Convention of Trade Unions met in Delhi on 28th September 2018 and decided to call for a two-day General Strike on 8-9th January 2019. It was attended by ten central unions and a large number of independent federations of workers and employees. The Convention noted with dismay an avalanche of anti-worker measures taken by the government and also its anti-peasant policies leading to farm crises. It also drew attention to the impact of the divisive and communal policies of the party in power which was using the government to pursue its agenda.

“This National Convention of Workers records its strong denunciation against the communal and divisive machinations on the society being carried on with the active patronage of the Government machinery. The BJP Governments are using draconian Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, National Security Act as



well as the agencies of the Central Bureau of Investigation, National Investigation Agency, Income Tax, to harass and suppress any dissenting opinions. The peace loving secular people in the country are facing a stark situation of terror and insecurity all around. Communal forces are cultivating an atmosphere of conflicts within the society on non-issues. It is disrupting the unity of the workers and the toiling people in general, so vital to carry forward the ongoing struggles based on our 12-point Charter of Demands as detailed above. Working Class must raise its strong voice of protest.”

Strike Breakers

One central union and some splinter unions opted out of the National Convention and the general strike – the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sabha (BMS, the trade union front of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh or RSS). In December 2018, the BMS along with the breakaway factions of the TUCC, INTUC and NFITU have formed what they call a “non-political” trade union front, called the Confederation of Central Trade Unions (CONCENT). The government has chosen to consult this breakaway front instead of convening the National Labour Conference or talking to the Central Trade Unions. It may be noted that the BMS, even though it is affiliated to the ruling BJP, is opposed to many of the policies of the government which are obviously inimical to its rank-and-file members. However it does not want to be associated in its actions with other Central Trade Unions which are affiliated to anti-BJP political parties and would like to use the strike to mobilise workers against the present government in the general elections.

It may be recalled that during the previous Congress-led government, the INTUC affiliated to the Congress chose to participate in a general strike in September 2010, which had been called by all central trade unions together. This unity of trade unions was broken by the BMS which sought to form a rival centre of trade unions. The working class which spoke with one voice in negotiating with the government now stands divided by this action of the BMS.

Unprecedented Success of the Strike

By most accounts, the strike was a great success, not only because most of the workers affiliated to the Central Trade Unions went on strike, but a large number of workers otherwise unorganized and engaged in the informal sector or in contract work struck

work. This included a large number of women working in government schemes referred to above, who constitute some of the most vulnerable sections of the Indian working class. They came out with a steely resolve to fight for dignity in their work. While many have questioned the dramatic figure of 200 million workers on strike, it may not be far off the mark. Of course at present it is not possible to verify and arrive at any correct estimate of numbers, but reports from the field are indeed impressive. We will be recounting some of these reports in the section below.

Before we turn to the details of the strike in the different states, it is important to put this strike in perspective. This is happening in the backdrop of continued mass demonstrations of farmers across the country, who constitute 40% of the working population of the country. This leftward turn of working people of India holds much hope in the dark times initiated by the Communal, jingoist, casteist and authoritarian BJP government.

Reports from the field

The strike in Assam was unprecedented. All the tea gardens were closed. Refineries were closed. Workers, both permanent and contract workers, picketed and demonstrated outside several refineries. Workers along with fraternal mass organisations of peasants, agricultural workers, students, women etc. held rail roko (railway stoppages) all over the state.

The strike received massive response from the working class in Bihar. Road transport was totally paralysed. Scheme workers, construction workers, beedi workers participated in the strike and held huge rallies in Samastipur, Khagaria, Darbhanga, Jamui, Begusarai and other districts. Roads were blocked in Samastipur, Katihar etc. The state bandh (shut-down) called by the Left parties in support of the strike, on the issues of peasants and agricultural workers and against the deteriorating law and order situation in the state, on January 9 was total.

The industrial workers and employees in the National Capital Region Delhi joined the strike in a big way. The industrial areas of Okhla 3 phases, Naraina, Mayapuri, Mongolpuri 2 phases, Udyognagar, Nangloi, Wazirpur, GT Karnal Road, Badli, Rajasthanpuri, Bhorgarhetc, were totally closed. Workers struck work and marched in processions which culminated in rallies in different industrial areas. Around 2000 to 3000 workers participated in each

rally. Teachers and students of Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University joined the strike en masse. Universities were closed.

Gujarat, the home state of Prime Minister Modi, witnessed such a joint strike of workers for the first time in many decades. The trade unions took up an extensive joint campaign. Engineering workers in Baroda, Surat, Bhavnagar, Rajkot, Junagarh, Ahmedabad, most of them not organised under any trade union, joined the strike in large numbers. Despite the threats of victimisation from the BJP government in the state, anganwadi employees and ASHAs joined the strike and held massive demonstrations in most of the districts in the state. For the first time, mid-day meal workers joined the strike. BMS campaigned extensively against the strike, calling it a 'political strike'. Despite this, anganwadi employees affiliated to the BMS union in three Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS) projects in the state joined the strike and also the demonstrations held on the occasion. Big rallies were held in eight cities – Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot, Junagarh, Baroda, Anand and Palanpur. Around 3000 to 8000 workers participated in each.

The modern industrial area of Gurgaon in Haryana witnessed a good response of the workers to the strike. Hero Honda declared three days' holiday. Except Maruti, most of the big industries including Honda remained closed. Workers in all the smaller industries in the area struck work and joined rallies. A huge joint rally of industrial workers was held on January 8. Workers in the government sector, roadways and unorganised sectors like brick-kiln, forest, village chowkidar, construction etc, joined the strike in a big way.

Strike in Rajasthan in different industries, both in the organised and unorganised sector has been quite noticeable despite severe police repression on the striking workers in the MNC dominated industrial area in Neemrana. There have been numerous demonstrations and processions by the striking workers along with others throughout the state.

The scheme workers, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act workers, hydel project workers as well as industrial workers in Himachal Pradesh participated in the strike. Huge rallies with mostly women workers were held in several district headquarters.

Despite the difficult political situation in the state, unorganised sector workers and scheme workers participated in the strike in thousands in Jammu and Kashmir. Interstate bus services were off the road. A procession with the participation of scheme workers, railway contract workers, construction workers, coal mine workers, hydro-project workers, vendors, middle-class employees etc was held in Jammu. Protest demonstrations were held in almost all the districts in the Kashmir valley.

The industrial areas of Bokaro, Ranchi, Adityapur, Gamharia in Jharkhand were almost closed due to the strike. The pharmaceutical industry was closed. Beedi workers and stone quarry workers in Pakur, Sahebganj and Chatra and Bauxite workers in Lohardaga were in total strike as were the workers in the copper mines and industry.

Over 30 *lakh* workers, including industrial workers, public sector, government, bank, insurance, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. scheme workers and unorganised sector workers, participated in the strike in Karnataka. There was total strike in public road transport; autos were off the road in Bengaluru. All the permanent workers in multinational corporations Toyota Kirloskar, Volvo buses and trucks, Coca Cola etc. and also in private sector major industries participated in the strike. Strike was total in the industrial areas of Bengaluru, Mysuru etc.

Despite the large-scale disturbances sought to be created by the BJP against the entry of women of all ages to the temple in Sabarimala in Kerala, a joint campaign was extensively conducted all over the state with an effort to reach every nook and corner of the state. The strike was total. Workers and members of other mass organisations picketed trains at 32 points. Train traffic was disrupted and several trains had to be cancelled. Trivandrum, Cochin and Kozhikode airport ground-handling staff were on strike causing disruption of flights. Because of the campaign, people extended support to the strike. There were very few passengers in the buses and trains. Thousands of workers have gathered at the 483 strike centres which have been opened across the state. These centres were active for the entire 48 hours duration of strike throughout day and night.

In addition to the total participation of anganwadi employees, ASHAs and mid-day meal workers in the strike in Madhya Pradesh, thousands of workers in private industries, particularly cement industry participated in the strike. Strike was total in all the cement

units where Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) had affiliated unions. In addition it was near total in Hitech and 75 percent in Heavy Engineering Works. Workers in the industrial clusters in Indore, Neemuch etc., and the contract workers in Navin Flourine International Ltd. joined the strike. Though most of the road transport workers are not organised under any trade union, the extensive campaign by the CITU state committee resulted in massive participation of road transport workers with transport being seriously affected in 22 districts in the state, where no passenger buses could run. In Bhopal, 70 per cent of the buses could not operate and 80 per cent of city buses were stopped in depots. Even under government pressure, only 15-20 percent buses were operated. Strike in the coal mines in the state was also massive.

In Chhattisgarh, Balco witnessed 95 percent strike, Hirry and Nandini Mines 90 per cent and in coal mines, more than 85 per cent workers joined the strike. Anganwadi workers and mid-day meal workers' strike was to the tune of 60 percent. Participation of beedi workers, rice-mill workers, loading-unloading workers in the mandis (market towns) was above 60 per cent. In the central government offices, banks and insurances, strike was above 90 per cent. In Bhilai Steel Plant, the strike was partial.

Workers of Holcim, and other cement factories, especially the contract workers, struck work in Chhattisgarh.

With the total participation of the transport workers in BEST (Bombay Electricity Supply and Transport) in the strike, bus services were off the road in Mumbai. There was total strike by workers in multinational companies like BOSCH, CEAT, Crompton, Samsonite etc. Thousands of permanent and contract workers of Reliance Industries also joined the strike. The industrial areas in Pune, Nashik, Aurangabad, Kolhapur, Ichalkaranji were seriously affected due to the strike. Highways were blocked in many places. A massive rally planned jointly in Solapur could not be held as police denied permission because of the prime minister's visit to the city on that day.

Manipur bore a deserted look due to the massive strike. Vehicular traffic was totally stopped; educational institutions shut down and examinations were postponed. All the major markets were closed. Road blocks and demonstrations were held in many places.

There was a bandh-like situation in Odisha. Road transport was totally off. Strike was 80 percent in cement and engineering indus-

tries. The strike in the public sector units like National Aluminium Company Ltd., Port and Dock and Indian Oil was over 80 percent. In the mining sector, strike was almost total. Scheme workers totally participated in the strike. Unorganised sector workers held rastroko (road stoppage) and rail roko in several places. All political parties, including the ruling Biju Janata Dal, except the BJP supported the strike.

In Agartala in Tripura, despite the use of force, BJP government could manage to get only 30 percent of the shops opened and around 30 percent of buses to operate. Almost same has been the situation in many other districts of the state. Teachers attended schools but there were no students.

The main participants in the strike in Uttarakhand were the anganwadi employees and mid-day meal workers in addition to the government employees. In some places, hotel workers, contract and outsourcing workers, work charged employees also participated. However, rallies were held in all the districts.

East India Pharmaceuticals, Britannia and other big industries in Kolkata were closed due to the strike in West Bengal. There was total strike in the jute mills with all except one being closed as well as in the engineering industry despite the terror by the ruling party Trinamool goons. There was no loading in trucks. Passenger and goods transport in the state were practically off roads. There was total strike in the industrial areas in 24 Parganas, Hooghly, and Howrah. Tea garden workers in Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar and Dinajpur were on strike and participated in rastroko demonstrations. There was good strike in coal and steel plants in the state. 60 percent of the permanent workers in Calcutta port were on strike. 70 percent of street vendors in Kolkata joined the strike. Universities and colleges remained closed with lecturers and students joining the strike. Despite the attack unleashed by police and Trinamool Congress goons on the striking workers in the state, it was heroically resisted by the workers along with democratic people from all walks of life throughout the state. Police arrested hundreds of activists and leaders including Anadi Sahu, general secretary of the CITU state committee.

Participation of workers in the major industries in this strike all over the country was quite high compared to the earlier strikes.

The overall participation of the strike in the coal industry was around 70-75 percent. Production and dispatch almost collapsed.

Both permanent and contract workers joined the strike in almost all the big projects including the outsourced projects.

Thirty *lakh* electricity workers, employees and engineers in the power sector joined the strike across the country at the call of the National Coordination Committee of Electricity Employees and Engineers.

The strike in the oil sector was unprecedented, particularly in Assam. Employees in various refineries in Assam joined the strike and picketed offices. Oil workers of three out of the four unions in Kochi refinery joined the strike despite the management getting a court order banning the strike. Contract workers participated along with the permanent employees. Overall, the strike in the petroleum sector has been substantive in eastern, north-eastern and southern India while it was partial in western and northern part.

There was a good strike in the steel industry with near total strike in Vizag steel, Salem steel and Bhadravati. In Rourkela steel plant, permanent workers joined the strike and picketed the plant and the strike was around 50 per cent on the whole. Contract workers joined the strike en masse. The strike in other steel plants viz., Bokaro, Bhilai and Durgapur was partial.

Strike was partial in the ports as some of the major unions did not join the strike in some of the major ports. But cargo handling was affected in Paradip, Tuticorin, Kolkata, Haldia, Visakhapatnam and Cochin ports.

Road transport was highly affected creating a bandh-like situation in many states in the country. An estimated 3.5 *crore* [1 crore = 10,000,000] transport workers and small owners participated in the strike. The strike in the road transport sector was total with the participation of workers in public and private passenger and goods transport including autos in Kerala, Bihar, Odisha, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The strike was over 80 per cent in West Bengal. The strike had serious impact in Punjab, several districts of Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Jharkhand.

Construction workers participated in the strike in a big way as well as in the demonstrations in the entire country. Plantation workers, tea, coffee, rubber, joined the strike en masse in Assam, West Bengal, Kerala and in large numbers in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

In addition to the industrial workers, the strike saw massive participation of employees in the service sectors also.

Women scheme workers in all states, including where the trade union movement was weak, participated not only in the strike but in the demonstrations all over the country. They lent visibility to the strike even in places where no other trade union existed.

The strike among insurance employees was near total all over the country. *Lakhs* of bank employees including the officers in the Regional Rural Banks, Cooperative Banks, Reserve Bank and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) participated in the strike at the call of the All India Bank Employees' Association (AIBEA) and Bank Employees' Federation of India (BEFI).

About 13 *lakh* central government employees joined the strike across the country as per the call given by the Confederation of Central Government Employees and Workers. The strike was total in the postal and income tax departments. In addition employees of Audit and Accounts, Civil Accounts, Atomic Energy, Geological Survey of India, Customs and Central Excise, Survey of India, Botanical Survey of India, Central Ground Water Board, Postal Accounts, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Printing and Stationery, Indian Bureau of Mines, AGMARK, Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS), Medical Stores Depots, Film Division of India, Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR), Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Central Food Processing Laboratory, Census Department, National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), Defence Accounts, Rehabilitation Department, Central Public Works Department (CPWD), Institute of Physics, LNCPE, Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute of Medical Sciences, Canteen Employees, Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), Passport Department, and various other autonomous and scientific research institutes participated in the two-day strike. The strike among central government employees was total in Kerala, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Haryana, Assam and other North Eastern states including Tripura. In all other states 60-80 per cent employees participated in the strike.

State government employees in many states joined the strike in a big way. While the strike was 90 per cent in Kerala, around 80 per cent of state government employees in Haryana and several other states joined the strike. In Uttar Pradesh over 60 per cent employees were on strike while it was 40 per cent in Himachal Pradesh.

The strike in BSNL was total in Kerala, West Bengal and the north eastern states and partial in other states.

In many states, retired employees, including EPS 95 pensioners extended solidarity and support to the strike by joining the demonstrations and rallies.

Huge demonstrations and rallies were held in all the states in the industrial centres and district headquarters with the participation of thousands of workers in each. Industrial workers, middle class employees, scheme workers and unorganised workers participated in these in large numbers. Thousands of workers were arrested across the country including in Assam, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal etc.

In conclusion

It would appear that the participation of workers from all sectors, both organized and unorganized, formal and informal was massive. This is an important pointer towards increasing disenchantment with the neo-liberal regimes and the present BJP-led government in particular. A brief summary of the distress of the working people may be useful to explain this disenchantment. Ever since India launched into the neo-liberal policy regime, it meant the closure of old large-scale factories and massive expansion of the small-manufacturing outfits which circumvented the labour laws. Most workers rendered unemployed turned to the informal sector for survival, doing odd jobs, running petty shops etc. The newly emerging industries and service sector firms were geared to the international market and susceptible to its pressures. During the same phase the phenomenon of primitive accumulation progressed apace in the agrarian and forest zones, driving millions of poor farmers, agricultural workers and tribal people to towns seeking jobs. Land alienation and urbanization classically went hand in hand. The urban formal sector understandably was unable to absorb the workers flooding the towns. These workers in turn desperate for work were employed as contract workers replacing the regular organised workers and their employment went up and down with the rhythm of the markets. Contract labour became the order of the day, a labour force without any formal status, recognition or rights. A highly volatile capital market, which required rapid combination of labour and capital and even more rapid movement towards de-combination led the capitalists to call for 'flexible labour laws' and an end to the old

welfarist labour regime. Workers employed here today and dismissed tomorrow, fell back on informal work for survival. One of the most devastating works of the Modi government was to demonetize currency notes in the hope of pushing the informal sector to function through formal money markets and banks. This severely undermined the functioning of the informal sector, which incidentally employed women on a very large scale. This attack was followed a year later by a clumsy implementation of a new indirect tax regime which mainly sought to bring the informal sector within the tax net. The combined effect of the two measures was to precipitate a severe crisis in the informal sector.

The neo-liberal onslaught had another weapon in its arsenal, that of privatization and commercialization of some of the essential public services, communication (mobile phones), transport, water supply, and above all education and health care. Privatisation of these public services increased the cash expenditure of the working people forcing them to look for funds.

It is here that the banks stepped in with offers of credit to the informal workers. A third major thrust of the Modi government was to bring the entire working population into the banking net through the Jan Dhanyojana. The banks and other institutions offered loans to informal workers especially women, otherwise denied any credit support. The urban and rural poor were now trapped in the debt cycle with a far more powerful and impersonal creditor. The net effect of this debt enmeshing was to coax the unorganised workers to work more for less wages, so as to pay the inordinate interest rate being charged for lending to resourceless poor.

Now comes the last straw, even as the neo-liberal policies sought to depress agricultural prices in favour of industrial and service goods, it allowed the energy prices to spiral up, leading to both increase in input costs for agriculture and a general price rise for the urban poor.

We need to look at the present protests and strike actions in the light of these developments. The ground for further radicalization of the workers and poor peasants is ready.

**12 Point Charter of Demands of
Joint Trade Union Movement of India (2016-19)**

1. Urgent measures for containing price-rise through universalisation of public distribution system and banning speculative trade in the commodity market
2. Containing unemployment through concrete measures for employment generation
3. Strict enforcement of all basic labour laws without any exception or exemption and stringent punitive measures for violation of labour laws.
4. Universal social security cover for all workers
5. Minimum wages of not less than Rs 18,000/- per month with provisions of indexation
6. Assured enhanced pension not less than Rs.6,000/- per month for the entire working population
7. Stoppage of disinvestment in Central/State PSUs and strategic sale
8. Stoppage of contractualisation in permanent perennial work and payment of same wage and benefits for contract workers as regular workers for same and similar work
9. Removal of all ceilings on payment and eligibility of bonus, provident fund; increase the quantum of gratuity
10. Compulsory registration of trade unions within a period of 45 days from the date of submitting application; and immediate ratification of ILO Conventions C 87 and C 98
11. Stop Pro Employer Labour Law Amendments
12. No FDI in Railways, Insurance and Defence.

Revolutionary Democracy

Italy

Communist Platform – For the Communist Party of the Proletariat of Italy

The Italian situation and the tasks of the revolutionary proletarians

The result of the March 2018 election

The votes counted and the growing abstention (27.15%) that occurred in the elections of March 4 2018 have made clear there is a large popular protest. Tens of millions of workers, oppressed laboring people, the unemployed and women of the people have refused their support to the parties that have led the governments in the last decades, enforcing the EU programs and neo-liberal policies.

This has been a meaningful political break with the past by large social sectors impoverished by the crisis, crushed by the EU diktats and the monopoly policies adopted by previous governments, and disappointed by the bourgeois left and the traditional right.

These social sectors, in which the urban petty bourgeoisie is playing the main role, have given their electoral support to two Italian populist parties, the Five-Star Movement (M5S, an eclectic populist party in which Keynesianism, neo-liberalism, ecologist positions, those against corruption, etc., coexist) and the League (an extreme xenophobic right-wing party, a champion of the independence of “Padania,”¹ in the government with Berlusconi), under the illusion that in this way they will succeed in safeguarding their interests.

The political success of the populist parties is undoubtedly the result both of the political, moral and electoral decadence of the liberal and social-democratic parties that over the last years have approved anti-popular counter-reforms, and of the crisis of legitimacy and authority of the corrupt bourgeois institutions.

In the absence of an independent and revolutionary workers’ movement and in an ebb in the class struggle, the populist parties as

¹ Padania is a geographical region corresponding to the plain that includes the Italian regions north of the River Po, in addition to Emilia-Romagna and Liguria. There is no Padania nationality.

M5S and the League have filled the existent political void with their social demagoguery, getting a high percentages of support from voters (32.6 % for M5S and 17.3 % for the League).

The Democratic Party (DP) run by Renzi, a pivot of the past governments, collapsed in the elections after the defeat suffered in the constitutional referendum of December 2017, entering into a deep crisis that is still continuing.

The new political phase poses a serious problem for the bourgeoisie, because it no longer has a totally reliable party, and no political force won an absolute majority in Parliament.

But it also poses a major problem for the proletariat, because the field is open for the activity of reactionary forces represented by dangerous demagogues.

The pressure of the oligarchy, the compromise and the “government agreement”

In spite of the defeat of its traditional political parties, Italian and international big capital did not give up forming a “government of broad agreement” that is anti-popular and in favour of the EU, in order to continue dismantling the gains and rights of the workers, and to continue the policy of war.

So it has persisted with the “Italian political instability” as a risk factor in an economic context tending again to the recession.

From the elections to now, the alarms over the rise of the “spread”² went along with the pressures for the formation of a strong, stable, “market friendly” executive. But the defeat of the DP and the weakening of Berlusconi’s party have blocked the road to this project.

The Italian crisis is so deep, the cohesion among the ruling classes so weak, that it has been impossible to form a “bourgeois class government” with a homogenous program capable of strengthening the ruling bloc and directing the subordinate classes with an openly neoliberal policy.

The ruling groups, having seen the impracticability of this road and considering that a new election would further reinforce the populist parties, have chosen another option: to affect—through the vetoes of President Mattarella – the formation of the government,

² Spread means the gap between Italy’s 10-year bond yields and Germany’s.

adding men of their confidence in key places (Economy Ministry, Foreign Ministry, Defense Ministry).

In this way, after two months of political stalemate and covert maneuvers, an unstable compromise was achieved among the representatives of the Italian and international oligarchy, of small and medium-sized industry of Northern Italy, of some sectors of Southern Italian middle class: this compromise has enabled the formation of the coalition government of the M5S-League, with the puppet Conte as Prime Minister.

The class character of this government is evident: representatives of the Confederation of Industry (Confindustria), neoliberal professors, lawyers of the régime, military men and populist charlatans. No single minister has a relation, not even superficial, with the workers' movement, with its traditions of struggle and its demands.

The compromise achieved in order to form a government “manageable” for the oligarchy was founded on a political agreement between the two winning parties, named a “government contract”, containing a series of measures to be approved in the five years of the legislature.

This “contract” foresees benefits for the capitalists and the rich, pardon for tax evaders, a general reduction of wages and destruction of the national collective agreement, dismantling of the rights of the workers (rights that are utterly absent from the program), elimination of State bonuses for the poor, bailout of the banks with public funds, militarization of the society, reinforcement of the military-industrial complex, a policy of blockade of immigration and a war policy closer to the “national interest” (the interest of the Italian monopolies).

It is an agreement seeking to settle the contradictory programs of the League and of M5S, expressing the interests of heterogeneous sectors of the small and medium-sized bourgeoisie that have a different economic weight and are split between Northern and Southern Italy.

It is significant that all the measures that concerned the financial oligarchy and the Brussels Commission have been already eliminated or mitigated in this document, approved before the formation of the government.

A xenophobic and racist migratory policy

At the center of the political-media offensive of the government in its first months in office was the systematic persecution of migrants, of their helpers and defenders.

The continuing closing of the harbors was the principal commitment of this government, which has characterized and politically marked it at the national and international level.

Minister of the Interior Salvini, the secretary of the League, the shameless interpreter of its reactionary and provocative policy, has some obvious political aims. With his demagoguery, he declares a non-existent migratory emergency (the number of migrants who have disembarked is diminished 76% in the last year), while the real emergency is the emigration of the young Italian unemployed; he speaks of an “invasion” and he creates fears in order to divert attention from the serious economical problems, from the growing poverty, in order to make people forget the numerous electoral promises,

to mobilize the petty bourgeoisie in a reactionary manner and reinforce his party in the coming European elections.

The State racism promoted and carried out by Salvini with the complicity of the whole populist government has materialized in a series of monstrous crimes, such as the increase in number of those who died in the sea, the refusal of help and medical care for shipwrecked people, the refusal to allow the ships saving people in the Mediterranean from docking, the kidnap-



ping of migrants on board ships, the collective rejection of the migrants in Libya with the criminal complicity of the Libyan coast guard, the threats, denigration and sabotage of the rescuers, the doubling of the number of migrants detained in Libyan camps, the establishment of a régime of racist persecution and a program of massive expulsion of migrants.

The climate of racist and chauvinist hatred instigated by the populist government has caused continual attacks by the fascists against the immigrant workers and the Roma people, and in general a threefold increase in racially motivated hate crimes.

So the Italian government has placed itself in the first line of the world-wide xenophobia and racist reaction, isolating our country in its international relations and giving rise to strong friction with the African countries.

But the target of the racist policy is not only the migrants escaping from hunger and wars caused by imperialism. This policy strikes all proletarians, as was demonstrated by the “Security Decree”, strongly desired by Salvini and approved with repeated strokes of parliamentary confidence in November 2018.

On the one hand, this decree eliminates humanitarian protection and makes tens of thousands of migrants illegal and more easily blackmailed, forcing them to accept starvation wages, lack of rights, abuse of power and harassment by employers and labor union bosses.

On the other hand, it criminalizes the struggles of the workers against the capitalists, introducing heavy punishment for blockading roads and railways, occupying vacant houses, for “suspicious persons” in urban areas and public demonstrations, and authorizing the use of deadly weapons, such as “tasers”, against protesting people.

The results of Salvini’s “law and order” policy (that has no cost but a positive electoral feedback), of his repressive measures against the workers and his continual propaganda-scenario, using fascist phrases and gestures, has been the growth of support for the League among the possessing classes and the backward strata of the proletariat, with a change in the balance of force between the League and the M5S (which, in order to save the government, avoided a trial for Salvini’s crimes).

In this sordid struggle for power, the League aims to become the new political point of reference for the Italian bourgeoisie, which is itself adapting to the new masters of Italian policy, pushing them more and more against the working class.

A rupture in the government coalition is possible, with early elections and the candidature of the League for the leadership of an extreme-right government together with Berlusconi's party and the fascists.

The “people’s maneuvers” and the negotiation with the European Commission

After many resounding proclamations, in October 2018 the populist government began an economic maneuver, called the “people’s maneuver”, that frustrated many of the promises made in the electoral campaign, allowing gifts and tax relief to the small and large employers, clearing out the State treasuries without adopting measures against the rich and the tax-evaders.

But this maneuver created a problem for the European Commission: the growth of the deficit to 2.4%. So the Commission rejected the proposed budget, because it failed to respect the obligation of a fast reduction of the ratio of the deficit to the GDP.

It is not a question of decimals, but of respect for the annual reduction of the public debt, basis of the Fiscal Compact. The non-observance of this financial rule jeopardizes the integrity of the EU structure, eroded by the absolute law of the inequality of its economical and political development.

So the European Commission immediately rejected the maneuver and asked for its revision. But it did not confine itself to that rejection: it dictated some measures and increased its supervision over Italy due to its “excessive deficit procedure”. The Commission acted as a real staff of the imperialist system in Europe, which has to concentrate at the financial, political and military level in order to resist international competition.

In this process of subjection to the EU, the Italian bourgeoisie has heavy responsibilities: the increased exploitation of and competition among the workers, the plunder of the oppressed peoples and the freedom of movement of capital and commodities have pushed our country into the always more stifling and anti-democratic cage of the EU.

After two months of “arm wrestling” (at a cost 4 thousand million € in interest, which will be paid by the workers), the Italian populist government, in order to avoid the infringement of the “excessive deficit procedure”, has decided to respect the parameters and decisions of the Commission and to reduce the deficit to 2.04%.

The national-populists of the government, isolated in the EU and under the threat of its Commission, surrendered without a fight, not even mobilizing the masses, whom they fear more than the EU. So they have accepted the diktat of the Junkers and their allies in order to prevent the outbreak of a new financial crisis and remain in the government, build a new oligarchy and continue their attacks against the working class and the popular masses.

The agreement with the EU – accomplished by downgrading the rights of the Italian Parliament – has involved further billions of cuts in expenses and public investments, and has dealt a further blow to the electoral promises of “basic income” and pensions. Social services are reduced, the public employment is frozen, new increases to the anti-popular taxes are in preparation, together with other forms of privatization, etc. There are many elements of continuity with the “austerity” governments.

In spite of the march backwards, Salvini and Di Maio say that the culprit is the EU, if the promised measures cannot be fully maintained. Their chauvinist demagoguery is aimed to extinguish the class consciousness of the workers and to prepare themselves for the next European elections.

As a matter of fact, their promises are not fulfilled due to the policy of the populists, who do not want to touch the enormous riches of the capitalists and the billionaires, or to cut the military expenses but increase them by acquiring F-15 war airplanes (following Trump’s directives); they do not even want to collect the billions in real estate taxes evaded by the Vatican, in order to defend the privileges of the capitalists, the rich and the parasites.

They said there were no resources to eliminate the infamous



“Fornero law” on pensions, but they bailed out the Carige Bank with millions in public money, just as the previous governments did.

Our principal enemies are in our country, not outside it. They are the forces which, with their economic and political power, exploit and oppress the workers, enrich themselves by starving the popular masses, forcing the young people into unemployment, into precarious jobs or to emigrate; they are the leaders of the new and old parties that are protecting their interests.

The agreement between the EU and the populist government shows that whoever is in the government and administers the State funds have as their fundamental criterion of action the defense of profits, the defense of private ownership and the international organs of monopoly finance capital; they can only promote anti-workers and anti-popular measures, also in the name of “change”. The Italian case shows that the line on which the populists in power orientate themselves is the line of the decisive forces of the bourgeoisie.

Big capital and petty bourgeois populism

Populism is an international phenomenon, which assumes specific national forms in the different countries, often in competition with each other. As an instrument of the ruling class, its aim is to divert the popular masses, first of all the proletariat, from the conscious and organized struggle against capitalism and imperialism, in order to channel the indignation and rage of the victims of capitalism towards political purposes useful to the survival of this system.

Capitalism and populism, in spite of the apparent conflict between them, are profoundly linked. Capitalism uses populism, prepares the road for it, makes it appear “popular”, because it has difficulty in maintaining its dictatorship and applying its policies with the old methods, old parties, old men.

The financial oligarchy, above all its more reactionary sectors, needs right-wing populism in order to prevent the social protests from turning against the bases of its exploiting system, and to assail the native-born and immigrant working class.

But the oligarchy does not let itself be led by the populists, it does not surrender power to them. It clashes with the petty-bourgeois populist leaders when they want to take control of eco-

conomic life and push measures that go beyond the established financial compatibility.

As for the leaders of populism, they are ready to compromise and ally themselves, on reactionary positions, with the class of owners of the means of production, of capital and of solid international relations. These demagogues represent the interests of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois strata that want to renegotiate their position, to obtain economic and political advantages at all costs.

But, in spite of their efforts, the populists cannot provide the measures needed to obtain a stabilization of capitalism, as they are unable to resolve the essential problems gripping our society. They do not completely satisfy the interests of the monopolies, and do not satisfy the demands of the middle class and the proletariat. In a few words, they cannot eliminate the class antagonisms, which become always more acute, and they cannot at the same time satisfy the interests of the bourgeoisie and of the working class.

This is the root of their impotence and their difficulties, which will become sharper as soon as a new crisis arises, when the old relations will be disrupted and the class differences will increase.

Strike and defeat populism in the field of class struggle

As we have seen, the government of MSI and League is not a “government of change”, but a reactionary and anti-worker government that is carrying out the same policies of the bourgeois center-right and center-left governments, with some variations.

The decline of Italian imperialism does not stop with the populists in power, but it deepens and accelerates, trampling on bourgeois-democratic liberties and the principle of equality of mankind.

What to do in these circumstances? How can one strike at and defeat this government, which, with its social demagogy, has a high level of support of the masses?

The hope of beating populism without a real struggle is in vain, as the idea of a return to a past of “alternating democracy” between two bourgeois blocs is deceptive.

To fall into this error means to leave the leadership of the struggle to groups, parties or institutional representatives of the bourgeoisie, to put the working class at its service, which will be crushed when it escapes from its passivity and again assumes its independent initiative.

The Italian bourgeoisie cannot return to the “constitutional” period, to the “centrality of Parliament”, to reforms and concessions. Its profound crisis, the sharpening of the objective contradictions of the imperialist system, prevents all that.

Ahead of us there is no period of progressive and peaceful development of monopoly capitalism, which cannot maintain itself without resorting to the reactionary transformation of all bourgeois institutions, to the destruction of the rights and liberties of the workers, to predatory war.

Populism and fascism are not defeated, and it is impossible to defeat them effectively with social-democratic and reformist policies.

The only force that can develop the struggle against the financial oligarchy and its national and international institutions is the social class that is most interested in beginning and leading to the end a revolutionary struggle against the entire capitalist system, for its replacement with a new and superior social order.

This fundamental force is the modern proletariat which, vigorously fighting against the capitalist offensive, political reaction and the danger of war, can and must realize its hegemony for the liberation of the country from all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois governments, exploiting their contradictions at home and abroad.

The proletariat has the task of assembling around itself and organizing on a larger basis, mobilizing and unifying into a single torrent of struggle all the strata of the population that capitalism leads to ruin, separating them from the reformist, liberal and populist influence, to bring them under their revolutionary political leadership.

In this sense, we have to highlight two important aspects:

first, it is true that the populists have a broad acceptance among the popular masses, but they do not yet have an organized mass base; they do not control mass organizations like the trade unions and they do not have a strong ideological basis; they are only based on demagoguery and promises;

second, today even the most modest demands of the working class are an integral part of the process of unity and re-organization of the class and must be linked to the struggle for the revolutionary destruction of capitalism. This connection is facilitated by the fact that the bourgeoisie in all its forms, including populism, is not ca-

pable of satisfying the economic, political, cultural, environmental, and other demands of the laboring classes.

The workers' movement and its present tasks

As the alternative to populism is the revolutionary and class alternative, the tactic of the united front of the workers' struggle against capitalism is the keystone to promote the struggle against populism and its cross-class, racist and chauvinist policy.

The present situation of the workers' and popular movement is still characterized by passivity and the division imposed by old and new trade union bureaucracies. Nevertheless, while the populist promises are vanishing and the economic cycle is going through a new downturn, we observe signals of awakening in the trade union movement.

Moreover, there are some fighting sectors that have never stopped striking and going out into the streets, first of all the workers of the logistic industrial sector and those of the factories under threat of layoffs. These sectors are the ones most struck by the repressive measures of the bourgeois State.

Other important movements are developing: the anti-fascist and anti-racist movement, the NO "TAV" (high speed train) movement against the "big works" that are useless and devastating to the environment, the women's movement, the student movement, the mobilizations against the "Security Decree", against the blockade of the harbors, the struggles of the unemployed, of the homeless, of the petty farmers, and so on.

It is a question of channeling these different popular responses to the populist government into a united front of struggle led by the working class.

On the agenda is the realization of unity of action, the mobilization of the masses against capitalism and class collaboration, based on the urgent and vital demands of the workers, even the smallest ones, on the basis of the existing discontent, of the defense of democratic freedoms, of the struggle against the consequences of the policy of war.

The way forward is the single front of all the forces of the proletariat – including those duped and deluded by the populists, but who suffer from the same anti-worker policies – to carry out new experiences of common struggle and to build united front organizations.

On this basis it is necessary to form the broadest popular unity against the capitalist offensive, political reaction and the threats of war, in order to make the rich and the parasites pay, to break once and for all with neoliberalism and the system that produces it.

The essential condition for breaking the power of the monopolies and the rich is the formation of a broad coalition of all sectors of the laboring classes, based on the working class as its leading force.

A coalition determined to put an end to capitalism through the mobilization and the formation of mass organisms (factory councils, enterprise councils, workers' assemblies, workers' committees, popular committees, etc.), in order to open the way to a revolutionary government of workers and other exploited laborers founded on these organs and led by the Communist Party. Only such a government can save our country from disaster, guaranteeing the material and cultural well-being of the workers.

To advance along this revolutionary perspective, the communists and the vanguard elements of the proletariat must radically and definitively separate themselves from the opportunists of every kind, and to unite in a revolutionary political party of the proletariat, opposed to all political parties and formations of the exploiting classes.

A Party that has an ideology, Marxism-Leninism, a program and a policy completely independent from those of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, in order to become the leading force of the exploited and oppressed masses in the proletarian revolution.

*Communist Platform –
For the Communist Party of the Proletariat of Italy
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Mexico

Communist Party of Mexico (Marxist-Leninist)

Lessons of the Recent Strike Waves of the Proletariat and Workers in Mexico

Social democracy and modern nationalism arrive at the government in the context of the falling rate of profit, high levels of exploitation and a tendency towards economic crisis

After the victory of AMLO-Morena [Andrés Manuel López Obrador, elected president in 2018, from the National Regeneration Movement – translator’s note] on July 1, a realignment began to take place within the ruling class, because the way in which capitalist accumulation has developed has reached its peak. Various studies on the behavior of the rate of profit corroborate the tendency put forward by Marx. Between 1950 and 2000 the rate of profit in Mexico fell from 47% to 28%. The possibility of halting the fall in the rate of profit is by raising the rate of surplus-value, that is, increasing the exploitation of wage-labor.

For the bourgeoisie the increase in exploitation is the starting point of a new process of recovery, to move to an ascending phase of the capitalist cycle. In this there is no difference between the different sections of the bourgeoisie, because, although they oppose each other based on their particular interests in the struggle for markets and profits, at the same time, they attract and complement each other in order to develop better political and economic conditions for accumulation and the raising of the level of exploitation of wage-labor. One section of the bourgeoisie is fighting for the revival of the internal market, developing the branches of the production of Sector II of the economy, destined for the production of commodities for personal consumption of the workers and personal luxury items of the capitalists. Sector I of the economy, which is centered on the companies that produce capital goods, means of production destined for productive consumption, continue to strengthen exports and the external market. However, the essence of the different sections of the bourgeoisie is the same: to increase the exploitation of wage-labor as a starting point to get out of the current stagnation, and reverse the fall in the rate of profit. Therefore, for the bourgeoisie, the secret lies in increasing the rate of exploitation of

the working class. With the formal arrival of AMLO-Morena to the government – on September 1, 2018, to the Congress of the Union and on December 1 to the Presidency of the Republic and the Federal Executive – even against another sector of the bourgeoisie, the political conditions have been created to implement the economic measures that allow it to overcome the tendency to the cyclical crisis, reverse the fall in the rate of profit, and increase the degree of exploitation of labor.

On the basis of the fact that, during the 8-hour work-day, there is a necessary labor time (to reproduce or recover the labor power of the worker) and a surplus labor time of the worker (which creates a surplus value which the capitalist appropriates without any remuneration), in Mexico, at present, one hour corresponds on the average to necessary labor; that is, the means of subsistence that the worker consumes daily is objectified in one hour of social labor. If the work day lasts for eight hours, then seven hours constitute surplus labor time or surplus-labor.

Within the framework of the capitalist-imperialist system, the character of the state is bourgeois; even when there is a change of government, and this government calls itself “left,” “progressive,” “liberal” or “anti-neoliberal”; it does not change the bourgeois character of the State and government, whatever the parliamentary composition and the name adopted by the Government in office. With the arrival and hegemony of AMLO-Morena, even when they represent the interests of a section of the bourgeoisie (Sector II of the economy), they arrived at the government as a result of proletarian and popular discontent with neoliberalism. The parties in the Government of Enrique Peña Nieto through the “Pact for Mexico” promoted, approved and wanted to forcibly impose the 11 major structural reforms (energy, labor, telecommunications, tax and education, among others) with a militarized country and working with drug traffickers. With the imposition of structural reforms and neoliberalism over a real sea of blood and tears, there was real social decomposition. In 2018 alone, painfully there were 34,000 murders, an average of 91 murders per day (in the first two months of the AMLO government, there were 5,699 murders, or 92 murders per day). According to figures from the National Registry of Missing and Not Found Persons, up to January 18, 2019, there were 40,180 people missing, around 300,000 displaced persons in the country, and according to the UN in Mexico there are about 8 women mur-

dered per day. Together with all the disastrous consequences of capitalism multiplied geometrically in the last 37 years: unemployment, low wages, privatization of the sectors of electricity, water, health care, education, etc., 25% of the total territory is in the hands of the exploitation of large mining companies. This whole situation led to the discontent and struggle over years that caused jail, repression, disappearances and murders of people's leaders and activists. This was shown on July 1, 2018, with the vote from below to punish the neoliberals and the need for a profound change in the economic, political and social system. This was taken advantage of by the sector of the bourgeoisie now led by AMLO-Morena, with his "anti-neoliberal," "nationalist" and anti-liberal discourse and of the struggle against corruption. As we pointed out earlier, his goal is to bring Mexican capitalism to new levels of industrialization and general development, breaking the social relations of production – and at the same time, complementing and counterposing them with the bourgeois sector that prevents or tries to prevent it, trying to reactivate the domestic market. For this reason, new megaprojects are being proposed, such as the proposal for a new refinery, the Mayan Train, the modernization of ports and airports, which require large amounts of public investment. This was already impossible due to the high levels of corruption under the PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party] and the PAN [National Action Party], with the objective of trying to reverse the fall in the rate of profit, and to create better conditions for accumulation, and consequently to raise the levels of exploitation and thereby compensate for the fall in the rate of profit.

The recent wave of strikes shows a revival of the class struggle, in which the capacity for struggle and organization of the modern working class has been shown.

In this general context, the main feature in barely the first 100 days of the AMLO-Morena Government is that a period of revival of the class struggle has begun. Unlike other periods, the main content that the working class and other working people have given it is that there is a new



quality that did not occur in the previous recent rise of the class struggle. For the working class has had really exemplary struggles in the recent history of the country, such as the Mexican Union of Electricians in the face of the elimination of Luz y Fuerza del Centro, the mining strikes in Cananea and Sombrerete, the insurrection in Lázaro Cárdenas, and the uprising of the agricultural laborers of the San Quintín Valley.

The recent strikes, led by the 20/32 movement [see below] of the workers at the maquiladora of Matamoros, Tamaulipas, the strikes of university workers and the mobilization of the teachers who are members of the National Coordination of Education Workers (CNTE), are taking place in the context of the full hegemony of the nationalist social democracy of AMLO-Morena. This is not a minor political point, because many peasant and popular organizations and not a few trade union leaders who call themselves part of the democratic, left-wing and revolutionary camp and for years had shown signs of combativeness and struggle prefer to wait for “changes” from above. In many cases they accommodate themselves to the new political regime, thinking sincerely from a petty-bourgeois viewpoint that change is already in progress and it is only a question of consolidating the agenda and direction projected at AMLO’s morning conferences, on his social programs, and large projects. They think that the fight against corruption will lead us to well-being and equality between bourgeois and proletarians. AMLO explicitly stated this in his campaign and recently in his morning conference on Monday, April 1. He said: “Marx’s theses about exploitation and the extraction of surplus-value do not apply in Mexico.” For many activists and union and popular leaders (although little by little they are becoming disillusioned) there is nothing to do but to support the government measures, and to repeat the new discourse of the bourgeoisie in power that the main contradiction is between two blocs, the “new conservatives” against the “new liberals.” They say that anyone who struggles to defend and improve the living and working conditions under the new government is at best a conservative or ultra-leftist, because in others cases they are accused in a simplistic and provocative way of playing the game of the right, and that they are siding with the fascists.

The general context of the workers' insurgency of the 20/32 movement

In this period of the revival of the class struggle, the workers' content of the strikes that took place from January to the time this article was written (April 2019) is taking on greater importance. Because in the past 6 years of the government of Enrique Peña Nieto, there were only 22 legally recognized strikes throughout the country.

The state of Tamaulipas has 1,260 maquiladoras concentrated in the cities of Reynosa, Matamoros and Tampico. Matamoros is considered one of the most important border cities in the country, the headquarters of large transnationals. It has four international bridges: Los Tomates, Los Indios, Puente Viejo, and Gateway leading to Brownsville, Texas, in the United States.

It is the second most populous municipality of Tamaulipas, and the third largest metropolitan area of that state, just below that of Reynosa and Tampico.

On January 12, a labor movement in Matamoros practically unknown in the recent history of the country broke out, which has continued to grow; it is taking place in a municipality and state where for decades it has been "normal" for the workers to be under the control of the pro-employer yellow unions. Tamaulipas was one more example of the "labor" peace of neoliberalism, based on low wages, exploitation of working women, corporate control of the "yellow" unions over the workers.

One of the stimuli of the 20/32 movement was the decree of a salary increase made by AMLO for the border strip. The movement began for a salary increase of 20% and an annual bonus of 32,000 pesos [about \$1,700 US] – hence its name: the 20/32 Movement. This was based on an annex to the collective bargaining agreements of payment of the difference for the salary increases that were decreed at the national level, that is, no salary increase in recent years, combined with a bonus (to avoid taxes and benefits) that increases according to the percentage of salary increase.

Beginning on January 25, 2019, work stoppages, walkouts and strikes began in 45 companies, and were carried out even disregarding the legal consequences of these strikes in 37 companies. These were carried out in companies affiliated with the yellow, pro-boss unions, the Day Laborers and Industrial Workers Union, the Union

of the Maquiladora Industry, the Industrial Union of Workers in Assembly Plants and Maquiladoras, and the Union of the Chemical and Petrochemical Industry of Matamoros.

The work stoppages and strikes almost completely paralyzed the production of parts for the automotive, electrical, heavy machinery, and metalworking industries. Six days after January 25, 39 companies had already yielded to the demands for a 20% salary increase, and an annual bonus of 32,000 pesos; six did not sign an agreement.

Given these achievements, the multiplier effect was not long in coming and in February other companies such as Arca Continental, a subsidiary of Coca Cola, Blanquita water and La Vaquita milk were joined by 16 maquiladoras and companies of the petrochemical sector; the workers of Soriana Stores and Chedraui Supermarkets joined the strike in Matamoros.

At the end of February, on the basis of the victories, organization and courage of the struggle, the objective of the 20/32 movement, headed by the lawyer and activist Susana Prieto, who has become an authentic mass leader and organizer, became the creation of a union, pushed from below, that really organizes and serves the interests of the workers.

The lessons of the recent period of struggle is the strike as an instrument of struggle of the working class and other working people, breaking with the control of the yellow unions. And the CNTE shows the need for workers' political struggle for their emancipation. The embryos of Soviet power of the masses are being built.

The recent wave of strikes has as its basis the recovery of wages, the defense of the contract, the fight against the yellow unions and the defense or building of organizations independent of the employers and the government, organizations of the working class and other working people and the building and development of the foundations of the Soviet power of the masses, through the assemblies.

As part of this wave of strikes and workers' struggles, the teachers organized through the CNTE, as they have done during many years of fighting against neoliberalism, and also against the conciliatory positions expressed within the union regarding the supposed abrogation of Enrique Peña Nieto's misnamed Educational

Reform and the “new” misnamed AMLO-Morena Educational Reform. This was agreed to by all the parties that signed the “Pact for Mexico,” making clear the doubletalk of the regime headed by AMLO-Morena, and developing a political struggle. The parliamentary debate, the parliamentary bloc, the struggle in the streets, puts into question a constitutional, that is, a political reform. In a rudimentary way, it what the workers must pursue, to be part of the national debate, defending the general interests of the workers, patiently unmasking the bourgeois character of the regime and its doubletalk.

In particular, with the strikes of the 20/32 movement and the university strikes, a form of struggle is developing and generalizing, that is, the strikes, which had been practically concealed by the bourgeoisie, through its laws, the yellow syndicates and the repressive apparatus. This combative sector of the working class surprised everyone, because they thought that the labor “peace” of no strikes that for many years the PRI and PAN governments had enforced (of course, with false figures, because there were strikes that were not generalized or officially counted), came to an end and spread like a dominate effect. But more importantly, they showed not only the strength and validity of forms of struggle such as strikes; in the course of events they became a general political strike, certainly limited to Tamaulipas, but general because they incorporated more than 30 maquiladoras and other types of companies with different social purposes. Another characteristic is that they broke with the control of the yellow corporate unions that have dominated the Mexican working class for decades. These forms of struggle and organization, even with lack of experience and at first with only a mere class instinct, have been evolving to class consciousness. Within this framework this strike in its form can be seen as an economic struggle for a 20% increase in salary and 32,000 peso annual bonus, but in its content in its forms of organization and struggle it showed its rebellious, plebeian, proletarian side, against the bosses, the government, and the yellow unions. Our class, when it demon-



strates collectively, shows its firmness and fighting ability. It has the qualities and ability to be the gravediggers of capitalism, and, although today only in a rudimentary form, this will not be so when the experience of struggle multiplies its capacity for organization, raises its forms of struggle and increases its class consciousness. Thus the wave of recent strikes and struggles puts forward a central problem for the communists: How under present conditions can one merge Marxism-Leninism with the workers' movement? To materialize the tactics and strategy for the proletarian socialist revolution.

The wave of recent strikes, particularly of the 20/32 movement, shows an ability, firmness, and spirit of sacrifice for the collective class interests, as we stated above. This is because, despite the consequences that a strike has for a worker and his family, they showed that for the working class, when it decides, there is no hunger, police, provocateur, scab, yellow union, government, or bourgeois who can stop it, despite the more than 5,000 layoffs of workers (who were blacklisted so that they cannot be hired in other maquiladoras) that according to official figures took place during this period of struggle that is ongoing. Repressions took place recently in the Mecalux company with six more wounded, the provocations of the scabs to break the strike at Coca Cola, the death threats and defamation of the main leader, although her role appears as the labor lawyer Susana Prieto Terrazas, the workers' firmness was shown. And even more she gives answers with her own tools of organization, such as the general assemblies held in the public square, embryos of the Soviet power of the working class.

The forms of historical struggle and organization of the proletariat for its emancipation are combined with modern forms of communication.

We communists do not invent the forms of struggles; they arise out of the initiative and combativeness of the masses, especially with the waves of strikes of the 20/32 movement in Matamoros, Tamaulipas. These have given a breath of fresh air to the general strike as one of the main forms of struggle of the modern proletariat that is fully relevant. There is the assembly process of organization with public debates and organization, the active participation in the pickets and rallies of the proletarian families despite losing their salaries for taking part in solidarity and strike pickets, the role of social networks that became an authentic collective organizer and a

means of information, agitation, and propaganda. The Matamoros workers made the struggle visible at the national level, showing the solidarity and development of the global struggle with the Matamoros strikes. They fused the forms of struggle and organization with a single objective that the working class has used since its birth, showing its freshness and validity. They fused them with modern means of communication that, without replacing written propaganda, today play an important role as a means of agitation and propaganda since many times the information instantaneously reaches the hundreds of workers in struggle and thousands of other workers in solidarity.

With the recent wave of struggles one can see in a practical way why the proletariat is the class destined to be the gravedigger of capitalism.

We cannot fail to point out a political-ideological aspect that is a backdrop of the recent period of struggle, the role of the working class. It was already given up for dead, and in Mexico all the post-modern and revisionist theories, elaborated and spread in the university media and in the mass media, pointed to the death or non-existence of the working class as a revolutionary subject. When there are waves of struggles like the recent ones, they give a material example of the fact that the masses are makers of history, but more particularly that because of their role in capitalist production the working class remains the central subject of capitalist production, and therefore the only class that can bury it.

In various periods but with the same goal, the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois theoretical-practical conceptions put at the center not only the negation of the proletariat as the most revolutionary class of capitalist society, replacing it with a “new social subject” – a multitude, the precarious ones, squatters, “new” social movements (feminists, ecologists, of indigenous people, etc.). Even the very existence of the proletariat, labor, and the class struggle as the motive force of history were questioned. These conceptions exist not only in the universities and among the revisionists of all kinds, but the most worrying is that they have echoes among activists and practical leaders of the worker and union movement. These are politically honest but ideologically incorrect people who echo “novel” bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideas. Thus from the most openly bourgeois and reactionary conceptions such as the “end of history”

(F. Fukuyama), the post-industrial society (D. Bell and A. Tourine), post-modernity (J. Habermas), to conceptions that supposedly form part of the worker and “socialist” movement, although in essence they deny it. These are views such as the “end of labor” (J. Rifkin), “farewell to the working class” (A. Gorz), the end of imperialism and the proletariat and the welcome to “the empire and the multitude,” “the precarious ones” and “change the world without taking power” (Negri and Hard, J. Holloway), the “citizen’s revolution” (Correa) and “21st century socialism” (H. Chavez, H. Dieterich).

What these theoreticians of “post-modernity” and “post-capitalism” never showed is the central position of the proletariat as the basis of commodity production, the extraction of surplus-value and capitalist accumulation. Because of its material characteristics, it is the only class that is in a position to destroy the capitalist system. Instead of becoming extinct, on the contrary, as capitalism develops with biotechnology, robotics, telecommunications, etc., the proletariat is growing in all branches of production and services. It grows numerically from the strategic sectors of industry, agriculture and services, to new proletarian contingents that include women, children, migrants, and agricultural workers. Thus the central problem presented to Marxist-Leninists is not the “existence” or non-existence of the proletariat. Now with the wave of struggle such as that of the 20/32 movement of Tamaulipas, what is again placed in the center is that the revolution is the central problem that awaits solution. Only the tactics and strategy of the proletarian revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat and world communism can put an end to capitalist barbarism; in this the proletariat and its fusion with Marxism-Leninism play the leading role. And the present struggles put to the test organizations such as ours in the process of the proletarian revolution.

The 20/32 movement influences the outbreak of the university strikes, and shows materially that the proletariat can play the role of leading and directing the struggle against the capitalist regime as a whole.

The 20/32 movement and its waves of struggle unmask and make evident the political bankruptcy of traditional, yellow, corporate trade unionism, for its ineffectiveness not only for workers control, but also for the struggle for economic demands, and the double discourse of the government. The main thing is that it positively

influenced the most advanced sectors of university unionism, without ignoring the organization, its own initiative, the experience of struggle in strikes in these sectors. This is correct and recognized by the workers themselves in the Strike of the University of Chapingo, the Autonomous Metropolitan University through SITUAM [Independent Union of the Workers of the Autonomous University of Mexico] and STUACH [Union of Workers of the Autonomous University of Chapingo]. Among other factors the strike and struggle of the workers of Matamoros, Tamaulipas pushed them to break out. Regardless of the results of the economic struggle obtained by these university strikes, we must recognize the importance that they had among the working class and other working people that the workers would develop, remaining in struggle and winning victories in the field of the economic struggle. They unleashed sympathy and helped in giving political confidence to the working class and other working people in their own strength and their forms of struggle, moving from a local to a national struggle, for its consequences and influence, to the surprise of the maquiladora workers of Tamaulipas themselves. This influence became clear when a commission of 27 workers appointed by their comrades in the 20/32 movement headed by their legal adviser Susana Prieto. They went to Mexico City, listening to the voice of the workers and other working people of the university strikes, the workers in the protest against the government of Mexico City, the Mexican Union of Electricians, the New Federation of Workers, the Union of Telephone Workers of the Mexican Republic, the National Union of Workers, the nuclei of the Indigenous Council of Government-National Indigenous Congress-Zapatista Army of National Liberation and others. The political influence is serving to consolidate the struggles of those contingents themselves, but mainly to consolidate the process of the united front for the victory of the proletarian revolution.

Communist Party of Mexico (Marxist-Leninist)

April 2009

Morocco

Democratic Road

To Hide the Class Character of the Party Leads to Deviationism

In this article, Lucien Sève discusses many issues raised in an article he published on April 30, 2010, under the title: “What Is To Be Done Now? – Ten non-conforming theses of a communist without a party card.”

Lucien Sève joined the French Communist Party (PCF) in 1950 and spent 32 years as a member of the Central Committee, from 1961 to 1994. He left the PCF on April 10, 2010.

The long experience of Lucien Sève in the French Communist Party gives the topics he deals with a great importance, not only because they concern the writer or the French Communist Party, but also the whole European communist movement because of the central role played by the PCF. And as we will see, they allow for the reconsideration and taking into account of the spirit of Marx and in general of Marxism as it was developed after Marx.

Lucien Sève’s starting point is the 2007 presidential election campaign of the Communist Party in 2007, with a result of 1.93% of the votes obtained by the party candidate, Marie-Georges Buffet, considered by the philosopher as a failure. He thinks that this is the case of the whole international communist movement, which must be rebuilt to consider 21st century communism as an alternative to the dying communism of the 20th century.

In his criticism of the French Communist Party, Lucien Sève considered that the party suffered from a “historical crisis” in three areas:

- 1) Strategic deficiency,
- 2) Organizational paralysis,
- 3) Aversion to political pluralism.

And as often, three becomes four: in the end, behind these three fatal mistakes, there is a common factor – *intellectual under-activity*.

Thus, the French Communist Party, having abandoned the dictatorship of the proletariat¹, was incapable of developing a coherent strategy (understanding strategy as not only the path but also the

goal, and therefore the whole aim), stuck on the line of parliamentarism and that *of the norms of institutional politics*.

For the organizational aspect, the party remained a prisoner of the organization's vertical position, a view coming from the Leninist theses and the resolutions of the Third International, that is, a vertical organization with a top that leads and a rank-and-file that follows. Thus, the Party is locked into what is happening in the society, condemning itself to isolation. This has led to many resignations among its cadres and the members of its federations and sections, as well as the low number of votes obtained in elections. This caused all these elements of the crisis in the party, the lack of intellectual activity, absence of intellectual development and absence of cultural debate and production.

The alternative proposed by Lucien Sève is based on the following Marxist thesis: "the emancipation of the working class must be the act of the workers themselves," a thesis he [Sève] adopted to criticize the obsolescence of the party-form, with its verticality of power, instead proposing a horizontality without leadership for which he has substituted the concept of centrality-decentrality (horizontal centrality). In this form of organization, broad organizational structures are formed around specific thematic issues, debating and making decisions without the need for leadership or centralized discipline (playing the card of decision-making democracy, which requires constant real debate, true collectivity of reflection). And because these are broad areas, they are very diverse and allow for broad debate and fruitful production of thought.

According to Lucien Sève, putting this view into practice will raise many questions and concerns, but he is convinced that experience itself can refine and correct the view.

Similarly, the philosopher believes that those who oppose this view are also victims of the lack of intellectual activity of the PCF. To illustrate this view, we will quote the following passage from the text of the ten theses:

"Yes or no, do we agree with Marx's thesis: 'The emancipation of the working class will be the act of the workers themselves'? The fact is that in all its practice the historical movement that has called itself communist *did not believe in Marx*: it took on the task of *itself* realizing the emancipation of the working class. *This is exactly what led to a shattering bankruptcy at the end of the last century*; and this is the very essence of the difference between socialism and com-

munism. Do we not understand that it is decisive to learn the whole lesson? A party that claims to be that of general emancipation, being itself built on the rejection of militant emancipation – the militant life has to be *directed from above* – is one of those aberrations with which one cannot agree once one is really conscious. Should we not finally face the fact that the depth of the culture of communist leadership is mired in old class stereotypes, even though in principle the party is in favor of the workers taking control of economic-social management? *This very mode of organization shows everyone that the party does not really believe in it.* Since the party does not really believe in this, it does not deal with the question. But this shows that the panic towards the idea of a political formation without leadership is based on a real confusion: what is really in need of an efficient fight for transformation is not the *verticality* of power but the *centrality* of deliberation – a horizontal centrality that does not direct but coordinates, allowing agreement without giving rise to dependence.”

In his tenth thesis, he explains that those who had left the French Communist Party were subjected to real criticism and that the Party was no longer a magnet for them, but the problem of finding a “common home” was to make sure that the mistakes and mess of the French Communist Party did not happen again. He therefore suggested carefully preparing the “Constituent Assemblies” on the basis of a horizontal organization. Thus, for example, taking into account the pluralism of points of view, the elaboration of the draft charter would constitute the guiding line of dialogue and preparatory debates of the councils, which would give birth to a communist formation.

Lucien Sève left the French Communist Party because he no longer found the right framework for his new convictions. He sailed to a destination unknown to himself but felt that it was his duty to fight to define its characteristics. He hoped that a new framework would express the communism of the 21st century and would break with the dying 20th century communism. Could he really offer the fundamental characteristics of this communism?

He built his view using Marx’s central theory that the liberation of the working class would be done by themselves, that to achieve this there is no need to build a partisan organization that leads, but he sees a horizontal communist formation that allows pluralism and the coordination of ideas.

In this spirit, Lucien Sève replaced the bureaucratic and deviationist style of leadership that he had experienced within the PCF with a “non-organized” form and in non-binding and non-engaging debates and forums. This is the transition from a bureaucracy to an unorganized form characterized by its flexibility according to a theoretical pseudo-justification borrowed from Marx but abandoned by the very essence of Marxism as a science of the realization of the proletarian revolution and the rise to power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is the democracy of the producing majority against the exploiting minority.²

Of course, each strategy has its class forces on which it relies and, as a result, the organizational form of mobilizing social and even military forces in order to succeed in its strategy. It was natural for us to start from the goal of progressive change to pass on to socialism and that the electoral road would be the means of communication. It was natural to imagine the most democratic organizational structures and the least controlled or subjected to the necessities of leadership and direction. But even this strategy, if we are well aware of the nature of the conflict in which the bourgeoisie is involved and in which it uses its state apparatus, it becomes obvious that it is impossible to escape from the organ that itself organizes the electoral battles.

When we examine the strategy appropriate for the proletariat to take power from the hands of the bourgeoisie, we consider that the PCF and other European communist parties have betrayed the proletariat and have become parties seeking to mitigate the class contradictions and maintain bourgeois hegemony. But this strategy could only be made possible and victorious by a revolution led by the proletariat rather than by a progressive and peaceful transition, as Eurocommunism and various other deviationist wings in the communist movement today call for. The abandonment of the class character of this revolution is a common denominator between Lucien Sève and the French Communist Party itself.

Lucien Sève leaves out this question in all his atypical treatises, as he likes to describe them. He is therefore focused on the need to bring together a large number of ideas and points of view of foreign communist activists from diverse and varied backgrounds.

Experience, old and new, has taught us that such intellectuals quickly leave these frameworks and fear that their freedom of thought and expression will be reduced, which limits their oversized

and narcissistic egos. They do not tolerate organized action and discipline, and they hate being in the minority and defending the opinions of others.

Criticism of bureaucracy and of deviations in the application of the principle of democratic centralism is an issue that has been addressed by the 20th century communist movement and has provided important theoretical and practical answers that must be grasped and developed instead of completely doing away with a central organization, deliberately and incorrectly called a “vertical organization.”

In order to respond to the various criticisms of the experience of parties, particularly in their relations with the working class or the popular masses in general, the Democratic Road has endorsed the thesis that the building of the party is dialectically linked to other processes, namely those related to the building of an independent self-organization of the masses and the process of building the front of classes with an interest in revolutionary change.

The question of the independent self-organization of the masses is a strategic element in the ideological line of the Democratic Road. This element is a summary of our experience of more than 40 years of revolutionary struggle in Morocco, whether through the experience of the Marxist-Leninist movement or through the lessons of many communist parties around the world.

The concept of independent self-organization of the masses is a fertile concept if it is grasped by the creative masses, because they are capable of transforming it into a formidable and substantial force.

To do this, it is necessary to emphasize the decisive importance of the role that the independent party of the working class, the people of the precarious ones and the peasants, must play in the organization and in their prevention of the infiltration (destructive entry) of reactionary forces.³

The third thesis deals with the dialectical relationship between this process and the question of building the independent party of the working class and the building of the national class front.

To deal with the question of independent self-organizations of the masses, we will deal with three approaches: a theoretical approach to the question, an understanding of some experiences of these self-organizations and finally the dialectical relationship between these processes and that of building the independent party of the working class and the national class front.⁴

First: Theoretical Questions

1. The independent organization of the proletariat is the guarantee of the leadership of the general struggle:

The working class is engaged in an inevitable, multidimensional and multi-level conflict, in which it realizes that it cannot be liberated as a class without the liberation of society as a whole, and that is what gives this class its specific role throughout human history. It has combined its struggle with the general struggle and maintaining the course. This can only be achieved by the emergence of an independent proletarian organization, which will contribute to and guide the movement of general struggle, the only one able to ensure its full effectiveness and coherence:

The communists distinguish themselves from other workers' parties only on two points:

1. In the different national struggles of proletarians, they put forward and promote the interests of the proletariat;
2. In the different phases of the struggle between proletarians and bourgeois, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the general movement.

In practice, the communists are thus the most resolute and most advanced section in each country, the section which drives all the others; theoretically they have the advantage over the rest of the proletariat of a clear understanding of the conditions, of the march and the general aims of the proletarian movement.⁵

2. The masses emancipate themselves:

The masses can only liberate themselves by struggle and the acquisition of expertise and experience in organization and initiatives and the development of their struggles. The revolutionary consciousness of the masses cannot emerge without the militant practice and direct participation of these masses. They learn from their successes and failures. In this process, the party plays its role as collective revolutionary trainer.

3. The working class is the leading vanguard class in society, as long as its allies are convinced of its vanguard role:



The different social classes and categories participate in the process of revolutionary change, but these same forces are witnesses to its developments and changes.

For this change to be really revolutionary, it is essential that the political organizations of these social classes and groups win democratic rights that guarantee their interests. But we also realize that they will not be able to maintain and consolidate these gains if they do not have a fully consistent class vanguard to defend the broad masses against the exploitation and domination exercised by the parasitic bourgeoisie.

The working class, armed with its revolutionary consciousness, is the only class capable of proclaiming itself the vanguard because it most clearly embodies the struggle against the exploitation of one human being by another.

For this vanguard to succeed in minimizing its losses in its actions, the working class and its independent party must meet the conditions of political and intellectual hegemony in society.

4. Understanding the essence of the Leninist theses of the party:

- Because of its fundamental position in the production of material goods in society, the working class constantly integrates these theses with the struggle against capital and its predatory greed to further exploit labor power in order to satisfy its increased desire for wealth and possession, based on the “unrestrained” and unlimited creation and realization of surplus value. In this fight, the working class is part of a process of developing class consciousness, with its victories and setbacks.
- In becoming conscious of the harshness of its struggle and the risks involved, the vanguard of the working class must accumulate experiences and learn the lessons from these struggles, and build and integrate organizations on the ground to begin with the trade union action to lead to the formation of its party. This is its fundamental element, its centerpiece in the mobilization of its collective action, able to organize both in periods of victories but especially in periods of setbacks in the struggle for a new society that abolishes the exploitation of one human being by another.
- The party of the working class is not the working class. It is its class instrument:

- Lenin firmly fought against any temptation to confuse the party with the class. This point of view prevailed during the development of the communist movement, and Kautsky was one of the main leaders of this trend, which considered that the transition to a socialist society would be the inevitable result of the objective development in which the working class would become the majority in society. This view is based on the limitation of politics to the social field or to purely economic perspectives. Lenin considered that economic and social contradictions must be expressed in the political sphere; only the independent party of the working class expresses its interests and is able to integrate any new or changing demand that may reflect the explosion of these economic and social contradictions into the political sphere. It will be ready to bring together these data, analyze them and make use of them to develop militant action up to the stages of development of the class struggle as a whole.
- In this context, Lenin understood that the party should be composed of revolutionary militants, agitators and organizers, who address themselves to all sectors of the popular masses, encouraging them to join the heart of the struggles that reflect the explosion of these economic and social contradictions and transform them into a political struggle with a class-wide content. In this sense, Lenin defended the concept of belonging to the party, that is, the involvement of each member in one of the party's organizational sections, in which he contributes to the development of programs and lines in a democratic manner and works to carry out tasks respecting the discipline and the decisions taken by these organizations. Thus, the party becomes the advanced section of the class, responsible for the political leadership acting on events and not an instrument that negatively affects the course of the class struggle.

5. Defend the independence of the autonomous organizations:

Thanks to his experience and deep knowledge of the practical realities of Russia and of the communist movement in Europe and America, Lenin realized that the proletarian revolution aiming at building a socialist society was possible and would become an inevitable reality. This was a task placed on the agenda of the communists who deserved this title, but on the condition that they have the structural bases for the accomplishment of the revolution. The

first brick for constructing this revolutionary edifice is the building of the independent party of the proletariat, of which the Bolshevik Party served as a model. The second element is the building of the Coalition of the Workers and Peasants Front.⁶ Lenin's central idea was that the revolution was a practical result of social relations and expected the participation of the conscious and independent masses. In any case, he continued to exhort these masses and encourage them to organize to reach a stage of consciousness that would allow them to seize power. Historical experience has taught us that the great challenge is to preserve and protect it from this anti-revolutionary force born after the Paris Commune and later, with the collapse of the Republic of Soviets. Perhaps the most appropriate path adapted to the historical and objective demand is to create diverse, plural and diversified organizations to shore up the revolution, to carry out its missions and to ensure the preservation of its popular and mass character. Through these organizations it would be able to defend its interests and power and maintain vigilance against any attempt to usurp it by anyone, even by part of the independent party of the working class itself which can be subjected to anti-revolutionary temptations, as was the case in the Soviet experience. Thus, when revolutionary militants of the vanguard constantly promote and revolutionize social class relations, they will reinforce these organizations and transform them into true instruments of power capable of overthrowing any authority constituted without the legitimacy of the people, as witnessed by the Paris Commune.

6. On the problem of pluralism:

- Given the objective conditions and characteristics of each social group and each period of its development, the existence of a differentiation between several groups of the same social class can reveal several political expressions within the same social class.
- As the working class itself is subject to such a law, it often finds itself faced with many organizations or parties claiming to represent it. But for the party itself, Lenin considered that it would be a serious mistake to introduce representative pluralism and, on the other hand, defended the right of the minority to express its opinion within the framework of democracy with all guarantees until the decisive moment when a decision is reached. As a result, at the point when the decisions are made, strict discipline is demanded of all, including the minority. Con-

trary to Trotsky's opinion, Lenin did not accept the existence of independent currents, and historical experience confirmed Lenin's opinion and Trotsky's error.

- The transition to a socialist society takes place at the heart of a class struggle of a new type, which makes it possible to resolve contradictions in the ranks of the people. Since these contradictions are objective, all the classes that have an interest in revolutionary change organize and make their interests evolve towards this historic transition. These are contradictions that will be resolved only in a new democratic society under the leadership of the working class as the vanguard, having reached the level of ideological and political consciousness that affects the task of liberation from all forms of class exploitation and for gender equality, in which all racial and identity differences are eliminated. At this stage, the question of power – the state – is at stake. For the new society cannot be achieved without putting into place the necessary conditions for the disappearance of the state itself; this question has been a stumbling block and difficult test of the experience of building socialism that humanity has known after the success of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Progress in resolving this dilemma begins with the leadership of the struggle and of the struggle in the period leading up to the success of the socialist revolution, and so it is a task today and cannot be postponed.

Starting from these assumptions, Lenin's analysis and concepts of proletarian democracy all make sense. He considered that this is the highest and most prestigious form of democracy, because it seeks to resolve the secondary contradictions among the people and their classes, but it is uncompromising with the class enemy, the exploitative and despotic bourgeoisie.

But in the practical application of this Leninist principle, the result was disappointing, leading to the domination of the intelligentsia and the workers' aristocracy, which soon became social groups that separated them-



selves from the working class base and became a State bourgeoisie, leading the state and society to the failure of the experience of building the socialist society itself. Faced with this historic catastrophe, all the imperialist gravediggers, traitors and deviationists watched for the missteps in order to carry out their business of defamiation of Leninist thought and inevitably of any Marxist thought.

We cannot permit ourselves to dwell on these failures. We must describe the situation accurately and with the seriousness required to perform the tasks ahead. Nevertheless, we stress that it is important to criticize the treatment formulated by short views, which have given up the study and analysis of the experience and examine only by the repetition of conventional statements and have given up the task of developing the theory and elaborating strategies and programs that correspond to the new situations and failures.

7. The response to the mistakes of the transition from capitalism to socialism:

When we are analyzing the reasons for the failure of the transition from capitalism to socialism, we point to a number of explanations, the most important of which can be summarized by the following factors:

- The first is the intimate conviction that the maturity of the objective and economic conditions will guarantee the victory of the new society and the building of socialism. But, as the Chinese experience has shown, it is wrong to ignore the role that must be attributed to the subjective factor by activating it through a cultural revolution that modifies the superstructure in its political, ideological and political aspects, and changes the industrial system by allowing the direct participation of producers, and overcoming the division of labor between manual work and intellectual activity.
- The second relates to what happened during the experience of socialist construction, in which a proletarian intelligentsia emerged, which quickly broke with its class base because of many constraints that were not fought with revolutionary rigor and sometimes vaguely justified this break. The emergence of the state and party bourgeoisie led the embryonic socialist revolution to its death.
- Third, it can be summed up in the failure of the workers' and peasants' alliance, which has strategic dimensions in the transition from capitalism to socialism.

8. At the time of the political crisis in the Leninist sense, the party must be ready to develop appropriate slogans and tactics.

- In the context of this analysis and at each stage and phase in the development of the class struggle, the working class and the other categories and classes of precarious ones and peasants must organize themselves, whether to defend themselves or to attack their class enemies. This raises the extremely important question of the building of appropriate independent organizations responding to the concrete tasks, and of the role of the party which must make the appropriate slogans and program available to them.
- The speed, relevance and creativity of these organizations will of course be the work of the masses themselves, who should be prepared for this purpose.

Second: Praxis and practical experience

1. By extrapolating from the experiences of the revolutionary processes, whether in Egypt or in Tunisia, we can identify many cases in which the masses have created forms of organization that meet the demands of the moment.

Concerning the trade unions, it was clear that in order to combat the rottenness of the unions or their inability to cope with the acceleration of events, the workers resorted to the creation of trade union organizations, thus replacing the decomposing bureaucracy.

- In order to organize the masses and protect them from police and military repression, committees have been created to organize the seizure of the land or self-defense committees against the Baltagiyas [regime-sponsored thugs – *translator's note*] and for the protection of working-class neighborhoods.
- In addition to ensuring the safety of the rebels, it was necessary to provide them with funding, accommodation and coverage, as well as the treatment of the wounded, which of course had to be provided with an organizational structure.
- In addition, these masses, due to the failure of the media, must take care of two crucial questions:
 - o Provide objective news and reliable sources,
 - o Resist the reactionary media of the authorities, which seeks to spread lies to the masses in order to weaken their resolve.

2. By extrapolating from other experiences of countries with similar social structures, especially in Latin America, we can

identify examples of these multi-purpose or pluralist organizations.

Many of these experiences emphasize the great importance given to working-class neighborhoods, such as popular committees that have been set up and which have served as a basis for a project in which these people learn to rely on themselves. These are projects of alternative popular power at the level of one district extended to several regions and, subsequently, to the whole country.

- Creation of self-management committees of industrial entities.
- Seizure of businesses and agricultural land.
- Creation of popular media that are alternatives to the official media that is against the mass movement.

3 – By exploring the Moroccan experience, it is clear to us that the model is still almost new. The balance of the experiences has not yet led to a degree of accumulation that is a reservoir of lessons rooted in the collective consciousness of the masses to the point that they constitute in the minds of the militants habits and traditions acquired through which they form easy and elaborate forms that meet the requirements of each step.

In our recent and earlier history, the masses have created many forms of self-organization that correspond to the needs of periods of ebbs, whether faced with natural disasters or difficult living conditions, or in defense of their rights to exist in the face of the central power or during the period of colonization through the successive waves that Morocco has known.

Many of these forms of organization of the social, economic and cultural life of the masses have been dissolved either by the domination and supremacy of the mode of production of dependent capitalism, or by deliberate war by the state organs, when the masses challenged the central authority of the state.

What has contributed to this state of substantial non-accumulation is the nature of the political forces that led the phase of resistance to the reactionary state in our country. These parties themselves do not believe that the masses are the creators of history and are able to emancipate themselves, and they consider themselves the liberators of the masses because their political thought, by a coup d'état or by Blanquism, was deprived of the line of revolution of the masses as developed in China, Vietnam and other parts of the world, experiences which were based on the Marxist theory of struggles.

In order to overcome this situation, we must face the difficulties of historical research and analyze the experiences of the masses of our people, whether at the time of the Siba (land of dissidence) or against colonialism or faced with the system of the comprador bourgeoisie. This study will help produce a political thought based on the concrete historical experience of the masses of our people. Also to launch initiatives that arise from the fertile ground of the class struggle in our country and facilitate the process of assimilation and adoption by these masses. This would prevent us from any foolish attempt to reproduce the Russian experiences under conditions different from ours.

At the end of this paragraph, we must address the qualitative developments in the field of the struggle in our country in early 2018. The marginalized areas have seriously and practically begun to launch their social movements, a phenomenon that cannot be ignored nor underestimated. An experience that brought out the functional elements of the convergence of these protest movements into a general social movement.

Referring to the functional elements that consolidate any movement into a social movement, we can enumerate three elements:

- Preparation of a list of grievances, with the required prioritization of demands to be addressed to the responsible persons or parties concerned. This was the case in Jerada, HIRAK of the Rif and relatively to Zagora.
- Proposal of an operational view of the struggle, taking into account the actual preparations of the masses present and participating in the protest movements, which can take the form of the following political actions: the creation of associations with specific objectives, restricted meetings, public meetings, solemn processions, sit-ins, marches, demonstrations, statements in the public media, brochures or political brochures. All these tools and ingredients have been used in Rif and Jerada.
- The last element is related to the immunization and strengthening of the movement and to the creation of mechanisms of consolidation to ensure continuity, such as the proud identification of belonging to the movement, the strengthening of unity, the quantitative and qualitative and balanced presence in the movement, the strengthening of confidence in the leaders of the movement towards each other and of the movement towards

these same leaders. This is what the organizers of these social movements carry out by undertaking commitments and taking oaths and other expressions of commitment and synergy and not diminishing the social movement. We have seen how this is done clearly in the Hirak of the Rif and Jerada.

Third: what political content and organizational mechanism do we work with?

One of Marx's most important lessons is that: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their social being, but on the contrary it is their social being that determines their consciousness".⁷

Therefore, we attach great importance to the struggle of the different classes and strata of our working people. Because, through this struggle, the activity of individuals becomes social and identifies their position in the social group, their rights and duties are defined and their consciousness structured. In order to develop this consciousness and to convert sensory consciousness into rational thought based on a scientific view, it becomes necessary to have scientific factors of transformation and emancipation.

Because the protest movements are often in reaction to the actions of the bloc of the ruling class, through choices or decisions of their governments or other state organs, these movements are often characterized by spontaneity and are dispersed in space and time, facing repression, wars of attrition or treason on the part of certain leaders. As a result, the desperation of the masses and loss of confidence in their capabilities, as well as the frustration in their ranks increases the capabilities of their class enemies. The result restricts the consciousness of these masses by keeping them at the stage of sensory consciousness.

In order to break this vicious circle, we consider that it is the responsibility of the activists in the struggles of the precarious masses and peasants, especially working-class activists, to consciously and intelligently intervene in order to constitute the factors allowing the transformation from sensory to rational consciousness and scientific characterization. The first task is to help the masses to regroup and become powerful blocs at each stage of their struggle, and to make efforts to fight the class enemies and their nefarious plans.

In other words, we consider that any protest movement, whether spontaneous or organized, limited in time and space, or extended and prolonged in time, first requires a clarification of the demands,

and the objective must be clear and understandable. It must have a clear line, identified methods, organizational and logistical structures and mechanisms to achieve it. In order to strengthen the movement, it is also necessary to foresee the future, whether it is a failure or ways to avoid such failures, then to organize against the retreats and reduce the losses for the next advance, or, if successful, how to build on the gains to move to a more advanced stage of demands.

The implementation of all these measures, among others, must be the concerns of the parties involved, the masses of these protest movements themselves, and not the concerns of groups and elites representing these masses. To reach this degree of organization by the popular masses, the following are necessary:

- The presence of an independent party of the working class and all the precarious people and the peasants, convinced of the line of the masses, at the service of the problems of the causes of the working class, whose duties are the strong and permanent link with the working class and that these masses are its vital element, as is water for in.
- Reflecting the principle that the masses will emancipate themselves, the party activists rely on their own forces, engage in the creation of all tools and all self-organizations, which should encourage the development of these organizations so that they gain strength and invulnerability and protect them from breaking.
- The nuclei through which the masses exercise their authority and impose it on all political forces and on all to take their point of view into account and to consider them as the decision-making framework on the questions of the day. The militant involvement of the party of the working class in such frameworks is the application of one of the most important lessons of experimentation. Communism, according to which “the educator himself must be educated,” allows the party to build a true mass political line, to win the trust and leadership of these masses, to become worthy of being the vanguard of society. And the working class must lead the struggle for a society in which democracy and social justice are realities, a society on the road to the transition to a socialist society without relations of class exploitation.

- These self-organizations of the masses also play a strategic role in establishing blocs of common work in the field among the social classes with an interest in revolutionary change in our country. As a result, the masses and our social classes learn to know each other and build bridges of confidence and the will to live together in a Morocco different from what they called a place of exploitation and tyranny. The stronger the links, the easier it is to build the national front of social classes, a strategic tool for the expected revolutionary change.

El Habib Titi
October 9, 2018

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Peru

Peruvian Communist Party (M-L)

The Winning of the 8-Hour Day in Peru, the Third International and the PCP (M-L)

This year, 2019, the Peruvian working class commemorates two events of great significance for its history. On January 15, it commemorates the hundredth anniversary of the winning of the 8-hour day in Peru, and at the beginning of March it commemorates the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Third, Communist International.

These are events that have greatly influenced the development of the class consciousness of the Peruvian proletariat and have laid the bases for its organizational and political development, with the view towards achieving its true class emancipation.

Since its origin, the Peruvian working class has carried out great struggles that have let it win some demands that gave it new and better conditions to participate consciously and actively in the class struggle. The winning of the 8-hour day mobilized all the forces of the nascent Peruvian working class that understood that it had to develop a consistent class struggle against the bosses, based on their own efforts with conscious discipline. It saw the need to develop class and internationalist solidarity and to see in its strategic aim the need to forge an alliance of workers and peasants and all the working people to win its short and medium-term demands. This struggle fills glorious pages in the history of the Peruvian working class.

The Awakening of the Peruvian Working Class

Since the end of the 19th century, the bosses of the new industries exploited the working class with work days of up to 16 hours; the health and food conditions were miserable. In the mining sector, the peasants who worked collective lands were hired from nearby regions for up to 36 consecutive hours of work, with an interval of rest of 12 hours, for the two or three months of their contract. The “hook” was the way in which the boss imposed payment of the worker’s wages with “commodity vouchers” that could only be used

in the stores of the same company, without possibility of protest. In short, the conditions of the nascent working class were unbearable.

The workers of the agro-industrial sugar haciendas, textile companies, bakeries, docks and ports began to organize, influenced by anarcho-syndicalist currents, and they took some protest actions that were harshly repressed by reaction.

On May 1, 1886, the U.S. proletariat had begun the General Strike for the Eight Hour Day, providing the first martyrs in the fight for this cause: “*8 hours of work*,” “*8 hours of rest*” and “*8 hours of education*” were the demands that came to Peru with the example of the martyrs of Chicago. This fight had greater importance because in July of 1889, the International Congress of Workers of Paris was held, where it was agreed from then on to commemorate May 1 as a “*Day of protest against the injustices that weigh down on the proletariat and as a day of international solidarity*.” It was also called: “*The great day of social emancipation and class struggle*”.

In 1904, the port workers on the Callao docks carried out the first demonstrations, demanding in their program the improvement of working conditions and the 8-hour day. These actions were harshly repressed by the government of José Pardo y Barreda. As a result, several workers were arrested and one killed: Florencio Aliaga, who is remembered as the first martyr of the Peruvian proletariat.

On May 1, 1905, also influenced by the example of the Russian Revolution of that year, the organized workers were summoned by the pioneer trade union organization Federation of Bakery Workers “*Star of Peru*.” They gathered at the Politeama Theater, where they proclaimed that from now on the Peruvian working class would fight to win the 8-hour day. The example of the Russian workers and peasants, who had risen up against the Tsarist regime and were harshly repressed, encouraged the struggle of the Peruvian proletariat to achieve their true liberation.

Leaders of great importance such as Manuel Lévano and Delfin Lévano of the Federation of Bakers, Luis Felipe Grillo of the Federation of Textile Workers of Vitarte, among others, gave combative leadership to what would later be the Local Workers’ Federation, which would lead the struggles of 1918-1919 until the promulgation of the decree recognizing the extension of the 8-hour day to all

branches of industry, during the second term of the sugar-plantation owner and textile entrepreneur José Pardo y Barreda.

The Worker-Peasant Alliance

On May 1, 1908 the port workers of Callao, Chancay and Huacho began a strike for the 8-hour day, and after pressure they achieved a partial victory; the government of Guillermo Billinghurst decreed the 9-hour day for port workers.

In 1911, the struggles of the textile workers of Vitarte, who demanded the elimination of night work and an increase in salary for the day shift, led to a partial victory. However, what was important for this movement was that for the first time a General Strike took place in Lima and Callao, in which the workers tested their strength against that of the bosses. On June 16 of that same year, an appeal was published in the “Libertad” press signed by the most advanced trade union leaders of the time and by some intellectuals, such as Delfín Lévano, Glicerio Tassara, Edilberto Boza, Juan de Dios Tapia, José Luis García, Silvano D’Arca, Elías Mendiola, A.O. Galli, Manuel Caracciolo Lévano, M.E. Viteri, Peter Pokell, Eulogio Otazú, Abraham Gamero, Luis G. García, Miguel Tassara, Moisés Gemany, Pedro Cisneros, Pedro Ferrari, Abelardo Ormeño, Luis Felipe Grillo, M. Anibal de Preti and Francisco A. Loayza. They pointed out:

“The struggle between capital and labor is taking place everywhere assuming well-defined and precise characteristics: it is our obligation to support these efforts, which in the future will lead to a better organization of human society than the current one. For that blessed hour to arrive, for which all human beings yearn, consciously or unconsciously, what should those who suffer hunger and needs under the current social regime do? They should fight without respite or rest against those who monopolize the instruments of labor, against those who own the land and its fruits, capital and machines.”

On January 5, 1913, the day laborers of Callao presented a petition demanding an eight-hour of working day, increased wages, help in case of acci-



dents; they gave a period of 24 hours for these demands to be fulfilled, or they would begin a general strike. The bakers, metallurgists, typographers and weavers joined the strike, which took on important dimensions. In the face of the increase in struggle, the government of Guillermo Billinghurst imposed a state of siege in the city of Lima. The solidarity of the working class was increasing and on January 10, 1913, the Muelle y Darsena company of Callao accepted the list of demands, the most important of which was the winning of the 8-hour day in this sector. The next day it was legalized by decree of the government of Billinghurst.

The communal pots of the striking workers were given food by the nearby communities such as Jauja or Huacho; this close collaboration strengthened the ties of solidarity between the working class and peasantry. In January 1915, the government of José Pardo repressed the protest of peasants in Llaucán; this event, which led to a massacre, aroused the solidarity of the workers of Vitarte. This was one of the first demonstrations in which the working class showed its solidarity with the peasantry and the agricultural proletariat.

In September of 1916, the agricultural workers of the various valleys of Chancay, including the fields of Huacho, Huaura and Sayán, carried out protest actions demanding the 8-hour day. This demonstration was harshly repressed by troops under the command of Alejandro Ayarza and by order of the prefect of Lima, Arenas. They fired on the crowd, killing six protesters including two peasant martyrs who are remembered: Irene Salvador and Manuela Chaflojo. This led to a spirited rally at the Apollo Theater in the city of Lima, where a red flag was displayed. César Lévano said of this event; *“There the red flag waved, dipped in the blood of the peasants, killed in Huacho. Thus the building of the worker-peasant alliance in Peru was begun.”*

On November 7, 1917 the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia broke out, inspiring the international working class to develop more decisive struggles; for the first time in history the working class had seized State political power and was hastening to build Socialism. After the Great War, there was a transformation that gave the development of the trade union struggle a greater impulse, in spite of the hegemony of the anarcho-syndicalism among the nascent working class. The victories of the working class on an international scale were reflected in the development of the consciousness of the Peruvian working class. From January 5 to 10, 1918, the First Con-

gress of the Local Workers’ Federation was held, whose demands for the working class were centered on: “Winning of the 8-hour day,” in addition to a Fourth Agreement that highlighted: “8 hours of work and a law that assures the *yanacona* [indigenous servants – translator’s note] and the peasant the possession of the land for sowing.”

On December 12, 1918, the Spinners section of the Unification of Textile Workers of Vitarte began a strike for the 8-hour day. On December 15 all the textile unions joined the strike, and on December 22 the shoemakers, maritime workers, day laborers and peasants, bakers, the peasants of the Ate Valley and the miners of the central region joined it. The struggles were developing and on January 8, 1919, there was a massacre of workers in Casapalca, after the strike was declared by the workers of the Backus & Johnston company. On that same day, the government of José Pardo suspended individual rights and ordered the police to attack the area of greatest worker resistance, Vitarte.

The Winning of the 8-Hour Day

On January 9, the Local Workers’ Federation called for a National General Strike. The Pro-Strike Committee set a 72-hour ultimatum to reach an agreement on the 8-hour day and wage increases. As there was no response from the government, on January 13, 1919 a massive assembly was held where the General Strike was declared. In the points of the General Strike decree one can see how the Peruvian proletariat was developing its internationalist solidarity. In points 3 and 4 it condemned “*the brute force of Argentine militarism for shedding the blood of workers in its stubborn desire to maintain this State.*” The proclamations that were spread after the assembly pointed to a high level of combativeness of the working class; one of the paragraphs stated: “*The victory of the rights of the working people depends on the solidarity and heroic action of the proletariat. Therefore, the Workers’ Assembly voted last night for a 48-hour general*



strike, as a show of proletarian force against capitalist intransigence.” Despite the government’s repression, the 48-hour general strike took place in Lima and Callao, and the Central Strike Committee was formed, presided over by the textile worker Fausto Navarrete and made up of Julio Portocarrero, Cesar Fonkén, Nicolás Gutarra and Carlos Barba, who raised the slogan of winning the 8-hour day through direct action.

The workers, after having made efforts for the Federation of Students of Peru to become a mediator with the government, received three commissioners, among whom was Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre. The students tried to placate the workers’ struggle by stating that it was a great advance for the government to recognize the 9-hour day in all industries, but this proposal was rejected by the workers. From this fact it was clear that it was not Haya de la Torre who inspired the struggle for 8 hours, as his biographers try to make the workers believe.

On January 14, 1919, various sectors of the bourgeoisie and the sugar lords pressed the government not to yield to the demands of the working class. Such was the resistance of the organized proletariat that on January 15, 1919, the government had to call the Commission represented by Carlos Barba, Nicolás Gutarra and Haya de la Torre, to announce that they would accept the decree recognizing 8 hours as the maximum working day in Peru.

The workers of Vitarte heard the news, but steeled by their experience and conscious conviction of the importance of their struggle, they did not stop the strike until they heard the news from their own delegates. The working class had won the 8-hour work day in all industries as well as the right to negotiate a salary increase, which would be negotiated by each branch of industry separately.

The Struggle of the Working Class and Peasantry Requires Their Organized and Combative Political Vanguard.

The struggles of the nascent Peruvian proletariat showed the need to advance the class organization of the working class. In the pages of “El Tiempo” José Carlos Mariátegui and Cesar Falcón reproduced the manifestos that the workers wanted to present as part of their struggle. The newspaper suffered a temporary closure due to the active support it gave to the strikers. The collaboration of the working class with Mariátegui allowed the most outstanding cadres to take up the task of organizing the vanguard of the Peruvian work-

ing class, among whom was Julio Portocarrero, leader of the Textile Workers' Federation of Vitarte.

The influence of the October 1917 Revolution, the Foundation of the Third International and the development of the class struggle in Peru, created the conditions for the workers, peasants and honest intellectuals to lay the foundations for the formation of the Party of the Proletariat.

On October 7, 1928, José Carlos Mariátegui, Ricardo Martínez de la Torre, the workers Julio Portocarrero, Avelino Navarro, Hinojosa, Borja and Bernardo Reyman agreed to found the Socialist Party, which in the future would work to organize the Peruvian proletariat on a class basis and to become its political vanguard.

On May 20, 1930, on the land belonging to the peasant Juan H. Pévez Oliveros, the Socialist Party agreed to call itself the Communist Party after the approving the thesis of adherence to the Third International prepared by Mariátegui and the bases proposed in the Party Program:

“The C.C. of the Party adheres to the III International and agrees to work to obtain this same adherence of the groups that make up the Party. The ideology that we adopt is that of militant and revolutionary Marxism-Leninism, a doctrine that we accept in all its aspects: philosophical and socio-economic. The methods we support and advocate are those of orthodox revolutionary socialism. Not only do we reject but we fight the methods and tendencies of social democracy and the Second International in all their forms.”

In the Party Program, it stated:

“The praxis of Marxist socialism in this period is that of Marxism-Leninism. Marxism-Leninism is the revolutionary method in the stage of imperialism and the monopolies. The Socialist Party of Peru adopts it as its method of struggle.”

On August 20, 1935, the VII Congress of the Communist International adopted the agreement “a) to accept the communist parties of Indochina, the Philippines, Peru, Colombia, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico and Venezuela as sections of the Communist International.”

For a Marxist-Leninist International

In the search by the Peruvian revolutionaries for a clear orientation in the class struggle, their first readings of Marxism, the influence of the October 1917 Revolution and the practical confirmation

of what the Peruvian working class and peasantry had experienced led to the initial idea of forging the party of the working class. Therefore the Socialist Party was founded, the first program of the Peruvian revolution was outlined and the thesis of affiliation to the Communist International was put forward.

Despite initial differences with the Latin American Section of the Communist International based in Buenos Aires, the Peruvian Communists understood that their grasp of Marxist-Leninist theory was just beginning and that they needed a fuller understanding of the science of the interests of the working class, without ever losing sight of the conditions and particularities of Peruvian historical development.

Today, we Peruvian communists, as a section of the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations – ICMLPO, state that it is necessary to lay the foundations for the building of a Marxist-Leninist International, which reflects the current conditions of the development of the movement and which carries forward what Lenin pointed out after the foundation of the Third International: *“The epoch-making significance of the Third, Communist International lies in its having begun to give effect to Marx’s cardinal slogan, the slogan which sums up the centuries-old development of socialism and the working-class movement, the slogan which is expressed in the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat.”* [From “The Third International and its Place in History”]

The era of proletarian revolutions and the dictatorship of the proletariat began with the October 1917 Revolution; it is up to the communists of today to steel ourselves in the Bolshevik method of work and in the organization of the working class for the ever more complete assimilation of the Marxist-Leninist science, in order to carry out the great feat of overcoming the “prehistory of humanity.”

**Long Live the Hundredth Anniversary of the
Communist International!**

**Long Live the Hundredth Anniversary of the Winning of
the 8-Hour Day in Peru!**

**Long Live the Struggle of the Working Class, the Peasantry
and the Peoples or their National and Social Liberation!**

*PB of the CC of the
Peruvian Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist)
April 2019*

Spain

Communist Party of Spain (M-L) – PCE (ML)

Raul Marco

The Fascist Beast and Its Litter Advance

“...to write for the people forces us to go beyond the borders of our country, it is also to write for people of other races, other lands and other languages”

“Beware of the topic ‘human masses.’ Many people of good will... use it today, without noticing that the topic comes from the enemy camp: from the capitalist bourgeoisie that exploits people and needs to degrade them, also from the church, organ of power, that more than once it has proclaimed itself the supreme institution for the salvation of the masses. Be careful, the masses are not saved by anyone;¹ but they can always be shot at.” (A. Machado, August of 1937)

I begin this article with the words of our Machado, the Machado of the people, who warned that the road is made by walking, that is, nothing is done but that is still to be done. This is a question that is already raised internationally, before the awakening, the public appearance of fascism in countries of Europe and the Americas, because the actual recognition of Nazi-fascism was (and in many countries is still) disguise, camouflaged in parties and other types of organizations, pseudo-democratic, solidarity ones, etc. This is the bloody case of monarchic Spain dominated by Franco and his puppets, with the shameful subjugation of some and the shameful if not open complicity of others.

Spain, where the Franco regime or its most blatantly Nazi wing remained disguised in the ranks of the current PP (cynically self-described as the “People’s” Party) where some people occupied

¹ Without misinterpreting the words of Machado, a matter of literary nuances, the masses are not a single, homogeneous whole of feelings and attitudes towards capitalism. There are conscious men and women, with a sense of class, and there are amorphous masses, unconscious and manipulated by fascist demagoguery. The conscious masses save themselves with their struggle with and in support of the revolutionary, popular organizations.

positions of responsibility for years in organs controlled by the PP. Such is the case of Abascal, the current caudillo – “Führer” – of the Nazi-fascist Vox network. The resurgence of far-right organizations is something that was anticipated. It is true that in some countries these organizations act openly, using the current legislation, as is the case of the National Front in France, led by father Le Pen for years and replaced by his daughter Marine, who changed the name of the organization to the French National Association. Organizations of such a type exist in Germany, England and several other countries in Europe, and in America both North and South, whose latest exponent is the Brazilian, that evil beast named Bolsonaro.

But new organizations emerge, or are reinforced and come to occupy positions in governments, such as Salvini in Italy, leader of the Northern League and currently a minister in the Government. The ENKRE [Conservative People’s] party in Estonia, led by Mart Helme; in Greece the “Golden Dawn,” chaired by Nikolaos Michaloliakos; in Hungary Viktor Orban, Prime Minister, who advocates “ethnic cleansing,” anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and his counterpart in Poland Mateusz Morawiecki, who call for a “Christian Europe that has to be defended.” Also another xenophobic, racist, etc., the Dutch Thierry Baudet, leader of the group “Forum for Democracy.” What is democracy for this ultra-rightist?

These parties and organizations coincide practically in an obsession, a dangerous obsession, which is beginning to be put into practice: to stop migration, especially from Muslim countries, because “they are a danger to the civilization of Christian Europe” and in addition “they usually vote for the left,” reasons more or less clearly stated by the FIDESZ party of Hungary, and “Law and Justice” in Poland.

This propaganda:

“Legitimizes the racist and xenophobic discourse in which the other – usually dark-skinned – is a threat... Islamophobia has become normalized with many statements by political leaders who do not (openly) call for the assassination of Muslims, but they do affirm it in a very direct manner that they are a problem and a danger. The assassin in Christchurch [New Zealand, March 2019], made it clear in a text-message: Westerners must ‘crush immigration,’ deport non-white people and have more children to prevent the decline of the white race. That is a message that we have been hearing for a long time in Western

countries. Also in Spain.” (Íñigo Sáenz de Ugarte, Eldiario.es, March 16, 2019)

This situation is really worrying, the growth and establishment of Nazi-fascist parties and trends, which in Europe are supported, stimulated and guided by agents of Trump, such as his adviser Steve Bannon, based in Rome, where he receives the main European neo-fascist leaders, such as Salvini, Orban, and others, including VOX leaders.

As an example, on the position of the reactionary and paranoid president of the United States, we note that, in March of this year, Vox’s deputy secretary of international relations, Ivan Espinosa de los Monteros, toured Washington, New York and other parts of the United States to, in his own words, “establish and strengthen the ties of his party with the Trump administration.”

In New York, at a public event organized by sectors of the oligarchy (including Spanish millionaires residing in that country), he presented the Vox program, and I took the opportunity to express support for the policy of “reinforcing the borders against illegal immigration, against the gay community and the issue of the autonomous communities” (Diario El Mundo, March).

According to Espinosa de los Monteros, Vox has delegates in New York, Houston (Texas) and Miami (Florida), adding that they also have delegations in London, Paris and Frankfurt and will soon open new branches in Chicago, Washington and California. I do not think it necessary to ask where the funds needed for such activity have come from, for a party that only appeared a few months ago...

In Spain, fascism is gaining a certain strength among sectors of the lumpen-proletariat, declassed workers and sectors of that ever-vacillating petty bourgeoisie whose desires are to stop being small and kiss up to the oligarchy. The right-wing and extreme right parties are joining and collaborating despite their own contradictions (People’s Party, Citizens’ Party and Vox), are supported by sectors of the Army, by high-level commanders, supporters of the Franco regime who are nostalgic for the dictatorship. We are faced with the need to achieve popular unity, a popular front, or however we want to call it, in order to counteract reaction. And one cannot ignore the very ambiguous role of social democracy, of more or less large sectors, which, in these forty years of the so-called transition, have lurched towards one or another side, but ultimately against the peo-

ples of Spain, openly or disguised, but always kissing up to the oligarchy and imperialism (U.S., NATO, EU, etc.).

All the analysts and political scientists point out that we are heading towards a major crisis, with worse consequences for the popular classes than those suffered until now from that of 2008. The oligarchy, always, always tries to place the consequences of its crises on the backs of the workers, of the people in general. For this they do not hesitate to impose laws, suppress those that oppose them, adopt measures of protection for their interests, achieve greater profits, etc. We the people pay for and suffer from the crises, while sectors of the oligarchy enrich themselves and recuperate their “losses” by dipping into the treasury (which is always public), with the so-called “reptile funds.”² With the crisis, the benefits of the great fortunes of the big banks, whose leaders resort to all sorts of tricks and deceitful maneuvers (cases of leaders of the Santander Bank, Bilbao-Vizcaya, Bankia, etc.

The PCE (m-l), our party, directed an internal memo to the membership in January of this year, from which I reproduce some ad hoc paragraphs:

“...our Party is warning of the danger of the combination of two factors: the dramatic social situation experienced by millions of families and the disappointment, (once again) discontent and indignation that they feel when contemplating that those who pretended to “assault the heavens” [Podemos] are a bluff, more of the same. Both factors may come to push sectors of the popular masses into the arms of fascism and others to abstention. Last December 2 (2018) in Andalusia [elections] the abstention rate was 41.35% (five points more than in 2015) and VOX obtained 400,000 votes, 10.97%, and 12 deputies. When the discontent and indignation do not have a revolutionary outlet, they have a reactionary one. The situation of penury, misery and oblivion that hundreds of thousands of people of the working classes experience has led the backward sectors to support VOX.

² “In certain barely ethical public administrations (!), there are certain amounts that are not well identified in the budgets for use in non-transparent tasks of financing propaganda campaigns, corruption of the media, buying of leaders of public opinion, etc.” (Ramón Tamames, Dictionary of Economics)

“...The left in general, and especially the institutional left (which has a greater burden of responsibility), excludes the masses from participating in politics, either consciously or unconsciously (due to inability, incomprehension or fear). It has abandoned or “yielded” the popular field to the extreme right. In the case of Andalusia, we are facing a region with the highest rates of unemployment and social inequality.

“...Andalusia has an unemployment rate of 22.9%, a rate that generally increases as we move south, reaching towns such as Vejer and Barbate (Cadiz) with 40 and 45% unemployment respectively.... many unemployed Andalusians see immigrants as competitors. And they really are, because their precarious situation and almost slavery... forces them to sell their labor power at a very low price that, on the one hand, makes the cost of production for the entrepreneurs lower, and on the other hand, pulls down wages.”

This situation forces us to confront it decisively, boldly and clearly. We must work even more than we are doing, in order to promote political, popular, conscious unity, fighting for a popular front. We must strive to achieve with our militant communist activity, that the proletariat achieve a fighting unity, not by compromising with the maneuvers of those who are trying and will try to sabotage the popular unity of struggle that the situation demands. In this task, which is not easy and which must be an everyday struggle, the youth has to play a fundamental role, the youth of the city and the



countryside, a struggle that also concerns the progressive intelligentsia and sectors of the petty bourgeoisie.

To achieve this popular unity, we must take into account the current weaknesses, including, and this is not a trivial matter, the organizational dispersion, the diversity of “proletarian, revolutionary, communist and other” parties and organizations. This is a problem that unfortunately is not exclusively one of Spain; it is a real problem that weighs down on the workers’ and popular movement. But we should not, we cannot be paralyzed, nor let ourselves be influenced by the existing problems. We must address them, facilitate the discussion and try to reach agreements. It is not easy, we encounter positions that do not understand or do not see the seriousness of the situation. So it is necessary to have a frank discussion, find the points of agreement and put aside the differences. Our firmness of principles (principles that are not negotiable) should not lead us to tactical rigidity, rigidity that hinders or prohibits any type of agreement. Firmness of principles, yes, but also tactical flexibility to achieve unitary agreements.

Jose Díaz,³ commenting on the general strike of October 1934, emphasized the participation of:

“The Spanish workers, the Catalan workers, the Basque workers, the workers of Galicia, in short, those from all parts of Spain, as they took to the streets to prevent the advance of fascism by a general strike and insurrection... that struggle fully triumphed in Asturias... because they knew how to march together... the banner of the power of the workers and peasants waved triumphantly... but we must not forget that our brothers there fought together and that is how they triumphed; communists, socialists and anarchists fought shoulder to shoulder. For this reason, if we want to succeed, the United Front must become a reality, unity of action must be imposed.” (“Three Years of Struggle,” Ediciones España Popular, Mexico 1942)

Of course, many years have passed and the conditions and situation are not generally the same, but the search for unity remains imperative. This is truly essential, it is not an easy task, there are many pitfalls to avoid, obvious disagreements, obstinate positions to refute, in order to organize common activities at certain times, such

³ Jose Diaz, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Spain, was born in Seville in 1895 and died in the USSR in 1942.

as May 1, or April 14 for the Republic. This is fine, but it is not enough, the situation demands more.

The situation in the world is extremely complex; we see how the contradictions between the imperialists themselves, between the superpowers and the so-called “emerging” countries. The governments are increasing their military spending for a greater war policy, in Syria, Yemen and several Africans countries, in which the armies of France, the USA and Spain intervene (each to different degrees). Also the Zionist State of Israel, protected by the paranoid Trump, increases its aggression against the Palestinians, occupies new lands (now with the blessing of Trump, it annexes the Golan Heights), etc.

These are inter-imperialist contradictions, but it is the peoples, the most disadvantaged masses, who suffer terrible consequences, the destruction of their countries, thousands and thousands of deaths. We communists are directly concerned, because the contradictions among the capitalist forces and countries, regardless of the degree of development of each, do not erase and do not eliminate the always current, crudely current contradiction between the proletariat and capital. It, the class struggle, does not disappear but sharpens. The fascist bands, such as Vox in Spain, emerge when the bourgeoisie sees its privileges and power in danger, when its laws are no longer enough to dominate the working and popular masses. In this regard, it is worth remembering what Georgi Dimitrov warned:

“Fascism is not only anti-communist, it is also anti-popular. Its task is to ensure the success of the struggle of capital in the political sense, of the exploitation and plundering of the popular masses by the capitalist minority and to strengthen the domination of this minority over the popular majority.” (*Selected Works*, Vol. 1, Foreign Language Books, Bulgaria. Translated from the Spanish.)

“No general characterization of fascism, however correct in itself, can relieve us of the need to study and take into account the special features of the development of fascism and the various forms of fascist dictatorship in the individual countries and at its various stages.” Such an “enemy must be known.... We must react to his various maneuvers, discover his hidden moves, be prepared to repel him in any arena...” (*The United Front*, Red Star Publishers edition, 2013)

To mobilize and unite the proletariat, the popular classes and progressive sectors of the petty bourgeoisie is a main objective. But make no mistake, the proletariat is not a single, homogeneous whole, with a uniform composition and structure; there is the lumpen-proletariat, declassed, corrupted and sold out. And the indifferent ones, that scourge, against which Gramsci stated:

“Indifference is apathy, it is parasitism, it is cowardice, it is not life. Indifference is the dead weight of history.... it is what cannot be told, it is what alters the programs, what upsets the best-prepared plans, it is the raw material that rebels against intelligence and strangles it. I live, I am partisan. That’s why I hate those who do not take sides, who are indifferent.”

In spite of everything, the conscious, “partisan” proletariat is the main element in the inevitable class struggle. To not take this into account or to ignore this leads to a paralyzing eclecticism, or even to idealism. In this regard, it is worth remembering that “dialectics are concrete and revolutionary.... Eclecticism and sophistry... blur all that is concrete and precise in the class struggle.” (Lenin: The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky).

To achieve unity of action of the working class against fascism, to work for a united front, is not an easy task nor one that can be

postponed until it is too late; it cannot be minimized, it requires efforts, understanding that there are differences that must be fought against, one must have flexibility, as the Party had under the leadership of Jose Diaz. Our “civil” war against fascism (1936-1939) (which can be considered the first battle of World War II) is full of examples (positive and negative) on the fight for the united front; we had to



**PAREMOS A
LOS FASCISTAS**

fight sectarian and also liberal positions.

The emergence and growth of Nazi-fascist parties and organizations, even if they hide behind harmless-sounding names, in Europe, the Americas and other continents, cannot be treated lightly; they should not be seen as isolated cases, as they try to unite and support each other. Moreover, they have the tactical and practical support of the most dangerous power in the world, the United States; particularly in Europe, Steve Bannon, Trump’s adviser, controls and guides them from Rome.

Without drawing parallels, in order to confront Hitlerite and Mussolini reaction, popular fronts and united fronts were created at the initiative of the Communist International in most of the European countries. With respect to the war in Spain, they played an important role in the development of international solidarity. There were the glorious International Brigades, which are already a legendary example, and later there was the defeat of the Berlin, Rome, Tokyo axis powers.

The circumstances are not the same today, but there is still no international. We have the ICMLPO, which is already a first step and which plays a coordinating role, but it is not an international common front. However, we do not dismiss the possibility of taking steps in that direction. There are those who say that this is pure utopia; so then let us act so that it ceases to be so, to make it a fighting reality, able to guide the struggles of the peoples, to unmask and combat those Nazi-fascist forces and their disguised or open mentors.

As an example of tactical flexibility, against sometimes intransigent positions regarding the conditions needed to achieve the unity of action of all sectors of the working class, and popular strata:

“The first thing that must be done is to form a united front, to establish unity of action of the workers in every factory, in every district, in every region, in every country, all over the world. Unity of action of the proletariat on a national and international scale... Is it possible to realize this unity of action of the proletariat in the individual countries and throughout the world? Yes, it is. The communist international, ***puts no conditions for unity of action except one, and that an elementary condition acceptable for all workers, viz., that the unity of action be directed against fascism, against the offensive of capital, against the threat of war, against the class enemy.*** That is our condition.” (Dimitrov, *ibid.* The bolds and italics are his.)

The experience of the struggle of the communist movement over the years shows conclusively that the proletariat, the working class, led by the communist party, can wrest power from the bourgeoisie, defeat it and carry out great social transformations. The disintegration of the socialist camp, the collapse of the USSR and the degeneration of many of the old parties sowed pessimism and lack of confidence, which has caused serious problems. But that does not mean the end of hope. Our daily actions, confronting multiple problems, including internal ones, show how we can overcome problems and difficulties with firmness and determination.

Faced with defeatists and all kinds of opponents of struggle, we maintain that in the acute class struggle that is deepening even more with the rise of Nazi-fascism, the communist parties are indispensable in this fight against reaction and capitalism in all its facets.

This is a struggle of an international character and content.

Communist Party of Spain (Marxist-Leninist)

April 2019

Tunisia

Workers' Party of Tunisia

The Communist International and the Arab World

*In memory of Mokhtar Ayari, communist worker,
founder of the communist cell of Tunisia in 1920
and co-founder of the first independent union of the
workers of Tunisia, the CGTT in 1924.*

Introduction

The Second International was mainly a European organization. It did not devote much interest to the rest of the world, which was essentially made up of colonies of the European imperialist powers. The national and colonial question was addressed only in a subsidiary and marginal way. This is one of the aspects that would be criticized and denounced by revolutionary social democracy. So the founders of the Third International would make it a line of demarcation, by giving due interest to this question and developing a strategy and tactics that made national liberation movements, including those of the Arab peoples, an essential component of the anti-imperialist struggle and for socialism on a global scale.

What analysis did the Communist International (CI) make of developments in the Arab world in the 1920s and 1930s, and what kind of help did it provide to the nascent Arab communist parties so that they could take an active and resolute part and take part in these developments?

1. The bankruptcy of the Second International and the birth of the Communist International

On August 4, 1914, the main socialist parties engaged in the Sacred Union [in World War I]: the Second International was dead as a revolutionary organization. Lenin drew lessons from this defeat and traced the prospects for the future.

The communiqué published on November 1, 1914 by the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers Party in the newspaper “Social-Democrat” ended like this: “The proletarian International has not gone under and will not go under. Notwith-

standing all obstacles, the masses of the workers will create a new International.” [The War and Russian Social-Democracy] This was the first milestone on the way to founding the CI.

In an article published in the same issue, Lenin defined the objectives of the coming International: “...To the Third International falls the task of organizing the proletarian forces for a revolutionary onslaught against the capitalist governments, for civil war against the bourgeoisie of all countries for the capture of political power, for the triumph of socialism!” [Position and Tasks of the Socialist International] The article ended with the words: “The Second International is dead, overcome by opportunism. Down with opportunism, and long live the Third International.”

A little later, the congresses of Zimmerwald (September 5-8, 1915) and Kiental (April 24-30, 1916) were important moments on the road to the Third International, but it was the victory of the Great October Revolution of which was the decisive step. Indeed, the CI was founded in the aftermath of the victory of the Great October Revolution and in full excitement of the foundation of communist parties around the world. It was at the same time a grouping of communist parties, but also a single unified party governed by the principles of democratic centralism.

It was its congresses (seven in all) that were held on a regular basis and that represented all sections of the CI, regardless of their numeric importance or political weight, which determined its policies.

Also, the CI was not only a strategic choice for the international communist movement but also a historical necessity for the organization of this movement into one and the same revolutionary current capable of creating mature conditions for the victory of the proletariat in the world on a global scale. Indeed, the nascent communist movement could not develop with the speed and efficiency necessary without a revolutionary organization that would benefit all, for the potentialities of all. Similarly, it could not develop without a revolutionary rupture with all the opportunist, social-chauvinistic currents that developed and entrenched within the Second International.

Unlike the Second International, the CI was really an internationalist organization that was not limited to the revolutionaries and proletarians of the developed countries but was open to the revolutionaries and proletarians of all the countries of the world, including

those of the colonies and semi-colonies. This is one of the reasons that would allow the CI to develop revolutionary policies on the issue of national liberation in these countries, in the light of the Leninist principle on the right of peoples to self-determination. In the footsteps of the victorious October Revolution, the CI called for the uniting of the forces of victorious socialism in Russia, of the proletariat in the struggle for socialism in the imperialist countries and the national liberation movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

In the aftermath of October 1917, we would witness the formation of communist parties in the countries of Europe breaking with social democracy. On March 2, 1919, the First Congress of the CI opened.

2. The CI and the National and Colonial Question

Although the national and colonial question was not included as an independent item in the agenda of the First Congress of the CI, it was there in all the debates as evidenced by the following extracts from the Final Declaration of this congress:

“The last war, which was largely a war for the seizure of colonies, was at the same time a war made with the help of the colonies. The colonial peoples were drawn into the European war in hitherto unknown proportions. Hindus, Negroes, Arabs and Malagasy fought on the territory of Europe, in the name of what? In the name of their right to remain slaves of England and France. Never before has the spectacle of the dishonesty of the capitalist state in the colonies been so edifying; never has the problem of colonial slavery been posed with such acuteness.”

The support for the struggles of the oppressed peoples was clearly expressed in this same declaration:

“The proletarian and communist international, unlike the yellow socialist international, will support the exploited peoples of the colonies in their struggles against imperialism, with the aim of accelerating the final destruction of the world imperialist system.”

Still, it is necessary to mention that it was above all the delegates of the Central Bureau of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East who were the most active in taking up this question. Palimov urged the delegates of the first congress to put the question of the awakening of the East as an essential point in the agenda of the CI, and he stated the following:

“When the East rises and holds out its hand to the socialist West, imperialism will be encircled and the hour of victory will then ring for socialism.” The same idea was echoed by Mostafa Sobhi, delegate of the Turkish section, who said:

“If French and British capital is established in Europe, on the contrary, its belly is in the rich fields of Asia. But if Turkey, Iran, India and China close their doors to French and British industrial products, this would engender a deep crisis that will have among other consequences the conquest of power by the proletariat and the establishment of socialism in these European countries.”

But as it was the revolutionary situation in the countries of Europe which focused the attention of the delegates, the final declaration reflected instead a questionable position on the issue since it subordinated the liberation of the colonized countries to the victory of the proletarian revolution in Europe.

“The workers and peasants not only of Annam [Vietnam], Algeria and Bengal, but also of Persia and Armenia, will not be able to enjoy an independent existence until the day when the workers of England and France, after overthrowing Lloyd George and Clemenceau, will take governmental power into their hands.

“If capitalist Europe has in spite of itself brought the most backward parts of the world into the whirlwind of capitalist relations, socialist Europe will in turn help the liberated colonies with its technique, its organization and its moral influence, so as to hasten their transition to the economic life regularly organized by socialism.

“Colonial slaves of Africa and Asia: the hour of the proletarian dictatorship in Europe will ring for you the hour of your deliverance.”

It was the Second Congress of the CI (in the summer of 1920) that would reassess and develop the strategy and tactics of the CI on the national and colonial question. Indeed, since this congress the struggle for national liberation was considered an essential component of the entire revolutionary struggle on a world scale. This congress examined the question of the possible allies of the proletariat in its anti-imperialist struggle as well as for social liberation. It therefore discussed at length the agrarian question and the national and colonial question. It was Lenin himself who proposed the draft resolutions on these two questions. He defended the idea of the necessity of the alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry both in

each country and on a world scale; hence the importance of the national and colonial question, the populations of colonies and semi-colonies being essentially peasant. This led him to conclude that the struggle for national liberation had become part of the global struggle for socialism. The communist parties in the developed countries were called upon to give help to their counterparts in the colonies, and the latter were called upon to support the national liberation struggle, even when it was led by the national bourgeoisie. But they were also asked to strengthen the links with the peasantry in struggle against the big landowners to give a revolutionary character to these struggles.

The Third Congress of the CI (in the summer of 1921) did not devote a particular resolution to the question. It merely recalled the importance of the implementation of what had been adopted by the Second Congress. It was instead the constitutive congress of the Red International of Labor Unions held during the same period which gave special importance to the national and colonial question. In addition to the resolution that it adopted on the subject, it appealed to all the revolutionary trade union organizations of the developed countries to pay the greatest attention to the development of the revolutionary struggle in the countries of the East and to support the unions in these countries by all means.

As for the Fourth Congress of the CI, it put forward the tactics of the united front both in the capitalist countries and in the colonies, where the latter took on the character of an anti-imperialist front. After lengthy debates reviewing the situation in most of the countries of the East, a “General Resolution on the Question of the East” was adopted.

The Fifth Congress of the CI published a special address to the peoples of the East, which stated that *“the final liberation of the oppressed of the East and the exploited of the West will only be possible by their common struggle against imperialism.”* In spite of this concern, the congress made a criticism to the communist parties and to the CI itself



that, instead of being *“the organization of the world revolution, it has paid more attention to the questions of the revolution in the West than to those of the countries of the East.”*

3. The Impact of the October Revolution in the Arab World

But was the situation of the “Arab world” when the CI was born? And what was the impact of the victory of the October Revolution in these countries?

Let us first recall that in 1917 the “Arab world” did not constitute a homogeneous geopolitical entity, but only a civilizational region where the Arabic language was a means of communication and of Arab-Muslim culture, a large part of which had for some centuries been under Ottoman rule, but which was also coveted by the colonial powers of the West, mainly France and Great Britain, and secondarily Spain and Italy. It was therefore part of this colonial or semi-colonial world dominated politically and economically by the imperialist powers.

But the difference of the means of domination (direct colonization, protectorate, mandate, etc.) influenced the importance of the presence of the European element in these countries; it was the same for the propagation of the new ideas that developed in the West.

Indeed, in the Arab East, contested by the British and French imperialist powers, the penetration by Bolshevik ideas was often less indirect and relatively independent in relation to the Communist Parties of the colonial powers. This was the case of Egypt and the Fertile Crescent. In the rest of the Arab countries, communism was rather the tendency of small groups that included mainly Europeans, minorities and intellectuals, since the working class was still embryonic. Also, the penetration of communism was very rarely the result of powerful communist parties with a strong proletarian base, the exception being that of Sudan and Iraq. But the Congress of the Peoples of the East held in Baku in 1920 would give impetus to this dynamic as well as the concern that CI would bring to the question of the liberation of colonized peoples.

Let us recall that one of the important actions taken by Bolshevik Russia was the disclosure and denunciation of the secret negotiations led by Mark Sykes and François Georges-Picot behind the backs of the Arab peoples and designed to divide up the Middle East once the war was over, betraying the promises of the realiza-

tion of an Arab state in exchange for their fight against the Ottomans, even if the denunciation of these secret plans did not change the course of history.

The Comintern would support many small communist parties created throughout the Arab countries; and it persevered in spreading information in its literature about the workers and peasant movements, the strikes and revolts. These parties never enjoyed the exceptional conditions that allowed their analogues in China and Indonesia to develop in a powerful way. Errors would be recorded in the application of the general tactics advocated by the Comintern: in periods when the latter advocated the tactic of class-against-class, at the local level, the internal social struggle was preached, without taking into account the need to safeguard the unity of the anti-imperialist nationalist front. In periods when the united-front tactic prevailed, the alliance with the middle classes of the colonizing countries put the national demands of the colonized countries on the back burner.

In **Egypt**, in the aftermath of the war, foreigners enthusiastic about the October Revolution created study circles and came into contact with the Egyptian socialists. Together in 1920 they formed the first socialist organization that took the name of PSE [Socialist Party of Egypt] in 1921. The PCE [Communist Party of Egypt] was founded thanks to the significant contribution of the socialist movement of which Salama Moussa was one of the main leaders. It joined the Comintern in 1923 and adopted its theses. In February-March of 1924, a few weeks after the Wafd came to power, a general strike, launched in Alexandria by the National Confederation of Egyptian Workers, formed in 1921 out of 90 unions, was severely repressed. The leaders of the movement were brought before the courts and convicted. The Communist Party, decapitated, ceased to exist or have a particular role in the Egyptian world. In the inter-war period, many Marxist forces were reconstituted, each claiming to be the sole repository of authentic Marxism.

In the **Fertile Crescent**, the Communist Party was only founded after the French mandate, in 1924, by some intellectuals influenced by the revolutionary ideas of 1917 but also by French Marxists and some trade unionists who had given their trade union activity a socialist political content. The nascent party immediately spread to Syria and Lebanon, both under French mandate. The party asked the Comintern to change the name of Communist Party to

People's Party, which was rejected by the Sixth Congress. From that time, it sought out and called for broad political alliances around national and social issues in response to the demands of the moment. The Lebanese and Syrian Communists applied the policy of alliance with the local bourgeoisie for the achievement of national demands. These issues included support for the Syrian revolution of 1925-1926 and for the small producers. It has also worked to consolidate Arab unity on a democratic basis.

A new generation of activists appeared in the years 1933-34, educated in the USSR; they replaced the older generations in Lebanon-Syria under the French mandate. The participation of the Communists in the Popular Front allowed the legal functioning of the CP of the Levant, the publication of newspapers, the creation of communist-led mass organizations, the development of trade unionism from which it drew its strength.

In Algeria, in May 1926, the first issue of the journal "Al Alam Al Ahmar" (The Red Flag) appeared announcing the North African Star. An organization that wanted to be a mass organization was therefore created during the general assembly of June 20, 1926, by Algerian Communists, members of the French Communist Party (PCF), such as, at that time, Abdelkader Hadj Ali and Messali Hadj. It presented itself as a special section of the Inter-Colonial Union of

the PCF. In September 1926 the PCF imposed on the Algerians the slogan of independence and introduced it into the program of the North African Star under the impetus of the Communist International. The hesitation to take it up sheds light on the components of Algerian nationalism at that time. The idea of national independence was thus born from the emigration in Paris, while in Algeria the assimilationist ideology dominated.

At the anti-imperialist



Congress, organized by the Communist International held in Brussels, Belgium, from February 10 to 15, 1927, the North African Star (ENA) called for the independence of North Africa, proclaimed by Messali Hadj, its General Secretary. The French authorities denounced the threat to the State Authority and decreed the dissolution of the ENA on November 20, 1929.

In **Morocco**, the only major action organized by the communists outside the study circles was the campaign against the Rif war. This was the first time that anti-colonialism became an argument for the mobilization of the French workers. The official proclamation of the Republic of the Rif, on July 1, 1923, communicated to the League of Nations in the English language and borrowing its formulation from international law, was only one of the periods of the resistance of the Moroccan people to its domination. It became effective starting with the symbolic and effective absence of the central government after the Algeiras Conference in 1906 and continued with arms in hand until 1933, when the policy of corruption of some tribal chiefs and the military repression defeated it temporarily and imposed the ‘pacification.’

At the same time, Morocco’s right to independence was affirmed and links were established between the Chinese revolution and the Rif. An effort was made to deny the image of the barbarian and show in Abdelkrim the head of a modern republic. This responded well to the Comintern’s orders to advance the new idea of ‘the union of the proletariat and the colonial peoples.’ After May 27, 1925, different themes would be proposed to the speakers in order to get them to hold meeting and rallies.

- The 1914-18 war was not the last; it continued in Morocco causing thousands of deaths and swallowing up millions.
- It was a “real war” mobilizing 200,000 men and big future conflicts because of imperialist rivalries.
- It was a war of the bankers to plunder the resources of the subsoil. It was deliberately provoked despite the peace proposed by Abdelkrim.
- The workers and peasants paid the price; they would be handed over to the new slaughter and the financial ruin of France would weigh down on them.
- The Cartel of the Left [a governmental alliance of Social-Democratic and Republican parties – *translator’s note*] acted as a servant of French imperialism with the support of reformist

leaders against a people who became the symbol of the oppressed.

In **Tunisia**, the communist section was created in 1920. Local delegates were present at the Congress of Tours, which saw the birth of the PCF. In the same year, Mokhtar Ayari, a worker and trade unionist and one of the founders of this cell, launched a communist Arabic-language newspaper, “The Friend of the People,” to spread communist ideas and make known the achievements of the Great October Revolution. Four years later he would become one of the founders of an independent trade union: the General Confederation of Workers of Tunisia (CGTT). This would be fought by all: the colonial power, the Tunisian nationalist parties, the French social-chauvinists and the yellow unions there; the CGT remained under the control of the socialists after the Congress of Tours.¹ It was known for its total absence from the struggles led by the Tunisian workers and denounced the formation of the Tunisian Confederation under the pretext that it would participate in the division of the labor force vis-a-vis united capital. According to Durel, its local secretary “*only racial and religious intolerance would prevent Tunisian workers from joining the USF*” (the French Trade Union, section of the CGT in Tunisia), to which one of the founders of the CGTT replied:

“Nothing prevents you from joining the Tunisian trade union since it is preparing to join the (trade union) International, in accordance with the internationally established labor principles. Thus we will avoid the division of which you fear the risks. In all the countries of the world, the formation of the unions follows from the conformation of the peoples. Each nation has an organization recognized by the International. Why should Tunisia not be recognized as a nation among nations – which it really is, if it were not assimilated to a French land. Under these conditions, nothing would prevent us from uniting other than your role of protectors which forbids you to condescend to consider us as your equals. As for the professional and union experience, where you deplore the absence of native people, I do not deny it. No doubt if you join us, it would be fulfilled. We are nothing other than workers.”

¹ 18th Congress of the French Section of the Workers’ International, held in Tours, France, from December 25 to 30, 1920. (Editor’s note)

And what about Palestine? We will discuss this in the next section.

IV. The CI and Palestine

Let us first recall that the revolutionary workers' movement had condemned the Zionist movement since its appearance at the end of the 19th century. Its leaders such as Bebel, Lenin and Kautsky had denounced it as an ultra-reactionary movement and doctrine at the service of the Jewish bourgeoisie allied to world imperialism.

The CI inherited this position and continued to denounce the Zionist project. At the time when the imperialists began to organize the waves of mass emigration of the Jews towards Palestine, the CI denounced this policy which it considered "*a utopian, petty-bourgeois and reactionary idea which seeks to divert the proletarians of the Jewish faith from the class struggle.*" And the Executive Committee of the CI proclaimed its support for the struggle of the Arab masses in Palestine against the imperialist and Zionist camp.

In the same context, the young Soviet state, only a few months after its birth, denounced the intrigues of the Zionists and their imperialist protectors against Palestine. In December 1919, the People's Commissariat for National Questions published, on behalf of the Jews of Russia, a declaration which stated that "*The Zionists are trying to expel the Arabs from Palestine to establish a Jewish state... The Jewish working masses of the Socialist Republic of Russia defend their socialist homeland on the front alongside the workers and peasants of Russia against the imperialist countries of the Entente and their agents... We do not need another country and we have no national right to Palestine. We recognize that these national rights belong entirely to the Arab and Bedouin working masses of Palestine.*"

In Palestine, the CI was confronted with a particular type of the colonial question, since it did not just concern the opposition between two forces on Palestinian land: an imperialist occupier, in this case Great Britain and a national liberation force, the Palestinian people, but a third force interfered with it: the wild hordes of the Zionist movement launched against Palestine and supported by all imperialisms. The nascent CI had to decide not only on this complicated issue, but also had to unequivocally support its Palestinian section that was being born: The Palestinian Communist Party is indeed the oldest of the Arab communist parties, founded in 1919.

This early foundation explains the presence within it of a large number of Jewish emigrants from Europe who settled in Palestine. It would know different phases of development and would suffer from different divisions. The task of the Jewish communists was subject to the major contradiction that they had to fight against Zionism, through which they were present and maintained on this land of colonization. At the time when it was instructed to Arabize itself, that is, to integrate Palestinians, many left it.

The Palestinian Communist Party, which is celebrating its centenary this year, would not only serve as a conduit between Palestine and the CI, but also between CI and the surrounding Arab countries. It should be noted that Palestinian communists would play a decisive role in the formation of the communist parties in Egypt, Syria and Iraq in the early 1920s.

As was mentioned above, it was the Second Congress of the CI that would address the Palestinian question in a clear and in-depth way. In fact, the theses on the national and colonial question adopted by the Congress reserved an important place for Palestine. The text unequivocally denounced the imperialist-Zionist project that was already being implemented in the heart of the Arab world. And this would also be reflected in the support that the CI would give not only to the nascent communist party, but to all the struggles of the Palestinian people against the British occupier or against the waves of mass migration of Jews organized by the imperialist powers.

This was the case, for example, with the Arab uprising of 1929, which was clearly supported by the CI. The resolution published by the Political Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the Communist International on the insurrectionary movement in the Arab nation on October 16, 1929 proves it well. This insurrectionary movement in Palestine was motivated on the one hand by the British occupation and by the expulsion of the Arab peasants from their lands in favor of Zionists newly settled in Palestine.

The Palestinian uprising was seen as the beginning of a great wave of the revolutionary liberation movements of the Arab countries, and therefore it had to be supported, especially since it had grown rapidly and was beginning to spread to neighboring countries.

Although it was essentially a peasant movement, and had in its initial phase a rather reactionary leadership, its anti-imperialist

character was enough for the CI to support it, especially since it was a question of a mass movement.

The support also materialized by helping the Palestine Communist Party theoretically and politically to be able to participate actively in the insurgency along with the other forces, without losing sight of the interests of the working class. The following passages, taken from the October 16, 1929, Resolution, show how attentive the CI leadership was to what was happening in Palestine and the rest of the Arab world:

“The CP of Palestine, as well as the other sections of the Communist International in the other Arab countries, must learn the lessons of the uprising. The most urgent task of the Party is to make a bold and energetic effort to Arabize the Party from top to bottom. At the same time, it must make every effort to set up Arab or mixed Arab and Jewish trade unions, and to win over and expand those that already exist.

“The Party must at all costs eradicate from its ranks all skepticism or passivity concerning the peasant question. It must establish an agrarian program that takes into account the partisan demands of the fellahs and Bedouins. The Party must continue its work among the Jewish workers organized in the Zionist unions, as well as among non-union workers. The denunciation of Zionism, especially of its left wing, as an agency in the service of imperialism, remains as in the past one of the cardinal tasks, and the lessons of the movement must be used to demonstrate it.

“These tasks can only be carried out if they fight energetically and boldly against the right-wing deviation in the Party, which is bound to be strengthened under the pressure of the white terror and the impact of the temporary defeat of the uprising. The right-wing deviation in the CP of Palestine is expressed in the underestimation of the revolutionary potentialities, the open or latent resistance to the Arabization of the Party, the pessimism and passivity about work among the Arab masses, the fatalism and passivity about the peasant question, the lack of understanding of the subsidiary role of the Jewish comrades, who are not the leaders of the Arab masses, the exaggeration of the influence of the reactionary bourgeoisie, large landowners and clergy on the Arab masses; the conciliatory attitude towards opportunist errors, the lack of understanding of the need for vigorous and courageous self-criticism for the mistakes made, a tendency to emigrate without the agreement of the CC,

which is a desertion, resistance to the slogan "For a workers and peasants government."

It is because of this always clear and far-sighted attitude of the CI to the Palestinian question that the position of the USSR for the partition of Palestine in 1947, and so for the creation of a Jewish state would be felt as a deviation by the Arab communists who had not found the words to defend it; and those who did it did so reluctantly. This attitude would have a negative impact on the development of the Arab communist parties, which would be discredited in the eyes of the Arab peoples, especially when we add this to the failure of these parties on issues of national liberation, leaving the leadership of this movement to the bourgeois or petty bourgeois parties.

Conclusion

It can therefore be concluded that the CI developed a policy of absolute support for the Arab world, both for the insurrectionary movements in the region and for the nascent communist parties, which it called on to be actively involved in the struggle for national liberation led until then by bourgeois forces. The problem therefore lay in the application of these policies by the Arab communist parties as well as by the communist parties of the colonial powers which had not firmly supported the right of these colonized peoples to self-determination and demand their independence.

Workers Party of Tunisia
March 2019

Turkey

Labor Party (EMEP) – Turkey

On the Hundredth Anniversary of the Communist International

Throughout the history of the international workers' and communist movement there were three Internationals. The Third (Communist) International / Comintern), which was founded 100 years ago, was the most advanced organisation of the international revolutionary workers' movement. This is because it was founded at an historical time when the working class had seized power and organised as an hegemonic class and when socialist construction began in Russia, the largest country in the world.

Lenin describes the most characteristic feature of the Third International as follows:

*“The most characteristic feature of this International, its mission of fulfilling, of implementing the precepts of Marxism, and of achieving the age-old ideals of socialism and the working-class movement – this most characteristic feature of the Third International has manifested itself immediately in the fact that the new, third, ‘International Working Men’s Association’ has already begun to develop, to a certain extent, into a union of Soviet Socialist Republics.”*¹

This is not a coincidence. If we look at the history of the Internationals we see continuity. Despite years-long “*intervals*”, the Internationals in fact display a line of development, in which the ensuing ones are based on the previous ones. What makes this continuity possible is the fact that the workers' movement in those years was in a line of progression in general, despite certain retreats in terms of the subjective aspect because of spontaneity, and the consolidation of the victory of Marxism.

The defeat of the Paris Commune and of the 1905 Revolution did not cause any general historical rupture in the international workers' movement. On the contrary, following a temporary and

¹ Lenin, “The Third International and its Place in History” [*Collected Works*, Vol. 29]

relatively short period of retreat, the movement was on the rise again.

Lenin describes the process of the Internationals as follows:

“The First International laid the foundation of the proletarian, international struggle for socialism.

“The Second International marked a period in which the soil was prepared for the broad, mass spread of the movement in a number of countries.

“The Third International has gathered the fruits of the work of the Second International, discarded its opportunist, social-chauvinist, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois dross, and has begun to implement the dictatorship of the proletariat.”²

With the outbreak of the First Imperialist War, the “socialist” parties which followed an opportunist and social-chauvinist line became dominant in the international organisation of the working class and lost credibility in the eyes of the workers, leading to the collapse of the Second International. In the meantime, the revolutionary workers’ movement in Russia had the 1917 October Revolution led by the Bolshevik Party.

Workers in many countries had sympathy towards the October Revolution and the Soviet government, and the German and Hungarian workers went as far as attempting to realise their own revolutions. This was a period when the daily struggle of the working class of the world widened their horizon in general.

As Lenin stated *“The Latin words [proletarian dictatorship] have now been translated into the languages of all the peoples of contemporary Europe—more, into all the languages of the world... The working people all over the world have instinctively grasped the significance of the Soviets as an instrument in the proletarian struggle and as a form of the proletarian state.”³*

The Communist International was in fact born in this process. Its founding on 2 March 1919 in Moscow was, in a way, “*the consolidation of the gains of the international proletarian masses*”. For this reason, with regard to the founding of the Communist International, Lenin stated the following:

“We have recorded what has already been won. We have written down what has already taken a firm grip on the people’s minds.

² op.cit.

³ op.cit.

Everyone knew... that a new proletarian movement was in full swing."⁴

Lenin proved to be right. The facts regarding the workers' and communist movement in the following years show that a new proletarian movement was in full swing. For example, "*the total world trade union membership expanded from some 15,000,000 in 1913 to 45,000,000 to 1920. Thus, the membership of the unions in the various leading countries during this period went up roughly as follows: Germany 2,250,000 to 8,000,000; Great Britain, 4,500,000 to 6,500,000; United States, 2,500,000 to 4,000,000; France, 500,000 to 2,000,000; Italy, 400,000 to 2,000,000; and Soviet Russia, from 1,500 (in early 1917) to 4,500,000.*"⁵

Also, while the Founding Congress of the Communist International in March 1919 was attended by only 19 parties and groups, at the Second Congress a year later 42 sections from 35 countries were represented.

This revival and upward trend was no doubt a continuous one in later years; there were ups and downs in connection with economic developments and class struggles. However, the general trend was obvious: There was "*a new proletarian movement with an unprecedented depth and power*". Communist parties with hundreds of thousands of members, reaching millions, were born. And the Communist International brought together in its ranks all forces representing the revolutionary workers' and communist movement in those years.

Therefore, because of its foundations, the Communist International was the most advanced, the strongest and the most influential international organisation of the world revolutionary workers' movement. And it maintained this character until it had to be abolished in 1943, during the harshest stage of the Second World War. After the war, with its limited structure and function, the Cominform was founded as a result of the efforts to re-establish the organised unity and relations within the international communist movement, which were weakened due to the war and the lack of organisation.

⁴ Lenin, "Won and Recorded", March 5, 1919 [*Collected Works*, Vol. 28]

⁵ William Z. Foster, *History of the Three Internationals*

With the betrayal and hegemony of modern revisionism, the Cominform was also abolished, but in the meantime, together with the real communist parties, especially the Party of Labour of Albania led by Enver Hoxha, the Marxist-Leninist parties and organisations which were founded in the struggle against modern revisionism and opportunism strived to form the most advanced international unity that was appropriate for the existing conditions. We materialised our international unity in this struggle.

Looking into history

There is no doubt that, for the Marxist-Leninists of our day, examining the history, vast experience, successes and failures of the Comintern and drawing lessons from its theory and practise for the present cannot be just a matter of anniversaries. The main question is to enable the advanced workers, party members and cadres to benefit from this vast history with an understanding of distinguishing and mastering it, not copying and learning the letter of the textbook.

Just as advanced music requires an educated musical ear, learning from history requires, first and foremost, a correct understanding of history. At present individuals are faced with some kind of destruction as they are being forced into a state of lack of imagination or narrow-mindedness and of being stuck in the present time. Revolutionary circles are also affected by this to varying degrees.

One of the approaches that undermines the efforts of utilising the historical experience of the international workers' and communist movement is the rhetoric that *"this is a matter of the past; present conditions are different"*. No doubt conditions are different today, but this approach of not feeling the need for studying and

learning from history is not surprising. The statement "This is a matter of the past" implies doubt of the present validity of what was experienced in the past because the present conditions are different. This understanding, independent



of the intention, narrows the view of looking into history, restricting the angle mainly to the determination of “*similar conditions*”.

It is true that the specificity of each historical period and its conditions makes it harder to learn from history. However, this fact, i.e. the specificity of each period, should not lead to the disregard for the generality that helps us to understand the uniqueness of that period. In order to understand the specificity of the period studied and draw meaningful lessons for the present, one needs to comprehend the specificity of the present day in the context of its wholeness.

Those who learn dialectic and historical materialism by heart and thus are aware of the laws of social progress can transfer what is also general in the specificity, what to pass on, and how to evaluate it on the basis of the specificity of the present conditions. Such transfer of experience from class struggles are possible for all class societies, especially from the history of the working class struggles, as we live in the same economic-social formation – capitalism.

Understanding the present

Then, in terms of learning from the history of the international workers’ and communist movement in general and the Communist International in particular, what specificities of the present day conditions do we need to take into consideration?

This is the thing we must stress first and foremost in this context: Despite the fact that the discontent, anger and the tendency to struggle within international workers’ movement have crystallised in recent years, the disorganisation and lack of experience of the working class of our day is not something we can overlook. Also the level of consciousness of the working class in terms of their class interests is still low. There are exceptions, of course, but the relationship of the main bulk of the workers’ movement with those revolutionary parties and organisations that represent the communist movement is weak. Moreover, in terms of embracing socialism and the tendency for it, the destructive effects caused by the latest historical defeat internationally have not yet been overcome.

The European-wide 1848-49 revolutions, the 1871 Paris Commune and the 1905 Russian Revolution were all defeated and followed by some reactionary periods, but in terms of the first two, the defeats suffered in France and their consequences did not spread to

an international scale to affect the workers' and socialist movement in general.

On the other hand, the latest historical defeat of socialism, which was suffered especially in the land where the working class was organised as the hegemonic class, and which spread internationally, was different from the previous ones and its consequences and effects are also different and are still being felt.

Comparable to the betrayal of the Second International and the defeat suffered by it, which was the previous turning point on an international scale, the international workers' and communist movement, under siege by and the offensive of imperialist capitalism, once again collapsed from within. However, during the collapse of the Second International, there was an ongoing war which led to the emergence of revolutionary situations in some countries and the progress of workers' movement as well as its many-sided destruction, and the Bolshevik Party, which was the strongest in terms of maintaining its communist platform, succeeded in leading the October Revolution, thus preventing the spread of the defeat of the international workers' movement into a historical fracture, and in fact mobilising the movement.

Yet the destruction caused by the latest defeat that came about with the hegemony of modern revisionism, which associated itself with socialism for decades, thus was presented – years later – as the “*collapse of socialism*”. This was different from the collapse of the Second International: the Second World War was over and all imperialists were united under US hegemony; capitalist economies began to overcome the effects of the war and entered into a period of boom; the effects of the collapse could not be abolished in spite of the existence of the Marxist-Leninist opposition, of which our parties were a part, but on the contrary, these effects spread into the international arena and caused a general fracture in terms of the workers' movement.

We are still facing the effects of this latter defeat. There are, of course, spontaneous and fragmented local and national workers' mobilisations in various countries. However, the working class movement that can form the foundation for the development of the Marxist-Leninist movement is at a low level in general. Also, the present-day Marxist-Leninist parties and organisations which identify with the line of the Communist International and hold a revolutionary position against modern revisionism have not yet rooted

themselves in the working class. The number of party cadres who work in the ranks of the working class is relatively low. The organisational and technical potentials of these organisations are at a low level, limiting their capacity to take the steps required by the class struggle.

While the contradictions of the present-day capitalist system are sharpening and this is simply pushing the working class into new struggles for their livelihood and future, struggles that are much wider in scope than those of the recent past, there is a risk that the working class and its movement, with state that is in now, may not take a path in their class interests in these struggles.

In other words, there is a discrepancy between the level of “*accumulation*” of social and political contradictions (a possible world economic crisis would make it even more prominent) and the present-day capacity of struggle of the working class. (For the sake of the subject matter here, we must leave aside the fact that various sections of the big bourgeoisie as well as the middle and petty bourgeoisie are utilising this discrepancy as a historical opportunity in their own interest.)

There is also a similar discrepancy in terms of the communist movement. However, what distinguishes it from the workers’ movement is the fact that it is the representative of the revolutionary theory (historical experience and accumulation of the international workers’ and communist movement), which is key to overcoming the problems that the workers’ movement is facing. Nevertheless, the specificity of this position, which can be considered ordinary, is that the communist movement is taking part in the present day struggles in circumstances when the movement has moved historically from an advanced position to a much lower one, and when it could not fulfil some important tasks that are necessitated by the present day.

This means that there has emerged a significant discrepancy between the historical-theoretical accumulation, which should also be updated, and the capacity for practical struggle. Therefore, unless a practice is developed in line with this relatively “*intense accumulation*”, the need for historical experience will not grow – although historical experience is one of the fundamental elements of a revolutionary practise.

Undoubtedly, the historical accumulation of experience of the workers’ and communist movement do not match one-for-one with

the accumulation of each of its components of the present day. Unless we develop the correct understanding of this fact, there is a danger that a tendency may grow to explain the weaknesses of our own practise by the historical accumulation of the movement.

The key to learning from history is to look into it by asking the right questions, and these questions can only emerge in the process of understanding the distinguishing specificities of the present day. Unless this connection is formed, one can only know history, not learn from it.

In short, if we look into history with the right questions, there is a great deal to learn from the theory and practise of the Communist International. Not only the successes but also the mistakes of the component parties of the Comintern are immensely valuable for us. In present conditions, when the workers' movement, despite all its weaknesses, is sliding into a new period of struggle on a world scale, when the challenges and possibilities are increasing for our parties to root themselves in the working class and embrace broader sections of working people, it is a practical necessity as well as a valuable opportunity for us to closely analyse and draw conclusions from the experience of Comintern on a series of subjects such as the mass activity among workers, forming party units in factories, and the struggle against fascism.

The need for a new International

The Communist International was founded 100 years ago, but just like the struggle in each and every country, the need for an internationalist position and an international struggle of the working class is even greater today.

The hundredth anniversary of the Comintern coincides with a period when the imperialist countries are propagating nationalism as well as the racist and fascist ideology among the working class, increasing spending on armament and their preparedness for war. While the collaborationist trade union bureaucracy has for a long time largely reduced the international solidarity of the working class to mere symbolic actions, the rising racist and nationalist propaganda is trying to poison the reflexes and sensitivities of the working class for international solidarity.

However, independent of these recent developments, when we take into consideration the facts such as the magnitude of the globalisation of present-day capitalism, the level of the interconnection

between capitalist economies, etc., the need makes itself felt practically for the working class and its parties, which are inherently internationalist and for self-interest, to coordinate their struggles and acts of solidarity faster and more intensely on a world scale.

The facts and developments of the present day make the need for a new International, as the most advanced form of the international organisation of the workers' and communist movement, even more urgent. What will determine the form of this new International is the content of the action of the international working class and its level of struggle and organisation as an independent social class in their own parties on a world scale: this means the level of development of the international communist movement and its components, the revolutionary parties of the working class and the place they hold within the workers' movement.

In this respect, the ICMLPO is the form of the organisation we have today. An organisation which is more advanced than that, for instance, something similar to but not exactly the same as the Comintern, would take a specific form applicable to the content of the action and forms of struggle of the international working class.

There is no doubt that the contribution of the presence of an international organisation, a centre with a more advanced function of a world party equipped with all historical and present-day accumulation of experience of the workers' and communist movement, would be central to the struggle of the working class and to the development of its parties. This would prevent many mistakes, waste of time and energy, and missed opportunities.

However, we must always remind ourselves that unless its components, foundations and conditions are ready, a forced transition to this most advanced form of organisation would downgrade the movement, instead of advancing it, and result in a caricature of what is needed. Moreover, the huge gap between the need for this most advanced form of international organisation of the working class and the present level of realisation of this need is an obvious one. In fact, the main characteristics of the present state of the workers' movement that we tried to touch upon earlier explain the reason why it is not possible to take any further steps at present.

In other words, even though it is the parties that will organise in a new Communist International, an organisation which is not based on a developing revolutionary workers' movement would go no further than a hollow organisation, one existing in name only. Why?

Because the presence of a developing revolutionary movement means that at least in some countries some parties can take root in the working class and lead the workers' movement in practice with an advanced level, that we see the signs of the emergence of a centre of attraction within the international workers' movement that could carry forward a new International, providing the foundation and opportunities for it. An International whose source of existence is not based on this workers' movement is far from meeting the requirements of an International.

The present-day situation is such that neither the working class nor its parties are now able to go beyond what we can already achieve with the ICMLPO and fulfil such activity at a level and quality required by the present-day class struggles and made possible by objective conditions. This can, of course, change, but it is something that prevents taking further steps practically.

In any case, the specificity that defines the framework of the class struggles of the historical period we live in is in fact these kinds of discrepancies (caused by the historical defeat of the working class), is it not? At this moment we have to move forward knowing how to "*face up to*" the contradictions of this specific situation. At this stage we must move forward in such a way that would serve the purpose of founding a new Communist International and that would move us closer to this target. In other words, we need to follow this path with the present structure, which has the determination to fulfil the activity and cooperation required by this target.

Despite all its shortcomings, that structure today is the ICM-LPO, International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations. Claiming the legacy of the Communist International today also involves strengthening the ICMLPO in every aspect.

Labour Party – Turkey (EMEP)
March 2019

Venezuela

Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Venezuela – PCMLV

The Third International, Imperialism and the Bourgeois-Democratic Processes in the Dependent Countries

One hundred years after the First Congress of the Communist International (CI or Third International), its positions remain fully valid, simply because capitalism in its imperialist phase is a reality for almost all the nations of the world, whether oppressed or oppressor. For, although the Soviet Union, which had barely begun its life at that time, no longer exists, the powers that led the big businesses have changed or regrouped in other forms. The forms of class struggle continue, just as the fight continues to eliminate the exploitation of one human being by another. The rejection of imperialist oppression has continued to expand on a world scale, as has the ideological struggle against sectarianism, left infantilism, social-chauvinism, reformism and modern revisionism. These are all deviations that end up, as much today as a century ago, defending “democracy in general” and with it the bourgeoisie, benefiting mainly the representatives of the financial oligarchy who are the most voracious fraction of monopoly capital.

The impact of the CI was so great that, despite its disappearance, initiatives of the Marxist-Leninists have continued to develop under its inspiration. As an example of this we have the ICMLPO, which works to advance the application of proletarian internationalism, taking as a reference point the work of the Third International, with the objective of continuing to strengthen the struggle against imperialism and the building of scientific socialism, defending at all cost the teachings of the classics of Marxism.

The Third International left us many experiences:

To the proletariat of the dependent nations, which for the first time was taken into account, not as one more second class force, worthy of pity by the petty bourgeoisie or the labor aristocracy whenever the capitalist powers carried out a new massacre, but as a fundamental element, an active subject in the internationalist strategy of the Marxists.

Further, with its teachings, the proletariat of the imperialist countries learned that internationalism is just another phrase if it does not work concretely in the struggle for the liberation of the oppressed countries, in the struggle against “one’s own bourgeoisie” and for making the right to self-determination a reality.

The CI learned masterfully from Lenin and Stalin to show the role of the proletariat and the peasantry in the dependent countries, as well as of the nationalities, as a central force in the struggle against imperialism on an international scale. Its mobilization in actions for the revolution and socialism are essential to strike a fundamental element of economic policy and of subjugation carried out by the great capitalist powers; here lies the essence of proletarian internationalism, surpassing the social-chauvinist and social-patriotic visions.

During the First Congress of the Communist International (March 1919), the bases were established for the organization of communists, specifically in the imperialist phase of capitalism, which differ in important points from the preceding organizations seen in the First and Second Internationals.

Since those years it was clear, for the true Marxist-Leninist Communist Parties, the real importance of the struggle against imperialism as the highest phase of capitalism. The document called: “Thesis and Report on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat”¹ is of particular importance in this respect, presented to the First Congress of the Third International on March 4, 1919, 100 years ago today.

In some of his theses presented to the Communist Parties, Vladimir Ilyich raised:

1. “Faced with the growth of the revolutionary workers’ movement in every country, the bourgeoisie and their agents in the workers’ organisations are making desperate attempts to find ideological and political arguments in defence of the rule of the exploiters. Condemnation of dictatorship and defence of democracy are particularly prominent among these arguments. The falsity and hypocrisy of this argument, repeated in a thousand strains by the capitalist press and at the Berne yellow In-

¹ Lenin, V.I. “Thesis and Report on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat,” *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, pp. 457-458, 467. Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974.

ternational Conference in February 1919, are obvious to all who refuse to betray the fundamental principles of socialism.

2. “Firstly, this argument employs the concepts of ‘democracy in general’ and ‘dictatorship in general,’ without posing the question of the class concerned. This non-class or above-class presentation, which supposedly is popular, is an outright travesty of the basic tenet of socialism... For in no civilised capitalist country does ‘democracy in general’ exist; all that exists is bourgeois democracy, and it is not a question of ‘dictatorship in general,’ but of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, i.e., the proletariat, over its oppressors and exploiters, i.e., the bourgeoisie, in order to overcome the resistance offered by the exploiters in their fight to maintain their domination.
3. “History teaches us that no oppressed class ever did, or could, achieve power without going through a period of dictatorship, i.e., the conquest of political power and forcible suppression of the resistance always offered by the exploiters—a resistance that is most desperate, most furious, and that stops at nothing. The bourgeoisie, whose domination is now defended by the socialists who denounce ‘dictatorship in general’ and extol ‘democracy in general’... under cover of shouts about ‘dictatorship in general’ are an outright betrayal of socialism. They are, in fact, desertion to the bourgeoisie, denial of the proletariat’s right to its own, proletarian, revolution, and defence of bourgeois reformism at the very historical juncture when bourgeois reformism throughout the world has collapsed and the war has created a revolutionary situation.”

Lenin continued up to thesis 22, which he ends saying: “In complaining of persecution by the Bolsheviks, the Russian Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries try to conceal the fact that they are persecuted for participating in the Civil War on the side of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat...”

He concludes his theses defending the



embryonic forms of proletarian power that, as heirs of the Paris Commune, were emerging in several countries: “And indeed, the form of proletarian dictatorship that has already taken shape, i.e., Soviet power in Russia, the Räte-System in Germany, the Shop Stewards Committees in Britain and similar Soviet institutions in other countries, all this implies and presents to the toiling classes, i.e., the vast majority of the population, greater practical opportunities.”²

In the Second Congress of the CI (July 1920), progress was made in the clear and precise evaluation of the problem of dependent countries also with Lenin’s thesis on the national and colonial problem, which were debated, taken up by the commission along with other contributions and established as its official position on the subject by the International.

In his “Report of the Commission on the National and the Colonial Questions” of July 26, 1920, Lenin said: “First, what is the cardinal idea underlying our theses? It is the distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations. Unlike the Second International and bourgeois democracy, we emphasise this distinction. In this age of imperialism, it is particularly important for the proletariat and the Communist International to establish the concrete economic facts and to proceed from concrete realities, not from abstract postulates, in all colonial and national problems.”

“The characteristic feature of imperialism consists in the whole world, as we now see, being divided into a large number of oppressed nations and an insignificant number of oppressor nations, the latter possessing colossal wealth and powerful armed forces.... This idea of distinction, of dividing the nations into oppressor and oppressed, runs through the theses, not only the first....”³

Since that time, the obligation of the Marxist-Leninists to fight against imperialist oppression at the side of the oppressed nation and against the oppressor nation became clear to all. This was an approach that was developed at the same congress, and also later in successive congresses of the CI, developing the Popular Front and

² Lenin, V.I., “First Congress of the Communist International,” *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p.465.

³ Lenin, V.I., “Report of the Commission on the National and the Colonial Questions,” *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 241, 242

the United Front as forms of struggle against imperialism and fascism.

In his report to the Second Congress of the CI, Lenin particularly emphasized the question of the bourgeois-democratic movement in the backward countries. And he said: “This is a question that has given rise to certain differences. We have discussed whether it would be right or wrong, in principle and in theory, to state that the Communist International and the Communist parties must support the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries. As a result of our discussion, we have arrived at the unanimous decision to speak of the national-revolutionary movement rather than of the ‘bourgeois-democratic’ movement.”⁴ He gave a series of reasons for that assertion, in order to sharply differentiate between the reformist movement and the revolutionary movement. He concluded: “The significance of this change is that we, as Communists, should and will support bourgeois-liberation movements in the colonies only when they are genuinely revolutionary, and when their exponents do not hinder our work of educating and organising in a revolutionary spirit the peasantry and the masses of the exploited....”⁵

At the Third Congress of the CI (June-July 1921) Lenin presented his “Report on the Tactics of the R.C.P.” [Russian Communist Party], telling us: “Much inflammable material has accumulated in capitalist countries, as well as in those countries which up to now have been regarded merely as the objects and not as the subjects of history, i.e., the colonies and semi-colonies. It is quite possible, therefore, that insurrections, great battles and revolutions may break out there sooner or later, and very suddenly too.”⁶

Lenin added to his view by asserting that “the movement of the majority of the population of the globe, initially directed towards national liberation, will turn against capitalism and imperialism and will, perhaps, play a much more revolutionary part than we expect. It is important to emphasise the fact that, for the first time in our International, we have taken up the question of preparing for this struggle.”⁷

⁴ Ibid., p. 241.

⁵ Ibid., p. 242.

⁶ Ibid., Vol. 32., pp. 478-479.

⁷ Ibid., p. 482.

In relation to the perspectives and problems of the revolution, in this Third Congress of the CI Lenin made reference to the Czechoslovak Party in the following way: “We have always said—and it was also said at the Second Congress—that revolution demands sacrifices. Some comrades in their propaganda argue in the following way: we are prepared to stage a revolution, but it must not be too severe. Unless I am mistaken, this thesis was put forward by Comrade Smeral in his speech at the Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.... Some comrades who spoke after Smeral at this Congress said, ‘Yes, we shall go along with Smeral because in this way we shall avoid civil war.’ (Laughter.) If these reports are true, I must say that such agitation is neither communistic nor revolutionary...”⁸

On the basis of all this and concrete experience, the CI concluded that the revolutionary processes demanded great sacrifices of the Marxist-Leninists, at all times and together with the working class and poor peasants, to take the pulse of the political moment and especially of the state of mind of the masses, in order to guide their force appropriately towards the seizure of power. This path will not be easy but as someone said, that is the way.

“Anyone who has read Marx and failed to understand that in capitalist society, at every acute moment, in every serious class conflict, the alternative is either the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or the dictatorship of the proletariat, has understood nothing of either the economic or the political doctrines of Marx.”⁹

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April 2019

⁸ Ibid., p. 488.

⁹ Lenin, “The Third International and Its Place in History,” May 1919, Vol. 29, p. 313.